



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

ST BENEDICT'S SCHOOL

APRIL 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	St Benedict's School			
DfE number	307/6006			
Registered charity number	1148512			
Address	St Benedict's School 54 Eaton Rise Ealing London W5 2ES England			
Telephone number	020 8862 2010			
Email address	headmaster@stbenedicts.org.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Andrew Johnson			
Chair of governors	Mr Pat Murphy O'Connor			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1087			
	Boys	725	Girls	362
	Day pupils	1087	Boarders	0
	EYFS	54	Juniors	221
	Seniors	605	Sixth Form	207
Inspection dates	26 to 27 April 2017			

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of trustees and the governor responsible for safeguarding. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Maureen Bradley	Reporting inspector
Mr David Edwards	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mr Grant Whitaker	Team inspector (Director of studies, IAPS school)
Mr Andrew Cleary	Team inspector (Director of music, HMC school)
Mrs Sarah Haslam	Team inspector (Head, GSA and HMC school)
Mr Tom Keenan	Team inspector (Head of sixth form, HMC school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 St Benedict's School is a Roman Catholic co-educational day school for pupils aged 3 to 18 years located in the west London suburb of Ealing. Founded by the monks of Ealing Abbey in 1902 as a school for boys, it has been fully co-educational since 2007 and became a discrete charity, separate from Ealing Abbey, with its own independent board of governors, in 2012.
- 1.2 The school has a mostly new senior executive team, with five out of seven members, including the headmaster, having started in September 2016. Since the previous integrated inspection, the school has opened a new art department and sixth form centre. The school is presently undergoing a refurbishment programme.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school promotes Catholic Benedictine values through its mission of 'Teaching a way of living', based on the Rule of St Benedict. The Benedictine ethos puts the Christian principles of love and forgiveness at the heart of each community.
- 1.4 The school aspires to the highest possible academic standards, whereby pupils become motivated to be self-reliant independent learners and inspired to be active participants in their learning whilst achieving excellent academic results, thereby enabling them to secure places at top universities and colleges. It seeks to offer an education which allows every pupil to flourish as an individual, with high-quality pastoral care to support their personal development. In accordance with the Rule of St Benedict, the school seeks to give pupils the opportunities and time to provide leadership and service both within school and in the wider community.

About the pupils

- 1.5 The pupils come from a variety of economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds with about three-fifths of them being Roman Catholic. The majority of pupils attend the school from the surrounding area of Ealing, with a small number travelling from other areas of west London.
- 1.6 Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the majority of pupils is above or well above average, with few pupils having below average ability. The school has identified 184 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), predominantly with dyslexia, 83 of whom receive additional specialist help. Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 13 pupils and 11 of these pupils receive additional specialist support.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Pre-Prep 1	Reception
Pre-Prep 2	Year 1
Pre-Prep 3	Year 2
Lower Prep	Year 3
Upper Prep	Year 4
Form One	Year 5
Form Two	Year 6
Third Form	Year 7
Lower Fourth	Year 8
Upper Fourth	Year 9
Lower Fifth	Year 10
Upper Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- In both the senior and junior schools, pupils make good progress in knowledge, understanding and skills and in their extra-curriculum activities, with their creative work being particularly strong.
- The good academic standards achieved throughout the senior school are reflected in the pupils' success in public examinations.
- Occasionally pupils make insufficient progress because expectations relative to their ability are insufficiently high, and planning fails to meet the needs of all pupils in a particular class.
- The majority of pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and they apply themselves diligently to their work.
- Pupils aspire to higher levels of achievement than previously, encouraged by increased focus on academic rigour by leadership and management.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils are thoughtful young people with strong values of compassion and service to others, reflected in their exceptional charity and voluntary work.
- Pupils' spiritual development is excellent and they are knowledgeable about the importance of faith to themselves and others.
- Pupils demonstrate strong moral and social development and enjoy working together for the good of the school, facilitated by a supportive community and excellent pastoral care.
- Pupils are tolerant and accepting of the cultural diversity within their own school and the wider community, recognising the value of diversity in enriching their lives.

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Implement fully development work on teaching and learning to further improve academic rigour.
- Ensure that the academic data being collected regarding pupils' individual ability informs teachers' planning, to enable the academic needs of all pupils to be met.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 Pupils throughout the whole school aspire to achieve the highest possible academic standards. This is in response to an increased focus by the governors and the senior leadership and management to improve achievement across all areas of learning. Pupils are responding well to recent demands for greater academic rigour and to the introduction of thorough procedures to track and monitor their progress. In accordance with the school's recent aim, pupils participate actively in their learning.
- 3.3 Junior school pupils develop a good standard of knowledge, skill and understanding in their areas of learning with excellent standards achieved by some, particularly in literacy and in the presentation of their work. Encouraged by their teachers, junior pupils develop good strategies for problem solving as they try to work out problems first before asking the teacher, and collaborate with their friends to share ideas. Scrutiny of senior school pupils' work shows their achievement to be good with some areas of excellence. Senior school pupils are diligent, present their work well and regularly demonstrate significant talents, especially in their extra-curricular activities. Excellent standards are achieved in subjects where the teaching fully engages the pupils and provides a stimulating learning experience. This is particularly evident in creative work, which is a strength of the senior school.
- 3.4 Children in the EYFS are confident speakers, can read simple words and develop fine motor skills as is shown in their writing. As they develop, the junior school pupils confidently plan, evaluate and edit their own work and evaluate the work of others successfully. Their competence in speaking, listening, and writing is well developed and is a strength that facilitates their work in other subjects. In an English lesson, the youngest pupils developed their phonic understanding well to increase the pace and accuracy of their reading. High standards are achieved in all aspects of literacy in the senior school. Pupils develop very good communication skills and can express their understanding and views with clarity and care when speaking and writing. They express themselves confidently and enjoy working collaboratively to share ideas. In a GCSE drama lesson, pupils used highly developed verbal and collaborative skills productively to devise a highly successful scene based on Brechtian techniques.
- 3.5 Junior pupils demonstrate age-appropriate numeracy skills. Children in the EYFS confidently count beyond ten when playing shops. Younger junior school pupils were able to apply their understanding of area and perimeter to both simple and complex shapes in a mathematics lesson. Pupils generally have a good understanding of these skills and apply them successfully in other areas of the curriculum. A lack of appropriate challenge built into the planning of numeracy lessons, however, means that some pupils progress less rapidly than could be expected, especially the more able mathematicians. Throughout the senior school, pupils show a strong basic level of numeracy and are able to apply this across the curriculum. Amongst the more able pupils, levels of numeracy are excellent. Sixth-form pupils are adept at using statistics; A-level pupils connected the use of probability tables to their algebraic calculations with confidence.
- 3.6 Information and communication technology (ICT) is used competently by all ages throughout the junior school. Pupils understand how technology impacts upon their lives and they use it appropriately to seek and find information, solve problems and support their learning. Pupils are able to synthesise information from a variety of traditional and technological sources to learn and present their work. For example, in a humanities lesson, older junior school pupils were able to use books, artefacts and mobile devices to compare their lives with those of children in India. Senior pupils use ICT when it is appropriate and they integrate it well into all

- subject areas. Younger senior school pupils used a variety of technological resources successfully in history presentations on the Renaissance. Pupils benefit from the well-resourced facilities throughout the school, which is a result of sound investment by the governing body.
- 3.7 Junior pupils are not entered for national curriculum tests at the age of seven or eleven but the school's internal assessment tests confirm that they make good progress overall. The scrutiny of pupils' work and evidence of achievement in the classroom shows that pupils consistently attain high standards. Children's progress in the EYFS is excellent from their starting points because progress is facilitated by thorough planning that focuses on their interests and aptitudes. Children in the Nursery reach their expected level of development and achievement and the Reception children demonstrate secure achievement levels in all seven areas of the Early Learning Goals, with many exceeding these. Junior school pupils are successful in their applications to enter the senior school or other selective schools of their choice. Results in GCSE and A Level examinations for the years 2013 to 2015 are consistently above the national average. Since 2013, on average, half of all GCSE grades awarded were A* to A and seventy-two per cent of pupils have been awarded A* to B grades in their A-level examinations. Standardised measures of progress to GCSE and A level that are available indicate that, historically, pupils have made appropriate progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Pupils report that they are very appreciative of the level of support and help given by their teachers in their examination years. The majority of pupils leaving the school after the sixth form are accepted to their first choice of higher education establishments, often gaining entry to universities that have high academic entry requirements.
- 3.8 It is evident in the scrutiny of pupils' work and the achievement observed in lessons that good and often excellent progress is now being made by the majority of pupils throughout the whole school in most areas of learning. Most parents and pupils in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that they are highly satisfied with the progress being made. On the few occasions when pupils fail to make sufficient progress, it is often due to a lack of challenge in the work set, due to the low expectations in teaching which underestimates the potential of the pupils. Such planning does not take sufficient consideration of the ability of the pupils and evidence of the school's own assessment data. This has begun to be addressed by the school through an increased focus on improving the monitoring of pupils' progress and developing teaching and learning strategies. Throughout the school, pupils with SEND make good progress as a result of the specialist support they receive and through the help given in the classroom. Progress of the more able pupils is excellent in lessons where work is challenging and suitable extension tasks are available to stimulate their interest, but this is not yet consistent.
- 3.9 Throughout the school, pupils achieve good and often excellent standards in a range of co-curricular activities and pursuits which lead to some well-developed physical skills and excellent creative work. Pupils are exceptional in their voluntary service to others and in their charity work in both the local community and overseas communities. They have been successful in a variety of academic pursuits and competitions, such as science Olympiads. They take advantage of the sporting and artistic opportunities available to them at all ages. Junior pupils achieve a good level of success in sporting competitions and in artistic performance, especially in drama, dance and music. Senior pupils gain success in regional and national competitions in sport, including team success in rugby, cricket, athletics and hockey and individual success in a wide variety of pursuits, including sailing, fencing and gymnastics. Pupils' achievement in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) is exceptional with over 100 pupils involved and as many as 30 participating in the gold level each year. Large numbers of pupils participate in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), developing a wide range of skills. Pupils

at all ages enjoy their engagement in school music, producing performances of an excellent quality. Many pupils perform in a wide range of choirs, bands and orchestral groups. Individual success is evident in drama examinations and school performances, as seen in a recent production of *Amadeus*. Five pupils have successfully had their work accepted for a national A-level art exhibition.

- 3.10 The majority of pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are keen to learn and work hard to achieve their best. As they mature, they set themselves ambitious goals and grow in confidence in their own ability as a result of the encouragement of their teachers. Pupils generally settle quickly into tasks and lessons, apply themselves diligently and remain engaged and focused, although some falling away from these normally high standards was observed in a small number of pupils. As pupils progress through the junior school, they enjoy working together in pairs and groups and further develop their independent working skills. Children in the EYFS enjoy opportunities to be independent and make decisions, choosing their own activity on the 'carpet' and happily engaging in role-play activities. Older junior school pupils enjoy working with others on project work. When they are positively engaged, pupils show a sense of interest in their work and the community around them.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils are thoughtful, modest and kind young people who exhibit a quiet confidence in their own abilities and self-worth. They feel that they belong to a warm and welcoming community where they are recognised as individuals and, in accordance with the Benedictine ethos, they develop strong values of compassion and service to others. Pupils appreciate the school ethos of placing appropriate emphasis on developing a person's character and personality whilst encouraging them to aim to do their best academically. Most parents in their questionnaire responses reported that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports their children's personal development.
- 4.3 Pupils throughout the school understand how they are developing as learners. In the EYFS, a constructive atmosphere is created, allowing children to develop friendships. This builds their confidence as they work and play together. As they move up the school, they grow in self-esteem, begin to accurately evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses and can articulate the progress they are making. Pupils feel encouraged by helpful, constructive feedback from teachers and the close monitoring they receive regarding their progress. Senior pupils value the opportunities given to shape their own future and speak very highly of the school's advice in the process of choosing examination subjects and in assessing careers information. Decision-making opportunities give these pupils a sense of increased maturity which helps them to develop as individuals and ensures they feel ready to move to their next phase of education.
- 4.4 Pupils demonstrate a highly developed spiritual understanding and this is a particular strength of pupils' personal development. They recognise the importance of faith in their lives. Pupils feel that the Abbey and Chaplaincy are valuable places for reflection, as is the Rainbow Room in the junior school. Most pupils understand that everyone at the school is involved in working towards the aim to keep the Christian principles of service, love and forgiveness at the heart of their community. Pupils' appreciation of the non-material aspects of life is highly developed and these elements are valued by pupils, who recognise that they enhance their lives. Year 7 pupils spoke of how the spiritual life of the school enables them to reflect on how fortunate they are. They also valued the opportunity to reflect on spiritual and philosophical matters during the time they spent on retreat. Junior pupils respect the 'Living our Mission Award', a special scheme that encourages pupils to live by the school's values. Pupils of all ages are comfortable discussing spiritual matters in lessons and assemblies. The emphasis on religious education in the curriculum develops their understanding of their faith and the faith of others. Pupils feel that their peers are respectful of this aspect of life.
- 4.5 The majority of pupils develop and demonstrate a strong moral understanding and distinguish right from wrong, understand and respect systems of rules and accept responsibility for their own behaviour and their behaviour towards others. Pupils say school rules are clear and the systems for rewards and sanctions are generally respected, although a few pupils can occasionally be observed in lessons and in the playground straying from the common expectation. The pupils feel they have clear guidance through the school code of conduct that is posted around school and promoted by the school leadership and teachers. They value the recent increased focus on good conduct and feel that the new behaviour policy sets much higher expectations for them to adhere to. They are aware of the need to look after each other and feel strongly that bullying is unacceptable and against the school ethos of showing love and kindness to everyone. Pupils understand that the values learnt in school are important in the wider community. They engage willingly in an integrated personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme which raises awareness of traditional British values and democracy. Sixth-form pupils are quick to identify perceived cases of political incorrectness in

- school debates. They eagerly engaged in informed political discussion as they planned their mock election to coincide with the forthcoming general election. In an innovative workshop based on the government's 'Prevent' strategy, pupils were able to debate the complex issues revolving around terrorism and radicalisation.
- 4.6 Pupils' social development is excellent. They develop good relationships with each other and their teachers as a result of the supportive nature of the school community and the excellent pastoral care systems that are in place. Through collaborative working in the classroom, their fundraising and extra-curricular activities, they understand the benefits of sharing and teamwork. The youngest children in the EYFS are good at taking turns and helping each other, whilst older pupils are good at working towards common goals. This collective approach is a real strength of the school. Opportunities to share in school development are eagerly taken by school councils, which include pupils from Year 4 to the sixth form. Pupils feel they have a voice in the school community and they are keen to make their voice heard. Opportunities to take on roles of responsibility are plentiful and pupils are proud to be elected to positions that help in the development of their leadership skills. Prefects, team and house captains, form leaders, members of the school councils and the Chaplaincy undertake their duties seriously. Every pupil in Year 6 learns social skills from their ambassadorial roles across the curriculum and pupils throughout the school willingly take turns in leading the prayers in the Abbey. Pupils' sense of their capacity to work towards the common good is highly developed and encouraged by a range of opportunities to contribute to the local community and further develop their social skills. Junior pupils raise funds for the local Ealing community every year through their Christmas appeal. The sixth form are proud of their service programme and the work they do, for example with senior citizens, which they find rewarding. They recognise the benefits this brings in terms of building relationships with others outside of the school. Pupils particularly enjoy sharing their art displays and musical and drama performances with local people.
- 4.7 Pupils are respectful of each other's religious and cultural backgrounds and value the diversity within their own community and the wider community, recognising the way it enriches their lives. Pupils talk knowledgeably of other cultures and respect the experience they gain from living in the diverse community of west London. Diversity is championed across the curriculum and it is natural for pupils to discuss different faiths and religious traditions in lessons. Tolerance of others' views is intrinsic to the whole community. Pupils of all faiths or none are welcomed into the school and are encouraged to celebrate their own feasts and traditions. Pupils are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to offer service to overseas communities, as afforded by the trip to Lourdes to assist disabled children and an initiative to support the rebuilding of communities in Sri Lanka after the tsunami. Pupils say their greatest achievement is their fundraising for charities to help those from other cultures who are less privileged than themselves.
- 4.8 Pupils understand how to stay safe and how to look after themselves. They understand the importance of a good diet, exercise and how to recognise factors influencing their well-being. Pupils feel that the school actively encourages them to be involved in sport and exercise. They understand how to be physically healthy and also recognise the importance of mental health. They respect the attention given by the school to maintaining a balanced lifestyle and recognise that the underlying spiritual heart of the school provides stability and calm, which help to counteract the challenges of stress. Pupils appreciate the pastoral support they receive including the work of the counsellor, school nurse and Chaplaincy. Pupils feel safe in school and recognise that safeguarding is strongly promoted. Pupils know who they can turn to when they are worried or upset and junior pupils feel confident that the worry boxes will be emptied frequently. Pupils report that anti-bullying and e-safety workshops are effective and appreciated. They feel well supported and educated in e-safety matters. Pupils are

knowledgeable about the dangers of using social media and found the guidance given on the impact of blue screens helpful. They felt reassured by the school support to help them keep safe outside of the school environment.