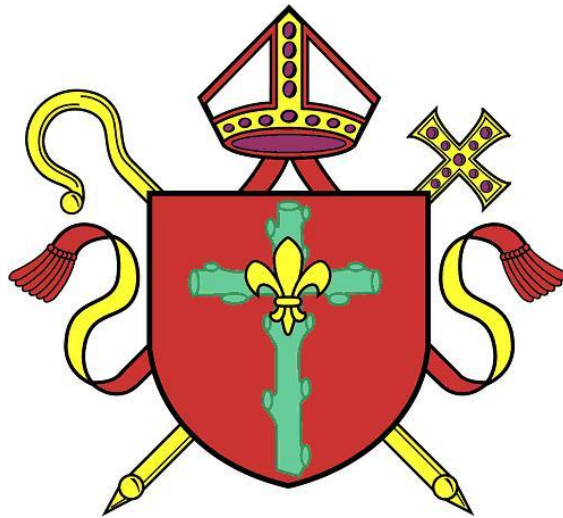


Nottingham Roman Catholic
Diocesan Education Service



Diocesan Canonical Inspection
Complaints Procedure

September 2018

Introduction

The Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service (NRCDES) acts on behalf of and advises the Bishop of Nottingham in all matters concerning education.

The Inspection Service at the NRCDES aims to carry out its work fairly and reasonably. It is important that inspections are carried out in a rigorous and challenging way. However, we know that occasionally, there may be some concerns about aspects of a particular inspection. We take all complaints seriously and we view them as an important way of improving what we do. Complaints can let us know about difficulties or problems in our systems and may lead us to issue or clarify guidance to inspectors. We will admit that we are mistaken if the facts clearly prove this or if we agree that there are serious factual errors in our reports. However, we will not change an inspection judgement just because it may be disappointing, because improvements in provision are promised at some time in the future or because of developments which take place after an inspection.

Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that the content of this procedure draws upon OfSTED's complaints procedure (published under the title, 'Complaints about OfSTED' – September 2015).

Scope of the complaints procedure

Whilst this document draws upon the complaints procedure published by OfSTED, it must be stated from the outset that the protocols and procedures governing diocesan canonical inspections vary greatly from those of OfSTED inspections. Fundamentally, the purpose of a diocesan canonical inspection is to ensure that the bishop's rights and responsibilities to 'watch over and inspect Catholic schools situated in his territory' are fulfilled (Code of Canon Law - 806). This complaints procedure is for the use of schools (headteachers or chairs of governing bodies) who may wish to raise a concern regarding the conduct or the outcome of a diocesan canonical inspection. Where a parent may wish to raise a concern about the outcome of a diocesan canonical inspection, this should be raised directly with the school and not with the NRCDES.

Principles of the complaints procedure

At the Inspection Service of the NRCDES, we want our complaints procedure to be easily accessible and easy to use. We will handle complaints in line with the principles below.

- We will deal with complaints respectfully.
- We will handle complaints as speedily as possible and will keep people informed of the process.

- The process will be consistent.
- We will investigate complaints thoroughly.
- We will consider and respond to complaints in a fair and objective way.
- We will provide a response to each complaint.
- We will regularly monitor complaints and this information will be used to develop our systems and procedures further.

Definition of a complaint

Our definition of a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about our actions that requires an investigation. We can sort out many concerns informally, as described below. We will deal with a complaint made in writing under the formal complaints procedure described on pages 3 to 5.

If there is a concern about safeguarding, this should be reported immediately to the Director of Education at the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service (01332 293833).

Resolving concerns informally

We encourage anyone involved in or affected by an inspection to raise any concerns as soon as possible so that we can deal with them quickly whilst the inspection is taking place. You should speak to the Lead Inspector or a member of the inspection team. They will do all they can to sort out matters raised through discussion.

Inspectors should do everything possible to make sure that everyone involved in, or affected by the inspection can raise concerns whilst the inspectors are on site.

If you feel that inspectors have ignored significant evidence, you should raise this concern as early as possible so that inspectors can try to resolve the matter informally before the end of the inspection.

If it is not possible to resolve the concerns informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Formal complaints procedure

If it has not been possible to resolve your concerns informally, you may decide to make a formal complaint. Complaints could be about your diocesan canonical inspection, our administrative process, the conduct of our inspectors or a combination of these.

Complaints should be submitted to the Inspection Service of the NRCDES no more than 5 working days following the publication of the draft report for the factual check. Complaints sent after this period will not be considered, as they will be deemed 'out of time'.

We will not normally withhold publication of an inspection report while we investigate a complaint, although we may decide to do so in exceptional circumstances.

Your complaint should be made in writing to:

The Diocesan Canonical Inspection Coordinator
Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service
The Diocesan Centre
Mornington Crescent
Mackworth
Derby
DE22 4BD

Please contact the NRCDES office for email details.

Complaints may only be made using the approved complaint pro-forma. The complaint should be confidential and should not be discussed with other members of the NRCDES staff either formally or informally. Neither should inspectors be contacted directly following an inspection. Where this takes place, the complaint will not be investigated.

It is important that we have all of the information, with all the points you want us to consider from the start of the process. This will allow us to deal with your complaint more quickly and will reduce the need to ask for more information. You must give the reasons for your complaint clearly, with the main areas of concern set out and supported by examples. If the complaint is about inspection judgements, it should include evidence that was available to the inspection team that you believe has not been taken into account. If you believe that the way the inspection was carried out negatively affected the judgements, you should provide evidence to support your claim.

The complaint will be dealt with by the Diocesan Canonical Inspection Coordinator or an inspector who has had no prior involvement in the inspection that is the subject of the complaint. You will be sent an acknowledgement within **five working days** of us receiving the complaint which will explain the steps that will be taken to address your complaint. No additional documentation received after the submission of the complaint will be considered.

We may also contact you by telephone within the first few days of us receiving the complaint. The purpose of this call will be to clarify the issues you have raised, including whether the complaint is about a judgement, conduct or maladministration. We will also seek to ensure that, as far as possible, there is sufficient evidence available to support a full investigation of your complaint.

We will reply in writing within **30 working days** of the acknowledgement of the complaint being sent. The response you receive will provide a conclusion on whether or not each main aspect of the complaint has been upheld and may link together similar issues for conciseness and clarity. On occasions, it may not be possible to reach a firm conclusion where there are

conflicting accounts and it is not possible to independently verify either of them. For an account to be considered independent, this must be from someone not involved in the issue of concern or inspection. In these cases, the outcome will be recorded as 'no decision could be reached' and the reasons for not reaching a conclusion will be explained. Where your complaint is about a judgement contained within an inspection report, our response to you will be moderated by an independent inspector who has had no prior dealing with either the inspection or the complaint. This is to ensure that our response is objective and thorough.

The outcome of the complaints process is final and there will be no right of appeal.

A formal complaint will not result in a 're-inspection' of a school. However, a school may request a diocesan canonical inspection 12 months after the date of the original inspection. This request must be made in writing to the Director of Education. As this would not be part of the normal inspection cycle, the costs of this inspection will need to be met by the school.