

Inspection of St Bonaventure's RC School

Boleyn Road, Forest Gate, London E7 9QD

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected since March 2009.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in every way here. They succeed academically and are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps. Leaders expect pupils to make a strong, positive contribution to their local community. For example, all pupils are involved in charitable work to support local food banks.

Pupils are safe, happy and cared for at this school. There is a climate of respect and compassion for all. Pupils are protected from bullying, which is not tolerated. Pupils said that the school values everyone equally and that it celebrates diversity, for example through culture days.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The school's values of tolerance, consideration of others and love are encouraged through all aspects of school life. Pupils are considerate, respectful and support one another. For example, sixth-form students help younger pupils with reading.

Pupils make an active contribution to the school. Many pupils in all years take on responsibility in the school, including for student leadership and fundraising. The student council is proud to have improved things for others. For example, on the school council's suggestion, leaders have introduced an 'Assisi tie' to recognise pupils who embody the 'Bonaventurian Way' by demonstrating the school's values.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have the highest expectations of their pupils, which are embodied by all staff members. They set demanding goals for developing pupils' knowledge, talents and interests over time. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, who are identified and supported effectively.

Subject leaders have thought about and developed richly detailed plans which set out what pupils need to know and do. As a result, pupils build knowledge securely over time, and they do not forget important details. For example, in design and technology, pupils first learn to use tools with precision so that they can choose from a wide range of instruments to build high-quality prototypes that solve a range of problems.

Teachers are experts in their subjects. They present new information clearly and in interesting ways. They check pupils' understanding continuously to ensure that there are no gaps in their knowledge, nor misconceptions. Teachers regularly provide feedback to help pupils deepen their understanding.

Pupils develop highly detailed knowledge of their subjects. For example, sixth-form artwork is highly imaginative, and displays students' strong technical skill and commitment to refining their work.

Leaders quickly identify pupils who struggle with reading. They waste no time in giving pupils the help they need to become fluent and confident readers. There is a well-established phonics programme for those who need it. Pupils read widely and often, including in the sixth form. Pupils are very well supported to engage with wider reading, which enriches their study.

Pupils are highly respectful of one another and their teachers. They listen attentively and are extremely courteous towards one another. Classrooms are industrious places where no time is wasted.

Leaders provide a thoughtful, age-appropriate personal development programme. This includes a strong focus on recognising the signs of poor mental health. Pupils are taught self-help strategies to stay well, and where to get help.

Leaders encourage pupils to take up wider opportunities, including sport, music, book clubs and debating. This extends to the sixth form, where outings, including visits to museums, galleries, universities and employers, take place each week.

Leaders provide comprehensive careers advice and guidance, including regular visits from guest speakers and a highly active network of former pupils. Sixth-form students receive a great deal of support, including with their applications for university and apprenticeships.

Leaders support staff well with their workload and provide high-quality development for them. Staff are highly motivated and say that they feel valued.

Leaders, staff and parents work as a close community in the best interests of pupils. Governors are well informed and share leaders' vision for the very best experiences for their pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established clear and robust systems for identifying pupils who may be at risk of harm. They provide all staff members with extensive training about signs of harm, including risks in the local area. Pupils are educated regularly about risks and about how to get any help they may need.

Teachers pay close attention to their pupils and form strong professional relationships with them. They report issues swiftly to the school's safeguarding team. Pupils have lots of adults in school to whom they can talk. They said that they feel they are taken seriously when they do. Staff secure the help pupils need without delay, including from external agencies where appropriate.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	102787
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	10242412
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,312
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Timothy Campbell
Headteacher	Christopher McCormack
Website	www.stbons.org
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has taken up post.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Brentwood.
- Through its careers programme, the school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- This is a Roman Catholic voluntary-aided school. The school's last section 48 inspection was in July 2019.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, mathematics, art, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to teachers, and spoke to some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' health and safety as well as their welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for SEND, reading, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with members of the local governing body, a representative of the diocese and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Rebecca Iles-Smith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Una Buckley	His Majesty's Inspector
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