



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Regulatory and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**  
**Ursuline Preparatory School, Wimbledon**  
**May 2019**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Ursuline Preparatory School, Wimbledon			
<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>Email address</b>	office@ursulineprep.org			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Chris McGrath			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Tom Bolland			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	234			
	<b>Boys</b>	19	<b>Girls</b>	215
	<b>EYFS</b>	55	<b>Juniors</b>	179
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14 to 16 May 2019			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Ursuline Preparatory School is an independent Catholic day school for pupils aged between 3 to 11 years. The school was established in 1892 by the Ursuline sisters of the Roman Union. It moved to its present site in a residential area of Wimbledon in 1944. Whilst predominantly a girls' school, it has a co-educational Nursery. A board of trustees appointed by the Ursuline Order, the school's proprietors, assigns responsibility for the day-to-day oversight of the school to a board of governors.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. The school has undergone two years of extensive development in terms of its provision, including classroom interactive technology enabling pupil use of tablet computers.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a secure environment, offering a broad and stimulating curriculum that will inspire every child to continue their educational journey with a strong foundation and a desire to go out into our rapidly changing world and make a positive difference. It seeks to ensure the ongoing faith formation of all members of the school community, with an emphasis on *Serviam*; in compassionate service to others.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, mostly from British families living within a five-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 19 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which includes dyslexia and dyspraxia. One pupil has an educational health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 47 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. The curriculum is modified for pupils identified as being gifted or talented.

## 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, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. 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 REGULATORY 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.

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 uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 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 proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

**2.18 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.



## Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Attainment in standardised tests and their ability to secure entry to the schools of their choice confirm that pupils make excellent progress.
- All pupils develop and demonstrate the secure key skills and knowledge which enable successful transition to the next stages of their learning.
- Pupils' progress is strongest when the level of challenge is high and when they take independent responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils achievement in activities beyond the classroom is excellent.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils demonstrate excellent relationships with peers and adults and exhibit a strong sense of community through the school ethos of *Insieme*; togetherness.
- Pupils clearly demonstrate a passionate appreciation of the non-material aspects of school life through the ethos of *Serviam*; service to others, and they show excellent spiritual awareness and respect for religious and cultural difference.
- Pupils across the whole school show notable self-confidence, moral understanding and an appreciation of diversity.

## Recommendation

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:

- Monitoring consistency in approach towards offering pupils the opportunity to show leadership and independence in their own learning.

## The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Ursuline Preparatory School pupils demonstrate a notably high level of attainment in accordance with the school's aim to promote excellence in all areas of education. This is a result of the commitment of the leadership to achieving high standards in all aspects of school life. Pupils acquire excellent levels of understanding and knowledge in most lessons and demonstrate high levels of performance and creativity in their extra-curricular activities.
- 3.6 In the years 2016 to 2018, the most recent three years for which comparative data is available, performance in English and mathematics standardised tests show high levels of attainment. Children in EYFS develop excellent skills in literacy and numeracy that prepare them for their smooth transition to the pre-preparatory school. This successful development is maintained through to the preparatory school. Pupils are therefore successful in 11+ and senior school entrance examinations, enabling an overwhelming majority to succeed in gaining admission to their first choice of school. Pupils benefit greatly from the well-established assessment and tracking programme, which enables them to make informed decisions to improve their attainment. Their rapid progress is generally the result of high teacher expectations and the provision of challenge and independent learning in most lessons. Pupils with SEND or EAL make good progress and are enabled to achieve standards that are in line with those of their peers. In French, for example, younger pupils with SEND achieved a clear understanding of the perfect tense, equal to the more able pupils. They benefit greatly from enriched support from specialist staff through one-to-one and small group support sessions. Pupils in Year 6 eagerly make use of the lunchtime and after-school subject support clinics, recognising that these enhance their understanding, enable them to progress in lessons and support examination success. More able pupils make excellent progress and successfully respond to challenging work in a large majority of lessons. For example, in mathematics, pupils in Year 6 excitedly discussed their success with solving problems and calculations in 13+ Common Entrance and GCSE questions. Pupil enrichment is enjoyed in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and has enabled several pupils achieve scholarships on entry to senior schools for academic, music and sport.
- 3.7 Pupils use sophisticated language confidently, as observed in Year 2, where they were exceptionally confident and articulate when speaking joyfully about their school and families. Pupils in Year 4 contributed enthusiastically and thoughtfully to class discussion, choosing words carefully when editing a piece of shared persuasive writing. The pupils are attentive and apply knowledge and reason thoughtfully and logically. In interviews, they expressed enthusiasm for being able to discuss and debate ideas freely in and out of class on a wide range of subjects such as how to be eco-friendly and on autism. Literacy is very strong; pupils are avid readers, fully utilising the library provision which is well stocked with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. This reflects that the commitments shown by trustees and governors to resource the school and provide suitable learning opportunities for the benefit of all pupils. Pupils express appreciation for opportunities for quiet reading and independent research. They additionally enjoy competitive reading challenges as part of inter-house competitions.
- 3.8 Pupils have very good numeracy skills and apply them successfully in a wide range of subjects. For example, in science they effectively demonstrated the competent use of formulae and calculation, to explore speed, time and distance. During a mathematics lesson pupils in Year 6 skilfully demonstrated their ability in simplifying equations and in Year 2, pupils displayed excellent achievement and confidence in solving maths problems using practical modelling skills during consolidation work. Pupils effectively utilise tablet computers in lessons and competent skills in coding and programming, well above those expected for their age. Skills in information and communication technology enable pupils to learn through programming times tables games in mathematics, researching and writing about Pentecost in religious education, in French exercises and in researching challenging vocabulary in English comprehension texts for homework.

- 3.9 Pupils are enthusiastic and determined learners, willingly prepared to take risks, enjoy the opportunities of different styles of teaching and to rise to challenging opportunities when these are offered. They are inquisitive learners, such as observed in the nursery outdoor activity area where a group of children enthusiastically collected and successfully identified mini-beasts to populate the bug hotel that they were thoughtfully constructing. Pupils demonstrate a resolute sense of purpose, moving calmly to their lessons. They quickly settle and display an eagerness to learn and be involved in discussion and questioning. Pupils respond willingly to guidance in lessons and are further empowered to make progress and self-reflect on their work through meaningful and engaging marking throughout the school. This is supported by a very large majority of pupil questionnaire responses and interviews, who felt that marking helps them to improve. Pupils express their enjoyment of independent research projects for homework and being allowed to choose how to personally approach them; for example, a task on the Stone Age elicited a sculpture of a cave or the creation of a Stone Age food menu, but such stimulating opportunities are not made available in all subjects.
- 3.10 Pupils are very confident public performers through their participation in the arts and music. They avidly engage and effectively demonstrate their musical talents through active involvement in the orchestra, choirs, and other musical ensembles. Pupils achieve national awards in music and drama. They enthusiastically discuss their participation in recent productions; opportunities to perform are available to all year groups on a regular basis. Pupils also gain positive experiences and achieve success backstage, in stage and costume design and making props for productions. Many pupils find pleasure and achieve personal and academic success in creative work and are encouraged to develop their interest and talent in drawing, painting and sculpture. Pupils enjoy the challenge of competitive sport and show support for each other in team and individual events. Active and skilful participation in team sports, includes cricket, netball and football. Success is also achieved by individuals in athletics, swimming and cross-country running. Pupils enthusiastically explained some of their class and extra-curricular achievement displayed on poster boards throughout the school; these demonstrate work that includes coding, eco concerns, biographies, creative writing in English and French. A very large majority of parents and pupils agreed in the questionnaires that these opportunities greatly enhance pupils' achievement.

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

- 3.11 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.12 All pupils demonstrate extremely high levels of self-confidence and an excellent understanding of how to progress. Pupils of all ages show personal pride in the quality of their work, and their ability to enjoy and experience tasks inside and outside the classroom. Throughout the school pupils are not afraid of being wrong and consider a failure as a learning opportunity. They positively react to challenges and occasional setbacks, and thus develop strong resilience and self-confidence which enables them to respond successfully to the choices appropriate to their age and stage of development. Pupils who recently joined the school report that the welcoming and supportive family atmosphere enabled them to make a very confident start to their school life. Pupils in the questionnaire, and an overwhelming majority of parents, agree that the school helps to develop confidence and independence. The strength of service and togetherness which is clearly apparent in the pupils and in the school reflects the commitment of the leadership to creating an aspirational and supportive ethos, to which the pupils readily respond.
- 3.13 Pupils are well prepared to face the challenges of living in modern Britain due to the strong provision of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and mindfulness training. Pupils demonstrate genuine understanding of the consequences of their own decisions for their own success and well-being. They feel that they are encouraged to make decisions. Across the school pupils employ sensible and productive use of their free time, with the support of their form teachers and the pastoral system, making informed decisions regarding their extra-curricular activities. Pupils in Year 6 greatly value the help to make informed choices regarding their senior school and are responsive to guidance from

teachers and senior staff. They appreciate and respond positively to the examination support they receive, understanding that participating in additional study empowers them to progress and achieve success.

- 3.14 Pupils successfully engage in the opportunities to make decisions and enhance their skills and learning opportunities in and out of the classroom, such an opportunity which was effusively described by the Year 4 pupils who, during their residential trip effectively acquired new skills by endeavouring new challenges. These included bravely rising to the challenge of using the zip wire, confidently partaking in night and nature walks, developing new skills in learning archery and successfully using their class-learned mapping and compass use in orienteering in the forest in teams. Year 6 were equally enthused about their learning during a visit to the Tate Modern gallery, achieving inspiration for the designing and construction of sculptures of wearable household objects, which they proudly displayed in the school review magazine.
- 3.15 Pupils have a strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life through *Serviam* and *Insieme* and they actively participate in art, music, sport and theatre throughout the school. They show excellent and genuine appreciation of how kindness makes for a better family-based community. Pupils utilise and appreciate quiet rooms and the prayer garden for reflection and spoke of their enjoyment of participation in a retreat and being able to join with friends and reflect. Pupils in Year 3 were delighted to explain their first experience and participation in a communion service. Pupils express great appreciation in the celebration of their successes in the weekly assembly that celebrates togetherness through awards for individual achievement and acts of service to the community, and also acts of kindness such as ‘buddying’ new pupils or helping peers in class.
- 3.16 Pupils exhibit respect for school rules and the class rules that they have written and agreed, and they also understand that individuals carry the responsibility for their own actions. They actively support each other and help monitor behaviour. Pupils are highly confident in articulating their acceptance of responsibility for their own behaviour, stating views such as “treat people how you want to be treated” and “don’t speak if you haven’t got something nice to say”. Pupils display great kindness, empathy and show thoughtful consideration for one another and an eagerness to help and support their peers, for example by instinctively going back to collect a classmate’s water bottle or being a buddy at breaktime to a new pupil.
- 3.17 Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding that individual success is not the only factor in their development and that co-operation can result in better outcomes. They adopt strong skills in working together as members of the school community. Almost all the pupils and parents in the questionnaire indicated that the school helps to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Throughout the school, pupils eagerly and successfully participate in carefully planned group tasks in their lessons. During Spanish Day, pupils worked together to learn dances, make fans and flowers. In science lessons and in sports pupils engage actively and work together to successfully develop their understanding and skills. They learn effectively about, and understand, the democratic process and experience the use of their vote; for example, they vote for school council representatives in their classes and decide the sponsorship of charities in their houses. The much-appreciated school council provides a forum for pupils to have a voice and make a valued contribution to the school. They have the opportunity to express their opinions and can air their views and those of their class peers. The council has been effectively involved in the improvement of the school play facilities by successfully requesting breaktime play equipment and game area markings, such as hopscotch, on the all-weather playing surface. Pupils have an active voice in the choice of charities and the manner of fundraising.
- 3.18 Pupils in Year 6 relish the opportunities afforded for leadership as prefects and take lead roles such as librarians, senior choristers, pupil chaplains and readers to children in the EYFS. Each class has two elected members of the school council. Roles as head of house and sporting team captains are available to pre-prep and prep pupils and the EYFS children can be monitors and helpers. Pupils enjoy acting as peer-to-peer mentors and buddies for younger pupils in the school. Pupils enthusiastically participate in and raise money for many local, national and international groups through service and

charity sponsorship. Some pupils visit a local elderly care centre, playing their musical instruments and singing to the residents. They care for the environment by their active and enthusiastic interest in recycling through *The Ursuline Zero Waste Challenge*, which encourages re-cycling by collecting materials ranging from plastic bottles to computer ink cartridges and sending them to recycling centres.

- 3.19 The pupils demonstrate excellent levels of empathy and tolerance towards others, respecting and valuing diversity. Pupils have an excellent appreciation of the wide range of cultures within the school. They celebrate other cultures and faiths such as Spanish Day and Chinese New Year, and experience enrichment through the visits by parents who share their culture and traditions, from countries in Europe, The Americas and Asia. Individuals too are celebrated; for example, a pupil's excellent gift for origami was valued by other pupils thus helping her integration into the class. The pupils further demonstrate a rich understanding of the key values that characterise modern Britain. Throughout the school pupils exhibit spirit and unity, rather than difference, and believe this is the key to tolerance. They successfully acquire greater understanding of these characteristics in academic lessons, PSHE and active participation in assemblies and educational visits.
- 3.20 Pupils articulate a strong understanding regarding their physical and mental well-being. They appreciate a balanced approach to life, demonstrated in their willing participation in physical education and sports. In discussion pupils stated that their wellbeing is supported by form teachers, the chaplain and an independent listener, enabling them to stay safe and healthy. They further confirmed that they understand how to keep safe on-line and in cyber-space. Pupils fully realise the benefit of a good diet and suitable levels of exercise and pursue these. They make informed choices from the school lunch menu, enjoying the selection of hot main meals or salad options freshly prepared and served to their great satisfaction. Recognising and understanding that they need physical exercise, pupils actively and enthusiastically participate in the wide range of individual and team sports and physical extra-curricular activities. Almost all the parents and pupils in the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages a healthy life-style.

## 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 a governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended an assembly. 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 Alistair Telfer	Reporting inspector
Miss Sue Duff	Assistant reporting inspector (Former senior leader, HMC school)
Mrs Naomi Fowke	Compliance team inspector (Compliance officer, HMC school)
Mr Steven Smerdon	Team inspector (Headmaster, GSA school)
Mr Joseph Smith	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)