

INSPECTION REPORT

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Name of School **St Augustine’s RC High School,
Elker Lane, Billington, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB9 9JA**

Inspection date 4 June 2019

Reporting Inspectors Andrew Bridson, Janet Burns, Leo Conley

Type of school	Secondary
URN	119801
Age range of pupils	11-16 Years
Number on roll	1050
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	Philip Gunn
Headteacher	Michael Wright
Religious Education Subject Leader	Jessica Cartwright
Date of previous inspection	2 May 2014

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Catholic Leadership	1	
The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	1	
Religious Education (incorporating Word)	1	
Collective Worship	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 95% of pupils are baptised Catholics. 72% of the teaching staff and 38% of support staff are Catholic. There are 11 members of staff that have the CCRS certificate and 7 have completed the Catholic Leadership programme. The majority of students are white British (94%) and there are very few pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of students supported by the Pupil Premium is below the national average (17%). There are 16 students supported with EHC Plans and the percentage receiving SEND support is in line with the national average. The school population is stable with few students joining after Year 7 (2.5% inward mobility, 1.8% outward). The Headteacher is currently supporting a local Catholic secondary school in the role of Executive Headteacher.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- **The Catholic leadership and vision of the school creates a learning community that inspires all to strive for excellence.**
- **Governors know the school well and are clear about how the school can continue to improve further.**
- **The exceptional quality of pastoral care, particularly for those in greatest need, is inspirational.**
- **The quality of Catholic education is outstanding.**

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

St Augustine's RC High School is an outstanding Catholic school. The Catholic life of the school is inspiring and is at its strongest in the exemplary relationships between staff and pupils and the excellent care staff give to all pupils, especially the vulnerable and potentially marginalised. Religious Education delivers the required 10% of curriculum time and, under the enthusiastic leadership of the Religious Education subject leader, has established itself as a hub of best practice in teaching and learning. Governors are knowledgeable and ambitious for the school, holding leaders to account for the Catholic mission of the school. They work closely with the Headteacher and have prioritised appropriate human and material resources to maintain sustainable improvement. The recent appointment of a new lay chaplain reflects the school's commitment to further improvements and the dedication of school leaders. A key strength is the supportive and caring staff who are committed to the Catholic ethos of the school and who take ownership of chaplaincy, liturgy and collective worship. The inclusive chaplaincy model has developed over a number of years and is successful because of the number of adults and pupils who are involved and committed to it. Chaplaincy is particularly strong and promotes a culture of confidence in witnessing to Catholic beliefs and values, both within and beyond the school community. Members of the school council defined these values without hesitation as: *'Faith in God; Love for one another; Help for those in need'*. Commitment to local, national and international charitable causes is impressive and imbues within the community a sense of service to the common good. Each year group supports nominated charities and there are high levels of participation in groups such as CAFOD Action, the Faith and Justice team and the developing Eco-Action Group.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The Headteacher and Governing Board provide inspirational leadership and have created a model of collaborative ministry where staff and pupils work together as *'People of God'*. School leaders and governors demonstrate a deep commitment to Catholic education and are energised by their task. The Catholic life of the school is central to all that takes place and leaders clearly witness Gospel values through the support provided to the most vulnerable in the community. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the achievements and challenges of the school and are not complacent in searching for further improvements across a wide range of areas. Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is embedded across all areas of the curriculum and is a beacon of excellent practice. Governors have a high level of commitment and make a significant contribution to the life of the school. School leaders have developed an ethos in which young people are confident in their faith and have developed a culture in

which it is *'cool to be Catholic'*. Local clergy are actively involved in the school and support the Religious Education department to enrich the curriculum. There are many impressive examples of pupil leadership demonstrating pupils' understanding of service to the school and wider community. Pupils value the many opportunities and experiences the school offers them to support their faith journey with one member of the GIFT team commenting on her recent pilgrimage to Lourdes *'It has changed our lives'*.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS OUTSTANDING

The school's Mission Statement permeates all aspects of school life and drives the inclusive ethos of this community where all are welcomed and valued. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is excellent. Across all areas of the school, the Catholic ethos fosters a high level of understanding and care where diversity is respected and valued. The school welcomes a wide range of visitors with warmth and care, with clear structures and procedures in place to ensure the safety of all pupils. Inspirational pastoral care and learning support ensures that the needs of all children, including the most vulnerable, are identified and met. Effective induction programmes, as well as primary and post-16 links, ensure smooth and supported transition pathways for pupils. Partnerships with parents are valued, they feel supported and have a strong sense of belonging to the school community. High rates of pupil attendance reflect the excellent pastoral support pupils receive and the quality of their whole educational experience. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe through cross-curricular PSHE and an effective SHRE programme. Safeguarding is outstanding. The development of the school's pupil support room provides a nurturing environment for pupils who require additional support. The school has invested in staff training and development and employs a full time counsellor to support pupils' additional needs and their mental health and wellbeing. During recent years the school has also invested in improvements to the physical environment to increase provision for children with mobility issues by installing ramps on staircases and a lift. SMSC is embedded in departmental policy and practice, and it is evident in the taught curriculum as well as in activities such as residential experiences, Fairtrade tuck shops, staff Friday treats and the school's commitment to social action.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS OUTSTANDING

Leadership of the Religious Education department is inspirational and provides pupils with a wealth of opportunities to explore their own faith and that of others. Pupils make exceptional progress in Religious Education. They are inspired by outstanding teaching which is well matched to the needs of all pupils. As a result, they are able to clearly articulate their beliefs and the impact this has on their lives. The Religious Education subject leader, fully supported by the Headteacher, Governing Board, Parish Priests and Senior Leadership Team, provides a clear vision of how high quality Religious Education should be taught. The collegiate approach of the department greatly enhances the teaching of Religious Education and faith development in the school, provides clear leadership and support for all staff and ensures that the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory are met. Teaching is delivered by an experienced team which is committed to providing an outstanding Catholic education for all pupils and which achieves excellent results in GCSE Religious Studies. Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding; they show a genuine interest in and enthusiasm for their work and can talk openly about topics and themes they have covered. High quality classroom resources are well used by staff and workload is reduced through the sharing of resources, both within school and part of the Salford Diocese Religious Education network. Sacred scripture is known and understood by pupils and they are able to articulate the importance of the Word of God in their learning. Across the Religious Education department, there is a consistent approach to marking and assessment which encourages students to strive for excellence and take pride in their work.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Prayer and worship are very much at the heart of the community of St Augustine's. A vibrant staff chaplaincy team and an impressive number of commissioned GIFT pupil chaplains (42 in 2019) are at the forefront of planning and delivering the extensive range of Masses, assemblies, celebrations and liturgies (some attended by parishioners). The pupils take part in a daily act of worship either in assembly or in their form groups, and the celebration of Holy Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation are regular features in the life of this community. St Augustine's benefits from the active involvement of local clergy in the life of the school and all agree that the school's description of their Masses and liturgies as *'beautiful celebrations'* is fully justified. The Headteacher, Governing Board, leadership team and subject leaders deserve great credit for the active role they play in guiding the faith of the school and for the high level of dedicated

funding and resources devoted to the development of prayer and worship. There is a palpable sense of togetherness and trust with the high value that both pupils and staff place upon prayer and reflection being clearly demonstrated. They look forward to developing this even further under the guidance of the newly appointed lay chaplain. Links with the local parishes are extensive, exemplified by the Crossroads Masses, their commitment to Hope in the Future and the Edge programme. In this they are truly *'stepping out in faith'* in accordance with the Mission Statement. A parent speaking about pupils' involvement in a parish focus group described how impressed the parishioners were with *'the eloquence and confidence with which the young people of St Augustine's expressed their faith'*. This was apparent throughout the inspection and is in no small measure due to the mission-led culture and climate of the school.

AGREED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- **Review the Mission Statement to ensure it continues to be understood and lived by all in the school community.**
- **Support the newly appointed lay chaplain to further develop the work of the chaplaincy team and to continue the existing plans to work more closely with local parishes.**
- **To broaden the opportunities for pupils to develop a greater understanding of other faiths in the local community so they can fully integrate into the world around them.**