



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

Name of School: St Bonaventure's School
Local Authority: Newham

Inspection Date: July 9 2019

Reporting Inspector: Damian Fox (Lead Inspector)
Tom Cahill (Associate Inspector)

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and 2011.

Type of School:	Voluntary Aided	School Address:	Boleyn Road
School Category:	Secondary		Forest Gate
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18		London
Gender of pupils:	Boys		E7 9QD
Number on roll:	1309		
Appropriate Authority:	The Governing Body	Tel. No.	020 8472 3844
Date of previous inspection:	16 July 2014	Headteacher:	Mr. Paul Halliwell
		Chair of Governors:	Mr. Timothy Campbell OBE

Information about the school

St Bonaventure's School is a voluntary aided school for boys. The school is in Newham Local Authority. The school mainly serves the parishes of St Anthony's, Forest Gate; Our Lady of Compassion, Upton Park; St Margaret's, Canning Town; St Michael's, East Ham; St Francis, Stratford; and St Anne's, Custom House. There are currently 1309 students on roll, including 301 in the sixth form. 71.8% of students are Catholics with most of the remainder coming mainly from other Christian denominations and other faith backgrounds. Levels of attainment on entry are broadly average. The vast majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Currently, 9% of students are on the SEND register, below the national average. This includes 0.76% of students currently with a statement or EHC plan. There are 65% students in years 7-11 for whom English is not the first language. 38% students are eligible for Pupil Premium funding. 46% of the teachers are Catholics and eight have the CCRS or similar qualification.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Bonaventure's Catholic School is outstanding at every level. The school's Mission Statement, 'In Sanctitate and Doctrina', ('In Holiness and Learning'), encapsulates the holistic approach to the spiritual, pastoral and academic excellence of every member of the community. The impact of the school on pupils and their families is profound. Leadership at all levels is outstandingly effective in establishing an ethos based on Gospel values and the example of St Francis of Assisi. The Headteacher is an inspirational presence. He is supported by senior leaders, and indeed all staff, in being excellent role models for pupils. The Governing Body are highly committed to the development of the 'Catholic Life' and ensuring its impact on the school and local community. Pastoral care for all members of the community is a significant strength of the school. It contributes to a genuine sense of belonging and provides an environment in which people know they are valued. As a result, safeguarding is outstanding. Outcomes in Religious Education are outstanding overall. Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that outcomes at GCSE are stronger than at A Level. Pupils genuinely enjoy Religious Education. They spoke with real enthusiasm for the way teachers guide and inspire them to achieve. The positive learning attitudes of pupils contributes significantly to their excellent outcomes in R.E. The school rightly deserves the high regard in which it is held by the Diocese and the wider community. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the all-round care and education their sons receive. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about being part of a highly inclusive community where each member is valued and respected. Collective Worship and prayer are at the heart of school life. The provision for private prayer and whole school liturgical celebrations reflects the deep spirituality of the chaplain and senior leaders.

What the school should do to improve further:

Ensure the plans to increase the curriculum time for R.E. at Key Stage 3 and 4 for September 2019 are fully implemented to fully meet the requirements of the Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Further increase chaplaincy provision by involving more students and staff so that it becomes more of a shared role.

CATHOLIC LIFE

Grade 1

Pupils at St Bonaventure's value and actively participate in the 'Catholic Life' and mission of the school. They spoke of a genuine sense of belonging. "A constant fidelity in small things is a great and heroic virtue", the words of St Bonaventure, are the guiding light by which they work and pray together. The mission to do the right thing at all times is reflected in the deep respect pupils have for themselves and others. The school is a giving and worshipping community. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary at all times. Strong student leadership is evident across the school, for example sixth form prefects, who are excellent role models of respect and service to others. They demonstrate a deep understanding of their

responsibilities. Powerful testimony from a pupil, in discussions with inspectors, confirmed the overall view of pupils, that they are valued and cared for as individuals. Contributing to the 'Common Good' is a central part of daily life. The way pupils willingly respond to others in the local and wider community reflects their commitment to serve people in challenging circumstances. Pupils show an emotional and spiritual maturity when engaging with the wider community. Sixth form students proudly serve as CAFOD Youth Leaders and work closely with the BYCS. The impact of the missionary work of the founding Franciscan Order is evident in the way pupils spoke with pride about their engagement with the TELCO project. This is a significant feature of the school's understanding of the needs of others. It began as an initial response to concerns over the London living wage. Further to that, pupils go out into the community to campaign for greater street safety to address the challenges young people face. As a result, pupils have raised the profile of young people who are working to limit the impact of social challenges in the area, such as knife crime and youth violence. Pastoral care systems are excellent and ensure pupils live and learn in a secure and loving environment. One pupil said that teachers 'do not give up on us.' There is a St Bon's webpage for pupils to share their well-being concerns anonymously. Pupils confirm that the response from teachers was prompt and effective in supporting pupils through challenging times.

The Catholic ethos and identity of the school is visible to the school community and visitors through the centrality of religious images throughout the school. Significantly, the cross in the garden at the school's entrance is a clear expression of the school's faith. The Mission Statement is a sincere expression of the school's understanding of their vocation to live for each other in faith and love. The school's learning conversations with pupils confirm the clear Catholic ethos and the centrality of 'Catholic Life' in the school. Comments such as, 'we are taught in the Catholic way, to share, be good to people and live by the Gospel', encapsulate the mission of the school to live 'In Sanctitate et Doctrina' ('In holiness and learning'). Its impact is evident in the strong sense of community and the high quality relationships throughout. Pastoral care is a significant strength of the school, evidenced in discussions with governors and pupils. The way pupils relate to one another and show mutual respect reflects the way teachers promote high standards of behaviour and demonstrate a commitment to serve pupils and each other. One teacher commented on being a 'Bonaventurian', following the example of St Bonaventure, living a life defined by kindness and forgiveness. Chaplaincy provision is an important part of the school. The Chaplain is building a team of pupils who will continue to promote the 'Catholic Life of the School' by supporting teachers and pupils in prayer. Members of staff spoke openly about the way they are supported professionally and personally. Induction programmes for new staff and CPD provision throughout the year demonstrate the commitment of the school to the well-being of the whole school community.

Leaders and governors are totally committed to the welfare of the whole community. They demonstrate a clear understanding of their role in providing a school that prays and grows in faith and love. The school's self-evaluation reflects the vision of leaders and governors for strengthening the 'Catholic Life of the School' further. It was fully endorsed by inspectors in all key areas. The school's leadership understand the Catholic mission in education. It is evident in the way they prioritise and deliver outstanding provision for the 'Catholic Life of the School'. St Bonaventure's is an authentic and lived Catholic experience. The school is impressively outward looking, working with the Deanery and the wider community. Leaders have a well-informed understanding of their vocation to be evangelists. For example, they work closely with local Catholic feeder schools and other schools across the Diocese and beyond, in the context of Catholic education, to 'create an alliance of Catholic schools with a Catholic identity'. The influence of the Headteacher in promoting a distinctive ethos cannot be overstated. This was affirmed by teachers and pupils in interviews. The quality of provision for sustaining and developing the 'Catholic Life of the School' reflects the understanding and commitment governors have of leading a school of service to others. Formal visits to the school and reports from the Link Governor ensure they are fully informed when offering support and challenge to the school. The staff development programme reflects key principles relating to catholicity and spiritual development. New staff are fully inducted into the 'Catholic Life of the School' and receive training on how to lead prayer that is reverent, respectful and reflective.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grade 1

Standards of pupils' achievement and progress are outstanding. From levels of attainment broadly in line with the national average on entry, almost all pupils make at least good, and often outstanding progress in R.E. Outcomes for pupils with various needs are impressive. They indicate that there are no discernible differences between groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. In discussions and during lesson observations, pupils displayed high levels of religious literacy. R.E. consistently enjoys a positive reputation within the school. Pupils unanimously affirmed their enjoyment of lessons as a result of a range of styles teachers use to engage them in learning. In a recent survey, pupils commented on why R.E. was of value to them. Comments such as, 'it helps me strengthen my faith and live a good Christian life', sum up the thoughtful and appreciative responses of pupils overall. They acknowledge the support and challenge teachers give. As a result, attitudes to learning are outstanding as seen in the independent and collaborative work in lessons and in the written work which is consistently of a high standard. In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils were attentive and actively engaged in learning. All pupils do well in R.E. Pupils' attainment, as indicated by school evidence and examination results, is outstanding and continues the consistently high performance over the last three years. At A level, pupils' outcomes are above the school average.

Lessons observed during the inspection confirm the school's judgement that teaching is at least consistently good and/or outstanding. Teachers use excellent subject knowledge and a range of methods in ways that motivate pupils to learn. Teachers are visibly passionate about R.E. and communicate high expectations to pupils. This ensures pupils, irrespective of ability, can access learning. Teachers are ambitious for their pupils and strive to provide a high quality of teaching that leads to substantial learning, significant progress and high attainment of pupils. This is evidenced by pupils who were highly engaged in lessons and who spoke warmly of the support and challenge they receive from teachers. Effective assessment leads to informed challenge and intervention to ensure pupils continue to make progress. This is evident in the consistently high achievement in R.E. Pupils know their current levels and how to make further progress. Moderation within the school, and across the Diocese, ensures accuracy in providing information for further planning of challenge and intervention.

Leaders and governors ensure the R.E. curriculum is fully compliant with the content requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. They understand that the curriculum allocation at Key Stages 3 and 4 does not yet meet these requirements but the curriculum model for 2019-2020 provides the necessary curriculum allocation for R.E. The provision of resources, staffing and appropriate accommodation reflects the commitment of governors to high standards of teaching and learning and maintaining the high profile R.E. has within the school. They closely monitor data in R.E. and evaluate performance to ensure planned improvements respond to the areas of development identified. The Headteacher and his senior leaders have established a culture of excellence through quality professional development and positive affirmation of pupils' achievements. Provision for continuing professional development across a network of schools is highly effective and results in improving teachers' understanding of how to sustain progress. The school is the lead member of the 'Agnus Dei Alliance'. Its effective use leads to a successful collaboration for sharing good practice and growing its own expertise in teaching and Catholic leadership. Leadership of R.E. is outstanding. The Director of R.E. has a high level of expertise and a clear understanding of how to develop the quality of teaching and learning. He has clear ideas for developing staff in order that pupils continue to receive the best education in R.E.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Grade 1

Pupils show a keen interest and actively participate in Collective Worship as a result of spiritual opportunities that engage and inspire them in prayer. They recognise the importance of prayer and freely seek to demonstrate and share their faith with others. An assembly observed during the inspection was an excellent example of introducing the 'Mission Week' and helping pupils understand how important and special they are. They were attentive, engaged and held a period of silence with respect for

themselves and others. Pupils and visiting clergy both affirmed the school's view that pupils respond with enthusiasm to the many opportunities to participate in liturgical celebrations. One visiting priest said that it was a privilege coming to the school. Pupils recognise that living and working in a worshipping community inspires in them a deep sense of respect for others regardless of their faith background. Pupil leadership of Collective Worship is becoming more effective. The school acknowledges that pupils are confident and ready to take on more responsibility for preparing and leading acts of worship. The capacity to develop their leadership is outstanding.

Collective Worship is central to the daily spiritual experience of pupils. It plays a key part in deepening the faith and Catholic ethos of the school. The community is fortunate to have Deanery priests who have a significant impact on the quality of provision for Collective Worship. Celebrations of the Eucharist for the whole community take place throughout the year, particularly at key times in the life of the school such as Feast Days and Holy Days of Obligation. Opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation are afforded to pupils during Advent and Lent. Collective Worship is at the heart of pupils' spiritual and moral development. The quality and variety of opportunities allows staff and pupils to develop their own personal prayer life. A recent survey confirms the overall positive view of pupils that Collective Worship has a positive impact on their lives. One pupil said, 'I get to pray a lot and it helps me focus and discover my full potential with God'. The extensive timetable of provision reflects the expertise and passion staff have for providing pupils and staff with a chance to deepen their spiritual development. Prayer is a daily event. Assemblies and Masses add to the variety and breadth of spirituality in the school. The annual 'Mission Week' is a significant part of the school calendar. It reinvigorates and refreshes the spiritual life of the school with activities and prayer that focus on the faith of each person.

The Headteacher is passionately committed to a Catholic school that deepens the faith of each member of the community through prayer and worship. A staff retreat day this year reflects the dedication school leaders have to develop leadership across the school. With senior leaders, he ensures that the example of St Bonaventure at prayer is at the heart of what the school does. The Governing Body shares this vision and demonstrates a commitment to the spiritual development of the school community. They provide annual funding for chaplaincy and are providing further allocation of time for the chaplaincy team to enhance its provision next year. They have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Chaplaincy constitutes a significant strength of the school. Visiting clergy make an outstanding contribution by providing opportunities for pupils to experience the efficacy of prayer during acts of worship. Leaders place the highest priority on the professional development of staff and provide an extensive range of CPD opportunities, for example, INSET entitled 'Supporting the 'Catholic Ethos and Creative Prayer and Reflection'.