



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION  
URSULINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

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## Ursuline Preparatory School

Full Name of School	<b>Ursuline Preparatory School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>315/6003</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>1079754</b>		
Address	<b>Ursuline Preparatory School 18 The Downs Wimbledon London SW20 8HR</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>020 8947 0859</b>		
Fax Number	<b>020 8947 0885</b>		
Email Address	<b>office@ursuline-prep.merton.sch.uk</b>		
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Anne Farnish</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Francis Bacon</b>		
Proprietor	<b>MrTom Bolland</b>		
Age Range	<b>3 to 11</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>259</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>		
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5 (EYFS):</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>5-11: 163</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Anne Stride</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection Dates	<b>10 Jun 2014 to 13 Jun 2014</b>		

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*, which occupies a period of four continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in May 2011.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. The range of these Regulations, which replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003, can be viewed on the website [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk). Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for pupils aged under three), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Linda Donowho	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Claire Delo	Team Inspector (Assistant Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr Oliver Stokes	Team Inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Dr Wendy Bowring	Co-ordinating Inspector for Early Years

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 Ursuline Preparatory School is a Catholic day school for girls aged 3 to 11 and for boys aged 3 to 4. It is located in Wimbledon, in south west London. The school is registered as a charity and is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. As such, it is overseen by a board of trustees. The chair of the trustee body has been delegated the role of proprietor by the Ursuline order that owns the school. Since the previous inspection a new headmistress has taken up post and the management of the school has been restructured.
- 1.2 The school caters for 259 pupils, 236 girls and 23 boys. In total, 27 children attend part-time and 29 full-time in the co-educational Nursery, and 40 girls attend full-time in Reception classes, making up the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There are 69 pupils in Years 1 to 2 and 94 pupils in Years 3 to 6. Of the 60 pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL), 14 require support for the acquisition of English. A further 34 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional support from the school. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.3 The school aims to educate, nurture and develop each pupil to his or her personal best, so that all pupils have the opportunity of a complete, happy and successful school experience and emerge as confident, well-educated and well-rounded individuals. It also seeks to develop the spiritual and moral lives of the pupils, as well as to develop a full partnership with parents, the Catholic Church and the wider community.
- 1.4 The majority of pupils are from the immediate locality, some of whose parents work in professional or business occupations. The school population is predominantly of white British heritage, while a small proportion of pupils come from other ethnic backgrounds.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, with around a fifth of pupils of well above average ability and very few pupils having ability that is below average.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 The overall quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent. Standards are high and progress is good. The pupils develop highly effectively in their knowledge, understanding and skills across a broad range of subjects and activities. In the EYFS, activities are at present restricted because of a building project. As a result, opportunities to provide appropriate activities both indoors and in the outside environment are limited at times. The vibrant curriculum and the excellent programme of extra-curricular activities elsewhere carefully support the needs of those of different abilities and ages, successfully fulfilling the school's aim to provide an enjoyable and challenging learning environment. Achievements are particularly notable in literacy, mathematics, science. The pupils' success is also promoted by excellent teaching and their exemplary attitudes to learning, which contribute well to their progress. In lessons, teaching methods are particularly effective in motivating and enthusing pupils and in challenging them to think for themselves. In less successful lessons, opportunities to challenge pupils are sometimes limited and teachers' subject knowledge is not always assured. Opportunities for teaching staff to observe each other's lessons and to share best practice are somewhat limited.
- 2.2 The explicit fulfilment of the school's aims, based significantly on the Ursuline philosophy, and the school's mission statement are evident through the high standard of pupils' personal development. From the EYFS onwards, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils speak with considerable maturity for their ages and develop a keen self-awareness, supported by the excellent pastoral care they receive. As a result, there is a happy, friendly atmosphere throughout the school. Every individual is well respected and treated with great courtesy and care. Welfare, health and safety matters are managed well. Since the previous inspection, all requirements with regard to staff recruitment have been implemented and procedures are now rigorous and carefully administrated.
- 2.3 Governance is excellent. The trustees and governors are committed to the academic progress and personal development of the pupils, together with the intent that the school sustains its Ursuline philosophy. Trustees and governors have excellent oversight of the school. They have recognised a need to improve the provision for the EYFS and are fully committed to the building project now underway. Leadership and management are good. Since the previous inspection, roles have been clearly defined, providing strong leadership and a clear vision for the school, with a focused emphasis on the curriculum, teaching and learning. However, in the EYFS, management is less effective, particularly in areas such as self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The school has excellent links with parents, the vast majority of whom support all aspects of school life.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

2.4 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Further develop peer observations for teaching staff throughout in order to better share best practice.
2. Involve all EYFS staff in evaluating the setting's outcomes and in planning targeted improvements.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning**

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils are well educated in accordance with the school's aims to provide an enjoyable and challenging learning environment and to develop well-rounded individuals who look to the future with confidence. Pupils achieve high levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in curriculum subjects and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, all children, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able, learn and develop well, making good progress according to their starting points. As a result, all reach at least the expected level of development for their age. Nursery children recognise numerals, count confidently to ten and recognise simple two-dimensional shapes. They can identify initial sounds and demonstrate careful letter formation. Reception children can add and subtract numbers to 100, double numbers and understand the concept of estimation. They can count to ten in French and know that a digraph is two letters that make one sound. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning activities and participate with enthusiasm and excitement, co-operating very well with each other and expressing themselves clearly and confidently.
- 3.4 Throughout all stages of the school, literacy skills are high. Pupils' oral skills are of particular note; they are highly articulate in their interactions with staff and their peers. In lessons they delight in opportunities to offer coherent opinions; they eagerly seize opportunities to answer questions and enjoy debating subjects of interest with each other. Pupils' understanding and correct application of grammar and punctuation are well established. They write with fluency and their writing shows strong evidence of critical thought and creativity. This was recognised externally, with pupils from Years 2, 3 and 6 achieving success in a local young writers' competition. Pupils read confidently and expressively, regularly encouraged in lessons. Numeracy skills are excellent and pupils demonstrate high levels of logical thinking and problem solving. This is also reflected in science, where pupils successfully engage in investigative tasks. Their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are excellent and pupils view its use as an integral part of the curriculum.
- 3.5 Pupils' physical skills are well developed throughout the school through their participation in a wide range of sports and activities. The school's inclusive approach enables pupils of all abilities to take part in these activities, including against other schools, as well as in house competitions within the school. Pupils enjoy their success. This includes the under-11 netball team winning a 'plate' competition, gold, silver and bronze medallists in a recent athletics meet and a silver medal in the London regional under-12 synchronised swimming championship. Chess is a popular pastime, with many pupils engaged in internal competitions and individual participation in the county final stage of a UK competition. Pupils achieve individual success in speech and drama examinations, and are successful in individual music examinations as well as performing in the school choirs. A testimony to their creativity is the high standard of artwork displayed around the school.

- 3.6 Pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to performance in national tests, but on the evidence available it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. Results in standardised tests of attainment used by the school indicate that pupils achieve results in English and mathematics that are higher than national norms. This level of attainment, together with inspection evidence from lessons observed, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils, indicates that pupils make at least good progress in relation to those of similar ability. When they leave the school at the age of 11, most pupils transfer to the senior school of their first choice, some achieving scholarships. Lower attaining pupils and those with SEND make excellent progress because they are well supported across the school. They are withdrawn from lessons for individual work if required and are regularly supported in class by their teacher or classroom assistants as appropriate. The most able pupils and those with particular talents are well catered for in lessons, with targeted work and activities that challenge their thinking. Pupils with EAL make excellent progress because they are well supported in lessons and receive extra help when required.
- 3.7 Pupils have an excellent work ethic and they are enthusiastic learners from an early age. They are highly motivated and co-operative, and keen to be involved in lessons and activities, displaying high levels of concentration throughout the day. Respect for one another amongst pupils, and between pupils and staff, is a strength of the school, with high expectations of others. As a result, pupils' behaviour in class is generally excellent. Pupils work very well both together and independently. They enjoy school and demonstrate a willingness to succeed.

### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision**

- 3.8 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.9 In the EYFS, the setting makes good provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend, fully appreciating their individual differences. The educational programmes covering the seven areas of learning provide interesting and challenging experiences for all children, including those with SEND or EAL. These activities provide many opportunities for playing and exploring, and for creating and thinking critically, although opportunities for children to self-select materials and equipment are not always evident. There is generally a balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, and children benefit greatly from these, particularly when they include the use of the outdoor learning environment. During the current period of construction the school has endeavoured to the best of its ability to ensure an appropriate range of experiences for the children.
- 3.10 For older pupils, the curriculum provision is rich in content, balanced and exciting. It strongly supports the school's aims of providing a challenging and enjoyable learning environment, and shows very good progression and broad and balanced coverage across the subjects. The curriculum promotes challenge and excellence and is sympathetically planned to meet the needs of the whole range of pupils as they progress through the school. It is efficiently timetabled to enable pupils to experience a programme of studies beyond basic requirements. There is a wide range of linguistic opportunities; French is taught from Reception and Spanish from Year 4. Creative subjects are well represented, with design technology, art and music, together with opportunities for all pupils to take part in concerts and in drama and role play within lessons. All pupils participate regularly in school productions. Specialist subject teaching is provided in art, music, modern foreign languages and physical education across the school.

- 3.11 All pupils benefit from the excellent ICT provision. In addition to ICT being taught as a discrete subject, pupils of all ages are provided with a wealth of opportunities within the curriculum to develop their skills to a particularly high standard. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is strong; it is taught in weekly lessons, with further enrichment across and beyond the curriculum in assemblies.
- 3.12 There is clear progression in the development of the curriculum, and planning across all subjects is meticulous. It is closely monitored by curriculum co-ordinators and prepares the pupils extremely well for the next stage of their education. The breadth of the curriculum is further enhanced by the use of cross-curricular links between subjects such as art, history and geography, together with science and mathematics.
- 3.13 Curricular support for those requiring additional help is successful, and the systems for identifying and supporting such pupils work well; any identified as requiring support are given individual education plans. Work is appropriately matched to their needs in lessons and good use is made of teaching assistants to provide class support. Pupils identified by the school as being able and talented are well catered for in lessons through specifically challenging activities and work.
- 3.14 The academic curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The current programme, which takes place at the beginning and end of the school day and at lunchtimes, is much appreciated by pupils. It includes ballet, street dance, cooking, chess, art and Spanish, together with many musical opportunities. Extra-curricular sports activities are particularly well represented and available to pupils of all abilities and ages.
- 3.15 Close links have been established with the local community, reflecting the school's aim to develop a full partnership with parents, the church and the wider community. The school has strong pastoral links with the local parish and youth minister. At differing times, pupils attend Mass at a local church. Pupils support local events such as the 'Book Fest', and regularly share activities with another local school. Their experiences are further broadened by a wide range of visiting professionals and themed days. The curriculum is also enriched by day and residential trips that support topics being studied across the school. Many visits are arranged to local sites, such as the library and places of historic interest. These activities considerably enhance the curriculum and are of great benefit to pupils, affording them opportunities to develop social and personal skills.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.16 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.17 Throughout the school, teachers have established an excellent rapport with their pupils and work hard to ensure that they achieve in line with the school's aims. Pupils benefit from teaching that is exceptionally well planned and sets high expectations of them; it is highly effective in promoting their progress. In the EYFS, such high expectations inspire all children to try their best and persevere. Overall, staff use open-ended questions well to challenge children's thinking but this is not consistent throughout the setting.
- 3.18 For older pupils, almost all teaching uses time well and teachers set appropriate challenges, skilfully questioning pupils in order to challenge their thinking. Opportunities are routinely provided for investigations and collaborative tasks. Peer discussion and review are used well to support pupils' understanding and skills. In

the small number of less successful lessons observed, pupils were offered fewer challenges, their concentration declined and they consequently made less progress.

- 3.19 Teachers generally display excellent subject knowledge although this is not consistent across all lessons. and their enthusiasm inspires and motivates pupils. Pupils benefit considerably from a wide range of teaching resources, including the excellent use that is made of ICT by both themselves and teachers. Teachers regularly provide pupils with open-ended tasks to promote reasoning, problem solving and practical work, and set a high expectation of independence.
- 3.20 The teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils' capabilities and adapt teaching to meet the needs of different abilities extremely well, including the more able. Teachers and other support staff show good awareness of pupils with SEND and provide strong support to individuals in lessons to ensure that they make good progress.
- 3.21 Assessment is used well to promote good progress. Marking is extremely thorough, with informative comments and, in some subjects, targets to guide improvement. The written comments ensure that the pupils have a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for development. This is further assisted through pupils' own assessment of their work, encouraging them to take some responsibility for and contribute towards their own learning. The pupils' attainment is assessed regularly, through the use of a range of standardised tests, particularly in English and mathematics. The results are used to monitor progress and to detect any unusual emerging patterns, thus identifying pupils who may require extra support or additional challenges.
- 3.22 A recently introduced strategy for tracking children's progress across the EYFS provides a clear and thorough picture of their achievements across the areas of learning, but staff commented that its administration is time consuming in its present form.
- 3.23 Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. High levels of mutual respect and pupils' high standards of behaviour characterise teaching. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect, as is humour, and these add to the pupils' enjoyment of the topics being studied. Pupils speak highly of the help and support provided by their teachers.

## **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' personal qualities develop exceptionally well. These are central to the school's aims for pupils to commit themselves in the footsteps of Saint Angela Merici in the spirit of serving others. Pupils are reflective, focused, compassionate and open minded. They are polite and well mannered, with an infectious enthusiasm for life which is communicated in all they do. They work together in harmony, developing a sense of responsibility for others and the wider world. They look after and respect each other, and greatly appreciate the staff's support for their development and focus. Pupils' personal development starts well in the EYFS. From the youngest age children are happy to share resources, take turns and organise themselves effectively, becoming more independent. Their behaviour is exemplary. Excellent relationships are forged between the children, staff and parents, based on mutual respect and an ethos of nurture and care. Children are extremely well prepared for their transition from Reception to Year 1.
- 4.3 The pupils' spiritual development is excellent throughout the school. They are confident and self-aware, and can articulate their developing spirituality. They have a strong sense of self-esteem as a result of the recognition they receive for their successes, which are celebrated regularly in assemblies, including the half-termly headmistress's award for serving others. Pupils demonstrate a keen sense of reflection on non-material aspects of life when taking part in school Masses, assemblies and prayers, attending Mass at a local church, and through art and drama, and many uplifting musical activities.
- 4.4 Moral awareness is excellent. Pupils have a keen understanding of right and wrong which goes beyond a simple notion of rules and is grounded on a sense of mutual and collaborative responsibility, implicit in school life. Formal sanctions are few and their use is rarely required. Pupils' interactions with one another, whether during group investigation or movement around school, are polite and respectful, and demonstrate tolerance and friendship. Pupils' knowledge of ethical and moral issues is further developed well through their PSHE programme.
- 4.5 The pupils' social development is excellent. They care for each other and show highly developed social skills, and a strong sense of community is fostered throughout the school. Pupils clearly rise to the many opportunities for responsibility, whether through membership of the school council or 'eco' committee, or, for those who are older, as class monitors or 'buddies' for the younger pupils. A culture of younger children turning to older pupils for support is fostered throughout the school. The house system further encourages this, with all ages working together in house competitions. Pupils show a strong political awareness through electing school council members. They are very aware of the needs of others beyond their school, and the whole school actively contributes to those in society who are less fortunate than themselves. Many good causes have benefited from the school's fund-raising activities. Pupils and staff lead a range of initiatives, including termly charity events, for example raising funds for Save the Children.
- 4.6 Pupils have an excellent cultural awareness, demonstrating strong appreciation of and respect for their own and each other's faiths and cultures. Pupils and staff celebrate the diversity within the school, enabling all pupils to develop an insight into

the values and beliefs of others, and to develop harmonious relations, whilst valuing Western cultural traditions. The pupils have a good knowledge of other cultures, fostered by the school's international food fayres, regular visits to different places of worship and the recent project which involved pupils looking at all the world wide Ursuline schools. Pupils have a broad knowledge of public institutions and services, appropriate to their age, supported by a wide range of external visitors and visits, for example to the Houses of Parliament, the Bank of England, local theatres and concert halls.

#### **4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care**

- 4.7 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is excellent.
- 4.8 The personal development of pupils is fostered by outstanding support and guidance from the staff, in line with the school's aims. Staff liaise closely and share relevant information promptly and effectively. Careful records are kept and these are regularly monitored for any emerging patterns.
- 4.9 In the EYFS, key people are particularly involved at the beginning of the academic year in building strong relationships with children and their families. Staff provide good role models for children in their care, demonstrating patience, perseverance, kindness and helpfulness whilst supporting children's development of personal skills and independence. Children feel empowered to ask for help in solving everyday disagreements with friends.
- 4.10 The school's policies and procedures for promoting an ethos of positive behaviour and guarding against harassment and bullying work very well. In class and around the school, respect for others is evident. Clear staff guidance, with a strong focus on positive behaviour, ensures close adherence to the school rules. A 'Friendship Week' held at the beginning of the year further supports this approach. Good behaviour is openly rewarded through house points, with special emphasis given to headmistress's awards. These are issued at the end of each half term, for conduct such as positive behaviour or kindness to others. Measures such as the 'buddy' system prove an effective way of helping new pupils to settle in. Where disputes arise, pupils are eager to resolve them personally or are prepared to help mediate between friends. They are confident that they can turn to a member of staff for help if needed and as a consequence, issues are swiftly resolved.
- 4.11 Pupils, including those in the EYFS, are encouraged to engage in a healthy lifestyle by exercising regularly and eating healthily. This is promoted within the curriculum and through a range of physical activities and clubs. Consequently, pupils have an excellent appreciation of the importance of eating a balanced diet. This message is positively reinforced through notices on healthy choices for snacks displayed throughout the school. Staff take this responsibility seriously and help to ensure that packed lunches brought from home support this.
- 4.12 The school council and the 'eco' committee are effective forums for listening to the views of pupils. A number of actions have resulted from pupils' suggestions; these have included organising a 'bring and buy' sale, and requests for more time in the adventure playground.
- 4.13 An effective plan is in place to cater for the needs of pupils with SEND or EAL, who are extremely well supported, in accordance with school policy.

**4.(c) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.14 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is excellent.
- 4.15 Concern for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils strongly supports their personal development, in line with the aims of the school. In the EYFS, a high priority is given to the safety of children and to minimising health and safety risks. Staff deployment ensures that children are appropriately supervised at all times. Daily checks are made to ensure that any potential hazards are responded to promptly. Staff are trained in paediatric first aid and other areas of health and safety.
- 4.16 Comprehensive arrangements for safeguarding are in place, which are in line with official guidance. Staff receive suitable training in child protection, both when they begin work at the school and at appropriate intervals. Those who act as designated persons attend additional training courses with the local social services department as required. As a result, staff are aware of the action to take should any concerns arise and the school liaises effectively with local agencies. Safeguarding is carefully overseen by both the trustees and the governing body, who together conduct an annual review. Arrangements for recruiting staff are more rigorously implemented than at the time of the previous inspection and now meet the requirements fully.
- 4.17 Throughout the school, health and safety policies and procedures are effective, regularly reviewed and implemented well by all staff. Health and safety are a standard agenda item at senior management team and finance committee meetings; any concerns within the school are reviewed, and clear methods are used to identify, record and minimise any hazards that arise. Risk assessments have been undertaken in all areas of school life, including external visits. The arrangements for pupils who are ill or injured whilst at school are of a high standard and strong provision is made for the welfare of those who have SEND. The attendance and admission registers are completed accurately, suitably maintained and stored for three years as required.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent.
- 5.2 The board of trustees and the governing body, to whom the trustees have delegated the day-to-day running of the school, provide an excellent vision for the core values and future of the school. They ensure that it maintains its Ursuline ethos, whilst continuing to develop high quality education through innovation, significant investment in staff, accommodation and resources, and careful evaluation of performance. Governors have recognised the need to improve accommodation for the EYFS and the ambitious building project to provide new accommodation is due for completion in the forthcoming autumn term.
- 5.3 Since the previous inspection, the roles and responsibilities of the governing body have been clearly established and governors bring a wide range of interests and expertise to their role. The board has a clearly defined structure and meets termly, as do its highly effective and supportive sub-committees. These meetings have been more frequent over the course of the recent building project in order to ensure its success. Governors have a clear picture of how successfully the school operates. The chair of governors keeps in constant contact with both the headmistress and the school business manager, and governors are regular visitors to the school, including the EYFS. These visits include observing lessons and talking to staff. The headmistress and school business manager compile regular reports that provide the board with a good insight into the working of the school, its achievements and its challenges.
- 5.4 Governors recognise their responsibility for the school's compliance with regulatory requirements. They fulfil their obligations for monitoring health and safety and child protection, and specific governors have been allocated responsibility for these areas, ensuring that relevant policies are regularly reviewed. Governors undertake training in safeguarding, and those who are new receive a full induction.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is good.
- 5.6 Leadership strongly supports the school's aims, so that pupils work productively in an enjoyable and challenging learning environment. Strong spiritual leadership filters through the school, encouraging pupils to develop a strong, moral compass in living out Christian values through the example of Saint Angela.
- 5.7 The members of the senior management team work very well together. Since the previous inspection, senior management has been restructured and its responsibilities have been clarified. Management processes have been developed and implemented in response to the recommendations made at that time. Structures and routines are clear, comprehensive and well communicated. Management is committed to improving quality, particularly in teaching and learning, whilst keeping the fulfilment of the school's aims firmly in focus. This is reflected in pupils' excellent academic standards and outstanding personal development, and in extremely effective teaching, as well as the happy and caring ethos that permeates

all aspects of school life. Management's vision for the school is clear, formalised in the current development plan. The plan has a clear focus and well-defined timescales, and it outlines targets and plans for its review and development over a long-term period, as recommended at the previous inspection. All curricular subjects are represented and staff have made valuable contributions. In the EYFS, self-evaluation and planning are less successful. Staff meet regularly to discuss all aspects of their practice, but they do not regularly carry out co-ordinated self-evaluation or set challenging targets for the future. The development plan identifies short-term targets, but not all members of the team have had formal input into this.

- 5.8 In other year groups, a well-organised meeting structure and informal liaison allow staff to evaluate and discuss their practice, as well as to monitor the progress and welfare of their pupils. Monitoring processes are firmly established, and pupils' work and teachers' planning are scrutinised by senior management to ensure that teaching and marking are meeting the standards expected. Regular lesson observations are undertaken by senior management and subjects are given a particular focus on a rolling programme, during which time subject co-ordinators carry out full audits, including lesson observations. However, teachers' peer observation to share best practice is less well established. A thorough appraisal system for all teaching and non-teaching staff is linked to personal and professional targets and the training and support necessary to secure them. Careful induction arrangements ensure that new appointees are well informed of school routines and safeguarding arrangements, and a comprehensive staff handbook gives them further guidance. In the EYFS, regular focused meetings for senior colleagues to provide professional support to individual members of staff in relation to their personal effectiveness or to issues of children's well-being are not currently part of formal practice. The setting provides regular opportunities for staff to build on their professional skills.
- 5.9 All appointments of staff and volunteers now follow scrupulously the principles of safer recruitment, and the necessary checks are suitably recorded in a central register and individual files.
- 5.10 Throughout the school, an excellent and effective partnership with parents, carers and guardians is promoted, aiming to establish and maintain particularly good communication between school and home. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated overwhelmingly positive parental approval of most aspects of school life. In particular, parents commented favourably on pupils' safety, happiness and behaviour, and on pastoral care, receiving timely responses to questions and the management of the school. Inspection evidence supported parents' views.
- 5.11 Parents are highly involved in school life and their considerable contributions to curriculum activities and outings are welcomed by staff. . The very active parents' association supports the school through networking, running a weekly French cafe, and arranging social events for parents and pupils, such as a quiz night, the Christmas fair, a football match and a meal for fathers and daughters; many parents become involved in social or fund-raising committees. Particularly appreciated by parents and the school is the 'drop and go' scheme in the mornings, where volunteer parents assist in overseeing pupils' safe entry to the school site when leaving their parents' care. In the EYFS, parents are invited into school to give talks about their cultures, for example discussing their home countries, and helping to organise activities, such as the sewing club for older pupils. Parents are also encouraged to attend sporting events, class assemblies, concerts and dramatic productions. They

take advantage of regular information, consultation and transition meetings. Parents appreciate greatly the much improved provision for extra-curricular activities and the commitment from staff this involves.

- 5.12 Parents receive good information about the school and its work, for example through a helpful weekly newsletter. Parents of EYFS children greatly appreciate the regular planning summary that outlines the week's activities and is sent to them in advance by email. Joining information for parents of pupils new to the school is comprehensive and detailed. Parents greatly appreciate the ease with which they are able to communicate with the school, through, for example, meetings, telephone calls and email. They attend formal meetings at which they can discuss their children's progress with staff. In addition, parents receive two full reports twice a year, the latter providing clear, detailed information about their children's progress and effort, as well as suggestions and targets for improvement. In response to the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents indicated satisfaction with the availability of information provided by the school.
- 5.13 The school has an appropriate complaints procedure that is efficiently implemented in line with published documentation when required. Parents with concerns or queries regarding their children may contact the school at any time.

**What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**