

St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108399
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	377749
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Petts

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geraldine Spoons
Headteacher	Carolyn Duffy
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons taught by 14 class teachers. They also observed intervention activities for small groups of pupils, talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and scrutinised in detail the work in pupils' books. Inspectors checked pupils' reading across the age range. In addition, inspectors held discussions with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and the local authority school link inspector. The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's records relating to pupils' progress and achievement, evidence relating to leadership and management, monitoring and evaluation, records of behaviour and safeguarding. They also took into account the questionnaires returned by 71 parents and carers, 103 pupils and 30 staff.

Information about the school

St Augustine's is a much larger than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with none at the early stage of learning English. A broadly average number of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or those with a statement of special educational needs is much lower than the average. The school meets the current floor standards which set out the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school extends its services in that it provides a breakfast club each day. The school has succeeded in gaining the Creative Partnerships Change School status and achieved the Artsmark Gold award.

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

- St Augustine's is a good and quickly improving school. It has made significant progress in the last 18 months, because the headteacher provides a determined leadership focus on raising achievement and attainment. Pupils enjoy their school experiences and all parents and carers appreciate the high-quality care and support for their children's needs. The school is not yet outstanding, because although most teaching is good, a pattern of rapid and sustained pupils' progress is not yet embedded.
- Children enter Nursery with skills well below those typical for their age and make good progress. The good progress continues in Years 1 to 6, although rates of progress are faster in English than in mathematics. Improvements include girls' better overall achievement and boys' much improved attainment in their reading. Typically, pupils leave school with above average attainment.
- In the good lessons observed, teaching successfully captures the pupils' keenness to learn and constantly challenges their thinking and understanding. Opportunities are occasionally missed to exploit the rich curriculum imaginatively and to provide well-defined guidance for improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and occasionally exemplary. Their positive attitudes contribute well to the quality of their learning. They are aware of the expectations set for them, display much respect for each other and are safety conscious. Their spiritual development is excellent and their moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is systematically sharpening the skills of a settled senior and middle leadership team. All staff share her vision for improvement. Highly effective leadership of teaching ensures that staff skills are fostered continuously. The good curriculum is well-matched to the needs of pupils, although outdoor learning opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially for boys, are sometimes a little narrow.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' pace of learning so that it is consistently at least good in all lessons, especially in mathematics, by:
 - increasing the amount of teaching that excites and inspires pupils
 - ensuring that approaches are matched even more closely to the needs and interests of all groups of pupils
 - make sure that pupils know exactly what to do to get to the next level.
- Improve the quality of outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by broadening the range of activities that are purposeful and ensure children take greater responsibility for choosing what they do, especially boys.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The concerted action to enrich the quality of pupils' learning experiences and improve their skills is resulting in an emerging pattern of rapid progress, especially in their reading and writing. Fun approaches to daily sessions in learning how letters and sounds are linked, help younger pupils and less-able pupils to read more fluently and write more accurately. As a result, pupils' good achievement is continuing to improve. All parents and carers agree that their children's particular needs are well met. A wide range of first-hand experiences capture the interest of pupils and stimulate their thinking. For example, pupils were observed totally engrossed in building a structure to hold a book, using only spaghetti and mounting putty. In most lessons observed, pupils' enjoyment was apparent, particularly when active and practical approaches ensured that their interest was held.

Children arrive in Nursery often with underdeveloped speech, language and numeracy skills. They make good progress from their starting points in the Nursery, with often rapid progress in developing their social and emotional skills. This makes certain that all settle happily and confidently. Their continued good progress and achievement ensures that by the end of Year 2 attainment is broadly average and by the end of Year 6, attainment is above average, although a little higher in English than in mathematics. This reveals the impact of the highly successful drive to raise attainment in English, especially improving boys' reading skills and developing the writing skills of all pupils. Good opportunities are created to foster pupils' interest and enjoyment of a wide variety of reading. For example, Year 6 pupils excitedly discussed their forthcoming visit to London to see the stage productions of *War Horse* and *Shrek*. Despite this, opportunities are occasionally missed to match activities even more closely to pupils' interests and needs, especially those of younger boys. Rich learning environments stimulate pupils' thinking effectively, although provision in Nursery and Reception for children to learn when outdoors is modest. Linking subjects together in thought-provoking ways effectively reinforces the crucial skills of speaking, listening and working collaboratively well.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates. At times, their achievement in reading and writing is outstanding, because their needs are accurately pinpointed and very effectively met. Those pupils known to be

entitled to free school meals also make the same good progress. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is below average. Younger pupils display growing confidence and skill, making sense of new words and responding to opportunities to develop their writing skills. In Year 6, significant progress is being made in promoting enjoyment of reading and extending pupils' knowledge of books and authors. As a result, pupils' attainment is above average.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good and all parents and carers agree. Rigorous checking of pupils' progress pinpoints slips and gaps in pupils' learning and informs teaching well. Lessons are planned in some detail and as a result inconsistencies in pupils' knowledge and understanding are systematically eradicated. For example, younger pupils whose reading skills are underdeveloped are given daily, intensive support and practice. This ensures continuous improvement. High expectations are set for pupils' engagement in their learning, promoting their excellent spiritual and good moral, social and cultural development. Increasingly, more is demanded of pupils, especially in those lessons which are both stimulating, active and which take full advantage of the interesting opportunities the curriculum provides. Thoughtfully planned professional development ensures a continued strong emphasis on raising achievement. Pupils are aware of their targets, assess their own work well and marking is positive, constructive and helpful. Despite this, clearly defined guidance for improvement is not consistently provided to boost achievement even further. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to share their ideas and thinking with a partner. They are encouraged to work independently. However, in Nursery and Reception, while children are provided with good opportunities to think creatively, investigate and explore and pursue their curiosity through role play when indoors, outdoor learning is less stimulating.

When progress is fastest, imaginative approaches encourage pupils to think about all the possibilities when faced with a problem. They are expected to explain their reasoning and solutions. Learning experiences, such as those provided by the broad range of visits and visitors, are used creatively to allow pupils' to practise literacy and numeracy skills. Writing is brought to life, for example when pupils' are writing a crime scene investigation report. Effective use is made of new technology to add to interest and pace of learning, including the learning for those with visual impairment. Questioning prompts the next stages of thinking really well, such as when children construct a model of Tower Bridge, part of the school's London Olympic theme. When teaching is occasionally satisfactory, the pace of learning can be variable, questioning not sufficiently searching or tailored to individual abilities. Pupils are sometimes too inactive in satisfactory lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

There is a highly positive climate for learning in classrooms, because pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary. Pupils report that they feel safe in the highly supportive school atmosphere. The breakfast club provides a calm, happy start to the day. Discussions with pupils reveal that the school system for dealing with any instances of inappropriate behaviour works swiftly and effectively. They describe how valuable their curriculum experiences are in teaching them to recognise risk and danger, such as when on the beach or coping with the potential threats of new technology. A very few parents did raise concerns about minor disruption in lessons. When inspectors observed lessons they found behaviour to be at least good and that on the very rare occasion when pupils were silly, staff skilfully corrected the behaviour without interrupting the flow of the class learning. In and out of

classrooms pupils' behaviour is considerate and thoughtful. Pupils are very aware of the boundaries set for them and enjoy the encouragement and reward their positive attitudes, good behaviour and good achievement provide. In conversations, pupils display a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They speak confidently about how they can manage any worries or concerns they may have. Excellent relationships with staff reflect the high level of mutual respect. The pupil comments in a recently written tribute to Father Ciaran, 'He taught us how to live like Jesus', reflect their outstanding spiritual development. Older pupils take pride in their role and responsibilities helping the school to improve. Robust monitoring of attendance and the active promotion of the benefits of regular attendance, has led to improved attendance which is above average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's passion and drive has greatly enhanced the ethos and culture of the school. Her resolute approaches have resulted in rigorous and accurate analysis of the school's performance. As a result, an increasingly consistent pattern of rapid progress and achievement is emerging. The stable senior leadership team are reflective and self-critical. Middle managers are ever more confident, building on their experiences and developing their expertise skilfully. Consequently, improvement planning sharply focuses upon the correct priorities for the school. The excellent management of teaching and learning has a strong emphasis upon nurturing staff skills and talent. Effective performance management and professional development has helped the school to improve rapidly in most areas since the previous inspection. The tightly-knit staff team actively support each other and willingly share best practice. Positive partnership working with specialists, local schools and external agencies adds to the momentum of improvement. The committed governing body are fully involved in school life, share its high aspirations and have a clear view of its strengths. The high quality of care and support for pupils and their families ensures that needs are accurately identified and addressed. The emerging pattern of improvement and progress demonstrates the school's good capacity for improvement.

The good curriculum is firmly directed towards ensuring all pupils can achieve their full potential. Art and performing arts are important priorities. A broad programme of enrichment activities, which include visits, visitors, themed events and after-school clubs, promotes learning, enjoyment and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development really well. The school engages parents and carers positively and works hard to give them opportunities to play a part in their children's learning. Equality of opportunity is being strengthened as gaps in pupils' achievement and attainment are closed. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are thoughtfully integrated and effectively supported in all aspects of school life to enable them to achieve success. Safeguarding meets requirements, with much effective practice supporting the high quality of care which the school provides.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Gateshead, NE10 8PP**

St Augustine's is a good and improving school. We were really impressed by the excellent quality of care and support provided for you. You told us that your staff continually encourage you to do as well as you possibly can. We were pleased by your good and occasionally exemplary behaviour. You told us that you feel safe and happy as a result. You also told us of how your staff teach you how to recognise danger and risk.

The headteacher and the governing body are taking positive action to ensure that the school continues to improve and this can be seen in the rapid progress in your reading and writing and your good achievement. We have asked the school to quicken the rate at which you make progress, especially in your mathematics, by making your learning more interesting and exciting. We would like your staff to make certain all of your activities are an even better match to your abilities and interests so you can take full advantage of the many varied and thought-provoking experiences provided for you. We have also asked your teachers to provide you with distinct steps for improvement in your books. We have also asked that younger children have more activities to choose from when they learn and play outside.

You can all play your part by attending regularly and continuing to work as hard as you can. All the very best for the future

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts
Lead inspector

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