

St Augustine's Catholic Academy

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

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Under the executive principal's and head of school's leadership, and supported by the multi-academy company (MAC), the staff team has worked successfully to create a harmonious and improving school. The Catholic ethos underpins the work of leaders.
- Members of the academy committee have a secure understanding of the work of the school. They provide strong levels of support and challenge.
- Leaders, including the board of directors and the academy committee, fully understand their responsibilities. They fulfil these with rigour and do not shy away from taking difficult decisions that improve the quality of education.
- Leaders use what they have learned from checks on the quality of teaching and learning to improve pupils' outcomes across all year groups.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Pupils practise and develop a range of skills before successfully applying them in longer pieces of writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective in some year groups. Some pupils do not make good progress because the sequencing of learning within a lesson or across a unit of work does not support them to build upon what they already know.
- Pupils read widely and often. They enjoy reading to themselves and value adults reading and sharing stories with them. Teachers give parents and carers ideas on how to support reading at home. This has improved the number of pupils who regularly read outside of school.
- The teaching of phonics is successful in providing pupils with early reading skills.
- Pupils experience a range of opportunities within the curriculum. Visits and 'Launch Days' are used to introduce topics. Specialist teachers support some areas of the curriculum, such as computing, sports and music. However, for some subjects, pupils lack opportunities to build upon skills they developed in previous year groups.
- Leaders in the early years foundation stage have developed planned routines and a strong curriculum. This ensures that children settle well and have their needs met. Leaders make sure that high-quality teaching is a consistent part of each and every day.
- Adults in the early years foundation stage are knowledgeable and skilled practitioners. They sensitively support and challenge children to grow and develop as independent, inquisitive and confident learners.
- Leaders' support for pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils are thoughtful and deeply respectful. They value their learning. They are extremely polite, well-mannered and very well behaved, both in lessons and at playtimes.
- Pupils are safe and well cared for. Safeguarding systems are robust. One pupil, reflecting the views of many, said: 'The adults are the best thing in the school. We can talk to them and they treat us with respect.'

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - wider curriculum subjects are planned and sequenced to develop clear progression of pupils' subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding over time.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - best practice in the planning and teaching of mathematics is shared across the school in order to further develop the delivery of mathematics lessons and support pupils' understanding of key concepts and skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have brought about rapid and sustained change that is strongly effective in improving teaching and learning across all year groups. As a result, standards are improving and all pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The executive principal and head of school lead the school with commitment and determination to bring about further improvement. Leaders, governors and the MAC have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Precise action plans are in place to address the legacy of historical poor teaching and pupils' performance. They also understand the unique circumstances of the school community and how to support each pupil to develop respect, resilience and a love of learning.
- The board of directors, along with the executive principal, develop, support and strengthen leadership at all levels. This allows information to be provided from different viewpoints and gives senior leaders a thorough understanding of standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Senior and subject leaders carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching. They provide training and support for staff to help them improve their practice. They have a good understanding of the information they gather and track pupils' progress closely to identify which pupils need additional support. Links with other schools in the MAC also provide good opportunities for subject leaders and staff to share ideas and check assessments of pupils' work.
- The special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) have a detailed and thorough understanding of the needs of individual pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The strategic decision to appoint two SENCOs has strengthened leadership and improved identification of and support for pupils with SEND across all key stages. Effective interventions are in place to support the personal and academic needs of these pupils.
- Leaders place significant importance on the safety and welfare of pupils in the school. A family support worker and safeguarding team support pupils and their families in a thoughtful and sympathetic way. This is improving attendance and means that pupils come into school ready to learn and can ask for help if they need it.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively. They have a detailed understanding of the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils, as well as the bigger picture of disadvantage within the community. Leaders have put in place a pupil premium team, involving key members of staff, to ensure that the personal and academic needs of these pupils are fully understood, considered and met. As a result, these pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum provides a range of opportunities and includes all subjects. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' behaviour, safety and spirituality. However, pupils experience some subjects more regularly and deeply than others. They are not provided with sufficient opportunities to develop important subject-specific skills, in

subjects across the wider curriculum, to a high enough standard.

- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding well. They provide pupils with many opportunities to take part in competitive sporting activities. Leaders ensure that teachers are trained to teach all aspects of PE effectively and that equipment is of high quality. Enhanced opportunities, such as yoga, lacrosse, fencing, golf and an after-school swimming club, are improving pupils' engagement with, and enjoyment of, sport.
- Leaders are involving parents successfully in their child's education. Parents have opportunities to find out how to support their child's learning, for example in developing reading through 'watch me learn' sessions. Feedback from parents shows they value these opportunities to be involved in their child's learning and are confident to say what else they would like to know about.
- Staff comment on the noticeable improvement in the culture of the school since the appointment of the executive principal and head of school and since joining the MAC. Morale is high. Staff work collaboratively as a team.
- Spiritual opportunities are many and reflect the Catholic ethos and gospel values of the school. Pupils value the opportunities for responsibility that include membership of the school council, acting as playleaders and becoming head boy and head girl. Visits, such as a residential trip to France, promote understanding of different cultures.

Governance of the school

- The MAC structure and areas of delegated responsibility are clearly communicated to all parties. Many board and academy committee members come from educational backgrounds and so bring an informed view to their roles. They are supportive of staff and they use a range of information, including visits to the school, to see the results of the actions that leaders have taken.
- Academy committee minutes show that governors consistently hold leaders to account. They ask probing questions that provide a good level of challenge in further developing the school.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school. They are highly supportive of the executive principal and head of school. Governors are proud of the kind and caring ethos and improved staff morale.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding systems and procedures are robust. Roles are clearly allocated with specified responsibilities. The relevant level of training is provided to all members of staff and governors.
- Leaders carefully consider the safeguarding challenges that are present within the local community. External training is bought in to provide specific support, as required, to ensure that staff understand and manage these challenges. Safeguarding is an agenda item for every staff meeting. As a result, staff are vigilant, know how to spot the signs of abuse and report any concerns they have promptly.

- Pupils clearly describe how the care of staff positively enhances their well-being. One pupil said, 'If we have a problem in school or at home, we have someone to talk to at school.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils demonstrate resilience, independence and a responsibility to improving their own and others' learning. The teachers' dedication to developing independent and responsible learners was clearly demonstrated by some Year 1 pupils who proudly wore their 'expert lanyard' and used their expertise to accurately identify specific grammatical aspects within other pupils' work.
- Staff feel motivated to improve their practice and they appreciate the opportunities that they have had to develop their teaching skills. Opportunities to share best practice and develop moderation and assessment across schools in the MAC, together with support from the Potteries Teaching School Alliance, have improved the consistency and quality of teaching and learning.
- Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to develop their writing skills for a range of different purposes. Basic skills are securely developed and applied in a range of contexts. All pupils show stamina in the length and quality of their writing, with the most able pupils being challenged to write pieces designed to meet the higher standards.
- The teaching of mathematics is variable. Some teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources well to support and develop pupils' mathematical understanding. However, some teachers' subject knowledge is not secure. This leads to lessons and units of work that do not build on prior learning. As a result, a few pupils are not able to progress through the steps required to understand and apply particular mathematical concepts.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. This starts in the early years and is built on successfully as pupils move through the school. Pupils have a secure ability to break down words and blend sounds together to work out new or difficult words. Reading books are sent home to help pupils practise and consolidate their early reading skills.
- Staff use questioning effectively to probe pupils' understanding, clarify thinking and address misconceptions. Where questioning is especially skilful, adults challenge pupils to consider problems at greater depth and in different ways. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding and consolidate their thinking.
- Throughout the school there is a team of committed teaching assistants who effectively and ably support teachers. Their support and interventions make valuable contributions to the quality of learning and the resulting improvements in pupils' progress.
- Staff value the investment in their health and well-being. Staff say that leaders continually help to support a manageable workload for staff. This allows staff the time to invest in improving learning to help pupils make good progress.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Strong and positive relationships between pupils and adults are clearly evident, with a deep respect for all shining through. Pupils confidently respond to, and engage with, adults and their peers. Pupils enjoy being successful but, equally, they are not afraid to make a mistake because their resilience and self-esteem are well developed.
- Pupils take pride in their work. Work in their books is well presented and reflects consistent expectations across the curriculum. Pupils' behaviour for learning is exemplary. They value their education and talk about their learning in a mature manner.
- Pupils understand their role within the school, within the community and the wider world. They have clear opinions on their education and can express their likes and their wishes. For example, one pupil, echoing the views of many, said, 'The teachers show us how to grow up,' and 'We would like to know more about other faiths.'
- The school environment is rich in displays and opportunities to celebrate aspects of pupils' development. For example, as well as pupils' artwork, displays focus upon healthy living, celebrating Catholic life, Remembrance Day events, charity events, and the school's business enterprise week. Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils and provide opportunities to widen pupils' experiences, for example via the Children's University. As a result of these opportunities, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's breakfast club provides a safe and welcoming start to the day. Pupils attend for a variety of reasons and, for some, the care and individual attention that they get supports a smooth transition into school and the start of their school day.
- Pupils are articulate, confident and have a 'can-do' approach to any academic, social or personal challenge. Older pupils show a particularly mature attitude to their learning and readily support each other with their work. They demonstrate sensible choices when deciding upon a bronze, silver or gold level of challenge.
- Pupils value the school's Catholic ethos and they actively model the school's motto of 'Love one another as I have loved you'. Pupils say they value the spirituality within the school. One pupil, summing up the views of others, said: 'I like it being spiritual. I gain respect for God.'
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have opportunities to learn about safety in the community. Pupils talk about the lockdown practices, fire drills and listening to visitors such as police officers. They know why these are important for their safety. They are knowledgeable with regard to e-safety and understand the importance of using passwords and staying safe on the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- Pupils are confident individuals who conduct themselves around the school, both in lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes, in an exemplary manner. They are extremely polite and courteous. Pupils show consideration and thought for each other and for the adults in the school. They are extremely welcoming to visitors to the school.
- Attendance is given a high priority. Attendance is good and persistent absence has significantly reduced. Pupils value their education and wear their 100% attendance badges with pride.
- Pupils are clear on what bullying is and the different types of bullying. They say that bullying is rare and internal documents studied show this to be true. Pupils trust adults to resolve it if it does happen. The organisation of the playground into clearly defined sections helps pupils to make individual choices about what to play with. It also helps pupils to behave responsibly and feel safe. Pupils enjoy the range of equipment on offer. They make independent choices on the use of equipment and play cooperatively together.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- For 2017 and 2018, in assessments at the end of key stage 1, Year 2 pupils' attainment at the expected and greater depth standards was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In assessments at the end of key stage 2, there has been an improving trend in progress in reading, writing and mathematics for all Year 6 pupils. As a result, the proportion of pupils attaining reading, writing and mathematics combined in 2018 was above the national average for all pupils and, for disadvantaged pupils, was in line with the national average. However, no pupils attained the higher standard in the reading, writing and mathematics combined measure.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 rose significantly in 2018 and is now above average.
- Leaders' termly checks on reading, writing and mathematics are detailed, precise and focus on individuals and groups of pupils. Their skill and knowledge, alongside high expectations, allow them to drill down and interrogate the progress that each pupil is making. Together with the class teacher, they identify any gaps in learning and any pupils who might be at risk of falling behind. This information is used to plan effective intervention activities.
- Science attainment at both key stages 1 and 2 was below the national average in 2017 and 2018. Work in books and discussions with leaders show that pupils' learning is less well developed in science and in some wider curriculum subjects. This is because the curriculum does not always build upon skills developed in previous year groups.
- The school's assessment information and work in books show that pupils, including boys and pupils who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. An increasing number of the most able pupils are being sufficiently challenged.
- In the majority of year groups, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some are making very strong progress. The school

is working well to diminish the difference between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.

- Pupils with SEND benefit from effective support. This helps them to access the curriculum and to make good progress in different subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have made significant improvements to the early years environment, both indoors and outdoors. They have taken time to consider the early years as a unit and how the environment and curriculum can meet the needs of all children.
- The focus on improving the provision is seen in children's outcomes. The proportion of children leaving the Reception Year achieving a good level of development has improved to be in line with age-related expectations for the previous two years. Children leaving the Reception class are well equipped for Year 1.
- Teaching in the early years is effective. Adults know the needs and interests of each child in detail. They use assessment information to plan tasks that specifically address gaps in development across all areas of learning.
- Children enter Nursery with skills that are below what is typical for their age in all areas of the curriculum. Practitioners use their understanding of child development to support children to make strong progress from their starting points in all areas. Children grow and develop into successful, confident individuals who enjoy their learning and get on well with adults and their peers. They manage their behaviour well, enjoy their learning and, with the help of puppets Betty and Barry, are confident to share their learning with their peers.
- Observations during the inspection and scrutiny of learning journals and English and mathematics books show that all Reception children, including disadvantaged children and children who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in all areas of learning. An increasing number are working at a level that exceeds expectations.
- Leaders and staff are working to strengthen parental partnership and increase parents' involvement in their child's education. A recently introduced baby and toddler group, together with 'help me learn' sessions and 'rainbow days', are improving parents' confidence in attending the school and sharing their child's learning. An increasing number of parents are attending these events and parents' feedback indicates that they are enjoying finding out about how they can help their child.
- Skilled practitioners plan with care and attention to detail. Adults promote reading, writing and mathematics at every opportunity throughout every area. This practice is well-established and part of everyday learning. When scrutinising learning journals, there was clear evidence of children reading in a range of situations and writing for different purposes. Mathematical understanding and vocabulary were particularly strong. Children were using mathematical words such as behind, equals, diamond and half-past accurately.
- Phonics is taught well. Children are encouraged to use their knowledge of sounds when they are reading and writing. Children's books show the strong progress they make in writing.

- Children completely immerse themselves in their chosen activity and are not easily distracted. They move around the setting sensibly, with respect for other children and their learning. This was clearly evident on the first morning of the inspection when, to the excitement of both adults and children, a hedgehog was found outside the Nursery door. Time was given to go outside and see and talk about the hedgehog. Once this was complete, children immediately moved into their phonics groups in a calm and focused manner, without any adult prompting.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Children learn to take risks in a safe environment. All appropriate welfare standards are met. Adults are vigilant, and they ensure that children are well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	140296
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10088503

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Albert Griffin
Principal	Margaret Yates
Telephone number	01782 319504
Website	www.staugustinescatholicacademy.org/
Email address	office@staca.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 October 2016

Information about this school

- St Augustine’s Catholic Academy is one of five schools in the All Saints Catholic Collegiate MAC. The school is governed by the board of trustees. The school has an academy committee, which has delegated duties as directed by the board of trustees.
- The school is led by an executive principal from the MAC and a head of school. There have been considerable changes in staff, including leaders and teachers, since the previous inspection.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. There was a larger than average increase in the proportion of pupils with SEND between 2017 and 2018.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.

- The majority of pupils are White British.
- There is an on-site nursery that has places for children from the age of three.
- The school's last section 48 inspection of religious education took place in June 2015.

Information about this inspection

- In addition to lesson observations, some of which were carried out with the executive principal, head of school and subject leaders, inspectors reviewed pupils' work. Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss their work, behaviour and safety, or to hear them read. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during breaktimes and lunchtimes to ask them their views about the school. Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons about their work and progress and observed pupils' behaviour and safety on the playground and at other times. One inspector visited the breakfast club at the start of the first day of inspection. Inspectors held meetings with the executive principal, the head of school, and senior and middle leaders.
- The lead inspector met the chair, vice-chair and a parent governor of the academy committee. She also met the chair and vice-chair of the board of directors of the MAC as well as a diocesan education improvement adviser.
- An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and the nine free-text responses. They also considered responses to the school's own parental questionnaires. Additionally, they took account of the 19 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 29 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- A range of documents were scrutinised by inspectors, including information about pupils' attendance, self-evaluation information, improvement plans, safeguarding records, pupil premium and sports strategies, minutes of academy committee meetings and staff development records.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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