

HANDBOOK

Quality Assurance

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Introduction

1. The purpose of inspection under the National Framework is to provide reliable judgements on how well Catholic schools fulfil their educational mission. The inspection is carried out on behalf of the diocesan bishop, who has the canonical responsibility to carry out such oversight visitations. Inspection is one of the ways a bishop exercises pastoral care for all those who are part of the community of Catholic schools under his jurisdiction. Inspection informs current and prospective parents and pupils about the quality of the Catholic education offered by the school, and it also assists senior leaders and governing boards of Catholic schools in their self-evaluation processes.
2. Therefore, it is important for bishops, parents and school leaders to have confidence in the National Framework to deliver judgements that are consistent, objective and rigorous. The reliability of inspections by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate depends on the consistent application of an agreed set of standards. This handbook has been written for that purpose.
3. The Catholic Schools Inspectorate will oversee the moderation process for inspections across England and Wales as well as providing training of inspectors. This will ensure that all inspections under the National Framework are consistent, objective, rigorous, and are overseen in a way that guarantees accountability to both canonical and statutory authorities.

Note on terminology and personalising the appendices

4. The words listed below are used in Handbooks for the National Framework for the Inspection of Catholic Schools, Colleges and Academies with the meanings set out, unless the context requires otherwise.

School(s) means all Catholic school(s) subject to inspection under the Catholic Schools Inspectorate, and includes:

- voluntary aided schools
- academies
- independent schools
- non-maintained special schools
- sixth form colleges.

Although academies are technically state funded independent schools, the inspection regimes differ from fee-paying independent schools. For that reason, the simple terms used throughout this Handbook are 'academies' to denote the former and 'independent schools' to denote the latter.

Diocesan Schools Commissioner (sometimes referred to as the diocesan Director of Education or the diocesan Director of Schools) means the officer or officers who exercise the diocesan bishop's education functions on his behalf.

Diocese includes any duly authorised representative or officer of the diocesan bishop who is exercising education functions on behalf of the diocesan bishop.

Governing Board refers to the body with legal responsibility for conducting the school on behalf of its trustees and includes the governing body of a Catholic voluntary aided school, the board of directors of a Catholic academy trust company, and the governors of an independent school. In appropriate circumstances, it may also include a 'local governing body' of a Catholic academy trust company, where that local governing body is exercising powers delegated to it by the board of directors. 'Local governing body' is the terminology used in this definition, but it may also be known as an academy committee or other local variants.

Governor means a member of a governing board.

Catholic Schools Inspectorate Coordinator means the person in each diocese responsible for the oversight and/or administration of inspections. This nomenclature is different in each diocese and will need to be amended to reflect local usage and the governance structures.

Pupils refers to children in early years, pupils in primary schools, and students in secondary schools and sixth form colleges.

Catholic Self-Evaluation Document (CSED) refers to whichever document(s) the school uses to record its self-evaluation of the three key inspection areas: Catholic life and mission, religious education, and collective worship. The Catholic Schools Inspectorate does not require any particular format be used for this record. However, if it is useful a template is provided for those who wish to use it.

Working days refers to any working day within school term time, excluding weekends, school holidays and bank holidays. Where term times differ within a diocese, it will be up to the diocese to specify which of the possible school holiday options they will be working with to determine the meaning of working days in that diocese.

Other terms and nomenclature in the appendices may also need to be adapted to reflect local usage and applicability (for example, whether the reference to the local ordinary should be Bishop or Archbishop).

The review of recruitment

5. An inspector for the Catholic Schools Inspectorate is licensed to inspect on behalf of all bishops in England and Wales but, in each case, will inspect on behalf of the bishop in whose diocese the inspection is carried out (the commissioning diocese). Each inspector is sponsored by a diocese which is responsible for the recruitment of inspectors against the national eligibility criteria set out in Handbook 1: Appointment of Inspectors. The process of selection against these criteria is tested by:
 - An application form – standardised across England and Wales.
 - An interview – with the Diocesan Schools Commissioner and/or Catholic Schools Inspectorate coordinator and a suitably qualified delegate appointed by the diocese.
 - A review of the references provided by each candidate by the sponsoring diocese.

The application form, summary grids and references should be retained by the sponsoring diocese and an anonymised sample of these will be used for the review of recruitment processes.

6. Successful completion of this application process qualifies the candidate to enter training for the Catholic Schools Inspectorate. Once the training is completed successfully and the sponsoring diocese has confirmed that the candidate meets all other professional and safeguarding requirements, then the candidate will be licensed to inspect in any diocese in England and Wales.

Sampling of applications

7. To ensure consistency across England and Wales, the Catholic Schools Inspectorate will conduct a periodic review of diocesan inspection appointment processes. Dioceses will be asked to provide anonymised samples of their records from inspector appointments. The team will evaluate the parity of each diocese's processes with others.
8. It is expected that this will be a facilitated process in the form of a workshop. The Catholic Schools Inspectorate coordinator meeting will contribute to and participate in this process. Please see Template 1: National sampling of recruitment processes checklist for a template checklist for assessing the reliability and rigour of each diocese's selection process.

Appeals process for unsuccessful applicants

9. In the event that an applicant is unsuccessful, and they are unhappy with the reason given for this, they are allowed to appeal against this decision. The appeal must be made within ten working days¹ of the date of the decision letter and must be made to

¹ In exceptional circumstances and with appropriate supporting evidence, this time frame may be extended to allow for a later appeal.

their sponsoring diocese. The appeal should be made in writing to the Catholic Schools Inspectorate coordinator in the diocese who will determine who will review the appeal. This will depend on the governance structure in each diocese but must be someone other than those who made the initial decision not to recommend the applicant for training.

10. The officer receiving the appeal should review the appeal and notify the applicant in writing of the outcome within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Possible outcomes are:

- Original decision to not select upheld.
- Decision sent for further review of evidence – the reviewer will notify the applicant of the estimated time the further review is likely to take, up to a maximum of twenty working days.
- Decision revoked and the applicant will be advised how to move to the next stage of the training process.

The outcome of the appeal is final. The decision maker will write a short report on the outcome which will accompany the decision notification. This report must be shared with the diocese in accordance with its governance arrangements. A decision not to be selected made by one diocese is binding on other dioceses and a note will be held by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate to avoid a person not being selected in one diocese being able to make a successful application in another. Candidates cannot reapply to become an inspector for one year from the date of their original unsuccessful application or appeal outcome whichever is the later.

The quality assurance of training

11. All inspectors receive training in how to carry out inspections under the National Framework for the Inspection of Catholic Schools, Colleges and Academies. This is conducted through a blend of direct input and online assessment activities, which ensure a comprehensive understanding of the suite of documents that comprise the National Framework. It may be supplemented by seminars and workshops where applicants either online or face to face compare and contrast inspection practices.

12. All licensed inspectors are trained to:

- understand the purpose of inspection.
- understand the canonical and legal bases of inspection.
- understand the structure and contents of the National Framework documentation.
- prepare properly for inspection.
- gather evidence assiduously from a wide range of sources to arrive at accurate judgements.
- work as part of a team to ensure reliable outcomes.
- write effective reports that provide evidence for the grades awarded, tell the unique story of each school and communicate in plain English, following the agreed report writing guidelines.

Quality assurance of inspector training will be achieved through a combination of feedback from applicants and testing the contents of training against the needs identified during the quality assurance of inspections. These will be gathered during the termly meeting of Catholic Schools Inspectorate coordinators.

The quality assurance of inspections

13. Quality assurance of inspections will be carried out by appropriate representatives of the Catholic Schools Inspectorate who are experienced Catholic school inspectors drawn from:

- Catholic Schools Inspectorate coordinators.
- other diocesan officers.
- current licensed inspectors under the National Framework.

Quality assurers will meet the eligibility criteria to be trained as an inspector and will have successfully completed the Catholic Schools Inspectorate training. They will also have been trained in the specifics of the quality assurance procedures set out in this document.

14. Catholic Schools Inspectorate coordinators should ordinarily arrange for at least 10% of their inspections in each academic year to be quality assured. It may be apposite to diarise more than 10% to account for any deferrals or last-minute changes to schedules, to ensure that the minimum 10% requirement per year is met. From time to time, quality assurance visits may be nationally coordinated by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate to ensure the standardisation of inspection practice and grading across dioceses. Where this is the case, the nationally coordinated visits will replace the ordinary diocesan requirement for the period concerned. Coordinators should ensure that all quality assurance visits for which they are responsible are completed with sufficient time to share the documentation at the national QA meeting.

Prior to inspection

15. The lead inspector will normally be notified that their inspection will be subject to quality assurance at the time they are notified of the name of the school to be inspected.

16. The quality assurer will ask the lead inspector for:

- copies of the joining instructions.
- the lead inspector's preparatory work (for example the analysis of the school's self-evaluation documents).
- pre-inspection correspondence with the school's leadership.
- copies of the datasets provided by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate and the school.
- the most up-to-date version of the school's record of its self-evaluation.

These should be sent to the quality assurer during the afternoon ahead of the first day of the inspection.

17. The quality assurer will also look at:

- the school's website.

- published curriculum materials in relation to Catholic life and mission of the school, religious education, and collective worship.
- policy documents from the school's website or received by the lead inspector.

18. The quality assurer will check that:

- the lead inspector has followed all the procedures and protocols outlined in the Inspection Handbook for the preparation of inspection.
- the lead inspector's initial pre-inspection analysis reflects all the information available.

During inspection

19. Quality assurance visits will normally last for one day only but may need to straddle two days to ensure a full range of evidence is gathered. Quality assurance visits should see a balance of first and second days of inspection across any given academic year. This will allow for leaders to gather evidence and information that they wish to share with the quality assurer. This will also provide an opportunity for school leaders to present any issues in respect of the conduct of the inspection or emerging outcomes.

20. During the visit the quality assurer will carry out a number of activities, for example:

- observe members of the team conducting inspection activities, such as observations of learning, the scrutiny of pupils' work, assemblies, prayer and liturgy, meetings with pupils, parents, leaders.
- observe members of the team conducting meetings and interviews with stakeholders.
- review evidence gathered by the inspectors, such as evidence forms, the school's self-evaluation documentation, any correspondence from parents or members of the public and the formal surveys.

21. Quality assurers will be in dialogue with inspectors throughout the quality assurance visit and in addition, will conduct a meeting with senior leaders, without the presence of the inspection team, to review the process of the inspection and to receive any feedback from the school that it wishes to provide. The lead inspector will build this meeting into the timetable with the school. The meeting is likely to cover:

- the timeliness and clarity of the announcement phone calls.
- pre-inspection information exchange procedures.
- the clarity of the inspection plan and its implementation.
- leaders' views on the appropriateness of the inspection activities.
- the willingness of the team to receive information and adjust the schedule to accommodate the leader's wishes.
- any concerns the leaders may have about the conduct of the inspection.

This meeting will not discuss any interim or emerging judgements.

22. Quality assurers will not undertake observation of learning unless they are observing an inspector to judge the accuracy of any feedback given.

23. Quality assurers will only participate in meetings with teachers as observers. School leaders, governors and teachers should not defer to them during such meetings, except in the specific meetings which are intended to gather evidence and information about the conduct of the inspection.
24. Quality assurers will only attend meetings with pupils to observe how the inspector conducts the interview and gather evidence about the quality and reliability of the inspection process. Quality assurers will politely interact with pupils as a courtesy when observing the inspectors observing play/lunch/breaktimes. They will not ask them questions that could be deemed to be gathering information for the inspection.
25. Quality assurers will only attend meetings with parents to observe how the inspector conducts the interview and gather evidence about the quality and reliability of the inspection process. Quality assurers will politely interact with parents at the school gate as a courtesy when observing the inspectors observing informal parental interactions. They will not ask them questions that could be deemed to be gathering information for the inspection.
26. Quality assurers should not contribute to inspection judgements. However, if an inspection team is failing to follow the procedures as set out in the inspection handbook or are making errors in their judgements which could undermine the reliability of the inspection, then the quality assurer should raise this with the lead inspector and ensure that corrective action is taken.

After inspection

27. Straight after the inspection, the quality assurer will provide a brief explanation of the next steps in the quality assurance process to the inspection team but will not provide formal feedback on the findings of the visit at this stage.
28. The quality assurer will fill in Template 2 and share this with the lead inspector at a quality assurance feedback meeting within ten working days of the end of the inspection. This meeting will allow for discussion of any points raised by the quality assurance of the inspection and provides an opportunity for the lead inspector to offer clarifications or corrections. Following this meeting, a final copy of the quality assurance report will be sent to the Catholic Schools Inspectorate coordinator in each diocese and copied to the inspection team.

'No notice' quality assurance visits

29. The Catholic Schools Inspectorate coordinator has the right to arrange a no-notice quality assurance visit in any event and for any reason. On a no-notice quality assurance inspection visit, the quality assurer will not be able to receive documentation in advance of the inspection and will collect these documents from the lead inspector during inspection.

The moderation of reports

30. The moderation of reports happens at two levels. At the diocesan level, every report will be quality assured to ensure that reports are accurate, well-written and reporting against the framework. At the national level a sample of reports will be quality assured periodically to ensure national consistency in this aspect of inspection.

Diocesan moderation of reports

31. The process for the moderation of written reports given below is the minimum required to ensure that reports are accurate, well-written and reporting against the framework. Dioceses may well supplement this minimum expectation with additional layers of moderation.

32. A diocese should identify a report moderation reader or readers whose role it is to check the quality of written reports before they are shared with schools for factual accuracy checks. Report moderation readers must have completed the quality assurance training and undertake all training specific to this role which is offered. The diocese should ensure that no conflict of interest exists between the report moderation reader and the school whose report is moderated. Once the inspection has been confirmed, each report moderation reader should receive a confirmation of the dates they will need to be available to moderate the report. If the report moderation reader is anyone other than the diocesan officer who schedules inspections, they should not know the name of the school until the school has been notified. Report moderation readers should use the report moderation checklist that can be found in Template 3: Moderation of inspection reports checklist.

National moderation of reports

33. To ensure the continued integrity of the National Framework, it is essential that reports are standardised so that there is consistency between dioceses. Consequently, the Catholic Schools Inspectorate will take a representative sample on an annual basis for scrutiny. This will enable the Catholic Schools Inspectorate to review the quality of reports and check them for compliance with the National Framework. This sampling activity will use the national sampling analysis form (Template 3: Moderation of inspection reports checklist) to record the outcomes of this process.

34. These outcomes will be reported to the Catholic Schools Inspectorate coordinators at their next termly meeting, highlighting strengths and key areas for improvement which will form the basis of future training for inspectors.

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Template 1: National sampling of recruitment processes checklist

Did the diocese use the Catholic Schools Inspectorate application form?	
Did the diocese collect a professional reference?	
Has the parish priest confirmed that the candidate is a practising Catholic?	
Did the diocese correctly use the pre-interview checklist for eligibility and suitability?	
Does the candidate clearly meet the Catholic Schools Inspectorate eligibility criteria?	
Is there evidence that the candidate was subject to an interview?	
If yes, were the questions asked effective and were the answers recorded clearly?	
Is there evidence that the candidate received feedback from the process?	
Did newly licensed inspectors who had no experience of inspection undergo the prescribed shadowing procedures outlined in the recruitment handbook?	

Have you any other comments on the sample? Please comment below
Are there any learning points for the diocese? Please comment below

Template 2: Quality assurance visitor's report template

School:	
Lead Inspector:	
Team Inspectors:	

For each of the criteria, please indicate how well the inspectors meet that criterion, using the following scale:

1: Not at all; 2: Somewhat; 3: Very well

1. Preparing for the inspection

Criteria	How well?	Comment
1.1 - The Lead Inspector (LI) analyses and records the available pre-inspection evidence incisively - The pre-inspection briefing draws from an appropriate range of sources - Focused lines of enquiry link clearly to the pre-inspection analyses including the school's record of its Catholic self-evaluation, available data and website scrutiny		
1.2 - The initial contact with the school was appropriately conducted and led to the phone call and initial letter being shared in a timely fashion - The school's leaders have enough information to set up the practical aspects of the inspection and to support the formulation of the timetable - They clearly understand and follow the inspection handbook and organisation of the inspection.		

2. During the inspection

2.1 Gathering evidence

Criteria	How well?	Comment
2.1.1 • The LI is highly effective in ensuring that time and the expertise of the team are optimised to gather a broad range of evidence and follow through lines of enquiry • Areas of focus are adjusted as appropriate from the emerging conclusions to final judgements • The evidence collected aligns closely with the relevant handbook guidance, convincingly supports the judgements and is highly evaluative		
2.1.2 • The LI samples the quality of the evidence base rigorously through sampling and provides constructive feedback to the team • The LI ensures that all evidence sampled is evaluative and recorded correctly, clearly and legibly using EFs and work scrutiny summary forms.		

2.2. Determining Judgements

Criteria	How well?	Comment
2.2.1 • The LI ensures that emerging or final judgements are accurate, coherent and fully supported by evidence. • In meetings the LI ensures that the team adheres closely to the inspection handbook and establishes a consensus when leading a best fit approach to determining judgements within the nine discrete judgement areas. • The LI accurately uses the aggregate grade descriptors for arriving at the key judgement and overall effectiveness judgement grades, including a discussion of the limiting judgements.		
2.2.2 • Incisive recommendations leave no doubt about the school's strengths and what the school needs to do to improve. • The areas for improvement are comprehensively supported by the evidence and are clearly related to the requirements of the framework.		

2.3. Leading others

Criteria	How well?	Comment
2.3.1 • The LI's planning and preparation provide TIs with a clear overview of the school, enabling the inspection to start in an efficient manner • The LI makes best use of time and individual expertise available.		
2.3.2 • The LI provides decisive leadership to the inspection team in pursuing areas of focus • Effective communication with school leaders ensures that emerging and final judgements and recommendations are clear and there are no surprises at the conclusion of the inspection		
2.3.3 • The LI's interpersonal skills leads to a supportive, rigorous and professional inspection experience • Any conflicts, concerns or misunderstandings are managed effectively.		

2.4. Behaving professionally

Criteria	How well?	Comment
2.4.1 • The LI demonstrates a detailed knowledge and understanding of the inspection materials • He/she provides a highly reliable point of reference for others		
2.4.2 • The LI demonstrates integrity and professionalism at all times • His/her engagement with others is effective • The LI manages challenge as an opportunity to explore different viewpoints and interrogate evidence.		
2.4.3 • The LI promotes the Church's mission in education at every opportunity. • He/she consistently exemplifies the inspectors' code of conduct and ensures that all in the team follow it meticulously.		

3. Reporting findings

3.1. Post inspection feedback

Criteria	How well?	Comment
3.1.1 The feedback given and the summary evaluations match the judgements closely. It follows the guidance given in the framework		
3.1.2 - The school's strengths are explained thoroughly - Incisive recommendations for improvement are derived from areas of development and the school is left in no doubt about what the next steps should be		
3.1.3 LI clearly explains the post-inspection processes, including: - that the report is confidential until the school receives the final published report – including on-line and social media - that there are diocesan quality assurance processes and that the judgements are subject to that process and may change - that diocesan moderation involves ensuring that there is a consistency between numerical judgements and the inspection text - that the final report should be placed on the school's own website and a copy sent to parents within five working days. - that the school would be invited to complete a post-inspection evaluation and the LI encouraged the school to do so.		

Template 3: Moderation of inspection reports checklist

Diocese:		Date of inspection:	
Name of school:			

Tick all that apply:

1. All sections of the report have been completed according to the rubric set out and correctly formatted as outlined in the style guide.	
2. Overall effectiveness and key judgement grades have been correctly calculated, using the aggregate grade descriptors in the framework.	
3. The 'Compliance Statement' section has been completed, indicating why the school has been given the compliance determination it has in each of the three compliance checks.	
4. 'What the school does well' section has been completed, containing no more than five bullets that reflect the evidence presented in the report.	
5. Does the 'What the school does well' section reflect the overall balance of the inspection findings	
6. 'What the school needs to improve' has been completed, the aspects are appropriate, are reflected in the evidence reported, and there are no more than three bullets.	
7. The text for each of the three judgement areas contains no more than 600 words.	
8. The text for each of the three judgement areas contains a paragraph covering each of: outcomes, provision, and leadership.	
9. The text for each judgement matches the numerical grade given.	
10. For all judgements that are not outstanding, the text makes clear what is preventing the grade from being higher than it is.	

How well does the report meet the following requirements?

(1: not at all; 2: somewhat; 3: very well)

11. Judgements clearly and objectively apply the grade descriptors as they are found in the schedule.	
12. The text throughout is evaluative, not just descriptive: it judges what the school does, how well it does it and the impact it has on the pupils. It focuses on typicality, on what pupils regularly experience and the evidence for this.	
13. Judgements are justified by reference to evidence.	
14. The report does not simply regurgitate the text of the grade descriptors from the schedule.	
15. The report uses examples to support judgements and to reflect the uniqueness of the school being inspected; the school should be able to recognise the report's authenticity.	
16. Comments relate to how the school is now, not how it is anticipated to be at some future point.	
17. The report avoids advisory language and speculation.	
18. The report is written in the present tense, is free from unnecessary technical jargon and is written in plain English.	

19. The report is free from spelling and grammatical errors and adheres to the 'Guidance on grammar and house style' from the inspection handbook	
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Template 4: National sampling of inspection reports analysis form

This form is to be used to provide a framework for the analysis of reports. It is most likely to be used by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate and, in session, members of the Catholic Schools Inspectorate coordinator group.

Name of school:			
URN:		Diocese:	
Name of Lead inspector:		Dates of inspection:	
In the box below outline the main strengths of this report			
In the box below note any shortcomings in the report paying particular attention to the report writing moderation checklist.			
Note any advice here for the National Framework working party about future training needs:			
Signed:		Diocese:	
Name (Please print)		Date:	