



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

Name of School: St. Bonaventure's Catholic Comprehensive

LEA: Newham

Inspection Dates: 16th October 2009

Reporting Inspector: Ms. Colette Dawson

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

**Type of School: Comprehensive
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 11 - 18
Gender of pupils: 11-16 (male) 16-18 (Mixed)
Number on roll: 1313 (367 in Sixth Form)
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous Inspection: February 2006**

**School Address:
Boleyn Road,
Forest Gate, London, E7 9QD
Tel. No. 020 8472 3844
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Chair of Governors: Mgr. John Armitage
Headteacher: Mr. Stephen Foster**

Introduction

The Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education [Schools] Act 2005 by Inspectors appointed by the Diocesan Bishop at the request of the Governing Body of the school.

The Inspectors acknowledge and are appreciative of the full support, co-operation and courtesy they enjoyed from the Governors, Headteacher, Staff and Pupils of the School both before and during the Inspection. The Inspectors wish to express their gratitude to all concerned.

The focus of the Section 48 Inspection was:

- Classroom Religious Education
- The Catholic nature of the school through:
 1. Worship
 2. Links with the Catholic and wider community
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The Section 48 Report

**St Bonaventure's Catholic Comprehensive
Boleyn Road
Forest Gate
London
E7 9QD**

Head Teacher: Mr. Stephen Foster

Date of Inspection: 16th October 2009

Description of the School

St Bonaventure's is a larger than average Voluntary Aided Catholic Boys Comprehensive School serving primarily the Newham Deanery. St Bonaventure's is a high achieving, successful school which is popular and over-subscribed. Currently there are 1313 students on roll, of whom 367 study in the school's sixth form. The sixth form is run jointly with St Angela's Ursuline Convent School for girls, and was founded in 1992. The Newham profile shows that it has a very large proportion of the population living in deprived areas. A high proportion of students live in single parent households. The students at St Bonaventure's thrive in an environment which values their linguistic, social and cultural differences. The students are socially confident and receptive to learning. They respond well to the ethos of the school, learning to support each other and to be sensitive to those who are in need. The school has Technology and Language College status and in April 2008 gained specialist status for Applied

Learning. Since the last inspection, the school has also achieved the Healthy School award. It achieved 'Beacon' status in 2001 and it also has SportsMark and ArtsMark Silver Award. St Bonaventure's was awarded Investor in People status in November 2004.

Record of Evidence Base

One Inspector was in the school for one day.

- The study of pre-inspection documentation including the Self Evaluation Form / Denominational Provision (SEF/DP)
- Observation of lessons.
- Scrutiny of students' work.
- Participation in a Year 8 and a sixth form Assembly
- Meetings with the Head teacher, the Deputy Head / Curriculum, members of the Senior Leadership Team, the Chair of Governors, the Faculty Head of R.E. and her Second in Department, a Chaplaincy Co-ordinator and two groups of students.
- Observation of R.E. Displays in the R.E. rooms and around the school.

What the School does well

St. Bonaventure's continues to be an outstanding Catholic School. It is outstanding in every area. It provides a community where each student can grow spiritually, academically and socially. The community is underpinned by its mission statement 'In sanctitate et doctrina', 'In holiness and learning'. 'St Bonaventure's school is founded on Christian principles and enriched by the cultural and religious diversity of its environment.' (School Prospectus) It is firmly committed to developing its Catholic identity under the inspirational and outstanding leadership of its Head Teacher who is very well supported by his Senior Leadership Team, Governors, Staff and Students and dedicated local clergy.

Religious Education (R.E.) is at the core of the curriculum at St Bonaventure's. The overall quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education (R.E.) continues to be outstanding. Lessons are well paced and planned, learning objectives are stated, explained and revisited. In the lessons observed the students were on task, engaged, highly motivated, challenged and enjoying their R.E. Behaviour is excellent and relationships and class management are outstanding strengths of the school.

Assessment in RE at all Key Stages is an identified and developing strength of the school. At Key Stage 3 students are in line or better than Diocesan expectations for level 5 (National Attainment Levels). At Key Stage 4 GCSE results are improving year on year. At Key Stage 5 AS and A2 Religious Studies examination results for 2009 are above the national average. Examination results at both GCSE and AS / A2 levels are above the national average.

The leadership and management of the R.E. Department by the Faculty Head of R.E. and her Second in the Department are outstanding. The R.E. team holds regular meetings. The development of literacy skills through R.E. has made a significant impact on the work of the department across all Key Stages. Students are

theologically literate and can express clearly the beliefs, values and way of life of the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian and Faith traditions. The school uses the 'ICONS' programme of study and has customised it to meet the needs of the students.

8% of curriculum time is allocated to Classroom R.E.

St Bonaventure's School promotes an outstanding and tangible Catholic ethos. This is subscribed to by all the stakeholders – Governors, the Head Teacher and his leadership team, staff, students and their parents. The school provides very good opportunities for the students to develop a strong sense of community through activities which engender feelings of loyalty and belonging. The school continues to develop strong links with other schools in the deanery and beyond. The emphasis on community is an outstanding strength. When asked, the students expressed the opinion that they felt safe, secure and cared for while at school. St Bonaventure's is an outstanding exemplar of community cohesion. 'Students in the Sixth Form are involved in a range of projects including the 2012 Olympics, City Safe campaign, a living wage for all and affordable housing schemes. Students help with soup runs organised by the (local) parish for the homeless. They are also involved in volunteering projects around the world including World Challenge and the Fulcrum Challenge. (SEF/DP)

Displays and artefacts in RE, in the RE classrooms are of a very high quality. They highlight creatively the Catholic beliefs of the school including the liturgical seasons.

Collective Acts of Worship and liturgical celebrations are well prepared and reflective. Music and singing contribute greatly to these occasions. Both are further strengths of St Bonaventure's School. Prayer in the classroom and at the beginning of meetings has a high priority. Each R.E. classroom has a prayer focus which is unique in our diocesan secondary schools.

St Bonaventure's values its strong links with parents. There is an excellent level of attendance at meetings arranged for them. Strong links are also in place with the governors who play a vital role in the school and are supportive of the strong Catholic ethos. Links with the feeder and other borough schools are strong especially through the work of the Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs). Links with the deanery and local priests, who are regular visitors, are strong. Their support and friendship are valued by all the stakeholders.

The students are given many opportunities to become responsible citizens. This is evident in their concern for each other and for those who are in need. This is particularly evident by the generous fundraising for the charities that the school supports. This dedication to Citizenship is celebrated by the School being represented at the annual 'Citizenship Awards' which takes place at Brentwood Cathedral each Summer term. There is a strong sense of social justice throughout the school and especially in the Sixth Form where there is a proactive Justice and Peace group. The school's response to the 'Make Poverty History' campaign and their involvement in The East London Community Organisation (TELCO) is evidence of this as is the 6th Form's Community Action Day when the sixth formers go out to some 22 venues to work in the community.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is an outstanding strength of the school. This was recognised by its most recent OfSTED report in March 2009. The Section 48 Inspectors endorse this judgement wholeheartedly and agree that personal development, of which spiritual, moral and social development is part, is outstanding throughout all three Key Stages. There is a Sex and Relationship Education policy. Plans are in place to introduce the Diocesan SRE programme a 'Journey in Love' recommended by the Diocese.

What needs to be improved ?

There are no specific issues other than those highlighted by the school in the Self Evaluation Form

Overall, St Bonaventure's Comprehensive continues to be an outstanding school which is outstanding in all areas. It prepares its students so that they leave school happy, well adjusted young adults who are a credit to themselves, their parents and to their school. The school owes much of its success to the inspirational and outstanding leadership of the Head Teacher and his Senior Leadership team and to the valued support and expertise of his staff and governors.