

# St Augustine's Roman Catholic High School, Billington

Elker Lane, Billington, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 9JA

**Inspection dates** 26–27 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
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.

- Students achieve outstandingly well from their starting points across both key stages, in many subjects and particularly English and mathematics. The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics has been above the national average and rose significantly in 2013. The proportion of students securing the higher grades of A\* and A remains above national averages in the majority of subjects and many significantly above. In 2012, English did not perform as strongly as mathematics but this slight dip has been dramatically reversed.
- All groups of students, including those who receive pupil premium funding, disabled students and those with special educational needs make equally outstanding progress. Gaps in attainment between different groups have been narrowing for some time.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Relationships are good-humoured and students show their maturity in the respect they show one another and the pride they have in the school. Attitudes to learning are excellent, students possess a thirst for knowledge often seen in their high level questioning of teachers.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now outstanding. Teachers have excellent relationships with the students who respond exceptionally well to the high expectations set by teachers. The climate for learning set by students and their teachers is impressive. An improved approach to marking students' work has been introduced but is yet to have the full intended impact.
- The leadership of the headteacher, his senior leaders, subject leaders and governors is outstanding. All are ambitious for the students and provide excellent opportunities for students' development both academically and personally. Teachers have a high opinion of their leadership colleagues and of each other. They are very supportive of one another. An impressive collegiate approach to providing care and support for students and staff pervades.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including their physical well-being is supported very well. This is a hallmark of a very caring and highly cohesive place of learning and development.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 50 lessons, taught by 48 teachers. Nine lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. One assembly was visited and three tutor periods.
- They met with four groups of students representing the full range of abilities across each year group, four members of the governing body including the Chair and a representative of the local authority. In addition, they held meetings with middle leaders responsible for academic subjects, the special educational needs coordinator and members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors took account of the 314 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 71 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- They observed the school at work and looked at students' work in their books. Student attainment and progress data were analysed, as were the plans for school development and the school's view of its performance. They also scrutinized minutes of governing body meetings and a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance. In addition, they looked at information on how the school supports those students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

## Inspection team

Peter Cox, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Additional Inspector
Janet Peckett	Additional Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Augustine's is a slightly larger than average-sized 11 to 16 secondary school.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for specific groups, including looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is much lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is also low, as is the proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are below national averages.
- A very small number of students in Key Stage 4 receive part of their education off-site at either Blackburn College or Accrington and Rossendale College.
- There is no early entry for GCSE.
- The school exceeds the government's floor standards which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Ensure that every teacher uses, to best effect, the recently introduced marking policy and that a greater proportion of teachers provide written feedback in students' work that clearly indicates how they can improve.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Attainment has improved since the previous inspection as has the progress students make in their learning. All students and particularly disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve exceptionally well given their starting points on entry to the school including the securing of the higher grades of A\* and A by the most-able students.
- Year 7 funding to enable those students who find difficulty in literacy and numeracy when first starting at school is used expertly well. Impressive gains in students' confidence, skills and understanding were seen on several occasions when teachers and their assistants provided high-quality learning activities that moved students on at a rapid pace. This outstanding element was seen at the previous inspection too; this group of students continue to benefit from this high-quality provision.
- The proportions of students meeting and exceeding the nationally expected rates of progress in English and mathematics are, overall, above national figures for all groups of students and have been for some time. According to the school's accurate tracking of students' progress, rates in 2013 are even higher, as was confirmed during lesson observations and scrutiny of students' work in their books.
- Pupil premium funding is used highly effectively helping secure rapid improvements over the last three years. In 2013, the gap between the attainment in English and mathematics of Year 11 students eligible for free school meals, in comparison to others, continues to narrow rapidly. Achievement of these students in English matches that of their peers and in mathematics the small difference in their learning compared with those not entitled to the funding is closing quickly.
- The outstanding quality of teaching, together with students' excellent attitudes to learning, contributes to students' high levels of progress and examination results across many subjects. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is extremely well developed. As a result, their confidence and mature outlook together with their academic success prepares them very well for their next stages in life.
- Those students who attend college are progressing well. The school knows this because of the regular updates it receives.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Students attain very well because of the outstanding progress they make in their learning as a result of the very high-quality teaching they receive over time in their school. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, none is inadequate and a significant proportion is outstanding.
- Teachers and their assistants have very high expectations and use their secure subject knowledge and often stimulating resources to teach difficult concepts. In lessons the pace of learning is rapid and students have opportunities during and at the end of lessons to reflect on the progress they have made. The relationships between students and staff are excellent resulting in highly focused learning in all subjects and year groups.
- Many lessons provide high levels of challenge for students. Teachers and their assistants skilfully question students in order to deepen their understanding and accelerate learning. Students ask probing questions of their teachers too. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson the teacher expertly used a question from a student that reshaped the teaching and learning and allowed the students further investigation and ultimate success in finding the answer.
- Students are always encouraged to work with others to help develop their understanding in addition to working independently when required. Students understand their ambitious targets and how to achieve them. Teachers regularly check students' progress during lessons and make any necessary adjustments to help ensure students stay on track. Marking in books would be

even more effective if the next steps for students to take to achieve their targets were more explicit. All teachers encourage students to take responsibility by involving them in self-assessment of their work. Helping assess each other's work is a regular feature of lessons and helps secure further learning.

- Students take great pride in their work. Books are well kept and work neatly laid out. Outstanding progress over time was seen in many subjects and all year groups. Of particular note was a Year 7 nurture group learning basic number skills of adding, subtracting and multiplication. The gaps in their knowledge on entry to the school in September were wide but had narrowed significantly as was evidenced in the neatly laid out mathematics work in their books in which they took much pride.

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

- Students think highly of their school and are immensely proud to belong to a caring, nurturing centre for learning. They wear their uniform with equal pride and behave exceptionally well around the school and particularly when waiting for one of the 14 buses used to take them home. Prefects take their responsibilities seriously and with a smile. They contribute very well to ensuring a safe, harmonious and well ordered environment.
- Staff are equally proud to be a part of St Augustine's. This highly positive attitude from adults helps promote a strong sense of belonging and students' love of learning in the classroom. Staff genuinely care for students' well-being. Students respect one another and hold their teachers and other adults in high regard. They are polite, respectful and highly considerate. Nothing is too much trouble for students when asked to escort visitors to classrooms. At these times they demonstrated a genuine interest in the inspection team and were keen to know how well the school was doing.
- Students' excellent attitudes to learning are of an equally high standard across all subjects and year groups. They focus on their learning very well and always attempt to do their best. A significant strength is the way that students challenge teachers when they are unsure about anything. They do this with respectful confidence and secure in the knowledge that their peers will not ridicule them. Students learn independently and when working in pairs or groups, classrooms are highly productive environments.
- Attendance is above the national average and consistently so for all groups of students. Students arrive promptly for the start of their lessons because they are keen to learn.
- Students feel exceptionally safe in school. They are aware of bullying in all its forms and report any incidents when they occur, but these are very rare. The school deals with any unacceptable behaviour effectively. Exclusions and behaviour logs show a declining number of incidents over time due to the school's successful promotion of its values and beliefs that helps create a stronger school community.
- Students attending alternative courses at college are kept safe; the school knows this because of regular visits to review the provision offered and the assessment of risk.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher along with his committed leadership team relentlessly drives school improvement, reinforcing the school's high expectations at every opportunity. Students speak well of the headteacher and describe him as 'approachable', 'kind' and 'always willing to stop and talk to us'. Leaders and managers at every level, including governors, are ambitious for all students and determined to provide the highest quality education for them. Consequently, the school has improved from being good at the time of the previous inspection to outstanding now. There is no complacency and this striving for excellence demonstrates that the school can continue to provide high-quality education.
- Robust monitoring of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' progress has led to an improvement in classroom practice throughout the school since the previous inspection.

Teachers are committed to improving and the school is very effective in developing them as skilled professionals. Performance targets for teachers are closely related to students' achievement and overall school priorities. In the joint lesson observations, senior leaders and inspectors agreed with each other on the evidence gathered and the judgements. The school's evaluation of the quality of teaching accurately judges it to be outstanding. Other judgements contained in the school's own evaluation of its provision and the resultant outcomes are accurate too.

- The curriculum is well constructed and managed. Courses are matched very well to students' interests, abilities and needs. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of the high-quality curriculum, teaching and personal development provided by the school. There exists a strong sense of social responsibility and awareness that all students buy into. Leaders monitor with a high degree of rigour and regularity the quality of the courses at the school and those on offer at the partner colleges where a small number of students attend. The outstanding nurture group is particularly successful in integrating students into life at the school.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View is supportive of the school and would recommend it to others.
- The school promotes and regularly checks that all students have the same opportunities to excel.
- The local authority provides good quality support from time to time. It regards the school as one without any concerns and regards their support as a 'light touch.'
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very well informed and challenges yet supports the leaders and managers to ensure they are doing the best for the students and staff. Governors understand how well students are achieving in relation to others nationally and the performance of different groups of students. They ensure that the pupil premium funding is used to its best effect and understand the narrowing of gaps in students' attainment and progress. They regularly challenge the headteacher over what is being done to ensure that standards rise further.
  - Governors ensure the financial integrity of the school and ensure that teachers' salaries are linked to their performance targets and make considered judgements when deciding whether or not a teacher should progress along the salary scales.
  - Governors meet their responsibility in ensuring that safeguarding meets 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>	119801
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	429211

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1068
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip Gunn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Wright
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 January 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 823362
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