

Inspection of Ursuline College

225 Canterbury Road, Westgate-on-Sea, Kent CT8 8LX

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Ursuline College are happy and proud to attend this school. They share respectful relationships with adults and their peers. Pupils talk positively about the care and support they receive from the staff. They know that their heads of house are always available to talk things through when they are worried.

Pupils reflect the school's Catholic ethos by supporting and helping their peers within their mixed-age tutor groups. They have learned to 'bear with' one another when pupils are sometimes unkind, so that issues are quickly resolved. Staff and pupils report very little bullying. Adults deal with it quickly and effectively if it does occur.

Leaders have high ambition for all pupils, including those in the sixth form, to achieve well. They ensure that pupils are prepared for their next steps through high-quality and impartial careers guidance. They encourage pupils to 'risk new things' and 'stick with it' when they are faced with new challenges. For example, many pupils develop their resilience, and leadership skills, by participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

There are a range of extra-curricular activities on offer, including rock, drama and mindfulness clubs. However, not all pupils know when these take place. Leaders do not currently track attendance at clubs, so they cannot be sure that those who would benefit the most take part.

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

Leaders have carefully constructed an ambitious and interesting curriculum, which is well suited to the needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Students choose from a wide range of vocational and A-level subjects in the sixth form. Leaders have taken action to ensure that the number of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects is increasing. However, pupils in key stage 4 are not currently given enough time to develop their knowledge and skills fully in physical education (PE).

Leaders have carefully identified the key knowledge that pupils must learn. They have ensured that curriculum plans give pupils opportunities to build on their learning in a logical order. Teachers plan lessons which allow pupils to apply old learning to new contexts and ideas. For example, students in the sixth form use their knowledge of the Crown Prosecution Service to analyse and evaluate real-life criminal case studies. Pupils in Year 10 explain, with accuracy, how their understanding of democracies and dictatorships helps them to understand life in Nazi Germany.

Pupils with SEND access the same work as their peers; however, teachers do not always adapt their learning resources appropriately for these pupils. Leaders know that there has not always been a consistent approach to supporting pupils with SEND. They have taken recent steps to ensure that this improves quickly.

In most subjects, teachers assess pupils' learning regularly to check for any gaps and misconceptions. They change their plans to address these effectively. Pupils embed their knowledge through 'recap and recall' at the beginning of most lessons. However, in a small number of subjects, such as modern foreign languages and PE, pupils do not always have enough opportunity to embed their learning before moving on to the next stage.

Leaders have prioritised reading so that pupils read regularly and widely across the school. They have used funding well to ensure that older pupils who find it more difficult to read are supported well to keep up. However, plans to support younger pupils further have been delayed. This means that a small number of younger pupils are not getting the help that they need as quickly as they should.

Leaders have worked to ensure that there is a consistent and positive approach to behaviour management. As a result, pupils are polite and friendly. They respect their environment and travel around the school sensibly. Leaders know that some pupils miss school too often, including students in the sixth form. They have put actions in place to improve this; however, increasing the attendance of some pupils remains a priority.

Pupils in all year groups learn about healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way, through the well-sequenced personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. They know how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils demonstrate the school's motto of 'serviam' by undertaking community and charity work. They develop leadership skills and help to bring about positive change, for example to the school uniform, as part of student voice committee.

Trustees and governors have a clear understanding of what the school is doing well and what leaders need to do to improve it further. Governors ask pertinent questions to ensure that leaders are addressing pupil attendance and improving provision for pupils with SEND, for example. Staff feel supported by leaders, who they say are mindful of their well-being and workload. They have access to well considered professional development opportunities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to identify and report concerns about pupils swiftly. Leaders keep clear records and closely monitor pupils who they are worried about. They work well with outside agencies so that pupils and their families receive the most appropriate support quickly. Leaders carry out the necessary checks so that they are sure all adults are safe to work in the school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. They know who they can tell if they are worried. Pupils have confidence that adults will take decisive action to make things better.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The offer for pupils in key stage 4 PE is limited. This means that pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not participate in physical activity or learn about healthy lifestyles as often as they should. Leaders need to increase curriculum time in this area so that pupils in key stage 4 benefit from high-quality physical education.
- Some groups of pupils miss too much school, including in the sixth form. Although leaders have taken action to address this, rates of persistent absence remain too high for these pupils. Leaders need to review and implement strategies that will have the most impact, so that attendance rates for all are swiftly improved.
- Pupils with SEND do not always receive the most appropriate support to help them achieve as well as they could. Governors and senior leaders need to continue with their plans to develop leadership capacity, so that there is a coherent approach to SEND provision, which is of a consistently high quality.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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

Unique reference number	141628
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10241745
Type of school	Secondary Modern (non-selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	929
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	156
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Powis
Principal	Danielle Lancefield
Website	http://www.ursuline.kent.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership and is within the Archdiocese of Southwark. The previous section 48 inspection took place on 22 and 23 February 2018.
- The school runs a breakfast club on site.
- The school uses one alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team completed deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, geography, PE and history. To do this, they met with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Southwark. The lead inspector met with two representatives from the academy committee, the chair of trustees and chief executive of the trust.
- The inspection team reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents, carers and staff were considered through discussions and a review of Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Zoë Harris, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Gibson	Ofsted Inspector
Maria Roberts	His Majesty's Inspector
Judy Rider	Ofsted Inspector

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022