

St Augustine's C of E High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101154
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	335667
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	John Kennedy 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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	712
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Rigg
Headteacher	Eugene Moriarty
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, two assemblies and a registration period, and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and three groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at its self-evaluation and its development plan, its analyses of students' achievement, governing body minutes, some departmental reviews and policy documents, safeguarding documentation and some of the students' books and records.

Inspectors also consider the views expressed in 77 student, 40 staff and 100 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The effectiveness of systems for assessment, monitoring and intervention for students who are underperforming.
- The impact of teaching in promoting students' independent learning skills and the quality of teachers' feedback in helping students make good progress.
- The degree to which improvement has been sustained since the last inspection, especially in the sixth form.
- The impact of the school's specialism on raising achievement and improving the quality of the curriculum.

Information about the school

Most of the students at this smaller than average school come from diverse faiths and a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with no particular heritage being predominant. A small minority are refugees or asylum seekers. A high proportion of the students, over a third, are eligible for free school meals. Around three quarters of the students speak English as an additional language and a third of these are at an early stage of fluency. The proportion of students with special education needs and/or disabilities is above average. These students' needs are varied and include behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, and moderate learning difficulties. The number in receipt of a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school gained specialist status for science in 2004 and in February 2009 was recognised as one of the top five most improved specialist schools nationally. Among its many other awards it holds the healthy schools status. St Augustine's is a full-service extended school. A new headteacher took up post in September 2009.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

There have been a number of notable improvements in St Augustine's since it was last inspected, particularly in all aspects of its provision. It is now a good school. Some of the outcomes for students are outstanding. The sixth form, which was judged to be inadequate in 2006, has improved considerably. Although it is satisfactory overall, because there are some comparative weaknesses in Year 12 and improvements have not had time to have a full impact, it now provides good teaching for its students.

The strong emphasis on improving the quality of classroom practice and the rigorous tracking of students' progress towards challenging targets has borne fruit. Standards in GCSE examinations have been increasing every year since the last inspection.

Performance in 2009 against key success measures, such as the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE higher grades which include English and mathematics, was the best ever achieved by the school. This is directly related to predominantly good teaching across the school and sixth form, rigorous tracking systems and the impact of targeted intervention and support. The trend of improved achievement is also evident in the sixth form. However, AS-level performance in 2009 was disappointing primarily because a few students chose courses that they struggled with.

St Augustine's is an exceptionally caring school which nurtures students' all-round development. Rigorous systems are in place for safeguarding, and promoting good attendance and positive behaviour. As a consequence, students feel exceptionally safe, and are absolutely confident that they can turn to any member of staff if they have concerns. The school actively promotes and nurtures a culture of mutual care and respect, typified by one student's comment, 'We look out for each other.' This forms the bedrock of their very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The curriculum contributes to positive outcomes, for example, through work-related learning and skills, which stand students in good stead for their adult lives. The school has developed the curriculum well since its last inspection with the bespoke themed programme in Years 7 and 8 as an example of the increasing focus on helping students develop learning and thinking skills. Leaders have recognised that this needs further development and have planned to audit its impact across the curriculum. Sixth formers say, and inspectors agree, that more could be done to enrich the sixth form curriculum.

The school works well with a range of partners, including parents and carers. This can be seen for example, in academic review days which are well attended by parents. It is also exemplified in the excellent work done to support parents who are not proficient in speaking English through the provision of interpreters and family learning classes for parents of Year 7 students to help with transition. The school has identified the need to

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do more to improve existing communication channels, such as its website, and this is being prioritised in its current development plan.

A key to the school's success is strong leadership and management at all levels, and a culture of and passion for continuous improvement which is shared by dedicated and committed staff. This, together with the school's comprehensive systems for self-evaluation and significant improvements made since it was last inspected, ensures that the school is well placed to sustain this trend.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Identify the next improvements in the curriculum by evaluating the impact of the themed learning programme in Years 7 and 8, focusing on student outcomes and its impact on learning across the rest of the curriculum.
- Build on existing good practice by developing a communications strategy that gives all parents and carers greater opportunity to have their views captured and acted upon.
- Improve the sixth form by:
 - providing wider enrichment opportunities for students
 - raising standards in Year 12, ensuring that all students are undertaking appropriate courses by receiving targeted guidance and support prior to their commencement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students make good progress because they are motivated, attend regularly and behave well in lessons. Learning is an enjoyable business for the students. They enjoy very positive relationships with staff and each other. They are not shy in asking for help because they are encouraged to do so and they want to learn. This ethos is at the heart of their effective learning. In lessons, little time is wasted. This is a consequence of well-established routines, firm boundaries and high expectations that staff have of them. Students respond well to activities in lessons which are relevant and practical. They show enthusiasm for the various opportunities that staff give them to think for themselves and work independently. Planning, ongoing assessment in lessons and additional support ensure that all groups, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Some of the students, including those who speak English as an additional language, make excellent progress because of the quality of the curriculum and the targeted support they receive.

Attainment of current students is broadly average and this represents good progress for all groups because for many students their attainment, for example in literacy, is low, when they join the school. The attainment of students who speak English as an additional language was above average in 2009, as a result of the school's effective provision. Standards in science are improving, particularly in triple science, and the school met its specialist targets in 2009, although it was slightly below targets in core

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and additional science.

Students have extremely mature and reflective attitudes to the world at large and show great pride in celebrating their rich religious and cultural diversity. This was reflected, for example, during the recent Black history month events. It is also exemplified in the harmonious social ambience which pervades the school and the high degree of racial tolerance. Students are actively involved in a range of activities that make a difference to the school and the wider community. Their exemplary moral development can be seen in their acute awareness of their role as part of a global community and the efforts they make to help out areas in the world which have greater need. It was also evident in a lesson where they were discussing the amoral use of propaganda during the Second World War.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is mostly good and some aspects, such as the quality of planning, are consistently and exceptionally strong. Planning is based on accurate and regular assessments and ensures that activities and support are well targeted. In the best

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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lessons, teachers draw on their good subject knowledge and use of questioning to regularly gauge students' understanding and progress and to extend their learning. Staff use confidence-building praise and continuous feedback to encourage students to move on to the next level. Students are aware of the levels they are working at and how this is linked to coursework and examination requirements. In a minority of lessons there are occasional lapses in learning and a few instances where teachers talk a little too much. Students are given opportunities to reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of their peers but, occasionally, teachers do not maximise opportunities for them to hone their critical thinking skills by working in pairs.

Students benefit from a flexible and rich curriculum that meets their differing aptitudes and aspirations. The specialist status contributes well to this by offering additional options and bringing science to life with its strong emphasis on practical activities. Information and communication technology is used across the curriculum to enhance learning and develop students' skills. In Key Stage 4, a wide range of GCSE subjects is complemented by vocational opportunities and other options such as a Prince's Trust programme of community outreach projects. Students are encouraged and supported to continue studying their heritage languages, with some examples of exceptional achievement. The school offers wide-ranging and popular enrichment activities for students in Years 7 to 11, including drama, debating, sport and music.

Staff are exceptionally well aware of individual students' needs, capabilities and progress. This underpins the absolute strength of the support, guidance and care they provide. Staff can intervene quickly and effectively to meet the needs of all, but particular the most vulnerable. Some aspects are particularly noteworthy, such as the quality of transition and induction support for students arriving from primary schools and those who arrive at other times during the school year, particular those who are at an early stage of learning English, refugees or those who have special educational needs. The school draws on its close links with outside agencies through its 'team around the school' to target specialised support for those most in need. Although there have been comparative weaknesses in guidance offered prior to sixth form courses, this affected only a small number of students, some of whom came from other schools, and is now being addressed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

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The new headteacher has hit the ground running and has given the school continued confidence in going forward. Seamless transition has ensured that the pace of improvement has been sustained. The headteacher benefits from well-developed systems for performance management, professional development, self-review and tracking. He is supported by strong senior and middle leaders and by staff as a whole who share a common ambition to continually improve teaching and raise standards. The high level of staff morale and pride is reflected in the positive written feedback to inspectors. Departmental self-evaluations are accurate and underpin priorities for the school's planning. Information from rigorous tracking, supported by information from the monitoring of teaching, is used to target support and challenge students and staff alike. The governing body holds the school to account well through its focus on challenging targets and through the work of its monitoring committee.

Staff ensure that no individual or group is marginalised and the close attention they pay to progress ensures that any emerging gaps in performance are tackled successfully. They safeguard students with the same rigour and attention to detail. St Augustine's is very cohesive, perhaps best exemplified by the palpable harmony which exists between the large Muslim student population and the Christian community in this Anglican school. The school promotes community cohesion locally in a multitude of ways such as its links with primary schools, extended services and work with the local Anglican church. It spreads its influence to the global community through its links with a school in Kenya. The school is keen to strengthen the impact of this international aspect of its work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Sixth form

The sixth form has improved significantly but more remains to be done for Year 12. A-level results show an improving trend and results represent good progress for most students, many of whom have low levels of attainment when they start. Retention is good and attendance rates are now high. Pass rates at AS-level, and for some vocational courses, however, are below average because a few courses are not appropriate for the small number of students who chose them. For this reason outcomes are judged satisfactory rather than better.

Leadership and management have been effective in driving the improvement at A-level and are tackling any remaining weaknesses well. Leaders are looking at ways of strengthening the support for any students who struggled with course choice and any adjustments they have to quickly make in their learning skills. Particular improvements have been made in the quality of teaching, the systems for monitoring and tracking of students' progress and the quality of individual care they receive. Though time is needed for these strong aspects of provision to have a full impact on outcomes, there has been some positive impact particularly in A-level courses and on students' engagement. Students are proud of the sixth form and say that they particularly value their 'amazing' teachers. Sixth formers make their own mark on the school, for instance, through their 'buddy' reading work with Year 7 students. Their philosophy can perhaps best be summed up by one student who said, 'I will inspire others the way teachers have inspired me.'

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of the 14% of parents and carers who returned questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive about the overall impact of the school. A small but significant minority of parents expressed concern about a few areas such as the degree to which the school takes account of their views. Inspectors consider that the school works hard to communicate with all parents and carers and has very positive relationships with most groups. However, at the same time inspectors agree that the school could further improve existing communication channels.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Augustine's C of E High 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 inspection team received 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 712 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	27	69	69	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	25	25	69	69	3	3	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	38	54	54	6	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	27	61	61	8	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	24	24	70	70	3	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	21	64	64	12	12	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	19	67	67	10	10	2	2
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)	27	27	58	58	8	8	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	21	58	58	16	16	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	33	57	57	4	4	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	17	63	63	16	16	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	23	23	69	69	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	30	64	64	3	3	1	1

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.



11 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of St Augustine's C of E High School, Kilburn NW6 5SN

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed listening to you and observing your work. You are right to be proud of St Augustine's. You go to a good and improving school. You said that you enjoy coming to school and we can see why. We saw good teaching in almost all of the lessons we visited and we could see that the care, guidance and support the staff give you is outstanding. We were particularly struck by the quality of your school community. You described it as 'a feeling of belonging'. This helps you feel very safe. We were impressed by how well you get on together, your keen moral sense and how well you appreciate and make the best of the rich cultural and religious diversity in your school.

Good teaching and your own very positive attitudes to learning help you make such good progress. However, we could see that some students in Year 12 did not do as well as they might have done last year, and we have asked the staff to make some improvements to make sure that students are all taking the right courses and getting any help they need if they are struggling. You told us that you enjoy the wide range of activities and events that you can take part in. We think more could be done to improve this in the sixth form. We saw that the school is working hard to provide opportunities for Years 7 and 8 students to develop good learning and thinking skills. This should be making a difference in all subjects and we have asked the school to check on what impact this is having.

One of the reasons why your school is doing so well is because it is well led by your headteacher and other leaders. They work with a strong team of staff to ensure that you do as well as you can. The 'highlander' system they have set up to track your progress is a really good example of how they can keep an eye on you and also let you see how well you are doing. Your parents gave us positive feedback about the school, although a few of them thought that staff could communicate better with them. We agree. Even a good school can do better and the suggestions we have made will help it improve further. You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you are doing. I wish you every success for your future.

Yours sincerely

John Kennedy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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