

# St Augustine Roman Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117438
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339006
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Norma Ball

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	252
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Teresa McCarthy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Eileen Plunkett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Riversmead Hoddesdon EN11 8DP
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@staugustines.herts.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons and observed 13 teachers. The inspectors met parents and carers, informally, on the first morning of the inspection and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, governors and pupils. The school's work was observed: this included scrutinising samples of pupils' work, the school's systems for tracking progress, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning and safeguarding documentation. In addition, inspectors took account of responses to questionnaire forms from 70 parents and carers, 16 staff and 112 pupils.

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

- the effectiveness of the strategies used to raise attainment in mathematics in both key stages and for boys in all subjects
- the impact of teaching and learning on improving pupils' progress, especially in Key Stage 2
- how well assessment information and targets for pupils are used to provide challenging tasks for all groups of pupils, particularly in mathematics
- how well the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils identified as underachieving, especially boys.

## Information about the school

St Augustine is an average sized primary school. Over a quarter of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mainly Italian and Polish, and almost half of these pupils speak English as an additional language. A much smaller than average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than that found nationally but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the national picture. The school is in the midst of an extensive rebuilding programme to improve and extend the accommodation. The school has gained the Activemark and Investors in People awards.

**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

This is a good school. Pupils behave well and enjoy their learning because they are taught well and lessons are interesting. As a result of careful monitoring of the progress made by all pupils, clear targets to help them identify what they need to learn next and a well planned curriculum, pupils make good progress in their time in school. The school has a strong Catholic family ethos which parents and carers value. One parent said, 'I have great confidence in the school and know my child has also.' Another said simply, 'The school is the best.'

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They show care for each other and respect for adults. The school meets safeguarding requirements well and good care, guidance and support are provided for all pupils throughout their time in school. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, enjoy sports and understand about using the internet safely. They make a good contribution to their school and local community and show pride and diligence in the responsibilities they carry out. Everyone is looking forward to the completion of the building works and the improvements this will bring.

Pupils make a good start to their learning in Nursery and Reception. Good progress continues through the school and at the end of Year 6 attainment is above average. Achievement has improved in mathematics and for boys in all subjects because lessons are well structured and pupils are set tasks which challenge them. They especially like the problem-solving approach to their work in mathematics and science. Teaching is good and has been monitored well by the headteacher but this monitoring does not extend to subject leaders to extend the support for teachers and also ensure that best practice is shared across the school. Where there are inconsistencies in teaching, work is not always matched well enough to the prior attainment of different groups of pupils.

The headteacher provides good leadership which unites and enthuses staff. She has managed staff changes well and provided support and careful induction for new teachers. The challenges posed by an extensive rebuilding programme have also been managed well with care given to safety considerations. Subject leaders, many new to their responsibilities, are gaining confidence in their roles. Members of the governing body are challenging the school and are fully involved in strategic planning. However, the school plan to promote community cohesion does not take account of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the local community. The self-evaluation of all areas of the school's work is accurate and new initiatives to help raise achievement have been successfully implemented and are showing clear signs of success. Standards in mathematics have improved especially in Key Stage 2 and there is good capacity to improve further.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring that teachers always match work to the prior attainment of different groups of pupils
  - introducing regular, close monitoring of lessons by senior managers and subject leaders.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's promotion of community cohesion by basing actions on more detailed analysis of the religious, ethnic and social context of the local area.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In most lessons observed, pupils were seen to make good progress because they were appropriately challenged by the work set for them. The results of National Curriculum tests have indicated a decline in standards over the past three years, especially in mathematics. As a result of improved teaching, a careful focus on tracking pupils' progress and adaptation of the curriculum to make learning more fun, progress has improved, especially in Years 4 to 6 and achievement is good. Recent school test results and the work in pupils' books indicate that attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average in mathematics and science and exceptionally high in English. The focus on developing mathematical and scientific skills through problem solving, identifying themes that will appeal to boys, has been effective in improving progress. In a Year 4 and 5 lower set mathematics class, car registration plates formed the basis of work on number patterns and rotating numbers. Boys especially enjoyed this work, were enthusiastic in answering questions and made good progress because they worked hard. Any underachievement is identified quickly by teachers and effective support is provided for pupils to help improve their progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make the same good progress as other pupils. This is because their needs are quickly and carefully assessed and effective support is put in place.

Pupils behave well around the school and in most lessons. They have a clear perception of right and wrong and meet the high expectations of good and kind behaviour set by adults. In a few lessons, some pupils drift off task for short periods but are quickly re-engaged by teachers. Older pupils carry out a broad range of duties, for instance, as prefects and school councillors, with efficiency and dedication. They value the initiatives to raise funds in their classes, or at prefect and school council level, and debate keenly how they will spend the funds they have built up by enterprising activities.

Attendance has improved and is above average. Pupils like their school and want to come because they enjoy learning and playing together. Their personal development is promoted well and they show kindness and concern for those around them, in their local community and further afield such as for people made homeless in Haiti. Pupils are very clear about what constitutes a safe and healthy lifestyle and this is reflected in the

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Activemark award achieved by the school. Several pupils explained how they had been careful to choose healthy lunch snacks in the period when the school kitchen has been closed for building work. Pupils enjoy finding out about other faiths and ways of life and their spiritual development is good. They show sincere respect for their faith and a meditation room provides a quiet space where they can go to be peaceful. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' good achievement and the good personal skills they develop means they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The inspection confirmed the school's view that the quality of teaching is good overall but there are some inconsistencies between classes. Teaching is consistently good at the end of each key stage. Teachers mostly have good subject knowledge, know their pupils well, and good relationships at every level are a feature of the school. The majority of lessons are interesting and this is often because links are built between subjects. For example, the messenger project links religious education, personal and social development, information and communication technology, art and literacy.

<sup>1</sup> 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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Classroom assistants provide good support for pupils who do not find learning easy, are developing their English language skills or need help to catch up with missed work. Where teaching is less strong, work is not always well matched to pupils' needs and as a result they can become distracted for short periods and progress is hindered.

The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences for pupils of all abilities so they make good progress in their learning. Pupils are clear about what they are to learn and are encouraged to evaluate their own learning so they are confident to ask for help where they need to. This self-evaluation also extends to assessing their involvement in small group work to accelerate progress. One boy wrote, 'Boosters have given me heaps of different methods for maths operations, some I've never thought of trying.' The learning environment is enriched by good quality displays including games and challenges on display in corridors for pupils to try. Links with the local secondary school are used to good advantage and liaison with science and mathematics secondary school staff has made a good contribution to pupils' learning. A limited but diverse and appealing range of clubs, some led by older pupils, and well-selected visits enhance learning well beyond the classroom.

The care guidance and support pupils receive is good and so they feel confidence in the adults who care for them. Robust procedures have raised attendance levels and the school works closely with parents to ensure pupils attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils and their families receive good support from the school at all stages and especially during transfer to secondary school. The good support and care provided by the school is extended by constructive links with a range of agencies and services. One pupil summed up the loyalty and affection pupils show to their school by saying, 'We know people care about us. Teachers care what you think and make sure we understand our work.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher provides clear and supportive leadership and has united staff in her successful drive to raise standards. The support given to new staff is reflected in the school gaining the Investors in People award. Careful management of recent changes of the senior leadership team has ensured that improvement has been concerted and successful. Staff embrace their roles and responsibilities keenly, and respect the support provided by senior colleagues. Careful monitoring of teaching and learning through

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lesson observations by the headteacher are now extending to subject leaders as they develop their responsibilities. The quality of teaching and learning is improving but existing good practice is not consistently and speedily shared to raise the pace of improvement further. Development planning is shared well with the governing body and teaching staff and identifies clearly the areas of improvement needed.

Governors are very well informed and their skills and expertise facilitate a good working partnership with senior staff. The partnership with parents is also good so that parents are well informed about their children's development and feel confident to approach the school with ideas or concerns. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory but lacks precision, especially in the finer identification of the characteristics of the local community around the school so that the school can reach out successfully to its members. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Procedures are efficient, closely follow local guidelines and are supported by clear policies. This underpins the good quality care and guidance provided by all adults and the effective promotion of equal opportunities for all pupils within this harmonious school community. Issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed and achievement for all pupils has improved.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children settle quickly and happily in the Nursery and Reception classes. The new classrooms and outdoor learning area are greatly appreciated by staff and enjoyed by the children. Resources are good and well deployed to ensure all six areas of learning are covered well. Children mix well and learn to share. For example, a driving game



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following the 'road' across the outdoor learning area was great fun and children even stopped at the crossing to let others pass. One car driver said, 'You cross. It's safe now.' Independence is fostered well so children follow the good routines well and show confidence in talking to adults. All staff provide good care so children are safe and secure in their learning environment. Children's progress is regularly and carefully assessed and parents are kept closely informed of their children's development. About half of the children admitted to Nursery transfer to other Reception classes locally and their transfer is sensitively managed.

Children enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are similar to those of other children of the same age but stronger in recognition of numbers. As a result of good quality teaching in Nursery and Reception, children make good progress in all areas of learning, gain confidence and develop a love of school. By the time they enter Year 1, their skills and attainment are generally above average but average in reading, writing and calculation. Innovative games and good interaction with adults encourage children to explore and develop their speaking and listening skills and there is good emphasis on improving number skills. Learning flows well between the indoor and outdoor learning areas and there is a good balance of adult-led learning activities and the games children devise for themselves. Staff take good opportunities to extend children's learning by gently challenging them and exploring ideas with them when they are playing. The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well managed and staff work as a close, efficient and dedicated team.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Most parents and carers who replied to the questionnaires or spoke to inspectors were very happy with the school. They value all that the school provides for their children and are especially pleased that they enjoy school and make good progress. Only a few parents expressed concerns. These were about how well the school keeps parents informed about the progress children make. Parents have an annual written report and two opportunities a year to meet with teachers by appointment. Newsletters and information about the curriculum themes are sent home regularly, and staff are available to meet with parents at short notice. A very small minority of parents did not feel the school took note of their concerns or suggestions or provided help for them to support their child's learning. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views and found no

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evidence to support the few parental concerns.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Augustine Roman 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 inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 252 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	50	35	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	61	27	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	40	34	49	6	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	44	37	53	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	51	34	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	46	33	47	2	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	43	39	56	1	1	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)	31	44	33	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	47	33	47	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	47	32	46	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	36	39	56	3	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	35	50	34	49	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	54	30	43	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Augustine Roman Catholic Primary School, Hoddesdon, EN11 8DP

Thank you for being so helpful and polite when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our visit and it was exciting to see how the new building is taking shape. We were very impressed with the happy atmosphere in your school and how well you get on with each other. You told us how much you like your school and that you enjoy your lessons because they are fun. You know a lot about how to be safe and stay healthy. We agree with you that you go to a good school and people look after you well.

Your teachers encourage you to work hard and make good progress in lessons. You make good contributions to your school and to the local community. Your headteacher, other staff and governors all work very hard to make sure your school is a happy and successful place in which to learn. We have asked them to do two things to make your school even better:

- to make sure that senior leaders and managers visit your classes regularly to check that all of your lessons are good or better
- to make sure that your school is well linked to the local area so that when they plan how you can develop links with your local area they know as much as possible about the community.

You can help by doing your best, always working hard and paying attention in lessons. It was a great pleasure to visit your school and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

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