

# St Augustine's Catholic Academy

Sandon Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 7DF

## Inspection dates

4–5 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The rate of progress and standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils are not consistently good, and remain below those of other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2.
- The differences in progress and attainment of the most able pupils, compared with those of similar pupils nationally, are not diminishing.
- Rates of progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are uneven.
- Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics are at an early stage of development.
- Planned outdoor tasks in the early years do not allow children sufficient opportunity to develop mathematical skills.
- Pupils' attendance is below average, but is improving over time.

### The school has the following strengths

- The principal, leaders and governors provide good leadership. They recognised a dip in attainment and have established clear priorities to resolve previous weaknesses. Their effective actions are improving teaching and helping to increase pupils' progress.
- Academy representatives are well informed and ambitious for the school's improvement.
- The quality of teaching has improved quickly as a result of leaders' actions and is consistently good. Work set now more closely matches pupils' starting points.
- Phonics is taught well. The proportion of pupils reaching the required level in Year 1 is improving and is now above the national average.
- Pupils work hard and are well behaved, polite and respectful. Relationships between adults and pupils ensure that pupils feel safe. Arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe are effective.
- Leadership and teaching are good in the early years and children make good progress. Children make a positive start to their time in school.

## Full report

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

- Secure continued improvements in pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics so the proportion achieving and exceeding expected attainment for their age increases by:
  - making sure that the pupil premium effectively supports disadvantaged pupils by identifying particular learning needs, providing specific timely support and regularly reviewing progress
  - evaluating, and where necessary adapting, the support and interventions for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - keeping a closer focus on the progress of most-able pupils as part of regular reviews and discussions.
- Ensure that leaders check on how well pupils are doing in subjects across the whole of the curriculum over time.
- Extend opportunities for children in the early years to develop mathematical skills, particularly number and reasoning, in the outdoor learning environment.
- Maintain the rate of improvement in attendance and reduction in the proportion of pupils who are away from the school too often by renewing efforts to engage with families that are harder to reach.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The recently appointed principal has an infectious energy and enthusiasm for the school and is impatient in her ambition to improve outcomes for all pupils. This vision is shared by other staff at the school, who are supportive of leaders' decisions and actions. Strong leadership is now resolving prior weaknesses and forging ahead with changes.
- In the past, pupils did not achieve well in key stage 2 because of high rates of absence of staff and poor leadership. These issues have been tackled effectively and successfully by the All Saints Catholic Collegiate, resulting in new structures of leadership and new appointments. This has resulted in strong leadership, better teaching and improving outcomes.
- Leaders and academy representatives meticulously evaluate a wide range of accurate information to form a realistic view of how well the school is doing. They use this to create clear plans for improvement. This approach has led to improvements in teaching and, although it is early days, is starting to have an impact on improving outcomes.
- There is an open and outward-facing culture among leaders. They value the challenge and support that they receive in equal measure. Leaders at all levels, particularly those new in post, benefit from working with colleagues at other schools within All Saints Catholic Collegiate. Middle leaders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are rigorously held to account by senior leaders and academy representatives. However, as some are new in post, their effectiveness in improving outcomes has yet to be demonstrated.
- Staff are now held more rigorously to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders make effective use of information from accurate monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress information. Leaders cross-reference these evaluations with checks on pupils' work to verify their judgements. They use the information they have successfully to challenge and support teachers to improve their skills and teaching. As a result, consistently, more good teaching is assured.
- Pupils are excited by the broad range of subjects that the curriculum provides and interest in their learning enables them to develop and make progress. Pupils' cultural development is promoted through a range of creative subjects. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities in which pupils are keen to participate, including sports clubs.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups work and play together. Diversity is acknowledged and celebrated and pupils' culture of tolerance and respect permeates the school. This helps pupils develop a secure understanding of British values. There is no evidence of discrimination in the school.
- The primary physical education and sport funding has been used to employ specialist sports teachers, develop teachers' skills and to extend the range of after-school clubs and activities. This has increased pupils' involvement in sporting activities.
- New systems are now in place to collect information about how much progress pupils are making. Leaders analyse this information to evaluate pupils' progress and attainment in each year group, and for different groups of pupils. Pupils who are underperforming are now effectively identified and support is provided, based on

accurate assessment of need. They have the opportunity to catch up with their classmates. However, these systems do not give leaders and teachers information about how well pupils are doing across the whole of the curriculum.

- The additional funding that the school receives to support the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils has not been used effectively in the past and has had varied impact on the progress of these pupils. This is reflected in pupils' outcomes where there are differences between how well disadvantaged pupils at the school do compared with other pupils nationally in some year groups. Inaccuracies in judging pupils' progress in the past have meant that robust evaluation of actions has not been possible.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance has improved a great deal. The multi-academy company and new chair of the academy representatives have established a governance culture of challenge and support which was previously lacking. Training and development opportunities continue to strengthen the skills that academy representatives bring to their work at the school.
- Academy representatives know the general strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are responsive to the school's development. For example, a strategic group has been created to monitor the accuracy of predictions of pupils' progress to avoid the inaccuracies of last year.
- Academy representatives are allocated clearly defined roles and take their responsibilities seriously. They work with relevant subject leaders to gain knowledge about the quality of teaching and are moving to monitor more robustly the impact of interventions and support on different groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are starting to keep a closer check on how additional funding that the school receives is spent. They use this information to inform decisions about the performance of staff at the school. Academy representatives ensure that there are clear lines of accountability from the school to the board of the multi-academy company. Communications with parents are improving, for example through the regular newsletter that academy representatives produce about their work.
- A wholesale review of school policies has been undertaken recently, linked to the development of a new website for the school. As a result, policies and the new website are compliant with statutory requirements, for example, those that relate to keeping pupils safe at school.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A culture of care and ensuring that all pupils are safe pervades the school and staff are vigilant. The principal has ensured that all staff have read and acted on the latest guidance on keeping children safe. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being and prompt action is taken to keep pupils safe. Academy representatives are kept well informed.
- A number of staff have undertaken enhanced safeguarding training so a designated person is always available to report concerns to. Key staff carefully monitor actions that are taken to support pupils who are vulnerable, and commission appropriate external support when required.

- Parents are assured that their children are safe in school. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and talk confidently and knowledgeably about how they go about keeping themselves out of harm's way.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Leaders' monitoring of teaching and inspection evidence demonstrate that the quality of teaching has now improved across the whole school, following new appointments and attention given to developing teachers' skills. Pupils in key stage 1 and the early years have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of consistently good teaching. Good teaching is enabling learning gaps that older pupils have to be addressed. However, these improvements are too recent to be demonstrated in outcomes at the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders have established more consistency in approaches, for example in applying the school's marking policy so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Their subject knowledge is secure and evident in their explanations. For example, teachers take opportunities to model and discuss how conjunctives could be used in sentence construction. Pupils reporting for the 'Meerkat Mail' newspaper were able to extend their writing as a result.
- Teachers set well-planned activities for most groups of pupils and ask appropriate questions of them. Tasks set help pupils to develop, practise and apply what they have learned and so they make progress. Pupils are now directed to work of an appropriate level of difficulty, so they are challenged, engaged and learn in a purposeful manner.
- Teachers now regularly check on pupils' understanding and progress in lessons. Additional support is provided and deployed well in classrooms where necessary. For example, as a result of good planning, other adults in lessons effectively target their work to support the learning needs of specific pupils or groups of pupils.
- Reading has a high priority in the school. Pupils learn and develop phonics skills successfully. They can use these to decode words that are unfamiliar to them. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' reading. Pupils develop a love of reading and readily talk about the types of books they enjoy reading for pleasure.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

#### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and experiencing the broad curriculum. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about what they do and how they enjoy their learning.
- Pupils say that they are safe, well cared for and happy at the school. All parents who contributed their views agree with these opinions. Parents comment on the friendly, nurturing environment of the school, and that their children really enjoy going there.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, they show respect for each other's views and understand the importance of treating each other equally and without prejudice.
- Teachers ensure that there are opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These contribute to the respect, care and welcome that pupils demonstrate in the school.

- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are knowledgeable about the dangers associated with using the internet and how to keep themselves safe around road traffic. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, that there is no bullying, and are secure that adults there will provide help for them if they need it.
- Pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities, such as being a school council representative. During the well-attended breakfast club, older pupils helped younger children with their breakfast, and also played with them.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, well mannered and interested in their work. They smile when they greet visitors and are respectful. Pupils' behaviour reflects the culture and ethos of the school.
- Pupils take pride in their work and their school. They keep the school environment free from litter and wear their uniforms with pride.
- The school's records show that there are very few instances of inappropriate behaviour. Bullying and use of inappropriate language are extremely rare. Pupils have confidence in adults at the school to address these matters, should they arise.
- In lessons, pupils typically work hard and concentrate on what they are doing. They take care to present their work well. Pupils respond quickly to reminders from teachers and teaching assistants on the few occasions where attention slips, or noise levels rise.
- Attendance has risen steadily over time and has moved closer to the national figure for primary schools. School staff continually seek ways to re-emphasise to families the need to attend as frequently as possible and to deter holidays during term time. Good attendance is celebrated and rewarded. Leaders sharply target resources to strengthen home-school links. Despite this, the attendance of some groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged, remains below that of all pupils nationally.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress and attainment in key stage 2 require improvement. Inaccuracies in judging the progress of pupils last year resulted in additional support not always being targeted at pupils who required it. This contributed to poor outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2. The school's current assessment information and work in pupils' books demonstrate that progress across the school is improving this year. The improvements are not yet consistent as some groups of pupils are progressing faster than others in some subjects.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected Level 2 at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics has improved over time and is very close to the national average. This is because an increasing proportion of pupils are well prepared to start, and make good progress throughout, key stage 1. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 continues to be below the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 in 2016 who reached the expected standard in the national phonics screening check improved markedly on the previous year to above the national average. There was also an improvement in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard. These improvements are as a result of key decisions leaders made, for example about the way pupils are grouped together when

learning phonics.

- Most-able pupils do not reach their potential by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. The attainment of this group of pupils is often below that of similar pupils nationally, particularly the proportion of pupils achieving a high score in reading and mathematics and working at greater depth within the expected standard in writing.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities varies and is lower than for similar pupils nationally. There are signs of good progress in response to targeted support, but the monitoring of these interventions does not always guarantee that they are having a positive impact on accelerating progress.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving, but is still inconsistent. Additional support given to these pupils has enabled the school to diminish the differences in attainment between this group and other pupils nationally in some year groups, but not in all. Disadvantaged pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 has not been good over time and therefore requires improvement.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Leadership and management of the early years are good. Leaders have high expectations of children's learning and behaviour. Staff are well trained and successfully provide a stimulating and engaging learning environment. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has a clear action plan to continue recent improvements in early years provision.
- Children often enter the school with skills that are below typical for their age, especially regarding their speech, language and communication. Adults question children effectively and model correct spoken and written language. As a result of better teaching, the proportion of children who leave Reception with a good level of development has increased and is now close to the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. Learning journals for children currently in Reception suggest that this trend looks set to continue.
- Children are happy and safe because of the secure procedures that exist to ensure their welfare and safety. Children's behaviour is good because adults have high expectations of them and set clear boundaries. Children have positive attitudes to learning and play well together.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors were very positive about the start that their children were making at school. They were appreciative of how the school approached the induction process to school, and how they were able to contribute towards teachers' assessment of their child's progress.
- Good assessment of the needs of individual children, and addressing their needs, enable them to make effective progress. Increasingly more are well prepared for Year 1. There is a good balance of time spent with the teacher and time for children to choose their own activities. However, some activities that are selected by children offer fewer opportunities to challenge the most able children.
- Teaching is good. A range of carefully planned and well-resourced learning activities ensures that children have daily opportunities to become immersed in their work. However, opportunities to extend learning activities in mathematics are more limited outside the classroom than within it.

## School details

Unique reference number	140296
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10019482

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The academy representatives (governing body)
Chair	Mr Albert Griffin
Principal	Mrs Lisa Machin
Telephone number	01782 319504
Website	<a href="http://www.staugustinescatholicacademy.org">www.staugustinescatholicacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@staca.org.uk">office@staca.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St Augustine's Catholic Academy is a member of All Saints Catholic Collegiate.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The previous headteacher left the school in July 2015. The school was led by an executive headteacher from the multi-academy company and a head of school until the principal took up post in April 2016. The two other senior leaders took up post in September 2016. There have been considerable changes in other staff, including middle leaders and teachers, during this time.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6, in 2015.
- The school is of an average size for a primary school.

- Approximately two in five pupils are known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding, which is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- One third of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is close to the national average. One in five pupils speak English as an additional language. The largest minority ethnic groups are of Pakistani or Black African heritage.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes attend full time.
- The school's last section 48 inspection of religious education took place in June 2015.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning in all year groups. They looked at work in pupils' books and on display, and spoke to pupils about their work. On some of these visits, inspectors were accompanied by senior leaders. A small group of pupils read to an inspector.
- Inspectors met with the principal, other leaders and staff, academy representatives and directors of the multi-academy company. An inspector met formally with a group of pupils. Inspectors also considered the views of 22 members of staff through online questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school at break- and lunchtimes. They looked at the school's records about behaviour and spoke to pupils to evaluate their views. Inspectors also considered the 27 responses made by pupils to an online questionnaire.
- Parents spoke to inspectors informally as they brought their children to school. Inspectors took account of 14 recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection and comments made.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement, records of pupils' achievement and progress, and records of leaders' checks on aspects of the school's work and information about attendance. They also evaluated documents related to protecting pupils and keeping them safe.

## Inspection team

Rob Hackfath, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Bates	Ofsted Inspector
Barry Yeardsley	Ofsted Inspector

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