

Nottingham Roman Catholic

Diocesan Education Service



DIOCESAN POLICY FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

September 2022

INTRODUCTION

Introduction The statement below provides guidance for schools on the arrangements for the timing and frequency of Catholic School Inspections (CSI) within the Diocese of Nottingham and also clarifies the bishop's right to watch over and inspect **all** Catholic schools within his diocese.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE

As works of the apostolate, all Catholic schools are subject to the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishop, even those that are not in diocesan trusteeship. Canon 806§1 (Appendix 1) provides that the diocesan bishop has the right of supervision, visitation and inspection of Catholic schools in his diocese, even those established or directed by members of religious orders. He also has the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools.

Inspection is where the diocesan bishop or his delegate inspects a school according to criteria determined by the bishop. In practice, this is normally carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (or equivalent) in a way which is complementary in scope to the section 5 inspection, but it can extend to all aspects of the school's curriculum and life at the bishop's discretion.

Supervision, or episcopal oversight, is the duty of the diocesan bishop, personally or through others, to ensure that all Catholic institutions within his diocese are acting in conformity with the teachings and regulations of the Church and the mission of the diocese, to regulate all works of the apostolate, and to take all necessary actions to ensure such conformity.

The Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service (NRCDES) - acting on behalf of the bishop of the diocese - may carry out an inspection of a school at **any time** and, in some circumstances, the costs incurred will need to be met by the school.

TIMING AND FREQUENCY OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTIONS

Catholic school inspection does not follow an Ofsted inspection; there is a separate cycle which is operated by the NRCDES. For academies in the Diocese of Nottingham, an inspection must ordinarily occur within five years of the end of the school year in which the school last received an inspection under the National Framework (or its predecessor equivalent). For academies that are judged to be less than good in their previous inspection, this will be no sooner than 3 years.

In the case of a school being judged to be less than 'good', it will receive a monitoring visit any time within 18 months of the publication of the inspection report. The Director of Education has the right to carry out as many monitoring visits as are deemed necessary. Please see separate guidance document on *Catholic School Inspection Monitoring Visits in the Diocese of Nottingham*.

THE PROCESS OF INSPECTION

Details of the process of inspection, and the criteria used to form judgements, can be found in the latest version of the *Handbook for Catholic School Inspection*. This, and a range of additional supporting documents, can be found within the 'inspection' section of the NRCDES website at the following address: www.dioceseofnottingham/education

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INSPECTIONS OUTSIDE THE NORMAL ROUND

In certain circumstances, schools may request a Catholic school inspection outside of the normal round, for which the headteacher should contact the Director of Education. A charge would be made for this service.

APPENDIX 1

The Code of Canon Law

'The diocesan bishop has the right to watch over and inspect the Catholic schools situated in his territory, even those established or directed by members of religious institutes. He has also the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools; these directives apply also to schools conducted by members of a religious institute, although they retain their autonomy in the internal management of their schools. Those who are in charge of Catholic schools are to ensure, under the supervision of the local ordinary, that the instruction given in them is, in its academic standards, at least as distinguished as that in other schools in the region'.* (Canon 806)

*this includes independent schools

APPENDIX 2

The Catholic Schools Inspection Handbook

Inspection of religious education and collective worship

61. The Secretary of State designates certain schools as having a religious character.^[footnote 20] In schools without a religious character, we inspect religious education (RE) and collective worship as part of inspections under section 5.

62. This is different in schools with a religious character. In most of these schools, denominational education and collective worship are inspected by a body appointed by the maintained school's governing body under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 or as provided in the academy's funding agreement.^[footnote 21] In a voluntary controlled school designated as having a religious character, we inspect RE, but not collective worship.

63. Inspectors may, however, gather evidence from anywhere relevant (including RE lessons and assemblies) to evaluate pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, personal development and/or behaviour and attitudes. The fact that the school has been designated as having a religious character must be referenced in the 'information about this school' section of the inspection report.

64. Section 48 inspections (or the equivalent inspection of an academy) are usually carried out every 3 to 5 years (and usually within 2 to 3 years of a new voluntary-aided school or academy/free school opening).^[footnote 22] Section 48 inspections were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, and restarted in September 2021. The first inspection will be within 8 years of the last, rather than the usual 3 to 5. The lead inspector on a section 5 inspection will check the section 48 arrangements. This includes when the next inspection is due and when the last inspection was. They will write about this in the inspection report. They will ensure that the required consultation has taken place with the prescribed faith body when a school has a prescribed faith body and decides not to use that body's inspection service but to appoint its own inspector.

65. Inspectors will familiarise themselves with any issues raised in any section 48 inspection (or equivalent) held since the last Ofsted inspection. Inspectors will not, however, use that evidence in an Ofsted inspection.^[footnote 23] The lead inspector will report if the section 48 inspection (or equivalent inspection of an academy) is overdue and that, therefore, the school is failing in its statutory duty. They will do this in the inspection report.

66. If a section 48 inspection (or equivalent inspection of an academy) happens at the same time as an Ofsted section 5 inspection, inspectors will mention this in the 'information about this school' section.

1. A school with religious character – often called a faith school – is designated under section 69(3) of the [School Standards and Framework Act, 1998](#). In a faith school, pupils are educated in the context of the principle of a religion. It is normal for there to be a formal link with a religious organisation.^[2]
2. See [Regulation 9 of The Education \(School Inspection\) \(England\) Regulations 2005](#).^[2]
3. See [Regulation 4 of The Education \(School Inspection\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2009](#).^[2]
4. Protocol between Ofsted and signatory faith group inspectorates.^[2]