



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### **SAINT AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM CENTRE**

#### **Part of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Company**

Stonepits Lane, Hunt End, Redditch, B97 5LX

Inspection dates:

13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Lead Inspector:

Chris Martin

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#### **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:**

**Outstanding**

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Outstanding

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Good*

#### **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS**

This is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- Catholic Life is a core part of every aspect of school life and its curriculum. Its impact on pupils, by the time they leave the school, is profound.
- Religious Education is outstanding. As well as being subject experts, teachers are authentic witnesses to a life of faith and inspire pupils in their learning. At GCSE, the progress of pupils is excellent and sustained. Students achieve well at A Level and value their Core Religious Education programmes.
- Collective Worship at the school is outstanding. Provision is well planned and sufficiently varied, enabling pupils to lead and be led. It engages them and inspires them to take the messages it shares into their daily lives and interactions with others.
- Leaders have dedicated considerable time to reviewing the mission of the school over the last two years. The Catholic Life of the school has developed significantly as a result. There is a clear vision for the future and further key appointments are planned to sustain this improvement.

## FULL REPORT

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop further opportunities for pupils to be more involved in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship in both form time and assemblies.
  - Formalise the monitoring of the student chaplaincy team to demonstrate their impact on Collective Worship of the school.
  - Further adapt resource materials to meet the needs of individual tutor groups.
- Build on the effective transition work across the multi academy company (MAC).
  - Embed the language of the gospel values across all feeder schools so that pupils arrive at the school with greater religious literacy and appreciation of Catholic traditions.
- Ensure there are opportunities for pilgrimage in school.
  - Plans for students in the sixth form to join the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes need to be realised.

### THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	<b>Outstanding</b>
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding

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

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

- Catholic Life is judged by the school to be outstanding and this is accurate.
- The school is an inclusive community firmly rooted in faith. Pupils refer to it as a family and staff describe it as, “a very special place to work”. There is a calm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere throughout the school. There is genuine warmth in all relationships, including towards visitors. Pupils greatly value the dedication of staff and identify quickly with the school community. Fundamentally, all are happy because they know they are valued and cared for as a child of God.
- Saint Augustine’s Catholic High School authentically lives out its mission – it really is “a Catholic school for all”.
- Students arrive in Year 9 often with a limited understanding of the Catholic faith and tradition. Leaders at all levels work hard to develop the religious literacy of students from the moment they arrive. The induction programme for students new to the school is thorough and much needed.
- As students move up through the school, they markedly grow in knowledge of the Catholic faith. As a result, they contribute more fully to the Catholic Life of the school through acts of worship, charity and service.
- By the time they leave the school, they mature into respectful young adults who have a deep reverence for the Catholic faith and are inspired to make a difference with their lives.
- Pupils know they are at a Catholic school but are very proud to say they learn about other faiths. There is a strong sense of pupils’ willingness to express their beliefs in a spirit of respect and social justice. A lunchtime debate on the role of religion in modern society

showed pupils to be very eloquent but also illustrated the respect for opposing views and the value pupils place on different faiths.

- The school reaches out to the needs of the local and wider area and to international concerns. Leaders encourage pupils to engage as citizens of the world and talk relentlessly about developing gifts and talents to be of service to others.
- Pupils respond to situations of need with a generous desire to engage in fundraising. All pupils participate in charity fundraisers. The annual sponsored walk is a key event in the school year and pupils take the lead in getting sponsors. As a result, pupils are all fully engaged in this memorable experience, which raises vast sums of money for charities (£5,600 during the last academic year).
- Pupils engage with key charities throughout the liturgical year. In Advent, after services and time for reflection in school, students collect food and gifts to make hampers for the local foodbank. During lent, there is a strong tradition of each year group nominating and then supporting different Father Hudson programmes.
- The student-led Sixth Form Management Board are an integral body in the school. It is supportive and thoughtful in nature – they are empowered and enabled by leaders to respond to global issues they are moved by. Young people at the school believe they can make a difference with their lives.
- Pupils are very well supported by staff whose personal commitment to the support of the destitute is powerful. Staff have previously volunteered to work in soup kitchens and have distributed food to the homeless on the streets of Birmingham. As a result of this witness, pupils express deep concern for those less fortunate and have an understanding of why they give to charity.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Standards of uniform are excellent throughout the entire school. Pupils work well together in fostering each other's learning, caring for each other and they have a deep sense of belonging to the school.
- Pastoral care is a great strength of the school. The relentless support of pupils has resulted in the attendance rate being above national average and contributes substantially to the high standard of behaviour.
- Although due for renewal, the behaviour policy published online did not explicitly reference the Catholic nature of the school at the time of inspection. This did not reflect the practice witnessed in the school.
- Gospel values are fully embedded into the rewards system. For example, students could explain to inspectors how and why homework links to faithfulness and integrity.
- Forgiveness and compassion for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils is at the heart of all leaders' practice. Governors do everything possible to prevent permanent exclusion including positive and proactive mentoring of those potentially at risk.
- The inclusion room, rather than being punitive, is a quiet reflective space filled with prayers and moral guidance from scripture and Catholic teaching.
- All staff have been recently trained on the character and culture of a Catholic school. One recent example of this was how Catholic Life can be lived out through restorative justice. The impact of this carefully planned professional development is that reconciliation is increasingly at the heart of pupil and teacher interactions. Pupils are encouraged to be compassionate and put themselves in the place of others, thinking about the impact of their behaviour on their neighbour.
- The school has significantly improved its provision for pupil retreats. The numbers of pupils attending diocesan retreat centres have doubled this academic year. This has had a long-term impact in developing spirituality and strengthening the community.
- Time in school is now given to enable pupils to reflect on how God is calling them to live. There has been considerable investment in external providers to ensure students experience specific and varied presentations on aspects of relationships and sex. As a result, pupils develop an understanding of love within the Christian context.

- The Catholic Life of the school is supported by a rich and varied curriculum. Pupils recognise and value the holistic education they are offered through the curriculum choices they have when joining the school.
- Each subject area in the school has a Catholic Life profile. As a result, gospel values are included in all departmental displays and are now embedded in all curriculum areas. Staff from a range of departments have shared good practice during professional development sessions.
- The school's physical environment is proudly Catholic. One pupil described the, "abundance of religious imagery" on display. Pupils appreciate the key quotations as well as the signs and symbols of faith. The faith-based art helps students on challenging days, providing inspiration and comfort.
- The school improvement plan detailed extensive plans to develop the school environment. These have been delivered excellently. The school has managed to involve pupils wonderfully in the process. For example, a large eight-foot-high cross displaying the words from Corinthians 1:13 was created over seven days by a dedicated team of art students from Years 9-13. The beautiful patterns were initially drawn free hand and then burnt onto the wood by pupils.
- All staff naturally and willingly engage with the Catholic Life of the school. They are committed to the beliefs and practices of the school.
- Over the last two years, there has been extensive training around mission and ethos. Building on previous excellent practice, all leaders, teachers and support staff now see Catholic Life as the most important aspect and feature of the school. As a result, new staff do not feel afraid to ask for support to deepen their own faith. More experienced staff embark on the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS).
- In addition to regular professional development for all, middle leaders have received additional training. This move has had a transformative impact and has effectively spread the leadership of Catholic Life across the school. Heads of department describe how using the gospel values has given all teachers a language with which to speak to pupils that enhances their moral and spiritual development.
- The school makes extensive provision for chaplaincy. The school benefits from an experienced and incredibly committed priest chaplain. The appointment of a liturgy and chaplaincy coordinator has significantly enhanced the profile of pupil-based activities relating to Catholic Life.
- Working closely with the priest chaplain and the person in charge of Catholic Life (PICCL), the liturgy and chaplaincy coordinator brings a wide range of experience to the role. As a result, there is a fast-growing enthusiasm on the part of the pupils to take part in chaplaincy activities.
- The chaplaincy team has grown significantly this academic year and the group reflects the character of the school. It is representative of gender and diversity.
- The school works closely with its main feeder primaries through the work of its chaplains. This leads to a smooth transition, enabling pupils to make a secure start to their secondary education.

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

- Governors are incredibly committed to the school. The chair and vice-chair are in school at least weekly and are a constant source of support and challenge. They have attended diocesan training and effectively monitor the Catholic Life of the school.
- Monitoring, analysing and evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school is clearly evident and effective. As with all features of the school, it is thorough, well-structured and enables further improvement planning.

- Leaders has taken effective action towards all the recommendations outlined in the previous diocesan monitoring report.
- Records indicate that performance management is used thoroughly. All staff have a primary objective linked to Catholic Life.
- Honest and thorough evaluation of Catholic Life has resulted in improving pupils’ understanding of liturgy. Pupils are given additional instruction on what is happening and why at appropriate times during the mass.
- A search for excellence permeates through the school. This drive originates from the executive principal and head of school, is reinforced by the governors and extends to all. Refusal to settle for less than the best has meant the school has taken time and great care to make the right appointments for the long-term future of the school.
- The appointment of a distinct liturgy and spiritual life coordinator, responsible for transition of pupils from the middle school to high school, is working well.
- There have been significant improvements in the quality of provision since September. This is undoubtedly linked to the appointment of the new PICCLS. As a faith-filled role model, his efforts and impact was commented on by several groups of pupils.
- All leaders, including governors, are committed to serving the common good. The level of support offered by the Teaching School to schools in the wider Catholic family, motivated by moral purpose, is a real credit to all connected to the school. It is playing an important role recruiting and developing future Catholic Leaders.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The quality of Religious Education.	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Outstanding
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Outstanding

**How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.  
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.**

- Teaching Religious Education at Saint Augustine’s is more than an academic qualification. As well as displaying high level of subject expertise, teachers are authentic witnesses to their faith. They readily share their own experiences and personal faith journeys in lessons. As a result, pupils are aware of the role faith plays in their daily lives and can readily give examples of their faith in action.
- The department see moral guidance as part of their mission. Teachers are available to pupils during break and lunch, where they willingly provide advice, guidance and wisdom to students. They also provide extensive opportunities for catch-up and support sessions to further facilitate progress.
- Religious Education has a high status in the school. The department is well resourced. Pupils are universally positive about the subject and hold their teachers in high regard.
- Key stage 4 outcomes are outstanding.
- Outcomes in Religious Education are among the highest in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. All pupils make excellent progress from their varied starting points.
- Learning always starts promptly. It is typical for ‘Do Now’ activities to test student knowledge at the start of lessons.

- Teachers are skilled and confident. They adapt learning to the needs of the pupils but maintain high expectations for all. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are exceptionally well supported. Teaching and learning is clearly adapted to cater for their needs.
- Learning is well planned and sequenced to enable all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, to achieve over time.
- Resources are excellent. Carefully designed booklets provided an effective scaffold for students with relatively low prior attainment.
- Homework, often done online, is used to effectively consolidate learning.
- Key stage 5 teaching is highly effective. The use of examiners' reports to prepare students for the requirements of the exam is exemplary.
- The progress of students in key stage 5, while not yet as strong as that of younger pupils, remains in line with national averages.
- There is clear and convincing evidence to suggest that progress in A-level Theology is improving.
- The numbers of students who study at A Level compare well with other subjects. Leaders are working hard to further increase the uptake of Theology by running a number of taster sessions for Year 11 pupils.
- Core Religious Education in the Sixth Form is successful. Students appreciate the quality of provision. They see the lessons as an opportunity to develop their faith and gain skills for life. Students also value the autonomy given to them. After listening to the views of students, additional Extended Project Qualification classes have been added this year. Staffing, training and resourcing have all been carefully planned to ensure that the quality of delivery continues to be excellent.
- Pupils are set high aspirational targets. The pursuit of excellence is embedded in the mind-set of all staff and students. As a result, pupil work and tracking data indicates that pupils are working to meet those targets.
- The high level of teachers' questioning ensures a deeper understanding of what is being taught in lessons.
- The quality of current work produced by pupils meets the demands of the new GCSE and there is an appropriate religious vocabulary embedded in the learning.
- Detailed assessment and tracking leads to targeted intervention for the most vulnerable groups, including the disadvantaged.
- Cases of any underachievement are rare. When it occurs, effective "diagnosis, therapy and testing" is provided.
- Individual success is celebrated and pupils appreciate and enjoy the success of others.
- Due to excellent teaching and a strong culture of learning in the school, pupils work very hard in lessons. No off-task behaviour was observed during the inspection.

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

- The Religious Education department is wholeheartedly supported by the leadership and management of the school.
- Governors are well informed about standards in Religious Education.
- Governors and leaders ensure that the required minimum curriculum time for Religious Education is provided. Course content complies with all diocesan expectations.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning by the Religious Education subject leaders is thorough. There is a rigorous programme of learning walks and work scrutiny in place. The evaluation of this monitoring has a clear impact on teaching and learning as delivery is consistent.
- Pupils are routinely asked for their view on the quality of provision. The department try to respond to these views, where possible, to maximise enjoyment of the subject.

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The quality of Collective Worship.	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Good
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Outstanding

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.  
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.**

- Inspectors confirm the school's judgement that Collective Worship is outstanding. Pupils' value the time for reflection and behaviour is excellent. Respect and reverence are evident in all forms of Collective Worship.
- All staff and pupils at Saint Augustine start each day with prayer. This daily experience has a profound impact on the students. A Muslim student readily shared that the regularity and depth of prayer at school had given her a deeper appreciation of both Islam and Christianity. One Sixth Form student stated that her personal daily prayer life started directly as a result of the routines deeply embedded in the school.
- Sacred spaces are clearly evident in every classroom throughout the school. They are personalised to the form group and highlight the lives of Saints as role models.
- All pupils will lead prayer at regular intervals during the course of the year. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to research and deliver their own prayers. As a result, prayer often focuses on local or global tragedies that have touched the hearts and minds of pupils. Furthermore, pupils value the school's inclusive ethos and are considerate of the needs of each other. As a result, they readily pray spontaneous prayers for the needs of their peers.
- Pupils routinely lead assemblies. Relevant staff have an excellent understanding of the essential elements needed in an assembly and prepare pupils to a very high standard. When addressing other year groups, Sixth Form students are superb role models to younger pupils.
- A wide variety of types of worship is made accessible to pupils through a range of media. As a result, uplifting and inspiring prayer enables pupils and staff to raise their hearts and minds to God.
- During the inspection, a Mass was celebrated for Years 11 and 13. This was deliberately timed to follow their recent mock exams, giving pupils' time and space to reflect.
- All the congregation were moved before Mass began by incredibly powerful personal testimonies. Both staff and students shared their experience of God's hand in their own lives. There was a strong and tangible sense of vocation threaded throughout the liturgy; that is, we are called to work hard and do our best not for personal glory but to live out God's plan.
- There are a range of opportunities for pupils to lead and participate directly in Mass. As well as altar servers and eucharistic ministers, there is a dedicated choir. Music is an exceptionally strong feature of the school. Choir trips are an integral part of the school calendar. Pupils described with great affection the opportunity to sing during Mass at St Mark's Basilica in Venice. During this Mass, the choir sang beautifully and contributed to the prayerful atmosphere. Pupils speak of the joy of the school coming together for whole school Masses with music and singing.
- The senior chaplaincy team, consisting of pupils from Year 12, show new pupils to the school how to use the chapel. This is an integral part of induction into the school. As a

result, pupils feel immediately comfortable and simply expect to lead Collective Worship from their first year.

- Every form will celebrate Mass each year in the chapel. The impact of this is particularly significant, and there is very good preparation and pupil participation. The priest chaplain says that the atmosphere is highly conducive to prayer and reflection.
- The chaplains have reflected carefully on ways to enable pupils to become familiar with the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- At appropriate times throughout the year, the rosary is said during break in the chapel. Attendance is variable but it is led by pupils and is becoming more popular.

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

- Leaders and managers are passionate about providing the highest quality of Collective Worship. They want to make the good news of the gospel accessible and relevant to all, regardless of prior experience, current practise or denomination.
- They have become experts in planning and delivering quality worship time. Liturgical themes are skilfully linked to contemporary issues and mapped carefully throughout the year. Assemblies have become central to the life of the school.
- The liturgy and chaplaincy coordinator delivers good quality Collective Worship. She has been well supported by the school and has attended diocesan training programmes.
- As leaders of the Collective Worship in form time, the work of tutors is carefully monitored and supported. The Gospel Values Booklets, together with accompanying interactive and audio-visual resources, are an effective tool in developing pupils' understanding of what the values mean and how they are lived out. Collective Worship is now sharply focussed and its purpose is to make the gospel values explicit to pupils.
- Both regular and large-scale events are rigorously evaluated. This has resulted in planning which includes clear objectives, monitoring processes and desired outcomes. For example, as a result of evaluation at the end of last academic year, pupils have been given additional time to prepare for their weekly form Mass. As a result, pupils now participate to a greater extent in the liturgy. They write their own bidding prayers, design art work and more.

**SCHOOL DETAILS**

Unique reference number	116997
Local authority	Worcestershire
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range	13-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	929
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	Mike Dean
Executive Principal	Anthony Quinn
Head of School	Gerald O'Connor
Telephone number	01527 550400
Website address	<a href="https://www.st-augustines.worcs.sch.uk/">https://www.st-augustines.worcs.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@st-augustines.worcs.sch.uk">office@st-augustines.worcs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	4th-5th March 2014

## INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- Saint Augustine's Catholic High School and Sixth Form Centre is a broadly average sized school, located in Redditch. It has an average-sized Sixth Form.
- It is heavily oversubscribed and has recently expanded.
- The percentage of baptised Catholic pupils on roll is 34%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is low.
- The school converted to become an academy in 2014. It is part of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Company along with St Bede's Catholic Middle School, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic First School and St Peter's Catholic First School.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Chris Martin and Sarah Hatfield.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education, and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across eleven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with governors, the executive principal and head of school, person in charge of Catholic Life (PICCLS), subject leaders, parents, priest school chaplain as well as leaders from a range of subjects.
- The inspectors attended form tutor time, year group assemblies, staff briefing, staff lunch and a Mass. They also undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, and teachers' planning as well as monitoring and survey reports.