



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St Ursula's Primary School**

URN: 102332

Carried out on behalf of the Right Rev. Alan Williams, sm, Bishop of Brentwood on:

Date: 23-24 November 2023

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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	✓
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	✓
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Pupils are proud of their school and are powerful ambassadors for the values of St Ursula's.
- Relationships between home and school are exceptionally strong and are thoughtfully nurtured, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils.
- Parents highly value the sense of community and welcome the support and opportunities provided by the school.
- There is flourishing partnership between the school and parishes.
- The subject leader for religious education has an inspiring vision of outstanding teaching and a high level of expertise.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure that pupils know and understand their role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching.
- Develop and implement effective systems of monitoring for leaders and governors resulting in strategic actions which lead to excellent outcomes in religious education.
- Provide professional development opportunities for all staff to support pupils in planning, leading and evaluating prayer and liturgy

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2



Pupils understand and value the Catholic nature of the school. They fully embrace the school mission statement, which they sing enthusiastically in assemblies and class prayer and liturgy. Additionally, they can clearly explain the mission statement: 'with God at the heart of our St. Ursula's family, we welcome all as we learn and grow together'. The values of the school are exceptionally well embedded and celebrated with the pupil awards each Friday. The pupils show joy and delight when their peers receive these awards for putting their five core values into practice. They know they are following Jesus. Pupils readily engage in fundraising activities. Locally, the faith in action group has helped at the Harold Hill Foodbank and funds have also been raised for the national Poppy appeal and Cafod. Pupils now need to link these activities specifically to the principles of Catholic social teaching. Pupils do know that they need to care for our common home, and the eco-school councillors are beginning to link their work to *Laudate Deum*. There is a strong culture of respect for the rights of all, including those of other faiths, which is acknowledged in the school receiving the Rights Respecting School Award at the silver level. Behaviour is good throughout the school.

Staff are committed to the mission statement and are proud to work at St Ursula's. A parent expressed their appreciation of this commitment in a statement saying, 'I am appreciative of the commitment of the staff who have worked with and are still working with my son for his academic and spiritual development.' There is an exceptionally strong sense of community and staff appreciate the sense of faith, family and commitment. There is an embedded sense of welcome and inclusivity. The school's excellent home school support worker is highly valued by staff and parents. It is clearly evident that the school goes the extra mile in supporting the most vulnerable families and pupils. Staff are good role models for children through their relationships and love and care for the pupils. Pastoral care is given an exceptionally high priority in the school. The physical

environment reflects the Catholic nature of the school, including beautiful “stained glass windows” of the Sacraments in the halls. Additional signage to promote Catholic social teaching has been installed. The chaplaincy provision is good and there is a clear programme of development for the pupil chaplains. The provision for relationship, sex and health education meets both the statutory and diocesan requirements. The policy is available on the school website.

Leaders and governors can articulate the Church’s mission in education. They are mindful to ensure that this mission is at the heart of their policies and procedures. Engagement with the diocese is good and school leaders regularly attend training. There is a flourishing relationship with the parish. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor. There is an exceptionally strong relationship with parents, who are very keen to attend assemblies and appreciate the school’s prompt responses to any communication. One parent explained, ‘I am so pleased that my child attends St Ursula’s Catholic school and our family enjoys being part of their community’. Leaders and governors are witnesses to Catholic social teaching. They demonstrate their commitment through participation in the Oscar Romero Award. Leaders and governors work exceptionally hard to ensure that the well-being of staff is paramount. There is a pro-active well-being team and the policy responds to both pupil and staff needs. Governors are ambitious for the Catholic life and mission of the school. They have begun to self-evaluate this aspect of school life, through a focused visit, where they offer support and further challenge. This self-evaluation now needs to be well-planned, frequent and include pupils, to ensure that strategic actions lead to continuous improvement.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

2

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

2

Pupils show great pride in their work and enjoy religious education. A Year 4 pupil described how in religious education lessons, 'we learn about how Jesus calls us'. A Year 5 pupil described the parable of the Prodigal Son and demonstrated a good understanding of God's forgiveness. Pupils steadily improve their subject knowledge in religious education. Pupils make good progress from their starting points because teaching enables them to know more and remember more. Pupils particularly in upper Key Stage 2 can speak with confidence about scripture and make connections between the Old and New Testaments. A focus on key vocabulary results in good levels of religious literacy relative to age. Pupils can speak confidently about what they have learned in religious education and are able to draw on prior learning to aid their understanding. Pupils are generally engaged in their learning and actively respond to teacher's feedback which they use to consolidate their understanding. Behaviour in lessons is good and they demonstrate a real commitment to their learning. Pupils in early years particularly enjoy lessons which follow the new *Religious Education Directory*.

Teachers plan lessons which are engaging and build on prior learning. This is exemplified in upper Key Stage 2 where tasks are designed to challenge all in order to maximise learning. There are high expectations for religious education. This is evident in how the pupils respond by producing extended pieces of work; including role play, art work, diary extracts and letter writing. However, plans should be further adapted to ensure that there are greater opportunities to develop pupils' creativity. There is also good challenge for the most able. Most teachers are highly skilled in checking understanding and addressing any misconceptions quickly and effectively. In the best lessons, questioning is used skilfully to identify where pupils are in their understanding and tasks are adapted accordingly where needed. In most lessons committed and experienced teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils with additional needs through careful planning

and differentiated tasks. In lessons where teachers recognise the impact of religious education on spiritual and moral development, pupils are given the space and time to reflect more deeply on their learning. Teachers' feedback in books is understood by pupils and they are clear on how well they are doing in religious education.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school fully meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. There is a clear plan for implementation of the *Religious Education Directory*, which is already embraced within the planning for early years. Religious education has parity with other subjects and resourcing is at least comparable with other core subjects. Religious education activities are part of the reading diaries that go home every day and pupils speak of how they enjoy these activities. The religious education leader is highly skilled and passionate about delivering high quality religious education. Her inspirational drive for excellence makes her a greatly appreciated excellent role model for others. The school's leadership team are committed to ensuring that staff have access to regular training to improve their practice. The religious education leader regularly provides support, when requested, particularly for staff new to the school. Leaders and governors have a clear vision for teaching and learning and monitoring of the subject is in place. However, this monitoring needs to be more systematic leading to a clear plan for self-evaluating. The plan needs to be focused with timed actions, to ensure even better outcomes and fully involve governors. Leaders now need to ensure that pupils are provided with more engaging enrichment activities.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

Pupils participate well in prayer and liturgy and are able to reflect silently upon scripture passages. They recognise that 'singing is praying twice', therefore they sing religious songs and hymns with joy and confidence. In class prayer and liturgy sessions most pupils are engaged and listen attentively to scripture. Pupils are able to describe parts of the liturgical year, including time to reflect during Advent and Lent. Pupil chaplains and the faith in action team are beginning to work with each other to plan and lead prayer and liturgy. Pupils are beginning to use a revised approach to prayer and liturgy, focusing on the '4 Ws'; welcome, word, worship and witness. This is at an early stage of development and pupils need to have regular opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy. Pupils are able to recognise how scripture shapes their lives and leads to action. Pupils are proud of their mission, which they reflect on during class and school prayer and liturgy. One pupil stated that they "get to evangelise" and can "spread the Gospel to others" so that "the whole world will know about it." In a Year 6 class liturgy, pupils shared spontaneous responses about how they are going to be better Christians. Pupils know prayer can help them when they are worried.

Prayer is central to the life of the school. The prayer and liturgy experiences offered include some variety in the prayer opportunity. However, younger pupils would benefit from more regular exposure to traditional prayers. Scripture passages used in class liturgies are relevant to the liturgical season. In key stage liturgies scripture is specially chosen to support the theme. Staff attending liturgies are active participants and positive role models, so that even the youngest children know what to do and join in.

Staff have received some professional development for the new prayer and liturgy resources, and their use has been modelled. However, class liturgies now need to become embedded in school practice. Although pupils read at Mass and other liturgies, supporting pupils to plan, lead and evaluate their own prayer and liturgy sessions is in its early stages. Music and other creative art

forms are not always consistently used. The school is well-resourced for prayer and liturgy; resources are cared for and used well to support prayer experiences. Class prayer tables are well presented and there is good provision across the school for prayer spaces. St David's room, a new space, is beginning to be created for personal prayer and reflection. Families are encouraged to participate in the prayer life of the school by attending assemblies and Mass.

The school has recently developed a new prayer and liturgy policy which can be easily accessed by all staff. It now needs to become a tool that they refer to when planning acts of worship alongside the school's own progression in prayer document. Leaders, including governors, plan to ensure that pupils can attend Mass on Holy Days of Obligation. Pupils are able to talk about other significant services including Ash Wednesday and Remembrance. Staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy. Leaders now need to ensure that staff have additional opportunities for professional development, regarding the new prayer and liturgy resources, including observing their peers. Leaders need to ensure that this professional development impacts and improves the quality of prayer and liturgy. Leaders ensure that staff plan and lead engaging liturgies that are relevant and accessible for all. For example, scripture for younger pupils is used. Governors are developing systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of prayer and liturgy. To further improve outcomes for pupils in this area, leaders and governors must now ensure that there is a strategic cycle of monitoring which focuses on concise planning, evidences practice and reviews systematically.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Ursula's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	102332
Full postal address of the school	281 Straight Road, Romford, RM3 7JS
School phone number	01708 345200
Name of head teacher or principal	Mr Karl Ashburn
Chair of governing board	Mr Andrew Shaw
School Website	https://stursulascatholicprimary.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	2-11
Trustees	Diocese of Brentwood
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	30th November 2016 (I); 23rd May 2017 (J)
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Gael Hicks	Lead inspector
Rosie McGlynn	Team inspector
Laura White	Team inspector
Felicity Hope	Shadow inspector

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement