

# St Ursula's Catholic Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	102332
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	376698
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Gavin Jones

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dermot O'Connor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare D'Netto
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Straight Road Romford  RM3 7JS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 343170
<b>Fax number</b>	01708 379590
<b>Email address</b>	office@st-ursulas-rc-jun.havering.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	7–8 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	376698



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Gavin Jones

Additional inspector

Kewal Goel

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They visited 15 lessons and observed 10 teachers over a total of almost seven hours. This included four joint observations carried out with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies, pupils' books, safeguarding records and evidence of the monitoring of teaching and learning. The team examined 65 questionnaires from parents and carers, 98 from pupils and 19 from staff.

## Information about the school

St Ursula's is similar to the average sized primary school. Almost half of the pupils come from minority ethnic groups with the largest being those of Black African heritage. A third of pupils, an above average proportion, speak English as an additional language, with a small number being new to learning English, and this figure is rising. There are 23 languages spoken in the school. The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is higher than the national average; a significant number of these pupils have speech and language difficulties and/or behavioural problems. A small number have multiple learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average.

The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has successfully gained the Eco-School and Healthy Schools awards.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. It has consolidated its position since the last inspection when it was also judged to be good. All but one parent/carer, who completed the questionnaire, said they would recommend it to others.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Their attainment is above average in English and mathematics and their progress is good. Achievement in mathematics is particularly strong as a result of many improvements made by the school. Achievement, in writing, for a small group of more able pupils, particularly girls, is not as high as it should be.
- Teaching is good, although some satisfactory teaching remains. Teachers have high expectations and good subject knowledge. Tasks are generally matched well to the needs of different abilities of learners. The teaching of mathematics is very successful and this has accelerated pupils' progress.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent. While there are pockets of good practice, marking does not always identify the next steps pupils need to take. There is also an inconsistency in the use made of additional adults in lessons.
- Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides strong leadership. A number of significant initiatives have been put in place and the outcomes of these are very positive. As one parent wrote, 'There has been a huge improvement in the school since the arrival of the new headteacher...it is reflected in the positive mood of the children.'
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are good and in some cases exemplary. The school is viewed by well over 90% of pupils, parents and carers as a safe place, where behaviour has improved. They say that bullying rarely occurs and is dealt with swiftly whenever it is seen.
- The curriculum for the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is well matched to pupils' needs and supports good progress. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development extremely well.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils in writing, but especially for more able pupils, particularly girls, in order that more reach the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6 by July 2013 by:
  - developing the English curriculum and the teaching of writing in particular to be more effective in challenging more-able pupils
  - ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation of leaders in English lead to improvement in the teaching of writing.
  
- Strengthen the teaching and learning coaching programme so that all teaching is good, with at least half outstanding by spring term 2013 by:
  - ensuring that it is rigorously monitored by leaders
  - ensuring that teachers deploy additional adults more effectively so that they model the work of the class teacher
  - sharpening marking which clarifies for pupils how they can improve.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment. Virtually all groups of pupils make good progress over time. By the time they reach the end of Year 6 their attainment is above average and they do particularly well in mathematics. There is very little variation in the achievement of different groups of pupils, as the school has been particularly successful in narrowing any gaps which existed between groups and national averages. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do as well as their peers, because staff make suitable adjustments to materials and activities so that they match pupils' needs. High levels of staffing enable pupils of varying abilities to make good progress, as a result of highly effective levels of care and one-to-one support they receive from teaching assistants. Especially successful, is the work of the home-school learning support mentor. However, a small group of more able girls do not always reach their fullest potential in writing.

The slight dip in standards, in 2010 in mathematics, has been very effectively tackled by the school, giving rise to the highest levels of attainment in several years in 2011. Although pupils' attainment in English is only slightly behind that in mathematics, the school has not been slow, under the leadership of the new literacy leader, in examining how improvements might be made in order to ensure that more-able pupils, in particular, are challenged.

Pupils enjoy reading and have developed the necessary skills to read accurately for sustained periods. By the time pupils leave, standards of reading are above average. This is because guided reading lessons and phonic work (the teaching of letters and the sounds they make) encourage and extend independent reading skills, with pupils using their phonic knowledge as a first strategy for word recognition. Where pupils need additional help with phonic work, teachers revisit and consolidate earlier

learning demonstrating clearly how to blend sounds and also how to segment words to support spelling.

Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well for their teachers and themselves. They share learning with their classmates and give each other support. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, pupils were quick in volunteering to write emotive words and phrases on the whiteboard as a precursor to writing an evacuee's diary. Pupils have their own targets for literacy and numeracy and most know them well. An appropriate emphasis on learning objectives helps pupils to understand what they will be learning, while understanding success criteria helps many to gauge how well they are achieving. Almost all parents and carers felt that the school helped their children develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils agree and this view is also supported by the inspection evidence.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is typically good over time and sometimes better, leading to pupils' achieving well. Nevertheless, there are still some pockets of satisfactory teaching.

The planned curriculum helps teachers prepare well, taking into account the varying abilities of pupils, so that they can all be challenged appropriately. However, occasionally, more-able pupils, particularly girls, are not given sufficiently challenging work, especially in writing. The school is confident that its coaching programme to support teachers is beginning to have an improving effect on the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, the pace of improvement for this small group of teachers is not yet good enough.

Teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and positive relationships with pupils. Questioning is used well to help pupils think deeply and often used effectively to check their progress. In the best lessons, learning is effectively modelled by the teacher, so that pupils know precisely what to do and exactly what they will be learning. For example, in a Year 6 diary writing lesson, a wide range of techniques and strategies were used to interest and engage pupils in the theme. Discussions, photographs, real letters from the Second World War, and hot seating with pupils acting the parts of wartime children all made for exciting learning. As a result, all pupils made good progress in their learning. This curriculum project offered a variety of experiences that contributed well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and enabled them to deepen their knowledge of social history and culture.

In less successful lessons, additional adults are deployed ineffectively and teachers do not spend enough time explaining and modelling tasks, enabling pupils to start their work quickly and effectively. Marking does not always point to how improvements can be made.

The ways in which teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are successful. Literacy lessons on the highwayman and Second World War themes, for example, lead to pupils creating writing following opportunities for reflection. Both help pupils celebrate their cultural heritage. This is further extended

in lessons where multicultural themes are highlighted.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Parents, carers, pupils and staff point to significant improvements in behaviour during this new school year. As one parent commented, reflecting the views of many, 'The state of behaviour is now good'. During the inspection, behaviour, attitudes and enjoyment in lessons and around the school were good and sometimes exemplary. Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and support learning well.

Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. This is as a result of pupils being enthusiastic about school and parents and carers giving good support in ensuring they attend regularly. The very small number of pupils whose attendance is slightly lower or who are sometimes not punctual has been improved considerably due to the work of the home-school learning support mentor and daily checks on timekeeping.

Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school and this is echoed by their parents and carers. When discussing life in the school with pupils, they are very positive about work and behaviour. Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and that all problems are dealt with very well. They expressed an exceptionally high level of confidence in staff. Parents and carers also reported that they too were confident that the school's systems were sufficiently robust to deal with any incidents, should they occur. Inspection evidence fully supports the views of parents and carers.

## **Leadership and management**

The leadership team is clearly driving school improvements. The new headteacher has instilled a passion and determination to achieve excellence. Staff questionnaires reflect a high degree of commitment. Post-holders at all levels have clear responsibilities, which they carry out with energy and professionalism. The teaching and coaching programme is helping to improve teaching supported by professional development.

The governing body is currently undergoing changes to its structure in order to strengthen its strategies for holding leaders to account through monitoring and evaluation, which are underdeveloped. Safeguarding procedures are thorough. They are reviewed regularly and updated where appropriate. Child protection procedures are of good quality and well managed. Staff are well trained in first aid and safety procedures are firmly in place. The school rigorously implements strategies to tackle any forms of discrimination and offers pupils an inclusive learning environment. The school has good provision for community cohesion. It knows well the cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds of its pupils and regularly involves them in a range of cultural events such as a multicultural week.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Staff present very positive role models for pupils to emulate. This enables the pupils whose circumstances could make them vulnerable to overcome their difficulties and

make significant changes to their attitudes and lives at school and at home. The school is already preparing to improve the effective curriculum. Currently, more-able pupils are not always fully challenged in writing and subjects are not always linked together as effectively as they might be. Pupils really enjoy the extended opportunities they have for first-hand learning through visits and over 90% of pupils now attend extra-curricular activities.

Since the previous inspection, the school has improved behaviour, raised pupils' performance, improved attendance markedly and sharpened the use of tracking to accelerate pupils' progress. These successful actions demonstrate that leaders have good capacity to sustain further improvements.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Ursula's Catholic Junior School, Romford RM3 7JS**

It was lovely to talk to so many of you when we visited your school this week in the snow. We judged that your school is good. You leave school with standards that are regularly above those of most children of your age. You make good progress in your work and achieve well. This is mainly because of good teaching and your good attitudes to your work.

You all say that you feel safe in school, in our discussions with you and in your response to the questionnaire. You confirm that behaviour is good. We found this to be the case in lessons, at playtime and lunchtime and your parents and carers agree with this view. All staff are very caring and take opportunities to help you achieve well not only in English and mathematics, but also in your personal development. You think deeply about issues in the world and are provided with many opportunities to develop spiritually. These are some of the reasons why you attend school so regularly, because you enjoy school so much.

I have asked the school to do two things to make it even better by:

- helping you to accelerate your progress in writing, particularly for the more-able girls
- ensuring that your teachers are helped to make more of your lessons outstanding.

All of you can help by maintaining the good behaviour we saw on our visit and by making sure you attend regularly.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Jones  
Lead inspector

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