

Inspection of a good school: St Augustine's Catholic School - a Catholic voluntary academy

Sandybed Lane, Stepney, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 5LH

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 October 2023

Outcome

St Augustine's Catholic School - a Catholic voluntary academy continues to be a good school.

The head of school of this school is Aishling Robinson. This school is part of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer (CEO), Karen Siedle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Laws.

What is it like to attend this school?

Every pupil is treated as an individual at St Augustine's School. Staff know pupils well. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are safe and cared for well. They want to meet the school's high academic expectations.

Pupils' commitment to their learning is a strength of the school. They benefit from a well-designed and broad curriculum. There are high standards of behaviour in the school. Pupils' learning is rarely interrupted. Teachers deal with the very occasional instances of disruptive behaviour quickly and effectively.

Pupils learn widely beyond the formal academic curriculum. The school's emphasis on personal development means pupils are articulate about a wide range of important issues. For example, pupils speak confidently about the importance of protected characteristics in society. Pupils also have a thorough understanding of healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe on and offline.

The school's motto, to 'love and serve through Christ', is the foundation of the school's approach. Pupils are taught important values. These are prominent in the school. For example, pupils learn about gratitude. This is supported by specific activities such as sending 'thank you' messages to others. The school ensures pupils debate complex issues in a safe space. This further reinforces the school's values. For example, pupils sensitively discuss Black History Month and associated themes of oppression.

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

With the support of the trust, leaders have ensured pupils have access to a well-planned and effectively sequenced curriculum. This includes identifying meaningful links between different curriculum subjects. For example, the teaching of trigonometry and Pythagoras in mathematics is planned to match related learning in design and technology.

Leaders ensure that curriculum plans include the important vocabulary that pupils need to know. Teachers teach this vocabulary effectively to pupils. They also revisit it regularly. As a result, pupils use these words appropriately in their work. For example, pupils in Year 11 write about Macbeth using a wide range of subject-specific terms, including 'hamartia'.

Teachers have deep subject knowledge. They provide clear and effective explanations to pupils. However, in some lessons, the tasks that teachers plan are not well matched to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In these lessons, pupils with SEND make slower progress through the curriculum than their peers.

Leaders have worked with the trust to improve assessment. Assessment is carefully planned and supports the aims of the curriculum. However, assessment is not used consistently to check pupils' understanding. Some pupils' misconceptions and/or gaps in their learning are not identified as early as they should be.

The school places a high priority on reading. Specific programmes help struggling readers. These are delivered by well-trained staff. As a result, pupils quickly catch up with their peers. A reading culture pervades the whole school. Pupils throughout the year groups read widely and often. This is supported by imaginative and engaging activities. For example, 'hot topic' sessions for older pupils enable them to read and discuss non-fiction media articles regularly.

The positive culture in the school is underpinned by clear and effective systems for behaviour. Pupils and staff understand these systems well. Low-level disruption rarely affects pupils' learning. Respectful relationships are the norm.

Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a wide extra-curricular programme. Clubs include Latin, musical theatre, Catholic life and eco group. Through 'pupil experience passports', staff encourage pupils to try new and enriching experiences beyond the school. Many pupils make full use of the plentiful opportunities available to them.

The school has an established careers programme in place. Pupils benefit from their engagement with external speakers, further education providers, universities and local employers. This supports pupils to make successful next steps beyond Year 11.

Staff are proud to work at St Augustine's Catholic School. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, place a high priority on managing staff's workload and ensuring their well-being. Staff are happy in their work. Leaders engage with parents and carers regularly. Many parents appreciate the way the school supports and nurtures their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, teachers do not check pupils' understanding effectively. This means that pupils' misconceptions and gaps in learning are not addressed. The school should continue its work to refine the assessment approaches used in the classroom.
- In some lessons, tasks are not well matched to the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils do not achieve the best possible outcomes. Leaders should intensify their actions to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum for pupils with SEND.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Augustine's Roman Catholic School, Scarborough, to be good in May 2016.

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	147212
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10268445
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	586
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Laws
Headteacher	Aishling Robinson
Website	www.staug.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The senior leadership team are new in post. The head of school was appointed in October 2023.
- The school moved to a new multi-academy trust in September 2022.
- The school is part of St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust.
- St Augustine's Catholic School – a Catholic voluntary academy converted to be an academy in June 2019. When its predecessor school, St Augustine's Roman Catholic School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The last Diocesan section 48 inspection took place in December 2019.
- The school uses two alternative providers of education, one of which is unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met with the head of school and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also met with the interim CEO.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the board of trustees. They also met with a member of the local governing body. They reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from trust board meetings.
- The lead inspector held a telephone call with a representative from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Middlesbrough.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and considered the support given to pupils with SEND, during lesson visits.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for personal development and visited registration sessions.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and students formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff, gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christina Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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