

# Inspection of St Ursula's Catholic Primary School

Straight Road, Romford, Essex RM3 7JS

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 July 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school is a welcoming community where relationships are warm and respectful. This ensures that pupils feel safe and are kept safe at school. Pupils attend school regularly and are highly motivated to do well. The curriculum is broad. Pupils produce work of good quality and are typically well-prepared for the next stage of their education. They appreciate that teachers want them to achieve their best.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. This is because the school's core values, including kindness and forgiveness, are part of the culture. Expectations of conduct are understood and consistently applied by all. Pupils appreciate any disputes being resolved quickly because adults deal with things immediately.

Mental health and well-being have a high status. Adults provide exceptional support to pupils in managing their emotions and feelings. For example, pupils use personal diaries to reflect on and recognise their well-being. Pupils appreciate that staff listen to their views and ideas.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access a broad range of extra-curricular activities that promote and develop their talents and interests.

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

Leaders are ambitious. This is reflected in their desire to design a curriculum that exceeds what is expected nationally. Over the last year, there has been a significant review of the curriculum. Subject leaders have identified gaps in the knowledge they expect pupils to learn and are now in the process of refining the curriculum accordingly. Much work has taken place to ensure that subjects such as mathematics, English and science are well-sequenced with clear end goals. For example, children in Reception use number lines when doubling numbers. This helps them to develop fluency when calculating larger numbers and solving increasingly complex problems. In these subjects, pupils develop a depth of knowledge and achieve significantly well by the end of key stage 2. This work is currently at an earlier stage in some other subjects.

Although staff have appropriate subject knowledge and check pupils' learning, teachers do not use assessment consistently. Misconceptions and gaps in some pupils' learning are not sufficiently addressed. In these instances, pupils do not secure the knowledge they need before moving onto the next steps of learning.

Pupils with SEND are identified. While some staff are knowledgeable and make appropriate adaptations that help pupils, this is inconsistent. Some teachers do not have the expertise in understanding the different barriers to learning or complexity of needs these pupils experience. As a result, some pupils with SEND or who are

lower attaining are not sufficiently supported to access the planned curriculum. Leaders recognise this and have plans in place to address the issue.

Phonics and early reading is well established. Leaders train staff to ensure that the agreed phonics programme is delivered consistently. Adults ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunity practise the sounds they will encounter, using books that are well-matched to the sounds they have learned. As a result, pupils develop accuracy, fluency and confidence, using their knowledge of segmenting and blending to decode unfamiliar words. Pupils enjoy reading the wide range of texts that are linked to the curriculum.

Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is exemplary. This is because all staff have consistently high expectations. Pupils take pride in earning rewards. Low-level disruption is very rare. If it does occur, it is tackled swiftly allowing pupils to concentrate on their learning.

The high-quality provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. The personal, social, and health education curriculum is carefully structured to foster pupils' character. For example, pupils learn to value the right to make their own decisions and the importance of accepting the consequences of these choices. Pupils learn about the protected characteristics and are supported to understand the importance of maintaining good physical and mental health. Pupils value contributing to the life of the school through taking on additional responsibilities such as chaplains, house captains and 'super scientists'.

There have been significant changes to the leadership and governance of the school since the last inspection and the amalgamation of the two previous schools. Leaders have worked incredibly hard in building a united team. Staff are highly committed and appreciate the stability this has brought. Staff acknowledge that while aspects of their workload has increased, they feel well supported and that well-being is prioritised. The governing body is new and relatively inexperienced. They have worked closely with the diocese and school community to redefine the vision and direction of the school. This puts them in a strong position to oversee the improvements that are planned.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Those responsible for governance fulfil their duties in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Leaders have appropriate processes in place for identifying pupils who may need help. Staff receive regular training and updates. As a result, they understand the procedures for reporting concerns about pupils who may be at risk. Leaders make timely referrals to external agencies and are rigorous in following up open cases.

The curriculum has been designed to help pupils to stay safe. For example, pupils are supported to develop an age-appropriate understanding about the importance of

consent in healthy and respectful relationships. Similarly, they learn about staying safe when using digital and social media, as well as in the real world.

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

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

- Some lower-attaining pupils and those with SEND are not consistently supported to access the curriculum. As a result, these pupils do not develop a sufficiently deep understanding in different subjects. Leaders must ensure that staff receive the necessary training to develop their expertise in recognising the barriers and needs pupils have. Leaders should also support staff to adapt tasks and activities appropriately. Teachers should check these pupils' understanding more consistently so that any errors or misconceptions are swiftly identified and corrected.
- The curriculum in some subjects is at an earlier stage of development. In these instances, pupils do not consistently learn and remember more. Leaders must ensure that subject leaders continue their work to develop the curriculum by defining the content and appropriate tasks that enable pupils to build, consolidate and revisit their knowledge.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102332
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268167
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	461
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Andrew Shaw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karl Ashburn
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stursulascatholicprimary.co.uk">www.stursulascatholicprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 and 3 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The infant school was officially closed in August 2020 and amalgamated with the junior school in September 2020.
- At the point of the amalgamation, the infant school was judged to be a good school and the junior school was judged outstanding.
- The school has experienced significant changes to senior leadership and governance since the last inspection and amalgamation.
- The governing body is newly formed, and the chair of governors took up post in September 2022.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2020, following a number of changes to the headship of the school.
- The school makes use of one alternative provider.

## 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 had 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.
- Inspectors met with the chair and members of the governing body, local authority and diocese representatives, the headteacher, senior leaders, and a range of staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and considered pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered information provided about safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised safeguarding records and pre-employment checks. Inspectors reviewed procedures and processes by talking to leaders and staff, and through discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Lascelles Haughton, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lorraine Slee	Ofsted Inspector
Barry Blakelock	Ofsted Inspector

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