



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

Name of School: St Angela's Ursuline School
Local Authority: London Borough of Newham

Inspection Date: 18th May 2022

Reporting Inspector: Tom Cahill (Lead Inspector)
Damian Fox (Associate Inspector)

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and 2011.

Type of School:	Voluntary Aided	School Address:	St George's Road
School Category:	Secondary		Forest Gate
Age range of pupils:	11-18		London
Gender of pupils:	Girls (11-16) Mixed (16+)		E7 8HU
Number on roll:	1265		
Appropriate Authority:	The Governing Body	Tel. No.	0208 472 6022
Date of previous inspection:	26 April 2016	Headteacher:	Mr. Mark Johnson
		Chair of Governors:	Mr. Tony Kieran

Information about the school

St Angela's Ursuline School is an 11-18 Catholic Voluntary Aided girls' school with mixed sixth form in the London Borough of Newham and within the Diocese of Brentwood. There are currently 1265 students aged 11-18 on roll. The school is heavily over-subscribed and has a proud legacy of 160 years of serving the local community. 64% of students in Years 7- 11 are Catholic and 23% are from other Christian traditions. In the sixth form 31% are Catholic and 12% are from other Christian traditions. There are six main Catholic feeder primary schools. The school serves the nine parishes in Newham.

Levels of attainment on entry are above the national average. The predominant cultural heritage is Black African. A significant number of students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Currently, 4% of students are on the Special Needs Register, below the national average of 20%. This includes 0.7% of pupils with a statement or EHC plan, below the national average of 2%. There are 39% of students for whom English is not the first language although almost all are fluent English speakers. 27 % of students are eligible for free school meals and 24% are on the pupil premium register.

There are 86.2 full time equivalent teachers of whom 43% are Catholic. Six teachers hold the CCRS and five have other Catholic qualifications in Theology and Catholic Leadership. There are eight teachers of Religious Education. The school has implemented fully the recommendations of the previous inspection. The Religious Education curriculum is at least 10% of the timetable and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The school's RSE policy is in accordance with the requirements of the Diocese of Brentwood.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Angela's Ursuline is an outstandingly effective Catholic school. At the heart of school life is the philosophy of Serviam which encourages the students to serve rather than be served. The Influence of the Ursuline Sisters permeates all aspects of school life. As one student said "Once a St Angela's girl, always a St Angela's girl".

The school has very high expectations of all the students including academic progress and behaviour. As a result, students make at least good progress in Religious Education from the time they join the school and many make outstanding progress.

Teachers and students really do 'Live the Motto' through outstanding teaching and the excellent attitudes to learning engendered by the school in the students. Leaders and the Chaplain work effectively together to ensure students experience outstanding collective worship and prayer life each and every day.

What the school should do to improve further:

- Continue to review the Key Stage 3 Curriculum to ensure it meets the requirements of the updated Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- Re- establish regular use of the local parish church to celebrate major liturgical events and school celebrations following the lifting of restrictions relating to the Covid pandemic.

Catholic life at St Angela's Ursuline School is outstanding. Students thrive in this multifaith community which is an oasis of peace, prayer and faith. The school is situated at the heart of a very diverse local community which is reflected in the intake of the school. Students speak warmly of the welcoming ethos of the school where everyone is made to feel included no matter what their faith or background. Each year they celebrate the cultural diversity of the students and staff through an international languages day when students also wear their national dress and colours. Students feel they are part of a family where kindness and respect are shown to all. They also told inspectors that this is a listening school and one in which they feel both safe and secure.

The school provides outstanding pastoral care which is deeply embedded in gospel values and the '7 Stars of Serviam'. The school's distinctive Catholic ethos is summed up by the word 'Serviam' and students place the needs of others before themselves following the teaching of St Angela that "You have more need to serve than be served". As one student said "Serviam is not taught, it just is ". Students have many opportunities to serve each other, the school, and those in need beyond the school gates. Many students are prefects or representatives of the school council and student voice. They also enjoy the opportunities to be serviam stewards, peer mentors, chapel angels, liturgy reps as well as charity reps. The students raise significant amounts of money for those less well off. They support many charities which include: CAFOD, Macmillan, Haven House Hospice for children, the annual Poppy Appeal and Young Minds to name but a few. A notable feature of this aspect of school life is that students actually visit the charities to see how funds raised are spent and then report back to their peers.

The school participates and takes a leading role in building community with the other Ursuline schools both in England and around the world. The Ursuline community of schools have developed the Ursuline Student Profile based on ten strands reflecting the teaching of St Angela. Rise Up days take place on a regular basis and the normal timetable is suspended so that students can reflect and experience one of the strands in turn. A year group will also participate on a retreat on each Rise Up Day. Images of the 10 strands illustrated as a tree with ten branches are displayed around the school and include themes such as social justice, resilience, gratitude, compassion, faith and truth. The school's approach to Serviam and Insieme (coming together) impacts greatly on the spiritual and moral development of the students. The school also hosts The Alpha Course for students in partnership with the local parish.

The school has very high expectations of all students. They respond very positively to these expectations through outstanding behaviour and outstanding attitudes to learning. As a result, they really are excellent ambassadors for their school in which they show immense pride. Students also enjoy a very wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the staff who go the extra mile to ensure the students receive a well-rounded education.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and many expressed their gratitude to the staff for their dedication and commitment to the well-being of their children. They are kept very well informed about the Catholic life of the school through an impressive termly newsletter which covers Religious Education and Chaplaincy. As one parent wrote "My daughter loves St Angela's and is very happy here. I did not expect the school to be so amazing. The teachers are so nice and teach in a very good way, We Love this school". Another parent simply wrote "An excellent school ". Inspectors fully endorse similar views expressed by many other parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire

The highly effective lay chaplain is well known and held in high regard by the students and staff and she has a high profile in the school. She works closely with leaders and colleagues in the Religious Education department to ensure students have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical calendar and that students have an opportunity to plan liturgies including writing their own prayers. She is ably and enthusiastically supported by the many students who are liturgy reps or chapel angels.

Leaders and governors know their school exceptionally well and their self-evaluation is both detailed and accurate and was readily agreed by inspectors. They have a clear understanding of the mission and purpose of this Ursuline school based on the teachings of St Angela Merici. The long serving and highly experienced Headteacher is an excellent role model to the school community. His own deep faith

is lived out through the excellent relationships he fosters with students, parents and staff as well as the governing body. Other senior leaders also model his philosophy of servant leadership reinforcing the Catholic ethos of the school. As a result, staff morale is very high and there is a strong 'Esprit de Corp'. Staff enjoy working at the school and staff turnover is low. Staff feel valued and are encouraged to develop professionally. Many staff send their children to the school or were educated at the school or another Ursuline establishment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grade 1

Students have a very positive attitude towards Religious Education. They rightly see it as a core subject and they very much value the hard work and unstinting support provided by their teachers. This positive approach is reflected in their work books which are always well presented with work of a very high quality. The R.E department is a highly regarded and successful department where students' outcomes are among the best in the school. Students have a very positive approach to learning and show high levels of engagement in response to the high expectations of their teachers. As a result, they make at least good progress and many make outstanding progress.

Teachers plan lessons in detail and these, together with resources are shared across the department ensuring consistency which contributes significantly to outstanding student progress. Lessons are well paced and tasks are suitably differentiated. Teachers use a variety of approaches to engage the students and make excellent use of the Chromebooks that the school has provided for all learners. Teachers are enthusiastic and ensure a positive climate in their classes and relationships between students and their teachers are excellent. Teachers promote a culture of praise and encouragement which motivates the students to be the very best they can be.

Teachers assess the work of students regularly as well as assessing students through end of topic tests. Marking is detailed and indicates how the student can improve further and students are able to give written feedback. Assessment procedures are a strength of the department and contribute to the outstanding outcomes achieved by the students. The school also ensures that Key Stage 3 students study the life of a saint each month and they have a separate booklet for their notes and research. A list of saints being studied for the term is printed in the termly newsletter. As one parent wrote "St Angela's fosters serviam throughout all they do, but particularly from a religious point of view. The school provides a well-rounded education in consideration of the life experiences of their students which is not easy in this day and age. My daughter really enjoys her Religious Education lessons, both the delivery and content so much that she is determined to continue the subject at university. This is strongly due to the approach of her Religious Education teachers ".

Provision for the teaching of R.E. is also outstanding. Since the last inspection, the school has increased curriculum time for R.E. so it is at least 10 % and even higher at Key Stage 4. Teachers are well qualified and have excellent subject knowledge. They are passionate about their subject which inspires the students to work hard and achieve. Teaching is never less than good and much of it is outstanding. The school has managed to recruit and retain qualified R.E. teachers when many schools find it difficult. Staff morale is very high and the subject leader provides outstanding leadership to a large team in addition to being the school chaplain.

The school offers a bespoke course at Key Stage 3 which links very well with the GCSE course. The department is in the process of updating the Key Stage 3 course to reflect the updated Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Inspectors agree this should be a priority for the department. The school follows the AQA GCSE syllabus with a focus on Catholic Christianity and Judaism. All sixth formers participate in Core Religious Education which is also a bespoke course designed by the staff of the R.E. department. Sixth formers spoke enthusiastically of their enjoyment of the course which is assessed and certificated by the school. In addition, A 'level Religious Education is a very popular choice of students with large numbers opting to study the course.

Leaders and governors have ensured that Religious Education is resourced at least at the level of other core subjects. They have also shown their full support in providing additional teaching staff to allow more

R.E lessons on the timetable in order to meet the 10% requirement. The department has a suite of classrooms adjacent to each other and the teachers have a resource base nearby. Classrooms are bright and clean and the standard of display is excellent both in the classrooms and around the school. Senior staff line manage the department and they know the strengths and areas for improvement very well. Data held by the department tracks student progress carefully and additional support is provided to any student who may need it. The priest who is a member of the governing body is also the link governor for the department.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Grade 1

Collective worship is outstanding. Students respond respectfully and reverently to the many opportunities for worship and prayer provided by the school. Each day starts with a prayer as does each lesson. Mass is celebrated every Friday in the school chapel and on major feast days as well as other liturgical celebrations such as Ash Wednesday and Founders day. Students take an active role in leading prayers as well as writing their own prayers. Music and singing play an important part in enhancing the spirituality of the students and the school has a number of choirs including a gospel choir. When students met inspectors, they were keen to sing the school song without a script and musical accompaniment and they did so joyously and with gusto .

Each year group has a weekly assembly in the school hall. During the inspection, Year 9 had their first assembly since the pandemic took hold. Students' behaviour was exemplary and they were fully engaged throughout the presentation. The theme was 'Women who have made a difference' and students were reminded that we all walk in the footsteps of those who have gone before and students were reminded of the legacy of the Ursuline Sisters who built the school , the first of many schools established in England by the Ursuline Order .

Provision at the school for collective worship and prayer is outstanding. The school has a beautiful chapel which enhances the quality and impact of prayer and worship at the school. The Blessed Sacrament is normally reserved in the chapel. For whole school events, the school is fortunate to be located close to the parish church of St Anthony's and is always made to feel welcome there. However, access to the church has been restricted during the recent pandemic and the school is keen to re-establish regular use of it for major liturgical celebrations. The school is very well supported by local priests which also enables the school to offer all students the opportunity to participate in services of reconciliation. The school has recently restored the grotto in the grounds of the school which celebrates St. Bernadette and Our Lady of Lourdes. Seating has been installed so it can be used by classes for prayer and meditation by the students.

School leaders and governors are fully committed to further enhancing the quality and provision of collective worship and the prayer life at St Angela's and are fully supportive of the work of the Chaplain and other members of the Religious Education department and liturgy reps who meticulously plan activities and events so they meet the needs of all students. Governors are regular visitors to the school and often attend major liturgical events so they have an excellent understanding of the quality and impact of collective worship and prayer life on students and indeed the whole school community.