

Inspection of St Augustine's Roman Catholic High School, a Voluntary Academy

Elker Lane, Billington, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 9JA

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The executive headteacher of this school is Michael Wright. This school is part of Romero Catholic Academy Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Des Callaghan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Angela Ager.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Augustine's Roman Catholic High School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of community at St Augustine's. The school encourages pupils to take on responsibilities and many do. Pupils spoke with pride about their work as well-being ambassadors to support their peers' mental health. Pupils enjoy being part of this school. They appreciate the importance of working together for a greater good, for example by raising money for their chosen charities.

Most pupils rise to meet the school's high expectations. They are polite and respectful to each other and move around school calmly. Relationships between staff and pupils are typically positive. Pupils told inspectors that there is always an adult that they can talk to, should they have any worries. The school resolves any such concerns quickly and well. Pupils are positive about recent changes to how the school deals with any poor behaviour.

The school wants all pupils to achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils benefit from the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. To meet its high expectations, the school encourages all pupils to develop their independence and their resilience. In the main, they achieve well. Pupils with SEND thrive here.

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

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils in key stage 4 choose subjects that align with ambitious post-16 destinations. In addition, a comprehensive careers programme helps pupils to make informed decisions about their future education, employment or training. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, are successful in their education and are well prepared for their next steps.

Across all subjects, the school has identified the most important knowledge for pupils to learn and by when. This helps pupils to build up their learning gradually. Most teachers deliver the curriculum using strong subject knowledge. They explain new concepts clearly.

In many subjects, staff use effective strategies to ensure that pupils remember what they have learned. They check pupils' understanding and address any gaps in pupils' learning. In other subjects, however, assessment strategies are not as successful. At times, staff in these subjects are not aware when pupils have forgotten important information. This makes subsequent learning more difficult for some pupils.

The school assesses pupils' additional needs accurately. Staff use a range of approaches to ensure that pupils with SEND learn well. These approaches are well matched to each pupil's needs and starting points. Most pupils with SEND succeed in the classroom. Expert staff support a small number of pupils who need more specialist help. Over time, this helps these pupils to return to learning the curriculum alongside their peers.

The school engages positively with parents and carers about the support that their children receive. Many parents of pupils with SEND are full of praise for the ways that the school helps their children to achieve the best that they can.

The school identifies pupils of all ages who find reading more difficult. Well-trained staff provide appropriate support to help these pupils to catch up with their peers. Most pupils' reading improves as they move through the school.

Uneven attendance had an impact on the published examination results for some pupils in 2023. Since then, the school has taken appropriate action to improve pupils' attendance. Although most pupils now attend well, a small number of disadvantaged pupils do not. Consequently, these pupils are less likely to achieve all that they should.

The school provides a comprehensive programme to support pupils' personal development. This helps pupils to become well informed about life in modern society. For example, they learn about different types of healthy relationships and the importance of consent.

Trustees and governors understand the school's priorities. They work together with the school to ensure that new strategies are not burdensome for staff. However, at times, the school does not have a clear enough view of how well these strategies are carried out. On occasions, this hinders the school's further improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small group of pupils do not attend school as often as they should. This leads to gaps in their knowledge over time and hinders their achievement. The school should bolster its efforts to ensure that these pupils attend school regularly.
- In some subjects, staff do not have a thorough enough understanding of how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Staff are sometimes unaware of the gaps that some pupils have in their knowledge. This hinders subsequent learning for these pupils. The school should ensure that staff use assessment strategies consistently well to rectify pupils' misconceptions and address forgotten learning.
- Some of the school's systems do not provide leaders with a clear enough view of the impact of their actions to improve the school. At times, some strategies are not implemented effectively. The school should ensure that any improvement strategies are monitored and evaluated carefully to ensure that they have the intended positive impact on the quality of education at the school.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	149457
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10290399
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1127
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela Ager
CEO of trust	Des Callaghan
Headteacher	Michael Wright
Website	www.sarchs.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Augustine’s Roman Catholic High School converted to become an academy and joined Romero Catholic Academy Trust in December 2022. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- This school is part of the Diocese of Salford. The most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in June 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place by 2026.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils have education, health and care plans for SEND. Of these, a small number have significantly profound and complex needs.
- The school makes use of four registered and two unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, heads of school, other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. He also held meetings with representatives of the trust, including the chair and the CEO.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: English, science, mathematics, history, design and technology and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and their views of behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, leaders' improvement plans, minutes of local governing body and trust board meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Philip Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Beard	Ofsted Inspector

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