



DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Kesteven Road, Stamford, PE9 1SR

School URN:	139626
Inspection Date:	28 February 2017
Inspectors:	Dr Eilis Field and Mrs Pamela Tonge

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection:	Good	2
	This Inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Requires Improvement	3

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy is a good Catholic school.

- The school is highly valued by the community. Parents appreciate the positive changes that have been brought about by the executive headteacher and current head of school. Well supported by a committed governing body, the school has developed a strong sense of its Catholic ethos and identity. It provides a nurturing environment where pupils feel happy and safe. Sound values based on the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church form the foundation of the life of this highly regarded school.
- The school's mission statement 'We grow and learn as a family in the footsteps of Jesus' is evident in exemplary behaviour of pupils. Well led by the head of school, the staff are excellent role models for this caring Catholic community. All families appreciate the inclusive, welcoming nature of the school and value the support it offers. Pupils develop a strong sense of social justice and turn this into action by raising funds for local and global charities.
- Prayer and Collective Worship are an integral part of the school day. Through varied and vibrant worship, all pupils, regardless of their faith backgrounds, grow in their understanding of their own unique value and the call to use their gifts and talents for the service of others. The parish priest is successful in drawing the school and parish community together for their mutual benefit. Parents appreciate the invitation to them to engage in genuine partnership with the school and willingly offer their talents to support the school in its aim to give every child the best possible start in life.
- The teaching of Religious Education requires further improvement. The governing body, executive headteacher and head of school are proactive in bringing about the necessary changes and the positive impact of these changes are in evidence. They are aware, however, that there is still work to be done to accelerate the rate of progress and raise the levels of attainment in Religious Education.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- The academy is smaller than the average primary school; there are currently 135 pupils on roll.
- St Augustine's serves the three Catholic parishes of St Augustine's, Stamford, St Gilbert's, Bourne and St Guthlac's, Deeping St James.
- The academy is federated with the English Martyrs' Catholic Voluntary Academy in Oakham, Rutland, with whom it shares the executive headteacher and governing body. Both academies are part of a multi-academy trust, the St Gilbert of Sempingham Catholic Academy Trust.
- 27% of the pupils are baptised Catholics, 33% are from other Christian denominations. 1% are from faith backgrounds other than Christian and 39% have no religious affiliation.
- 19% of pupils have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) at 'school support stage', 4% have an education, health care plan (EHCP).
- 30% of pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium.
- Under the strong leadership of the governors, executive headteacher and head of school, the school has recovered from a period of upheaval. The governors are now faced with finding a suitable appointment to build upon the foundations laid down by the outgoing head of school.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Catholic Life
 - It is imperative that governors appoint a new headteacher who will sustain and develop the Catholic Life of the school and have the experience and knowledge in primary teaching and learning essential to develop the professional needs of the staff.
 - Ensure that the school's strong Catholic ethos is clearly visible on the website and reflected in the wording of all its policies and agreements.
- Collective Worship
 - Develop strategies so that all pupils feel included and welcome to join the 'Little Lights' pupil chaplaincy group.
 - Increase pupils' level of independence in preparing Acts of Worship and leading the prayer life of the school.
 - Develop the necessary knowledge and skills for all staff to be confident in leading Acts of Worship.
- Religious Education – raise standards of progress and attainment by:
 - Developing teacher skills in using 'driver words' to give oral and written feedback that is consistently effective in moving learning on across all key stages.
 - Ensuring that teachers' understanding of the *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* is secure and results in reliable and accurate assessment of pupils' progress and attainment in Religious Education.
 - Developing teachers' ability to question and use pupils' responses to extend their learning.
 - Ensuring suitable learning opportunities and written tasks that challenge pupils to their full potential.

As Religious Education has been judged to 'require improvement', the school will receive a monitoring visit within one year of the publication of this inspection report.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL	2
--	---

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

2
2
2

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

- The school's mission statement 'We grow and learn as a family in the footsteps of Jesus' is genuinely lived out in the daily life of the school. Pupils, including those from challenging backgrounds, benefit from the Catholic ethos of the school and this is reflected in their exemplary behaviour in and out of lessons.
- The school is welcoming and inclusive to all pupils and their families, whatever their faith background. All families feel valued, [the headteacher] 'has an open door policy, always has time to see me and she makes me feel worthy' (parent of a child with special educational needs and/or a disability).
- The 'Little Lights' pupil chaplains are playing an increasingly prominent role in promoting the Catholic Life of the school, 'I am proud of my badge, I keep it in a very special tin' said one child. They were proud to point out religious displays that they had produced and of their role in encouraging each class with its display and liturgical planning.
- Pupils describe their school as 'a caring, supportive, community where we learn to be more like Jesus and follow his example'. They appreciate the changes that have been brought about by the current head of school. 'It is calmer; we don't worry. We believe in ourselves; this is a good school'.
- Pupils' support of a wide range of charities evidence a strong sense of social justice. They research charities eagerly and plan successful fundraising events, for example CAFOD, NSPCC, MacMillan and Anna's Hope.
- Parents value the changes brought about by the leadership of the current head of school as they feel the Catholic Life has grown stronger under her leadership. 'I wanted a Christian school and this is a very strongly Christian school'. 'My child has learnt many more bible stories and is clearer about her faith which is blossoming'. Parents are anxious that the school gains 'another lovely headteacher', who will ensure that the Catholic Life continues to grow in strength.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school - good

- The behaviour policy is effective in ensuring exemplary behaviour throughout the school. The school has invested in a full-time pastoral carer and, as a result, children with severe behavioural needs are well supported.
- Staff morale is high. Teachers report feeling 'valued and cared for', since the current head of school has been in post.
- The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor who is actively involved in promoting and improving the Catholic Life of the school - staff and pupils value his support and advice. His encouragement for pupils and their families to become more active in the parish is beginning to yield positive results.
- The school provides a welcoming and organised environment. Bright, attractive religious displays are visible throughout the school and send a clear message about the centrality of the school's Catholic identity.
- The school has adopted 'A Journey in Love' as its Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) scheme of work and has updated its RSE policy accordingly. Staff who attended Diocesan training some time ago, however, have since left and leaders have correctly identified the need for further training.
- The school's heightened sense of Catholicity and strong sense of mission is not yet clearly evident on the website and in the wording of some of its policies and agreements. This is an area that has been targeted for further development.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school – good

- Governors, the executive headteacher and head of school place a strong emphasis on the Catholic Life of the school. They recognised that during a period of turbulence and leadership change, the focus on the Catholic Life had been 'side-lined to some degree'. However, following the appointment of the current executive headteacher and head of school, robust steps have been successfully taken to ensure the school has secured a strong sense of its Catholic identity. Governors have learnt from this experience and are more strategic in ensuring that Catholic Life will remain central throughout any future changes.
- The high priority given to the induction of new staff and continued professional development for established staff is evidenced by ongoing engagement with the training opportunities offered by the Diocese. The advice and support of the Diocesan Primary RE Adviser has been actively sought and acted upon. Members of staff are currently participating in the Bishop's Certificate training.
- The executive headteacher and head of school provide strong role models for the Catholic Life of the school. They lead by example, combining a clear expectation that a high standard of education must be the norm, along with a positive, caring and supportive attitude.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	2
-----------------------------------	---

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for the Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2
2
2

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

- Pupils' behaviour in Acts of Worship is exemplary. In the Act of Worship observed, pupils entered the hall silently, demonstrating reverence and respect. This level of respect was sustained throughout the Act of Worship, even during those parts which may have resulted in poor behaviour if the high standard of behaviour was not well established. For example, at one point the children were invited to hold hands; later they were given the opportunity to share thoughts with a talk partner.
- Pupils delight in the wide range of worship opportunities and are keen to engage. They know how to respond to a variety of worship styles. In the Act of Worship observed, with its theme of 'Life is a Journey', in preparation for Lent, pupils were able to participate in private and community prayer, mime and singing.
- Pupils value the richness of the school's Collective Worship. 'Taking part in liturgy fills me with joy - hearing the stories about Jesus. It makes me feel safe and like I can get on with my life'.
- Well supported by the head of school and the parish priest, the 'Little Lights' group is gaining confidence and expertise in promoting and supporting the prayer life and Collective Worship of the school.
- The school needs to explore ways of ensuring that all pupils feel included and welcome to join the 'Little Lights' group if they so wish, for example, more boys may be encouraged by appointing ICT Chaplains.
- As the 'Little Lights' become more firmly established, the school now needs to increase their level of independence and train younger pupils, so that there is a steady succession to replace outgoing pupils.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship - good

- The school effectively leads and plans creative and varied Acts of Worship which are planned around the liturgical year. Staff draw on a wide range of resources including the 'Statements to Live By', and Acts of Worship suggested on the Diocesan website.
- Pupils write invitations to their parents to attend Collective Worship and Mass. An increasing number of parents are accepting these invitations. Those who do attend are very positive about their experience. 'Parents are made to feel welcome'. 'My daughter comes home talking about what she has learnt in assembly' commented another parent.
- Pupils' understanding and respect for other faiths is enhanced by Acts of Worship around other faiths and visiting speakers.
- Resourcing for Collective Worship has been a high priority. The school now benefits from high quality materials, such as John Burland music with accompanying videos which are used effectively to enrich pupils' spirituality and enjoyment of Collective Worship.
- Class worship is gaining momentum throughout the school. Use of the 'Let Us Pray' materials is greatly assisting the quality of class Acts of Worship.
- The head of school encourages staff to pray together. Prayer at the start of meetings is now the norm for the school. All staff willingly attend school Masses and join in Acts of Worship.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship - good

- The executive headteacher and head of school are experienced in planning and delivering high quality Acts of Worship. The subject leader for Religious Education has attended all Diocesan RE subject leaders' days and disseminates ideas and good practice with her colleagues.
- Leaders have established clear systems for evaluating Acts of Worship and pupils are increasingly involved in this process. 'Little Lights' leave evaluation slips for completion at the end of Acts of Worship and review these with the head of school.
- The link governor for Religious Education has benefited from Diocesan training and, as a result, governors are effective in monitoring and evaluating the quality of Collective Worship.
- Pupils and staff are benefiting from the advice and support offered by the parish priest in preparing high quality Acts of Worship.
- Leaders have been effective in addressing the issue raised in the October 2011 inspection: Further develop the role of the prayer leaders to enable different forms of prayer to be introduced.
- The school now needs to develop the necessary knowledge and skills for all staff to be confident in leading Acts of Worship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	3
------------------------------------	---

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

3
3
2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education – requires improvement

- Progress and attainment in Religious Education are below Diocesan averages (31% achieving Level 4c or above in Key Stage 2 in 2016), and are indicative of wider teaching issues. There are signs that the strategies being deployed for improving outcomes in Religious Education are beginning to come to fruition, 58% of the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach the expected standard in Religious Education by the end of the current academic year.
- Pupils are well-behaved in their Religious Education lessons. Where teaching is good, there is a high level of engagement and enthusiasm.
- Where lessons were judged to be good, pupils were invited to participate in discussion and to reflect on the subject matter.
- In Key Stage 1, the tasks were closed and limited pupils' outcomes as there was no opportunity for pupils to develop their understanding to a higher level and little or no new learning took place.
- Work scrutiny confirmed the school's self-evaluation that, in a significant proportion of books, pupils' work is well below their capability. This is particularly notable in Key Stage 1, where there is such a heavy reliance on photocopied material stuck into books that the teacher input outweighs that of the pupils.
- Although there is some evidence of developmental feedback which effectively uses the 'driver words' to move learning on, this is yet to be developed throughout the school and teachers' understanding of the *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* is not yet consistently secure.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education – requires improvement

- The findings of the inspectors concurred with the view of governors, the executive headteacher and head of school that a significant proportion of teaching in Religious Education requires improvement, notably in Key Stage 1.
- In Key Stage 1, the pace of delivery was found to be too slow, there was a lack of challenge and time was wasted revisiting learning which pupils had already mastered. Teacher-talk dominated the sessions with little opportunity for pupils to discuss and further develop their understanding. Questions were limited to information retrieval and pupil responses confined to one or two word answers.

continued

- In Key Stage 2, there was evidence of some good practice, which may be disseminated with others. In these classes, pupils were fully engaged and were able to discuss their levels in Religious Education and knew what was required to move to the next level. Teaching Assistants were used effectively to support the teaching and learning of Religious Education.
- Developmental marking and feedback is not yet consistent throughout the school, and there is almost no evidence of it in Key Stage 1.
- Under the leadership of the executive headteacher and head of school, and with the support of Diocesan Primary Adviser for Religious Education, staff have benefited from training in respect of the *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* and the respective 'driver words'. The impact of this has been a move towards a shared understanding of the levels in Religious Education. Leaders recognise that the understanding of this is not yet fully consistent and teacher assessment is not yet accurate in all classes.
- Even in classes where teaching was judged to be good, teachers' ability to question and use pupils' responses to extend their learning is in need of further development.

The extent to which leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education – good

- Leaders ensure that all classes meet the episcopal requirement to devote at least 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education.
- The executive headteacher and head of school, supported by a highly skilled governing body, closely monitor the provision for Religious Education and have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. However, whilst they are robust in addressing underachievement, resolving these weaknesses within an acceptable time-frame is presenting a challenge, as it is being impeded by staffing issues which can only be resolved through following the correct procedures.
- The executive headteacher and head of school provide good support for staff and seek to develop their expertise through a combination of in-house mentoring and training offered by the Diocese. The head of school has worked closely with the Diocesan Primary Religious Education Adviser to ensure that Religious Education books reflect appropriate religious literacy and level of challenge. The positive impact of this support may be seen in Key Stage 2.
- The executive headteacher and head of school use the data to pinpoint the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The problem of resolving teaching competencies has been further compounded by the imminent departure of the current head of school. The governing body and the executive headteacher are acutely aware of the vulnerable state in which the school is placed.
- The school needs to robustly resolve any teaching concerns as quickly as the correct procedural framework will allow.

SCHOOL DETAILS

School Name	St Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Academy
Unique Reference Number	139626
Local Authority	Lincolnshire

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law in accordance with the *Evaluation Schedule* for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspectors observed an Act of Worship and six Religious Education lessons.

Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school who is also the subject leader for Religious Education, three governors and two parish priests. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils' Religious Education books and pupil tracking data. They examined a range of documents including the DCI SEF and Toolkit, folders for Catholic Life, Collective Worship and Religious Education, the school improvement plan and the school website.

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Sarah Archer
Executive Headteacher:	Mrs Patricia Mason
Head of School:	Mrs Karen Crawford
Date of Previous School Inspection:	20 October 2011
Telephone Number:	01780 762094
Email Address:	karen.crawford@st-augustine.lincs.sch.uk

WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

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

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

Grade 1	Outstanding	The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met.
Grade 2	Good	The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, and there are aspects that require improvement. There will be a monitoring visit within the next 12 months and the school will be re-inspected within 3 years.
Grade 4	Inadequate	There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy as a Catholic school. The school will receive an annual monitoring visit and will be re-inspected within 3 years.