

# St Louis Catholic Middle School

St Andrew's Street South, , Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3PH

**Inspection dates** 13 – 14 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
<hr/>			
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- St Louis Catholic Middle School is an outstanding school providing an exceptionally high quality of education for all its pupils.
- Achievement in all subjects is outstanding and pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their lives.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs all make outstanding progress because of the very effective help and guidance they receive.
- Teachers usually give pupils helpful guidance through comments in marking, although this is not fully effective in all subjects.
- Teaching is consistently good or better and a very high proportion is outstanding.
- Pupils are exceptionally polite. Through their outstanding behaviour in lessons, they encourage each other to do better. They feel safe and secure in school.
- A very large proportion of pupils are involved in fundraising and out-of-school activities.
- Leaders and managers work extremely effectively to ensure the school continues to improve. This results in an excellent learning experience for all pupils.
- Governors regularly check how well the school is doing and they have taken effective action to make sure improvements have been sustained.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, of which five were seen together with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the acting headteacher, the Chair and representatives of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, senior leaders, staff and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 63 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the 41 responses from the staff questionnaire and letters from parents and pupils.
- Inspectors looked carefully at a wide range of documents, including, the school improvement plan, the system to track pupils' progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, information on teachers' performance, safeguarding records and a sample of pupils' work.

## Inspection team

Neil Stanley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Angela Podmore	Additional Inspector
Paul Bartlett	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Louis Catholic Middle School is a smaller than average middle deemed secondary school, with pupils in Years 5 to 8.
- Pupils come from a wide geographical area surrounding Bury St Edmunds.
- The school population is mainly White British, with a significant minority from White Non-British backgrounds.
- A significant minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children looked after by the local authority, children from armed services families and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Four pupils are currently educated off-site for two days per week at a specialist dyslexia facility at Wickhambrook.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school was scheduled to close in July 2013, as part of the Local Authority School Organisational Review. Although now delayed, the future of the school remains under review.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all staff members provide consistently high-quality written feedback for pupils in all subjects, so they are able to make even more rapid progress in their work.

## Inspection judgements

### **The achievement of pupils** **is outstanding**

- Pupils' attainment when they join the school in Year 5 is above average in English and mathematics. By the time they leave at the end of Year 8, it is significantly above average in all subjects, including English, and exceptionally high in mathematics. This is because of teaching that is often outstanding.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average in English and mathematics. Pupils read widely and most can scan information in books and on computers to gain information quickly. In mathematics, they have a good feel for number and conduct complex investigations.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high in all subjects. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, work on constructing graphs from algebraic equations would not be out of place in a Year 9 lesson.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to produce longer pieces of writing when working in different subjects, for example writing on family in religious education.
- Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs make outstanding progress thanks to very effective guidance and help from the staff. Their attainment gets closer to that of other groups of pupils as they move up the school. Pupils who attend off-site provision and pupils with statements make exceptional progress.
- The school provides very good support for pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and, as a result, these pupils are making rapid and sustained progress and improving their attainment in English and mathematics. Year 7 catch-up funding is also well used in helping identified pupils make rapid progress. The effectiveness of this spending is fully evaluated by school leaders and governors. As a result, the attainment of these pupils is typically one term or one National Curriculum point ahead of other pupils in the school.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make comparably outstanding progress to others in the school. Pupils who speak English as an additional language tend to make increasingly sustained improvements as they progress through the school. This is because they make rapid progress, particularly in mathematics, once their understanding of English has improved. By the time they leave the school, these pupils have made outstanding progress.
- The school carefully checks the achievement of pupils in Years 5 and 6 and gives extra help to those who are not doing as well as they should. This helps them to catch up quickly.
- In addition to academic success, pupils gain skills in leadership and teamwork through, for example, the wider reading programme, the new pupil buddy scheme and the school council's work with the local mayor. The take-up rates for the wide range of additional activities and clubs beyond lessons are very high. For example, over 60 singers and musicians perform regularly in the liturgy group.
- Pupils praise the way the school supports those who are gifted and talented. This has included a visit, for able mathematicians, to the Royal Institution. Pupils say these events make them want to succeed even more.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- Across all subjects, teachers plan lessons thoroughly that build on previous learning and enable pupils of different abilities to make consistently rapid progress. They use a wide range of well-judged activities that, with sharply focused and timely support, match individual needs exceptionally well.
  - Pupils relish their learning. Their questions in a Year 8 science lesson on microbes showed them making links with prior learning and also using the lesson to improve their understanding of knowledge gained outside school. As a result of the exceptionally respectful relationships, they were very confident when asking questions.
  - Pupils are given many opportunities to comment on the work of others. They do this with encouragement and respect and, as a result, pupils are confident about sharing their work. This was particularly effective in an art lesson where Year 6 pupils looked at the work of Year 8 pupils and used this to help them improve their own work. As a result, these pupils are making exceptional progress.
  - Teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves. This was evident in a Year 8 maths lesson, where pupils were researching traffic accidents. Pupils were given the opportunity to think through the issues independently so that they asked the right questions and selected the most relevant information.
  - Teachers are aware of the importance of improving levels in reading and writing and have a consistent approach to spelling, grammar and punctuation. In class, teachers regularly challenge pupils to extend their vocabulary. This was particularly evident in a Year 7 history lesson on Inuit culture.
  - The school gives pupils the opportunity to read widely and often. All pupils have a private reading book with them at all times and their progress is regularly checked. Pupils often arrive early for lessons after break and lunch and settle down to read quietly before the lesson begins. As a result, they are challenging themselves and each other to read increasingly difficult texts. For example, one Year 8 pupil was reading 'The Life of Pi'. Consequently, their reading levels are rapidly improving.
  - Teachers use probing questioning in lessons to check pupils' understanding. This was particularly effective in Year 6 numeracy, where the teacher used questioning to help pupils understand where they had gone wrong and to give more challenging tasks to those who securely understood the work. This meant all pupils were making rapid and sustained progress.
  - Teachers generally provide pupils with detailed written feedback on how to improve their work. This works particularly well in French, where pupils are given the opportunity to respond to the marking and show immediate improvement. However, in some subjects, this is not always the case.
  - Classrooms are vibrant environments and teachers were seen referring to wall displays to help pupils improve their work. This inspires pupils to do their best and helps them think for themselves as they look for solutions to problems and ways to improve their work.
-

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils' excellent behaviour in lessons and their calm, polite and courteous manner around the school make a substantial contribution to the positive school environment and both their personal and academic achievements.
- Pupils listen to each other and respect each other's opinions. They confidently share their ideas in class. Pupils praise each other when they answer a question correctly and they support each other when they are not right.
- Pupils do not feel that bullying is a problem in this school. However, they are confident that if any did arise it would be dealt with quickly and effectively by teachers. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, racism, sex and gender bullying and other forms of harassment.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure in the school and they display a good understanding of the issues relating to safety. Pupils talk confidently about how they would keep themselves safe in different situations, for example, when using the internet and social networking sites.
- The school has a consistent approach to encouraging good behaviour and creates opportunities to reward good behaviour. Pupils say this system is clear and fair.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their attendance, which is well above average. Levels of persistent absence are very low. Pupils' punctuality reflects their enthusiasm for their school and their learning.
- Pupils are keen to talk to visitors to the school. For example, they enthusiastically joined the inspectors at lunch and were keen to talk about the school and their learning.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility and the school council has led the way in improving facilities. Pupils say the teachers listen to their ideas about how to improve the school.
- Pupils quickly learn how to work by themselves and do not rely on teachers to direct them. For example, in an afternoon registration session, pupils were working independently on a range of different activities.

**The leadership and management are outstanding**

- St Louis Catholic Middle School is exceptionally well led by its acting headteacher and senior leaders who have ensured that, following a period of instability, pupils' achievement and progress has continued to improve.
- Subject leaders have confidence in, and the support of, their senior leaders. This has enabled them to be innovative in the classroom and in their decision-making. In particular, the English and mathematics co-ordinators are supported to employ, evaluate and, if necessary, adapt the strategies they put in place to help pupils catch up. As a result, these pupils are making outstanding progress.
- The school emphasises the importance of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

and this is evident across all subjects. For example, pupils in English were seen discussing morality and blame in 'Macbeth'.

- The school provides a wide range of subjects and places a strong emphasis on art, music and modern foreign languages. This rich and rewarding experience means pupils are exceptionally well equipped for their future studies.
  - Regular and rigorous lesson observations are highly effective in helping staff, who are very keen to learn from lesson observation feedback, to improve their teaching. Good use of the results from these observations leads to appropriate and effective training for individual teachers and forms an important part of regular meetings on teachers' performance and decisions about their pay and promotion.
  - The school gives pupils regular opportunities to reflect on their place in the world through its links with other schools run by the Sisters of St Louis in Africa. Pupils enthusiastically raise money for a range of local and international charities, particularly through the annual Lenten Alms events.
  - With the help of its active parent teachers association, the school has used a range of informal and social events to build links with parents, particularly those who find it difficult to work with schools. These include the annual 'Music on the Lawn' concert, family bingo and 'Bring Your Grandparents to Lunch' day. As a result, attendance at formal parents' evenings is very high.
  - Despite the recent consultation regarding its future, the school has maintained good links with the local authority, the Diocese of East Anglia and other Catholic schools in the area. In particular, expertise from the local authority has been helpful in supporting thorough and accurate self-evaluation and identifying and providing specific training for teachers.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governance is outstanding. The governors play an important role in school life. They regularly visit and meet with staff to gather evidence about how well the school is doing. Senior managers keep governors well informed about the achievement and progress of different groups of students in the school. Governors make exceptionally effective use of interactive software to track progress and hold leaders to account.
    - Governors check pay decisions for teachers. They demand that pupils' progress justifies better pay and promotion.
    - Governors understand their role very well and provide excellent challenge to senior leaders. Through rigorous planning and prudent budgeting, governors are ensuring the school's financial stability. They make sure that the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding fully meet national requirements.
-

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124863
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	412055
<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	484
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Siobhan Watson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rose Heap
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01284 753495
<b>Fax number</b>	01284 749387
<b>Email address</b>	ad.stlouismiddle.p@talk21.com

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and

skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013