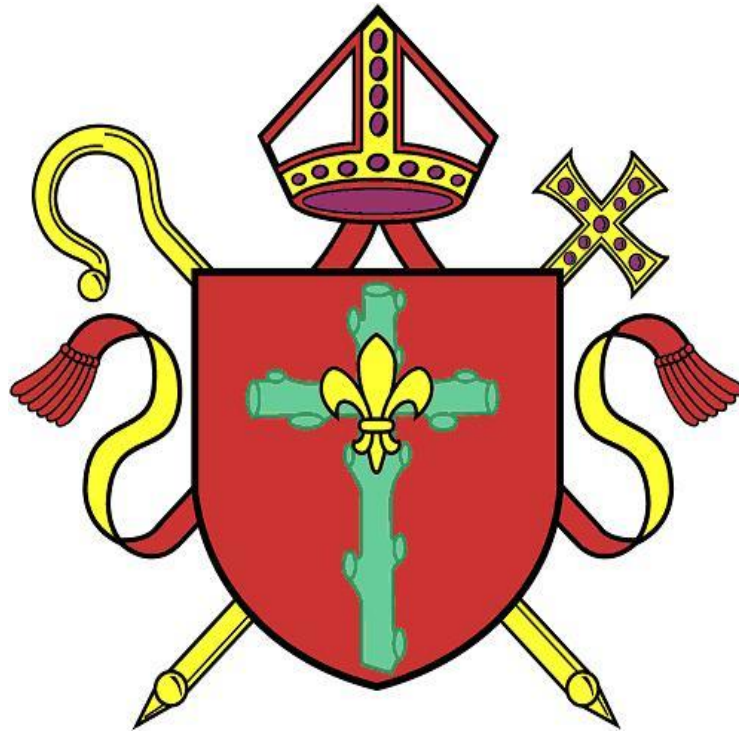


Nottingham Roman Catholic  
**Diocesan Education Service**



**Diocesan Canonical Inspection**  
**Myth Buster**

September 2019

## THIS PART IS SPECIFICALLY FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

### Introduction

The purpose of this document is to confirm facts about the requirements for diocesan canonical inspections in the Diocese of Nottingham and to dispel myths. The main focus of the document is on the 'Religious Education' strand of diocesan canonical inspection.

Although there will be similarities between diocesan canonical inspections and Ofsted inspections, there are also differences. Diocesan canonical inspections are undertaken on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham to assess the effectiveness of schools in fulfilling their Catholic mission.

In terms of Religious Education, it must be noted that the curriculum for Religious Education is set by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. This is then assessed based on the *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* again published by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. In the Diocese of Nottingham, the '*End of Year Expectations*' document has now been implemented as the vehicle through which assessment in primary Religious Education will be carried out. In this sense, there is a difference here between the requirements for a diocesan canonical inspection and Ofsted. It is the case that for English and mathematics, schools can use a range of approaches to assess pupils' work and to track their progress. In Religious Education it is important that there is a 'shared language' of assessment and that this is measured in a consistent way throughout the diocese. For this reason, it is a requirement on all primary schools that from September 2019, the '*End of Year Expectations*' document will be used to assess pupils' achievements in Religious Education.

An important feature of Religious Education is the use of the 'driver words'. These provide a clear progression in the development of skills and knowledge in Religious Education and are also integral to the assessment process.

For this reason, the 'driver words' play an integral role in the effectiveness of the planning, delivery and assessment of Religious Education. They provide a platform on which to 'pitch' learning at an age-appropriate level and through the related language, form the premise of subsequent challenge and support for pupils. In addition, the 'driver words' shape the level of questioning and discussion within lessons particularly with regard to Attainment Targets 2 and 3 in Religious Education.

### ***What exactly are you looking for when inspecting RE?***

In order to be effective, we are looking for pupils' work in Religious Education to be consistent with the statements in the 'End of Year Expectations' document for each year group. There should be appropriate coverage of the three Attainment Targets in Religious Education and there should be clear evidence of pupil progress in their books *over time*.

### ***Why are there so many new initiatives all the time?***

This is a really important point. At the end of the day, for the Religious Education aspect of diocesan canonical inspection, inspectors will be looking at pupils' *outcomes*. The Diocesan Primary Adviser for Religious Education spends a great deal of time preparing a range of tools/resources to support schools in their provision and delivery of Religious Education but these are not compulsory. It is for schools to decide on how appropriate these are in accordance with the needs of their pupils and teachers. Once selected, it is essential that these are disseminated appropriately and that there is a consistent 'whole-school' approach.

### ***What about teacher workload?***

The *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* makes clear that Religious Education is at the heart of a school's curriculum and that it is to be regarded as **the** 'core' subject of the curriculum. The Bishops also state that the study of Religious Education must form at least 10% of the timetabled week in all schools, (this is known as the 'episcopal requirement') and that this does not include time allocated to Collective Worship. We recognise that in primary schools, the vast majority of teachers are responsible for teaching many subjects. Our expectation would be that the amount of time spent on planning and assessing Religious Education is commensurate with the time spent on English or mathematics.

### ***Do you expect to see a certain number of pieces of work in RE?***

Yes. We are aware that this is a difference in expectation between diocesan canonical inspection and Ofsted. However, this requirement is certainly not new. In Key Stage 1, we expect to see at least 4 *quality* pieces of work for each *Come and See* topic and at Key Stage 2, the expectation is between 4 and 6 pieces of *quality* work for each *Come and See* topic (two of these should be sustained, 'extended' pieces). Bearing in mind that the duration of most *Come and See* topics is approximately four weeks, this is seen as a realistic and manageable expectation.

### ***This is far too much, we just can't manage to do that.***

We reject this view and would go further to say that if the episcopal requirement of 10% of the working week (see above) is being devoted to the study of curriculum Religious Education then it is most definitely achievable. In most circumstances, each *Come and See* topic will last for approximately four weeks which equates to at least 2 hours of coverage per week in Key Stage 1 and 2 ½ hours at Key Stage 2.

***Do all of these pieces of work need to be written pieces?***

***There's just far too much writing and not enough room for creativity.***

No, they do not all need to be *written* outcomes. We encourage an approach which incorporates a number of other areas of the curriculum. In fact, there are many other areas of the curriculum which can be used within Religious Education to ensure that lessons are very creative. Approaches to, and strategies used within other areas of the curriculum can often serve as a catalyst to further enrich the provision of Religious Education. For example, Religious Education will often complement the variety of skills which pupils develop within the English curriculum, including approaches to writing, verbal responses and interpretation of text. In addition, the revised diocesan planning materials for each year group were devised in tandem with the *'End of Year Expectations'* document and serve to promote a more creative and holistic approach to the delivery of the *Come and See* programme.

***So, would some art work qualify as a 'quality piece of work'?***

Yes, where this piece of art was a piece of *quality* work which linked in with the *Come and See* topic, this could count towards one of the pieces of work. However, it would also be advisable that this piece is suitably annotated, providing a context to the piece of work and highlighting the learning outcomes which ensued.

***Why do we have to do an 'assessed task' each term?***

The assessed tasks were primarily devised to raise the profile of the Religious Education Attainment Targets within the diocese. They provide schools with a benchmark within each strand of Religious Education and can be used to inform aspects of pupils' progress over time within all the areas of the Religious Education curriculum. The tasks also serve as a termly assessment point in Religious Education, enabling schools to moderate within a CMAT or indeed with schools across the diocese. The outcomes of these moderation exercises should further enrich the teacher's knowledge of a respective strand whilst also providing pupils with suitable next steps, thereby enriching the provision and implementation of Religious Education.

However, it is very important to point out that the assessed task is simply a tool to inform teachers' judgements about attainment in Religious Education. It should **not** be the only tool used to assess a child's learning over time. The outcome of the tasks constitute only part of a pupil's overall attainment in Religious Education over time. For this reason, the outcomes of the assessed task should **not** be used in isolation to inform attainment and related pupil progress within Religious Education. Schools need to monitor the implementation and outcomes of the assessed tasks with care, ensuring that there does not exist a *marked difference* in pupils' achievements in an assessed task and their learning over time as demonstrated in their RE workbooks. This will be a cause for concern to any inspection team and prompt further enquiry into the validity and reliability of data for Religious Education. The expectation is that the standard of pupils' work in books should be indicative of the standard demonstrated in the assessed task at a particular point in time.

**What about data – is this important?**

Just like any other area of the curriculum, it is important for teachers to know what their pupils have learnt and what they need to do next in order to plan effective lessons. At a whole-school level, assessment information is also important for leaders to track the progress of each pupil over time. We do not expect complex tracking systems, but we would expect that schools have an understanding of pupils’ progress in Religious Education over time and that this information is reviewed regularly so that underachievement is identified and addressed rapidly. We have discussed tracking of pupil progress in Religious Education with the diocesan CMATs as well. We ask that CMATs request the following information from schools on a termly basis:

*** Term		
No in cohort	% at expected	% at exceeding

As a diocese, we collate this information annually (in July) in order to form the ‘diocesan average’ which is then shared with schools.

It is important too that this data is *analysed* rather than simply being collated. Just like in other areas of the curriculum, school leaders should break this information down for each cohort. The progress and attainment of different groups within the school should also be analysed and acted upon accordingly. Most importantly, schools will be asked to demonstrate *how* they are supporting pupils who are not achieving the age-related end of year expectation.

As of September 2019, the ‘*End of Year Expectations*’ document will be used to assess pupils’ achievements in Religious Education. The statements outlined within this document for each year group should further inform schools about pupil attainment and expectations within Religious Education. Schools need to ensure that any judgements made with regards to pupil attainment are based on this document and that these are further validated through evidence within the RE workbooks and the overall provision of Religious Education within the school.

***I think that some of the activities described in the Come and See book could be updated.***

Yes! That is certainly the case. No school should still be using the original *Come and See* book for each year group. All schools should now be using the materials from the *Come and See* website. If you are not sure how to access this, please contact the diocesan Primary RE Adviser. Also, don’t forget that the Primary RE Adviser provides training and further planning materials at the termly *Come and See* Planning Days which are held in each of the CMAT areas.

## THIS SECTION IS FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

### ***We were inspected in May last time, does this mean that our inspection will take place in May the next time that we are due for inspection?***

No, a school may be inspected at *any* time during the academic year in which it is due for inspection. The month or term when the last inspection took place does **not** determine the timing of the next inspection.

### ***Do we have to show lesson planning?***

We do not require schools to provide individual lesson plans nor do we expect schools to provide previous lesson plans. There is no requirement for a 'standard' lesson planning format although schools may wish to provide a lesson plan to give additional contextual information. However, where weaknesses in teaching are observed, inspectors may ask schools to provide information on expectations on how learning is sequenced and how teaching is being tailored to the particular needs of each class/cohort.

### ***Are lessons graded during an inspection?***

No, gradings are not given for individual lessons observed during an inspection. The inspectors will be looking at a wide range of evidence in order to arrive at an *overall* judgement for teaching and learning in Religious Education *over time*. This will include visits to lessons, looking at pupils' books, the school's tracking of pupil progress over time and discussions with the pupils themselves about their learning. Only at this stage will all of this information be considered and an overall grade awarded.

### ***Do we need to complete a SEF?***

Yes, there is a requirement on schools to complete Part 1 of the DSEF (Diocesan Self-Evaluation Form). The reason for this is that inspectors do require information about issues such as pupil numbers, the proportion of pupils who are Catholic etc. There is no compulsion to complete Part 2 of the DSEF however, schools should be able to produce self-evaluation evidence for the three areas of the diocesan canonical inspection *Evaluation Schedule*. There is an expectation that this would be part of the school's monitoring and evaluation systems. This should be concise.

### ***Can I just present the Toolkit as my school's self-evaluation?***

No, the toolkit serves a useful purpose in assisting schools to evaluate each aspect of the *Evaluation Schedule*. However, in many cases, this document can be very detailed and long. Inspectors expect the school to provide a succinct summary of this which includes information about the school's view of each area along with evidence to justify this and most importantly, what the school considers to be its next steps.

The Toolkit does however assist schools with navigating the expectations within each of the three areas and qualifying respective evidence for each grading. It also serves as an excellent tool when used with staff and governors to further inform them of the expectations involved and formulating a suitable and robust action plan within each area.

***What about marking?***

We recognise that marking and feedback to pupils, both written and oral, are important aspects of assessment. However, we do not expect to see any specific type of marking and feedback. This is for the school to decide upon through its marking and feedback policy. Marking and feedback should be consistent with that policy. Inspectors will consider how written and oral feedback is used to promote learning and affect the rate of pupil progress. If it is necessary for inspectors to identify marking as an area for improvement for a school, they will pay careful attention to the way recommendations are written to ensure that these do not create unnecessary workload for teachers.

***What do the proportions referred to in the Evaluation Schedule actually mean?***

A number of the judgement criteria in the Evaluation Schedule use proportions such as ‘many’ ‘almost all’ or ‘some’. These are defined on page 41 of the *Evaluation Schedule (2018)*.

**THIS SECTION IS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

***What about assessment in secondary schools?***

In secondary school inspections, inspectors will want to ensure that the school’s assessment system provides evidence of pupils’ progress and attainment both within each year and through the school. It is important that schools are able to provide inspectors with details of their assessment system prior to the inspection.