



## Statutory Inspection (Section 48) Report

<b>St Bede's School</b>	
64 Carlton Road, Redhill, RH1 2LQ	
<b>Current Section 48 inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Dioceses</b>	<b>Anglican Diocese of Southwark &amp; Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel &amp; Brighton</b>
Previous Section 48 inspection grade	Good (RE Satisfactory)
Local authority	Surrey
Date/s of inspection	6 & 7 December 2017
Date of last inspection	22 & 23 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	125278
Headteacher	Revd Stephen Crabtree
Inspectors' names and number	Christine Smyth NSI 459 & Jane Goring

### School context

St Bede's is a voluntary aided, larger than average school with a unique foundation, where Anglicans, Roman Catholics and the Free Churches are bound together in a formal ecumenical partnership. The school serves 1704 pupils from age of 11 to 18, with the majority of pupils from churches in the Reigate, Redhill, Caterham and Horley area. It is heavily oversubscribed and 96% of places are currently reserved for children who meet the foundation criteria. Pupils enter the school with significantly higher attainment than the national average. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are all considerably lower than the average in schools nationally. A new headteacher and deputy head were appointed in September 2014, as was a new head of RE. The school was inspected by Ofsted in January 2017 and judged to be outstanding.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Bede's as a church school are outstanding

- The high-profile Christian mission of the school, the value of which has been appreciated and articulated by all stakeholders.
- The courageous and inspiring leadership of the headteacher has instilled a deeply Christian understanding of all aspects of the school's work.
- The excellent behaviour and relationships which exist between and amongst students and staff and at all levels across the school community.
- The headteacher and senior leaders who actively promote and live out the Christian distinctiveness of St Bede's; this example is recognised and appreciated by students and staff.
- This is a forward-thinking school where leaders and governors are ready to engage with the national agenda for education whilst remaining true to the school's Christian vision.
- Pupils grow into mature and passionate young people who are confident to discuss issues of faith and spirituality and to challenge all forms of injustice.

### Areas to improve

- Improve the consistency of marking and the effectiveness of 'next steps' comments in Religious Education (RE) to enable all pupils to improve their work further.
- Further embed the pupils' leadership of collective worship so that all are fully engaged and it remains relevant to the whole school community.

### **The extent to which the Christian character of St Bede's allows all members of the school community to flourish is outstanding**

The deeply embedded Christian character of St Bede's and its mission to provide 'Christian education at its best' is valued highly and is clearly recognised by all. It enables pupils of all abilities to flourish and excel in their learning and personal development. This was explained clearly by a Year 7 boy who said that it was the ethos of the school which sets it apart. He spoke happily of the Christian care and love shown by everyone which was almost tangible in all areas of school life. The school's values of belonging, education, determination, excellence and service are well known to all pupils, staff, governors and parents and impact on all aspects of school life. Consequently, behaviour is impeccable and relationships exemplary between and amongst pupils and adults. Pastoral care is excellent. Older pupils live out the values of belonging and service, actively welcoming new pupils who recognise this and settle quickly. Those of all backgrounds and faith traditions are embraced warmly so everyone feels valued and proud to belong to the St Bede's community. As a result attendance is high and exclusion minimal. The achievement of pupils in a wide range of subjects including English, maths and RE demonstrates consistently good progress that is above that of similar pupils nationally, locally and is within the top 5% of schools in Southwark Diocese. Pupils in vulnerable groups make strong progress across all key stages. Sixth formers do well and are fully prepared for the next stage of their education with 98% moving on to the university, college or career of their choice. The Christian ethos permeates the curriculum as all departments promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) dimension of the subjects they teach. Pupils now draw parallels, for example, between topics they have covered in RE with projects in drama, history and design technology and it shows how the work of all subjects is having a cumulative effect on pupils' spirituality. In addition, the rich range of extra-curricular provision enhances SMSC with specifically Christian focused activities such as 'God and the big bang' and the three Christian Union groups. Pupils have a deeply instilled sense of service and social justice, enhanced by, and lived out on trips within the UK, Europe and Tanzania. They make a significant contribution to the mission of the school through various responsibilities such as visiting the elderly. They are fully aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith and they have a secure understanding of nature of ecumenism.

### **The extent to which prayer and worship promote the spiritual life of all members of the community of St Bede's is outstanding**

A rich experience of prayer and worship is provided for all members of the school community. It is an intrinsic part of school life, is rooted in the school's ecumenical Christian tradition and genuinely valued by pupils and staff. Senior leaders and chaplains play a key part in the planning and development of prayer and worship opportunities. Their example as role models and their contributions are recognised and articulated by all. Collective worship is now a consistent and high quality experience which leaves a powerful and lasting impression on pupils' spirituality as they move into adulthood. The weekly themes are based on the Lectionary and include a bible reading and a prayer. As a result of planned opportunities and services and pupils develop a good understanding of the Bible. The five values are a focus in year assemblies as are Christian festivals and special services at particular times of the year, such as a service for the new Year 7 intake and the Christingle services. Pupils are very aware of the impact that the school's values, and the message of the services, have on their actions and relationships with others both within the school and beyond. Worship is inclusive of all, whatever their faith position and increases pupils' understanding of the Roman Catholic (RC), Anglican and other faith traditions. Through the greetings, responses and use of specific prayers, such as the 'Glory be' and the Grace, pupils' understanding of these traditions is enhanced as is their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of Christianity is impressive. While worship is always distinctively Christian, due to careful planning and the high quality support and resources provided, it is delivered by all staff in a way that invites everyone, whatever their faith position, to engage with the themes and to use the time for their own personal reflection. The response to this is extremely positive and results in an unusually high level of interaction. Pupils find the material thought-provoking so say that they will reflect on 'God's message and the theme later in the day... and take action on it'. The impact of worship is long lasting as illustrated by 'the 40 acts of kindness', which pupils were encouraged to undertake in Lent, being implemented again voluntarily during Advent. Voluntary Anglican / Free Church Communion services and RC Mass are held termly; they are led and are joined by ministers from different churches locally. Pupils of all faiths value these opportunities with increasing numbers, up to 25% choosing to attend. Pupils' planning and leadership of collective worship is now well established and the school is actively seeking to extend opportunities. Prayer is integral to daily life for staff and pupils. Each day starts and ends in prayer and all meetings of staff, parents and governors begin with prayer, 'as we seek to anchor all our work under the guidance of God'. Pupils contribute willingly and sensitively to prayer. Pupils engage in worship with other schools, hosting the Taize service, at the 'Good Shepherd' service, Wintershall and beyond. Worship is evaluated effectively by all involved.

### **The extent to which religious education makes a significant contribution to the theological development and religious understanding of all pupils is outstanding**

RE is central to the life of the school and permeates every facet of life for students and staff, making a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and to the development of their Christian values. Pupil achievement at Key Stage 4 is outstanding as all pupils make rapid and sustained progress, leading to GCSE results well above the national and Diocesan averages. Attainment in RE is comparable with other core subjects at Key Stage 4. Achievement at Key Stage 5 is very good, both at AS and at A Level, comparable to national averages and there is an upward trend when considering Alps scores as a benchmark. At Key Stage 3, most pupils make good progress, but it is more variable across different groups of pupils. Pupils have an understanding of their target grades and what they have to do to improve. Pupils really enjoy their RE lessons and clearly do well through high teacher expectations and engagement in their own learning as evidenced in lesson observations. Teaching has a significant impact on learning, progress and outcomes over time. In the best lessons seen, teachers plan and teach lessons that are well matched to their pupils' needs and actively engage pupils in their learning. Pupils were confident asking questions and conducted very effective learning conversations with each other and with the teacher. In a Year 11 lesson seen, pupils were enthralled by the imaginative and creative approach taken to engage them in effective revision using examination questions; an approach which no doubt attributed to the rapid progress made by pupils in this key stage. Teachers implement the school marking and assessment policy. However, although marking and constructive feedback were evident in books, they were variable in frequency and quality. Despite this, pupils have a very positive experience of RE in the classroom and so most pupils make sustained progress. The content of classroom education throughout all key stages generally meets the requirements of both dioceses. The time allocation is adequate, although it falls a little short of diocesan expectations at Key Stage 5. All teaching staff know and understand the broad areas of the RE curriculum and progress in learning from year to year is developed. The programmes of study for core and for denominational RE provide a systematic study of God, the life and teaching of Jesus and the Church, the central beliefs that Christians hold and the relationship between faith and life. The curriculum is creative and engaging and is also well resourced. The Key Stage 3 programme includes modules of world faiths in each year group. The RE curriculum allows plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop excellent religious literacy. Leadership of RE is excellent. The subject leader is well qualified and has a strong appreciation of the centrality of RE in the mission of the Church and its impact in the daily life of the school. All with responsibility for RE focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning and work to monitor and improve teaching, encouraging the enthusiasm of staff and challenging their efforts and skills to good effect. Members of the RE department work in a collegial way. Student and parent evaluation of the department's work is sought regularly and triangulates this evidence.

### **The leadership and management of St Bede's as a church school community is outstanding**

Leadership and management are outstanding in promoting the Christian distinctiveness of the school. The heart of the school's mission 'to be a Christian school that seeks to appreciate and develop the talents of each individual, inspired by the love of Christ and his teaching' is lived out by the head and the leadership team and this is recognised and valued by the whole school community. The leadership team has high ambitions for the school and works hard to ensure the Church's mission in education is demonstrated in a dynamic and creative way. Governors are deeply committed and conscientious in their role. They know their school well and play a very active part in the school community. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership in leading and managing the school as a living faith community. He has a very strong sense of service and mission which colours all management decisions and policy making. His clear vision is shared the whole community, resulting in a very strong Christian ethos with deep foundations. The school has a very real sense of inclusion and belonging; the behaviour of the pupils is exemplary and achievement is high. The governors and leadership team promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of worship, resources, curriculum and staffing of the RE department very well. The school's systems of review and evaluation are accurate and robust. Partnership is a key, vibrant and central part of the school in its relationship with the immediate and wider community. There is an appreciation of being part of the Christian community by school leaders and governors and this underpins all its actions and the school demonstrates exemplary ways of realising this. This extends to the school being an active partner in programmes to develop school leaders within the local area, as well as a focus on professional development within the school community itself. The Chaplains give generously of their time and talents to support the Christian life of the school. Sensitive provision is made to provide prayer opportunities for all. The presence of pupils and staff of the different traditions enormously enriches the spiritual life of this school, where the Gospel is lived and breathed in a truly unique way.