

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119607
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379851
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2012
Lead inspector	Geoffrey Yates

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Cox
Headteacher	Angela Pye
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team visited 17 lessons, observing nine teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and groups of pupils, including hearing eight pupils read. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to take account of in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at minutes of the governing body meetings, the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures, pupils' work, and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 136 parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St Augustine's is an above average sized primary school and is over subscribed. Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups with an increasing number of Polish pupils. There are an above average number of pupils learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The percentage of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is similar to that seen nationally. The school has achieved a number of awards. The school exceeded the current floor standard.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Under the good leadership of the headteacher the school promotes pupils' learning successfully and serves its multi-faith community well. It generates, through its curriculum, pupils' very positive attitudes and a great care for others.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage from starting points which are well below those expected for their age. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment is average in English and mathematics. This represents good progress and means that pupils are in a good position to make the transition to secondary school. An above average proportion of pupils are attaining at the higher Level 5. Progress is less rapid in Key Stage 1. The school's arrangements for the teaching of early letters and sounds are not always precise or rigorous enough.
- The quality of teaching is good. Pupils learn well because most teaching is ambitious and skilful. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. However, while there are examples of good teaching in Key Stage 1, some aspects are not as strong. Work is not always matched well to pupils' academic needs. While much has been done to improve pupils' writing skills, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Parents and carers think highly about the school. Pupils' behaviour is good and they are clear about what is acceptable and what will result in sanctions. Incidents of bullying and incidents of racial harassment are few and far between and dealt with well. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including when using the internet.
- Leadership and management are good. The clear focus on pupils' personal care and systems to evaluate the school's work, and the impact which this is having on raising pupils' aspirations and sense of community, are at the heart of the school's success.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement and raise their attainment in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring teaching is consistently good or better
 - ensuring work is better matched to the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring marking is more effectively used and written feedback indicates how pupils can improve their work.
- Ensure arrangements for the teaching of letters and sounds are more rigorous.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children settle quickly and enables them to make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1, although still below the levels expected for their age, children have made good progress from their starting points. Children enjoy the many learning experiences and immerse themselves fully in the many interesting curriculum activities. For example, during role-play, children in the 'doctor's surgery' gave an inspector a written appointment time to see the doctor, having first looked at the inspector's badge, stating 'Mr Ofsted Monday 4.'

Pupils' current work and the test results from 2011, together with the school's data, show that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is average, with a higher proportion of pupils than that seen nationally attaining the higher levels. Pupils make good progress. A notable success is the proportion of pupils making the expected levels of progress in English and mathematics which is above the national average, reflecting the upward trend in the school's performance. Parents and carers are pleased with their children's progress. One parent's view was typical of many: 'I feel my son has come on loads. He runs to school every morning and loves doing his work.' By Year 6, pupils make good progress in reading relative to their starting points. They are keen to read and use decoding skills well when faced with difficult words. The majority of pupils read fluently and with expression and are keen to predict what might happen next in the stories they are reading. However, they are not challenged consistently to use their writing skills well in subjects across the curriculum. Although attainment at the end of Year 2 is currently below average in reading, writing and mathematics, there is clear evidence to suggest that pupils are now making better progress and that attainment is beginning to rise although senior leaders recognise, rightly, that this is a work in progress. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make similarly good progress to their peers.

Pupils are attentive in class and keen to do well. They particularly enjoy practical activities such as responding to mathematical challenges. For example, when asked to measure angles or to work out the percentage savings of items in a sale. Younger

pupils in Year 2 are eager to discuss ideas with a 'talking partner' and are keen to demonstrate and use their knowledge of connectives and adjectives.

Quality of teaching

The good quality of teaching contributes to pupils' good behaviour and highly positive attitudes to their learning. Parents and carers report how pleased they are with their children's progress and feel that the overall quality of teaching is good.

Good teaching in most classes, with outstanding practice in some, has a number of strengths. Teaching assistants, including bi-lingual staff, provide effective support. Teachers make good use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding. Staff are effective in knowing when to intervene and how to interact with pupils to enhance their learning. For example, in one lesson a small group of pupils were unclear about what an instruction 'write in a formal language' meant and the teacher quickly picked up on this and involved the pupils exceptionally well in clarifying their understanding, thereby enabling them to make good progress. Where teaching is less strong, as in some lessons in Key Stage 1, tasks for pupils across the curriculum are not well matched to their prior attainment; there is an over-use of commercial work-sheets which reduces pupils' progress. Teachers mostly assess work regularly in order to check on pupils' progress. Marking normally provides pupils with constructive and informative written comments about how to improve their work although this is not consistent across Key Stage 1. The introduction of a systematic phonics (the sound that letters make) and decoding scheme in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, is leading to pupils' greater confidence in tackling unfamiliar words, although some of the sessions lack a precise and rigorous focus.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

From an early age, children develop good social skills and positive attitudes to learning. These qualities are maintained throughout the school. Pupils are well behaved and this contributes very positively to their learning and progress and to the very strong social and moral ethos of the school. Pupils like their school and their teachers and are polite and respectful. Attendance overall is above average. Pupils willingly participate in the tasks that they are given and are very supportive of each other when working in small groups. Often pupils are seen helping each other to understand an instruction or share ideas. For example, a group of East European pupils were observed working well together in carrying out measuring tasks. It was very apparent that they appreciated the support of a bi-lingual assistant. A small number of pupils raised concerns about behaviour in their questionnaires, though when inspectors discussed this with pupils they believed behaviour to be good, and this was confirmed during the inspection.

Parents and carers speak highly of the school. Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They know who to turn to if they have any concerns and said that they try to resolve disagreements between themselves when possible. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in all aspects of their daily life. They understand the dangers that the internet and mobile phones present and how to deal with them. The school is very good in pursuing the interests of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable through its good partnership with

parents and carers, outside agencies and its own good in-house support provided by the learning mentor, school counsellor and other staff.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, with good support from the deputy headteacher and other senior staff, is not only strongly focused on raising pupils' attainment but also on ensuring that pupils' personal needs are met. She has established a clear vision for improvement and has the respect and support of the staff, parents and carers. Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is seen in the fostering of key skills within a welcoming environment, with adults sharply focused on meeting children's personal needs. Good leadership of the school's provision for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs ensures that these pupils make good progress and achieve well by the time they leave. The professional development of staff continues to be a high priority and teachers talked enthusiastically about how well their professional needs are met. As a result, the majority of teaching is at least good. A recent focus on developing pupils' writing skills has meant that in literacy lessons the quality of writing has improved, but this has yet to show in the writing done in other subjects. School leaders are successful in narrowing the gaps in performance between different groups, including pupils whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the school's strong promotion of equality of opportunity.

The governing body is knowledgeable about the school and its performance and holds senior leaders to account well. All requirements for safeguarding and risk assessments are met. Parents and carers who returned questionnaires believe the school cares very well for their children. Pupils are very well supervised in not the easiest of sites to manage. The school is a harmonious community in which pupils gain a good understanding of different ways of life in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, which they respect and value. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to all the school provides. The curriculum provides an interesting range of experiences for pupils, including after-school activities. It promotes not only the good development of academic key skills but also ensures that pupils' personal development is enriched and supported very effectively.

The school has consolidated the good practice identified in its last inspection report. For example, issues relating to the use of assessment information and in improving attendance have been addressed well. Attendance is now above the national average. This, together with leaders' strong focus on improving pupils' achievement and promoting their well-being, demonstrates its good capacity for further sustained improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Preston, PR1 3YJ

Thank you all for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your thoughts and ideas about it. This helped us to make the judgements about your school. St Augustine's provides you with a good education. The best things about the school are:

- you enjoy school, work hard and make good progress
- your behaviour is good and you work and play very well together
- your teachers look after you and usually make sure you have work to make you think hard and make good progress
- your headteacher leads and manages the school well.

There are some areas where the school can improve. I have asked your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to make sure that you make better progress in Key Stage 1 and attain higher standards. I have also asked them to ensure teaching is always good and that you have more opportunities to practise your writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. Your teachers need to ensure that the younger pupils learn the sounds that letters make more effectively.

You already make a good contribution to the life of the school. You are very positive about learning and we were very impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors. You can help the school improve even further by continuing to work hard.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates,
Lead Inspector

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