

**INSPECTION REPORT** St Augustine's RC High School

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Inspection date 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014

Reporting Inspectors Sister Judith Russi  
Mr Kevin Hogan  
Mr Brendan Coyle

Inspection carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Catholic High School
URN	119801
Age range of pupils	11-16 years
Number on roll	1070
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Philip Gunn
Head teacher	Mr Michael Wright
Date of previous inspection	2009

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The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades  1 = Outstanding  2 = Good  3 = Requires Improvement
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	
The quality of Catholic Leadership	1	
The quality of the Word of God community	1	
The quality of the Welcome community	1	
The quality of Welfare	1	
The quality of Worship	1	
The quality of Witness	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL**

St Augustine's is a larger than average Roman Catholic High School serving a number of parishes from the Ribble Valley and surrounding areas of Lancashire. Over 97% of pupils are baptised Catholics. There are 46 Catholic teachers and 21 teachers other than Catholic. 37 out of 59 non-teaching staff are Catholic. 17 members of staff have the CCRS certificate with 7 having completed the Catholic Leadership programme. Over a quarter of students come from wards with D/E/E deprivation. The great majority of students are White British (96%). There are very few pupils whose language is not English. The proportion of students supported by the Pupil Premium is below the national average (8.6%). The percentage of students supported at School Action, School Action Plus or with a Statement of SEN, including those with disabilities, is in line with the national average. (11.8% SA, 6.5% SAP, 1.8% St) The school population is stable with few students joining after Year 7 (2.5% inward mobility, 1.8% outward).

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING**

St Augustine's RC High School is an outstanding Catholic school which challenges each person *'To encourage, inspire, challenge and care for each other'* whilst striving to ensure that every student receives an education which engages them both locally and globally by being *'open to the world about us and celebrate together our reasons for living and hoping'*. The mission statement provides a focus and driving force across the school. The Governors and leadership of the school give priority to those in the greatest need and actively seek to ensure that their commitment to building up a Christ centred learning community not only strives for excellence in all things, but lives by their explicit commitment to inclusivity, respect, acceptance, forgiveness and a love which recognises the presence of Christ in every person. The high levels of staff commitment, unity of focus and purpose are energised by the warmth of relationships across the school. St Augustine's is a learning community which provides a living testimony to the vision and strength of the cohesive leadership which is successfully delivering the mission of the Church in education.

## **KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:**

- The leadership and vision of the school nurtures and inspires all to strive for excellence.
- The Catholic life, relationships, behaviour and care for those in the greatest need is inspirational in its witness to the Gospel call to transformation.
- The quality of Catholic education is outstanding.

## **THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

St Augustine's is led by an inspirational head teacher who seeks to develop the leadership skills of staff and pupils to the highest possible level. The outstanding leadership team actively promote creative innovation and risk taking across the school. The clarity of vision and sense of purpose recognises the dignity and value of every member of the community whilst ensuring that those in the greatest need receive outstanding care, support and educational provision. The governors act as a very effective, reflective team who are not afraid to challenge and take risks in ensuring the promotion of Catholic education. Support for new governors and staff to the school is provided through a very comprehensive and clear induction programme which ensures a Christ centred approach throughout.

St Augustine's commitment to providing the very best for all pupils was greatly appreciated by parents and pupils alike. Parents spoke of their appreciation of the head teachers commitment to supporting everyone equally even to writing a personal letter of welcome for each pupil to the school or when they were in any difficulty. The attention to the individual needs of each family, parents recognised as being beyond what they would expect because the school '*go the extra mile*' and '*look for what is good in everyone and then they celebrate it*'. Pupils were found to be confident and enthusiastic about taking on responsibility. Pupil leadership has been developed to a high level and is significantly impacting on the development of the young people, the environment and life of the school. The wide ranging and numerous tributes and awards which the school has received are all testimony to the outstanding leadership.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORD IS OUTSTANDING**

The Mission Statement has served to focus the educational endeavour at St Augustine's on the sacredness of each person as being made in the image and likeness of God and the driving force '*to encourage, inspire, challenge and care for each other...celebrating our reasons for living and hoping*'. It is currently in the process of being reviewed to ensure a greater level of pupil access. Exceptional progress has been made in the recent development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education across all key stages. SMSC lesson observations across the curriculum were found to be outstanding in their creativity and authenticity and clearly setting the context for learning across the curriculum. Every department has selected its own scripture verses which are displayed throughout and used as a reference point for the department. The leadership of the religious education department was found to be outstanding. The distributive leadership style has enabled the RE team to develop their skills and particular strengths to a high level. This is a dynamic and creative department that is ready and willing to let new thinking emerge and not afraid to take risks. Pupils clearly enjoy RE and the department is recognised as a lead area for learning. The governors have ensured that the environment for learning in RE is given a high priority and also been attentive to the need to provide high quality specialist teachers. Religious Education is at the core of the curriculum and meets the RECD requirement for 10% at KS3 and 4. Teaching in RE was found to be at least good and mostly outstanding. Expectations are high and higher order questioning, discussion; group work and assessment for learning are strong features of the teaching and learning in the department. Pupils clearly knew what they needed to do to improve. The school is vigilant in its monitoring of any underachieving areas or groups of pupils through regular monitoring and action which is resulting in driving up pupil progress. Pupils were clearly enjoying their lessons and the relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Throughout behaviour for learning was found to be outstanding.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELCOME IS OUTSTANDING**

The centrality of Christ at the heart of St Augustine's is seen throughout the school community. The pervading atmosphere is one of calm, unity of purpose and joyful enthusiasm. Governors, parents, pupils and staff new to St Augustine's all spoke of the care and personal welcome that they received when new to the school and particularly appreciated the high level of research, care and personalised transition arrangements that are made to ensure everyone feels welcomed and valued. The development of the materials for transition, '*Our Crossroads Journey*' provides an excellent tool for helping new students to embrace their next steps in their school journey. The resource highlights the importance of home, school and parish as the threefold approach to educating a young person. St Augustine's actively embraces and celebrates diversity and the uniqueness of the individual as a '*gift*' for the community. The school is recognised as a center for outstanding practice for inclusivity and the care of those with special needs and as such is frequently called upon by the local authority for training and support for schools in the area. The governors and leadership team have committed

significant resources to ensuring the school is physically accessible for all students through the installation of lifts and ramps. Attendance at school is consistently high because as one pupil said *'I came here because I was very unhappy at my last school. I never wanted to be there. Now I never want to miss anything. I couldn't believe it when Mr Wright wrote a letter to me saying he was happy I was coming to St Augustine's'*.

### **THE QUALITY OF WELFARE IS OUTSTANDING**

The welfare and care of all at St Augustine's is excellent and is seen as an example of outstanding provision by both the local and Catholic community. The level of concern for each one was referred to by parents, staff and pupils who spoke of the times when the head teacher and staff had made phone calls, letters or visits in times of need often going way beyond what they would expect. The exceptional practice of dedicated parent's evenings for pupils with special needs to ensure that parents feel supported and that pupils make the best possible transition from St Augustine's into further education or employment has resulted in a 100% success rate for every pupil. St Augustine's has no pupils in the NEETS category. Pastoral Care is inspirational at St Augustine's as it seeks to ensure all pupils are safe, happy, and able to achieve and prepare for life after St Augustine's. The creation of a dedicated Pupil Support Room is a particularly successful venture which is clearly helping to accelerate pupil progress and development. A recent parent survey resulted in 97% of parents agreeing that their children were well looked after and 73% feeling that this was strongly the case. Regularly revised policies are in place and guide staff and pupils in all areas of wellbeing and safety. Pupils were open and honest about how they deal with any unacceptable behaviour such as bullying. The leadership team have invested a considerable amount of time and resources to enable pupils to help one another in a thoughtful and Christian manner. The Pupil Chaplains spoke of how they felt it *'was a privilege to be able to help and listen to the younger pupils who may prefer to talk to another student rather than an adult'*. Sex and Relationship Education is set within the teaching of the Church. Staff are confident in dealing with 21<sup>st</sup> century issues. The provision for SHRE is supplemented through the use of experts from outside agencies. The head teacher ensures that any trainers or speakers visiting the school are well briefed and prepared according to the requirements of a Catholic School. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding, well known and monitored closely. A wide range of ideas for fund raising led by both staff and pupils all support the outreach to the wider community locally, nationally and globally and build up a deep understanding of what it means to be part of the 'Body of Christ'.

### **THE QUALITY OF WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING**

Worship has been developed to an exceptionally high level at St Augustine's. All classes have two pupils who are appointed to the much prized position of being worship leaders symbolised by the wearing of a white dove badge. Prayer is seen as essential and integral to the life of the school and for this reason the governors have agreed a specific budget for the development of worship, prayer and chaplaincy throughout the school. Prayer is systematically taught throughout each year group and pupils are offered a rich and varied range of opportunities for prayer and worship each week led by pupils of different age groups. The chapel is beautifully designed and cared for by the Chaplaincy assistances who take great delight in making sure it is always in use and arranged to reflect the time of year. Lay Chaplaincy is outstanding and is significantly impacting on the building up of the Catholic life of the school. Pupils were both mature and confident in their willingness to lead and develop prayer and worship both in school and in the parish. The introduction of Lectio Divina for meditation times both in the Chapel and across the school was outstanding. The 'Theme for the Week' which is accompanied by a prayerful reflection sent out to all through the Intranet and staff

briefings provides a unifying focus for all. There is an exceptionally high level of support from the local clergy who are a frequent and in some cases daily presence in the school. This is much appreciated as it serves to strengthen the links between school and parish. The celebration of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are available to all during term times which are well attended and pupil centred. The school offers a programme of retreat days and pilgrimages for pupils and staff as well as an annual retreat experience for all staff.

### **THE QUALITY OF WITNESS IS OUTSTANDING**

The witness to the joy of the Gospel in St Augustine's is a source of hope and joy for all. The ongoing development of the extensive Lay Chaplaincy is fast becoming integral to all aspects of school and parish life, developing pupil leadership and outreach across the school and into the parish. The KS3 pupil Chaplains are clearly being trained by their older Year 11 role models who take their responsibilities as leaders in their community very seriously. Pupils spoke of how they saw their role as being *'a privilege and honour to be chosen to be a Pupil Chaplain'*. The involvement of the clergy is much appreciated and ensures an important partnership for development and the building up of young leadership in the community. Staff and pupils were confident and proud to talk about their faith. This was seen both in teaching across the whole curriculum and in discussions with pupils and staff. Pupils demonstrated a mature confidence and ease when discussing matters of faith and morals and were clearly well able to relate their learning to everyday life. The importance of being a witness to Christ was clearly understood and articulated by the pupils who said *'It is up to us to tell our friends and bring them with us'*. Action for those in the greatest need is a high priority at St Augustine's. The many social justice projects give testimony to the mission statements call to *'be open to the wider world about us, and celebrate together our reasons for living and hoping'*. This building up of empathy between peoples is seen in the work of the CAFOD Action and Fairtrade Groups, the 'Connecting Classrooms' project with Sri Lanka, and the Bethany Project within the Music department, are just some of the many practical expressions of the beliefs and values of the school.

### **AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT:**

- Continue to further support the outstanding RE department as it moves through its transition in leadership to ensure it remains a lead area for learning and formation.
- Continue the development of the Chaplaincy team to further the already high level of pupil engagement in the Leadership of the Catholic life of the school into the parish.
- Continue the review of the Mission Statement to involve the student body as a whole.

May 6<sup>th</sup> 2014

Dear Students

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to visit you. Your school is an outstanding school and in many instances excellent. This is because you and your teachers are continually striving to be the very best you can be.

Together you are achieving a great deal to make your school a place of hope and joy for all. We looked at length at your learning and achievement and found it to be outstanding. It was very clear to us that you want to make a difference and be the agents of change that are so greatly needed today. Many of you have 'stepped up' and taken on significant leadership roles in the life of the community which is a clear indication that you are receiving the very best education and formation.

Your insights and contributions all contributed to our final assessment of St Augustine's as an outstanding place of learning. Your creative ideas are very good and we could see that you can make connections between what you are learning in RE with other areas of the curriculum through the spiritual, moral, social and cultural interventions in your lessons. Thank you for letting us share so much of what you are doing.

Many congratulations on your amazing fund raising efforts.

Your teachers are keen to help you develop the Catholic life of your school even further and to do this they will be working to develop the Pupil Chaplaincy team to take up leadership roles in the parish as well as the school.

God bless you all and I hope the rest of the school year goes well.

Yours sincerely

Sr Judith Russi

(Section 48 Inspector)

### **Summary Report to Parents**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 the school was inspected in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The full report has been made available to the school and can also be accessed via both the school website and the Education section on the website of the Diocese of Salford.

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