

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**Ursuline Preparatory School**

**June 2019**



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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Ursuline Preparatory School			
<b>DfE number</b>	881/6034			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1058282			
<b>Address</b>	Ursuline Preparatory School Old Great Ropers Great Ropers Lane Great Warley Brentwood Essex CM13 3JW			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01277 227152			
<b>Email address</b>	secretary@ursulineprepwarley.co.uk			
<b>Headmistress</b>	Mrs Pauline Wilson			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Fiona Deery			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	172			
	<b>Boys</b>	91	<b>Girls</b>	81
	<b>EYFS</b>	52	<b>Juniors</b>	120
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25 to 27 June 2019			

## **1. Background Information**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Founded in the 1930s as an independent Catholic school for girls, the school relocated in 1994 to a large Georgian house on the outskirts of Brentwood. In 1994 the school became a co-educational school for boys and girls aged from 3 to 11 years. At this time, the preparatory school became independent from the Ursuline High School, although the Ursuline ethos and traditional standards are still maintained.
- 1.2 The school is a charitable trust administered and run by a board of trustees supported by an advisory governing body.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.3 The principal aim of the school is to provide the children with a sound Catholic, moral, social and academic education. The school aims to create a happy and caring atmosphere founded on traditional values and fair discipline. The school also seeks to instil in pupils a sense of pride in themselves, their school and community and to encourage concern for others.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds; mostly from white British families living within a 50-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised tests indicate the ability profile of the school is above average. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 25 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia and autistic spectrum disorder, all of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for one pupil, whose needs are supported by classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 28 pupils as being the more able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 7 other pupils because of their special talents in sport and music.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. Additionally, the inspection reports 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was 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 report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. 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 regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; 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 full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## 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 measures attainment using national curriculum tests. In the years 2015 to 2017, the results were well above the national average for maintained schools.
- 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 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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**

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 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**

- 2.11 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.

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

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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 pupils with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include 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.

**2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.15 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.

**2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.17 The trustees ensure 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.

**2.18 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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

**The headline judgements must include 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. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Pre-reception/Reception	Nursery
Kindergarten	Reception
Intermediate	Year 1
Transition	Year 2
Lower 1	Year 3
Upper 1	Year 4
Lower 2	Year 5
Upper 2	Year 6

## Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress at all stages, due to the broad curriculum and to planning that is based on a detailed understanding of the needs of individual pupils.
  - Pupils enjoy discussion and collaboration, and respond well to the expectation to take increasing responsibility for their learning as they grow older.
  - Pupils have very secure skills of information and communication technology (ICT), although their competence is not consistently developed in the wider curriculum.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils feel valued and supported from the youngest age and able to tackle challenges willingly, both in class and in the wider aspects of school life.
  - The self-esteem of the pupils is high, and the school has simple but effective mechanisms for ensuring that individual voices are heard.
  - Throughout the school, pupils have a mature understanding and respect of cultural diversity and tolerance of individual differences.

## Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:
- Enhance pupils' ICT skills by providing a wider variety and range of digital learning experiences across the curriculum.

## The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Children make consistently good progress across all areas of the curriculum in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) as they lay down strong foundations for future learning, due to the highly effective planning and assessment that ensures provision is closely matched to children's needs and interests. As a result, all children achieve, and the majority exceed, the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. Throughout the school, this same level of progress and attainment is evident due to the high expectations and very solid grounding in the core skills pupils need to engage with the junior curriculum.
- 3.6 Pupils of all abilities, and in all year groups, make good progress at all stages, due to the broad curriculum and planning that is based on a detailed understanding of the needs of individual pupils. Those requiring additional support make excellent progress due to the highly effective input from the learning skills department and the positive relationships between staff, parents, pupils and outside agencies. Pupils enjoy the challenge of a broad curriculum with a significant emphasis on English and mathematics, particularly in the older year groups. Pupils' success is promoted by senior leaders who monitor progress carefully, using the data to plan the curriculum and inspire new initiatives. Pupils are entered for national curriculum tests at age seven and eleven. Over the years 2015 to 2018, results in both tests have been well above the national average. Inspection evidence including lesson observations, scrutiny of books and the destinations of leavers indicates that attainment is excellent in relation to pupils' individual ability and starting points. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils were unanimous in stating that teachers help them to make progress.

- 3.7 Pupils enjoy the challenge of the broad curriculum, exhibiting secure knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. For example, in a year 1 maths lesson, pupils demonstrate a practical understanding of halving, while older children employ a wide range of problem-solving strategies to complete complex number problems. Almost all pupils agree that lessons include interesting activities that help them to learn, as evidenced by a year 4 history lesson in which pupils compared the rights of children in Victorian England with those set out in the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child.
- 3.8 Pupils have well-developed linguistic and mathematical skills which they use to good effect to further their learning across the curriculum. All feel that their knowledge and understanding grow as a result of the interesting, well-paced lessons that are a feature of the school. As a result, their confidence grows as they progress from year to year. Older pupils make rapid progress as they prepare for senior school entrance examinations due to the greater emphasis on core subjects. As a result, a considerable number of scholarships are gained to selective senior schools, and the majority of pupils gain entry to their first-choice school.
- 3.9 Pupils make the most of the many opportunities they have to express themselves as they read out work in class, perform with exuberance in dramatic and musical productions, or write and present reflections of the past year for prize-giving day. The vocabulary and terminology used in classes are advanced, and pupils are very willing to share their ideas, knowing that their teachers will respect and encourage their views. Pupils exhibit fluency and clarity in their written work and show increasing confidence as they progress through the school. Independent reading is encouraged from a young age, and the pupils of all ages make excellent use of the well-stocked library. Pupils are highly adept at analysing their written work as was seen in a year 6 where they reflected on the language used in pieces of creative writing: identifying types of nouns and examples of onomatopoeia.
- 3.10 Pupils' mathematical skills are at a high level, and they use a wide range of approaches for tackling questions. This begins very clearly in Nursery where they have an excellent grounding in numeracy, such as a highly developed sense of shape and ability to classify and sort simple shapes encouraged through the use of guided questioning. Pupils' ability develops quickly throughout each year and teachers know very well the strengths of their pupils and are extremely accommodating in devoting time and energy to providing additional support and challenge to those who need it. Older pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to solving mathematical problems due to the high expectations and focused support from their teachers, ensuring pupils complete a very good volume of work and make rapid progress. Pupils work with a high level of concentration and attention to detail as teachers encourage quick responses from the whole class, occasionally using ICT creatively to encourage participation and gather useful assessment data. For example, in Year 5, pupils' data handling skills and ability to present information in different formats, such as graphs and pie charts, is well above expectations for their age.
- 3.11 Pupils have very secure ICT skills when using a range of word processing, data handling and presentation software, due to a highly structured programme of ICT lessons, including coding, which is introduced from an early age. The skills are appropriate to their age and they are especially effective in supporting learning in numeracy and communication. Pupils' skills are used to very good effect in some lessons as they plan and cost events for Enterprise Week, create short animated films or edit work to improve their English skills, helped by the commitment of leaders and managers to improve the quality and availability of ICT resources. However, pupils' skills in using digital technology as a learning tool in other subjects is not widely developed.

- 3.12 Pupils achieve well in a wide range of academic, sporting, dramatic and musical activities which are recognised and celebrated by the whole school community. All pupils participate in team games and have the opportunity to represent the school. A number of senior pupils applied to take part in a regional junior triathlon with one finishing second. A significant number of pupils have competed in national sporting competitions, and pupils have achieved a 100% pass rate in drama and music exams. The school places a very high value on these achievements and encourages every pupil to find their individual talent through a comprehensive extra-curricular programme. Parents are extremely happy with the range of activities available.
- 3.13 In lessons, pupils evidently enjoy the challenge of independent work although this is not always seen in their workbooks. They enjoy discussion and collaboration, and they respond well to the high expectation to take more and more responsibility for their learning as they grow older. As a result, pupils are consistently well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.14 Pupils are keen and willing learners. They have a positive attitude and are well able to judge where they are with an activity and how much they have understood. Pupils work exceptionally well on their own and in small groups, demonstrating initiative and independence although opportunities for open-ended, self-initiated activity are sometimes limited. Their excellent attitude to learning stems from positive feedback they receive and the overarching ethos of encouraging and celebrating all endeavour. The work set is stimulating and enjoyed by all. The work ethic of pupils across the school is excellent and their pride in their work is notable.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.15 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.16 In the EYFS, children are encouraged to take small steps to develop self-discipline and resilience. They develop excellent self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence, and are encouraged and helped to take control of their own learning and performance. From the earliest age clear and structured systems allow the children to reflect and express their emotions. They are seen as joining a family and this extends to all areas of the school community where everyone helps each other. Pupils feel valued and supported from the youngest age and able to tackle challenges willingly, both in the class and in the wider aspects of school life. Staff and leaders regularly remind the children who they can turn to if they need help, academically or emotionally, and as a result, pupils feel happy to talk to housekeepers, friends and teachers as they are secure in knowing they are always willing to help; clear advice is helpful and appreciated by pupils. Pupils recognise the progress they are making, and know what they need to do to improve, due to the quality of verbal feedback during lessons and the well-established marking system, evident in most workbooks, that provides individual targets. The self-esteem of the pupils is high as a result, and the school has simple but effective mechanisms for ensuring individual voices are heard.
- 3.17 Pupils' decision-making skills are very well developed. In the EYFS; children select freely from the range of resources and activities available to them. Pupils feel the advice they receive on making best decisions, for example, tips about their first day in a new class or in secondary school, is really helpful. Pupils feel confident they can make their own decisions when they are given the opportunity to show they have initiative and are able to make informed choices, such as not having to put a hand up all the time if they want something.

- 3.18 Pupils have a good spiritual understanding as well as an appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. They enjoy their personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) lessons, which they find calming, and which help them to understand how to deal with things that concern them. Older pupils have mindfulness sessions which are appreciated and focus on finding solutions to real-life problems. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need for reflection, for example, describing how a painting makes them feel in an art lesson or pausing to consider the needs of those less fortunate than themselves during assembly. Pupils show considerable concern for each other, and this is a reflection of the caring, nurturing environment created by the staff. Pupils appreciate the daily acts of worship, in line with the school's Catholic values, which provide a genuine sense of community.
- 3.19 Pupils' are consistently well-behaved. They have a very clear sense of right and wrong, inculcated through a structured personal development programme. Pupils are courteous and considerate, and the well-established code of conduct is ingrained in all activity. The vast majority of respondents to the pre-inspection questionnaire agree that the school actively promotes good behaviour. The emphasis upon personal growth is very clear, as is the part the children have to play in their own destinies and successes. Pupils recognise and respect staff as positive role models and do their best to live up to the high expectations of adherence to the rules and spirit of the school's aims. Pupils also recognise the need for sanctions and understand that their behaviour has consequences. In their response to the questionnaire, pupils expressed confidence that rewards and sanctions are used consistently to promote good behaviour.
- 3.20 Pupils' social awareness is excellent. They work effectively with others both in class and in other extra-curricular areas embodying the school's central ethos of collaboration and co-operation. In the EYFS, older children readily support those younger than themselves, helping them to access resources or complete activities. Older pupils, fulfil their responsibilities, such as representing their classmates on the school council, in a positive fashion, contributing excellently to the lives of others in the school, as well as those who live in the local community and further afield. Pupils in year 6 take pride in the morning duties entrusted to them, such as escorting younger pupils to their classes for registration. The youngest pupils develop an understanding of the needs of others when they visit a local nursing home to read to the residents. A strong ethos of social responsibility pervades the school and is evident in the range of local, national and international charities for which they fundraise. During Enterprise Week, older pupils invest considerable time, energy and creativity, planning and organising sponsored activities, to raise money for a charity that they have chosen.
- 3.21 Throughout the school, pupils have a mature understanding of issues relating to tolerance, respect and acceptance of others, as well as a range of social issues, sensitively developed through the whole school PSHEE programme. In the EYFS, children begin to develop a sense of cultural diversity and respect for others as they celebrate a range of festivals throughout the year. All pupils have a mature awareness of what is happening in the world today, as current affairs are discussed regularly. Pupils are genuinely appreciative of each other's difference and embrace their opportunities to share them. During their younger years, trips to a synagogue, temples, and other places of worship allow pupils to make comparisons between religions, helping them to appreciate and respect diversity. The school's ethos is strongly centred in its Catholic heritage but open and tolerant of others and understanding of the world around them. Every parent and pupil who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance.
- 3.22 Pupils have an excellent awareness and understanding of the need to make healthy choices regarding the food they eat, as well as an appreciation of the importance of taking plenty of exercise during their school day. In conversation with inspectors, pupils spoke enthusiastically about the positive benefits of special events such as Fitness Week and Healthy Lifestyle assemblies. All pupils are well versed in safeguarding, e-safety and what to do if they are concerned about bullying, due to the deeply embedded ethos of understanding and concern for others. . As a result, pupils develop characteristics of resilience, self-awareness and confidence which prepare them well for the next stage of their education, ready to lead successful and productive lives.

## 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 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

Mr Chris Manville	Reporting inspector
Mr Charles Banbury	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mr Thomas Mylne	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)