



Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy

Bishopton Road West, Stockton on Tees, TS19 0QH

School Unique Reference Number: **141370**

Inspection dates:	27 – 28 November 2017		
Lead inspector:	Mrs Meg Baines		
Team inspector:	Ms Liz McGuire		
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:	Outstanding		1
Collective Worship:	Outstanding		1
Religious Education:	Outstanding		1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The headteacher and his team have passion for Catholic education which informs their clearly defined vision for a school which holds Christ at its heart. The school's motto, "To know God is to know oneself" is a pivotal axiom which is embraced by the whole school community. A strong Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life and all departments. Catholic life is evident in the relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the staff there is a genuine sense of support and concern for each other. They treat one another with kindness and respect.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. Pupils benefit from a wide variety of opportunities to gather and worship. Pupils and staff plan for and lead prayers and liturgies. The lay chaplain and school leaders work closely together to provide opportunities for high quality Collective Worship. Good relationships with local clergy enable Mass to be celebrated and liturgies occur weekly, supported frequently by the clergy. Pupils have the opportunity to pray reflectively and formally and the chapel is open and free for anyone to use daily. Pupils speak with knowledge and pride about their faith.
- Progress and attainment in Religious Education are both outstanding, they have risen significantly over the last three years and have become a strength of the school. The quality of teaching and assessment practices are outstanding. The very positive attitudes of staff and pupils, combined with high expectations, has ensured outstanding behaviour for learning and great progress. An intelligently led department, strong leadership and commitment have helped drive up and maintain standards in recent years. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff have also helped drive the ambitions of leaders and managers, staff and parents.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy is an average sized mixed 11-16 Catholic school in Stockton on Tees. It became an academy as part of the Carmel Trust in February 2015. It reports to the Carmel Education Trust via its own interim advisory board.
- The school's history can be traced back to 1850 when the first Catholic school was set up in Stockton. In its present form the school is essentially a combination of two single sex schools, St Mary's and St Bede's in 1972. The school has a large number of pupils with additional needs and has a small autism unit within the school. It serves pupils from all areas of Stockton with a range of social and economic backgrounds.
- There are currently 821 pupils on roll. A planned expansion and refurbishment has been approved, work on which begins summer 2018.
- Of the 821 pupils, 295 (36%) are baptised Catholic. There are 260 pupils on pupil premium with 95 receiving support from the special needs department. There are 17 pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last diocesan inspection.
- A new Catholic Life lead has recently been appointed.
- The school serves five local parishes: St Bede's, St Cuthbert's, St Mary's, St Patrick's, SS Peter and Paul and English Martyrs

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve further teaching and learning in Religious Education by:
 - creative use of pedagogies and techniques to inspire passion for learning
 - developing effective questioning
- Ensure the school's learning environment reflects the school's mission and distinct identity by:
 - siting concrete and effective signs reflecting the school's character in public areas and meeting spaces.
- Formalise the monitoring and evaluation of the excellent practice identified at the inspection for Collective Worship by:
 - creating a clear central structure, drawing together all aspects of Collective Worship in one place and reporting outcomes to governors.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Catholic Life is central to the school. Pupils, parents and staff speak warmly about their school and the opportunities offered to enhance and demonstrate the ethos which exists in school. Pupils were able to articulate fluently the events and charities they initiated or were involved with. Pupils treat each other with respect and say that they feel safe in school. The highly effective St Monica Centre is a safe place for students in need and at risk. Here they are treated fairly and are given the opportunity to grow and in some cases heal.
- A Catholic Life leader has recently been appointed. She works closely with the lay chaplain to create events, retreats and opportunities for all pupils to access. The school is a positive caring environment which places Christ at the heart of all it does. It is not inward looking but seeks to look out to the community to help others and offers a rich source of support for families in need. Examples include a sponsored swim for the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle, raising funds for a local neonatal clinic, raising funds for Zoe's Place, a centre for children in need and for Water Aid. Catholic Life is strong across the school as a whole with all departments seeking to encourage and deliver support through charitable events throughout the year.
- Behaviour in class and around school is excellent. Behaviour for learning within the classroom is also excellent. Pupils are proud of their school, know, by heart, the school motto and were able to speak about how the school came into being. They are proud of their charity work. A number spoke of their experience of speaking in the local parishes about their school. The links with the local community are strong.
- Pupils were able to speak at length about pupils from other faiths within their school, demonstrating a sense of genuine tolerance and inclusion. A real sense of belonging was identified. Younger pupils said they felt safe and knew who to speak to if they needed help.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- A Catholic Life team exists to create opportunities for pupils and staff to develop their own faith. Pupils are supported to take part in events such as the Witness Walk through the streets of Stockton. They have been to The Source, Flame, Summer Festival (God Camp), and participate in the Youth Council. Pupils have the John Paul II awards available to them. A large number of pupils attended the Summer Festival. Work with looked after children is a strength. Staff make themselves available and take a holistic approach. The school

continues to work on projects in their own community. Such work should be celebrated around the school, demonstrating the hard work and social conscience clearly at work here. The heads from every department spoke passionately about the relationships in the school and were able to highlight areas of Catholic Life which affected their subject. Most were form tutors and many had heart-warming stories about their pupils who had instigated charitable events and fundraising activities for those in need, including refugees and contributions to CAFOD.

- The school motto is in every pupil diary and is understood and appreciated by all. The evidence for this can be seen across the school in the relationships that exist between staff and pupils and amongst the staff themselves. A strong and evident Catholic ethos is apparent when you speak to pupils, staff and parents. Staff use retreats and professional development days as part of their ongoing formation. These are led by key staff and outside speakers. There is a regular programme of induction in place.
- Religious Education classrooms are bright and well-resourced and reflect the Catholic Life of the school. They offer display for learning and reflect the work being done in the curriculum. Teachers work collaboratively, supporting each other and seamlessly covering and helping in a strong department which is intelligently led.
- Large areas of the school and some communal spaces lack the distinctive Catholic flavour due to a lack of outward signs of Catholicity. Recent refurbishments and future building projects have meant that previous banners and signs were taken down. This area has been on hold for a while. A large amount of money has been raised to pay for new signs and symbols of the school's Catholic history and faith.
- Parents interviewed as part of this inspection were highly supportive of the school, praising the progress made and the ethos.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Leaders are passionate about the Catholic Life of the school and are effective in planning for and promoting Catholic Life at Our Lady and St Bede. Evidence for this was found in planning documentation and in governors' minutes. Governors monitor Catholic Life through reports from the newly appointed Catholic Life leader and the chaplain via the headteacher's report. The appointment of a Catholic Life leader will enable even greater monitoring.
- Leaders manage all aspects of pastoral care well. Attendance is improving year on year and stands around 95%.
- Governors are frequent visitors to school. The chair of governors has given training on safeguarding to staff. The governing body reports directly to the trust and as such is a conduit between the trust and the school. They ensure monitoring takes place and play a role in strategic development of Catholic Life through regular involvement in the everyday life of the school (for example the chair of governors accompanied learning walks).
- The deeply held faith of the head and his team is at the centre of all they do. The tenets of our Catholic faith are openly shared and are threaded through all school policies and procedures. Leaders live out daily what it means to work in such an environment, showing respect and fairness. Outstanding relationships have underpinned the huge progress the school has made in the last three years in and out of the classroom. The behaviour is a credit to the pupils themselves, their families and to staff, leaders and managers who together effectively promote the Catholic Life of the school. They ensure that the spiritual,

pastoral and academic needs of the pupils are met and that an authentic Catholic education is provided for all in their care.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The acts of Collective Worship observed were of a high quality. They held the pupils' interest and inspired them to deep thought. Responses in the classroom prayers were mature and moving. The prayer life of the school is deeply embedded, observed and held in esteem by the whole school community. Pupils were able to articulate very clearly what it meant to be part of a Catholic school and how a prayer life has helped them.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to take the initiative and were seen writing their own prayers. Anecdotal reports of end of year Masses and liturgies during Lent were received and video evidence of a variety of liturgies was also seen. Such events were well received and favourably remembered by staff and pupils.
- A rehearsal of the worship choir was witnessed and the large school choir was observed rehearsing for the Advent celebration. This was a joyful and moving event which included pupils from across the school age range as well as both sexes. Additional staff support the choir. All demonstrated respect and reverence for the carols they were singing.
- There is a sense, reflected in conversations with pupils, that they are aware of each others' different backgrounds, be it ethnic, religious or socio-economic, and that a genuine moral awareness pervades.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Prayer and worship are central to the life of Our Lady and St Bede. While less than half the pupils are baptised Catholic a large number are Christians and all respect the prayer life of the school as observed by inspectors in examples of Collective Worship.
- The high priority that Collective Worship is given by the leadership provides a sense of belonging to a community which takes seriously its mission in education. Prayer opportunities are carefully planned and supported by the lay chaplain. Her role is highly praised and considered crucial by staff to the delivery of effective worship. A wide variety of liturgical experiences are used. Liturgical dance, music, mime, drama and silence have been evidenced.
- The lay chaplain, the heads of Religious Education, the headteacher and his team are all Religious Education specialists and have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical heritage, its rites and seasons and are passionate and determined in ensuring that pupils are given high quality experiences throughout the liturgical year.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The school community benefits from leaders, governors and middle managers who are adept at planning and delivering outstanding experiences in Collective Worship.
- The school has also ensured that there are opportunities daily for reflection and meaningful prayer for staff and pupils. All continuous professional development sessions begin with a prayer and have a worship focus. Staff have a positive view of ongoing formation which they feel is effective. The last two staff retreats had the Catholic Life of the school as their focus. There is a timetable for Collective Worship which can be flexible to respond to current events, for example the recent Manchester tragedy which was witnessed by pupils from the school.
- The headteacher and deputy are Religious Education specialists. They and the governing body have a keen understanding of the Church's year and ensure that events and liturgies are planned to reflect this. Pupils' responses to such events are largely excellent. The school's leaders frequently lead Collective Worship, modelling outstanding practice for staff and pupils.
- As part of the self-review process leaders meet with key deliverers of Collective Worship weekly. Information regarding Collective Worship is reported to governors via the headteacher's termly reports.
- Leaders and managers are proactive in seeking to elicit the views of all groups in the school; staff, parents, carers, pupils, support worker and governors regarding the quality and appropriateness of Collective Worship. The chair of governors is personally supportive and frequently involved in Collective Worship. Bringing a wealth of experience to his role in monitoring its quality and impact. Leaders seek the views of all stakeholders when reviewing the quality of Collective Worship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Pupils enjoy Religious Education. They apply themselves diligently, come prepared for work and work at a good pace. In all lessons observed behaviour for learning was excellent. Most pupils including the most able but especially those with additional needs are making good progress within lessons and over time. Pupils have an understanding of their own progress and know what their targets are. Pupils are able to apply a range of skills, including the ability to identify and interpret sources and symbols, engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their own lives. Work in books is consistently marked according to the school's marking policy.
- The key stage three curriculum is internally designed and in line with the diocesan curriculum guidelines. It provides a structured springboard for the transition to exam work in year 10. Pupils observed in this key stage showed interest in their lesson and many were able to articulate the knowledge they had acquired.
- The school's overall Progress 8 score has increased over the last three years. In 2016 it was +0.69. In 2017 it was +0.72. This is significantly above average for all groups. Progress 8 for disadvantaged pupils was significantly above the national average. The upward trend in results for GCSE Religious Education peaked in the summer with A*-C pass rate of 96%. (2016-89.3%, 2015-71.2% 2014-56.9%). Religious Education progress has improved from a low point (-0.82 in 2014) to +1.15 in 2017. Outcomes for all groups of pupils are outstanding.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.

- The quality of teaching is at least good with some examples of outstanding teaching. At its best it enthuses pupils and engages them totally allowing pupils to make sustained and rapid progress
- A number of lessons were jointly observed with the senior leadership team. All lessons observed were at least good.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education which they effectively communicate to pupils. The department is intelligently led by subject specialists who are effective at planning and selecting resources which promote good learning. A range of teaching strategies was seen. A limited use of effective questioning was in evidence. Where it was used it was transformative and had immediate impact. This is an area which may be developed. Teachers are efficient at managing their time and all lessons

observed showed good pace and energy. Some lessons were outstanding, engaging the pupils and having an impact on learning which was missing in others. Four of the eight members of the Religious Education department hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

- Homework in both key stages follows the school's policy, is regularly set and was well marked with appropriate feedback, contributing to pupils' learning, allowing them to consolidate their learning. Pupils are given time and opportunity to respond to teacher feedback.
- Assessment is effective. It is used to check pupils' progress. Assessment for learning is recorded in every pupil's book in accordance with the school's policy, developed from Bloom's taxonomy of learning. As a result of these assessment processes teachers have a sound knowledge and awareness of pupils' prior learning and capabilities, which enables them to meet the specific needs of all those in their group when planning. Data from assessments is gathered every term and issued to parents. Final reports are written in the summer term. Other forms of monitoring include lesson observations and learning walks.
- The heads of Religious Education ensure that schemes of work are in line with the Bishops' Conference. Relationship and sex education (RSE) is in line with the diocese guidelines and is delivered jointly by the Religious Education department and science department.
- They meet regularly with their team and have a shared vision for the department. The recent success at GCSE has empowered the department and high energy levels amongst staff make for a lively focused environment.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- Leadership and management at Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy are ambitious for their pupils. The department is managed by teachers who value self-evaluation and reflection on practice. Their passion for their subject and drive in its delivery are not yet matched by the pupil body generally. They have put in place procedures and protocols which will ensure pupils' enjoyment and passionate engagement in the future.
- The headteacher has been the link between the Religious Education department and the leadership team since his appointment in September 2014. A rigorous monitoring of the department has been a consequence of this. Religious Education is now considered the "core of the core curriculum" to quote the head. The head provides support for the leadership of the department in the implementation of changes to staffing, curriculum, teaching and learning and management.
- Self-evaluation is encouraged by the senior leaders and governors. It is rigorous and challenges the staff and pupils to be the best they can be. Targeted planning and monitoring have enabled the Religious Education department to continue to raise standards over time. A series of outstanding results at key stage four led to high morale within the department. The success of the department has had a knock on effect across the school community as they celebrate the impact on the moral and spiritual development of pupils and on their own ability to discern their own unique vocations.
- Leaders are well informed of current best practice and employ a range of strategies to ensure their department is always striving to achieve highly. Leadership of the Religious Education department is excellent and informed by a high level of expertise and vision to improve teaching and learning and ultimately outcomes for all. This is demonstrated in the continuous improvement of results over time. Attitudes and relationships within the

department are outstandingly positive. Staff model the high standards and expectations of behaviour expected for all those in their care. The Religious Education department deserve the excellent reputation it has within the school community

- Planning is collaborative and thorough. The key stage three curriculum is skilfully designed to meet the wide range of pupils' abilities and needs.
- The curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to engage with the sacramental and liturgical life of the school. Links with parishes and outside agencies enrich the programme which in turn enriches pupil learning and progress.
- Religious Education lessons are well resourced in terms of staff, physical resources and curriculum time. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' conference with a minimum of 10% curriculum time dedicated to Religious Education. Creative use of resources including staffing and the appointment of key staff ensures the Religious Education department are meeting the needs of all pupils.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

1

CATHOLIC LIFE:

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

1

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

1

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy
Unique reference number	141370
Local authority	Stockton
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Mr Jim Cunningham
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Hammill
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