



## St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Academy

URN: 149031

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Liverpool

11 February 2026 – 12 February 2026

### Summary of key findings

#### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

##### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

##### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

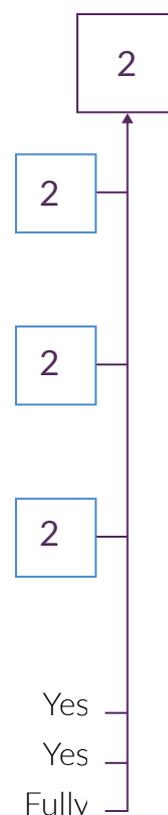
##### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



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## What the school does well

- The school provides excellent pastoral care and staff demonstrate a tireless and practical devotion to the success of every child with a tangible commitment to the most vulnerable.
- Robust induction programmes empower new staff to immediately engage with and advance the school's Catholic mission.
- Leaders and governors actively champion archdiocesan initiatives, ensuring a collaborative relationship that both supports and serves the wider Catholic community.
- Leaders and governors provide high-quality professional development that strengthens both subject expertise and teaching impact in religious education.
- Routine Collective Worship, grounded in scripture, actively promotes the core principles of Catholic social teaching.

## What the school needs to improve

- Review the mission statement to embed core values, ensuring it is understood and tangibly lived out by stakeholders.
- Raise the attainment levels in religious education to meet or rise above the national average, so as to be in line with other core subjects.
- Develop opportunities for students to work with others, to prepare, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy.

## Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

### Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

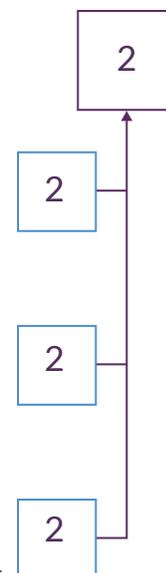
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school



At St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Academy, students demonstrate a clear awareness that they are valued as unique individuals, creating a community where they feel happy, safe, and supported. This strong sense of belonging is reflected in positive behaviour across lessons and the wider school environment, where students consistently show respect for themselves and others, including those of different faiths, beliefs, or none. The school's core values of Aspiration, Belief, and Compassion are deeply embedded, and students can confidently explain how these values shape their daily choices through sacred time, assemblies, and learning experiences. Students show a willingness to care for others and for the environment. Examples of this include visits to local care homes, fundraising for charitable initiatives such as Mary's Meals, and participation in toilet twinning projects. However, while these actions clearly demonstrate compassion and service, the school's mission statement, "In Faith We Grow," is less widely understood by students. There remains an opportunity to strengthen understanding of how acts of service are rooted in faith and Catholic identity, enabling students to recognise the spiritual foundation of their actions and appreciate how their personal development connects more explicitly to the mission of the school.

The school community is centred on Christ, creating a warm and welcoming environment characterised by respectful relationships and genuine care for one another. Students and staff contribute to a joyful culture where hospitality is extended to all, particularly to those who are vulnerable or in need. This inclusive ethos enables individuals from a variety of

cultural and faith backgrounds to feel respected and supported while remaining faithful to their own traditions. Staff play a crucial role in modelling the Catholic life and mission of the school through compassionate relationships and high-quality pastoral care, demonstrating a tangible commitment to supporting the wellbeing of students, especially those most in need. This practice is increasingly consistent across the school, with further opportunities to deepen staff confidence in explicitly articulating the Catholic rationale that underpins pastoral provision. The school environment further reflects its mission through visible signs of Catholic identity and carefully maintained spaces that affirm the dignity of every individual, with scope to further strengthen student involvement in shaping and leading these expressions of mission. Chaplaincy provision plays an important role in supporting spiritual and moral development, offering structured opportunities for reflection, worship, and personal growth through a well-planned personal development curriculum, and there is potential to extend pupil leadership within chaplaincy activities to enhance engagement. Staff formation has also been strengthened through trust support, ensuring spiritual development is prioritised for adults as well as students. In addition, the relationships, sex and health education curriculum meets archdiocesan expectations, presenting a holistic vision of the human person with continued focus on progression enabling students to articulate their learning with increasing depth and confidence.

Leaders and governors demonstrate strong commitment to the Church's mission in education, placing Christ firmly at the centre of school life and modelling effective Catholic leadership. They actively promote the development of Catholic identity through policies, decision-making, and engagement with archdiocesan initiatives, resulting in strong partnerships that benefit both the school and wider Church community. Their leadership reflects a clear commitment to Catholic social teaching, particularly through prioritising support for disadvantaged members of the community, promoting the common good, caring for the environment, and respecting the dignity of workers. Staff wellbeing is carefully supported through structured pastoral systems, whilst new staff benefit from focused induction programmes that encourage active participation in the school's Catholic mission. Links with local parishes have strengthened significantly, with those communities valuing student involvement in parish life. However, engagement with parents and carers has been less successful, and opportunities for students to contribute meaningfully to evaluating the school's Catholic life remain limited. The curriculum, with religious education at its centre, reflects a coherent Catholic worldview, with subject leaders working collaboratively to embed Catholic social teaching across learning areas. Although governors provide effective challenge and support, self-evaluation processes require further development to more precisely identify areas for improvement and drive sustained progress.

## Religious education

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

2

#### Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

2

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education

2

2

The ongoing development and regular review of the Religious Education Directory (RED) at Key Stage 3 is strengthening students' knowledge and understanding of religious education, ensuring learning is increasingly coherent and progressive. Students benefit from regular live marking during lessons, receiving immediate feedback that supports their understanding and encourages improvement. Written assessments are marked consistently; however, there is an opportunity to further strengthen feedback so that it becomes more diagnostic, purposeful, and clearly linked to next steps in learning. A strong focus on religious literacy is evident, with students confidently discussing their learning using accurate and increasingly sophisticated religious vocabulary. Retrieval activities at the start of lessons are particularly effective in embedding key knowledge and vocabulary, enabling students to retain and apply prior learning. Exercise books demonstrate high levels of pride and presentation, reflecting consistent teacher marking alongside meaningful self-improvement reflections. Behaviour in lessons is positive, with students demonstrating engagement, independence, and enjoyment in their learning. Although outcomes currently remain below those seen in other core subjects, students recognise the impact of recent curriculum developments, describing lessons as more independent and enriched, reflecting a clear and positive shift in aspiration and engagement.

Teachers within the department demonstrate strong subject knowledge, supported by greater staffing stability through the appointment of subject specialists, which has had a

positive impact on student confidence and progress. The department maintains high expectations for all students, fostering a culture where they feel motivated to succeed and take pride in their achievements. Effective questioning is evident across most lessons, enabling teachers to probe understanding, extend thinking, and address misconceptions. Further consistency in the use of high-quality questioning across all classrooms would strengthen outcomes and should remain a key focus for development. Teachers deliberately incorporate opportunities for moral and spiritual reflection, allowing students to engage with deeper questions of meaning and purpose, with students themselves recognising the value of these reflective moments. Relationships between staff and students are characterised by genuine care and encouragement, supported by effective use of praise to build confidence and motivation. Significant improvements to the curriculum at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 since the previous inspection demonstrate the dedication, innovation, and leadership of the subject lead, whose commitment to delivering a fully authentic Catholic curriculum is clearly evident.

Senior leaders and governors demonstrate a strong commitment to religious education, positioning it firmly as the “core of the core” and ensuring it holds full parity with other core subjects. This prioritisation reflects the value placed on religious education by the entire school community. New staff feel well supported through comprehensive induction programmes and access to high-quality professional development opportunities, including participation in archdiocesan training and collaboration with partner schools across the trust. The ongoing development of the enrichment opportunities within religious education will strengthen student engagement and support continued improvement in outcomes, particularly at Key Stage 4. The department’s progress reflects a clear and positive trajectory of development, demonstrating sustained improvement driven by staff expertise, enthusiasm, commitment, and shared purpose. This progress is a direct result of the subject lead’s dedication and consistent hard work. Her creativity and passion are clearly reflected in her determination to provide an authentically Catholic curriculum that meets the needs of every student. Monitoring and evaluation processes are undertaken regularly; however, these would benefit from greater precision and analytical depth to ensure the curriculum consistently meets the needs of all students. Strengthening evaluative processes would support more strategic planning, enabling leaders to identify priorities more accurately and drive further improvements in student achievement and engagement.

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

2

Appropriate to their age and capacity, students demonstrate an understanding of a range of prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition. Students identified their involvement in writing the new school prayer as a particularly meaningful experience that deepened their personal engagement with faith. While students can describe key elements of the Church's liturgical year, they find it more challenging to articulate how these seasons influence practical changes within both Church and school life. Students engage respectfully in the school's regular prayer and liturgical experiences. This was evident during Sacred Time when students reflected on the teachings of Jesus through Matthew's Gospel, exploring themes such as being the "salt of the earth" and "light of the world." Although students can recall and reflect thoughtfully on these experiences, they are less confident in explaining how these spiritual messages translate into sustained actions in their daily lives. Opportunities for students to prepare and lead prayer and liturgy remain limited, with participation often restricted to reading scripture or presenting key liturgical symbols. Expanding opportunities for student leadership in these areas would significantly strengthen their spiritual formation and ownership of the school's prayer life.

Prayer and liturgy forms a central part of the daily rhythm of school life, supporting routine gatherings for students, staff, and leaders while providing opportunities to respond to significant moments of joy and sorrow through prayer. Scripture is carefully selected to ensure celebrations are seasonally appropriate and meaningful, enabling active participation

from the school community. Staff, including senior leaders, model strong practice by leading and participating fully in prayer, with the lay chaplain providing particularly inspirational leadership and guidance for both staff and students. The richness of the Church's tradition is reflected in engaging liturgical experiences, such as assemblies where students entered to the song "My Lighthouse," enthusiastically participating in actions that enhanced prayer and liturgy. Despite these strengths, the range of prayer styles experienced by students remains somewhat limited, and there is an opportunity to further reflect the breadth of Catholic spiritual tradition. Efforts to engage families in the school's prayer life have been initiated but have not yet achieved sustained success, highlighting an important area for development. Leaders and governors, supported by the trust, ensure the school calendar provides regular opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist, including visits to the local parish church and celebrations of key feast days such as those honouring St Augustine of Canterbury and St Joseph. Although a formal prayer and liturgy policy is in place, staff familiarity with its content is limited.

Leaders and governors demonstrate awareness of the progressive development required for students to participate meaningfully in prayer and liturgy; however, a clearly defined and structured pathway outlining how these skills develop across year groups has yet to be established. In contrast, provision for staff formation is a notable strength, with leaders providing regular, high-quality professional development that supports liturgical planning and spiritual leadership. Collaborative training delivered through the trust and archdiocese is well received, with staff reporting increased confidence and understanding of the importance of prayer within school life. Leaders and the Chaplaincy team provide strong support in planning and delivering engaging spiritual experiences that are accessible and relevant to students' lives, as demonstrated through Sacred Time and assemblies. However, evaluation processes for prayer and liturgy lack consistency and do not yet fully incorporate student voice. Strengthening evaluation systems to include student feedback would provide valuable insight into the effectiveness of spiritual provision and support further development. By building stronger opportunities for student leadership, broadening styles of prayer, and embedding more robust evaluation practices, the school is well placed to further enhance its culture of prayer and liturgy.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Academy
School unique reference number (URN)	149031
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3424001
Full postal address of the school	St Augustine Of Canterbury Catholic Academy, Boardmans Lane, St Helens, WA11 9BB
School phone number	01744 678112
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Giselle Lynch
Chair of Governors	Mrs Caroline Murphy
School Website	<a href="http://www.staug.org.uk">www.staug.org.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	St Joseph MAT
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	
Age-range of pupils	11 - 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	13 March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

## The Inspection Team

Anthony Pontifex Lead

Louise Conway

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement