

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

The Ursuline Preparatory School Ilford

March 2022

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School's Details

School	The Ursuline Preparatory School Ilfo	rd		
DfE number	317/6062			
Registered charity number	1130196	1130196		
Address	The Ursuline Preparatory School Ilfo	rd		
	2–4 Coventry Road			
	Ilford			
	Essex			
	IG1 4QR			
Telephone number	0208 5184050			
Email address	urspi@urspi.org.uk	urspi@urspi.org.uk		
Acting headteacher	Mrs Lorraine Pereira			
Chair of governors	Mr Simon Bird			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	105			
	EYFS 27 Key Sta Years 1	-		
	Key Stage 2 49 Years 3 to 6			
Inspection dates	1 to 4 March 2022			

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1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 The Ursuline Preparatory School is a Roman Catholic independent day school. The school opened on its present site in 1996 as a feeder school for The Ursuline High School, which is now part of the maintained sector. Originally for female pupils only, it became fully co-educational in 2011. The school is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The board of trustees assigns responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of the school to a board of governors. A new chair of governors was appointed in 2019. At the time of the inspection, an acting head was in post.

- 1.2 The school consists of three departments: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for pupils aged three to five years, Key Stage 1 for pupils aged five to seven, and Key Stage 2 for pupils aged seven to eleven.
- 1.3 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

What the school seeks to do

1.4 The school's aim is to provide the pupils with a sound Catholic, moral, social and academic education where all pupils strive to be the best they can be.

About the pupils

1.5 Pupils come from families with a range of professional and business backgrounds who live within a twenty-mile radius of the school. The school's own assessment data indicate that the ability of the pupils on entry is broadly average. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified fourteen pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), two of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for nine pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified nineteen pupils as being the more able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for seven other pupils because of their special talents in music and art.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> <u>Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.</u>

Key findings

2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards)
Regulations 2014 and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years
Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 - Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are

maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

The PART 6 - Provision of information

- 2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.
- 2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
 - Pupils display extremely positive attitudes to learning.
 - Pupils are outstanding communicators in their speaking, reading and writing; they use vocabulary appropriately and are excellent listeners from a very young age.
 - Pupils demonstrate strong knowledge, skills and understanding in the core subjects and apply them effectively.
 - Pupils display excellent numeracy skills and apply them successfully across the curriculum.
 - Pupils' progress and ability in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are good, but there are limited opportunities to develop these skills further across the curriculum.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils have an excellent understanding and appreciation of diversity and value it within their community.
 - Pupils' have a strong moral sense in line with the school's ethos, and their behaviour is excellent.
 - Pupils have excellent spiritual awareness and a strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life.
 - Pupils' social development is excellent; they interact and collaborate positively to solve problems with others.
 - Pupils show excellent appreciation and respect for the belief and faiths of others.

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
 - Enable pupils to develop their ICT skills further by creating more opportunities to use them across the curriculum.
 - Enable pupils to develop their skills and independence in the creative arts by creating more opportunities for them to do so.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress over time as a result of cohesive leadership, effective teaching and a broad and challenging curriculum. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children make good progress from their various starting points, actively encouraged by sensitive teaching and a nurturing environment, so that almost all reach the expected levels of development for their age. Evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment data show that, by the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in English and science is above average in relation to national age-related expectations and, in mathematics, it is well above. However, progress is variable across other subjects, in particular, the creative arts. Most pupils proceed to the senior school of their choice, and a few are awarded scholarships. Pupils with SEND or EAL make similar progress to other pupils, achieving well in relation to their needs, due to accurate interpretation of assessment data and the close liaison of teachers and leaders. More able pupils achieve in line with their potential as the result of the challenge they receive in lessons. Responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most parents agreed that the school enables their children to make progress and most agreed that their educational needs are met effectively. In their responses, all pupils agreed that their teachers help them to learn.
- 3.6 Pupils show secure knowledge and understanding and are highly effective in applying their skills in the core subjects. Children in the EYFS demonstrate excellent retention of their learning due to thorough observation and identification of next steps by staff, so that they move on or consolidate as necessary. The school places a high priority on the establishment of competency in English and mathematics, so pupils develop high standards in these subjects due to positive encouragement from teachers and the opportunities provided to practise and improve. Pupils' basic skills for learning are a strength across most areas; however, they are less strong in the creative subjects because there are fewer opportunities within the curriculum to develop independent creativity in these areas. Pupils are keen to demonstrate their skills. For instance, children in the EYFS confidently explained the plot of the story of the Three Little Pigs while making houses of bricks, straw and wood and, in a Year 5 assembly, pupils having assimilated many historical facts about crime and punishment through the ages, demonstrated excellent recall and understanding of the different types. Similarly, in an English lesson in Year 6, pupils showed excellent knowledge of quantifiable determiners, opposing adverbials and modal verbs, using them to present balanced arguments in groups. Pupils value the helpful feedback from teachers which enable them to reflect successfully on their achievements and move on to the next steps.
- 3.7 Pupils are excellent communicators. They are highly articulate orally and in writing, and they are skilled and respectful listeners. Strong relationships between teachers and pupils create a purposeful and productive environment in which pupils feel confident to express their ideas. Pupils speak with poise and confidence, and listen with care and attention, putting their ideas forward with clarity. In a personal, social, health education (PSHE) lesson, for example, pupils discussed and commented with great insight on the complex issue of the present situation in the Ukraine. Encouraged by sensitive and encouraging teaching, they spoke with depth and confidence about how the children might be feeling as they fled their country. Pupils use a wide range of vocabulary. Children in the EYFS discussed the characters they were dressed as for World Book Day, with one child confidently explaining that he had lost his tail and why! In Years 1 and 2, pupils use complex sentences and vocabulary in their story writing and their spelling and punctuation are accurate. In a lesson observed, younger pupils enjoyed reading their stories aloud with great expression. In the EYFS, children confidently explained what their activities were and what they are doing. A group were engaged in role play as travel agents and, since one child was selling dinosaurs, another used the telephone to call the airline to see if it was permitted to travel by plane with a newly purchased dinosaur, speaking clearly and persuasively. Pupils' written communication is highly developed from an early age, and their writing is fluent and accurate, with increasingly sophisticated language and content used for a variety of purposes.

- 3.8 Pupils of all ages attain excellent levels of numeracy skills which they successfully apply to other areas. Supported effectively by teachers, they respond positively to the levels of challenge available to enrich their skills and understanding. In a mathematics lesson, pupils in Year 1 confidently discussed length, explaining that it is still possible to measure without starting from zero and effectively changing centimetres into millimetres. In another lesson, pupils in Year 2 showed excellent aptitude for algebra, using appropriate technical language and discussing possible solutions to a problem. As they progress through the school, pupils are able to choose a variety of different methods, often displaying higher-level reasoning skills, to solve advanced mathematical problems. Converting fractions to decimals, pupils in Year 5 used mathematical terms and strategies with confidence. Inspired by the clear presentation and high expectations of the teacher, they were reviewing what they knew about equivalent, complex and simple fractions, working well in groups to share and apply their knowledge and to present their findings. Sensitive teaching ensured that all pupils made rapid progress in this stimulating lesson, the more able being appropriately challenged and, at the same time, the less able were being supported by the teacher and their peers.
- 3.9 Pupils are competent in the use of ICT. The school takes a measured approach to ICT with pupils growing in confidence so that, by the upper years, they are able to code, demonstrate good keyboard skills and use these for research and computation. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils confidently made cartoon strips with their own photos, manipulating the image using a publishing tool and in a lesson in Year 5 pupils independently and confidently used computers to research a Catholic community they had been learning about in RE, helping each other out with technical issues. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and are making good progress, but that there are limited opportunities for them to develop their skills across the curriculum.
- 3.10 Pupils develop good study skills and are intellectually curious learners, seizing every occasion to debate and analyse new and prior learning concepts and apply them effectively. Creative thinking opportunities allow pupils to think deeply and independently. In class, they respond reflectively with thought-provoking answers to teachers' challenging questions. For instance, in a lesson in Year 1, pupils were able to predict what would happen to seeds when placed in a variety of conditions, and in an excellent English lesson on narrative poetry, creative and imaginative teaching engaged the pupils who confidently analysed showing depth of thought about the poem and what the protagonist was thinking and feeling; hypothesised about what would happen next; shared their ideas and then went on to write their own narrative poems.
- 3.11 Pupils make good progress in extra-curricular activities, though there are limited opportunities for matches and competitions. Choral music is a strength of the school and the music group performs with skill and enjoyment. Older pupils were delighted to perform their song about Henry VIII, having successfully memorised the lyrics for a class assembly. A few parents in their questionnaire responses said that they would like the school to offer a wider range of extra-curricular activities. The inspectors found that, although the range is small, pupils gain success and become skilled in the extra-curricular opportunities on offer, such as football and dance.
- 3.12 Pupils display excellent attitudes to their work and good levels of independence. When offered the chance, they thrive on the freedom to take charge of their own learning. Pupils are enthusiastic, diligent learners. They eagerly embrace new learning and tackle open-ended tasks. In a singing practice, teaching clearly articulated what the pupils must do to improve, and they responded positively. Pupils showed a real love of singing and a keenness to improve their presentation and worked hard to perfect the piece.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils are confident, caring and have high levels of self-esteem and self-awareness, successfully meeting the school's aim to provide pupils with a sound Catholic, moral, social and academic

education where all pupils strive to be the best they can be. A clear framework for their personal development results in pupils who are confident, well-rounded and curious, enabling them to develop into respectful, resilient young people. They have excellent levels of perseverance and resilience and respond to challenges at all levels with commitment and enthusiasm. In the EYFS, children show strong self-confidence in their activities and play because of the warm, encouraging interactions with their teachers. During a merit assembly, many pupils achieved awards for a wide variety of things, from attendance, swimming, best costumes, to house points, the warmth of the celebration demonstrating how much these things are valued in supporting pupils' self-understanding and self-esteem, in line with the school's aims and ethos. In interviews, the pupils said that they value and follow advice given by teachers and were able to explain what they are good at and what they need to work at to make progress. Pupils are self-disciplined and resilient in their learning. From reflection times in Nursery to self-assessments of work at the top of the school, they are encouraged to be reflective learners, developing a strong understanding of themselves which stands them in good stead for the next stages of their education and lives. Pupils judge their own work effectively, self-reflecting and self-evaluating, using the success criteria from the task, with teachers adding supportive comments to further strengthen this area. The leadership of the school is highly effective in creating the space and the time for pupils to develop excellent personal skills and self-awareness. All parents who replied to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children to be confident and independent.

- 3.15 Pupils are confident and able decision-makers and understand the importance of this skill. Pupils are actively involved in decision-making, for instance, through the school council. Pupils commented that they relish opportunities in lessons to choose the level of difficulty to tackle in a task. They are able to consider options evaluatively, for instance in a lesson in Year 6, pupils worked effectively together in groups to decide how to prepare an argument, collaborating well to decide what should be included. Children in the EYFS confidently made sensible choices on what to play with and with whom, giving reasons for their choices. Older pupils understand that decisions they make about friendships and social groups will be important for their future well-being and that of others in the years ahead. They adjust their behaviour accordingly. Strong relationships between teachers and pupils promote an atmosphere where pupils are willing to respond to challenges and take risks, understanding that mistakes are an important part of learning.
- Pupils have a deep spiritual understanding. They appreciate the importance of the religious aspects of life, both their own and those of others, and have respect for the Christian ethos that permeates the school. They attend a rich schedule of assemblies and Catholic Masses, which allow regular quiet times where pupils can pray, think and reflect, and they are good at taking that time to develop their spiritual understanding. In an RE lesson in Year 1, pupils reflected on the things they wanted to improve on, linked with the Ash Wednesday Mass of the previous day. Pupils commented that circle time and mindfulness lessons were positive opportunities to be thoughtful about different topics and that they allowed opportunities to discuss and reflect on things that 'can't be bought', but are beautiful, such as the sky, nature and paintings.
- 3.17 The pupils have a strong moral sense, and behaviour in all age groups is excellent. Despite palpable excitement as children in the EYFS arrived wearing costumes for World Book Day, they were able to calm down and settle quickly for registration and story. Older pupils took part in intelligent and thoughtful discussion about morality and forgiveness in the context of a lesson about Prospero causing a storm in *The Tempest*. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of right and wrong and show appreciation for the rules and values in place at the school. They embrace the school culture of kindness and have a clear understanding of the school code of conduct which is regularly referenced and discussed in form times and assemblies. This enables pupils to understand the expectations and, therefore, modify their own behaviour accordingly. They are deeply caring and respectful of each other and the school community. Pupils said in interviews that they regarded members of staff and older pupils as role models and very much looked up to and respected them. Evidence from interviews and observations around the school show that pupils are very aware of the expectations made of them by the school,

- and their behaviour is exemplary. The vast majority of pupils who replied to the questionnaire agreed that pupils are kind and respect each other.
- 3.18 Pupils are socially aware and so are able to work effectively with others, including to solve problems and achieve common goals. Pupils form highly effective relationships with each other and understand the value of respect. They spoke of the house system which enhances their sense of belonging, and the opportunities they have to work with older and younger pupils in the pupil enrichment programmes in which they tackle a variety of challenging problem-solving tasks. The whole-school ethos encourages collaborative working, and there are many such opportunities to do so. Pupils embrace the challenge of working together towards a common outcome with consistent enthusiasm. They form positive relationships with their peers and collaborate effectively in their lessons and their play. This is underpinned by the consistent high expectations and caring approach of the staff. At playtime, pupils collaborate well in a variety of activities, and behave sociably and respectfully towards each other. In the Ash Wednesday Mass, musicians collaborated well together to produce a high standard of performance. Younger pupils were keen to share ideas in lessons and worked effectively together in class. Almost all pupils responding to the questionnaire agreed that the school teaches them to build positive relationships and friendships.
- 3.19 Pupils respect and care for each other as part of a supportive community. Older pupils have responsibilities such as heads of school, cyber and anti-bullying ambassadors, which they carry out effectively, setting an excellent example to others. Pupils take part in school council and eco committee to represent the school on important environmental issues. The school music group led the music confidently and competently in an act of worship, enhancing the experience for all in attendance. Children in the EYFS were learning how to take responsibility for their own belongings, putting bags and coats away correctly. Caring for each other is a strong part of the whole-school ethos. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.20 Pupils show enormous respect for different faiths and beliefs and enjoy learning about their different cultures and traditions through a well-planned PSHE, RE and relationships education curriculum. The open and friendly ethos of the school supports this and underpins the highly positive relationships between everyone. Governors and senior leaders actively promote inclusivity across the school. Curricular opportunities enable pupils to develop a good awareness of the different cultures and backgrounds in the school. Opportunities to learn about these underpin a broad awareness and appreciation of diversity within their own community and beyond. In all classes and around the school, pupils interact well with each other, showing respect for the wide variety of cultures and beliefs represented. There are many opportunities for pupils of all faiths to share and celebrate. Older pupils have weekly Spanish lessons, and literature and art from a variety of cultures is studied in English and art lessons, making links between language and culture. Pupils are inquisitive about the faiths of others. In international week, pupils were encouraged to wear their traditional dress and sing a song or share food from their culture.
- 3.21 Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and physically and mentally healthy. Leaders ensure that all pupils engage in sufficient physical activity, and pupils understand the importance of choosing balanced meals and the physical and mental benefits of healthy exercise. Pupils showed clear enjoyment of PE lessons and after-school football club and an understanding of the benefits to their well-being. During lunch, older pupils spoke confidently about making healthy food choices, and younger pupils expressed the importance of eating their vegetables. In interviews, pupils recognised the importance of mental well-being and the negative impact that anxiety can have on the individual, commenting that helpful discussions in PSHE and form time and support from teachers ensure that they can share any worries or concerns. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they knew how to stay safe when online, and this was confirmed in interviews when pupils showed awareness and knowledge, explaining how PSHE and ICT lessons had deepened their understanding significantly.

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4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, a Catholic Mass and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Loraine Cavanagh Reporting inspector

Mr Sam Antrobus Compliance team inspector (Chief executive officer for a group of

IAPS and ISA schools)

Mrs Heidi Berry Team inspector (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)