



## SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the  
Archbishop of Southwark and Inspection of  
Denominational Education under Section 48  
of the Education Act 2005

URN 100193

St Ursula's Convent School  
Crooms Hill  
Greenwich, London  
SE10 8HN

Inspection date: 2 & 3 March 2015

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Estelle Currie
Headteacher:	Mrs Ciara Warnock
Inspectors:	Mr Damian Fox Mr Joe Carvill

### EDUCATION COMMISSION

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# SECTION 48

# Introduction

## Description of the school

St Ursula's Catholic School is a voluntary aided Catholic Comprehensive school for girls built on the traditions of the Ursuline Order. It is situated in the Woolwich Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is in the Greenwich Local Authority area. The principal parishes it serves are St Saviour's, Lewisham; Our Lady of Grace, Charlton; Our Lady Star of the Sea, Greenwich; St Joseph's, East Greenwich; St William of York, Lee and the Assumption of Our Lady, Deptford. In 2014, the overall number of Catholic primary schools from which pupils in year 7 were recruited was 28.

The school takes pupils from 11-16 years old. The current roll is 610. The Catholic pupil roll is 98.7% but it has been oversubscribed with practising Catholics for the last three years. Attainment on entry is above national averages. 57% of students are white British and black African. 73% of students overall are from multi ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above national averages. 189 students receive Pupil Premium funding.

Date of previous inspection:

09/02/2010

Overall Grade:

1

## Key for inspection grades

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

St Ursula's is an outstanding school on all levels.

The Governors of the school are very active and effective in their support for Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school. They challenge and support the Headteacher but they also work in partnership with her to ensure that the Ursuline mission is lived and impacts on the lives of the community.

The leadership of the Headteacher is outstanding. Her vision for and her dedication to the pupils is rooted in her own faith. She leads by example and models Serviam for the community. In discussion and in lessons, pupils were witnesses to the Gospel. They are excellent ambassadors for the Ursuline family.

Pupils said that they were happy, respected and cared for at the school. Bullying was not an issue. They added that when it does occur it is addressed promptly and sensitively. Older pupils are excellent role models.

Of the 267 responses from parents, 83% strongly agreed that St Ursula's is an outstanding school. One parent wrote that the school "effectively guides the girls towards good morals and spiritual development."

## What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Put in place a programme of support for the new Chaplain.
- Ensure the effective participation of students in the Chaplaincy group.
- Consider how to ensure the amount of time given to Religious Education at Key Stage 3 meets the Bishops' requirement of 10% of taught curriculum time.
- Review the staffing of the Religious Education Department to give the Head of Department scope for delegation of her workload.

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

The range of opportunities to contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. There is a whole school Mass at the beginning and end of term. There is a voluntary Mass every week and a form Mass which pupils prepare for themselves. There is a detailed programme of assemblies. Form periods offer an opportunity for prayer and reflection.

Pupils confirmed that they are always involved in the preparation of all forms of worship.

The Ursuline message of Serviam is manifest throughout the school. The relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff, observed in both in and out of lessons, are built on mutual respect and care. One pupil said that Serviam was not added on or just about fundraising, "It is just there." Junior leadership, peer mentors and the youth ministry are appreciated by all pupils and are examples of how Serviam influences them in their daily lives. Pupils said they were respected and cared for. The school recently had to respond to the loss of a pupil's mother. The Parish Priest and Chaplain both commented on the way the community came together to pray and to support the pupil and her family.

In discussion, pupils were able to articulate an awareness and appreciation of prayer. They said that prayer and Serviam were who they were as Catholics.

The new Chaplain has already had a significant impact on the spiritual and daily lives of the pupils.

There is a deep awareness of the international and local community. They are alert to the needs of others and are enthusiastic in their responses. Fundraising is a central feature of the school. Pupils said that they "just join in." Last year they raised nearly £9,000 for charities at home and abroad. Money was given to a project in Gambia and the Kobo orphanage in Ethiopia. This was in conjunction with five other Ursuline schools. A former pupil had asked for support for 'Action in Children in Kenya' for which all pupils went on a sponsored walk. Pupils contributed to local charities such as the '999' homeless centre, the 'Refuge centre for women and children' and 'Rays of Sunshine'. Pupils' responses show a keenness to seek justice and fairness for vulnerable communities.

## **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

Outcomes in Religious Education are outstanding overall and compare very well with English and Maths. The GCSE results have increased from 91.67% in 2012 to 96% in 2014. They are on a par with English and Maths. For A\*/A, Religious Education achieved 57%, significantly above English and Maths.

The figure for pupils achieving 4 or more levels of progress was 78% which was on a par with English and higher than Maths.

100% of students on free school meals achieved A\*-C and 67% achieved A\*/A. 100% achieved the expected three levels of progress and 89% four levels of progress.

Pupil Premium students achieved higher than non-Pupil Premium students.

Lesson observations showed that pupils were highly motivated. Inspectors noted that in the lessons they visited, pupils were engaged in effective interactive work. Their keenness and commitment to succeed is exceptional. There was a positive learning environment in all lessons.

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship**

The Chapel and the Chaplaincy room afford excellent opportunities for pupils to pray. The Parish Priest and the Chaplain both confirmed that pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship with deep reverence. The assemblies and form periods which Inspectors visited were described as very spiritual occasions. All acts of worship encouraged pupils to reflect on their own intentions and the needs of others in the community. Pupils are at ease when praying.

Pupils across the years are happy to participate in preparing and leading worship. They do so with confidence and dignity.

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## **How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. There is very deep commitment to the Church's mission in education.

The Governors are an integral part of the Catholic life of the school. They are highly effective in the monitoring and supporting role. The self-evaluation is a coherent reflection of their awareness of the strengths of the school and its areas for development. They have a strategic approach which leads on to well targeted planning and actions taken by the school.

There is a link governor for Religious Education. The Governors have introduced a link governor for Pupil Premium students. Religious Education and Spirituality is the first section of the School Development Plan and worship and assemblies are the first item on the weekly twilight inset sessions. The Chair of Governors addresses all new parents and speaks on the Open Days. They want a school where students "look for ways to demonstrate their faith."

The Headteacher has a significant impact on the growth of the academic and spiritual life of the school. She embodies the Serviam ideal in her role as Headteacher. The spirit of mutual care and respect is very obvious in her relationships with staff and students. Serviam permeates throughout the whole school.

Senior Leaders monitor teaching and learning effectively. There is a detailed log of lesson observations and work scrutiny.

The Head of Department models high quality teaching and has put in place extensive and meaningful tracking.

## **How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils**

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and reflects the high level of achievement across the school. They are rigorous in how they monitor the work of the Religious Education department through regular lesson observations and a detailed and meaningful tracking system. Data is collected and used to assist students in their learning. The FADE (Focus, Analysis, Do, Evaluation) appraisal process has a positive impact on teaching and learning.

The Head of Department provides detailed data regarding and plans for sustained improvement for the outcomes of pupils. Governors are aware that several teachers of Religious Education are members of the Senior Leadership Team and the impact this has on the capacity of the Head of Religious Education to distribute responsibilities.

### The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

The quality of teaching overall is outstanding. Inspectors observed eight lessons covering all year groups and abilities. Those that were outstanding were characterised by excellent subject knowledge, high level questioning, pace and peer learning. The level of challenge, Assessment for Learning (AFL) and differentiation of groups and work demonstrated that teachers knew the strengths of their pupils and where to give particular support. Teachers were willing to take risks and encourage pupils to ask questions. All pupils were encouraged to answer each other's questions which enhanced discussions.

Where lessons were less than outstanding, teachers showed high level skills but the challenge for higher ability pupils was not there and learning was knowledge level only.

Pupils were highly motivated. They responded well to the variety of styles and the high expectations of teachers. In all lessons behaviour was outstanding and demonstrated a mutual respect for one another.

The marking and dialogue between teachers and pupils was of a very high quality. Teachers suggested ways to improve or asked questions. Pupils amended or completed tasks with a purple pen.

Externally commissioned surveys confirmed that pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons and have confidence in their teachers.

### The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

At Key Stage 3, the school has produced a programme based on the Curriculum Directory. It covers the necessary requirements of the Directory. At Key Stage 4, they follow the AQA specification, units 2 and 5. These are appropriate for the needs of the pupils. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners in Religious Education.

Achievement data in both key stages shows that the curriculum is presented in a way which is relevant to the pupils' understanding of Serviam. All lessons had scripture as the starting point, but they led to developing an understanding of its relevance to their lives as Christians.

The time allocated for Key Stage 4 is 13.3%, but the 6.6% for Key Stage 3 does not meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The Governors are aware of the need to address this and are investigating ways of doing so.

The overall allocation to Religious Education is 10%.

### The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Overall, the quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school and fundamental in providing extensive, varied and meaningful religious experiences. The Parish Priest offers Mass twice a week in school. Pupils also attend the

parish Mass in the church which adjoins the school. There is a detailed programme of Collective Worship.

The weekly afternoon staff inset always begins with guidance on Collective Worship.

Prayer opportunities are well planned. Pupils display an understanding of and a deep reverence at prayer.

Pupils said that the new Chaplain had enhanced their spiritual experiences. In one assembly, the singing of the girls and their quieter reflective moments were "beautiful". An inspector who visited a form period was very impressed with the participation and reverence of the pupils.

The Chaplain has already made a highly significant contribution to the Catholic life of the school and the individual faith journeys of pupils. The school should now put in place a programme of support to help the Chaplain develop this work including the development of pupils working in a chaplaincy group.

Prayer is a natural part of the pupils' life. Staff and pupils are comfortable sharing moments of happiness and occasions of sadness.

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