

Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy

Conwy Court, Castlefields, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2JJ

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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The headteacher of this school is Nedra Sothern. This school is part of the Holy Family Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Andrew Moor, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Simpson. There is also an interim headteacher, John Marciniak, and Steve Jevons, executive headteacher of three other primary schools within the trust, who supports the school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Augustine's is a warm and welcoming school. Pupils are keen to learn and make friends. They are happy, and feel safe and supported in school. The school sets high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils live up to these expectations. They spoke openly and confidently about the work that they do in class. Pupils' positive attitudes to their learning and the pride that they take in their work help them achieve well.

Pupils behave well. As a result, the school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere which reflects its ethos of 'be ready, show respect, aim high'. Pupils care for and support each other. They respond well to staff's requests and direction. Pupils are aware of whom they can talk to if they have a concern.

Older pupils have access to a range of activities and experiences which allow them to develop their interests. These include sports clubs and residential trips. Pupils, and children in the early years, benefit from an exceptionally well-resourced outdoor environment. This includes the school's innovative treehouse, which stimulates their engagement and learning.

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

The school has established a well-structured curriculum which is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In most subjects, it is clear what the important knowledge is that pupils must learn. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. This allows them to deliver the curriculum in a way that enables pupils to build their knowledge well over time. As a result, pupils across the school, including those with SEND, are well prepared for the next steps in their learning.

In a few subjects, however, the school has not identified what important knowledge it wants pupils to learn. This makes it difficult for teachers to design learning opportunities that help pupils to gain the knowledge that they should. It also makes it difficult for teachers to check what pupils have learned and where they may have gaps in their understanding.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils benefit from a wide range of reading resources which promote access to, and a love of, reading. For example, a reading hut provides a cosy haven for pupils to enjoy their reading activities. Staff have benefited from training in the school's phonics programme, which is delivered consistently well. Children start this programme as soon as they enter the Reception class, having benefited from a language-rich environment across the early years provision. This allows pupils to quickly develop their fluency and accuracy in reading. Teachers' checks ensure that those who struggle to keep up with the reading programme are identified and receive effective support.

The school ensures that pupils with SEND are identified early. This allows pupils and their families to access the support that they need. Teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum to enable pupils with SEND to learn alongside their peers. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

The trust has ensured that staff have access to effective professional development. Staff have readily engaged with these opportunities, which have helped support their knowledge in delivering the subject curriculums.

Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is very positive. As a result, pupils learn in an environment that is free from distractions for the vast majority of the time. Pupils are polite, respectful and welcoming.

The school has thought carefully about pupils' wider development. Older pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities through a range of roles in the school, for example as fire marshals or safety officers.

The school has fostered a strong, positive and supportive culture among staff. They recognise and appreciate the opportunities and support provided by the trust. The school has carefully considered the workload demands on staff when it makes changes.

Parents are well supported and included in the education and care of their children, for example through the provision of stay-and-learn sessions.

Governors and trustees know the school well. They provide the school with appropriate challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the school has not identified clearly what it wants pupils to learn. This hampers pupils from learning all that they should. It also makes it difficult for teachers to know what they should assess to make sure that pupils' knowledge is secure. The school should identify the essential knowledge that it wants pupils to learn in all subjects.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141980
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10290285
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Simpson
CEO of trust	Andrew Moor
Headteacher	Nedra Sothern
Website	www.st-augustines.halton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There is a breakfast club and after-school club at the school, which is managed by the school and trust.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is led by an interim headteacher.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The school had its last section 48 inspection in March 2017. The next inspection is due in 2024.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of the school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- An inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of the governing body. An inspector also spoke with representatives of the diocese and the multi-academy trust.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. No responses from pupils and staff were available.
- The inspectors talked with pupils, visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and as they moved around the school.

Inspection team

Iain Sim, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Rebecca Gough

Ofsted Inspector

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