

St Augustine's Catholic High School

Stonepits Lane, Hunt End, Redditch, B97 5LX

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well at this school because of good teaching, the carefully considered range of subjects they follow, and the strong quality of care and guidance they receive.
- Behaviour is good. Students have positive attitudes to learning and are respectful of each other and their school environment. This helps them to feel safe.
- The sixth form is good and prepares students well for the next stage in their lives.
- Strong leadership from the Principal means that the school's existing strengths have improved and weaknesses have been tackled well.
- The quality of teaching is good and continuing to improve. An increasing proportion is outstanding.
- Governors do a good job in supporting and challenging the work of school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet making sure that all groups of students make outstanding progress, in particular those supported by additional government funding, disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- Not all subject leaders are as good as the best in improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement in the areas for which they are responsible.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, some jointly with members of the senior leadership team, and also observed assemblies, tutor times and breaks and lunchtimes.
- The inspection team met with senior and subject leaders, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other members, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 142 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and results from the school's own surveys of staff and students.
- The inspection team analysed information about examination results, students' progress, their attendance and behaviour and other aspects of students' personal development, and achievement. They reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and its records relating to the monitoring of teaching and safeguarding of students.

Inspection team

James McNeillie, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Roisin Chambers

Additional Inspector

Robert Smith

Additional Inspector

Bob Roberts

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Students join the school in Year 9 from a number of middle schools in the Redditch area of Worcestershire.
- St Augustine's Catholic High School is similar in size to the average secondary school.
- Most students are White British with the remainder being from other White or Asian backgrounds.
- Fewer than average students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is below average, and the proportions supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are broadly average.
- A below average proportion of students at this school are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- There are currently six students attending classes at The Forge Secondary Short Stay School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of the Bishop Challoner Teaching School Alliance.
- The Principal took up his post in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase students' achievement so that all groups of students, including in the sixth form, make outstanding progress. Do this by:
 - further narrowing the gaps that exist in the achievement of students supported by the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs, and other students in the school
 - making sure that teaching consistently matches the needs and abilities of all students in the class
 - further improving the attendance of students supported by the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs in order to maximise the time they spend learning
 - making sure that all subject leaders are as good as the best in rigorously monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and students' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From joining the school in Year 9 with broadly average levels of attainment, students achieve well throughout the school, including in the sixth form, and in a wide range of subjects. Students from different heritages do equally well.
- Students' positive attitudes to learning make a considerable contribution to their achievement.
- In 2013, 74% of students achieved grade C or above in five or more GCSEs including English and mathematics which is a rise of 13 percentage points on 2012 results. Improvements in students' attainment in individual subjects such as history, information technology, health and social care and English Literature are continuing for those currently in the school.
- Overall achievement in English and mathematics has been consistently strong. Initial analysis of 2013 GCSE results show that students of different levels of abilities made outstanding progress in these subjects.
- Achievement in the sixth form is also good, although students have in the past made better progress in Year 13 than in Year 12. The number of students attaining the highest grades fluctuates, but at A level is broadly average. Wider aspects of students' achievement in the sixth form, such as attendance and progression to further and higher education, are excellent.
- Students supported by pupil premium funding are achieving better than they have in the past as a result of sensible spending of this funding and better teaching. Gaps in achievement between these students and their classmates remain, but are narrowing.
- In 2012, students supported by the pupil premium achieved less well in English than other students, typically by about one grade. In 2013, they caught up significantly because they made faster progress. In mathematics, this group of students were about two thirds to a grade behind all other students in the school. However, the 17 point increase in the proportion making expected progress in mathematics, higher than for other students, shows that they are catching up in this subject too.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is generally good. Additional support provided by specialist teachers makes a good difference in developing these students' learning. However, this is not the case in every lesson.
- More students are now attaining the highest grades at GCSE in a range of subjects than in the past. The most able pupils, particularly in English and mathematics, are learning and achieving well. School leaders are making judicious use of early entry to GCSE examinations and this policy is having a positive effect on students' learning and achievement.
- Students have generally good opportunities to use their well-developed literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects. Students who join with low reading skills make quick progress because of the effective additional support they receive. School leaders are now rightly focusing on further developing students' writing skills in subjects other than English.
- The academic achievement of students attending the short- stay school has been variable. However, all of those attending in the last academic year achieved appropriate qualifications in English and mathematics. A senior member of staff is now working closely with these students to

support them to reach their full potential in all subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching, and an increasing proportion that is outstanding, is helping students to achieve well in a range of subjects, including in the sixth form. Students enjoy lessons because they respect their teachers and appreciate the help they are given.
- A Year 9 student, in her third lesson of learning German commented, 'It's all new to me but I can already count to 20 in German and know some ways to start a conversation'. This achievement is because of outstanding teaching. In this lesson, the teacher used her expert knowledge and enthusiasm to immerse students in the language, asked carefully considered questions, and had planned activities to support and challenge students of different abilities. These strong features are consistent in the best teaching in the school.
- Much teaching fosters in students the ability to reflect on their own and other's experiences. For example, in a GCSE history lesson students were asked to think about how the people of Ypres would feel about the German army and why this would be a challenge for those representing the victors at the Treaty of Versailles.
- Good and outstanding teaching in subjects such as English, science, performing arts and in humanities subjects, helped students to learn at a good pace. In these lessons, teachers used the school's expectations of having a balance of teacher input and group and independent work to accelerate students' learning. Lessons included good visual and written stimuli, such as clips from the internet and poetry, which helped students to have a deeper understanding of the themes or topic of the lessons.
- Students in Year 10 and above described teachers' marking and feedback as helpful. Examples observed by inspectors at this early stage of the term broadly support the students' views. Timely and precise feedback in lessons on what students need to do to improve is a feature of the best teaching.
- Where teaching requires improvement, and sometimes when it is not outstanding, it is often because the activities planned do not match the needs of the students in the class well enough. Sometimes, work does not sufficiently challenge the most able students or those who struggle with the work. When this happens, those who need additional help are not given enough support by teachers or other adults in the room. On other occasions, students are not able to get started with their learning quickly enough because time is wasted when teachers talk for too long or, as reported by some students, do not quickly deal with students who go off task.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Almost all students have very good attitudes to learning in lessons with many of them keen and excited to learn. Most settle to work quickly and have the skills needed to work well independently or with each other.
- Strongly positive relationships exist between classmates and with teachers. Students from different backgrounds get on well together.
- Behaviour and students' conduct at breaks and lunchtimes are also good. There is a good level of staff supervision and students gather together to chat quietly or play games on the courts. Students are respectful of their school environment, for example by making sure that any litter is

placed in bins.

- Year 9 students, who joined the school very recently, feel well supported and welcome. They describe the good transition arrangements organised by the school as a strong contributing feature of this.
- Very few students are excluded from school because of poor behaviour. Those students who do have difficulty in managing their behaviour are very well supported and the school's records show that this work is making a positive difference.
- Attendance is above average overall. Students eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs are more likely to be absent than their classmates. However, as a result of good leadership, including in the use of the additional government funding, this is being addressed well.
- Students have a good understanding of what it means to be bullied and the hurt that can be caused by name calling. They say that this sometimes happens but that teachers and other staff are quick to tackle this. Parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire agree.
- The good behaviour in school, the few incidences of bullying and the good level of staff supervision at break times all support students in feeling safe in school. Inspectors spoke to lots of students who said that they felt safe and secure and that there was someone they could go to if they needed help. Parents also agree that their children feel safe at school.
- Opportunities for students to develop leadership skills are numerous. Sixth form students can apply to be 'ambassadors' and to have duties at lunchtimes, helping students where necessary. As well as student librarians, older students mentor younger pupils and a range of students contribute to the improvements in their local area.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal has shown an outstanding commitment in his first year at the school to building on the school's successes, improving teaching and making sure that all members of staff understand their responsibilities in raising students' achievement. A strong senior leadership team, including of the sixth form, supports him well in this, and in making sure that the caring and welcoming atmosphere of the school is maintained.
- Students are set challenging targets in all subjects and their progress towards these are tracked carefully in each year. Similarly high expectations are set for their attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Increased checks on the quality of teaching have resulted in improvements and supported school leaders in knowing well the strengths and relative weaknesses in teaching. Teachers are offered good quality support and guidance, and decisive action is taken if the standard of their work dips below an acceptable level.
- Subject leaders are increasingly held accountable for the work of their team and the progress students make. There are some clear examples of where this has made a substantial difference. There remains some variation in groups of students' achievement and this means that these leaders are not all as good as the best.
- There is a focus throughout the school on academic qualifications but a balance of good work-

related courses means that the needs and interests of the range of students are met. This good balance, which includes students able to take courses in a modern foreign language as part of their 'pathways', means that they are well prepared for future learning and work. A similarly broad range of subjects is available for study in the sixth form, with students in this school often studying more subjects than is the case in many schools.

- Students experience a wide range of sporting, spiritual, cultural and social activities organised during and out of school hours which contribute well to their strong personal development. An open-air lunchtime concert of the school's jazz band was well attended during the inspection. There are numerous subject-related trips, including a geography field trip to Dorset. School assemblies and other activities promote students' spiritual and moral development very well.
- Leaders and teachers work well in partnership with other schools and agencies and this contributes to students' good behaviour and achievement as well as the continually improving quality of teaching. This school shares its expertise as part of its involvement in the Teaching School Alliance and receives support from other good and outstanding schools.
- Keeping students safe is an integral part of the school's caring atmosphere. Leaders make sure that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has identified this school as needing only 'light touch' support. Termly meetings focus on aspects such as the quality of the school's written self-evaluation, and advisers support governors in reviewing the performance of the Principal.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors offer firm challenge and good support to the school's leaders. They know how well different groups of students are achieving in comparison to all students nationally and where gaps in achievement need to be narrowed further. Governors are aware of how and why the pupil premium funding is being spent and are involved in evaluating the impact of this spending. Governors also have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They have provided excellent support to the Principal in managing the performance of teachers, including when he has made difficult decisions, and in approving salary progression when deserved. The governors also play a vital role in promoting the moral ethos of the school.

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	116997
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	429056

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	854
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Dean
Headteacher	Anthony Quinn
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2009
Telephone number	01527 550400
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