

St Augustine's Catholic High School

Stonepits Lane, Hunt End, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 5LX

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The executive principal and head of school exude a determination to enable every pupil to achieve his or her potential. Governors, leaders, staff, pupils and students all share high expectations for pupils' achievement and their personal development.
- Pupils make outstanding progress and achieve exceptionally well in examinations by the end of Year 11 and the sixth form.
- A 'learning culture' is firmly embedded among pupils. In all subjects, pupils are keen to discuss and debate ideas and approaches. They are eager to find out more, and determined to improve. Not a minute is wasted in lessons, and pupils readily continue their enquiries and endeavours out of class.
- Assessment is used very well by teachers and pupils themselves to ensure that pupils have a very clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. Teachers use assessment information exceptionally well to plan activities that build seamlessly on what pupils already know, understand or can do.
- The curriculum is exceptionally rich, offering a very wide range of academic and vocational courses and extra-curricular programmes. The curriculum is tailored closely to meet pupils' interests, abilities and aspirations.
- A comprehensive careers programme ensures that pupils and sixth-form students are exceptionally well informed about opportunities for their next steps in life.
- Pupils conduct themselves with great maturity in lessons and around the school. High attendance rates are testament to pupils' enjoyment of school. Rates of persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils are, however, markedly higher than the low rates for other groups.
- 16 to 19 study programmes are highly effective. Students achieve well in their examinations, and their personal development is promoted exceptionally well through non-qualification activities and support provided for younger pupils. The school recognises that stronger earlier pastoral support might reduce the number of students who change courses or leave the school at the end of Year 12.
- Leaders maintain a regular and effective review of teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes. Information from the review cycles allow leaders to intervene or adjust provision to sustain progress at the highest levels.
- Governors make very effective use of information on pupils' outcomes to hold leaders to account.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen pastoral support processes in the sixth form to further improve retention rates between Year 12 and Year 13.
- Reduce the rate of persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The executive principal and the head of school have successfully established an ethos of high aspirations for the success of all pupils. This ethos permeates the whole school community. The pupils themselves, who show much drive to succeed, greatly appreciate the support given to them by staff in helping them make strong progress. Most parents who communicated with inspectors have a very high regard for the work of the school.
- School self-evaluation is highly effective. It is based on regular reviews of school performance using highly transparent reports on pupils' performance that are shared with staff and governors. The effectiveness of teaching programmes and groupings of pupils are monitored closely and adjusted where required.
- School development planning is based sharply on open and honest self-evaluation, so that the school is quick to address any weaknesses. Leaders and governors have also sought to develop the school strategically so that it is well positioned to support improvement across the wider school system. School leaders therefore play an important and demonstrably successful role in supporting other schools. Staff and leaders have benefited by working in partnership with other schools.
- Heads of department play a highly effective role in monitoring and developing teaching. Performance of teaching and non-teaching staff is managed effectively to promote improvement. Subject departmental teams are highly cohesive, and staff work closely together to design schemes of work that secure pupils' basic skills and apply these in increasingly challenging contexts. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the direction of the school and the success it brings for its students. One newly qualified teacher said simply: 'I love it here.'
- The curriculum is a cornerstone of the school's success. From the time they join the school in Year 9, pupils are offered 'pathways' linked to their interests, aspirations and talents. The school works closely with feeder middle schools, pupils and parents to ensure that transition into these pathways is smooth and effective. The pathways offer a broad range of academic, applied and vocational courses, many of which are sustained into the school sixth form.
- Leaders' passionate belief that pupils should be able to shine in any discipline underpins the success achieved by pupils in core academic subjects and across the humanities, sciences, creative and performing arts, sports and vocational areas. A strong early focus in mathematics and English on developing pupils' basic numeracy and literacy ensures that they are well placed to succeed in any subject.
- Pupils and sixth-form students are very well prepared for the next stages of education, employment and training. They have an exceptionally well developed understanding of occupational pathways, including apprenticeships, through a highly effective careers programme. Pupils and students are therefore very successful in reaching the destinations for which they have applied.
- The curriculum supports pupils' personal development, including their moral, cultural and social development, well. Pupils have a good understanding of British values of

tolerance, respect, freedom and democracy. A rich extra-curricular programme promotes pupils' engagement in sport, the arts and in helping others.

- Leaders manage additional funding with a high degree of success. Special educational needs funding is very well used to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are integrated fully into classes. The employment of 'graduate coaches' to provide in-class and additional support has been especially effective. Pupil premium funding has provided additional individual support to disadvantaged pupils to meet specific needs, and has also supported teachers to focus on improving progress for these pupils in lessons. As a result, disadvantaged pupils have made better progress than all pupils nationally on most key measures.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is highly effective.
- Governors, or 'academy representatives', are fully involved in monitoring the work of the school. They have a well-developed understanding of the school's performance measures, and minutes of the governing body show that they hold leaders fully to account for meeting demanding targets for pupils' achievement.
- Governors play a full part in establishing the school's priorities for improvement, and regularly measure progress towards targets set out in the school's development plan.
- Governors monitor effectively the school's system for the performance management of staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is an exceptionally orderly environment, where the quality of relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils is very strong. As a result, pupils told all inspectors that they feel very safe in the school. They have great confidence that should they have any concerns for their safety or well-being, staff will address them.
- Procedures for keeping pupils safe are well designed and well managed. Leaders liaise effectively with parents and other agencies to keep pupils safe. Teaching and non-teaching staff are fully trained to meet the latest government guidelines for keeping pupils safe. They have a very good understanding of what to do if an incident should come to their attention
- Through the curriculum, tutorial times and assemblies, pupils develop a comprehensive awareness of potential threats to their safety and well-being and how to guard against them, including cyber-bullying and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers plan programmes of work and manage their classes exceptionally well to ensure that all pupils are able to make strong progress.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and make a significant contribution to learning. Staff develop pupils' confidence to 'have a go' in contributing ideas or solving problems, and as a result the quality of discussion and debate in

classes is very high across pupils of all abilities. Pupils' oracy is a key strength, and they articulate their thoughts very clearly.

- Assessment information is used particularly well to promote pupils' excellent learning and progress. Across subjects, teachers adjust teaching plans and groupings in response to regular reviews of assessment information. This ensures that each pupil is in full command of basic knowledge and skills and able to move on to work that challenges and enthuses them. As a result, pupils from all starting points, including the least and most able, make excellent progress. Teachers specifically monitor the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils in their classes to ensure that all learn well.
- Additional support is readily deployed in and out of class for all pupils who need it, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The quality of this additional support is first class. The 'graduate coaches' who provide this support have excellent subject knowledge. They encourage pupils to solve problems independently, thereby developing their skills and resilience. The pupils' individual learning plans offer clear and helpful targets and strategies to promote strong progress.
- Pupils themselves develop a very good understanding of assessment criteria, acquired by regularly assessing their own work and that of their peers. Teachers provide pupils with very clear feedback on the quality of their work. As a result, pupils have a very clear understanding of which skills and knowledge they need to improve. Furthermore, they work with determination to make those improvements.
- Pupils' learning is supported by very good access to a range of books and online resources that enable much learning to continue beyond the classroom.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise enable them to respond very well to pupils' queries in class and sustains pupils' interest and enthusiasm.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are highly motivated to learn.
- Pupils work very well together and are highly supportive of each other in developing their understanding and skills. A key feature of many lessons is the way pupils discuss and share ideas with their teachers and each other to improve and refine their understanding and approaches.
- Pupils readily take additional responsibilities in the school. Older pupils support younger ones in their learning; sixth-form students give their time freely to help younger pupils to secure their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe from bullying. They have great confidence in staff to resolve any problems or threats to their well-being.
- The school's strong sports programme, and a well-structured programme for personal, social and health education, give strong support to pupils' physical and emotional well-

being.

- The safety and well-being of the few pupils who attend alternative provision is monitored and reviewed thoroughly. Most pupils benefit from the alternative provision they receive and make progress expected against their targets.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is built on the very positive relationships and mutual respect that prevail between pupils and staff.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally calm and orderly, in lessons and around the school. They interact with each other and with adults, including visitors, with great maturity. During breaktimes, pupils from different backgrounds and heritages mix easily to share views on a range of topics.
- Pupils are very punctual to school and to lessons. As a result, lessons start promptly, and pupils' excellent behaviour ensures that no time is lost in learning activities.
- Pupils have much respect for each other, and for the environment in which they work. The school is therefore litter- and graffiti-free.
- Teachers rarely have to use the school's behaviour sanctions, but pupils say that these are consistently and fairly applied. As a result, fixed-term exclusions are low and have fallen sharply, with very few repeats. Few permanent exclusions have occurred over time, but they increased this year, including for pupils in alternative provision. Inspection evidence shows that the cases were exceptional and that the action taken by the school has been proportionate.
- Attendance is high and the number of students persistently absent is low. This reflects pupils' enthusiasm for school and enjoyment of lessons. Absence is rigorously followed up by the attendance team. Nonetheless, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils that are persistently absent is markedly higher than that for others, and leaders agree that more focus is needed on strategies to narrow this gap.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Outcomes have been high since the last inspection. The consistency of the strong progress made by all key groups of pupils and subjects is exceptional.
- In GCSEs in 2016, pupils from low-, middle- and high-ability groups made overall rates of progress among the highest 10% nationally from their starting points. Progress was strong for all of these groups across subjects including English, mathematics, science and the humanities.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are high attaining, similarly make strong progress overall and across subjects. In the 2016 GCSE results, they made better overall progress than other pupils nationally. This reflects very well on the effectiveness of spending of the pupil premium, and the school's success in tracking and supporting the progress of each individual pupil.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress. They benefit greatly from the school's close attention to securing pupils' strong basic literacy

and numeracy skills and high expectations for each pupil's achievement.

- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well managed to enable most to make at least good progress. Individual learning plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that provision is best meeting need. The quality of additional support for learning provided in and out of class is high.
- The progress of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision is sound, though more variable, reflecting the range of medical and behavioural needs prevailing for them.
- Progress for current cohorts remains strong across subjects, and pupils flourish in academic, technical and creative subjects as well as in sport and the performing arts. This progress is based on excellent attitudes to learning, promoted by highly effective teaching. Pupils are therefore exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education or training.
- The basic skills of those pupils who arrive with weaker literacy and numeracy are secured by highly focused work in English and mathematics and across subjects. Pupils are therefore well equipped to learn well across all subjects. Pupils of all abilities develop a thirst for further enquiry and for working at greater depth. Higher-attaining pupils are very well supported to achieve the highest grades through expert teaching and access to additional resources.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Outcomes for students have continued to strengthen over time. In 2016, students made particularly strong progress across applied and academic subjects, including A and AS levels. This high level of performance is on course to continue for current cohorts.
- Over time, there are few significant variations between subjects. As with the main school, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently high. Students show a deep interest in their subjects. Teachers ensure that students understand exactly what they need to do to reach their demanding target grades, and students work hard to achieve these. Students are well supported by subject-specific resources that enable them to deepen and broaden their understanding.
- Throughout lessons, a sustained emphasis on good oracy, literacy and numeracy ensures that students develop highly effective communication skills. They articulate their ideas well, both in discussion and on paper.
- Provision is effective for the very few students who join the sixth form without attaining a grade C in English or mathematics at GCSE, with students successfully improving their grades as a result.
- The curriculum offers much enrichment alongside subject provision, for students to prepare very well for later life. Students engage in a 'giving back' programme of service to others, where, for example, they support younger pupils with subject or literacy and numeracy programmes.
- Students' behaviour and conduct are excellent. Attendance rates and punctuality are

very high.

- As in the main school, careers advice and guidance is a particular strength, and draws on a range of contacts with external businesses and agencies. All students undertake work experience in Year 12. A range of activities, including placements, presentations and competitions, provide students with contact with employers and workplaces linked to their study programmes. Students therefore have a very well-developed understanding of opportunities available to them beyond school, including in apprenticeships. All students who leave gain places in employment, higher education or training.
- One consequence of students' awareness of other opportunities is that over 10% leave at the end of Year 12, mainly to move to apprenticeships or other courses. While these moves are made for positive reasons, school leaders recognise that earlier pastoral support to help students cope with the rigours of Level 3 study might lead more to remain on a two-year programme.
- The sixth form is very well led and managed. Effective self-evaluation and review are key strengths that underpin its sustained improvement.

School details

Unique reference number	141063
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10032649

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	910
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	249
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Reverend Anthony Rohan
Principal	Anthony Quinn
Telephone number	01527 550 400
Website	http://www.st-augustines.worcs.sch.uk/
Email address	saints@st-augustines.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- St Augustine's is a high school of broadly average size, which pupils join in Year 9. It has an average-sized sixth form.
- The large majority of pupils are White British, although the proportions from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is a little higher

than those found in schools nationally.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is low.
- The school converted to become an academy in 2014. It is the lead school of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi Academy Company. Through this company, leaders of the school, including the principal, provide regular support to other schools.
- The school meets current government floor standards for the attainment and progress of pupils.
- A small number of pupils attend the Aspire Academy in Worcester full time for alternative provision, and a few are supported by the Worcestershire medical education team from its centre in Redditch.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was initially conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 as a short inspection of a school whose predecessor was judged good. The inspection became deemed a full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspectors observed teaching in lessons, including jointly with senior and middle leaders. Other aspects of the school’s work were also scrutinised, including tutor time.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the academy trust. Informal discussions also took place with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 89 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire to provide evidence for the inspection. Evidence from responses to online surveys of staff and pupils was examined.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation and development plans, its safeguarding policies, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Ian Hodgkinson, lead inspector – section 5	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Bernice Astling	Ofsted Inspector
Deana Holdaway	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Bernice Astling, lead inspector – section 8	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Barnes	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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