

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Augustine's Catholic Academy

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

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

St Augustine's Catholic Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Rebecca Perkins. This school is part of All Saints Catholic Collegiate multi-academy company, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Margaret Yates, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ann Middleton-Hill.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school in the heart of the community. Pupils arrive eagerly every day. Warm and caring relationships are its heartbeat. These help pupils feel safe in school. Pupils have faith that staff will look out for their needs, and they do.

Staff want the very best for all pupils. They have high ambitions that when the time comes to leave the school, they will have reached their full potential. This extends further than just how well pupils have learned the curriculum. Staff also want pupils to be responsible, respectful and active members of their community, who have a secure understanding of right and wrong. This ambition is realised, including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They understand the school rules well. They talk confidently about how respect for themselves, for others and for property underpins all they should say and do. Kind and caring staff model this for them, and pupils replicate it impressively.

Many pupils arrive at different points throughout the year. Many also speak English as an additional language. The school offers a warm welcome and a safe haven that supports these pupils to settle and thrive in a deeply caring environment.

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

Children get off to an excellent start in the early years. Staff pay great attention to providing activities that invite curiosity and interest. There is a good mix of opportunities for children to work independently or in a group, led by an expert in early years practice. Whether working independently or with an adult, they show impressive levels of concentration and determination.

Reading is prioritised. The school wastes no time in teaching pupils how to read. Staff teach phonics well. This means many pupils keep up with the pace and expectations of the programme. Some pupils need extra help. For most pupils, the help they receive is effective and enables them to make rapid progress. This includes some pupils who have newly arrived to the country. However, for some pupils with SEND, their learning gaps are not addressed with the precision needed. This affects how quickly they can close the gap with their peers. On occasion, teachers expect pupils with less developed phonics skills to write at a standard that is beyond their ability. This does not support them in securing the firm foundations for future success.

The school has designed the curriculum so that pupils build knowledge sensibly. Pupils benefit from being able to refer to prior learning and understand what they will learn next through the school's use of a 'learning train'. This enables them to make links with what they have learned before and make sense of what they will learn in the next lesson and beyond. Pupils with SEND are well supported in lessons. Teachers know what their next steps in learning are, and additional staff support them well.

The school's approach to developing the whole child is exemplary. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to school life. They relish these opportunities and talk keenly about how their voice can affect positive change. There are many opportunities for pupils to bring value to their local community. This might be through picking litter or brightening the day of residents in the local nursing home. The school does everything in its power to teach pupils about how to keep themselves safe when they are not in school. Visits and visitors support this, as well as carefully considered additions to the curriculum that ensure what pupils learn is relevant to them.

Pupils behave very well at all points of the day. They know what is expected of them and are proud to demonstrate the high standards that they understand. Their attitudes to learning and in lessons are praiseworthy. Pupils are routinely well-mannered and polite. The school has worked extremely hard to galvanise the support of parents and carers. They have been successful in doing so. The trusting and honest relationships enable both parties to work together to secure extremely positive rates of attendance.

The school is led exceptionally well. Leaders at all levels, including the school, the trust and the local governing board, ensure that the children's best interests drive decision-making. They are compassionate and caring. They have worked relentlessly to maintain the standards since the last inspection. The trust and the school work as one, with the trust providing highly effective support. Its skilled professionals support the school in every aspect of its continued journey of success. Local governors know the school very

well and add value to the strength of leadership. Staff appreciate the opportunities made available for them to develop as professionals in a caring and nurturing environment that values their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not identified the precise gaps in learning of some pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read and write. They are sometimes given tasks that are too difficult for them to complete. This slows down their progress. The school should ensure they identify the precise barriers to learning that pupils have so staff can address these and support them in closing the gaps with their peers.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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	140296
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10344029
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ann Middleton-Hill
CEO of the trust	Margaret Yates
Headteacher	Rebecca Perkins
Website	www.staugustinescatholicacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has wraparound care for its pupils.
- This Catholic school is in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in December 2021. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the academic year 2025/2026.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector spoke with the chair of the local academy committee and directors from the trust.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the Diocese.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The inspector spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as informally in lessons and around school.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information on the school's website.
- The inspector talked with pupils and staff to gather information about school life. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and parents.

Inspection team

Keri Baylis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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