

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Avenue Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B21 8ED

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is typically good, and some is outstanding.
- The quality of teaching and learning has risen, thanks to thorough monitoring by the headteacher that has led to well-considered training for staff.
- Pupils make good progress from starting points below the levels typical for their age.
- Teachers know each pupil's needs well. They provide activities which are interesting, lively and varied.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well, get on well together and feel safe.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership that is firmly focused on improving the life chances of the pupils in the school's care.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a wide variety of activities.
- There is a positive atmosphere in the school as a result of strong relationships between pupils and teachers.
- The governing body knows the school well and provides a good level of support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally the most able pupils are not given demanding enough work.
- Teachers do not share the learning prompts in all lessons to help pupils know not only know how well they are doing, but also what they need to do to improve their work.
- Leaders do not use all of the information they collect about pupils' progress to sharply focus the way they check performance, and so further improve the quality of teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They observed 18 lessons, some of them together with the headteacher, who was also observed reporting back to a teacher on the quality of their teaching. They made brief visits to several more lessons, and also examined closely the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held discussions with: the headteacher; leaders responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage, special educational needs, literacy and numeracy; governors; and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors had many discussions with pupils in classrooms and around the school, and spoke to some parents informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors heard pupils read in lessons. They also heard some individual pupils read, and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors looked closely at a wide range of documents covering: safeguarding, attendance, and behaviour; pupils' progress and attainment; the work of the governing body; the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan; and the monitoring of teaching quality.
- Inspectors took into account four responses on the Parent View website and the school's analysis of information gathered through its own survey of the views of parents and carers. The questionnaires completed by 29 members of staff were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Susan Vasey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Georgina Beasley

Additional Inspector

Terry Mortimer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high. The largest group is of Indian heritage, followed by pupils from Black Caribbean backgrounds. There is a growing number of pupils of different Eastern European backgrounds, mostly Polish.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. Many start in the nursery and in older year groups speaking little or no English.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and pupils with a parent in the armed forces. There are no pupils in this school with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding, by ensuring that teachers:
 - always use information about pupils' learning and progress effectively to plan demanding but achievable tasks and activities in lessons, particularly for more-able pupils
 - share teaching prompts more regularly with pupils, so that they know not only how well they are doing but also what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by:
 - using information about the learning and progress of individuals and different groups of pupils to decide what, when and how to focus checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' work
 - providing suitable training to develop the monitoring and evaluation skills of all leaders and managers to the same high level.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the nursery with skills and understanding that are below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in the nursery and Reception, but even so they start Year 1 with weak reading and writing skills. They make excellent progress in their physical and personal, social and emotional development in the nursery due to the considerable opportunities for them to make decisions and to be adventurous.
- Pupils in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 learn phonics (the names of letters and the sounds that they make) systematically and effectively. In the national Year 1 phonics check last year, pupils achieved more marks than pupils of a similar age nationally.
- Good progress continues throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. More-able pupils make good progress but some of them do not always reach their potential in reading.
- Pupils know the levels they are working at, but not always how to improve on them. This is because 'learning ladders' and other teaching prompts including 'steps for success' are not used to guide learning consistently across the school.
- Pupils use their reading, writing and computer skills to support their learning well in other subjects. In history, for example, pupils found information on the internet to help them write about what life must have been like in wartime.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because adults successfully help them with their learning in lessons and in small groups outside lessons.
- Good support for pupils who speak English as an additional language ensures that they make good progress. Many do not have time to catch up with expected standards by the end of Year 2. However, those who have been at the school for longer than two years usually do catch up by the end of Year 6. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as, and at times better than, other pupils nationally.
- The large number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and in local authority care make good progress. In 2012, these pupils attained higher levels than other pupils in the school in reading and writing, and all pupils nationally in writing. The gap is closing faster than the national rate.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers generally take good account of what most pupils already know, understand and can do in planning lesson activities that cater well for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds.
- A good, lively and varied range of teaching approaches add interest and enjoyment and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The use of a pupil in a 'hot-seat' as an evacuee during the Second World War inspired others to ask thought-provoking questions and deepen their understanding about the topic.

- Teachers generally use resources, including laptops and a good range of written materials, well to support learning. This helps pupils with special educational needs in particular to learn independently. In some lessons, teachers do not use prompts such as 'learning ladders' to guide learning often enough and therefore pupils do not know the next steps they need to take to improve their work. As a result, they rely too much on support from teachers and other adults who work in the classroom.
- Teachers check the work in pupils' books conscientiously. Their comments show pupils clearly how well they are doing while pointing out what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils say they find these comments helpful.
- A common feature of most teaching is the way lessons are organised to ensure all groups of pupils make good progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson the teacher had decided that there was no need to introduce the work to all the pupils at the same time because they would be carrying out different activities based on their ability. At the start, one group worked by themselves to solve problems consolidating what they had learnt in earlier lessons. Meanwhile, the teacher introduced the rest of the group to something new that they had to learn about. A group of less-able pupils worked with a teaching assistant, who questioned them expertly so that they made good progress.
- Where teaching is occasionally not so effective, the tasks given to the most able pupils are not sufficiently demanding and this holds back their progress towards reaching higher levels in their work.
- In the best lessons teachers ask searching questions to find out what pupils are thinking and then guide them to work things out for themselves. For example, in one session they were guided skilfully into knowing what the author meant when reading a story.
- Teaching assistants and other adults play an important role in supporting pupils' learning and personal development, especially for those who find some tasks difficult.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, and when they are walking about the school or playing outside. All pupils are supported well, so those who need extra help and guidance from time to time overcome any concerns quickly.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive, and they are eager to do their best. Relationships are good because of sensitive and clear classroom management. This gives pupils confidence and a real enjoyment of learning. Occasionally in Reception and Years 1 and 2, adults direct the most able pupils too much rather than building on the self-help skills they developed in the nursery.
- Pupils are courteous, confident and polite. They show respect for others, and the 'class ambassadors' in Years 3 to 6 welcome visitors to lessons. The school is a calm and harmonious community where teachers can teach, and pupils can learn, in a purposeful and effective way. Discussions with pupils and parents and carers, and related school records, indicate that this is usually the case.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. Their parents and carers say they are confident that pupils are safe in school and free from harassment. Bullying and safety issues are covered well in lessons and assemblies, and pupils show a good awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They are confident that the school will handle any rare instances effectively if they should arise. 'Playground buddies' contribute to this by actively supporting other pupils.

- Teachers take the school motto 'Be the best that we can be' very seriously. They take every opportunity to raise pupils' aspirations and build their sense of self-worth. At key moments teachers take great care to see that pupils feel confident and well prepared for what they are about to do.
- Attendance has risen and is now average. Pupils arrive at school on time and are ready to learn.

The leadership and management are good

- A good level of planning that identifies key areas for further development is driving successful improvements in teaching, the curriculum and attendance. The headteacher and assistant headteachers check that the school is making the progress that it should and have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The results of checks on staff performance are linked well to training. All staff have to meet targets set for teaching and pupils' progress before they are given a pay increase each year.
- Not all of the data being collected about the learning and progress of individuals and different pupil groups is being used by subject coordinators to sharply focus the improvements needed to develop teaching further. As a result, some more-able pupils in particular do not make the amount of progress needed to achieve higher levels of attainment.
- Pupils' learning opportunities promote the development of literacy and numeracy well. Pupils also enjoy the weekly 'Arts afternoon' where they participate in a varied range of activities including dance, music and drama. From Year 2 onwards, pupils learn French. The school offers a good range of out-of-school activities, including music, tag rugby and tennis. These are popular and well attended.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. A planned programme of special events, visits, visitors and topics such as Bollywood Steps and the trip to the nature centre give pupils memorable experiences.
- The school has good links with most families. Opportunities for parents and carers to come into school and learn alongside their children are popular and well attended. Workshops, curriculum booklets and 'Inspire' sessions provide a good channel of communication between home and school.
- The local authority adviser has a good knowledge about the school's performance following a recent visit to the school. Because the school is not one that causes the authority concern, support has been at a low level.

■ The governance of the school:

- Despite changes to its make-up recently, the governing body is well organised and well informed about the school. Governors have frequent training to update their knowledge and skills. They know the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and how well it performs against schools nationally. They provide valuable support for the headteacher and make a good contribution to the school's quest for further improvement. Some governors are closely involved in the day-to-day work of the school, for example as reading volunteers, and the community it serves. Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They know where the strengths in teaching lie and how the school has tackled underperformance. They have a good grasp of the way finances, including the pupil premium, are used to promote

pupils' achievement. They make sure that staff pay rises relate closely to the impact of their work on pupils' achievement. The governing body ensures all national requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103431
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	402915

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	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Burke
Headteacher	Mary Stanley
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2008
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