

# Ursuline Catholic Primary School

Nicholas Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L23 6TT

**Inspection dates** 3–4 June 2015

|                                |                      |             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good        | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Early years provision          |                      | Good        | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are at least in line with the national average and are rising.
- Pupils' progress is good and continues to improve. A higher than average proportion of pupils makes better progress than expected in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and often better progress because their needs are met well.
- Teaching over time is typically good and some is outstanding. Staff check on pupils' understanding carefully and use effective questioning to probe their thinking.
- Engaging and varied activities foster a love of learning and develop pupils' ability to learn independently and with others very effectively.
- Reception classes provide children with a good, secure and happy start to school life.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They behave well, feel safe and are keen to learn.
- Parents feel well informed and hold positive views about their children's progress and the way they are cared for.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and how it can become even better. Governors ensure that they hold leaders fully to account for the school's performance.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Traditional British values are developed through much of what pupils do in the school.
- The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders, has taken successful steps to improve the performance of the school.
- Middle and subject leaders play an important role in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing, although good, is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. The most-able pupils are capable of reaching even higher standards.
- The teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling varies across the school. Opportunities for pupils to practise writing skills by undertaking longer pieces of work are sometimes missed.
- The school's marking policy is not followed consistently by all staff. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils use the guidance provided to correct and improve their work.
- Activities provided for children in the early years, particularly the most able, do not support the best development in writing.
- Although gaps are closing, disadvantaged pupils are still not doing quite as well as other pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time. They observed learning in classes, including three joint observations with senior leaders.
- The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about their work. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills. Inspectors talked to pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading. Inspectors took note of displays around the school and the work in the forest school and other outdoor learning areas.
- Inspectors talked with pupils as they played at break times and visited the dining hall at lunchtime. They also observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils and spoke to them about their work.
- Inspectors met with three governors. They spoke to a representative of the local authority, an external consultant who works with the local cluster of schools and met with members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the 81 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of the school's most recent questionnaire issued to parents. They also took account of returns of the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress and school improvement, and external views of the school.
- Inspectors also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andy Purcell

Additional Inspector

Julie Peach

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Two full-time Reception classes form the early years provision.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is similar to that found in most other schools. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has experienced a significant amount of building work in recent years.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Before- and after-school clubs run by a private provider take place on the school site. These are subject to separate inspection arrangements. Inspection reports for this provision may be viewed at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement further, particularly in writing, by making sure that:
  - children in early years have more opportunities to write independently
  - all staff adhere consistently to the school's marking policy so that all pupils are clear about how to improve their work
  - in accordance with the school's policy, pupils have enough time to make corrections and act on the advice given in marking
  - the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is consistent across the school
  - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills by undertaking longer pieces of written work in literacy lessons and when they write in other subjects.
- Close the remaining gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils by continuing to develop and implement the wide range of strategies that have been put in place to support these pupils in the current year.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, other leaders and staff create a positive ethos for learning and for good behaviour. The whole of the staff team works closely together and morale is high. All share the same commitment and determination continually to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result, standards are rising and the school is well placed to continue to improve.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Development plans indicate the correct priorities. They identify, for example, the need to continue to accelerate the progress of all pupils and raise standards further, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Checks on the quality of teaching by senior and middle leaders are regular and robust. The outcomes identify the most effective practice and any training required to update or sharpen teachers' and teaching assistants' skills. Firm links exist between the teachers' pay and pupils' achievement.
- Warm, positive relationships ensure that all are made welcome and the school fosters a culture of respect.
- Middle and subject leadership is effective. All leaders keep their knowledge about the subjects they lead up to date and use this information to support their colleagues. Teachers regularly take the opportunity to observe and share the most effective practice.
- Curriculum leaders manage their various subjects well. The curriculum is vibrant and well organised, and is enriched effectively by a range of school clubs, trips and visitors. It captures pupils' interests and responds well to their needs. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the frequent learning opportunities provided outdoors. Sessions held in the forest school in the school grounds are rich experiences which contribute well to many subjects and to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The pupil premium funding provides additional individual and small-group support for disadvantaged pupils and enables these pupils to participate in all school activities. This funding is having an increasingly positive impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. However, some of the actions put into place by leaders are still to show the full impact and some in-school gaps in achievement remain. Nevertheless, equal opportunities are promoted well and discrimination of any sort is not tolerated.
- Good use is made of the primary sport funding to extend the teaching skills of staff, boost participation rates by pupils and broaden their sporting experiences. For example, some pupils are learning to play squash at the local club this term. The school is proud of its success in inter-school competitions and the funding has had a positive impact on pupils' well-being and their understanding of the importance of a healthy life-style.
- Parents hold positive views about the school and the care it provides. They feel well informed about how well their children are doing. The up-to-date website provides a range of valuable information.
- Pupils are taught about British values, such as honesty, tolerance and fairness. They learn to recognise the importance of showing respect for different faiths and cultures through assemblies, lessons and class-based discussions.
- Safeguarding and child protection systems meet statutory requirements and are effective. Procedures to follow up absences are robust and attendance is in line with the national average.
- The headteacher and governors have managed the significant building work undertaken at the school in recent times well, maintaining a secure focus on pupils' well-being and achievement throughout this challenging period.
- The local authority recognises that this good school is able to direct its own continued improvement. The school values the well-targeted support which the local authority has provided since the previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a good day-to-day knowledge of developments in the school. They make regular focused visits to the school and receive detailed reports from the headteacher and other leaders about pupil achievement and the quality of teaching.
  - Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and how it compares to other schools nationally. They ensure that performance management arrangements are in place and teachers' salary is linked to pupils' outcomes.
  - Governors are clear about the steps taken to support any weaknesses in teaching and reward effective teachers. They have an accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve further. Finances are managed well. Governors check that the pupil premium funding is being used to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and ensure that the primary sport funding is improving pupils' fitness.
  - Governors, including those who are new to their roles, have undertaken a range of training to ensure

that they have the skills to hold leaders fully to account. Governors ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly, polite and well mannered. They show kindness and respect to each other and to adults.
- Pupils are well motivated. Attitudes to learning are good and sometimes exceptionally positive. Pupils particularly enjoy the school's creative topic work and the cooperative learning opportunities provided regularly by their teachers. Work in books is usually well presented and pupils take a pride in their work.
- Pupils say that behaviour is typically good in lessons and around school. Pupils willingly take on responsible roles, such as that of school council members. Pupils say their views are listened to and acted on by the adults.
- Changes made to the playground equipment and training provided for lunchtime staff help make sure that all play happily together. Pupils say that the skills they have learnt while working in cooperative learning groups in lessons help them deal with any friendship issues that may arise on the playground.
- All know the school rules well and pupils think the adults apply these fairly. The school ensures that pupils' achievements and efforts are recognised and celebrated. Pupils regularly seek to gain the range of rewards such as those for 'Computing Champion', 'Marvellous Mathematician' and 'Wicked Writer'.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel safe. They develop an age-appropriate understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and say that incidents are rare. Pupils insist that if issues do occur, they trust the adults to listen to and deal with any problems quickly. Parents who spoke to inspectors and the vast majority who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are looked after well and feel safe in school.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe and avoid unnecessary risk. For example, they learn the importance of road safety and how to get the best out of the forest school activities while using these resources safely.
- Pupils enjoy school. They attend regularly and on time. Attendance is in line with the national average.

## The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is typically good. Work in pupils' books shows that it is improving and that some is now outstanding.
- Classrooms are bright and welcoming, and outdoor areas have been developed into effective learning spaces. Activities are varied and interesting, and hold pupils' attention in lessons. Displays are used well to celebrate pupils' achievement and further improve learning.
- Learning builds well on what pupils already know and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and do. Teachers use good subject knowledge to question pupils in order to judge the progress they are making and deepen their thinking. They hold termly conferences with each pupil to discuss progress and decide on personal learning targets.
- Reading is taught effectively and there is a culture of reading for enjoyment throughout the school. For example, Year 2 pupils showed great enthusiasm, concentration and recall as their teacher shared *The Holy Man* book with them. Despite the lack of a school library, pupils of all ages have access to a range of books which capture their interest and promote their love of learning.
- The teaching of mathematics is good, especially when learning encourages pupils to use reasoning skills and is placed in the context of a challenge with problems to solve.
- Pupils use their writing skills confidently in a range of subjects. However, the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling skills, although improving following leaders' focus on this aspect of the curriculum, are not yet taught consistently well across the school. Leaders are aware that progress in this area remains uneven and that pupils are not yet given enough opportunities to practise writing longer pieces of work in lessons.
- Teaching assistants are skilful and well trained. They are deployed well and play a key role in supporting individuals and small groups in their learning. Support for disabled pupils and those who have special

educational needs is effective.

- Small-group and individual support for disadvantaged pupils is helping them make good progress. Gaps are closing between the standards reached by these pupils and others in the school. However, some of this work is at an early a stage and needs more time to see the full impact on pupils' achievements.
- Teachers mark work regularly and give praise, but pupils are not always made aware of how they can improve their work in line with the school's marking policy. Pupils do not always have enough time to respond to teachers' marking and, as a result, opportunities to make corrections, improve their work and learn from their mistakes are missed.
- The regular opportunities teachers provide for pupils to learn together in cooperative learning groups are popular and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Pupils enjoy sharing their ideas and explaining their thinking to others. They understand that these opportunities help them deepen their understanding of some difficult issues and help to sharpen the recall of facts and information across many subjects.

### **The achievement of pupils is good**

- Over time, progress is good. The proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding the progress expected of them by the end Year 6 is generally at least in line with the national average. As a result, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach at least the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, standards have been broadly average since the last inspection. A dip to below average in 2013 has been overcome successfully and in 2014 standards improved to above average.
- In 2014, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling dipped to below those in reading and writing. School leaders identified the causes of this dip quickly. They improved the quality of teaching systematically and successfully in order to raise standards quickly. As a result, pupils' achievement has accelerated, particularly in reading and mathematics. The very large majority of pupils in the current Year 6 are working at the level expected for their age in these subjects and the majority are doing better than this.
- Progress has also accelerated in writing in the current year and again the very large majority of pupils are working at typical standards for their age. However, although the proportion working at the higher levels is similar to the national average, fewer do so compared with reading and mathematics. This is because standards of punctuation and grammar, and particularly accuracy in spelling, are lower than expected. Pupils have too few opportunities to practise and apply these and other writing skills by undertaking longer pieces of work.
- Reading is a strength of the school and pupils read regularly in school and at home. The school's results in the national Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening check are consistently higher than the national average. Progress in reading is consistently strong across the school.
- After a dip in 2014, the proportion of the school's most-able pupils reaching the higher standards in Year 2 and Year 6 has risen in all subjects. The proportion doing so in writing is similar to the national average and is high in reading and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books and displays around school show high quality art work and strengths in subjects such as history, geography, computing and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils say that music is a subject that they enjoy and have success in. Opportunities to take part in cooperative learning groups in all subjects provide pupils with the chance to share their talents and expertise and learn from others.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well from their varying starting points. This is because staff have a clear understanding of their exact needs and tailor work to enable pupils to achieve well.
- In 2014, the majority of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made at least the progress expected of them and a good proportion did better than this. Gaps between the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, and with other pupils nationally, narrowed in all subjects. Gaps closed completely in writing overall, although they were approximately two terms behind in grammar, punctuation and spelling, one term behind other pupils in school in reading and three terms behind in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils reached similar standards compared with those of other pupils nationally in writing but were approximately three terms behind in grammar, punctuation and spelling, a term behind in reading and four terms behind in mathematics. School data show that, although gaps continue to close in the current year groups, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils is uneven at times across the school and there is more to do if disadvantaged pupils are to attain the same standards as other pupils in the

school consistently.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Reception classes with skills and knowledge that are similar to those typical for their age. However, the ability range varies significantly from year to year. Well-established routines and a calm, welcoming environment help children settle quickly and they are cared for well. All children, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, make at least expected progress and a good proportion does better than this in all areas of learning. The majority reach a good level of development by the end of Reception and children are well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.
- Early years provision is led well and staff make learning fun, particularly in the outdoors area. Activities provide children with a range of exciting opportunities that encourage them to explore their environment and work together to find out things for themselves. During the inspection, some children showed great curiosity and perseverance as they searched for insects to inspect under their magnifying glasses. A particularly large spider's web caused great excitement.
- Children behave well, are kept safe and learn how to manage risk as they play. They play happily together, listen carefully to adults and take turns sensibly. Teaching encourages children to use their imagination and captures their interests well; they are eager to learn.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is effective. Children are confident in building and writing individual words and, sometimes, simple sentences in these sessions. However, there are too few opportunities planned for children to write independently in the activities provided and teachers do not develop children's writing skills as well as they might. As a result, progress in writing, although good, could be even more rapid and the most able, in particular, are capable of doing even better.
- Parents are involved in the initial assessment of their children when they join the school. They hold highly positive views of the teaching and care their children receive.



## What inspection judgements mean

| School | Grade   | Judgement            | Description  |
|--------|---------|----------------------|--|
|        | Grade 1 | Outstanding          | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
|        | Grade 2 | Good                 | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
|        | Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.   |
|        | Grade 4 | Inadequate           | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |



## School details

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 104937 |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Sefton |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 461746 |

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

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                              |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                      |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                                 |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 414                                  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Paul Monaghan                        |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mark McQueen                         |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 25 April 2012                        |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0151 924 1704                        |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 0151 924 2158                        |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | admin.ursuline@schools.sefton.gov.uk |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

