

DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM



What is Diocesan Canonical Inspection?

A Guide for Parents



What is diocesan canonical inspection?

If your child attends a Catholic school within the Diocese of Nottingham, there will be occasions when the school will receive a diocesan canonical inspection.

Diocesan canonical inspections are carried out by the Diocese of Nottingham for two principal reasons.

Firstly, there is a legal requirement for the Diocese of Nottingham to inspect the quality of 'denominational' worship and Religious Education. This is because in a Catholic school, Ofsted does not have the authority to do this; these aspects must be inspected by the Diocese of Nottingham. (This is described in Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act).

Secondly, it is a canonical duty for the Diocese of Nottingham to inspect its schools. The word 'canonical' comes from 'Canon Law', this is the law of the Catholic Church which states clearly that the diocesan bishop has the right and the duty to inspect his schools. (Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law).

In the Diocese of Nottingham, these inspections are carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham by the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service (NRCDES) – this is the Education Department of the Diocese of Nottingham.

Inspectors are commissioned by the Bishop of Nottingham to undertake these inspections. They are normally either serving headteachers/senior staff in our schools or headteachers/senior leaders who have recently retired.

There is a detailed framework which inspectors must use to inspect a Catholic school. A range of documents which provide greater detail can be found at:

www.dioceseofnottingham.org.uk/education

There are three main sections to the inspection:

- Catholic Life
- Religious Education
- Collective Worship



Making judgements

The inspectors use the same numbers to make judgements as Ofsted and their meaning is also the same:

- 1 outstanding
- 2 good
- 3 requires improvement
- 4 inadequate

The school will receive a number of judgements for each of these areas and it will also receive one final judgement for its 'overall effectiveness' as a Catholic school in the Diocese of Nottingham.

If the school receives an overall effectiveness grading of outstanding or good, it will normally be re-inspected within 5 years. However, if it receives a judgement of either requires improvement or inadequate, it will receive monitoring visits and will be re-inspected within 3 years.

How much notice does the school get?

In most cases, the school will receive its notification for diocesan canonical inspection three working days before it is due to take place.

What happens during an inspection?

There are many similarities between a diocesan canonical inspection and an Ofsted inspection. In most cases, the inspection will last for a day. Inspectors will look at the school's self-evaluation and will discuss this with senior leaders. Inspectors will also visit Religious Education lessons and Acts of Worship. They will look at the children's Religious Education books and will talk to the children about their work in Religious Education, their involvement in the school's Collective Worship and how they feel about being part of a Catholic school. Inspectors will also speak to a number of staff in the school, perhaps the local parish priest and some members of the local governing body. Where possible, inspectors will also try to speak to parents either at the beginning or end of the school day in primary schools.

Can I make my views known?

We would expect schools to undertake regular questionnaires/surveys with its parent community particularly about its work as a Catholic school. The inspectors will look at the school's analysis of these. However, if you wish, you may also write to the inspection team and place your letter in a sealed envelope addressed to the diocesan canonical inspection team.

What happens after the inspection?

The inspectors will report their provisional judgements to the school's senior leaders and governors at the end of the day, however, this information is confidential. After this, they will write a detailed report which will provide information about the school's effectiveness as a Catholic school. The school will receive the report after 15 working days.

The school has an obligation to publish this report to its parent community and it will also appear on the Diocese of Nottingham's website.

Privacy notice

During the diocesan canonical inspection, the inspectors will collect information about the children at the school by looking at school records, reviewing responses to a range of surveys and by observing the everyday life of the school. No names will be recorded but some information may make it possible to identify a particular child. The inspectors use this information to prepare their report. The Diocese of Nottingham will not publish any information that identifies a child in the report.

If you have concerns about any aspects of the diocesan canonical inspection process, please contact the Director of Education for the Diocese of Nottingham, (01332 293833).

