



# **DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT**

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on  
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

**URN 149261**

**St Augustine's Catholic Primary School**

**St John's Road**

**Hythe**

**Kent CT21 4BE**

**Inspection date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**Chair of Governors: Mr Ivan Hart**

**Headteacher: Mrs Nicola Clarke**

**Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck**

**Miss Frances Honis**

## **EDUCATION COMMISSION**

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR  
Tel 01689 829331

**Interim Director of Education: Angela Cox OBE**



## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an Academy in the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership Trust which it joined in September 2022. It is one of five schools in the Dover Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parish the school serves is The Virgin Mother of Good Counsel, Hythe. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 38% which has decreased since the last inspection. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in both key stages.

The school takes pupils from ages 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 203. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average at 10.8%. Around 11% of the pupils are identified with special educational needs, which is below average. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average. The school is in the centre of the index of multiple deprivation (IMD) in ranking in Kent, with most pupils being of white European heritage.



## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Augustine's is a good Catholic school because:

- It has a clear vision for ongoing improvement shared by all school stakeholders.
- Outcomes for pupils in curriculum religious education are good, and pupil workbooks reflect their hard work and thoughtful approach to lessons. Teaching is good across the whole school, creating a solid foundation for all pupils who develop good religious literacy.
- Support for some of the most vulnerable children and their families is of a high order, reflecting the school's explicitly inclusive ethos.
- There is strong evidence of leadership capacity to build on the school's current strengths and achieve its stated aim: '*Striving to deliver exceptional Catholic education that inspires them to be the very best version of themselves*'.
- Catholic Social Teaching is highly prioritised, and pupils can relate this to their daily lives.
- The strong home, parish and school partnerships create a community for the family that everyone recognises and appreciates, with inclusivity being at the heart of the school's mission.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further strengthen subject leadership within the religious education team by developing their roles to facilitate a more distributive approach to the subject.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning by sharing identified good practice across the school, linking this to more effective use of the newly established procedures for assessment.
- Give pupils more opportunities to plan, lead and implement a range of collective worship that they have designed.



## Overall Effectiveness

How effective is the school in providing Catholic Education?

2

### Catholic Life

2

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

2

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

### Religious Education

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

### Collective Worship

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2



## CATHOLIC LIFE

2

### **The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good**

All aspects of improvement identified in the last inspection have been actioned. Work on the mission statement has been undertaken and now sees pupils fully aware of the statement. They can articulate its meaning and relevance to their daily lives. School parish relationships continue to develop well and are greatly enhanced by the headteacher and other staff being members of the school's parish community.

Parents and governors are involved in the Catholic life of the school, and there is good capacity for ongoing improvement. All staff work together to ensure good outcomes for pupils, and some very good relationships were witnessed across the school.

Overall, pupil participation in, and leadership of, the prayer and liturgical life of the school is good. Most pupils show reverence and respect during times of worship. Good use of scripture, prayer, focal points, interactive whiteboards and music was observed in worship. Pupils are gaining skills through leading prayers and reflections in class, and good examples were seen of spontaneous prayers with which pupils were confident.

Pupils responded well to thoughtful consideration of, *'What do you need for you to say I have a good life'*, linked to a Bible passage and the week's message to be 'peacemakers'. One pupil commented, *"I like it when we come together to take a moment"*. There are, however, some inconsistencies across the school meaning some pupils do not have these experiences.

Pupils who take on the role of worship leaders were effusive about the opportunities this provided them with to lead prayer and reflection at a class level. They expressed a keenness to plan, lead and implement a broader range of worship. This should be considered in various contexts, including developing their skills in voice projection which is confirmed as a planned development.

In an early years' worship, pupils built the focal area and explained the light of a candle reflecting Jesus as the light of the world, loving them and that they, in turn, should be kind to each other. Teaching assistants were good at recording pupil responses. Leaders should ensure that the identified best practice is shared across all year groups so that the content of prayer for all pupils is both catechetical and spiritual.



### **The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is good**

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School is a good school with some outstanding features. The school offers a welcoming inclusive environment where all are valued and supported in their individual faith journey. The clearly articulated values permeate all the school does. Staff are positive role models and have high expectations. The school maximises its use of the 'Come and See' programme for religious education alongside its use of Ten-Ten resources in the areas of Personal, Health, Social and Citizenship (PHSCE) and Relationships, sex and health education (RSE).

The school has a beautiful chapel that is put to good use in celebrating acts of worship. The school utilises buildings and the extensive grounds to reflect each person's dignity, and great care is taken of the learning environment.

Pupils feel they have many opportunities in extra-curricular and leadership activities within the school day to engage in roles that support their skills and development, such as School Council, Prayer Leaders, and the Eco team. They enjoy activities related to the Catholic life of the school, such as a range of charity works, including a local homeless charity, food donations, and a Turnaround Shop dealing with the provision of second-hand school uniforms. They have also provided a warm welcome to refugee visitors. The school confirmed that their next step in developing Catholic Social Teaching further will be through the establishment of a pupil lead group such as Minivinnies or a CAFOD club.

The Godly play scheme is well established in the school and supports teaching pupils the art of using Christian language to make meaning in their lives. It provides opportunities for scripture and other forms of Christian language to be shared in a way that enables pupils to consider, at an age-appropriate level, the relevance of this to their own lives.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good**

The school has experienced a significant change in recent times in the areas of governance, school leadership, subject leadership and the quality of the curriculum. This change management has been well supported by the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership, whose CEO commented that she had seen significant stability achieved. This is an opportune time to further strengthen subject leadership within the religious education team by developing their roles to facilitate a more distributive approach to the subject.

Leaders and Governors of St Augustine's Catholic Primary school demonstrate a strong commitment to the Church's mission in education, the common good and Catholic Social Teaching. They are keen to continue to enhance the school's spiritual and moral dimension and promote strong links between the school and the parish community.



The Headteacher, Deputy Head and the recently appointed curriculum lead for religious education work as an effective team, supported by other staff members, and are deeply committed to the school's mission. They prioritise the Catholic life of the school and religious education. This is reflected in how they plan and evaluate the areas for development, and is the first priority of the school's strategic improvement plan. The religious education leader and the headteacher report to governors on religious education and any monitoring that has taken place.

Governance is strong, with a broad skill set having been established. As a result, governors have a good understanding of their school, its strengths and areas for development. They recognise the school's journey to embed and build on progress made to date and the need to support pupil and staff well-being.

Gospel values are given a high priority, with the school having adopted six values as being particularly special to the school as chosen by pupils, staff, governors and parents. This is well linked to the school's vision, 'Striving to deliver exceptional Catholic education that inspires us to be the *best version of ourselves*'. This further emphasises the school's stated aim that '*complacency is not an option*' with regard to ongoing developments and was spontaneously reflected in conversations held with staff, pupils and governors

The school has gained the Romero Award at the Participator level, reflecting its commitment to Catholic Social Teaching and a desire to seek external validation and feedback on its work which is a strength of the school.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good**

Pupils are engaged in and enthusiastic about their religious education lessons and are developing a secure knowledge and understanding. From varied starting points, they make progress in each key stage and generally meet age related expectations. Discussions with pupils made it clear that they understand and appreciate the broader implications of religious education teaching for their spiritual and moral development. Almost all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are progressing well. All pupils concentrate well and have the desire to improve. Most pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged; most show genuine interest in the subject and enjoy being able to discuss and reflect spiritually, ethically, and theologically and to extend their learning. These are opportunities that could usefully be expanded across the school.

Behaviour in lessons is, in most cases, very good. Pupils work well individually, in pairs and groups. As teacher assessment indicates, pupil attainment is good and often exceeds achievement in other curriculum areas. The quality of pupils' class work is good; their written work is generally well-presented and thorough, and they are given opportunities to respond to marking comments.

Learning and achievement are enhanced by using religious education class floor books, which are of high quality and reflect pupils' pride in their religious education activities.

Standards of presentation in literacy book are comparable to that seen in the religious education books. As a parent commented, *'The school offers a clear religious education and my children enjoy the reflective sessions.'* Another said, *'The children love the religious parts of school. RE is talked about often at home, and they pray and think so deeply.'*

### **The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good**

The 'Come and See' curriculum is followed throughout the school to teach religious education. Good use is made of 'driver words' on which learning objectives monitored by the religious education lead are based. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and use a good range of questioning throughout lessons to assist pupils understanding. Some examples of cross-curricular links were evidenced, particularly in the areas of language, art and drama. The school plans to develop and embed these links further.





The lessons observed were never less than good and, in two areas, were outstanding. In the best lessons, work was well planned and matched to current levels of attainment. Teachers utilised good open-ended questioning and, in some classes, differentiated tasks to provide greater challenges for more able pupils, although this is generally applied to outcomes rather than planned activities. This was evidenced in the early years through the use of a puppet, pictures of the pupils involved in various tasks, and related scripture to emphasise feelings and draw out a range of vocabulary. In an upper key stage two class, Bible references were used to highlight how the Passover and faith influences behaviour today. In a lower key stage two lesson pupils were mainly well served by the teaching assistant who scribed for them on a large sheet, and in this group, good use was made reflecting on the head/heart/hands process. Opportunities should now be provided for pupils to undertake more independent tasks and research.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good**

Leaders ensure that provision for religious education, including the required amount of curriculum time, meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in each key stage and has full parity with other core subjects in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. The recently appointed subject leader has a clear and inspiring vision for teaching and learning and a very good level of expertise to enable the school to secure this vision. She shows outstanding commitment to the development of her colleagues and supports them in the classroom.

The school leadership team provided an accurate self-evaluation document reflecting a clear awareness of the school's strengths. The document would be a more beneficial working tool if it were further developed to include proposals regarding areas identified for development linked to the religious education part of the school's strategic development plan.

The leaders and governors of St Augustine's ensured that teaching religious education remained a top priority throughout periods of lockdown caused by the pandemic. Leaders are commended for their efforts in this area. Monitoring has not yet accurately identified the barriers limiting much of the teaching in religious education to being good.

As a result, the teaching of religious education is not yet rapidly moving towards securing an outstanding judgement.

A significant level of questionnaire responses was received, of which 96% confirmed their satisfaction with the school's provision for their child. One parent wrote, *'Everything about St Augustine's school is Catholic. It is an example of God's plan for us, all lived out. The whole school is like a loving family, and we benefit at home from being part of the community. They want the very best for the children and support families too. I love the person they are helping each child to become, and their Catholic faith is shaping them forever.'*



## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good**

Children enjoy prayer and liturgy. They behave beautifully and are respectful during Masses, prayer and liturgy, assemblies, and in the classroom. They are reflective, engaged, and happy to share their thoughts and views. They enjoy leading aspects of prayer and liturgy, for example, through readings, drama, answering questions, leading and signing formal prayers, writing and reading prayers, and are increasingly confident at sharing spontaneous prayer. Pupils also enjoy giving thanks and praise for successes and achievements during the week. The most evident impact of prayer and liturgy is the quality of the children's relationships with each other and adults within and beyond the school community and their families, where Gospel values and the teaching of Christ are lived out.

Each class has a particular area dedicated to prayer, liturgy, and religious education, and they are focal points for prayer. Prayer leaders look after resources in these areas, including managing their special box of resources, which they were involved in putting together during 2021-2022. These boxes contain cloths of different liturgical colours, candles, holding crosses and scents to make the room smell different during worship to accommodate all spiritual styles. These leaders are now ready to support the development of opportunities for all pupils to participate in the planning, leading and implementing a range of worship that pupils have designed.

### **The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good**

There is a clear policy for collective worship, which is central to the life of the school and makes a significant contribution to the moral and spiritual needs of the pupils. Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff, which has a positive impact on the school's sense of community. Acts of collective worship underpin the daily life at St Augustine's, and all celebrations are well-resourced and given a high profile. Staff are confident in leading worship. Whole school assemblies celebrate the liturgical year and the current learning in religious education sessions. The Gospel, the school vision and values encourage pupils to reflect on how to build God's kingdom. Staff and pupils pray together, and there are some formal and informal prayer opportunities.

A planned programme of Masses and liturgical celebrations provides opportunities for the whole school community to participate in.

There is a great sense of community at all levels, evident in the overall quality of relationships between staff, governors, pupils and parents. One parent commented, '*St Augustine's is a great school with a very caring staff who go beyond their duty to care for everyone*'.

Sacramental preparation is now well embedded and is well supported by the school leadership team who are constantly looking for ways to increase family involvement.



Other faiths are celebrated and explored, so pupils know about differences and diversity in their community and beyond. This learning is also linked to important festivals to enhance the experience for the pupils. For example, the study of Hinduism is scheduled to coincide with the celebration of Diwali; the study of Judaism links with the Passover and the study of Islam links to the time of Ramadan wherever possible. Parents were supportive of this aspect of the curriculum. This programme could be further enhanced by opportunities for pupils to visit other places of worship.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good**

Leaders and governors recognise the value and importance of collective worship to the life of the school and are committed to delivering high-quality provision to the school community. School leaders model good practice and support other staff in leading worship. School-based training is provided to increase staff confidence and expertise.

The school held a celebratory Mass for the new communicants, who greeted parents in their special outfits at the gates. Catholic and non-Catholic families commented on how wonderful it was to celebrate with them and share in their evident joy, reflecting how well-integrated non-Catholic pupils are.

The school subscribes to Ten-Ten Catholic prayer and liturgy resources, which provide strong Scripture-based models and consistency across the week and between classes. School leaders plan to promote greater pupil involvement in planning and leading Collective Worship through the 'Prayer Leaders' group. However, due to the pandemic, planned developments in parish links have been impacted and will therefore continue to be a focus in 2022-2023.

Leaders regularly monitor and evaluate the provision for prayer and liturgy through discussions with pupils and staff and reflecting on engagement levels and responses. This has resulted in a clear vision on how to move this area forward.

The appointment of several new Foundation Governors in autumn 2021 has increased the capacity of governors to monitor and review prayer and liturgy at the school. The link governors for Catholic life, religious education and collective worship are the Chair of Governors, a new Foundation Governor, and an experienced Catholic educator, all of whom provide a valued contribution to the life of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School.