

Different pathways for different students

Centre name: Bishop Douglass Catholic School

Region: East Finchley, London

Area type: Suburbs

Number of students: 670

School type: Academy, Roman Catholic School

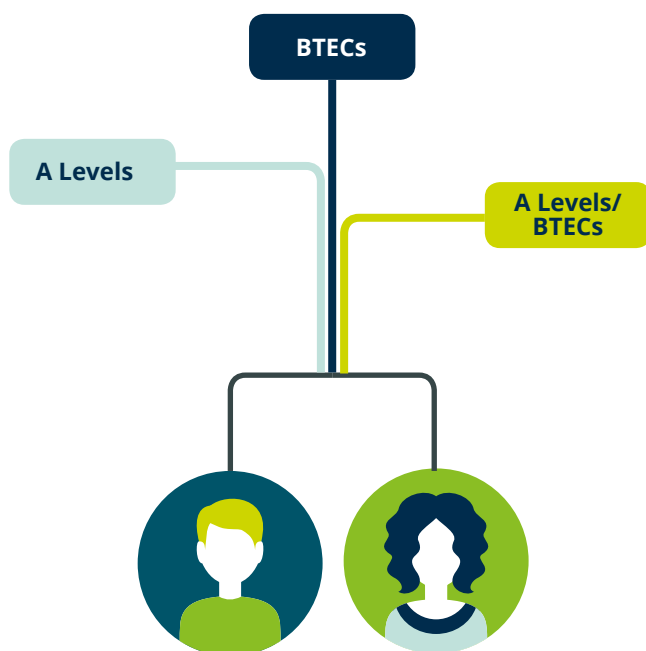
Ofsted rating: Good

Pupil premium %: 46%

Bishop Douglass include BTECs in the curriculum to offer all students a pathway that works for their individual learning styles and ambitions, improving achievements and widening progression opportunities.

Bishop Douglass Catholic School offers BTEC qualifications to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to succeed and progress. To support this aim, the school offers three pathways in the Sixth Form:

- academic (A Levels),
- vocational (BTECs) or
- a combination of the two.



Students take part in taster lessons for both BTEC and A Level courses as part of their Options Days, ensuring they understand the differences before they commit to their choices. Currently 50% of students in the Sixth Form take at least one BTEC.

David Adum-Yeboah, Head of Business Studies & Vocational Education, describes the difference between the A Level in Business and the BTEC Level 3 National in Business as being about the depth and breadth of content covered: "My BTEC students get deeper understanding in a narrower range of topics while A level students cover a wider range in terms of areas of study, but they study these at a lesser depth than BTEC courses."

The most likely progression path for both A Level and BTEC students at Bishop Douglass is higher education at university: they have found that there's no difference in terms of ability to access degrees, as the UCAS points for BTEC Nationals and A Levels are equivalent. The school has found that both groups are equally able to access degrees.

David reports that those who have taken a BTEC are better prepared for the style of studying at university, partly due to this depth of knowledge developed, with a focus on fewer topics but in more detail. He feels that the skills developed during BTEC Nationals also develop skills in research, independent learning, and report writing, all key elements of university study. They also see how their learning relates to



the final outcome of the course, as the assessments that they take throughout give them grades to work with, rather than relying on final examinations at the end of the course - as with traditional A Levels. David finds that on average, BTEC students tend to work with more conviction to achieve their target grades because they are self-motivated.

For Bishop Douglass Catholic School, offering BTECs opens pathways in education to all students, giving the opportunity for them to achieve and progress in a way that suits their learning style and their individual aspirations.

50% of students in the 6th form choose to **take at least one BTEC**



“ BTEC is not a poor relation to A Levels, but simply a different pathway for our students. ”

David Adum-Yeboah,
Head of Business and Vocational Education