

# Inspection of a good school: St Ursula's Catholic Infant School

Straight Road, Romford, Essex RM3 7JS

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Inspection dates:

30–31 October 2019

## Outcome

St Ursula's Catholic Infant School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff provide a warm welcome to the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and say learning is fun. They say adults are kind and helpful. Leaders and teachers encourage pupils to be thoughtful and respectful. Pupils are friendly and have good manners.

Pupils feel safe in school. They told me there is no bullying. They know that adults will listen and help them if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils know how to stay safe online. They know to tell an adult should they see something on the computer that they do not like.

Pupils work hard and are sensible in lessons. They listen well to adults and follow instructions. Learning time is not wasted. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils follow the new code of conduct that they helped to design. Teachers make sure that all pupils achieve well. Leaders check that pupils receive the right support. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Teachers provide a calm and stimulating learning environment. Pupils focus well in class and do not disrupt the learning of others. Teaching is engaging and motivates the pupils to learn.

Leaders, teachers and pupils recognise that reading is important. Pupils told me that they enjoy when teachers read to them every day. They say that they especially like it when teachers put on funny voices and act out parts of stories.

Leaders have prioritised phonics and early reading skills. Phonics teaching begins at the start in the early years. Staff training in phonics is well thought out. This helps staff to teach pupils very well. Pupils learn to become fluent readers.

Teachers have high expectations of the sounds and words that pupils should be able to read. Most pupils secure the necessary reading skills early on. This enables pupils to progress to reading books matched well to pupils' phonics knowledge. Where this is not the case, teachers help pupils to catch up quickly.

Leaders have worked hard to improve mathematics. Mathematics is taught in a clear order. This helps pupils build fluency in number skills and learn new mathematical concepts. Teachers plan mathematics lessons that are practical and engaging. They ensure that pupils have lots of practice learning number facts. Pupils like carrying out mathematical investigations. Pupils said work is sometimes challenging but teachers help them if they struggle.

In early years, teachers plan activities to help children explore and understand numbers. Children learn to count and sing number rhymes. Reception teachers skilfully plan activities that support the foundations of early reading, writing and mathematics. Activities are tailored to children's skills and abilities. They capture and hold children's interest.

Leaders' subject plans are well thought out. Teachers provide opportunities to revisit learning. This helps pupils develop their knowledge and understanding over time. Pupils' books showed they are learning a range of interesting topics in geography and history. For instance, in geography, Year 1 pupils learned about the United Kingdom and their own locality. They went on an autumn walk to familiarise themselves with the local area. Pupils use basic geographical skills to find places. Pupils identify and describe seasonal changes. This helped them to speak with confidence about weather patterns. Pupils respond well to teachers' questions. They are engaged in lessons and display positive attitudes to learning.

Science is not as strong as other subjects. Teachers' planning shows that pupils' opportunities to work scientifically are limited. Teachers have not considered the depth of knowledge pupils need. Pupils were not able to explain what they had been learning about in science. They could not make links to what they had learned before. As a result, pupils are unable to develop their scientific knowledge and skills.

Leaders support pupils with SEND well. This is a strength of the school. As a result of high-quality training teachers are clear on what strategies work well for pupils. Teaching assistants provide good support for all pupils.

Pupils' wider development is well thought through. Adults actively demonstrate respect for one another, and for pupils, and pupils learn from this. Assemblies are prepared with a focus on pupils' well-being. Pupils are awarded certificates to celebrate their achievements. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including drumming, choir and karate sessions, which pupils enjoy.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors are clear about their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. Staff follow the school's policy for reporting any concerns. Staff speak confidently about whistle-blowing arrangements. Safeguarding concerns are reported in a timely manner to ensure that all agencies can take effective action to support vulnerable pupils. Record-keeping is detailed.

Leaders, staff and governors are knowledgeable of the local context and risks to pupils in the wider community. They understand the importance of keeping pupils safe from gangs and radicalisation. Leaders and teachers work effectively in partnership with parents and carers to support pupils in need.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In science, teachers' planning and sequencing of lessons are not as effective as in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils do not have a good understanding of scientific concepts. Leaders need to decide what the key content is that pupils should learn in science. They should ensure that this knowledge is embedded so that pupils remember more. Leaders should make appropriate changes to the curriculum, to ensure that pupils achieve well in science.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged St Ursula's Catholic Infant School to be good on 7–8 July 2011.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102333
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110464
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	214
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mrs A Kearns
<b>Teacher in charge</b>	Mrs L Butler
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stursulascatholicfederation.co.uk">www.stursulascatholicfederation.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	February 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in November 2016 when this aspect of the school's work was graded as outstanding.
- In 2017, the school federated with St Ursula's Junior School.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the interim executive headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of the governing board and the home liaison officer.
- I also met with a representative of the local authority.
- I focused on reading, mathematics and geography. In each subject, I visited lessons in different year groups, scrutinised pupils' work and held discussions with leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
- I met with leaders to discuss the school's curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, I reviewed school policies, procedures and records. I held meetings with the interim executive headteacher as the acting designated lead for safeguarding, assistant headteacher and the schools home liaison

officer to review examples of actions taken to keep pupils safe. I also checked staff members' and governors' understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.

- I observed pupils' behaviour before school, in lessons and at lunchtime.
- I spoke to pupils informally when visiting lessons, and in groups, to gather their views on the school and to talk about what they were learning.
- There were 16 responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey. A variety of documents and records relating to the school's work, including behaviour, were analysed. The 19 responses and free-text comments submitted to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were considered. The 86 responses to a survey of parents carried out by the school in July 2019 were also considered.
- The 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey were considered alongside the views of teachers gathered during meetings with me.

### **Inspection team**

Dawn Titus, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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