

Inspection of St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Academy

Boardmans Lane, Blackbrook, St. Helens, Merseyside WA11 9BB

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Giselle Lynch. This school is part of St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Andrew Truby, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ann Connor OBE.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to attend this school. They embrace the school's values of aspiration, belief and compassion. For example, pupils spoke about an increase in kindness towards one another. They are becoming proactively involved in the school community. For instance, the eco-team has installed recycling bins in the canteen to reduce plastic waste.

Based on mutual respect, pupils forge strong relationships with staff. They are confident that staff want the best for them. Pupils' self-belief in what they can achieve is rising. This is helped by the embedding of a no-excuse culture. Staff have the highest expectations of pupils' academic outcomes. Pupils' achievement across the curriculum has improved and is now strong overall

In lessons, pupils follow the school's firmly embedded routines. They behave well. Pupils appreciate that the school's rules allow them to learn undisrupted. The 'ABC' cards encourage pupils to behave well. At social times, behaviour is calm.

Pupils enjoy the array of sporting clubs that are on offer. The weekly darts match draws in a number of excited spectators and also helps pupils to practise their numeracy skills. The student leaders, democratically chosen, take up the mantle of responsibility with honour. Pupils are keen to serve their peers as form representatives, mental-health and anti-bullying ambassadors.

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

The school's broad and ambitious curriculum is well-ordered to help pupils build knowledge over time. The number of pupils opting for the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is rising. This is because the school has strengthened the modern foreign languages curriculum and more pupils are choosing to study this subject.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain ideas clearly. Across the school, teachers deliver the curriculum well. They design activities that help pupils to practise and to consolidate their learning. Teachers support pupils to connect new ideas with prior knowledge. In most subjects, pupils can explain their learning clearly.

Teachers use effective strategies to check what pupils know. They are adept at spotting gaps in knowledge. Teachers swiftly identify and remedy misconceptions. They give pupils plenty of opportunities to repeat and recall learning. This helps pupils to secure what they know.

The 2023 published key stage 4 outcomes do not reflect the improved quality of education in the school and how well pupils are now learning. Those outcomes are a legacy of a weaker curriculum and poorer behaviour. Currently, the work in pupils' books shows that pupils are successfully building learning over time. Pupils take pride in their work. They appreciate how teachers do not move on to new learning until they have checked everyone understands.

Typically, the school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. That said, some of the information given to staff does not help them to give these pupils the support that they need. For instance, some learning is not adapted well enough to meet the needs of some pupils with SEND. This limits their access to the curriculum.

Reading is front and centre of all that the school does. The school and trust view reading as the gateway to pupils' success. Pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge, including those at the early stages of learning to read, receive effective support that helps them to catch up with their peers. The school encourages regular habits of reading.

The school has employed effective strategies to improve pupils' attendance rates. As a result, absence rates have decreased. Furthermore, the school has created a climate where most pupils want to learn. Staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. Nevertheless, there is a small group of pupils who do not behave appropriately. They fail to meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. This results in a negative impact on the achievement of these pupils.

The school's programme for pupils' personal development is carefully designed to help prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils can readily recall the protected characteristics and why discrimination is wrong. They understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, on-line, around water or in relationships. Pupils' understanding around different faiths and cultures helps them to empathise with others.

Trustees and members of the local governing board challenge the school appropriately to continue to raise standards. Staff support the school's ambitious vision. They make use of the plentiful opportunities for professional development. Staff spoke readily about how the school supports their well-being and how much the school has changed for the better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The information given to staff about pupils with SEND is sometimes too generic and does not help staff to tailor teaching and the curriculum to meet the needs of those pupils as effectively as they could. This means that some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that the information is personalised and that staff are supported with the knowledge and expertise to use this information to support pupils with SEND to achieve well.
- There is a small minority of pupils who do not behave well. This has a negative impact on their achievement. The school should ensure that it reviews its strategies for

supporting these pupils to help them learn how to behave appropriately so that they can achieve well.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	149031
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10348392
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	554
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ann Connor OBE
CEO of the trust	Andrew Truby
Headteacher	Giselle Lynch
Website	www.staughs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Academy converted to become an academy in April 2022. When its predecessor school, St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be requires improvement for overall effectiveness.
- The school is part of the St Joseph's Catholic Multi Academy Trust.
- The school makes use of one registered provider of alternative provision for a very small number of pupils.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2019. The next inspection is due before August 2026.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement. Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, CEO and the trust's director of education. The lead inspector had telephone conversations with a representative of the archdiocese and the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with trust directors and representatives of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and design, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also considered samples of pupils' work in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including governor meeting minutes, the school's self-evaluation and development plan and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gil Bourgade

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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