

Nottingham Roman Catholic
Diocesan Education Service



**Diocesan Canonical Inspection
Monitoring Visits**

September 2015

Diocesan Canonical Inspection Monitoring Visits

Introduction

This guidance explains how the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service (NRCDES) will monitor and support schools:

- Where one aspect of provision was judged to require improvement
- Where the overall effectiveness was judged to require improvement
- Where the overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate

The *diocesan canonical inspection policy* states that in all of the above cases, schools will receive a monitoring visit within 12 months of the publication of the inspection report and that schools judged to be inadequate will receive a monitoring visit each year.

Schools where one aspect is judged to require improvement will be re-inspected within 5 years of their last diocesan canonical inspection. However, schools judged to be requiring improvement or inadequate will be re-inspected within 3 years of their last diocesan canonical inspection.

All monitoring visits comply with the code of conduct for inspectors as set out in the *inspection handbook*.

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 (see *diocesan canonical inspection policy*) 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.

Before the monitoring visit

- **Notification**

The inspector will telephone the school three working days before the monitoring visit is due to take place (please see the *inspection handbook*) in order to ensure that a member of the governing body is available when the visit takes place.

If the headteacher is unavailable, the inspector should ask to speak to the next most senior member of staff and will seek to ensure that the headteacher will be in school on the day of the monitoring visit. Once the visit has been confirmed, the NRCDES will send formal confirmation of the visit to the school by email. During the initial telephone call, the inspector will:

- confirm the date of the monitoring visit
- make sure that the headteacher will be present on the day of the visit
- explain the purpose of the visit

- confirm that the school is able to inform the governing body that the inspector will wish to speak to a representative during the visit

Requests for a deferral will be handled in accordance with the *inspection handbook*.

During the monitoring visit

- Focus

The monitoring visit will focus on:

- reviewing with the school how urgently and effectively it is acting on the key area(s) for improvement identified at the most recent diocesan canonical inspection
- examining with school leaders and governors whether the fundamental actions needed to improve the school are being taken
- reviewing the impact of any external support on the school's improvement
- reviewing the impact of a review of governance or governor training package (where appropriate)
- determining the nature and timing of further activity from the NRCDES to support improvement

At the end of the monitoring visit, the inspector will make a single overarching judgement stating whether:

- senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle areas requiring improvement or which were inadequate identified at the recent diocesan canonical inspection; or
- senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement or which were inadequate identified at the recent diocesan canonical inspection

Monitoring visit activities

The inspector will arrive at the school on the day of the monitoring visit at the time agreed during the initial telephone conversation.

On arrival at the school, the inspector will produce a form of identity if required and will ensure that the headteacher (or senior member of staff) has been informed of their arrival.

During the visit, the inspector may:

- meet with the headteacher and other senior leaders to establish a working relationship and focus on the actions taken so far to tackle issues stemming from the recent diocesan canonical inspection; the inspector may undertake observation or other enquiries to follow up the effect of the actions; while they will consider the progress made in implementing the plan and the impact of actions. The inspector is not visiting simply to evaluate action plans, but to challenge and support the school so that any necessary changes in approaches to leadership, teaching and governance occur.

- hold meetings with a representative of the governing body, to establish what action is being taken, including the progress and impact of any review of governance or governor training package (where appropriate)
- gather any other evidence needed, which may include discussions with staff and pupils, observation of the school at work, planning and assessment, observations, work scrutiny and minutes of governing body meetings
- discuss with the headteacher the next steps, including any possible further monitoring visits or other improvement activity
- plan time to reflect, draft the monitoring letter and consider what, if any, further challenge or support is required
- hold a feedback meeting with the headteacher and a representative of the governing body; where the inspector has serious concerns about the lack of urgency with which weaknesses are being tackled, they may ask for a full governing body meeting. If needed, they will make arrangements to do so after the monitoring visit.

Where the inspector has concerns about the school, its leadership and management, its governance or the lack of urgency with which weaknesses are being tackled, these will be identified clearly and specific recommendations relating to these concerns will be made.

Where a monitoring visit identifies serious concerns about aspects of the school's foundation as a Catholic school or its performance, these will be reported to the NRCDES and may lead to the next diocesan canonical inspection being brought forward.

After the monitoring visit

- ***Reporting on the monitoring visit***

The content of the letter written at the end of the monitoring visit will include:

- the date of the visit and whether it was a first, or subsequent visit
- a summary of the type of evidence gathered during the visit and the context of the school
- the judgement on whether the area(s) for improvement identified at the last diocesan canonical inspection are being tackled effectively
- the relevance, urgency and any early impact of the work being done to improve the school since the recent inspection, with particular reference to the inspection findings
- the suitability of the school's plans to tackle the area(s) judged to be requiring improvement or inadequate at the recent diocesan canonical inspection and any recommendations from a previous monitoring visit (where appropriate)
- the timeliness and impact of any external review of governance or governor training package recommended at the last diocesan canonical inspection (where appropriate)
- the quality and impact of any external support
- any additional priorities for improvement

At the end of the monitoring visit, the inspector will complete a letter. This will be sent to the school within 5 working days of the visit taking place. The school should ensure that it is copied to the chair of governors and that it is shared with the governing body.

Conducting subsequent monitoring visits

For schools judged to be requiring improvement at the most recent diocesan canonical inspection or where one aspect of provision was judged to be requiring improvement, additional monitoring visits will only be carried if the first visit judged that the school was not taking effective action to address the areas for improvement.

In the case of schools judged to be inadequate, a monitoring visit will be carried out each year (or more frequently if necessary).