

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125713
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	354327
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Una Bennett
Headteacher	Angela Scull
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2006
School address	Hollis Lane Kenilworth CV8 2JY
Telephone number	01926 852943
Fax number	01926 857073
Email address	head3541@we-learn.com

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed eight teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and spoke with parents. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school improvement planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 76 parents and carers.

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

- the reasons for the dip in attainment in 2009, how leaders and staff have responded, and the evidence that standards are back on track
- how well the school caters for boys and girls of different capabilities
- the impact of the school's focus on modern foreign languages and an international curriculum.

Information about the school

This is an average size school. The large majority of pupils are White British, with most other pupils coming from other White European backgrounds. None are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. As part of a pilot for the introduction of specialist status in primary schools, St Augustine's has been designated as a centre for modern foreign languages. A breakfast and after-school club run on the school site, but these are independently managed and separately inspected.

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

St Augustine's is a good school where girls and boys make good progress and where their personal development is especially impressive. Parents particularly value the high quality care, guidance and support, describing the school as 'a warm, caring and happy community'. They are unanimous in their view that the school ensures that their children feel safe, and pupils' own comments echo this. Pupils have complete confidence that staff will sort out any difficulties that they might have. Those who need extra help with their learning benefit from exceedingly well-tailored support that enables them to make good progress throughout the school, although teaching assistants are not fully utilised during whole-class periods. Together with pupils' enthusiasm for school, thorough systems for promoting attendance and punctuality have resulted in attendance rates that have been consistently high.

A number of parents voiced worries over the detrimental impact of the many changes of teacher that some pupils have had during previous years at the school. This certainly had an adverse impact on the Year 6 results in 2009. Test scores that year were no higher than average because relatively few pupils attained higher levels in writing and mathematics. The governing body and school leaders have been swift to act. New systems were put in place to much more closely track pupils' progress. These quickly identify any pupils who may be falling behind, and the school has targeted additional support at boosting these pupils' performance. As a result, attainment is well above average, as evident in lessons and from pupils' work. Even though the current Year 6 also went through some disruption to their learning through several staff changes earlier in their school career, the measures taken by the school have been successful in compensating for this. There have been other notable improvements too, including to the now excellent start that children get off to in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Assessment was flagged as a weakness in the last inspection report. It is now among the many strengths of the school. Such changes for the better, coupled with leaders' accurate self-evaluation, illustrate the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Some of the teaching is outstanding and this is really accelerating pupils' learning. Variation in practice between classes means that teaching and learning are good overall rather than better. For instance, objectives are sometimes unclear at the start of lessons and occasionally work is not matched to pupils' capabilities to extend the more able. Similarly, the use of questioning and marking is inconsistent. Many aspects of the curriculum stand out, especially in the younger classes, where there is a seamless integration of different subjects to make learning interesting and fun. Year 2 pupils, for example, followed instructions in German while taking part in physical exercise. This

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topic-based approach to linking different subjects as part of an international curriculum is still developing in Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, it has already yielded dividends in the school's impressive promotion of community cohesion and in the keen interest that pupils take in international affairs and in other cultures and beliefs. This is illustrated through the 'day in the life' focus on the everyday experiences of people in other countries. Pupils play very active roles in the school and wider community, taking an especially strong interest in environmental issues. They get on very well together and treat each other with great politeness and respect. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Together, these show the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' learning by ironing out variations in teaching and learning between classes and ensuring that in all lessons:
 - the objectives set out at the start identify what it is that pupils are expected to learn rather than just the activities they are due to carry out
 - work is always matched to the different capabilities of the pupils, particularly to extend the more able
 - teaching assistants are fully utilised during whole-class teaching
 - teachers direct questions at those pupils who are slow to volunteer answers
 - marking in all subjects gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The outcomes for pupils are outstanding because pupils achieve well academically from their starting points and their excellent behaviour is matched by their exceptional personal development. Pupils' work shows that they are attaining standards that are well above average, reversing the dip last year. Pupils who need extra help with their learning make good progress because they benefit from well-planned support. Able boys and girls are enabled to make similarly good progress in most lessons because they are generally set work that stretches them. This is especially the case in English and mathematics. Pupils are not challenged quite so much in all other subjects, particularly on those occasions when all are given similar worksheets to complete. When this occurs it constrains opportunities for the more able pupils to further develop their thinking and to use and apply their literacy and other key skills.

Throughout the school, pupils' love of school and their exceedingly positive attitudes to learning make major contributions to the progress that they make. They listen well to their teachers and to each other, and they are very keen to participate actively in lessons and other activities. These include the many opportunities that they have to contribute to the local community: singing at the Mayor's inauguration; taking part in other musical events in the town and farther afield; and campaigning on environmental

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issues. Many take on responsibilities in school. The student council is exceptionally active, contributing a pupil voice to school decisions through its fortnightly meetings. The Bee Green team lead on ecological concerns, and they run a Fair Trade stall. The school's 'Wow' team have put into practice the Biblical Parable of the Talents to raise funds for national and international charities. Pupils take a lively interest in different ways of life with, for example, each class linked to a different country around the globe.

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	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers know their pupils very well. The good caring relationships that they have with them help to motivate the children to try hard and do their best. Pupils are also highly motivated by the way that the curriculum is being made increasingly interesting and relevant through the imaginative links forged between different subjects. They embrace with enthusiasm the opportunities that they have to sample several European languages. A great many join the wide range of after-school clubs on offer and which contribute strongly to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Comprehensive tracking arrangements now quickly pinpoint any areas of

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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underachievement and result in excellent support and guidance that is very well tailored to individual pupils' needs and which, in the words of a parent, 'Helps each child reach their full potential in accordance with the individual child's ability.' Although some parents would like still more information about their children's progress, the details provided to parents by the school, and the regular homework, enhance classroom learning and equip parents to support their children's education at home. Most marking, especially in literacy, gives pupils clear guidance on how to move their work on, and pupils are increasingly involved in evaluating their own and each other's learning. There are, however, some classes where marking in some subjects is less precise; not, for example, picking up key spelling errors. Lessons routinely start with teachers setting out learning objectives, but these sometimes describe the tasks that pupils are due to undertake rather than what they should be learning. Where this occurs, it limits opportunities for pupils to reflect on and assess what they have learnt rather than what they have done.

Teachers' questioning is sharply focused so that it draws out thoughtful responses from pupils, for example in explaining their methodology in mathematical problem-solving. When questions are asked, the great majority of pupils put up their hands to answer, but a small minority are more reluctant to volunteer, and teachers do not always direct questions at these pupils to ensure that they are fully involved. Teaching assistants are very effective in supporting those pupils who need extra help in lessons, but they are not always directed as well as they could be during periods when the teacher is addressing the whole class. Opportunities are missed, for example, for them to use this time to support the teacher by keeping a note of which pupils are volunteering answers and which are not.

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?

The headteacher, leadership team and governors work together very effectively to drive school improvement. Leaders' monitoring has enabled the school to maintain and build on its strengths and to rapidly respond to the dip in standards last year. Leaders' observations of lessons have resulted in feedback to teachers that has helped them to improve their practice, although the checklists that leaders use when visiting lessons do not all guide them to focus their attention on the progress that pupils make. The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are fully met and that there are

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thorough systems in place to deal with any child protection issues. The challenging questions that governors pose leaders also help ensure good equality of opportunity. School leaders quickly spot any differences in the attainment of boys or girls and they respond with appropriate interventions to alleviate any underachievement, for example among some girls last year in mathematics in Key Stage 2.

A feature of this school that particularly stands out is its promotion of community cohesion. The governing body and school leaders have a very clear picture of the community served by the school and have worked hard, and very effectively, to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils successfully learn about the lives of those in other parts of Britain and the wider world, and about other cultures and beliefs. In this, the school's focus on modern foreign languages makes a major contribution. Even the very youngest children begin to learn a little of other European tongues and this helps to stimulate their thirst to learn more. The school looks outwards too, having developed very productive ties with community groups in the parish and wider locality, such as the 'Tea and Tunes' sessions for senior citizens in the town.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the school with skills that are mostly above those expected for their ages. Well-chosen activities, and the steer that the children are given by staff to help them get the most out of activities they choose for themselves, mean that they are helped greatly to grow in confidence and build on these skills. Highly-focused leadership has led to much improved systems for keeping a careful track of children's progress as they learn

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through play in this stimulating setting. The net result is that children now leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with capabilities that are well above average. Children's early writing skills are notably lower than their other abilities when they start in the Reception Year. Nevertheless, the constant exposure to writing and labelling inside the classroom and in the lively outdoor area, coupled with the encouragement that the children are given to practise mark-making, result in especially rapid progress in this area of learning. The excellent relationships that children have with the staff and with each other mean that their social development is also exceptional.

Parents recognise the recent improvements that have enabled their children to get off to an accelerated start in the Reception Year. They reserve particular praise for the induction arrangements and workshops for parents that are provided when their children start school. As one explained, 'St Augustine's has really helped my daughter to settle in.'

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Although the large majority of parents express very positive views, a significant minority raise concerns. Several feel that there are too few opportunities for physical exercise. Timetables show regular physical education lessons, and there are long breaks which allow for active play. Inspectors also saw opportunities taken for physical exercise while learning in other subjects. A number of parents feel that more able pupils could be stretched more. Inspectors found good challenge for able pupils in the majority of lessons, but they identified some occasions when teachers might expect more of these pupils. Some parents also expressed dissatisfaction with communications between school and home, saying that they felt it was difficult to raise concerns. Inspectors have drawn this to governors' attention as a point for them to look at, but inspectors were impressed with the quality and quantity of communications from the school, including a regular weekly newsletter, a termly governors' report and twice-yearly school reports on each child's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Augustines 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 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	63	23	30	5	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	64	27	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	37	36	47	7	9	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	43	28	37	12	16	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	41	54	24	32	9	12	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	39	31	41	8	11	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	45	37	49	3	4	2	3
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)	40	53	33	43	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	43	30	39	9	12	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	43	32	42	4	5	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	37	31	41	10	13	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	37	49	28	37	7	9	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	53	27	36	6	8	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

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). 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"> ■ 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.



17 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Kenilworth, CV8 2JY

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we came to visit your school. You told us that you thought St Augustine's is a good school. We agree. We were delighted to see such excellent behaviour and how very well you all get on together. You concentrate hard in lessons and your teachers make learning interesting and fun. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are getting off to a really excellent start and, throughout the school, you are making good progress and reaching standards that are above those seen in most other schools. We were impressed by all the ways in which you contribute to the school and wider community. We could also see that the school's focus on foreign languages has helped to greatly broaden your horizons. Staff take exceptionally good care of you, and that is a key reason why you feel so very safe at school. We were very pleased, too, to see such excellent attendance.

Teachers' marking mostly shows you exactly what you need to do to improve your work. We have asked your teachers to make sure that all their marking is just as helpful. It is good to see that many of you are becoming more involved in assessing your own and each other's work. We have asked the school to make sure that the objectives that teachers give you at the start of lessons always help you with this by setting out clearly what you should be learning. We have also asked staff to be sure to always give you work that stretches you; we saw some that was too easy for a number of you. You can help here by telling your teachers when you think you could be tackling something a little harder. Most of you are keen to volunteer answers in lessons, but we noticed that a few of you are a little shy about putting your hands up. There are times when support staff could be asked to look out for this and we have asked teachers to direct some of their questions at those of you who are slower to volunteer so that everyone is actively involved in every lesson.

Our thanks again for helping to make our visit to your school so memorable, and our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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