

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Henshall Avenue, Latchford, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 1PY

Inspection dates 14–15 June 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been relentless in eradicating underperformance across the school. As a result, both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have greatly improved since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance.
- Staff morale is high. Staff hold their leaders in high regard, appreciate the positive difference that the wealth of training has made to their practice and know that leaders listen to and act on their ideas.
- Middle leaders are very effective and make a good contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Early years provision has improved and is now good. Children make strong progress and achieve good levels of development, above the national average.
- Governors have made sure that they have the levels of skill and knowledge required to be effective. They challenge leaders and hold staff to account.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics across the school. Work in pupils' books and school's own assessment data are testament to the rapidly improving standards in writing in all classes.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They like their teachers and are enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils are kind, cooperative and courteous to one another. Parents say that their children are safe and well cared for.
- Pupils are keen to help those less fortunate than themselves. They regularly raise money for and make donations to local and international charities.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as others in the school. Those who speak English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress from their different starting points.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Efforts to improve attendance have not been sufficiently effective. As a result, pupils' attendance is still below the national average.
- Too few of the most able pupils achieve standards above those expected for their age, particularly in writing.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take further action to make sure that attendance improves, until it is at least in line with the national average for primary schools.
- Further raise the quality of teaching so that pupils' achievement continues to improve, particularly that of the most able, by:
 - raising expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve in writing
 - making sure that teachers plan lessons which offer high levels of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers further refine their questioning skills so that pupils are encouraged to think at a deeper level.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has been unrelenting in her determination to drive up standards since the previous inspection. She has ensured that no-one is in any doubt that the pupils of St Augustine's can achieve the highest standards. She has worked hard to develop a school which staff, parents and pupils are proud to be a part of.
- The senior leaders have successfully eradicated the inadequate teaching seen during the previous inspection. They have worked alongside teaching staff to strengthen the quality of teaching across school.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Everyone knows what their role is in working towards the performance targets set by leaders.
- The headteacher is committed to bringing out the best in each and every member of her team. She makes sure that all members of staff receive the training and support they need to be successful. As a result, she enjoys the respect and loyalty of her staff: as one teacher explained, 'We are all a team but we know who our leader is.'
- Leaders have created a culture where everyone feels confident to share their views and try new ideas. At the beginning of the academic year, leaders introduced a new approach to assessment. It very quickly became apparent that this approach was not providing the school with the information needed. The deputy head designed a bespoke system for St Augustine's in response to teachers' feedback. The new assessment system has proved to work well.
- Senior leaders have an accurate overview of pupils' attainment and progress. They hold teachers to account and put additional support in place for pupils that they can see are falling behind. As a result, more pupils than previously are on track to achieve age-related expectations this year.
- The headteacher has invested in senior and middle leaders, enabling them to flourish in their roles. The teacher-in-charge of mathematics and the temporary teacher-in-charge of English are highly ambitious for the pupils in the school. They have a well-informed, accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects. As a result, the actions they have put in place are having a positive impact on raising standards across school. Moreover, they have worked with teachers to develop an approach to teaching which engages and enthuses pupils in their learning, for example the recent whole-school writing project based on 'The Tin Forest'.
- The well-designed curriculum ensures that pupils have ample opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills while securing their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Senior leaders are refining and improving the curriculum model to help pupils connect their learning, for example by bringing together the teaching of history and geography. The school uses religious education lessons well to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. School leaders ensure that pupils' success across the curriculum is celebrated through high-quality displays around school, regular posts on Twitter, school newsletters and assemblies.
- The curriculum is further enhanced by extra-curricular clubs such as sewing, guitar and football. Pupils, trained by Chester University, run a 'Change for Life' club which helps their peers to make healthy lifestyle choices. Pupils' learning is also enriched by trips and visits such as a history trip to Chester Museum and a residential trip to Anglesey for pupils to take part in outdoor, adventurous activities.
- Sports funding is directed with good effect by school leaders. They have prioritised the development of teachers' skills and knowledge through the provision of specialist sports coaches. The school has focused on developing pupils' skills in hockey, football, gymnastics so that next year they will be able to take part in inter-schools competitions through the local schools' sports partnership. Pupils have already had the opportunity to represent the school in a local tag rugby festival.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding (additional funding provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) to good effect. Senior leaders closely monitor the performance of these pupils and ensure that the additional funding is used well so that disadvantaged pupils achieve their full potential. As a result, the performance of disadvantaged pupils is improving in line with that of their classmates across the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is good. Following the previous inspection, governors took some time to accept and act on the findings. However, since they commissioned the external review of governance they have been resolute in their determination to make a valuable contribution to improving the school's performance. As a result, they now have a detailed and accurate view of the school, informed through analysis of

performance data, reports from school leaders and their regular visits to school. They have made sure that they now have the skills and expertise needed to provide effective support to the school.

- Governors ensure that finances are well managed. For example, they carefully considered the potential advantages and disadvantages of the deputy headteacher not having his own class this year and have kept a close eye on the positive difference his hands-on support is making to the quality of teaching across the school.
- Governors have a robust understanding of their statutory duties and discharge them efficiently and effectively.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The culture of vigilance across the school ensures that staff are meticulous in ensuring that concerns are followed up as a matter of urgency and record-keeping is accurate. Staff keep up to date with their training and are aware of local issues which could pose a risk to pupils at the school. The pastoral lead works closely with pupils and their families to provide help as and when it is needed. As a result, pupils feel safe in school and parents know that their children are well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked tirelessly since the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching. Their hard work has paid dividends. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has significantly improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching staff speak highly of the positive impact of the support from senior leaders in improving their practice. Excellent professional relationships have ensured that teaching staff feel confident to ask leaders for help, take on board advice and guidance and have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of their practice. As a result, teachers at all stages of their career as well as teaching assistants continually refine and improve their practice. This has had a positive impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers systematically check on pupils' learning. They plan lessons which tackle misconceptions, deepen understanding or introduce new learning as appropriate. They use their knowledge of pupils' learning in writing and reading to make links across the curriculum to reinforce key skills such as spelling.
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge helps them to provide clear explanations which are easily understood by pupils. They model subject-specific technical vocabulary and plan well-considered lessons which excite and enthuse pupils. The overwhelming majority of pupils like school and are keen to participate in lessons. For example, during the inspection, Year 4 pupils were delighted when the teacher shared the new class book. Pupils excitedly talked about the illustrations and made predictions about the events which might unfold.
- Pupils' work in books, classroom displays and observations in lessons confirm that teachers are setting increasingly challenging tasks which check pupils' understanding and deepen their learning. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 took on the role of teachers to mark an anonymous pupil's calculation work. The pupils identified which questions the pupil had answered incorrectly, identified the errors which had been made and wrote explanations to tackle the pupil's misconceptions.
- The whole-staff focus on developing skills in questioning is making a positive difference. While there are still some missed opportunities, for the most part adults use questioning well to assess pupils' understanding and deepen their learning. Pupils listen carefully to each other and older pupils are confident to challenge their peers appropriately when they do not agree with an answer.
- Pupils present their work to a high standard. Pupils take pride in their work, setting it out with care. They have made marked improvements to their handwriting. Pupils use the range of resources thoughtfully displayed in their classrooms to help them improve their work. Recently, dictionaries have been made available on every table in the key stage 2 classrooms. Pupils have responded well to encouragement by their teachers to use the dictionaries to check spellings and definitions, taking greater responsibility for refining and improving their work.
- There has been a noticeable improvement in the impact of teaching assistants on pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed for the most part; as a result, support staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in lessons. Teaching assistants provide effective support to a wide range of pupils, ensuring that they are all able to access the appropriate learning for their year group. However, occasionally, teachers do not make as effective use of these staff as they could.
- Pupils say they find the feedback given by their teachers helpful. Work in books shows that they pay heed to the comments of their teachers and these help them to improve their work. However, pupils are not

always provided with sufficient time in which they can complete extra tasks or make corrections set by their teacher and sometimes these additional tasks are not followed up.

- Teachers do not give the most able pupils sufficient opportunity to attain the very highest standards. Often, the tasks set do not provide enough challenge so that pupils improve the effectiveness of their writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils, and children in the early years, work and play harmoniously in school. They are caring and considerate towards each other, sharing resources and helping each other. The Christian values which underpin the school's mission statement are a golden thread running through every aspect of school life.
- Pupils are encouraged to notice the thoughtful deeds of others. Pupils are zealous in reporting these good deeds to members of the school council who record the deed on a 'leaf' and hang it on the 'Tree of Respect' in the school hall.
- From the youngest to the oldest, pupils are encouraged to help those less fortunate than themselves. For example, Nursery pupils raise money for a children's charity through their 'Giant Wiggle', a sponsored walk.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. A small group of pupils have been trained as 'Junior Police Constable Support Officers' (JPCSOs). Their work to promote cycling, walking and more sustainable travel have earned the school a Bronze Modeshift Award from the Department of Transport. The JPCSOs have encouraged parents to park more responsibly near school and organised safe-cycling sessions for their classmates.
- Pupils enjoy learning about languages, religions and foods from around the world. For example, all classes contributed to a recent assembly, focussing on Judaism, which parents also attended. However, pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for life in modern Britain. School leaders, including governors, have not ensured that they provide sufficient planned opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of the diverse groups that make up modern Britain. As a result, pupils can sometimes call each other names and share viewpoints which are at odds with the school's ethos and values.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils listen attentively in class, move around school in a calm and orderly manner and treat adults and each other with respect. Pupils spoke politely to inspectors during their visit.
- Well-established routines, high expectations and the vigilance of staff ensure that pupils conduct themselves well throughout the school day. Those pupils who find it more challenging to manage their own behaviour are well supported by staff, who liaise closely with external agencies to access specialist advice as appropriate.
- The rare occurrences of bullying are, for the most part, dealt with effectively by staff. Although pupils say there is some name-calling, they feel that this has reduced. Pupils trust adults to resolve any issues.
- Staff ensure that lessons get off to a prompt start and no learning time is lost following breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils follow instructions quickly and have the correct equipment to hand so that interruptions to learning are minimal.
- Pupils' attendance has improved this year. However, it remains below national average. The headteacher has put in place rigorous systems for following up on every pupil absence and the school supports families who are struggling to maintain regular school attendance for their child. These actions have made a positive difference to the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, whose attendance is now broadly in line with that of other pupils.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- The quality of pupils' work in books, learning in lessons, the 2015 test results and the school's own assessment data for 2016 all provide evidence of the improvements in standards across the school. In the early years and key stage 2, the legacy of previous inadequate teaching has been eliminated and in key stage 1 good teaching is making sure that pupils are catching up quickly.
- Achievement in writing has historically lagged behind that in reading and mathematics at the end of key

stages 1 and 2. While outcomes in writing have improved steadily since the previous inspection at the end of key stage 2, there has been little improvement at the end of key stage 1.

- However, current pupils' books and the school's own assessment information demonstrate the accelerated progress of pupils across the school as a result of the actions put in place by the temporary teacher-in-charge of English. She completed a detailed analysis of pupils' writing, identifying the key issues, and the targeted actions she has put in place are making a positive difference. As a result, the proportions of pupils working at age-related expectations in writing have increased across all classes. Therefore standards in writing are catching up with those in reading and mathematics.
- Standards of spelling, grammar and punctuation have shown a marked improvement. The school's systematic approach to addressing pupils' historic underperformance in this area has resulted in rapid improvements in outcomes. As pupils become more secure in their knowledge in this area, they are using their skills to refine and improve their independent writing.
- Pupils' work in mathematics shows a shift in expectations because of improvements in the quality of teaching. As a result, standards in mathematics have improved since the previous inspection at key stage 1 and most notably at key stage 2. The high-quality support from the teacher-in-charge of mathematics has ensured that teachers' good subject knowledge, increased familiarity with the content of the national curriculum and accurate assessments help them to plan successful lessons that ensure that pupils grasp key skills and knowledge. Teachers regularly plan opportunities for pupils to reason and solve problems. This approach has helped pupils to deepen their understanding.
- Teachers instil a love of reading in pupils. The judicious choice of texts ignites a passion in pupils and they talk enthusiastically about their favourite genres and authors. The impact of the school's improved teaching of reading has been most notable in key stage 2 results, which in 2015 rose to above the national average.
- The improvements to the quality of teaching in early years and key stage 1 have ensured that current pupils get off to a good start, acquiring key reading skills well. As a result, a greater proportion of younger pupils are now working at age-related expectations than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Improvements in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) ensure that more pupils are meeting the expected standard by the end of Year 1 than was previously the case. The proportion of current pupils who are on track to meet the expected standard is closer to the national average than in previous years.
- The outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 has improved year on year since the previous inspection. Work in books and the school's own assessment data clearly show that the progress that current disadvantaged pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics is at least in line with their peers.
- The strong leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that these pupils make the rapid progress needed to keep up with their peers. These leaders have robust systems and procedures in place to make sure that teachers deliver the additional support agreed through the school's plans for these pupils.
- The school's raised expectations for less-able pupils means that these pupils are making even better progress across school than previously. Teachers' planning ensures that these pupils are well supported to access the same learning as their classmates.
- Too few of the most able pupils are exceeding expectations. Over the past two years, the proportions of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading and mathematics have increased at the end of both key stages 1 and 2. However, too few pupils are achieving above age-related expectations at the end of each key stage in writing.

Early years provision

is good

- The headteacher and early years team acted swiftly to address the concerns raised, during a monitoring visit, about the achievement of pupils in early years. They used the findings from an external review to identify changes that needed to be put in place. As a result of the improved provision, children in early years are making good progress from their different starting points and the proportions of children reaching age-related expectations in 2016 is likely to be above the national average.
- Most children have knowledge and skills below those typical for their age when they join the school. Previously, most children did not make sufficient progress to close the gap with their peers nationally. However, the large majority of children now achieve good levels of development and some children are

working above the standard expected for their age.

- The investment in training for staff has paid dividends. Teachers' increased confidence and competence have raised their expectations of what the children can achieve. Teaching staff ask probing questions which encourage children to think deeply and help adults check children's levels of understanding. As a result, children in Reception are able to confidently add and subtract numbers up to and beyond 20 as well as write simple sentences to re-tell familiar stories which can be read by themselves and others.
- Pupils are excited by learning and enjoy the wealth of activities available. Teachers and support staff skilfully create opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills in literacy and numeracy throughout the day. During the inspection, some children were carefully following instructions they had written about how to plant a sunflower seed, and others were excitedly writing a list of minibeasts they had found in the garden.
- The early years team use the information they gather about children through regular assessments to help them plan targeted support for pupils, whatever their obstacles to learning may be. As a result, all pupils make good progress from their different starting points, including disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs or disability.
- The children in the Reception class are well prepared for their move into key stage 1. Staff take time to share information about each of the children with the Year 1 teacher prior to the summer holidays. Children make visits to their new classroom to become familiar with the environment, adults and routines. As a result, pupils get off to a good start in Year 1.
- The early years team works well with parents. Their 'open door' policy means that parents are encouraged to stay and play each morning when they drop their children off. Staff are highly skilled at helping children who join the early years setting mid-year to settle in well.
- Children behave sensibly and safely both indoors and outdoors. Teaching staff take every opportunity to teach children about keeping themselves safe. For example, during the inspection, children took great care in putting pins away after fixing shapes to a cork board, as well as putting on gardening gloves when planting seeds.
- Safeguarding arrangements for the early years provision are effective. Well-established routines and the watchful eyes of staff ensure that children are safe and well cared for. This view is corroborated by parents.

School details

Unique reference number	111309
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10011661

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Morgan
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Mrs Andrea Towey
Telephone number	01925 633317
Website	www.st-augustines-warrington.co.uk
Email address	st_augustines_primary@warrington.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April–1 May 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has an increasing number of children with English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, including joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, members of staff, representatives of the governing body and representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, school improvement planning, assessment information and reports on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during the school day and observed them during playtime and lunch. They also met formally with a group of pupils to talk about their learning, behaviour and safety. Inspectors made note of the 39 responses they received to the inspection questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors heard a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors took note of displays around the school.
- A range of pupils' books were checked jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents and took note of the 12 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire).
- Inspectors also considered the 12 responses they received to the inspection questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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