

# St Ursula's Catholic Junior School

Straight Road, Romford, Essex RM3 7JS

## Inspection dates

2–3 February 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Exceptional leadership, including governance, drives the strong ambition for excellence, which ensures the school's continuing improvement.
- Senior and middle leaders are unremitting in making sure all pupils achieve highly.
- A coaching programme has improved classroom practice across the school. Teachers are reflective practitioners who set high expectations for their pupils' progress. As a result, teaching overall is outstanding.
- All staff are confident and empowered to develop their teaching skills. Staff relish taking on additional responsibility to improve the school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils exceptionally well. This means pupils receive outstanding guidance in order to keep improving their work.
- In 2016, the overall outcomes for pupils by the end of Year 6 remained higher than national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Excellent use of pupil premium funding means the differences between the disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, and other pupils nationally have diminished by the end of Year 6.
- The creative curriculum truly inspires the pupils to reach high standards. Pupils take great pride in how they present their work.
- Governors have a deep understanding of school performance and work diligently to hold the school's leaders to account.
- The school's robust safeguarding arrangements ensure that pupils' safety is everybody's responsibility.
- Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the work of the school. This is because staff share and use information very effectively.
- Leaders' work with staff ensures a consistency of approach to behaviour management. Consequently, there is a culture of mutual respect. Strong relationships exist between the pupils and staff.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They show consideration and respect to each other and adults.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the ambitions of the school. They say the staff know their children well and enable them to excel.
- Leaders acknowledge more work is required to increase the proportion of pupils, in particular girls, who exceed expected standards in mathematics.

## **Full report**

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

- Speed up rates of progress in mathematics by providing more challenge for the most able pupils, particularly girls.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher's inspirational leadership has instilled a 'can do' ethos among the whole leadership team. As a result, all leaders, including governors, share a clear vision for school improvement and high aspirations for pupil achievement.
- Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the school. They regularly review all aspects of the school's priorities to ensure that high outcomes for pupils continue to be a focus for improvement. Leaders scrutinise staff performance carefully to ensure that the school's systematic approach to challenge pupils in their learning is rigorous. Regular reports to governors result in a well-informed group able to question leaders' actions appropriately.
- Leaders provide high-quality feedback for staff about their performance, informed by thorough and precise evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Excellent use is made of performance management systems for teachers and teaching assistants to reward highly effective classroom practice.
- Leaders' investment in a coaching programme has resulted in a highly reflective team whose members feel empowered to take on more responsibility. Teachers regularly seek ways to improve their practice so that pupils make even more progress. This successful system, shared with other schools, enables teachers from St Ursula's to coach colleagues from other schools. External evaluations, including those provided by the local authority, validate this work and say it provides extremely valuable support to teachers.
- Middle leaders are an exceptionally skilled team. This is evident in the excellent way they support staff. They share their subject knowledge successfully with colleagues, and conduct outreach work with other schools. They promote their subjects passionately. Leaders have developed a stimulating and exciting curriculum for pupils. This ensures high outcomes across a range of subjects.
- Leaders' strong ambition to develop staff at all levels is seen in the success of a project led by teaching assistants to improve pupil progress. This work, using pupil voice, resulted in the current highly effective system of checking pupils' work. This has increased teacher confidence to use professional judgements when assessing pupil's work. Pupils value this incisive guidance. Inspectors saw rapid progress made by pupils in their books.
- The pupils value the school's creative curriculum. Topics link to wider national curriculum subjects, such as history and music, but also current affairs. Pupils show, in their work, how they successfully apply skills learned in reading, writing and mathematics across a wide range of subjects. For example, in Year 6 work on the Second World War, pupils wrote letters from the point of view of an evacuee. These demonstrated how pupils are able to use high-quality, rich and emotive vocabulary to inform readers of the reasons for evacuation and the impact it had for children.
- Pupil premium funding is spent on high-quality support so that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieve very well. As a result of teachers' accurate tracking, these pupils make rapid and sustained progress similar to that of

their peers and others nationally by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Leaders use the funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities extremely well. Skilled staff ensure that these pupils have challenges that accurately match their needs. Leaders' positive partnership work with parents means these pupils are receiving high-quality support and make good progress from their starting points.
- Exceptionally well-used sports funding enables excellent collaboration with other schools. As a result, there has been increased participation of pupils in a wide range of sporting activities, the offer even extending to parents for attending fitness clubs. Pupils are clear about how sport helps them develop a healthy lifestyle.
- High-quality homework gives pupils opportunities to engage in pre-learning activities before embarking on a theme. Pupils make rapid progress in a range of subjects, because teachers enable pupils to research extensively and move learning on at a fast pace. Pupils say they really enjoy their wider curriculum learning. Teachers' expectations of high standards is clear in the quality seen in pupils' books.
- The strong faith element of the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how values from other religions are similar to those of the Catholic faith. The school prepares its pupils very well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a good understanding of society outside the school gates and are confident in talking about how the school's values link to wider British values.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are highly skilled and knowledgeable. They have an incisive understanding of school information. They meet with staff and pupils regularly, and have a deep understanding of the work of the school. Governors challenge school leaders to set very high standards for pupils. They are clear about the strategic priorities for the school.
- They ask pertinent questions about pupil premium spending, and can assess its impact on pupils' progress using the school's assessment information. Governors benchmark their own practice against other schools. This results in a cohesive approach to school self-evaluation, which ensures that all leaders work relentlessly to provide the best education for all pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that recruitment procedures are robust. Safeguarding policies and procedures are stringently applied. High-quality training ensures that staff are confident and vigilant. Staff and governors have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities to identify when pupils may be at risk of extremism, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation.
- Pupil safety is paramount at St. Ursula's. Leaders are tenacious in chasing up cases where the responses of external agencies are felt to be too slow. Pupils and parents receive regular updates on how to keep safe online. The pupil digital leaders group

ensures that safety information for their peers is relevant and well understood. Parents say they are confident that their children are safe and well cared for when they are at school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan highly stimulating activities that draw out pupils' understanding through probing questions. High expectations are evident in the quality of pupil response across the school.
- Teachers' deep subject knowledge enables pupils to learn exceptionally well. Pupils' rapid progress is clear in lessons and over time. Pupils work extremely well both with each other and independently. Highly effective use is made of time in lessons to maximise pupils' learning. As one pupil said, 'Teachers own the lesson, pupils own the learning.'
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly, and teachers provide appropriate guidance to inform next steps in learning. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils to offer them thoughtful challenges. Self-motivated pupils relish questions posed and show resilience when encountering opportunities to work on tasks that involve applying their reasoning skills. For example, in mathematics teachers pose questions designed to develop pupils' mastery of the subject. Nonetheless, the most able girls do not always make rapid progress, because activities do not always build on their prior learning.
- Leaders use accurate assessment information to ensure that pupils progress rapidly as they move through the school. Where gaps appear in pupils' learning, teachers act swiftly to put strategies in place to close the gaps quickly. Teachers' accurate tracking of disadvantaged pupils' progress, including the most able, is used to ensure that any differences, when compared with other pupils nationally, diminish sharply by the end of Year 6. The 2016 results show this to be the case.
- Teachers skilfully link the way they teach grammar in English to that taught in Spanish lessons. This means pupils easily make links between language structures, and results in pupils developing high-quality written work across the curriculum.
- Well-taught reading means pupils quickly learn the skills of extracting and summarising the main points in challenging texts. They are able to comment on the techniques used by writers to engage the reader. Pupils recognise that this helps them develop their own writing styles. Pupils read from a wide range of authors and subjects with confidence, and show a real love of literature. Teachers set them challenging books to complete to a deadline. As a result, the number of pupils meeting age-related expectations in reading is high and improves as they move through the school.
- Teaching assistants also benefit from the school's coaching programme and are exceptionally well skilled. Consequently, they make a valuable contribution to the outstanding teaching across the school.
- The support given to the high number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptional. Parents are involved in regular assessments and sharing of information to ensure that these pupils make very strong progress from their starting points. The school's highly inclusive ethos is demonstrated in the well-thought-through programmes of work to meet each pupil's needs. This begins with quality

teaching, which ensures that these pupils benefit from being able to work in their mainstream class whenever appropriate.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupil well-being lies at the very heart of St Ursula's. Staff consistently teach pupils to respect themselves and others through the strong faith element of the school, using the five core values of respect, spirituality, care, enthusiasm for learning and recognising a wrong, which underpins everything the school does.
- Leaders ensure pupils' involvement in a wide variety of responsibilities. For example, the 'games crew' supports pupils' physical education beyond lessons, and helped design the school kit. The pupils believe strongly in the importance of their collective voice. They have a mature understanding of the democratic system. For example, they told inspectors that it was important to vote as it 'instils a democratic mind-set'. Pupils regularly present their ideas to the governors to request funding for projects and then evaluate their impact.
- The pastoral care is exceptional, resulting in very vulnerable pupils receiving high-quality support. This ensures that no learning is lost and pupils feel a real sense of success despite experiencing difficult personal circumstances.
- Praise is used constantly to promote the school's ethos and comes naturally to staff and pupils. The 'golden assembly' ensures that the week ends on a positive message and is an opportunity for pupils to share their successes.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils move around the school calmly, and show impeccable manners towards each other and to visitors. They are very eager to share their work and can show how they are improving.
- Pupils demonstrate the values of the school in the way they conduct themselves. They successfully develop strong self-discipline. They are not over-reliant on the adults supervising at unstructured times to sort out any problems. Playtime is a happy place, where there is much laughter heard. Pupils mix well in the playground, and play safely with a range of equipment. For example, bicycles are used regularly and pupils practise the skills of cycling in the playground.
- Bullying is rare. Robust systems of recording and sharing information means pupils feel listened to and appreciate the very swift action taken by staff when they have any concerns.
- Pupils really enjoy coming to school and are immensely proud to be members of St Ursula's. They told inspectors that their peers behave well and look after each other. This is true in lessons and around the school. Pupils say 'teachers give them space to learn'.
- The environment reflects the respect the school community has for each other.

Teaching spaces are tidy, and displays are of a high quality, celebrating achievements and promoting diversity.

- Attendance is above the national average. The school knows its families well, and leaders' good communication ensures that parents buy completely into the value of their children's regular attendance and punctuality.
- Parents say behaviour is well managed and they are supportive of the school's work. They feel their children have the right environment to excel academically and develop as well-prepared citizens of the future.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- The progress most pupils make from their starting points is above the national average. By the end of key stage 2, any gaps close rapidly for all groups of pupils as they move through the school.
- The systematic approach to tracking pupils' progress enables leaders to allocate support quickly to ensure rapid improvement. Teachers are held to account for pupils' progress, planning high-quality lessons, which address any identified needs. As a result, progress gaps between groups of pupils close swiftly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers plan extremely well to address pupils' needs using the school's assessment information. Working to the school's six-weekly assessment cycle, teachers quickly identify when a pupil's progress is not as high as expected. Leaders say their system of regular monitoring means 'no child left behind'. This was evident when inspectors looked through books in classes.
- In 2016, the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, was well above national averages, particularly in writing. This trend is similar to that of current pupils across the school, taken from their individual starting points.
- Initial differences in development between disadvantaged pupils and their peers as they enter the school, rapidly diminish as they move further up the school. Historically, this has been less so for groups of girls. Leaders' actions are resulting in an improvement in girls' progress, particularly in mathematics, across the school. They acknowledge there is still some work to do to ensure that a higher proportion exceed national standards by the end of Year 6.
- Progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. The school's expectation for what these pupils can achieve is impressive. Pupils produce high-quality pieces of work because of high-quality support. The impact of strong teaching and positive relationships between the parents, pupils and staff mean that these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The outcomes for pupils in 2016 were impressive. There were no identified weaknesses in the last set of results for Year 6 across reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in mathematics was above national averages in the 2016 results. The school has rightly identified that more work needs to be done to ensure that the proportion of most-able girls who reach the higher standards in mathematics improves.

## School details

Unique reference number	102332
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10023722

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathy Smith
Headteacher	Clare D'Netto
Telephone number	01708 343 170
Website	<a href="http://www.st-ursulas-rc-jun.havering.sch.uk/">www.st-ursulas-rc-jun.havering.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@st-ursulas-rc-jun.havering.sch.uk">office@st-ursulas-rc-jun.havering.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	7–8 February 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Ursula's Junior School is an average-sized school.
- The proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is just above national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or an education, health and care plan is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is high.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every year group with senior leaders. Assemblies were also visited during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised books to evaluate the progress and current achievement of pupils in lessons and through a work scrutiny.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from Year 3 and Year 6 read. Inspectors also spoke to these pupils about the types of books they read and their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation related to pupil achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. This included the school's current plans for improvement, and assessment information on the achievement of current pupils in the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Inspectors also scrutinised the school's logs on attendance, behaviour, bullying and exclusions.
- A range of safeguarding documentation was scrutinised during the inspection. This included school policies, records relating to child protection, procedures to keep pupils safe in school and the school's single central record.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to evaluate behaviour, safety and pupils' attitudes to learning. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally in lessons and around the site.
- Meetings were held with the local authority representative, the governing body, senior leaders and middle leaders to evaluate the impact of their work.
- Inspectors met formally with a group of staff to review the support provided by senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors also spoke to staff informally and took account of 26 staff and 31 pupils' responses to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally before school. Inspectors also took account of the 10 responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

## Inspection team

Sara Morgan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Cox

Ofsted Inspector

Nick Turvey

Ofsted Inspector

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