

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**



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
DfE Number 315/6003

The Ursuline Preparatory School
18, The Downs
London
SW20 8HR

Chair of Governors
Headteacher
Inspectors

Mr Francis Bacon
Mrs Anne Farnish
Mrs Ann Oddy
Mrs Penny Rickard

Inspection dates 28th February 2012

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
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Introduction

Description of the school

The Ursuline Preparatory School is an independent school for girls. It is situated in the Merton Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parish which the school serves is the Sacred Heart, Wimbledon, although pupils also come from a number of other parishes. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is approximately 68%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10%.

The school takes pupils from Nursery to Year Six. The number of pupils currently on roll is 141. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly above average. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is below average. There are no pupils with statements of Special Educational Need.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

The Ursuline Preparatory School is clearly a good school and much evidence of good and excellent practice was seen. This was the first Section 48 inspection for the school. The headteacher was appointed in September 2011 and is taking the school forward with dedication and enthusiasm; the school is judged to have excellent capacity to improve as current good practice is securely established and embedded. The atmosphere of the school is warm and welcoming and its Catholic identity is clear to all. The school is rightly proud of its Ursuline tradition, which is evident throughout the school. The mission statement is prominently displayed and the school peace prayer is displayed and used throughout the school. It is a very attractive and well resourced learning environment. Pupils are extremely polite and well behaved. They are considerate of each other, are pleasant and respectful to adults and clearly enjoy school life. They are attentive and work hard in lessons and achieve well. Academic standards are high. Religious Education is an important part of the school curriculum: provision is good and pupils enjoy their lessons and work well. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. A large number of parental questionnaires were returned and all were affirmative of the Catholic education and ethos exemplified by the school.

Grade 2

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

- To share good practice to ensure that all teaching and learning is securely good or better.
- To use “next steps” marking as a developmental tool to improve learning and accelerate pupil progress.
- Governors should consider including Religious Education / Catholic Ethos as a regular agenda item at governing body meetings and as a section of the School Development Plan. This would be additional evidence of its importance to the school and all governors.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Grade 2

Leadership and management is good; as current practice and procedures are developed and embedded, it will be strengthened further. The headteacher, although newly in post, shows great commitment to the Catholic life of the school and to promoting the school's values and ethos, particularly with reference to its Ursuline tradition. Relationships at all levels are good; pupils and staff relate well to each other and staff are very supportive of each other and in developing the Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils work well together, supporting each other in group work and are friendly and considerate to one another. School Inset has been provided on the New Translation and aspects of Religious Education. Systems of monitoring and assessment, together with pupil tracking, are in place and are being used to inform teaching and learning. The headteacher and the Religious Education co-ordinator have been commissioned as Special Ministers of the Eucharist. Governors are very involved in the life of the school. They attend school events and carry out monitoring visits for Religious Education. They may now wish to consider a more structured approach to monitoring, including the use of specific focus such as the evaluation of the impact of Religious Education monitoring across the school and assessment of progress made.

The school is fortunate to have a governing body with a wealth of expertise, including in the fields of education and Religious Education. The governors are clearly committed to the importance of the Catholic nature of the school and the quality of Religious Education; they may now wish to consider including it in governing body meetings and on the School Development Plan in order to make this more explicit.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Grade 1

Provision for personal and collective worship is excellent. There is a regular programme of class masses and celebrations of the liturgical year. Pupils and staff share in the planning and preparation of these and enjoy participating. Parents and carers are invited and feel welcomed to these events. Prayer is central to the life of the school. This is illustrated by many examples around the school, including the provision of a quiet area for prayer, opportunities for prayer across the school day and displays in classrooms and other areas. Class prayer books in which children have written their own prayers are very special books; beautifully illustrated and clearly written from the heart.

The school's self-evaluation states that "Pupils are thoughtful, reflective and aware of God's presence in the world and their own lives." This was exemplified by the liturgy seen in a Reception class, which was a beautiful example of a Lenten prayer service.

Community Cohesion

Grade 2

The school is very much part of the Ursuline community and often works in partnership with its “brother school” Donhead and the Ursuline High School. It has had some contact with other local schools and organised successful and well-received joint activities; it should now consider extending this work. The school participates in a wide range of charitable ventures and fundraising for local and global charities. The school has recently raised money for children with sight problems, and for a child with leukaemia. It recognises and respects the diversity of its school community and is planning an international festival in March to celebrate this. The headteacher attends the conference for the Ursuline community of schools; the Religious Education co-ordinator is accompanying the headteacher to the Ursuline conference and also attends the Diocesan Religious Education co-ordinators’ conference and regular diocesan Religious Education meetings.

Religious education

Achievement and standards in religious education

Grade 2

In general, pupils achieve well. Standards of work across the school are consistently high, both in presentation and content and compare well with those in Literacy. In 2011, three out of thirteen Year 6 pupils achieved Level 5 and one out of twenty Year 2 pupils achieved Level 3; as the school’s systems of monitoring, assessment and pupil tracking become established, together with “next steps” marking the number of pupils achieving the higher levels should increase. Appropriately differentiated tasks help to ensure the progress of all pupils. Pupils are motivated and enthusiastic and keen to do well. They understand that religious education is important and that it has a bearing on daily life and how they are to other people.

Teaching and learning in religious education

Grade 2

Lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Where practice was good, pupils were attentive and engaged and outcomes were good. The best lessons used activities in Religious Education creatively, with opportunities for role play and recording performances, artwork and storytelling. All lessons had clear learning objectives and differentiated tasks, although these could sometimes have provided more challenge for the more able pupils. Good use was made of visual aids and ICT. Lessons all contained references to Scripture and made it clear that this was at the heart of the lessons. Pupils responded well to tasks set, they were thoughtful and wanted to do their best. The school has a programme of monitoring teaching and learning and should continue to extend this. It may wish to consider extending its lesson observation forms to include areas for development and to evaluate the impact of this.

Planning was consistently excellent, with clear differentiation for different groups of pupils and assessment. Marking is regular and up to date; it is rightly affirmative, but should now be extended to be more developmental so that pupils know what they need to do to improve.

The religious education curriculum

Grade 1

The Religious Education curriculum is well planned and delivered; provision is good. The school currently uses the 'Here I Am' religious education programme, and will be considering the new version of this when it is available. All abilities are catered for, with clearly differentiated work. Assessment and pupil tracking inform progress of individuals and groups. The curriculum is enhanced by visits, including to other places of worship, and speakers of interest (e.g. Disability Awareness, Cabrini Society). Teaching about other faiths is securely in place and is being extended. It contributes to the spiritual and moral development of pupils and to their knowledge of their faith.

Leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1

The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator provide excellent leadership and management in Religious Education and are very good role models for pupils and staff. The headteacher has an excellent overview of the subject and its contribution to all aspects of school life, as well as ensuring sufficient funding for resources. The Religious Education co-ordinator is conscientious and committed and her enthusiasm for her area of responsibility is evident. This has resulted in ensuring that the subject is very well led and managed. Record keeping of all aspects is exemplary, giving an accurate picture of Religious Education in the school and providing accountability. Systems of monitoring and assessment are in place and fully operational. As these are embedded and evaluated, the school will be able to show clear progress over time. Staff are well supported and provision of resources is good. The co-ordinator attends Diocesan co-ordinator meetings and is building a network of co-ordinator colleagues with whom she can share ideas and good practice.