



# St Benedict's School

URN: 101947

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster

11–12 March 2026

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

#### 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

1

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

No

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

Yes

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

Fully

## Compliance statement

- The school is not fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference, as the curriculum time allocated to religious education does not meet the required minimum of 10% at Key Stage 3.
- The school is compliant in relation to any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school is compliant in relation to previous areas for improvement.

## What the school does well

- The school is a welcoming community where strong relationships and Benedictine values ensure every pupil feels known, valued and able to flourish.
- Values such as respect, humility and service shape daily life, fostering character, empathy and a strong sense of belonging.
- Pupils show a strong sense of social responsibility, supporting others and reflecting on the values that guide their actions.
- Outcomes in religious education are outstanding, with strong progress from the Early Years onwards supported by exemplary behaviour that creates a calm and purposeful environment.
- Prayer and reflection are central to school life, enriched by the Benedictine community and supporting the spiritual development of all pupils.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure full compliance with Bishops' Conference requirements by allocating a minimum of 10% of timetabled curriculum time to religious education in every year group in Key Stage 3.
- In religious education, draw more effectively on expertise across the junior and senior phases by systematically identifying, evaluating and sharing effective practice.
- Strengthen collaboration between the junior and senior schools so that chaplaincy expertise is shared more effectively and greater consistency of practice is achieved.

## 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

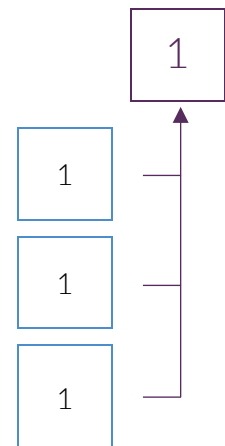
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



Pupils fully embrace the school's Benedictine values and recognise that they are inclusive of all faiths and none. They understand these universal values as the foundation that shapes how they live each day and how they relate to others within the school community. From the youngest pupils in the junior school to the oldest in the senior school, pupils consistently report feeling happy, secure, safe and valued. They speak confidently about the values that guide the life of the school and demonstrate clearly how these influence their actions and relationships. Pupils draw on 'Laudato Si' when discussing their responsibility to care for our common home and to act with compassion towards others. They understand how the Rule of St Benedict emphasises both work and community, offering thoughtful examples of how this is lived out through initiatives such as Mary's Meals, the Ealing Night Shelter and Ealing Foodbank. Pupils recognise that the theology underpinning these actions is rooted in the school's Benedictine tradition and is therefore accessible and meaningful to those of all faiths and none. Many willingly undertake leadership roles connected to the school's mission, including participation in Mini Vinnies and the student chaplaincy. This is particularly strong in the junior school, where firm foundations for service and leadership are established and sustained into the senior school through charitable fundraising and community engagement.

Staff who teach across phases and subjects speak with conviction about a Benedictine charism that embraces every individual and shapes daily interactions across the whole community. St Benedict's benefits from strong generational connections, with many families and members of staff maintaining long-standing links with the school over many years. Staff recognise that this continuity reflects how the Benedictine charism continues to influence and shape lives long after pupils and staff have left. The culture of the school is firmly rooted in shared Benedictine values

of hospitality, respect for persons, community, stewardship, moderation, prayer, humility and stability. These values underpin a deep and sustained commitment to service and shape the school's approach to relationships, learning and pastoral care. In the parent survey, feedback was overwhelmingly positive. One parent wrote, 'The school's Catholic ethos is a strength of the school. The headmaster and the teachers foster a supportive and inspiring community.' Another parent noted, 'We are not Catholic; however, the school strikes an appropriate and respectful balance for us.' Relationships across the school are strong; staff know pupils well, and pastoral care is exceptional, characterised by generous hospitality, particularly for the most vulnerable. Relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned and fully meets diocesan requirements.

Leaders are resolute in their pursuit of excellence, firmly rooted in Benedictine values and ensuring that Christ remains at the heart of the school's life and work. Leaders and governors work in close partnership with the diocese and the parish, placing themselves at the service of the local church and strengthening the school's sense of mission. They model deep respect for the dignity of every worker and actively promote a culture in which staff feel valued and supported, particularly in relation to pastoral care and wellbeing. New members of staff benefit from a highly effective induction programme and regular supportive check-ins, enabling them to develop a strong understanding of the school's mission and ethos. Leaders, together with the Benedictine community, ensure that Catholic life and mission remain the school's highest priority through ongoing formation and sustained high-quality pastoral care. Strategic leadership has strengthened provision through the appointment of a new lay chaplain, who is already making a positive impact on the life of the community. Evidence from staff surveys and discussions with inspectors indicates that the vast majority of staff greatly value the guidance and direction provided by leaders. The weekly Friday Mass is especially cherished as 'a moment of calm and prayerful reflection', illustrating how Catholic life and mission are central to the life of St Benedict's.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

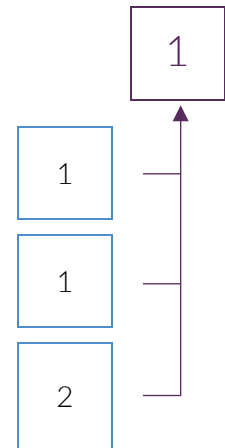
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make very good progress across all key stages. They benefit from a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where creative activities such as exploring the temptation of Jesus and re-enacting the Last Supper foster a love of learning and support rich language development. In Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrated secure recall of prior learning relating to the events of Holy Week. In Key Stage 2, they show increasing depth of understanding, confidently debating concepts such as conscience using scriptural knowledge. By Key Stage 3, outcomes are outstanding, with pupils engaging in thoughtful reflection, articulating ideas clearly, and making meaningful links between theological themes, such as suffering, and everyday life. At Key Stage 4, pupils develop as independent learners, and in the Sixth Form they participate enthusiastically in high-level discussions, debating topics such as euthanasia and Augustine's views on human nature, drawing effectively on prior learning to support their arguments. Assessment for learning is used effectively to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, understand how to improve. Pupils demonstrate outstanding religious literacy, present their work to a high standard, and produce extended writing of quality that reflects spiritual insight, ethical awareness and theological understanding within a culture of high expectations.

Teaching across the school is consistently strong, beginning in the Early Years and junior phases, where teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and effective pedagogy. In Early Years and Upper Key Stage 2, planning is closely linked to assessment and prior learning, ensuring that pupils build knowledge progressively. In an Upper Key Stage 2 lesson observed, strong teacher expertise and skilful questioning challenged pupils' thinking, with adaptations made to meet individual needs and support success for all. As pupils move into the senior school, this strong practice continues, with teachers demonstrating high levels of confidence rooted in secure

subject knowledge. Planning remains sharply focused, as seen in revision lessons where learning is clearly informed by assessment. Teachers use questioning effectively to probe understanding, check for misconceptions and deepen thinking. In a Key Stage 3 lesson, ongoing assessment enabled the teacher to make clear links to prior learning, resulting in pupils confidently articulating their next steps. In Key Stage 4, teachers further enhance learning by linking content to Catholic social teaching, fully engaging pupils. In the Sixth Form, high-quality dialogue and discussion support pupils in exploring scripture within a culture of strong and respectful relationships.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum is closely aligned with the *Religious Education Directory*, with imaginative and creative resources contributing to lessons that are engaging and well received by pupils. Professional development has been prioritised so that staff are well supported in implementing the new *Directory* effectively. In the junior school, further professional development would strengthen consistency and build confidence for all staff in delivering the new curriculum. Subject leadership of religious education is strong across both phases. In the senior school, expert leadership and rigorous monitoring secure consistently high standards. In the junior school, the subject leader has a secure understanding and promotes improvement through relevant professional development. Opportunities to share best practice across phases are not yet fully realised and would enhance consistency further. Religious education is very well resourced in terms of staffing, accommodation and budget. Currently, the school does not yet meet the requirement for 10% curriculum time in religious education across all year groups at Key Stage 3, although it does meet the requirement at Key Stage 4 and the 5% requirement at Key Stage 5. Leaders recognise this shortfall and have identified it as a priority, demonstrating a clear commitment to ensuring full parity with other core subjects through timely and effective action.

## 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

1

**Provision**

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

**Leadership**

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

1

1

In the junior school, the quality of prayer and liturgy enables pupils to participate fully and actively from an early age. In an Early Years celebration of the word, pupils sang 'Jesus Loves Me' and prayer monitors confidently led the liturgy. Pupils engaged with scripture. Teachers support understanding through creative use of small world resources, fostering a strong sense of awe and wonder. This reverent engagement continues in Key Stage 1, where pupils participate with respect, praying spontaneously and confidently within a calm and reflective atmosphere. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate deeper spiritual engagement. In one celebration of the word, they recorded thoughtful reflections in prayer journals, with responses that were both moving and profound. As pupils move into the senior school, this engagement is sustained through opportunities such as form time prayer. Key Stage 3 pupils made meaningful links between scripture and the liturgical season of Lent, as well as through experiences such as Adoration and chaplaincy groups. Pupil chaplains contribute actively by writing their own prayers and supporting prayer demonstrating a secure understanding of a range of Catholic prayer forms. Greater collaboration between the junior and senior schools would enable chaplaincy expertise to be shared more effectively and ensure consistency of practice.

The centrality of prayer is evident across the school, reflected in a clear daily pattern of prayer and strong provision enhanced by the Abbey. Seasonally appropriate scripture underpins prayer and liturgy, for example in assemblies focused on the pillars of Lent, pupils were encouraged to reflect and respond through meaningful action. Opportunities for quiet reflection are a consistent feature, ensuring inclusive participation for all pupils. Staff recognise the importance of this provision, with one noting that regular Mass in the Abbey is a welcome time for spiritual growth. Prayer tables across the junior school reflect the liturgical year and support pupils' understanding of the Church's seasons. In the senior school, the chapel provides a fitting and

reverent space for adoration, while the chaplaincy room facilitates regular opportunities for lunchtime prayer and reflection. The proximity of the Abbey is used effectively for the celebration of the word and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, enriching pupils' spiritual experience. The school nurtures strong relationships with families, and parents speak highly of the community, with one commenting that staff are 'phenomenal role models,' reflecting the strength of witness and the positive impact on pupils' spiritual development.

The policy for prayer and liturgy is carefully formulated and reflects a clear understanding among leaders, including governors, of the varying levels of participation appropriate to pupils' age and capacity. A well structured annual plan of provision, rooted in the Benedictine tradition, ensures that prayer remains central to the life of the school. This is evident in the wide range of opportunities provided, including whole school Masses, year group Masses and weekly voluntary Masses. The ordained chaplain works closely with leaders and is regularly present in the school, supporting the induction of new staff into the Benedictine tradition. As a result, staff have a strong understanding of the centrality of prayer and liturgy. Leaders ensure that this provision is well resourced through appropriate allocation of time, high quality accommodation and targeted professional development, including input from external speakers to enrich staff formation. Practice is rigorously monitored and evaluated, with the formation of both staff and pupils at the heart of leadership priorities. The lay chaplain is well placed to develop this provision further, and has already begun to increase opportunities for pupils to lead prayer and liturgy. Her work, alongside the generous involvement of the Benedictine community, significantly enriches the prayer life of the whole St Benedict's School community.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Benedict's School
School unique reference number (URN)	101947
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3076006
Full postal address of the school	54 Eaton Rise, Ealing, W5 2ES
School phone number	02088622000
Headteacher	Joe Smith
Chair of governors	Mike Davis
School Website	<a href="http://www.stbenedicts.org.uk">www.stbenedicts.org.uk</a>
Trusteeship	St Benedict's School, Ealing
Phase	All Through
Type of school	Catholic Independent School
Admissions policy	Selective
Age-range of pupils	3-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	May 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Evelyn Ward	Lead
Brian Finnegan	Team
Geraldine Hampton	Team
Rose-Marie Sorohan	Team

## 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