

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Riversmead, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 8DP

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 December 2024

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Joanne Walsh. This school is part of St Francis of Assisi Catholic 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 Celano, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Edmund Boyle Harris.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school environment that is designed to bring out the best in each pupil. Pupils know there are high expectations for what they can achieve. They respond every day by working with high levels of focus. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are provided with suitably demanding activities across the curriculum. The work they produce demonstrates their strong knowledge. It also reflects the great pride they take in their learning. Pupils' achievements are impressive. This is reflected in the exceptional outcomes achieved by pupils by the end of Year 6.

Pupils enjoy each other's company and build secure relationships with the staff. Pupils are taught how to be kind. This results in a community where the care and consideration of others is a shared priority. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are exemplary, showing a deep commitment to the exciting curriculum lessons on offer. Beyond lessons, pupils experience a rich range of experiences that broaden their understanding. This includes meaningful opportunities to explore issues of diversity, for example during the 'cultural heritage week'. Pupils also relish the chance to make a difference through leadership roles. These opportunities prepare pupils well for success and happiness in the future.

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

Since the previous inspection the school has established and refined an ambitious curriculum. The structure of it supports all teachers to maximise pupils' achievement. The curriculum has clear and progressive aims for learning content in all subjects. This ensures that teaching focuses reliably on the most important knowledge and skills for pupils to learn. In addition, the school provides high-quality training opportunities for its staff. This means that all staff have strong, shared knowledge about how best to support all pupils to learn.

Teachers make highly effective use of the curriculum structure. They use it to support pupils to revisit and build upon key concepts in an accessible and routine way. This is true from the moment children join the school in the early years. The youngest children quickly settle into helpful routines. This builds independence and they very quickly take responsibility for their learning choices. The level of concentration and resilience of children in the early years is notable. Children are absorbed in purposeful activities that capture their interests and motivation.

Teachers and support staff work together to complete daily checks on what pupils can do. They quickly identify gaps or misconceptions. Teachers respond and provide extra practice to help pupils achieve well across the curriculum. This is seen in the school's work to build pupils' fluency in reading and communication skills. The effective teaching of phonics from the Reception Year ensures that children rapidly gain the knowledge they need to start to read with confidence.

There are the same high expectations for pupils with SEND. Pupils' needs are swiftly identified. There is a sharp focus on making sure that pupils' needs and interests are well known. This helps all pupils to feel welcome and included. Pupils with SEND have precise support plans. Staff use these effectively to help pupils overcome any barriers they face. This support is in addition to the high-quality daily teaching and support that pupils receive. Teaching routinely and efficiently adapts to the needs of all pupils.

Subject leaders maintain close oversight of the quality of teaching and learning. They respond swiftly to address areas that can be further refined. This diligence is modelled at all levels of leadership and governance. Trust leadership structures ensure that leaders in school are held to account and supported. Those in governance roles understand their responsibilities well. They carry out duties with a sharp focus on maintaining and improving standards. There is also effective consideration of the workload and well-being of staff. Staff recognise this as a positive feature of working in the school.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when playing outside. They have a responsible attitude to the school's rules and an unwavering desire to be kind and helpful. In lessons, pupils engage fully in their learning. They show impressive commitment to their work and show resilience when faced with challenging tasks.

Pupils demonstrate responsible attitudes by taking on leadership roles in school. These include school council representatives and members of the teaching and learning

committee. Through these roles, pupils are empowered to make a difference to the lives of others. Pupils know the importance of being both mentally and physically healthy. They confidently share strategies that can support them to handle worries or anxieties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2014.

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	148494
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345541
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Father Peter Edmund Boyle Harris
CEO of the trust	Andrew Celano
Headteacher	Joanne Walsh (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.staugustines.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Augustine's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2021. When its predecessor school, also named St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Westminster. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in February 2022. The next section 48 inspection is due by the end of 2027.
- The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2024 and has leadership responsibility for another school in the trust.
- The school provides before- and after-school clubs for pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, including the SEND coordinator, the early years lead and some curriculum subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with three representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. A separate meeting took place with three trust leaders, including a director of the trust board. The inspector also met with an adviser from the local authority.
- The lead inspector visited a large sample of lessons across the curriculum, spoke to a range of pupils about their learning, heard some pupils read and reviewed a broad sample of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

Inspection team

Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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