

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111309
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	331553
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Gill Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Littlewood
Headteacher	Mrs Lisa Wigglesworth
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents and carers, and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at data on pupils' progress, pupils' work, school improvement plans and monitoring records, governing body minutes and questionnaires returned from 69 pupils, 12 staff, and 23 parents and carers.

- children's achievement during their first two years at school
- pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stages 1 and 2
- the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and whether staff expectations for this group of pupils are high enough
- the cohesiveness of the school community and what pupils learn about the wider world in which they live.

Information about the school

This is a small school situated in Latchford on the outskirts of Warrington. Most pupils live in the surrounding neighbourhood, which experiences some economic deprivation. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average and has risen by a third in the past year. The number of pupils leaving the school during the school year has risen since the last inspection, when the school was given a notice to improve. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has doubled, but is still well below the national average. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. There is a higher number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs than is found nationally. Since 2008 there has been a large turnover of staff. The majority of teachers are new to the school and a deputy headteacher has yet to be appointed.

The school has achieved a number of awards, which include Activemark 2008 and Healthy Schools status. It provides a breakfast club every morning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in separate Nursery and Reception classes.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. St Augustine's provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is improving rapidly and some aspects of its work, such as the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of pupils and the Early Years Foundation Stage, are good. The headteacher sets high expectations for raising pupils' achievement. Since the last inspection she has worked tirelessly and successfully to secure improvement. In 2009 the standards reached by 11-year-olds were much higher than in previous years and are now broadly in line with the provisional national average in English, mathematics and science. More pupils attained the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science than is found nationally, but standards in writing remain low. The school has plans of good quality to improve this aspect of its work. From pupils' average to below average starting points, progress during their seven years at school is now satisfactory. The morale of staff is high and they say they enjoy working at St Augustine's.

Pupils are friendly and polite to visitors. Behaviour is good. They enjoy school, but the attendance and punctuality of a few pupils is poor. Most pupils report that they feel safe in school and are confident to talk to staff if they have any concerns. Parents appreciate the good-quality care provided by staff, particularly towards pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, some parents and carers report that they would like more information on their children's progress. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and recognise the improvements made since the last inspection. Parents and carers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are particularly appreciative of the opportunities provided by the new family learning programme.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is some excellent practice from which staff can learn. Pupils work well in lessons; where teaching is good or better their progress is rapid. However, because of the legacy of underachievement, some pupils are still working at levels below those expected for their age and their progress and attainment are not yet good enough. Pupils report that they do not always know how to improve their work. This was evident in the varied quality of marking in pupils' books and in the lack of guidance provided in some lessons which were only satisfactory.

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in English and mathematics. However, other subjects, for example geography and history, are not used well to promote pupils' understanding of community cohesion. Opportunities are missed to

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practise skills which prepare pupils for their future economic well-being. For example, enquiry skills, communication skills and developing pupils' knowledge of the wider world are not given sufficient emphasis in subjects such as history. The curriculum does not always match pupils' interests well. There are good examples of curriculum planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Given the progress made since the last inspection, the recent higher attainment, the drive of the senior leadership, the high-quality of self-evaluation and the determination of staff to secure high standards and improve achievement across the school, the school demonstrates that it has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in writing, by ensuring that:
 - - all pupils make satisfactory or better progress in their learning
 - - all pupils know and understand the next steps in their learning
 - - staff implement the school's plan to improve writing consistently across all classes.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - - sharing and learning from the best practice which exists in the school
 - - ensuring that the guidance given to pupils in lessons to improve their work is clear
 - - ensuring that marking consistently matches the quality of the best practice.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum by:
 - - ensuring that curriculum planning takes account of pupils' interests, knowledge and understanding
 - - focusing on developing pupils' skills across different subjects
 - - using subjects like history and geography to promote pupils' understanding of community cohesion both locally and globally
 - - learning from some of the good developments in curriculum planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Encourage parents and carers to become active partners in their children's learning by:
 - - informing them more frequently and clearly about their children's progress
 - - extending the family learning programme
 - - implementing the school's plans to improve attendance.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Children start in Nursery and Reception with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly typical for children of their age. However, their levels of communication and personal, social and emotional skills are lower than other areas of their development. During their seven years in school, pupils' achievement is now satisfactory, including the achievement of those with special educational needs and/or

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disabilities.

In 2009 pupils in Key Stage 1 reached levels in reading and mathematics that are in line with those expected for seven-year-olds nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards at the end of Year 2 were low. The standards reached by 11-year-olds in the most recent national tests were broadly in line with the provisional national average and pupils' progress in the last academic year was good. Over half the year group achieved the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science. However, the more-able pupils did not reach the same high standards in writing.

Pupils say they enjoy school. They are keen to learn and support each other well in lessons. In a good Year 6 lesson, inspectors observed pupils making excellent use of ICT. They listened attentively to each other's opening sentences and made excellent suggestions to improve their work. In the good and better lessons, pupils understand how to present their work and respond well to teachers' high expectations. In some weaker lessons pupils do not always grasp what they are expected to learn, they become confused and their progress is slower. The work in pupils' exercise books demonstrates that standards in some year groups are below those expected for their age. The leadership recognises there is still much to be done to secure good or better achievement across the school.

Pupils know about leading healthy lifestyles and most are keen to keep fit and take an active part in the wide range of activities provided by the school staff. The uptake of school dinners is good and pupils know that they should eat healthily, although many prefer crisps and biscuits to fruit in their lunch boxes. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the local and wider community by working with staff on projects. For example, they took part in the recent Fair Trade initiative with a local shop and they raise money for appropriate charities. They have a good understanding of their own faith and demonstrate through their kindness to one another a good understanding of right and wrong.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

This is a caring school, where the safeguarding of pupils' health, safety and well-being are a top priority. Staff are vigilant and take their responsibilities seriously. Although many are new to the school, they are clear about school procedures and are working effectively with staff who know the local community well. Relationships between pupils and staff are good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided for well and the school makes good use of other agencies that support children's and families' well-being. Teaching assistants are well led and managed, and new arrangements to use the staff's strengths in providing additional support are beginning to produce a faster rate of progress for vulnerable pupils. The breakfast club provides a good level of care for pupils who use the facility.

Inspectors observed lessons across the curriculum. They ranged in quality from satisfactory to outstanding. In the better lessons, teaching captured pupils' interest well and staff made excellent use of resources. For example, mini video cameras were used imaginatively in Year 1 to improve pupils' understanding of speaking in sentences. Some outstanding practice in assessment exists. In a Year 5 English lesson, pupils used their knowledge of sentence structures effectively to assess the quality of their own work. Teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics is good, but in other subjects they do not always take full account of what pupils already know. In the satisfactory lessons the teacher's expectations were not always high enough. The more-able pupils in particular were given activities with insufficient challenge and the guidance about what they should complete was not always clear.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and places a good emphasis on the basic skills and personal, social and health education. Pupils take part in a residential visit to France to support their acquisition of French, and there is a good range of visits and visitors to school. However, curriculum planning in subjects other than mathematics, English and science is weak; plans place too little emphasis on developing enquiry and communication skills across subjects. There is too much reliance on worksheets and some tasks provided for pupils are dull.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, well supported by an enthusiastic staff, is successfully driving forward improvements in all aspects of the school's work. The quality of her school development planning and self-evaluation is excellent. Governors provide effective challenge and support. Recent appointments have strengthened the senior leadership team, but the lack of a substantive deputy headteacher remains a cause for concern. New subject leaders have made a positive start in their roles, but it is too soon to measure the impact of their work against the outcomes for pupils. The school works well in partnership with the local authority and diocese. They have provided good support, particularly aiding improvement to the Early Years Foundation Stage and strengthening the governing body.

The school tracks the outcomes for different groups of pupils well and has a clear picture of each individual pupil's progress. It recognises that progress for some of its most vulnerable pupils is poor. The school is tackling this effectively and, as a result, equality of opportunities is now satisfactory. Procedures to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of pupils meet current statutory requirements well. Staff are well trained and have a good understanding of pupils' needs. The school is a cohesive community, but it recognises that there is more to do to engage parents and carers fully as partners in their children's learning. The school has plans of good quality to promote community cohesion; however, these have not yet been implemented fully. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception and, by the time they enter Year 1, most have skills and abilities that are broadly typical of four- and five-year-olds nationally. They settle well and use all the areas of learning available to them, indoors and outdoors, confidently. During the inspection, children in the Nursery talked happily to inspectors as they wrote birthday cards to their class mascot. They know the daily routines of the Nursery well. Because there are only a small number of children in each class, they receive a lot of adult attention, which is helping their good progress. The quality of teaching is good. Resources are well organised, staff work together effectively and relationships are good. An outstanding aspect of planning is preparing areas in the classroom which focus on the special interests of individual children. However, a relatively weaker aspect is ensuring that all staff use planned opportunities well to develop good levels of dialogue. This means that the progress children make in communication, language and literacy is relatively slower than other aspects of their development.

The arrangements to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children are good. Parents and carers report that they feel welcome in the Nursery and Reception and are pleased their children are happy. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The leader has high expectations and is driving improvement effectively. There are plans of good quality to extend the family learning programme and to involve parents and carers further in supporting their children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received a small number of completed questionnaires from parents and carers. The responses were overwhelmingly positive and typical comments include: 'My child has settled extremely well, she is shy and the school has helped her become more

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confident;' and, 'My child is very happy at school.' The few concerns expressed by parents were mainly about the need for more challenge for children with higher ability and for more information about their children's progress.

Where inspectors agree with comments from parents and carers, this appears in the main body of the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Augustine's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 139 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	74	12	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	91	4	9	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	70	12	26	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	52	22	48	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	67	14	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	78	10	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	61	18	39	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	58	18	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	52	22	48	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	61	18	39	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	52	22	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	74	12	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	80	8	18	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



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

You may remember that I visited your school recently, with another inspector, to carry out an inspection. This letter is to thank you for talking to us about your school and to explain to you what we found.

We judged your school to be providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. This means it no longer needs a notice to improve. Your headteacher and other staff have worked very hard since we last visited to make sure that your lessons are more interesting so that you make better progress. You told us that you think your school has improved and we agree!

We were impressed by the confident way you use computers in your lessons. Your behaviour is good and you are keen to take part in the clubs and activities provided by the school. You know how to keep healthy, but a few of you don't always choose to eat the things that are good for you!

To help your school become even better, we have asked it to do the following:

- improve the standards you reach in your work, particularly in writing
- improve the curriculum to make sure that you can develop the skills you need for your future life
- make sure that you always understand what you need to learn in lessons
- give your parents and carers more information about how well you are doing in school so that they can support you better in your learning.

You can help your teachers by making sure you come to school on time every single day and by trying hard in all that you do.

With my best wishes for the future

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