# Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

URN: 114544

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Diocesan Administrator of Arundel & Brighton

30 September 2026 – 01 October 2026

## Summary of key findings


**Overall effectiveness** 2

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

**Catholic life and mission (p.3)** 2

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)** 2

The quality of curriculum religious education RE

**Collective worship (p.7)** 2

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


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|---|---|
| The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference | Yes |
| The school is fully compliant with diocesan directives | Yes |
| The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection | Fully |


This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

## What the school does well

- The school provides a warm, caring and inclusive environment, with pastoral care and thoughtfully designed physical spaces that uphold the dignity of every pupil.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, as they demonstrate respect, focus and maturity in lessons, prayer, liturgy and the wider life of the school.
- Approaches to religious education are well structured and engaging, which enable pupils to develop secure scriptural knowledge alongside an emerging understanding of the ethical and moral dimensions of faith.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school, with a broad range of opportunities, including creative 'pop up' prayer spaces, that pupils use meaningfully and with enthusiasm.
- Teachers demonstrate confident subject knowledge, modelling clear expectations and providing varied, age appropriate opportunities that support pupils' engagement and progress.

## What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen pupils' ability to articulate the theological and scriptural foundations of their actions, including clear links to the school's mission statement and the principles of Catholic social teaching.
- Develop pupils' confidence in identifying and explaining their next steps in religious education, so that they understand how to improve their work and build knowledge securely over time.
- Formalise and sharpen monitoring and evaluation processes across the school, ensuring leaders gather pupils' views and use precise evidence to secure greater consistency in practice.

## 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 2

#### Pupil outcomes 2

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

#### Provision 2

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

#### Leadership 2

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

The pupils are a credit to their parents and to the staff at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic primary school. They are polite, helpful, engaging and articulate, and these qualities enable them to demonstrably bring to fruition, the school's Catholic identity. They welcome the leadership opportunities given to them, including both the eco and school councils. However, they do not consistently express that the school's mission is rooted in the teachings of Christ. Pupils are happy and feel safe in all areas of the school. They recognise their individuality and know they are cared for by all members of staff. Behaviour is exemplary, and pupils show respect for themselves and others, including those of different religions. They understand why their actions matter regarding their behaviour, helping others, and through supporting charities. However, they are not yet secure in articulating that these actions arise from their faith commitment. This includes their understanding of the school's mission and how it links to Catholic social teaching principles. Pupils demonstrate some knowledge of documents such as *Laudato Sí*, but do not readily or confidently explain how these underpin their actions. They highly value the opportunities given to them through the school's approach to chaplaincy, understanding the importance of this work.

The school's mission statement, *'Live, love, learn'*, clearly reflects the educational mission of the Church, and its impact can be seen across policies and practices. Staff are committed to bringing the mission to life, framing their work in warm, purposeful service, expressing that 'love is at the centre of everything'. They provide strong role models in witnessing that Christ is at the centre of the school. A culture of welcome is evident, supported by physical aspects of the building that celebrate both individual and community identity. The depth of care

shown to pupils is clear and extensive, particularly through the inclusive 'Nest' provision, where pupils receive additional nurture and hear affirming messages such as, 'You're beautiful in your own way because God makes no mistakes'. The provision for relationships, health and sex education meets diocesan requirements, although pupils are not yet secure in articulating the links with their faith, or recalling what they have learned. Chaplaincy supports the life of the school through prayer groups, pilgrimages and other opportunities, for both adults and pupils. All engage positively with these opportunities, although the ability of the pupils to connect these experiences confidently to the school's mission and the teachings of Christ is still developing.

There is a clear commitment to upholding the educational mission of the Catholic Church by leaders and governors. They recognise this as a core aspect of their role and carry out their duties with energy and faithfulness, which positively influences staff commitment. Staff are well supported to work in a Catholic school, and are treated with dignity and respect, both through formal policies and in daily interactions. Leaders and governors root their major decisions in Church teaching, particularly in their support for the most vulnerable pupils. This is seen in the provision of school uniform, support for educational visits and the school's inclusive pastoral approach. The diocesan bishop's vision is promoted through leaders' work in religious education, the wider curriculum and approaches to relationships, sex and health education. Parish links are strong, with pupils benefitting from regular visits from the parish priest and frequent use of the church for liturgical and curriculum learning. Partnerships with parents are effective, reflected in comments such as, 'the school does a fantastic job of keeping parents informed and involved'. However, evaluation processes, whether adult- or pupil-led, are not yet consistent or systematic, meaning that improvements are not always as well-targeted or as secure as they could be.

# Religious education

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 key judgement grade 2

### Pupil outcomes 2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

### Provision 2

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

### Leadership 2

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

Pupils at Our Lady of Lourdes demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect the learning required by the *Religious Education Directory.* Pupils make good progress through the religious education curriculum, and achievement is comparable to other core subjects, including for pupils with additional needs and those who are disadvantaged. They are developing religious literacy, acquiring key knowledge and vocabulary, although they are still developing clarity about how this connects to the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. In lessons, pupils show high levels of concentration and work independently with focused and attentive behaviour. They enjoy their religious education lessons and produce good-quality work that displays creativity and showcases their individuality. Pupils expressed, 'We like how you can represent your learning in art.' They treat their books with care and respect. Pupils have some understanding of why and how their work is assessed, although they tend to link assessment to coverage rather than to the development of their knowledge and skills. Pupils are becoming more confident in identifying and articulating their next steps. They show the capacity to ask searching questions and draw on prior learning, although their recall is not yet consistently detailed or secure.

Religious education lessons at Our Lady of Lourdes begin in a calm, prayerful and purposeful atmosphere, supported by teachers' confident subject knowledge. They understand the value of religious education and communicate clear expectations throughout their teaching, including informing pupils that their books are 'special and important.' Teachers recognise the

impact of religious education on pupils' moral and spiritual development and provide opportunities for reflection and consideration of moral issues. In some lessons observed during inspection, teachers used stories and scripture effectively to deepen pupils' understanding of principles such as dignity, respect and celebrating differences. These lessons also demonstrated a positive range of questioning techniques that enable pupils to think more deeply. Teachers offer varied opportunities for pupils to present their learning, including artwork and decision-making activities alongside written work, helping to sustain engagement. Other adults in classrooms contribute well to supporting pupils' learning, including for pupils with additional needs. Teaching approaches are age-appropriate, with some lessons providing more demanding questions and challenges for pupils. Where this is evident, teachers are better able to assess the progress pupils are making. Feedback is largely affirming and celebrates pupils' efforts and achievements.

Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory*, making effective use of the diocesan guidance. Religious education is given a high priority, with resourcing, timetabling and staffing comparable with those of other core subjects. Professional development is regular and appropriately targeted, addressing both subject knowledge and pedagogical development. Although leaders monitor its impact, this evaluation is not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure that training is consistently responsive to staff needs resulting in some unnecessary repetition. The curriculum is organised sequentially and progressively, enabling pupils to build their knowledge year on year. Enrichment activities deepen learning, including pilgrimages and visits to places of worship of faiths other than Christianity. Leaders also ensure that learning arising from visits to the local church and from engagement with the parish priest, is extensive and meaningful. There is a clear vision for religious education at Our Lady of Lourdes, supported by appropriate levels of subject knowledge and expertise. Monitoring and evaluation processes, although established, are not yet rigorous enough to ensure that improvements in teaching and learning consistently enable pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade 2

#### Pupil outcomes 2

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

#### Provision 2

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

#### Leadership 2

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

Pupils at Our Lady of Lourdes engage readily in the experiences of prayer and liturgy offered to them. They understand the need for silence when joining in communal prayer and singing, which they do with energy and enthusiasm. Pupils are familiar with a range of traditional and creative approaches to prayer, recognising that they can pray through scripture, icons and other media, although their experience of these forms of prayer varies between classes. Pupils are confident and willing to undertake liturgical ministries in class, in the school hall and in the local church, with appropriate support from staff. Older pupils carry out these roles with maturity and independence, and act as positive role models for younger pupils. Good use is made of the prayer spaces available, and pupils respond particularly well to the 'pop-up' prayer areas around the school, and the 'prayer trees and beads' in classrooms. These provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to pray, express their intentions and reflect, particularly in response to challenges they encounter during the school day. Although pupils understand the importance of reflection on these occasions, they are still developing confidence in articulating how prayer influences their choices and actions in daily life.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school, and staff have a clear commitment to providing pupils with positive and age-appropriate experiences of prayer. There is an established daily and weekly pattern of prayer and liturgy, well understood by pupils and staff, through in-class prayer, key stage assemblies and whole-school celebrations. These varied gatherings enable pupils to experience prayer and liturgy in a range of settings and contexts. The school makes thoughtful use of its environment, creating focal areas that encourage prayerful reflection. Through a strong partnership with the local parish, pupils

benefit from regular use of the church to enrich their experience of prayer and liturgy. Parishioners contribute meaningfully to the prayer life of the school including through sacramental preparation. The school's approach reflects the rhythm of the liturgical year, with clear recognition of seasons and special times of prayer. Carefully selected scripture strengthens the connection between what pupils hear in their parishes and what they encounter in school. Parents and carers appreciate the invitations they receive to join the school in prayer and liturgy, reflected in comments such as, 'Parents are always encouraged to be involved in the prayer life of the school.' Pupils occasionally use their talents to support prayer and liturgy, although opportunities beyond reading scripture and writing prayers are still developing.

The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well structured and accessible, providing clear guidance and a coherent annual plan that highlights key holy days and significant moments across the liturgical year. Leaders support staff formation effectively and model a positive witness to Christ by beginning all staff sessions with prayer and reflection. In doing so, they reinforce the central place of prayer in the life of the school and provide positive role models for staff and pupils. Regular professional development strengthens staff confidence and skills in leading prayer and liturgy. While the policy does not yet provide detailed guidance on developing pupils' skills of participation as they grow and mature, it supports positive experiences of prayer and liturgy. Some variation in practice remains because the guidance is not used consistently by all staff. Monitoring and evaluation processes are in place, but they do not yet provide leaders with sufficient insight to secure consistent practice across the school or ensure that pupils' views are gathered systematically. As a result, the strong commitment and expertise of leaders have a positive impact on the prayer life of the school, although this is not yet evident with complete consistency.

# Information about the school

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| Full name of school | Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School |
| School unique reference number (URN) | 114544 |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB) | 8463316 |
| Full postal address of the school | Rottingdean, The Green, Brighton, BN2 7HA |
| School phone number | 01273 306980 |
| Headteacher or Head of School | Anita Philbrook |
| Chair of Governors | |
| School Website | www.ourladyoflourdesprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Trusteeship | Diocesan |
| Phase | Primary |
| Type of school | Voluntary Aided School |
| Admissions policy | Non Selective |
| Age-range of pupils | 4 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Date of last denominational inspection | 18 November 2021 |
| Previous denominational inspection grade | Good |

## The Inspection Team

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|---|---|
| David Hennessey | Lead |
| Jessica Devlin | |

## 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 |