

# St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Riversmead, Hoddesdon, EN11 8DP

**Inspection dates** 16–17 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher's clear vision of what she wants for the school and her ambition for it, are helping to create an environment in which all pupils can achieve success.
- Good leadership at all levels has secured good teaching and achievement. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average.
- Procedures to keep pupils safe and the behaviour of pupils are outstanding. Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning mean they make the most of the opportunities offered.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Relationships are characterised by high levels of respect and tolerance.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership roles, both within school and in their local communities. These experiences ensure that pupils are given a good grounding for life which prepares them very well for life in modern democratic Britain.
- Provision in the Early Years is good. As a result of good teaching, children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress. They are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and organised to provide interesting and engaging activities. The school's good curriculum is contributing well to the achievement and personal development of all pupils.
- Support for disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs is strong and enables them to achieve well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to plan activities which support effectively those pupils who require additional assistance.
- Attendance has improved and is above average.
- Governors provide very good support for school leaders and are actively involved in checking the school's work. They hold leaders to account for continued improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While the more-able pupils make good progress, their learning is sometimes held back when they are set tasks that are not sufficiently demanding.
- Teachers do not always question pupils in a way that helps to extend their thinking and learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher and two were with the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made short visits to eight lessons.
- The inspectors talked with two groups of pupils, as well as individual pupils during lessons and at playtimes, to find out their views about the school. The team completed a scrutiny of pupils' English and mathematics books to establish the quality of pupils' work. They heard two groups of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, leaders, staff and several governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. A further discussion was held by telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement, records of lesson observations, information on pupils' progress, and work in pupils' books. They also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors looked at pupils' work on display throughout the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and parents' comments. They checked information on the school's website, and took into consideration the 18 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janice Martin	Additional Inspector
Graham Gossage	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs identified as SEN support is below average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is 4%, which is also below average. The number of these pupils who are supported by an additional education, health or care plan is very small.
- At fewer than one in ten, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Major building work is nearing completion. The library and several new teaching rooms have been remodelled.
- In September 2014, several new teachers, including two newly qualified teachers, started at the school.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club on the school site, managed by the governing body.

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

- Increase the rate of progress and so raise achievement even further by ensuring that:
  - teachers set more challenging work for more-able pupils
  - teachers' questioning checks on pupils' understanding and extends their thinking.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong direction with clear lines of accountability; so all staff know what is expected of them. Leaders at all levels have high expectations of pupils and are ambitious for the school. Leaders' capacity to improve the school further is good, as indicated by their record of improvements to date.
- The school's self check of its strengths and areas for development is detailed and accurate. This is used well to identify the priorities to be tackled to bring about improvement.
- The school sets demanding targets for pupils and tracks their progress regularly, so that underperformance is quickly identified and appropriate support is put in place.
- Well-directed training for teachers is helping to improve the quality of teaching, and leaders have taken effective action to tackle underperformance. Checks on teaching ensure that only teachers who demonstrate strong performance move up the pay scale. Governors check these arrangements carefully.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to purchase extra resources, provide additional teaching and one-to-one support, and to enable disadvantaged pupils to take part in school trips and after-school clubs. Consequently, these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils are taught to be caring, reflective and responsible, with a keen interest in both the running of the school and in the world around them. Some of them take part in evaluating on a weekly basis the quality of teaching and learning they receive, others have worked with the governors to set the budget, and some are members of the school chaplaincy team. In all these roles, they have made a strong contribution to the development of their school.
- Pupils develop respect for and understanding of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles, and are very well prepared for life in modern democratic Britain. The school has earned the Investors in Pupils award, as part of which pupils have discovered how their school is run, their role in it and how they can make a difference. A wide range of additional activities helps pupils develop broader skills and extends their learning. Lunchtime and after-school clubs, including music, cheer leader and sports clubs, are immensely popular.
- Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it meets the new national guidelines. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and it is promoting literacy and numeracy skills effectively across all subjects.
- The school receives effective support from the local authority and this has provided a clear focus for senior staff to help make planned improvements. With the support of the local authority, the school is developing its preferred approach to assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels, and is dealing effectively with the challenges that this brings.
- The school is making very good use of the additional primary sports funding to enhance provision and widen opportunities for all pupils. It has purchased new equipment and forged stronger links with other schools and local sports clubs. As a result, the number of pupils taking part in sporting events and after-school clubs has increased.
- Pastoral care for pupils is strength of the school. One parent wrote to inspectors and described the school as offering a 'first-class, personal, cultural and social education', adding, 'It is a learning community that is vibrant and alive.'
- Equal opportunities for different groups of pupils are promoted well and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very supportive of the school, but nevertheless rigorous in the way it holds school leaders to account. The range of skills and expertise of governors enables them to ask school leaders searching questions.
- Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school, how good teaching is, how well pupils achieve and those areas that still require improvement. They are fully informed about the use and impact of pupil premium and sport funding.
- Governors have a clear understanding of targets set for teachers and how these contribute to improving teaching and achievement. Salary progression is carefully considered and proceeds only where there is clear evidence to support it.
- Governors are instrumental in setting the strategic direction for the school, and make a valid and valued contribution to improvement planning and self-evaluation. Over several years, they have planned to refurbish the learning environment and the work to include a refurbished library and classrooms is almost complete.
- Governors ensure financial probity, and carry out their statutory safeguarding duties with diligence to ensure that all national safeguarding requirements are fully met.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their above-average attendance. Pupils move about the school in a calm, orderly way, and they are exceptionally polite and friendly. They were very happy to talk to inspectors about their work and their school.
- Pupils behave equally well in the playground, around the school and when working with other adults outside the classroom. They look smart and take care of the environment.
- Pupils' high level of motivation and keen desire to achieve their best is evident in all lessons. They settle to work quickly at the start of lessons, listen attentively to teachers and each other, and respond immediately to instructions.
- Pupils make a positive contribution to the school in various leadership roles, and they are very proud of their involvement in making changes to the school through the pupils' teaching and learning committee and membership of the chaplaincy team. Year 6 pupils are excellent role models for younger pupils; they set a good example of impeccable behaviour.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Diversity is celebrated across different subjects. Pupils show the utmost respect for different faiths and cultures, and they are aware of the dangers of extremism and of stereotyping. Pupils develop a range of skills to help them contribute fully to life in modern Britain.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding and most parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children feel safe in school. A large number of pupils were spoken with informally and they were unequivocal in their view that they feel extremely safe in school.
- Pupils are friendly, caring and supportive. Their teachers have established excellent relationships, which means that pupils are confident to talk to staff should they have any problems in or out of school. Staff help pupils develop excellent personal skills and achieve good academic standards.
- Pupils say they are not aware of any bullying in school. They are confident, however, that if any problems should arise – for example, pupils 'falling out' with each other – staff help them deal with it quickly and fairly. In discussions, pupils show that they have an excellent awareness of different types of bullying, including prejudiced-based and cyber-bullying. Pupils have an excellent understanding of e-safety.
- School leaders continually review and update safeguarding procedures, so that staff are very sure about

what to do if they have concerns about a pupils' safety. Support for the most vulnerable pupils is excellent; it successfully helps these pupils overcome barriers to learning and ensures their safety. The links with referral agencies ensure that information is appropriately shared and concerns are acted on quickly.

- Attendance is above average. Persistent absenteeism has continued to reduce, particularly among vulnerable pupils. There has not been any permanent exclusion for a number of years.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs provide an excellent start and end to the day for those who attend.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and manage their classes extremely well. The strong and positive relationships between staff and pupils are a major factor in pupils' enjoyment of school and their willingness to work hard and improve their work.
- Lessons are planned to be interesting and relevant, and most succeed, particularly since the introduction of lessons based on themes that run across different subjects and within which literacy and numeracy skills are practised.
- Imaginative strategies and exciting resources are often used to capture pupils' interest. An example is when starting off English work on the theme 'Land Ahoy' pupils were taken to see the *Golden Hind*. Inspectors could see how pupils clearly enjoyed and were motivated by the tasks associated with the first-hand knowledge they had gained, and they remained engaged and enthusiastic throughout the lesson.
- Pupils throughout the school read enthusiastically. From an early age, pupils use their developing knowledge of the sounds letters make (phonics) to read in school and at home. Older pupils talk about their favourite authors and regularly help younger pupils with their reading.
- Teachers use guided reading sessions well to help pupils improve their reading and comprehension skills. They ensure that the content of these sessions is linked well to literacy lessons, either through the topic or in the focus for their writing. This was exemplified during a Year 6 activity, where pupils were able to draw on what they had learned about the life of Nelson Mandela, with most pupils able to explain the deeper issues of apartheid.
- Pupils write for a range of different purposes and can adapt their style to suit different audiences. They have opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects; for example, when writing about the famous reformers in a history topic.
- In mathematics, pupils are challenged to do well and teachers provide enjoyable ways to consolidate the basic skills that pupils can successfully build on.
- Teachers regularly set homework, much of which is completed and marked online. This helps pupils to consolidate and extend their learning. Marking is frequent. It clearly and consistently tells pupils how they can improve their work. All understand the 'even better if' system.
- The specific learning needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are understood well, and these pupils are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants, either in class or in smaller group or one-to-one sessions. The small number of disadvantaged pupils also make good progress because their individual needs are also understood well and appropriate support is provided.
- Teachers' planning, observations in lessons and work in pupils' books, show that most of the work undertaken by pupils successfully matches their ability and moves their learning forward. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn at the start of the lesson, but they do not always question pupils enough in order to check how well they have understood or to extend their thinking. On occasions, the work set is not challenging enough, especially for the most-able pupils.

**The achievement of pupils is good**

- After a good start in the Early Years, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 2. Progress continues and accelerates in Key Stage 2. The proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in mathematics and English in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests has increased year-on-year and is well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that pupils are well prepared for their next schools.
- School information and the, as yet, unpublished results for 2014 show standards that are again likely to be above national averages. The knowledge and understanding of the current Year 6 pupils, and their work, demonstrate that all pupils are on track to make the progress expected of them and a significant proportion to make more than the expected progress. They are securely on track to maintain above-average standards by the end of Year 6 in 2015.
- Pupils achieve well in reading, and pupils read widely and often, both in school and at home. In the 2013 Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make), the proportion reaching the required level was well above average, and the proportion was even higher in 2014. Pupils make rapid progress because they have an excellent knowledge of phonics and have many opportunities to use what they have learned.
- In mathematics, basic skills are taught well. Across the school, teachers make sure that pupils have the opportunity to use and develop their basic numeracy skills in a range of other subjects.
- Pupils write in a wide range of formats. Their writing is interesting and well planned, including regular opportunities to write in their topic work.
- Early identification of pupils who have additional learning needs, enables the school to make effective provision for the very small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They make good progress because they are given activities well matched to their individual abilities and needs. The school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity is excellent.
- Where needed, extra support is provided for the small number of disadvantaged pupils. They typically make good progress. The group is too small to compare accurately the standards they achieve by the end of Year 6 with others in the school or with pupils nationally.
- All groups of pupils make similarly good progress across the school. However, the progress made by some pupils is not as fast as it could be because the work set is sometimes not challenging enough, especially for some of the most-able pupils. As a result, their progress is good but not yet outstanding. Although a good number attain Level 5, not enough attain the higher Level 6.

**The early years provision is good**

- The Early Years is led effectively. The Early Years leader knows the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and has well thought through plans for improvement. Children are known and cared for as individuals throughout their time in the Nursery and Reception classes and, as a result, they settle in quickly. Leaders have created stimulating learning environments, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Adults rigorously track the progress children make and use this information to plan future activities that will build on children's knowledge and skills. Consequently, all groups of children make good progress in the Early Years. Links between home and school are excellent, and a meaningful learning partnership is forged.
- Supportive relationships between adults and children help develop confidence and a positive attitude to learning. Children become enthusiastic learners who love to talk about what they are doing. They display high levels of curiosity and sustained concentration. During the inspection, children shared equipment and

talked confidently to each other.

- Children benefit from good teaching and they are provided with a wide range of tasks and activities which cover all the areas of learning. They are encouraged to discover things for themselves and to develop an enquiring mind. They make a good start in their reading, writing and numeracy.
- Children play and learn together well and their behaviour is good. They quickly learn the routines established in the classroom that help them to get along with each other well.
- Interactions between adults and children are excellent. This was observed when the children had just been discussing the story of *Goldilocks*, and the class teacher asked the class not to wake up the sleeping mummy bear as they went out for lunch. The children responded with exemplary consideration as they left in silence on tiptoe.
- Children are very safe and secure in the Early Years. The provision is checked regularly to make sure that children are safe, and that staff are very well trained in all aspects of safeguarding.



## 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>	117438
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448502

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	258
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jacqueline Harvey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hayley Francis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 463549
<b>Fax number</b>	01992 446263
<b>Email address</b>	admin@staugustines.herts.sch.uk

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