

St Augustine's Catholic Primary

Henshall Avenue, Latchford, Warrington, WA4 1PY

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although attainment is broadly average this declined in 2012 at both Key Stage 1 and 2. While current pupil progress shows improvement it varies between classes. This means pupils' overall achievement requires improvement.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent, and there is not enough good or better teaching. Work is not matched closely enough to pupils' abilities, particularly for those who are less able.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their writing, grammar and spelling skills or to apply their mathematical skills across different subjects.
- Marking does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve and they do not always have time to respond to any advice given.
- The roles of leaders, including the governing body, need to be further developed to enable them to accurately monitor and check on pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and attendance.
- How teachers use the information on pupil progress to plan for pupils needs has not always been used or checked well enough to hold teachers fully accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes.
- Attendance is below average overall and requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed headteacher has, in a short time, identified priorities and introduced changes that are bringing about improvements, such as the use of teaching assistants to support specific groups of pupils.
- She knows the school's strengths well and has an accurate view of what needs to be improved.
- The newly structured senior leadership team have a clear direction and are beginning to drive improvements. Teamwork and staff morale are strong.
- Pupils feel safe and know that adults in the school look after them well.
- Because behaviour is managed well and relationships are caring and supportive, pupils are ready to learn and have positive attitudes to school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or part lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from four different year groups read and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a member of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents relating to pupils' progress and to the school's management, including the arrangements for safeguarding.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by staff and spoke to some parents about their views of the school.

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Webster

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Augustine's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average and those supported at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2012.
- There is a breakfast club provided by the school which was visited during the inspection.
- Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes to the staff in school, including the leadership. An executive headteacher was in post part-time for two terms prior to the current headteacher taking up post in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise attainment and improve the progress of all pupils, particularly the less able by:
 - ensuring that activities in lessons are clearly matched to the needs and abilities of all pupils, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - giving pupils enough information on how to improve their work and providing them with time to respond to the advice given
 - providing pupils with opportunities to use and apply mathematical skills through investigative and problem-solving activities in mathematics and other subjects
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their writing, grammar and spelling skills.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - further developing leadership and management at all levels, including the governing body, to enable them to accurately check and measure how well new initiatives are improving pupils' progress and the quality of teaching
 - rigorously check how effectively teachers are now using the systems for tracking pupils' progress to set work at the right level for pupils of all abilities
 - working with parents and other agencies to develop strategies to improve the attendance of all groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally well below expectations for their age in most areas of learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average though it remains below national levels.
- Although floor standards were not met at the end of Year 6 in 2012, this represented expected progress for the majority of pupils in this small cohort in which almost 50% of pupils were supported at school action plus for their special educational needs.
- Through the Early Years Foundation Stage children make steady progress but enter Year 1 with skills which remain well below levels expected for their age. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is generally broadly average.
- Progress varies between different classes. Overtime most pupils make expected progress though not enough make better than expected progress. Achievement overall therefore requires improvement.
- The pupil premium funding is used well and gaps between the performances of different groups are closing. The attainment of pupils who receive the funding, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, is generally below that expected for their age and often below that of pupils who are not eligible. They make progress which is slightly lower than that of pupils who are not eligible. However, the progress of this group is improving because of the support provided and current information shows most are making at least expected progress and the gap is narrowing.
- The less-able pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are helped through a range of extra support in class and through additional individual and small group sessions. As a result of these, pupils are beginning to make up for gaps in their learning and most are now making the progress expected from their starting points.
- Pupils generally enjoy reading. Daily guided reading lessons and daily phonics (letters and the sounds they make) lessons have been introduced for all pupils in order to improve their skills. Pupils are increasingly confident in using these skills and this is beginning to show improvements in their reading.
- Pupils writing skills, particularly at Key Stage 1 are lower than that expected for their age and although pupils write for a variety of purposes they do not always have sufficient opportunity to improve their spelling and grammar skills, which prevents them from making better progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in some year groups is good. However, it is not, overtime, consistently good enough across the school resulting in pupils not always doing as well as they should. Therefore, the overall quality of teaching requires improvement. In the best teaching seen, teachers plan work that is matched to the needs of the different abilities of pupils. This helps them to learn quickly and build their skills. These lessons often involve practical learning activities, sometimes in pairs and groups, that keep pupils interested and engaged in wanting to learn.
- One example of good teaching was in a Year 6 class where pupils used the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* to debate whether Goldilocks was guilty or not guilty. Pupils were very engaged and the pace was brisk. Good questioning from the teacher meant pupils' responses became more focused and developed as they responded well to counter arguments.
- In other lessons the work set is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs, particularly for those who find learning more difficult, this means they do not make as much progress as they should.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children are happy and play well together but there is not a good enough balance between child-led and adult-led activities. Children are encouraged to be

independent but they are not given enough guidance from adults to build on their skills and make as much progress as they should.

- Pupils' books are marked regularly but there are inconsistencies in the help and advice given. In the best examples, pupils are given helpful comments about how to improve. However, there is not sufficient time given for pupils to respond to these comments.
- Pupils are not consistently given enough opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills, including spelling and grammar. The school has begun to introduce some strategies to address this, such as activities which allow them to verbalise first what they want to write.
- Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills to investigate and solve problems, in mathematics and other subjects, are not consistent across school. In the majority of lessons seen pupils practised skills in the form of answering similar types of sums. Examples of application of this in real-life contexts or problem solving were limited.
- Homework is regular. The more recent introduction of project-based homework provides pupils with opportunities to develop a range of skills, including extended writing.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational need and those who receive pupil-premium funding are given extra support. Observations of small group sessions, introduced since September and led by teaching assistants, show that these pupils are now making better progress, in line with their peers. This ensures that they progress at least as well as other pupils and shows the school's commitment to equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- A strength of the school is the way it understands the community it serves. Pupils are kept safe and are well cared for in school.
- Pupils want to learn and they have positive attitudes to their work, particularly when teaching is good. They settle well and show enthusiasm and commitment when lessons are engaging. When teaching is not as strong and pupils are not sure what is expected of them they can become restless and distracted.
- Pupils mostly get on well together and they have a clear understanding of the school's behaviour strategies. They feel that sometimes the behaviour of a few pupils is not good. Observations show that behaviour is well-managed by all staff.
- More-recent changes to the way pupils start the school day has improved their behaviour as they come in to and move around school. They are well supervised at break and lunch times and any incidents are well managed by staff.
- Pupils across school have a good awareness of different forms of bullying, including that of cyber bullying. Although some said this occasionally occurs, they were confident that any issues were quickly dealt with. School records are well kept and show incidents are followed up.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and that teachers care for them. The breakfast club provides, for the small number of pupils who attend, a good start to the day through offering a range of activities and a safe and welcoming environment.
- Attendance overall is below average. Attendance for most pupils is average and there are improvements in the attendance of some pupils whose attendance is well below average. The recently appointed attendance officer is supporting the school in improving the attendance of specific pupils. However, more needs to be done, through working with parents, pupils and other agencies, to improve attendance so that it is at least average for all pupils.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The recently appointed headteacher has quickly gained a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need to improve. Staff morale is high and there is a strong sense of teamwork because the headteacher has ensured that all who work in the school know how they can help to make the school more successful and are beginning to drive improvements.
- The leadership team is relatively new and, although there are some improvements in pupils'

progress, including those who benefit from additional support, their work is not yet fully impacting on raising pupils' achievement or improving the overall quality of teaching. Senior and middle leaders are not yet fully checking or measuring how well new initiatives are improving teaching and pupils' progress to rapidly drive improvement.

- Procedures to check pupils' progress are not yet sufficiently embedded. Therefore, staff are not always clear about the progress pupils are making, how to use this to accurately plan work to meet their needs and ensure all pupils make at least expected progress.
- Arrangements to check and improve the performance of staff are thorough and are linked to the Teachers' Standards. Good links with the local high schools, other local schools and the local authority help staff develop their skills.
- The curriculum has undergone some recent changes and is at the early stages of being reviewed and improved. Lessons are enriched by a variety of activities and themed days such as European Languages day. There are a range of clubs and sporting activities and older pupils have an opportunity to attend a residential trip, all of which contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The parents who the inspectors spoke to were happy with school. However, there was a suggestion that rewards for good attendance should be more frequent. The school is aware that more needs to be done to improve attendance.
- The local authority provides a range of support. The headteacher has quickly identified the priority areas for this and the work is beginning to improve some aspects of teaching and the development of different leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are enthusiastic and supportive of the school and determined to help it succeed. They ensure that all appropriate policies are in place and that safeguarding procedures are effective. Systems for reviewing and managing the school's finances are secure. Some governors have undertaken training to support their roles. Governors ensure performance management is in place, including that of the headteacher and that teachers' pay progression is linked to these arrangements. Governors recognise that they have not always been involved enough in checking on the quality of teaching and the progress and attendance of different groups of pupils across the school, including those eligible for the pupil premium and that this needs to be developed further.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111309
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	401180

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	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Littlewood
Headteacher	Mrs Andrea Towey
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 October 2009
Telephone number	01925 633317
Fax number	–
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