

# St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111309
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	288921
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clare Henderson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	163
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss Elizabeth Bailey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lisa Wigglesworth
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	Henshall Avenue Latchford Warrington Cheshire WA4 1PY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01925 633317
<b>Fax number</b>	01925 575119

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves a community which experiences considerable social and economic disadvantage. The majority of children are White British. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has suffered a high level of disruption to staffing in recent years. Temporary teachers are in post in a number of classes and the headteacher has been in post since September 2007. The school has gained Healthy School and Activemark status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve.

Significant improvement is required in relation to the standards of pupils' work and their achievement, the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and provision in the Foundation Stage. The school provides inadequate value for money.

The quality of education the school provides has declined since the previous inspection: standards overall are not as high, and pupils' achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 has fallen to very low levels in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards are exceptionally low in these subjects. The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate overall. This is because, although teaching is satisfactory and at times good in some classes, in others there are major weaknesses which impair pupils' learning. Consequently, over time, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Since her appointment, the headteacher has made strenuous efforts to reverse the school's decline. In close partnership with the local authority much is being done to stem this legacy of underperformance. For example, there have been effective improvements in the use of assessment procedures, helping senior staff to track pupils' progress and to provide 'catch up' programmes as required. These are already proving effective, for example, in improving the quality of learning for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, the progress of these pupils is now satisfactory. The curriculum is inadequate overall because within the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, learning is not matched closely enough to the abilities of the children. Similarly, in English and mathematics there are not enough opportunities for more able pupils to extend their learning sufficiently in order to attain the higher levels.

The school provides satisfactory care, support and guidance. The pupils say, 'staff care about us and keep us safe'. The marking of pupils' work and setting targets for improvement are now established in all classes and most pupils know what they need to do to improve. However, this is not as effective as it could be, because in some classes the teacher's expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Their behaviour is good and attendance is improving. Parents are largely appreciative and supportive of the school. However, a minority are concerned that work in lessons is not always pitched at the right level to interest or challenge their children well enough and inspectors agree.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. In evaluating the work of the school, senior staff and governors have gained an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses and are united in their relentless drive and determination to raise standards and pupils' achievement. Positive action is now being taken to remedy the accurately identified weaknesses in teaching and learning. This is why, although there is much to do, the school can demonstrate clearly a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 4

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is inadequate overall. Children's skills when they start Nursery are low and particularly so in their personal, social, emotional and

communication skills. The quality of the curriculum in the Nursery is inadequate because it does not provide enough opportunities for children to improve these skills by, for example, sharing, taking turns or learning to cooperate. Also, the inadequate quality of teaching and learning in the Nursery does not give children enough time indoors or outside to become independent learners or to explore their own ideas. By the time children move to Reception they have already lost ground particularly in developing their social, emotional and communication skills. Until recently, staff in both Nursery and Reception have had an unclear picture of how children are progressing, due to the lack of a rigorous system to check children's learning as they move through the Foundation Stage. The local authority has deployed an Early Years consultant to provide full-time specialist leadership and this has already secured improvement in the quality of teaching in Reception. She has improved provision, assessment systems, available resources and links with parents. As a result, provision in Reception has improved enabling children here to make satisfactory progress towards their learning goals. However, because of a poor start in Nursery, when they begin Year 1, many have not reached the standards expected for their age, particularly in communication and personal development.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in English and mathematics throughout the school, particularly for more able pupils.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, eradicating inadequate teaching.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage so that children make at least satisfactory progress in their learning.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum so that pupils can build on prior learning more effectively.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Achievement is inadequate and has been so for several years. The school acknowledges that too many pupils do not do as well as they should during their time in the school. Standards are below average when pupils start in Year 1. They remain too low in English and mathematics throughout the school. Too many pupils are making slow progress or falling behind in their work relative to their starting points. More able pupils are not stretched sufficiently to achieve the higher levels of which they are capable. The senior management team has made improvements to tackle the causes of underachievement and this is starting to make a difference. For example, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are now making satisfactory progress in lessons, because of the recently improved support they receive. Similarly, increased expectations have begun to raise the quality and standards of pupils' writing. However, there remains much to be done. Basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) are weak because teaching of these subjects is inadequate overall.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and provides a sound basis for improving their academic achievement. However, pupils' understanding and experiences of other cultures and traditions are limited. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They mention some low-level bullying but are clear about what to do about it and where to go for help should they need it. Although the quality of teaching and learning is inadequate, relationships between

pupils and staff are positive and are one of the reasons for the good behaviour and enthusiastic attitudes to school shown by most pupils. Pupils show a satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles. They know why they should drink water regularly and eat fruit and vegetables. Pupils eagerly attend the activities available after school; however, these are currently limited in number. Pupils have welcomed the opportunities to be involved in decision making in the school. For example, as members of the school council they have chosen play equipment for use at lunchtime. The weaknesses in literacy, numeracy and ICT do not prepare the pupils well enough for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

In most classes pupils are keen to learn. However, inadequacies and inconsistencies in teaching and learning dampen this enthusiasm and are the main reason why pupils underachieve. There are some examples of good teaching where lessons are stimulating and challenging and result in brisk learning. However, these are in the minority. In other lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should do are not high enough and work is not always sufficiently challenging for the different abilities within the classes. This is because, until recently, systems to keep a check on how well pupils are doing in their work and what they need to do next to improve have been insufficiently developed. As a result, pupils do not learn as much as they should. A strong feature of teaching is the high quality additional support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which enables these pupils to make satisfactory progress in their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 4**

The curriculum is inadequate because it does not currently meet the learning needs of all pupils well enough. For example, in Year 1, the curriculum is not sufficiently adapted to meet the personal, emotional and communication needs of pupils as they move from the Foundation Stage. However, the current leadership team has firm plans to ensure this happens when the current Reception class move to Year 1. The curriculum is not planned effectively to ensure that children's skills, knowledge and understanding are built upon systematically and that activities planned in lessons provide sufficient challenge, particularly for more able pupils. There are too few planned opportunities for children to practise and develop the skills learned, for example, by using literacy, numeracy and ICT in different subjects. The provision for extra-curricular activities, visits out of school and visitors to the school is limited, and pupils say they would like more opportunities to develop their interests and skills through such activities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Procedures for safeguarding and ensuring pupils' health and safety are secure. Where emotional or learning problems arise the school is more consistently involving parents and health professionals to help remove any barriers to learning. Pupils' academic progress is tracked carefully enabling the school to know where to provide additional support, for example, for those pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Setting targets and writing

helpful comments on pupils' completed work feature strongly in some classes but this approach is less evident or effective where the quality of teaching is inadequate.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. With energy and drive and good leadership by the new headteacher, the senior leaders have set the school on the road to rapid recovery, with a firm vision for eliminating underachievement and raising standards. This focus, shared by staff and governors, has accurately identified the areas of improvement that are necessary to raise standards and tackle weaknesses. The current school improvement plan provides a clear direction for moving this forward. The strategies introduced are beginning to raise standards. Subject leaders, particularly in the core subjects, are taking a stronger role in monitoring and improving teaching. Governance is satisfactory. Governors work cooperatively with the school fulfilling their responsibilities appropriately. They have a clear understanding of the challenges the school faces and of their role in securing improvement. They are starting to hold the school to account for its performance.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Warrington, WA4 1PY

On behalf of the inspection team I thank you for being so friendly during our recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school and what you like best about it. We were particularly impressed by your good behaviour and kindness towards each other. It is good that you know why it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle and that most of you try to do your best for your teachers. It is also good to see that more of you now come to school regularly.

It is our judgement that your school has not been effective enough in helping you to do as well as you can. For this reason, the school has been given a 'Notice to Improve'. This means that other inspectors will return quite soon to check on how well it is improving. We have asked your headteacher and staff to improve the school by making sure:

- you are learning new things quickly enough to raise standards in English and mathematics
- all your lessons are exciting, interesting and ensure that all of you do well in your work
- children get a better start to their education in the Foundation Stage
- the activities and experiences you are given, help you to develop the skills you will need in the future.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. You can help even more by attending school regularly and working as hard as you can for your teachers.