



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 119801
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280666
Inspection dates 18 January 2006 to 19 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Bev Barlow

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Elker Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Billington
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Clitheroe, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 823362
Number on roll	1030	Fax number	01254 822147
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Father Willoughby, SJ
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr Anthony McNamara

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 18 January 2006 - 19 January 2006	Inspection number 280666
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Augustine's is an average sized Roman Catholic high school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16. The school has 1,030 pupils on roll. It is oversubscribed with most pupils travelling to the school from the Ribble Valley and surrounding areas of Lancashire. The vast majority of pupils are white British. Fewer than usual come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have free school meals. Attainment of the pupils when they join the school is slightly above average compared with the country as a whole. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school gained specialist science status in 2003.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. The school's very strong Catholic ethos helps pupils to develop well in a very caring and supportive environment. The overwhelming majority of parents have great confidence in the work of the school. The strong leadership of the headteacher is well supported by the senior leadership team and governing body.

Standards are above the national average and pupils make good progress during their time at the school. In 2005 the proportion of pupils achieving high grades in their GCSEs was well above the national average. In English at Key Stage 3, pupils do not do as well as expected given their results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and plan their lessons well. In some lessons pupils are not actively engaged in learning and do not have enough opportunities to develop their independent learning skills.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, feel safe and benefit from the very positive relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school. They respond very well to the excellent range of enrichment activities and their personal development is outstanding. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and they make good progress.

Self-evaluation is honest and effectively identifies the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. Staff are supportive of the strategies in place to bring about improvements. The school provides good value for money. Additional funding associated with specialist science status and leading edge school has been used well to support new developments and improve facilities. Issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed and the school has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Create more opportunities for active and independent learning to fully engage and challenge all pupils.
- Improve standards in English at Key Stage 3.
- Ensure that all teachers tell pupils clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school correctly believes that achievement and standards are good. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 their standards are slightly above average as indicated by test scores at the end of Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in mathematics and science, and standards are above average. In English pupils do not do as well as expected given their results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2.

By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress. A high percentage of pupils get five or more GCSE grades at A* to C. GCSE results in 2005 are well above average and an improvement on the previous year. Results are strong in many subjects. The proportion of pupils achieving the very highest grades, A* or A, is very good in music, art and design, science, geography, religious education and Spanish. The school correctly identified that pupils have not achieved as well as they should in information and communication technology (ICT) and have taken effective steps to improve this. Almost all pupils gain five or more graded results, reflecting the school's aim to be inclusive. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils develop powerful personal values and beliefs within a strong Catholic community. They make substantial efforts to raise funds for local and international charities. Through work in subjects, extra curricular activities, and joint projects with other local schools pupils develop a very good awareness of world issues and other cultures.

Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is exemplary. They enjoy school and are keen to learn. Attendance is good except for a very small minority of older pupils whose achievement is affected by their intermittent attendance. Pupils benefit from the excellent range of extra curricular activities. The school council take their responsibilities very seriously and make well considered decisions on, for example, healthy eating and uniform.

A well planned personal, social and health education programme helps pupils to know how to keep safe. Intimidation is rare, and pupils know how to seek help if they need it. They are encouraged to stay healthy through sensible eating, regular participation in physical education and encouragement to drink water regularly. Pupils are very well prepared for their futures, developing very good

personal qualities and strong leadership skills. There are excellent opportunities to develop enterprise skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Almost all teaching is good or better and nothing is less than satisfactory. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. Teachers have very good working relationships with pupils who are keen to learn. In the best lessons, teachers plan a wide variety of stimulating activities and pupils are actively engaged in their learning. In these lessons, effective questioning techniques check pupils' understanding and develop their thinking skills. Teachers effectively use information learning technology

(ILT) to support pupils' learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they respond enthusiastically to opportunities for independent learning, although there are not enough opportunities for this. In the less successful lessons teachers spend too much of the time talking, the pace is slower and the work less challenging. The school is currently focusing on improving teaching and learning and there is an increased willingness to share good practice. Learning mentors and teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning and are particularly successful with less able pupils.

Teachers use assessment data effectively to track and monitor pupils' progress, but it is not used consistently to plan teaching and inform learning. Homework is regularly set and marked. Teachers give good verbal feedback, but marking does not always give subject specific, personalised advice and guidance on how to improve. Procedures for identifying pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are robust and they receive good support in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges its curriculum to be good. The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils and enables most to follow appropriate pathways on leaving school. Transition from primary school is highly effective, supported by a well designed programme of cross-phase teaching.

Between Years 7 to 9 pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum and develop good skills in literacy, numeracy and science. In Years 10 and Year 11 the statutory requirement for ICT is not currently met, but plans are in place for September 2006. Pupils are well informed about their option choices at Key Stage 4 and progression routes post-16. Science college status has enhanced the range of GCSE science courses offered. Vocational courses in school and at a local training provider give a wider choice of options to better meet the pupils' interests and aspirations. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop the skills, attitudes and qualities valued in the workplace. Provision for citizenship is good. Pupils enjoy an extensive range of extra curricular activities and participation rates are very good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. They are underpinned by the strong and supportive Catholic ethos which pervades the school. Staff know the pupils very well and relationships throughout the school are very positive. Within this positive atmosphere, pupils thrive. They feel safe, grow in confidence, enjoy learning and achieve well. Older pupils are very proud of the support they give to younger pupils.

A very strong pastoral team keep a close check on pupils' personal development. They recognise and reward pupils' success, and are quick to identify needs and provide support. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from very good care and support. Pupils' academic progress is tracked closely and pupils who

underachieve are identified and supported. Those exceeding expectations are rewarded. However, systems do not always fully inform pupils and parents of how well they are doing in relation to their targets and not every pupil benefits from a personal discussion on their progress.

Extensive guidance on options and careers, and very good opportunities to find out about different pathways when they leave school, help learners to make well informed decisions about their futures. Rigorous procedures are in place to safeguard pupils. Parents are highly satisfied with the school's provision.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and a clear vision based on the school's caring Christian ethos. He is supported well by an effective senior team who share his vision and work well together. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Relationships at all levels within the school and the wider community are very good. Subject leaders evaluate the work of their departments and are accountable for quality and standards, though systems are sometimes too informal to be fully effective. Pupil performance data is used effectively to track pupils' progress and identify underachievement. In some departments, there is very effective topic analysis of pupils' work to inform teaching and learning, but this is not yet widespread. Performance management is linked to the school's focus on improving teaching and learning. A programme of professional development was introduced in September to further develop teaching skills; however this is planned over a 5 year timescale, which will slow its impact. The school's self-evaluation report is accurate and detailed, and is based on evidence from all stakeholders. The school's development plan clearly identifies the school's key priorities and progress is formally evaluated at the end of each year.

Governors are aware of the school's strengths and know where it needs to improve. They are committed and supportive, and carry out their responsibilities effectively, including the need to challenge the school to continue to raise standards. Day-to-day management is highly effective and the school runs smoothly. Financial management is secure. Additional funding for the science college and leading edge status is used very well to enhance the educational provision for pupils at St Augustine's and its partner schools. Staff and resources are well deployed and the school gives good value for money. Issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed and the school has good capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Alexandra House

33 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

T 0207 421 6800

F 0207 421 6707

Ofsted helpline

08456 404045

St Augustine's Roman Catholic High School

Elker Lane

Billington

Clitheroe

Lancashire

BB7 9JA

18 January 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the Ofsted inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and it was very interesting to see you in your lessons and talk to several of you and find out your views. We also looked at the questionnaires sent in by your parents. The vast majority of them have great confidence in the work of the school in leading you to success.

These are our main findings from the inspection.

St Augustine's is a good school with some outstanding features. Mr McNamara is doing a very good job in leading and managing the school. He is helped well by the senior teachers, governors, teachers and support staff, your parents and yourselves.

During your time at school you make good progress and the results in GCSE subjects are well above the national average.

Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. You are polite, courteous and friendly towards one another and to adults in the school. The relationships between you and your teachers are very good.

Much of the teaching is good and your attitudes to learning are very good. Those who need extra help receive it. You told us that you enjoy coming to school, your attendance is good and you appreciate the hard work and support of your teachers.

There is a wide range of courses for you to choose from in Key Stage 4. The school has developed a curriculum which is preparing you well for your future choices in life. You obviously enjoy taking part in the wide range of activities outside lessons, including raising money for charity, making music and playing sport.

You benefit from working in a safe and happy school with a strong Catholic ethos. The care, guidance and support you get from your teachers is outstanding. You contribute well to the

student council. Older pupils are very proud of the support they give to the younger pupils in school.

In order to make the school even better we have asked the teachers to:
provide more opportunities for you to work independently in lessons
help you understand how well you are doing and exactly what you need to do to improve.
improve the results in the English tests in Year 9.

We are confident that the staff at the school can achieve this and you are willing to put in the hard work.

Once again, may we thank you all for your support during this inspection. There is much for you and your teachers to be proud of at your school. We wish you every success for the future in all that you do.

Yours faithfully

Bev Barlow

Her Majesty's Inspector