

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr M McQueen
Headteacher
Ursuline Catholic Primary School
Nicholas Road
Liverpool
Merseyside
L23 6TT

Dear Mr McQueen

Ofsted 2009-10 subject survey inspection programme: citizenship

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 4 June 2009 to look at work in citizenship.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with staff and learners, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of four lessons.

The overall effectiveness of citizenship was judged to be outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are outstanding.

- Pupils have particularly good knowledge of how democracy works and how local government services are financed; the role of public bodies such as the police, fire services and voluntary organisations; rules, rights and responsibilities; ethnic and religious diversity in the United Kingdom; prejudice and discrimination; and how to care for the environment.
- Pupils are very skilled at researching, discussing and debating topical issues and events. They are encouraged to actively listen, form opinions and express their own and other's views.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to participate in decision-making about real issues affecting the school and local community. The school council is democratically elected and members are well known and respected by the rest of the school. Even the youngest pupils have a

say in how the school is run. The council has an impressive history of making changes in the school. Suggestion boxes in each class and regular 'constituency meetings' ensure that all views are heard.

- Pupils make many and varied contributions to school life. The popular self help club for pupils with dyslexia is an excellent example of active citizenship within the school.

Quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

- Teachers use a range of approaches that help to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in citizenship. Lessons are interesting, active and participatory. Interactive whiteboard technology is used to very good effect; access to web pages in lessons brings topical issues into the classroom and teaches pupils how to use information and communication technology to conduct their own research.
- Teachers deal with sensitive and controversial issues well. Pupils' work on Holocaust Memorial Day is an excellent example of outstanding learning in a controversial area.
- Pupils enjoy citizenship lessons and activities very much. The school makes a good effort to ensure that all have the opportunity to participate in citizenship activities. Success in citizenship is celebrated through schemes such as the Diana Memorial Award. Pupils are very proud of the individuals who win citizenship awards and many seek nomination.
- The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well met through good support from teaching assistants.

Quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is outstanding.

- In all aspects of the school's work, pupils are being prepared to play an active role as citizens.
- The curriculum is particularly strong on difference and diversity in the United Kingdom, rights and responsibilities, decision-making and environmental awareness.
- The integration of knowledge, skills and understanding is a key feature of the school's approach to citizenship. Pupils are encouraged to play an active role as citizens in a variety of ways including through work on the eco club, school travel plan and school council; acting as playground buddies and play workers; visiting the elderly in a home for Alzheimer's sufferers; leading assemblies and through charity fund-raising.
- The school has strong transition links with the local secondary school but does not share information on the citizenship programme nor Year 6 pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding in citizenship.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of citizenship are outstanding.

- Citizenship is well resourced in terms of staffing, leadership, training and materials. Classroom libraries are well stocked with suitable texts and there are excellent citizenship displays all around the school.
- The responsibility for leading on citizenship is effectively shared between a range of senior and middle leaders. This includes the subject leader for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) and the coordinator for social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL). This sharing of expertise highlights how citizenship is integral to the ethos of the school and the philosophy that underpins its work.
- The school's evaluation of its work in citizenship is both analytical and accurate. The school has rightly highlighted the need to improve on the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in citizenship. As such there is very good capacity to further improve.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- enhancing transition links with the local secondary school by sharing information on the citizenship programme
- improving the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in citizenship.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop citizenship in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer
Her Majesty's Inspector