

St Augustine's Roman Catholic School, Scarborough

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121714
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	301367
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Jan Bennett HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	483
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Moat
Headteacher	Mr Roger Cannon
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Sandybed Lane Stepney Hill Scarborough North Yorkshire YO12 5LH
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Augustine's Roman Catholic School in Scarborough serves a large area of coastal North Yorkshire. The school is small and oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils eligible for school meals is around average but the school serves some wards with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The school caters for pupils wanting a faith based education and although 75% of its pupils are Catholic other religions represented include Islam, Hindu and Sikh. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is low but the school is attracting an increasing number of pupils from Eastern Europe. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. A Section 48 inspection, on behalf of the Diocese of Middlesbrough, took place at the same time as this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Augustine's is an outstanding school that is continuously improving. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school has improved dramatically in the last five years and major weaknesses highlighted in previous inspection reports have been addressed. The headteacher and governors have taken decisive and effective action to tackle poor teaching, low standards and inadequate resources. The recovery was carefully planned, prioritised and managed. The headteacher is very forward-looking. An inspired management restructure last September renewed the focus on learning and the new team of directors and learning leaders is already playing a key role in taking the school into the next phase of its development.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and standards have improved rapidly. Teaching is good and there are pockets of excellent practice but not all teachers are making sufficient use of assessment to support learning. The curriculum offered is outstanding: it is very flexible and responsive and the range of extra-curricular activities is excellent. The school works very effectively with a wide range of partners. Accommodation and resources have been enhanced greatly and plans are in place for further improvements.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. St Augustine's is a very caring school in which pupils are well supported and enjoy their learning. However, care and support systems are too often left to key members of staff to decide on and need to be the subject of clear policies, understood and implemented by all staff. There also needs to be a central system for recording actions taken and subsequent progress. Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is of the highest standard: there is mutual respect between pupils and staff and pupils show genuine concern for each other. The strong Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of the school's work. Both parents and pupils are very complimentary about the school.

The school is financially sound and provides good value for money. The self-evaluation report is not sufficiently detailed and incisive but the governors, headteacher and senior managers know the school very well; they are aware of the few remaining areas of comparative weakness and are addressing them. Governors, managers and staff are very ambitious for the school and there is outstanding capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the good procedures developed to improve teaching and learning are used consistently.
- Create clear written procedures and central tracking systems for the care, guidance and support of pupils.
- Sharpen the self-evaluation process.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding at Key Stage 3 and standards are very high. This has been the case for the last three years. Standards in English and mathematics are very high and pupils make much better progress than expected. The standards attained in science are not quite so high but they rose in 2006 and a further rise is predicted this year.

Pupils' achievement at Key Stage 4 is outstanding and standards are now very high. They have taken longer to improve but GCSE pass rates rose considerably in 2006. The proportion of pupils

achieving five GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including mathematics and English, was 15% above the national average. Pupils are now making much better progress at Key Stage 4 and the progress made in English is outstanding. Pupils also do well in history, music and design technology, but results in science, religious education and geography have been disappointing. Demanding targets have been set for this year and the indications are that they will be exceeded.

No group of pupils underachieves. The school has a growing number of pupils for whom English is not their first language and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also increasing. Both groups of pupils are supported very well and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils are a credit to the school. They have positive attitudes to learning and do their very best to succeed. Behaviour in lessons and around the site is excellent. Pupils are wonderful ambassadors for the school and are quick to offer help: they are polite, friendly and articulate. They are proud of their school and enjoy the education they receive. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and based on mutual respect. There is a very strong pupil mentoring scheme and pupils say they feel safe in school, there is very little bullying or harassment.

There is very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in a broad variety of learning and contexts. Pupils are well aware of healthy lifestyles and take an active part in sport. They partake in many and varied extra-curricular activities, which they really enjoy. Pupils actively contribute to the community in and out of school through musical performances and the church. They also raise money for Catholic and other charities. Pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good and they have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills. Pupils leave school with the maturity and skills to equip them for the next stage of their academic or working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most lessons have a clear focus and teachers successfully demand high standards of work and behaviour. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and their questioning skills are very good. They challenge and extend students' thinking and give them opportunities to reflect before answering. Teaching assistants are used well to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English are fully included in lessons. For instance, keywords are written in both English and Polish on the board. ICT is used well in many lessons.

The best lessons inspire and challenge pupils to extend themselves, providing activities carefully matched to individuals' needs. Teachers explain the purpose of each lesson and ensure that pupils return to this at the end of the lesson to check how well they have achieved their objectives. In the weaker lessons, however, teachers are not using assessment to support learning as effectively and consistently.

Teachers make effective use of assessment information to track pupils' progress and set appropriate targets. Pupils have many opportunities to discuss their work with teachers within and outside of lesson time. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully, giving useful guidance about

how they can improve. As a result, most pupils have a good understanding of the standard of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. Despite being a small school, every effort is made to tailor the provision to meet the differing needs of pupils. An increasing range of vocational courses is being offered in school and partnerships with local colleges give pupils access to additional vocational provision. Pupils' ICT skills are developed well through specific courses and across the curriculum. The literacy development of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which was a weakness at the last inspection, is now good. The most able students are challenged and given opportunities to excel. For example, individual arrangements are made for gifted pupils to take GCSE and GCE AS qualifications early and individual progression routes are carefully planned in collaboration with the local college.

An excellent range of extra-curricular activities is available and participation is very good. The school is a hive of activity at lunchtime: the music room is packed with pupils enjoying choir practice, many other pupils play sports and some grasp the opportunity to use specialist facilities to complete work. Teachers give their time freely and there are many additional activities after school and at weekends.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides very good guidance and support to individual pupils. The tutorial programme is very strong and provides high quality pastoral care and good academic guidance. Staff give up their free time to help pupils and the support is valued and appreciated. Facilities, like the library, ensure that the learning needs of pupils are central to their provision: this helps to maintain the very good progress that pupils make. Relationships are very positive and there is a strong sense of mutual respect. Transition arrangements with primary schools and local colleges are strong and help pupils settle quickly. Guidance for career choices and the next stage of learning are securely in place, with good support from the school's partners. The provision for learners in the 'Study' is an example of good practice of high quality care that brings about improvements in learning. Safeguarding requirements meet statutory requirements. Some procedures need to be written down and shared with all staff to make them more effective and less dependant on individual members of staff. There also needs to be a central tracking system to record and monitor any action taken.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. Over the last five years the school has been transformed from a failing school to one in which pupils' achievement and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. The senior leadership team is strong with a good range of complementary skills. Governors have played a key role in the recovery of the school by supporting the headteacher in addressing major issues. They set challenging targets and hold the school to account: they are not complacent. Governance is outstanding.

A management restructure at the start of this academic year devolved leadership, empowering directors to take responsibility for their own areas. The directors meet regularly and work well together. They have made a very promising start and are ably supported by the learning leaders. Teachers have been made more accountable and have risen to the challenge showing creativity and enthusiasm. The management of both learning and support is more cohesive and responsive with good practice shared more effectively. Managers and leaders know the school well: they are fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses and have detailed plans to take the school forward. The self-evaluation report, however, lacks clear judgements and thoroughness in places. Day to day management of the school is very good but some systems need to be strengthened through the creation of clear, written policies. The school has recognised this and improvements are underway.

Working in partnership has become a key strength of the school. Accommodation has been improved and is now good: further developments are planned. Resources are good and the school provides good value for money. The school has an outstanding capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of the school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views. Here is a summary of our findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- St Augustine's is an outstanding school. The school has improved tremendously over the last few years and the signs are that it will continue to get even better.
- External examination and test results have improved dramatically and are well above average. Pupils of all levels of ability are making good progress.
- Teaching is good overall and is outstanding in some lessons. You participate well in lessons and clearly enjoy your learning. We have asked the school to try to make the quality of all teaching match that of the very best.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary and you show consideration and respect for others.
- The range of courses and out of school activities is outstanding. The school makes every effort to offer courses that meet your individual needs.
- The care, guidance and support available are of the highest quality but we have asked the school to keep better centralised records of this aspect of its work by using a computer database.
- Mr Cannon and his team of managers are doing an outstanding job and they know exactly what needs to be done to improve the school further.

We would like to thank you for contributing to the inspection and for being so polite and helpful. We would also like to congratulate you on being part of an outstanding school and wish you well for the future.