

Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Avenue Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 8ED

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 January 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school. They arrive in time for breakfast bagels, which starts the day well for them. Pupils enjoy their lessons, which they look forward to eagerly. They are especially enthusiastic about reading, writing and mathematics. They do very well in these subjects by the time they leave school. Leaders want all pupils to do as well as they can. Leaders encourage all pupils 'to be the best you can be'. Whatever their background or values, leaders respect all pupils equally, in line with the schools' belief that 'each child is made in the image and likeness of God'.

Pupils contribute their views and ideas through the school's 'spiritual council'. All pupils are supported to attend residential trips, for example to North Wales and Alton Castle. All pupils learn to play the flute in Year 4 and, if they wish, can continue with lessons until Year 6.

Pupils are polite and courteous in school. Leaders deal with any allegations of perceived bullying or poor behaviour very effectively. As a result, pupils said they would report any incident, confident they could talk to any adult in school. The school's message to pupils is 'tell, tell, tell'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have high ambitions for what they want pupils to achieve. They have designed the curriculum well in most subjects to help pupils learn and remember more. Leaders place a strong emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics, Pupils achieve highly in these subjects. These successful outcomes are supported by pupils' learning in a wide range of other subjects, such as history and science, where they can apply the key vocabulary and concepts they have learned over time. In a small number of subjects, where planned learning is not as well sequenced, this application is not as strong.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading, which starts almost as soon as children join the early years. Adults teach phonics consistently well, remaining faithful to the scheme they use. Reading books in the taught sessions are well matched to the letters and sounds that children and older pupils are learning. This helps pupils at the early stages of learning to read to gain the knowledge and skills they need to be confident readers. As pupils move up through the school, they make even better progress as they grow in their love of reading.

Leaders have successfully fostered a love of mathematics in pupils, including children in early years where they know the difference between 'more than' and 'less than'. Pupils have grown in confidence and are not afraid to make mistakes when explaining their answers. They are resilient learners. They have made rapid gains in their mathematical fluency through the way the curriculum is designed to provide for repeated practice. This is reflected in the high outcomes pupils achieve in Year 6.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak

English as an additional language are able to access the work in each subject through the adaptations and support which leaders have put in place. Leaders place high emphasis on including all pupils in lessons, and this was much appreciated by all the parents spoken to.

In most subjects, teachers check carefully what pupils have learned and what they need to do next. This is either carried out formally or informally during lessons. In a small number of subjects, this is not achieved as successfully. Consequently, teachers are not as secure about what pupils have learned and remembered and what they need to do next.

Pupils behave well in lessons, which are mostly free of low-level disruption. Children in early years have quickly settled into good behaviour routines. Pupils work well with each other and have strong relationships with teaching staff. Levels of persistent absence remain high for a small number of pupils.

Pupils show respect towards others with different views or lifestyles. Celebrating difference is at the heart of school life. Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values and are confident in discussing and debating these. There are a wide range of clubs and activities for pupils to enjoy, including archery and golf.

Leaders are very mindful of reducing staff workload, for example by removing unnecessary tasks. Recently, the workload of the headteacher and other leaders has increased through staff illnesses. Governors are very aware of this and have put senior staff's well-being at the heart of their leadership discussions. Governors know the school's strengths well, as well as aspects of the school's work that need to improve further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are trained well to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities. There are clear systems in place to identify pupils quickly to ensure, where relevant, they receive early help and support. The culture is one of vigilance where staff are well trained to look for and record any signs of concern, however small. There is a safe place for pupils to discuss any worries they may have. The school has effective systems in place to recruit staff safely and to respond to any allegations. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and are aware not to give out personal information on social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The planning and sequencing of the curriculum in a small number of subjects are not as well developed as in other subjects. This makes it harder for pupils to learn

and remember more. Leaders should ensure that plans in these subjects are as well developed as they are in others.

- In a few subjects, plans to check what pupils have learned are at an early stage of development. As a result, teachers do not have a clear enough view of how well pupils are doing and what their next steps should be. Leaders should ensure that arrangements for assessment are consistently embedded effectively across all subjects.
- Levels of persistent absence remain high for a small proportion of pupils in the school. Therefore, these pupils have gaps in their learning. Leaders should ensure that levels of persistent absence fall and that arrangements are fully in place for pupils to catch up on missed work when they return to school.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	103431
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10228297
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Malcolm Rose
Headteacher	Mary Stanley
Website	www.staugust.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the post of deputy headteacher was established.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school was judged outstanding in all areas in its most recent section 48 inspection in July 2018. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other members of staff.

- Inspectors spoke to several groups of pupils, including a group of girls.
- Inspectors met six members of the governing body, including the chair, vice-chair and parish priest.
- An inspector spoke by telephone to a representative from the diocese and to the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service, the online survey, as well as the staff survey. As the number of parental responses was very low, an inspector spoke to 13 parents at the school gates. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance, personal development, safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design and history. They also looked at work in a number of other subjects, including in the early years foundation stage. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Noble

Ofsted Inspector

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