



# Ursuline Catholic High School

URN: **151350**

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

25–26 September 2025

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

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

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

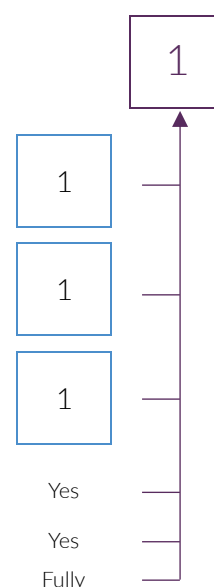
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection



## Compliance statement

- Religious education is taught for a specified portion each week and constitutes at least 10% of the taught curriculum time at KS3 and 4, and 5% at KS5.
- The school is fully compliant with additional requirements of the Archbishop.
- The areas for improvement from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed comprehensively.

## What the school does well

- Pastoral care is a great strength, pupil and staff wellbeing are central to the care of all members of the community.
- Students very much enjoy their religious education.
- The whole school community are living ambassadors of the Ursuline charism for education living out Serviam.
- Catholic life and charism dissemination and theological formation of staff is a real positive.
- Liturgical formation through the Ursuline charism enables students to undertake a variety of liturgical ministries with confidence, reverence and skill.

## What the school needs to improve

- Enable students to contribute in a more planned systematic way and take a lead in planning and improvements of Catholic life and mission
- Provide professional development for staff to ensure a clear understanding of liturgical behaviour in line with the Prayer and Liturgy directory.
- Ensure consistency of assessment with diagnostic marking.

## Catholic life and mission

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

### Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

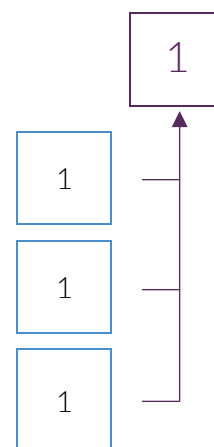
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### Provision

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

#### Leadership

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



All students understand, greatly value and fully embrace the school's distinctive Catholic Ursuline identity. They describe the school as, 'A community, a family,' and when asked if they would consider another school responded, 'Not a chance!' Students at Ursuline High know they are valued and cared for as unique individuals made in the image of God. Students stated they have, 'Grown in faith together, find our own journey and own faith.' They are very clear of the Ursuline values and 'Serviam' is lived and breathed throughout the school. Students speak of their formation stating, 'The Serviam values won't leave you.' The behaviour of students is exemplary in all respects. A very good knowledge of *Laudato Si* and *Fratelli Tutti* inform their response to Catholic Social Teaching. Examples include sixth formers annually organise a summer camp for primary school children, and a student organised gardening club to reflect upon the environment. Students stated, 'We do this for the good of humanity.' The student chaplaincy team's impact on formation is tangible, a student stated, 'I now attend Mass every week and this is because of the school and the work I do in the chaplaincy team.'

All staff agreed that the regularly reviewed, lived and witnessed mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church and the Ursuline vision for education. A Muslim staff member stated, 'I feel connected to this mission.' A parent stated, "The Catholic ethos is woven through every aspect," and 'The Serviam Passport provides empowerment and self-reporting on achievements on gifts and talents into actions.' The school provides an exceptionally supportive and joyful community, especially for the most vulnerable. A parent stated, her child knows, 'She is valued, understood and belongs.' After a family bereavement a parent shared, 'Staff have provided my daughter with the pastoral care that has allowed her to thrive and be a loving and caring young person.' Parents are involved in relationships, sex and health education taught using the Ten:Ten resource. It follows Church teaching and fulfils all statutory requirements. Chaplaincy provision is centred around the student chaplaincy team, and has strong links with the parish. The parish priest

regularly celebrates Mass with the school, and the parish Ursuline sister is a regular presence within the school. Pastoral care for all is excellent. A staff member stated, 'The school is very special in the way it treats everyone with respect and dignity.'

Staff describe Ursuline High as, 'A hug like a home,' having, 'A real sense of community with shared values which enhance teaching.' Induction for new staff is excellent, stating, 'It enabled them to understand what it means to be part of Catholic education'. They greatly value Serviam and support for staff wellbeing is excellent. Staff stated, 'Should there be bereavement or sickness, prayers are offered, and senior leaders regularly ask how they are.' School Leaders ensure, as a parent stated, 'Christ and St Angela are always at the heart of the school.' Catholic social teaching 'Has been thoughtfully embedded into schemes of learning' across the curriculum. A parent stated, 'One of my daughters volunteers for Oxfam,' and 'the school encourages students to participate in fundraising campaigns for charities.' Catholic curriculum is strong, for example, a teacher commented on the 'Value of using Serviam in planning a science lesson.' Governors and leaders including the Trust are highly ambitious for the Catholic life, mission and charism of the school. It is consistently emphasised as a school improvement priority and, the Trust puts it 'on a pedestal'. Students feed into the rigorous monitoring of the governors, and some improvement planning.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

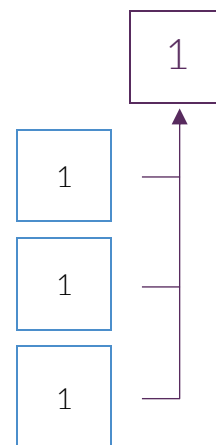
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### Provision

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

#### Leadership

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



Students very much enjoy their religious education. A student said, 'RE gives a good grounding and is multifaith, across a range of topics.' Another stated, 'RE makes you think about issues in a different way.' Students are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills and data shows they make consistently good progress over time. They can use scripture adeptly and link it to moral learning. For example a student was able to use a text from Mark to answer a question on the Church's teaching on divorces stating, 'What God has joined together, let no one separate.' Students very much enjoy varied teaching approaches giving the example of 'Learning and then teaching others.' Students' responses showed a high level of religious literacy using key concepts and subject specific vocabulary. A year 8 student, in response to the question, why do you think Pope Francis had need to write *Fratelli Tutti*? stated, 'To remind people of what God wanted us to do because we are all children of God.' Work produced is of a consistently high quality with excellent presentation and demonstrates students can respond in a variety of creative ways. In addition, the work shows many opportunities for stretch and challenge.

Teaching is never less than good with some outstanding and teachers have a high level of confidence based on authentic subject knowledge. Assessment is used to inform planning although, whilst assessment is linked to the school's assessment policy, a greater level of consistency is needed. Tracking of students evidenced rigorous monitoring and teacher feedback helped to improve progress. Teachers provide opportunities for purposeful reflection during lessons and planning ensures students have many opportunities to present their learning in a variety of forms. Parents very much appreciate religious education teaching. One stated, 'My daughter's favourite lesson since Yr 7 has been RE...She is now considering doing A Level.' Another stated, 'The school has done a fantastic job of developing the religious education of my daughter, enhancing her spirituality and moral choices.' In addition, teaching impacts upon the home. A parent stated, 'The religious education teaching is very good. I see this when we have conversations about the Christian faith and other

religions at home.’ Teachers use challenging questioning skilfully taking students to greater depth of learning. In Year 7 learning, beginning with ‘How do we learn about God?’ responses such as ‘In the Bible,’ were developed leading to understanding of two forms of revelation.

Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the Religious Education Directory. The subject leader has a clear vision for teaching and learning which is communicated effectively. The curriculum is carefully planned and sequential leading to greater depth of learning and is appropriate to all groups. As a result data demonstrates very strong outcomes at all key stages. Religious education is on a par with other core subjects in terms of staffing, timetable allocation, budget and accommodation. A wide variety of agencies are used to enhance learning; students spoke accurately, using subject specific vocabulary about visits to places of worship such as the local mosque and synagogue. Governors ensure high quality professional development in religious education such as engagement with diocesan training to enhance subject knowledge and delivery. The subject leader has a key input into the school’s self-evaluation document and governors ensure rigorous, forensic monitoring and evaluation through regular learning walks, lesson observations, work scrutiny and student voice. The subject leader reports to and meets with the local governing board who scrutinise in detail the reports from the subject leader. This results in strategic action and well-targeted planning.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

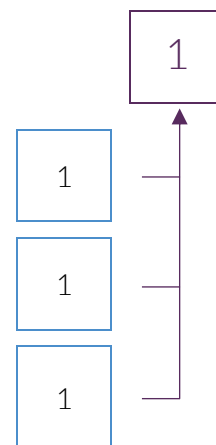
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

#### Leadership

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



Students' experiences of prayer and liturgy lead them to full, active and conscious participation and all is linked into the Ursuline charism of Serviam. Students know how to read scripture in liturgical settings, they said, 'We must read scripture with purpose.' The quality of prayerful silence was clearly demonstrated as students left the chapel at the end of a liturgy at lunchtime. A reverential silence was observed which allowed those who wished to remain to be still in God's presence. Students work collaboratively with others in planning, preparing and leading prayer and liturgy. This collaboration includes meeting with student chaplains of the nearby Jesuit school to explore scripture and music. Students undertake various ministries including Eucharistic ministry, altar serving and reading with due reverence. Students clearly articulate how prayer and liturgy impact upon the curriculum. A student stated in a geography lesson that they, 'prayed for those who work in the environment.' A student stated that leading prayer in class helped them build self-confidence. Initially they were very nervous but now look forward to doing so. Student chaplains are very enthusiastic about their role and, through the ongoing development of the chaplaincy team, liturgical formation of students is very evident.

Prayer and liturgy are integral to all routine gatherings of the community. It is part of the rhythm of the day. Significant moments of joy and sorrow are identified and celebrated. A staff member who had experienced significant challenges stated, 'It was through the school's collective worship opportunities...that I was able to return to practicing in my personal life.' In addition, staff commented, 'The students join in morning prayers and times of worship with eagerness, showing a calm respect and genuine joy.' A wide range of engaging and creative experiences are provided which includes music and liturgical dance. These enhance students' experiences and help them to explore prayer in different ways. Prayer tables with statues, the Bible and candles in classrooms are a focal point reflecting the liturgical season and are very well looked after. Mass is celebrated both in the school and in the parish. The school chapel has the Blessed Sacrament reserved and students respond

positively to this. However, whilst senior leaders are exemplary role models in their practice this is not always shown by other adults. The impact of the prayer life upon parents is exceptional. They expressed how they 'especially like how all meetings with parents begin with prayer.'

The school policy on prayer and liturgy is well formulated, regularly reviewed and most staff agreed it was useful to them. The school calendar is carefully planned so that regular opportunities are offered for the celebration of Mass, at significant points in the school year such as patronal school saints' days. Holy days of obligation are recognised, and a voluntary Mass is made available. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is made available during Lent and Advent and, students were clear, available at other times when requested. The training of staff is a high priority and the budget for prayer and liturgy is very generous. Staff fully understand the centrality of prayer and liturgy to the life of the school and spoke of its impact. One, who had no religious upbringing, stated, 'I can see the immediate and long-term impact this has had on students, teachers and the wider community' and a parent referring to her daughter stated, 'Her love of prayer and her relationship with God have grown significantly.' Students are involved in the evaluation of prayer and liturgy. They stated, 'we feel our ideas are listened to' in giving feedback to the Chaplain.

## Information about the school

|                                                |                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full name of school                            | Ursuline Catholic High School                                                      |
| School unique reference number (URN)           | 151350                                                                             |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB)                    | 3155400                                                                            |
| Full postal address of the school              | Crescent Road, Wimbledon, London, SW20 8HA                                         |
| School phone number                            | 02082552688                                                                        |
| Headteacher                                    | Eoin Kelly                                                                         |
| Chair of governors                             | Adwoa-Buahema Fadahunsi                                                            |
| School Website                                 | <a href="http://www.ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk">www.ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk</a> |
| Trusteeship                                    | Diocesan                                                                           |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | Sancta Familia Catholic Academy Trust                                              |
| Phase                                          | Secondary                                                                          |
| Type of school                                 | Academy                                                                            |
| Admissions policy                              | Non-selective                                                                      |
| Age-range of pupils                            | 11-18                                                                              |
| Gender of pupils                               | Girls                                                                              |
| Date of last denominational inspection         | 26-27 April 2018                                                                   |
| Previous denominational inspection grade       | Outstanding                                                                        |

## The inspection team

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Stephen C Horsman | Lead |
| Bridget Durrant   | Team |
| Ciaran Graham     | Team |
| Bernie Woodcock   | Team |

## Key to grade judgements

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