

DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark

URN 141629

Ursuline College

225 Canterbury Road

Westgate on Sea

Kent CT8 8LX

Inspection date: 22nd & 23rd February 2018

Chairs of Governors: Roberta Kulasinghe

Executive Headteacher: Stephen Adamson

Head of School: Camilla Crampton

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EDUCATION COMMISSION

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DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Key for inspection grades

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

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Ursuline College is a mixed voluntary aided academy. It is part of the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership, situated in the Thanet Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parishes, which the school serves, are Our Lady and St Benedict, Birchington and Westgate; St Austin and St Gregory, Margate; St Ethelbert's, Ramsgate and Our Lady Star of the Sea, Broadstairs. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is approximately 25%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in each of the key stages.

The school takes pupils from 11 to 19 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 786. The attainment of most pupils on entering the school is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is broadly average. Around 5% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) is above national average. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is below national average. The largest ethnic minority group at the school are pupils from White British heritage.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Ursuline College is a GOOD Catholic school because:

- It is a warm and welcoming Catholic community. Pupils are overwhelmingly appreciative of the care and support they receive from staff.
- The Executive Head Teacher is outstanding. He is very well supported by the strong leadership of the Head of School.
- The new Sixth Form Serviam group is effective. It provides a strong foundation for deepening the school's spiritual and caring ethos.
- Outcomes in Religious Education are rising as a result of good subject leadership and improving classroom practice.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Enable outstanding teaching and learning in Religious Education by increasing the capacity for the curriculum leader to promote and model outstanding practice.
- Further develop the quality of Collective Worship by providing more opportunities for pupils to take greater ownership of planning and leading acts of worship.



Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

Catholic Life

1

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

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

1

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

1

Religious Education

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

2

Collective Worship

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship	2
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	2

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Pupils benefit greatly from the Ursuline College. They are proud to belong to a school in which they feel safe and genuinely cared for by teachers. One pupil said of teachers: "they go out of their way, even when it is not in their job description." One parent said "I cannot fault the school on any level."
- Pupils know they are in a Catholic school. They were erudite in articulating their understanding of the Serviam values that underpin the life and work of the school. They willingly play their part in fostering the warm and welcoming ethos through their behaviour and their attitudes to others in the community.
- The Ursuline ethos pervades all aspects of school life. This is evident particularly in the way pupils confidently expressed how they actively seek to support one another. In speaking with Inspectors, pupils were overwhelmingly positive about the pastoral care of the staff. Pupils recognise and value the spiritual and pastoral presence of the Ursuline Sisters. The Sisters are always on hand to offer support to staff and pupils.
- Pupils understand the needs of their own and the wider community. They respond positively to the many opportunities to serve others. They have raised awareness of and money for Cafod and the Shoebox appeal. They work with the St Vincent De Paul Society (SVP) in raising funds for Christmas hampers which help local families in need.
- Pupils appreciate the public recognition they receive for living by the Serviam values. They overwhelmingly respond to the opportunities to respond to the needs of others. For example, one pupil spoke of how he helped a friend who had a brain tumour. Two pupils are going to Africa to work with families. Pupils said that Serviam was a way of life. They do not need to think about it. It happens.
- The Sixth Form Serviam group is a new initiative this year and it is already effective in deepening the caring ethos among pupils. Sixth Form students help in the Ursuline nursing home. They also help around the school by volunteering to assist pupils in a wide variety of



lessons and extra-curricular activities. Inspectors are confident it will continue to establish a culture of service and leadership. A student said that joining the school was the “best decision I’ve ever made”.

- The Parish Priest is a regular and welcome visitor to the school. Pupils know him and appreciate his presence in the school.

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The school is distinctly Catholic. The Catholic ethos and identity of the school is visible to the school community and to visitors through the centrality of the religious icons and images displayed throughout the school. The presence of the Ursuline community in the main entrance display captures the essence of the faith.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to grow in faith and to serve others beyond fundraising. For example, helping teachers or watching out for fellow pupils who may be upset.
- One parent described the ethos as “something tangible about what the school does and how pupils respond.” Another spoke movingly about the support offered to her daughter who had been seriously ill: “I couldn’t have asked for more.”
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary and reflects the ethos which is firmly built on gospel values. Relations throughout the community are excellent. Teachers and pupils show a high degree of mutual respect.
- The Ursuline sisters are present within the community. They share their values and their mission with pupils by giving talks, welcoming pupils into the convent and by greeting pupils with a friendly smile and hello.
- The convent chapel is available for the school for assemblies and Masses. It is at the heart of the school as a visible presence of God in the daily life of the school community.
- *Insieme* is a supportive environment for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Additional Educational Needs. It is a quiet space where pupils go and feel welcome and supported.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic life of the school. The minutes of the Ethos Committee reflect the importance they place on this. The Religious Education link governor meets with the Head of Department to receive an update on the quality of provision, and is challenging and supporting as appropriate.
- Governors are passionate about the ethos and history of the Ursuline community. Their commitment to fostering Ursuline values in the lives of young people is explicit. The school is



a vibrant, growing and spiritual Catholic community. One teacher said: “We will journey with them to the end.”

- School leaders are deeply committed to the Church’s mission in education. They have the vision and the passion to develop the Catholic life of the school further. They understand that developing a spiritual and loving ethos is a core responsibility.
- The Executive Headteacher’s personal faith and vision for the school are having a major impact on the growth of spirituality in the school community. Ably supported by the Head of School, he has been highly effective in ensuring the Catholic life of the school remains strong during a period of transition.
- School leaders work effectively with the Parish Priest to carry the message of the Gospel to others. For example, they reach out to families who need help. Spiritual, emotional and sometimes financial support is available, for these families.
- The Executive Head Teacher has produced information about the school in Polish to show the wider community the values of a good Catholic education. The new intake in 2017 showed a significant increase in the number of Catholic pupils entering the College. Plans are now in place to provide the same service for the growing Slovak community.
- The Curriculum leader for Religious Education, acting as the Chaplain, said that the school’s mission is to “nurture the faith of young people.” Inspectors felt that with external support to engage a Chaplain, the Catholic Life of the school would be enhanced further.
- The Catholic life of the school and the Ursuline values are incorporated into the induction programme for new staff. This includes a talk from the Ursuline Sisters.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

- Pupils' ability on entry is generally below average from year to year. From these varied starting points, pupils make good progress.
- Last year's GCSE results showed a marked improvement in outcomes on the previous year and are broadly in line with English. Higher ability pupils achieve better in Religious Education than English. Inspectors are confident that the school can build on these results and continue to raise standards.
- Almost all pupils were actively engaged in learning in the lessons observed. They were concentrating well and approaching lessons with interest and enthusiasm. Overall, behaviour in lessons is very good.
- The many pupils who spoke with Inspectors said they enjoyed lessons immensely. They respond well and benefit from the range of teaching styles, which include discussion, visual stimuli and quiet independent work. Pupils spoke warmly about the way teachers encourage them and never let them settle for second best.
- The quality of written work is good and shows pupils take pride in their learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- Inspectors agreed with the school's self-evaluation that teaching overall is good with some examples of outstanding practice. It is effective in enthusing pupils and ensuring that most learn and progress according to their ability.
- Good teaching is characterised by a variety of styles including discussion, paired and independent work. In one lesson observed, the challenging use of religious literacy was excellent.
- Questioning overall was good and encouraged pupils to think for themselves and make meaningful contributions to the lesson. Teachers also asked questions to check pupils' knowledge and understanding, although this was not consistently effective across the lessons observed. Pupils are confident in expressing their ideas and in trying to answer

questions. There was frequent discussion in class. This is a strength of teaching and is effective with most pupils engaging and responding positively.

- Pupils displayed a good knowledge of the Lenten Gospel stories and key vocabulary such as temptation and Ash Wednesday. Religious literacy was at a good level. Lessons are carefully planned but assessment is not always consistently used to plan differentiated activities to challenge across the ability range. The school acknowledges the need to encourage peer observations to ensure good practice is shared and developed among all staff.

- Teachers set homework regularly and give feedback in line with the school's policy. At KS4, for example, marking followed the GCSE marking scheme and informed pupils of their current level.

- Classrooms are well equipped and have high quality displays which enhance the learning environment.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each stage.

- School leaders are committed to driving up standards in Religious Education and have very high expectations. They are honest and realistic in the assessment of where the school is and that they are in a period of transition. They understand the challenges and are determined to support the development of the Religious Education department to ensure standards of teaching and learning continue to improve. Governors know the strengths and areas for development in Religious Education. They understand how to improve and this was demonstrated by the increase in GCSE results last year. The Link Governor monitors the work of the department closely and reports to the Ethos Committee regularly.

- School leaders agree that there are two areas for consideration: how pupils are grouped to ensure they are supported and challenged in the most effective way and the need to produce extended tasks for higher ability pupils.

- The Head of Religious Education is passionate about helping pupils learn. His enthusiasm is appreciated and enjoyed by pupils. He is also fulfilling the role of Chaplain. Inspectors agreed with school leaders that further support would ensure sustained improvement in outcomes in Religious Education.

- Clear and precise monitoring systems are in place to identify pupils who need support or extra challenge. Flight path graphs for each pupil are effective in indicating the progress of each pupil relative to the expectations established in year 7. Every four weeks, topic assessments take place. The school uses 4Matrix to give regular updates on each pupil's progress.



- The departmental action plan for Religious Education reflects leaders' understanding of how to improve outcomes and provides a foundation for further developments.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.

- Pupils are respectful and show reverence when participating in acts of worship. The Parish Priest said he was impressed by the level of participation. He confirmed that pupils often participate by reading, bringing up the gifts at Mass and by writing their own prayers.
- Pupils said that they discuss their assemblies with their form teacher but they were unclear about how they might take a more active role in leading acts of worship.
- Acts of worship are well planned by staff. The school acknowledges that there is an opportunity to develop pupil participation by using the Serviam group to work with younger pupils when planning and leading acts of worship.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.

- Collective Worship and praying together are important parts of school life. They give opportunities to pupils for daily prayer and reflection
- The Head of Religious Education works in collaboration with form teachers and key stage leaders to provide a programme of Masses and assemblies linked to the liturgical year. He ensures that are given the appropriate readings and themes.
- There is a weekly voluntary Mass. Each year and form have assemblies weekly. The liturgical year is followed with Feast Day Masses and Reconciliation Services. The school is aware that pupils would like to be offered more opportunities for retreats.
- The Prayer Week held this year was highly effective in providing prayerful experiences for pupils. Seventeen prayer spaces were set up offering pupils the opportunity to pray in a group or privately. The school plans to build this into their Collective Worship programme.
- Inspectors felt that with external support to engage a Chaplain, the provision for and the quality of Collective Worship would be enhanced.



How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.

- Members of the Senior Leadership Team monitor the provision of Collective Worship by supervising the weekly Masses and by assisting in the preparation of weekly assemblies. Governors are frequent attendees at Masses and celebrations that mark the major feasts of the year.

- Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to pray whilst respecting those who may have other faiths or none. As a result, no pupil feels excluded. They are comfortable with the prayerful and spiritual environment in which they live.

- The Head of Religious Education ensures that there is a detailed list of liturgical events and acts of worship. He works closely with the Parish Priest who comes to celebrate the weekly Mass and all major feasts.

- School leaders are aware that Collective Worship could be enhanced further by training and engaging the Serviam group to work with younger pupils to develop a wider range of acts of worship.

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