



St Bonaventure's Catholic Secondary School

URN: 102787

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

23 April 2026 – 24 April 2026

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

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Yes

Yes

Fully

What the school does well

- The mission and vision, based on the original Franciscan charism, is expressed through the virtues of St Bonaventure's and feeds into the local community.
- The transformational impact that the school has on the lives of young men and women in this area of London is rooted in the school motto of 'in holiness and learning'.
- The teaching of religious education is well planned to meet the needs of all learners and to encourage them to engage purposefully with their local community.
- There is an enthusiastic sense of ownership of the whole ethos, mission and vision by the staff, students and parents that celebrates the school community as a family.
- The work of the chaplaincy team is essential in supporting the vision of developing the whole student to be a confident and successful learner who strives to effect positive change.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluating students' responses to self evaluation, leading to improved outcomes in religious education.
- Develop the annual plan of provision to provide consistent support for pupils' liturgical formation, enabling them to take a progressive and age-appropriate role in the planning, preparation, and delivery of prayer and liturgy.
- Review current core religious education provision to ensure the subject is fully integrated and timetabled within the curriculum offer, enabling greater depth and impact.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

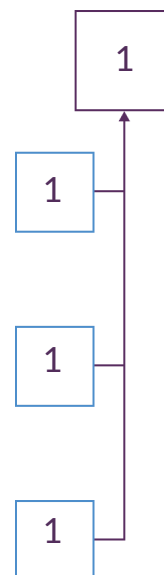
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



The Franciscan motto, “In sanctitate et doctrina” (in holiness and learning), is fully realised in the daily lives of students, who both benefit from and actively contribute to a deeply authentic, faithfilled environment. The school’s lived expression of its mission, to “live, love and learn in the presence of the Lord,” is evident in the way students engage with prayer, service and community. From the outset, students are immersed in a culture shaped by Gospel values and the Franciscan charism, and strengthened through formation experiences and the active witness of student groups such as the Chaplaincy team, the CAFOD group and the Lads of Laudato Si’. Students demonstrate highly-developed spiritual, moral and emotional awareness, participating enthusiastically in liturgy, prayer and charitable action, including whole-school initiatives. The virtues of St Bonaventure - Faith, Hope, Charity, Integrity, Courage, Humility and Kinship - are deeply embedded; students confidently assert how these guide their relationships and decisions as proud “Bonaventurians.” They show respect for the dignity of all, valuing diversity and living out Catholic Social Teaching in practice. While their lived understanding is strong, further development in explicitly articulating the language of Catholic Social Teaching would enhance this even further. Overall, students emerge as compassionate, confident young people, committed to living out their faith in action.

Provision for Catholic life and mission is outstanding. The mission statement shapes every aspect of the school’s daily experience. Rooted in its Franciscan heritage and strengthened through initiatives such as the Virtues project, the school provides a coherent and deeply authentic expression of Catholic identity. This is highly visible in the environment, where

liturgical seasons are carefully marked, prayer is embedded into daily routines, and Catholic symbolism enriches classrooms and shared spaces. Chaplaincy provision is a significant strength, offering spiritual formation, pastoral care and meaningful leadership opportunities for students, who are empowered to participate actively in the faith life of the school. Staff are well supported to contribute confidently to this mission, regardless of background, fostering an inclusive and respectful community where all are valued. Pastoral care is exemplary, reflecting a deep commitment to human dignity through practical and compassionate support for vulnerable students and families, including strong partnerships with organisations such as the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society and Rights and Equalities in Newham (REIN). Relationships, sex and health education is fully compliant with Church teaching and thoughtfully delivered, rooted in the dignity of the human person.

Leaders and governors demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the Church's mission, ensuring that Catholic life is central to strategic vision and daily practice. The dedicated Catholic Life sub-committee provides highly effective oversight and challenge, driving continual improvement and ensuring that mission and ethos are fully integrated into all aspects of school development. Governors are well-formed and actively engaged, participating in diocesan training and initiatives such as GiftEd, enabling them to confidently articulate the impact of Catholic life through the strength of relationships and the evident faith commitment of students. Senior leaders, including the headteacher and deputies, model authentic Catholic leadership through their active contribution to diocesan and national work, demonstrating service rooted in Gospel values. Parish links are strong and mutually enriching, further strengthening the school's identity as a faith community. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, clearly informing strategic priorities. Staff formation is a significant strength; comprehensive induction and ongoing professional development ensure that all staff, regardless of experience or background, fully understand and contribute to the mission. As a result, a shared language of values, kinship and community permeates the school, reflecting a deeply embedded and lived Catholic ethos. One student said, 'It looks like a school on paper, but we are a family.'

Religious education

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

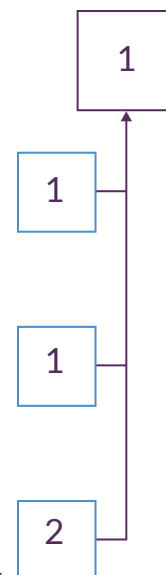
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupil outcomes in religious education are outstanding. The school demonstrates excellence in enabling students to achieve and enjoy their learning through a comprehensive approach aligned with the Religious Education Directory. Students develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills, empowering them to think, write and reflect theologically with confidence. They are highly religiously literate and engaged, using precise theological vocabulary fluently in both written and verbal responses. A consistent focus on retrieval practice, including quizzes and varied questioning, ensures students know more, remember more and apply learning with increasing depth. Carefully structured feedback, including self-assessment and opportunities for redrafting, strengthens understanding and supports sustained progress. Students respond well to exam-style questions, demonstrating secure analytical and evaluative skills, while the mastery curriculum at Key Stage 3 enables clear progression from basic knowledge to critical reflection. Students, including disadvantaged students and those with SEND, make good progress against the planned curriculum and are well supported to achieve strong outcomes. They speak confidently about their learning, ask insightful questions and show curiosity in deepening their understanding of faith and ethics. Outcomes are in line with national averages and compare favourably with other core subjects, reflecting both high levels of enjoyment and sustained academic achievement in religious education.

Provision in religious education is outstanding. Teachers demonstrate exceptional subject and pedagogical expertise, most being subject specialists with strong academic and theological

backgrounds. This expertise is communicated with clarity and confidence, inspiring students and securing their trust in teachers as knowledgeable practitioners. Expectations are consistently high; students of all abilities are challenged through precise questioning, stretch tasks and rigorous assessment, enabling them to deepen and extend their understanding. Teaching is characterised by carefully planned, well-sequenced lessons that ensure progression and continuity, in line with the Religious Education Directory. A wide range of high-quality resources and varied teaching strategies are used effectively to promote engagement, pace and excellent behaviour for learning. Questioning is a particular strength, skilfully used to assess understanding, address misconceptions and draw out deeper theological reflection. Assessment is integral to provision, with regular opportunities to revisit and refine learning, ensuring that gaps are swiftly addressed and progress sustained. Teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to students' spiritual and moral development, providing meaningful opportunities for reflection and encouraging students to consider how faith informs action. Differentiated approaches ensure that all students can access the curriculum fully, resulting in a rich, inclusive and academically rigorous religious education that meets the needs of all learners.

Leadership of religious education is good. The subject leader has a clear and ambitious vision for religious education as both an academic discipline and a space for spiritual reflection. This vision is effectively communicated through well-structured, high-quality training, often using a peer-expert model to address areas for development and promote consistency across the department. The curriculum is thoughtfully designed as a faithful expression of the Religious Education Directory, carefully adapted to meet the needs of students of all abilities and prior experiences. Leaders and governors ensure parity with other core subjects through appropriate resourcing and staffing, enabling students to experience religious education as a valued and rigorous subject. Assessment systems, including class tracking and targeted interventions, support students in making secure progress. The subject leader provides strong support for staff through workshops and collaboration, fostering a cohesive and effective team. Links with organisations such as CAFOD enrich the curriculum and promote Catholic Social Teaching. Selfevaluation is detailed and informative, though it would benefit from a sharper evaluative and self-critical focus to further strengthen strategic improvement. While provision in Key Stages 3 and 4 is strong, further development of Sixth Form religious education and its place in the curriculum would enhance the overall curriculum offer.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

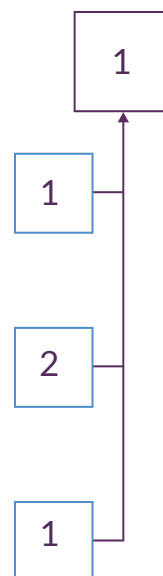
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Pupil outcomes in collective worship are outstanding. Students engage fully, actively and consciously in the rich prayer life of the school, demonstrating reverence, attentiveness and a deep understanding of the sacred nature of worship. They participate confidently in a wide range of liturgical experiences, including whole-school Masses, Celebrations of the Word, form prayer and spontaneous prayer opportunities. Students respond with maturity through prayerful silence, reflective participation and enthusiastic communal singing; for example, younger students sing with confidence and joy, contributing to a strong sense of community worship. A significant strength is the extent to which students lead and shape worship. The large chaplaincy team enables many students to plan and deliver prayer, and they clearly value these opportunities to contribute meaningfully. Students appreciate the centrality of prayer within the daily rhythm of school life and speak articulately about its importance. They are able to reflect deeply on how prayer and liturgy influence their personal faith, identity and actions beyond school. Worship themes are understood and applied to real-life contexts, including issues of justice and charity, demonstrating that students internalise what they experience. As a result, students foster a strong spiritual awareness and actively live out the values nurtured through collective worship.

Provision for collective worship is good. Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school, embedded across daily routines and the wider community. All lessons, form times, meetings and assemblies begin with prayer, establishing a consistent and reverent rhythm that supports students' spiritual development. A wide range of opportunities, including Mass, the Rosary, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and themed liturgies, ensures that students

experience the richness of Catholic tradition. Students are given regular opportunities to lead prayer in a variety of contexts, supported effectively by staff and the chaplaincy team, which contributes significantly to the quality of provision. Staff are well trained and confident in leading worship, modelling good practice and fostering an inclusive environment. Music is a notable strength, enhancing participation and the sense of community. Strong links with the local parish further enrich the liturgical life of the school. Worship is responsive and often connected to current events, charity and social justice, helping students to see its relevance to daily life. While there is a wide range of high-quality opportunities, further development is needed to ensure greater cohesion and consistency in students' experience across all year groups. Opportunities to enhance dedicated prayer spaces would further strengthen provision.

Leadership of collective worship is outstanding. Leaders and governors demonstrate a clear and strategic commitment to ensuring that prayer and liturgy are central to the life and identity of the school. A well-structured and consistently applied policy provides a clear reference point for practice and development, ensuring coherence and high standards across the provision. The liturgical calendar is carefully planned and faithfully implemented, ensuring that students experience the richness of the Church's seasons through appropriate and meaningful liturgies. Leaders effectively promote, monitor and evaluate collective worship, using a range of strategies including policy review, staff training, stakeholder engagement and regular quality assurance processes to secure continual improvement. High-quality training ensures that staff feel confident and well supported in leading prayer and developing worship, which is consistently valued across the school community. Leaders demonstrate a strong understanding of the diverse needs of students and ensure that provision is inclusive, accessible and responsive to all. Engagement with families and the wider community is a significant strength, supported through an active social media presence, newsletters, monthly Masses open to all, and live-streamed celebrations of key liturgical events. Governors and leaders work collaboratively to ensure worship is well resourced, highly visible and fully embedded in school life, fostering a vibrant and inclusive Catholic community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Bonaventure's Catholic Secondary School
School unique reference number (URN)	102787
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3164601
Full postal address of the school	Boleyn Road FOREST GATE, newham, E7 9QD
School phone number	020 8472 3844
Headteacher or Head of School	Mr Christopher McCormack
Chair of Governors	Mr Timothy Campbell, MBE
School Website	www.stbons.org
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non Selective
Age-range of pupils	11 - 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Date of last denominational inspection	09 July 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Andrew Bull Lead

Patrick Harrison

Philip Turnham

Winnie Greer

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement