



Loyola Preparatory School

URN: Preparatory

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Brentwood

05–06 February 2026

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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 any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

1

Compliance statement

- The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishop's Conference.
- The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvements from the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Parents appreciate the holistic approach and the formation in Catholic education which the pupils receive.
- Pupils are inspiring in the way they embrace all opportunities to develop their learning and understanding across all areas of religious education.
- Leaders are ambitious and pro-active in seeking further ways to improve the excellent formation and spiritual growth of pupils.
- Leaders' excellent subject knowledge challenges pupils to think deeply about their learning, understanding of scripture and discernment.
- Pupils are able to clearly link aspects of scripture to Catholic social teaching, resulting in actions such as feeding the poor, and caring for creation and for our global neighbours.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure religious education books fully demonstrate the level of challenge in lessons and pupils' high level of understanding.
- Ensure that religious education books are consistently well presented across the school.
- Provide high-quality, strategically planned prayer and liturgy training for all staff to ensure prayer experiences are spiritually enriching.

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



Loyola's Jesuit roots and its mission for 'the greater glory of God' is fully understood and lived daily by the pupils. They are able to explain the importance of the school's motto and values and link them to how they should conduct themselves. 'We are a Catholic school, praying and the school mission statement goes at the top of all our books and we do all for the greater glory of God'. Pupils feel a deep connectedness to Loyola and feel very happy and safe. This results in them flourishing. As a parent shared, 'the values and teaching are strongly interwoven through school life'. Pupils are responding to Catholic social teaching in a variety of ways, supporting the local foodbank, Cafod, Noah's Ark or the Christmas shoebox appeal, to name a few. They also respond by sharing their talents, especially through singing to enhance liturgical celebrations within school, parishes, the diocese and abroad on pilgrimage. Pupils recognise Christ in others and respect and accept each other for who they are. They are given a voice and are encouraged to develop their leadership skills. Path Lighters, the School Council and other pupils could all share the work that they do to support others within their community and for 'their global neighbours'.

The mission statement is expressed abundantly throughout the school and underpins every facet of school life. This deeply embedded mission is adopted by all staff and observed in the way they interact with each other and the relationships forged with the pupils and wider community. As one parent expressed, 'my son's teacher cares about more than just his academic work, it's a holistic approach'. Pastoral care lies at the heart of daily life at Loyola along with a warm welcome, which adds further richness to this community. The school environment is distinctly rooted in its Catholic foundations. This can be seen in the thoughtful liturgically themed displays such as the community board, the Courtesy Cup board, the careful placing of

information to support emotional wellbeing and scripture quotations along with the pupil voice letterbox which promises that 'we listen'. Each classroom has appropriate prayer tables displaying correct liturgical colours. These are prominently placed alongside meaningful displays supporting the relevant religious education topic. These remind the community of their purpose and that formation and happiness are central to school life. The provision for relationships, sex and health education is very carefully met. It is planned with extreme diligence and dovetails into the holistic approach which the school takes with regard to the educational, spiritual and moral growth of its pupils.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher view Catholic life and mission as a core responsibility. They make sure that it is lived, known and spoken about all the time. The links are made explicit to all stakeholders so that everyone is very clear regarding the purpose of Loyola as a school. This is witnessed by all and becomes woven into the rhythms of the everyday life of the school. The headteacher said, 'We want the pupils to remember and keep hold of all the morals and values we teach them so that it serves them as they go through life. The pupils are the future.' Catholic life and mission are placed at the top of governor meeting agendas and headteacher reports. It is lived in the way the wellbeing and care for staff is addressed. Staff responses were extremely positive. They shared that they feel supported and appreciated. Parents were very effusive regarding the love and kindness shown daily by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and how they 'superbly lead the school' and ensure that Loyola is 'the embodiment of the Catholic faith'. Leaders and governors actively take up development opportunities provided by the diocese and willingly respond to requests to support parishes. Governors are regular visitors to the school, meeting with pupils and staff. Their challenge and support ensure that Catholic life and mission are not overlooked or diminished in any way.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

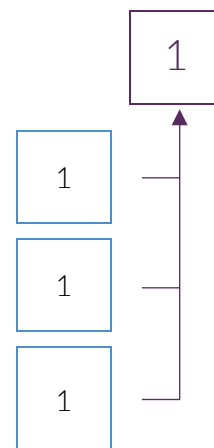
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Pupils at Loyola said, 'Religious education is one of our most challenging subjects in the school day'. They embrace all opportunities to deepen their religious education knowledge and expertise, enjoying the increased rigour that the new *Religious Education Directory* has brought. Pupils speak eloquently, knowledgeably and with increasing discernment about the various topics they have learnt about. They especially enjoy the wealth and variety of tasks they are given and the excellent teaching they receive. Their religious education books, along with their relationships, sex, and health education books and class portfolios show a vast array of work. These include freeze frames, newspaper articles, diary entries, debates and recounts as a few examples. Pupils accept the invitation to choose how they might record a piece of work and apply themselves fully. Reflecting on their learning is a strength and responses to marking demonstrate deep theological understanding across the school. Pupils make excellent progress and readily make links back to their prior learning, scripture and conversations. Bibles are readily available for scripture references, which they are very comfortable using and quoting from. Their mature religious vocabulary and practised oracy, for embedding learning, play a significant role in the quality of work produced and is evident in conversations. Pupils know exactly how well they are achieving in religious education. They fully understand marking and can self-assess.

Teachers benefit from a collegiate approach where they are fully supportive of one another. The excellent specialist teacher and deputy headteacher have a high level of expertise and demonstrate this confidently. They have developed the expertise of other staff so that pupils receive high-quality teaching within religious education. Teachers use well-planned lessons to drive learning outcomes alongside skilful questioning techniques. For example, 'How can you link the raising of Lazarus to the resurrection at Easter?' Teachers in the best lessons explain the journey the pupils will be taking in a topic. They reiterate the importance of prior learning as a

foundation in the next steps to understanding and growth as a learner. Acknowledging that scripture is hard supports the pupils in their approach and encourages them to ask questions. Marking is timely and appropriate with challenging written questions as follow up. All pupils respond to marking. Lovely relationships, praise and humour all add to the teaching provision, resulting in strong progress, outcomes and the pupils being exceptionally eloquent and religiously literate. Pupils can link scripture to daily life, Catholic social teaching and school values. They share it with others. This is because staff recognise the important role religious education plays in the formation of the pupils and the importance of allowing time for reflection in lessons.

The vision for introducing the new *Religious Education Directory* has been systematic and thoughtful. This has ensured that staff needs have been fully taken into account so that its impact has been positive and inspirational. This approach has enabled staff to thrive and drive teaching standards and outcomes for religious education at pace. Alongside this, the governors have been kept fully informed and have attended relevant and appropriate training at the diocese and within school so that they too can fully support religious education. Governors pose relevant questions, seeking to ensure that impact is appropriate. Staff have received high-quality professional development, so that the pupils are benefiting and achieving the best possible outcomes. Trustees are kept fully informed. Religious education receives full parity with other subjects and is regarded as a core subject. All policies reflect this and high-quality resources are available and used daily. Religious education is monitored carefully and leaders respond swiftly to needs and areas of concern leading to the very pleasing and excellent outcomes Loyola secures.

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

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

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

1

1

Pupils show a high level of engagement in prayer and liturgy, demonstrated consistently whenever they gather, whether in class, year groups, or as a whole school community. They participate confidently through well-rehearsed responses to familiar prayers and actions, and through the strength, reverence, and enthusiasm of their singing. This is particularly evident during whole-school Masses, including confident singing in Latin. Parents share that weekly Masses leave them feeling calm and uplifted and the pupils' singing is an emotional experience. One parent shared, "The boys sang 'Dona Nobis Pacem' so beautifully I felt God was speaking." Pupils listen attentively to scripture and engage thoughtfully with its meaning, which frequently leads to actions beyond the celebration itself. They demonstrate a secure and detailed understanding of the wide range of prayer forms within the Catholic tradition. Pupils collaborate effectively with teachers, the religious education specialist, and one another to plan and prepare prayer and liturgical experiences. Designated roles such as Path Lighters and Prayer Leaders are undertaken confidently, with pupils embracing their ministries with pride and maturity. Path Lighters provide lots of opportunities for the school to join in prayer with one child sharing, 'Praying together lifts each other up and encourages us to work together for the greater glory of God'. Pupils' preparation, planning, and leadership of prayer are clearly structured and sequenced appropriately according to age. However, this is not yet consistently engaging pupils deeply and leading them to full, active and conscious prayerful participation.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and are an integral part of daily experiences for both pupils and staff. There is a rich and extensive expression of the Catholic tradition of prayer. Scripture is carefully selected in line with the liturgical year, with clear and meaningful links made between the chosen readings, the overall theme of the celebration, and the actions pupils are encouraged to take into their daily lives. One pupil shared, 'Prayer is not just

something we do; it shapes how we think and feel and inspires us to act. Through prayer, we make a positive difference in the world and for future of generations to come.' Scripture also forms the foundation for the creative and reflective prayer environments established across the school. Class prayer follows a clear and purposeful structure. This is complemented by the modelling of Visio Divina by the specialist teacher in building staff confidence in leading prayer. There is a strong commitment to creating sacred spaces within classrooms at appropriate times, in addition to those used across the school.

Leaders place the highest priority on prayer and liturgy, ensuring that pupils experience daily prayer opportunities that are rich, varied, and progressive. The school's policy for prayer and liturgy is clear, relevant, and well understood, resulting in meaningful spiritual development for all members of the community. Staff highly value the professional development and formation they have received, facilitated by senior leaders and the specialist teacher. This training is having a clear and tangible impact across the school and is particularly appreciated by teachers who are committed to making worship meaningful and inclusive. The leaders' comprehensive and well-planned annual calendar of prayer and liturgical events allows pupils, particularly the Path Lighters, to share responsibility for its delivery. Governors are highly supportive of the school's prayer life and work closely with leaders to remain well informed about the range and quality of prayer experiences offered. During pilgrimages to Rome and Lourdes, both parish priests and parents witnessed how the pupils' deep immersion in prayer translates into genuine understanding and a lived commitment to faith in action. Together, leaders and governors reflect carefully on the impact of prayer and liturgy on pupils and use this reflection proactively to inform strategic planning. Prayer and liturgy are also prioritised within staff development, and the school actively engages with other schools and the diocese to seek inspiration and further enhance practice.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Loyola Preparatory School
School unique reference number (URN)	115393
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8816007
Full postal address of the school	103 Palmerston Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex, IG9 5NH
School phone number	02085047372
Headteacher	Kirsty Anthony
Chair of governors	Anne Marie Fox
School Website	www.loyolaprepschool.co.uk
Trusteeship	Independent
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Catholic Independent School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Date of last denominational inspection	15 May 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Sheila Birtles

Katherine Parker

Lead

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