

Ursuline Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104937
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	377149
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2012
Lead inspector	Adrian Francis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vanessa Frew
Headteacher	Mark McQueen
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2008
School address	Nicholas Road Liverpool L23 6TT
Telephone number	0151 924 1704
Fax number	0151 924 2158
Email address	head.Ursuline@schools.sefton.gov.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Adrian Francis
Chris Maloney
Peter Martin

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 26 lessons taught by 12 teachers and talked with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors took account of the questionnaires returned by staff and pupils, and the 150 returned by parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, teachers' planning, school self-evaluation, leaders' monitoring of teaching and a range of data.

Information about the school

This vast majority of the pupils who attend this larger than average-sized primary school come from White British backgrounds and a much smaller than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the average. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has gained Healthy School status, Voices Foundation Beacon status and has achieved the Effective Early Learning accreditation. There is an out-of-school club that provides before-and after-school care. This provision is independent of the school and is separately inspected.

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

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Ursuline Catholic Primary is a good school. It is not outstanding because teaching and the checks made on its quality are not yet leading to pupils' achievement being outstanding. The school has a strong focus on providing high quality care for pupils and developing their well being. Pupils and their parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that the school has a happy, caring and family like environment.
- Pupils' achievement is good and they reach above average attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good across the school. Progress in writing has accelerated as a result of the initiatives that have been introduced.
- Teaching is good overall. Where it is most effective, high expectations and a high level of challenge for all ability groups ensure that pupils learn very quickly; however, this is inconsistent across the school. Teachers do not use their written feedback well enough to help pupils to improve their work. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are often provided with highly tailored, effective support.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Pupils' positive attitudes towards others ensure that bullying is rare, pupils feel safe and behaviour is good. In some classes, pupils demonstrate excellent skills in managing their own behaviour. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good.
- Senior leaders have established a very positive climate for learning throughout the school and their work impacts positively on pupil achievement. Although improvement planning is in place, the actions identified are not always easily measurable so it is sometimes difficult to measure success. Pupil tracking information is collected and analysed but leaders and managers do not always use this information to provide them with a clear picture of the progress being made by specific groups of pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of progress being made by pupils in lessons by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide a high degree of challenge for all ability groups
 - providing clear written feedback that guides improvement
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to respond to written feedback
 - sharing the best practice in teaching throughout the school.

- Improve the effectiveness of the leadership and management of teaching by:
 - sharpening the quality of improvement planning through success criteria being more precise, measurable and firmly focused on pupil outcomes
 - making more effective use of pupil progress data so that the school has a clearer picture of the progress being made overall and by specific groups.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development which are usually in line with expectations. Reading skills develop well through constructive interaction with staff when learning about letters and sounds. Children are challenged well while developing their writing skills through activities that provide good opportunities for them to write simple sentences. An increasing proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils achieve well overall in Years 1 to 6. In lessons, they respond particularly positively to opportunities that allow them to investigate and work in small groups. The overwhelming majority of pupils work attentively and demonstrate that they are able to apply skills learned in one subject to other subjects across the curriculum. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, pupils worked together to investigate the angle that a beam of light from a torch would reflect off a mirror. The discussions that took place demonstrated clear links between their learning in science and mathematics and they were able to use highly developed mathematical language to describe their findings.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in writing has been lower than in reading and mathematics, particularly by the end of Key Stage 1. However, improvements in teaching to ensure a focus on many different aspects of writing have led to better progress in lessons. As a result, the gap between pupils' attainment in reading and writing has closed. Attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average. Inspection evidence and pupils' current work indicate that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average by the end of Key Stage 2.

Boys and girls make similarly good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also learn well and make good progress as a result of high quality leadership and management of this area and well targeted interventions by teachers and support staff. Parents and carers are rightly of the opinion that the progress

their children make is good. A typical comment was 'I hold the school in high regard. My daughter is making excellent progress and is very happy.'

Quality of teaching

Lesson planning makes increasingly good and effective use of a range of assessment information in response to staff training. Targets for pupils form the basis for feedback and pupils' own assessments of their learning, and the large majority of pupils know their targets well. In the most effective lessons, teachers identify clear learning objectives and specify precisely what pupils need to do to demonstrate that the objectives have been achieved. For example, in a Year 6 lesson focusing on developing pupils' writing in a chosen style, pupils clearly understood what their writing needed to show in order to demonstrate success. Occasionally, planning does not cater as well for some individuals or groups as it does for the rest of the class because tasks provide a level of challenge which are not closely matched to their learning needs. In these lessons, a small minority of pupils become restless. Marking varies in quality. Some of the marking is of a high standard, clearly identifying for pupils the next steps in their learning. This is not a consistent feature, however. There is a lack of clarity in many teachers' comments as to how pupils could improve their work. When constructive comments are made there is often little evidence that pupils have acted upon this guidance.

Teachers' enthusiastic approach takes good account of pupils' interests through appropriate and planned adaptations to the curriculum. Activities are typically well presented as a wide variety of tasks to suit different learning styles. This engages pupils well. Purposeful links are made between subjects through activities that have strong connections with the real life application of the skills being learned. This also contributes strongly to promoting pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most lessons feature good questioning that develops learning effectively, because teachers set high expectations for pupils' responses and ensure that time is given for developed answers. This was demonstrated well during a Year 1 mathematics lesson, where the high quality of the teacher's questioning had a direct impact on improving pupils' understanding of shape and sequences. Reading is taught well across the school and pupils tackle new texts with confidence, effectively applying the skills they have been taught.

Teaching assistants are usually deployed well, including supporting the learning and progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This ensures that pupils' independence is promoted during learning activities. A very large majority of parents and carers feel that their child is taught well at this school. Inspection evidence supports this view overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils usually have very positive attitudes to learning and engage enthusiastically with the range of exciting experiences provided in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and conduct around the school are typically good and often excellent. On the few occasions that pupils' behaviour does not meet the high standards set by the school, most teachers respond effectively. Pupils receive good support and positive encouragement. Consequently, disruption to lessons is rare although, just occasionally, pupils in some classes do not always show

that they can consistently manage their own behaviour because they need more regular reminders about how to behave.

Pupils cooperate well and work collaboratively with their peers during lessons. Their relationships with staff are strong and friendly. The level of care pupils are shown is frequently referred to by pupils and their parents and carers as 'being part of a family'. As one child expresses this, 'Our school is very welcoming'. This helps to ensure that a positive learning environment exists in classrooms. Pupils therefore state that they feel safe, secure and are able to contribute fully to lessons. Their attendance is above average and punctuality to school and lessons is good.

The very large majority of parents and carers have positive views of behaviour at school. A few pupils expressed concerns about behaviour in their responses to the questionnaire. Inspection evidence, including discussions with groups of pupils and observations, shows that other than in a very small minority of less effective lessons where some pupils may become restless, pupils' behaviour is good and they are thoughtful and kind to one another. Pupils are clear that bullying of any sort is rare and dealt with swiftly by school staff. They demonstrate a thorough knowledge of how bullying, including cyber-bullying, might occur. Prejudice based incidents and bullying do not occur because pupils have been taught to have empathy with people who are different from themselves, for example in their beliefs, heritage or ability.

Leadership and management

Leaders have a clear school vision based on raising attainment. Staff work closely together and share a common commitment to the school and its continued development. Consequently, there is a strong team ethos. Improvements to self-evaluation ensure that leaders know the strengths and areas for development in the school. Appropriate areas for improvement are identified in the school improvement plan. However, the intended outcomes are not always clear and it is, therefore, difficult for school leaders to measure success. Teaching has improved since the last inspection, although best practice is not always shared extensively across staff in the different key stages. The improvements in teaching over time show that the school has been able to maintain good achievement for pupils and has good capacity to improve further.

Leaders and managers at all levels promote equality and tackle discrimination well. The caring school ethos and emphasis on whole school approaches fully include disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. School leaders and governors ensure that arrangements for safeguarding pupils are managed appropriately.

Improvements in pupils' progress have been achieved following ongoing professional development, including some effective co-coaching, for all staff and an effective performance management system. This has been particularly successful in improving the teaching of writing. Teachers use a wealth of pupil tracking data to inform them of pupils' progress but school leaders do not always use the available data and other information effectively enough to give them a clear understanding of the progress being made by specific groups of pupils across the school. Teaching is regularly monitored by school leaders and the findings are reflected in the school's self-evaluation; however, this monitoring does not always provide opportunities to check

whether previously identified areas for development have been successfully addressed. The school is now addressing this. The governing body is knowledgeable and highly supportive but there is less evidence of challenge to senior leaders regarding the school's performance.

Curriculum planning ensures that pupils have access to a broad and balanced programme with good links between subjects and gives pupils extended opportunities to apply their skills to realistic situations. This engages pupils well, promotes their enthusiasm for learning in and out of school and makes good provision for developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. There is a range of extra-curricular activities. Several parents and carers remarked on the warm learning environment and the hard working ethos of the school, a view supported widely by the pupils.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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).

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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



27 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ursuline Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L23 6TT

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently, particularly those of you who read to us or spoke with us about your work and what it is like to go to school at Ursuline Catholic Primary. I am writing to tell you about our findings.

- Ursuline Catholic Primary is a good school. This is because you make good progress in lessons and treat each other well. You told us, and your parents and carers agreed, that the school is a happy place to be. Your good attendance shows you enjoying coming to school and that you are eager to learn.
- You learn a lot about the differences between people and this makes a big contribution to your school being a safe, happy and friendly place to learn. You told us that bullying is rare. Your behaviour in lessons and around school is good, but just occasionally some of you need to take a little more responsibility for your own behaviour in lessons and not always rely on the teacher to remind you about how to behave.
- The teachers who lead your school have made sure that it has continued to improve since the last inspection.

We have asked the teachers and those who lead your school to make sure that:

- teachers' marking and feedback to you shows you more clearly how to improve your work
- the work provided for you is really well matched to what you need to learn next
- they carefully evaluate how much the changes they make improve your progress in lessons.

You can all help by always taking responsibility for behaving well in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Francis
Lead Inspector

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