

Inspection of St Augustine's CofE VA Junior and Infant School

Hanson Lane, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 5PG

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Over time, leaders have not taken the urgent action needed to improve pupils' achievement. Leaders and staff have not had high enough expectations, especially for the younger pupils in early years and key stage 1. Teachers have not taught pupils to read as soon as they should. This has prevented pupils from learning well in other subjects too. Many pupils struggle to access an age-appropriate curriculum. This has led to some poor behaviour for learning. Pupils' absence is high. This also affects how well some pupils can learn.

The new headteacher has reached out to the community and has worked with staff and parents in identifying shared values for the school. Parents are positive about these recent changes. Staff say morale has improved since her appointment.

Pupils speak positively about their school. They feel safe and recognise that staff are there to help them. Pupils are confident to report concerns about behaviour or bullying and trust that adults will listen and help them.

Leaders are making sure pupils are respectful of other cultures and develop a sense of responsibility. For example, pupils in Year 6 have recently organised a collection of books, games and toys to donate to a centre which helps refugees in the community.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

There have been significant changes to leadership and governance over the last few years. This has deflected leaders and governors' attention away from the core business of improving the quality of education. Many of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection still exist.

Governors are new to post. They joined a newly formed governing body in September 2020. They have appointed a substantive headteacher and have restructured staffing. Governors' current level of challenge and support is not urgently addressing pupils' under-achievement. Leaders have an overly generous view of the school's effectiveness. Their plans for improvement do not recognise the extent of some of the weaknesses which persist.

Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum for early reading is effective. There is a lack of ambition for the youngest pupils. Pupils are not securing the basics of reading and writing in early years and key stage 1. This means that they struggle to take part in lessons and have difficulty accessing a range of subjects. A very large proportion of pupils throughout school are working well below what is expected for their age. This is the result of weaknesses in the phonics curriculum and lack of subject expertise of leaders and staff.

The English curriculum does not address the significant gaps in pupils' reading and writing. For example, struggling readers in key stage 2 do not access the support

they need to urgently catch up with phonics. This includes pupils who are new to English or with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders introduced a new phonics programme in September 2021. All staff are receiving training. Phonics now begins at the start of Reception. However, it is too early to see the impact of this new approach.

The curriculum for science and most foundation subjects is at an early stage of development. The content reflects the broad expectations of the national curriculum. However, subject leaders have not identified the smaller steps of knowledge which pupils need to grasp to succeed in each unit and over time. Because this has not been defined, assessment is not focused on checking how well important knowledge is remembered. Weaknesses in designing the curriculum mean that teachers are not always clear about the intended learning. This results in activity choices that do not provide sufficient practice of key knowledge. In contrast, in mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE), leaders have introduced published schemes of work. These are beginning to provide teachers with more support on precisely what to teach and when.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a clear strategy for improving provision for pupils with SEND. Pupils' needs are being more quickly and accurately identified. Outcome plans set out appropriate targets for individual pupils. At present, weaknesses in staff subject expertise limit the impact of support for these pupils.

Staff and pupils report improvements in pupils' behaviour. However, there is low-level disruption when pupils' work does not meet their needs. For example, when younger pupils cannot succeed, they avoid the task and find other distractions.

Pupils' absence is high and too many pupils are regularly absent from school. Leaders have not developed rigorous enough systems to improve this aspect of the school's work. These weaknesses persist from the previous inspection.

Leaders are beginning to plan for pupils' personal development more effectively. A new curriculum has recently been introduced for PSHE. Theme weeks, such as black history and world festivals, supplement the curriculum. Pupils only have limited access to opportunities to promote character development and increase their engagement in wider learning opportunities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher has prioritised safeguarding. Staff know how to recognise, and report causes for concern. The headteacher makes sure that staff have regular training which responds to safeguarding issues in the local area.

During the pandemic, vulnerable pupils were prioritised for face-to-face education. Leaders also implemented effective systems to make sure that vulnerable pupils accessing learning remotely were safe.

The curriculum supports pupils in knowing how to report concerns and how to stay safe, for example when online. Visits from police community support officers help to reinforce messages that affect pupils in this community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors' attention has been diverted away from prioritising the quality of education. Some of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection persist. Leaders and governors should urgently address pupils' under-achievement and poor attendance.
- The school's early reading curriculum is not effective in making sure that pupils learn to read as soon as they should. Leaders and staff do not currently have the expertise needed to improve this aspect of the school's work. Too many pupils do not secure the basics in early reading and writing and are not ready for the next stage of their education. Leaders should ensure that training for leaders and staff is a priority. They should check that the school's new programme is being implemented rigorously so that pupils quickly catch up with the expectations of the programme. Struggling readers in key stage 2 need urgent support to make sure they rapidly catch up with their peers.
- The English curriculum moves pupils too quickly onto complex writing tasks which they do not have the knowledge to succeed with. For example, pupils are asked to write a conversation when they do not have knowledge such as: the concept of a sentence; phonics knowledge for spelling; or knowledge of pen grip and letter formation to write the words they want to say. This leads to some poor behaviour for learning. Leaders should make sure that curriculum plans identify the individual components of knowledge it is important for pupils to secure. Learning should progress sequentially from early years into key stage 1. Activities should build on what pupils know, providing the practice needed for the intended learning to be performed with ease. Leaders should make sure that leaders and teachers have the necessary expertise to implement these changes effectively.
- Curriculum leadership is weak. In most subjects, leaders have not identified the precise knowledge which helps pupils to get better and make progress in the subject. Teachers often decide for themselves what to teach but this does not build effectively on pupils' prior learning. Pupils sometimes struggle to access the intended learning because of significant gaps in prior knowledge. Leaders should make sure that curriculum plans identify key knowledge and that this is carefully sequenced within each unit and over time. Assessment should check that pupils have remembered this knowledge. Leaders should ensure that staff are able to make appropriate pedagogy choices to help pupils secure the intended learning and use ongoing assessment to check that pupils have learned the curriculum.

- Leaders and those responsible for governance may not appoint early career teachers before the next inspection.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	107543
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10200645
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anthony Hillyard
Headteacher	Ruth Lee
Website	www.st-augustines.calderdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a period of turbulence in leadership since the last inspection. An interim executive board took over governance from December 2018 to September 2020. The current headteacher took up post in April 2021.
- St Augustine's is a voluntary aided Church of England school. Its last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due by June 2025.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders, including the early years leader, learning mentor and the SENCo. Meetings were also held with a representative of the local authority and six governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector had a telephone meeting with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors talked to leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding issues. They examined safeguarding records, including those related to behaviour and bullying.

Inspection team

Kirsty Godfrey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrea Batley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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