



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

*“Supporting Catholic schools to provide excellent education where pupils flourish,
and Christ is made known to all.”*

Are you expecting the Catholic School Inspection phone call?

In each of the 3 strands of the Catholic School Inspection (completed under Section 48 of the Education Act) - Catholic Life and Mission, Religious Education and Collective Worship (Prayer and Liturgy) – a judgement is made on how well **‘leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate...’** provision.

The judgement on governance forms part of the judgement on the effectiveness of Leadership in each strand. In making this judgement, inspectors will consider the criteria set out in the Inspection [Handbook](#) evaluation schedule.

Inspectors will seek during the inspection to meet those directly responsible for exercising the governance of the school and overseeing its performance. This will include Foundation and other maintained school governors or academy trustees. As with the meetings between inspectors and pupils or staff, meetings with those responsible for governance will take place without the headteacher or senior staff being present.

Inspectors are unlikely to be able to dedicate more than an hour to talking to the governors. They will want to hear from governors but they will also corroborate what they are being told by looking at evidence such as minutes of meetings, visit notes, data and parental feedback. This is also an opportunity to tell inspectors what you really want them to know about. Celebrate and showcase successes!

Inspectors will invite as many governors as possible to attend the final feedback meeting.

Key Lines of Enquiry

There is no ‘one size fits all’ checklist of questions the inspectors will ask.

The ‘key lines of enquiry’ will be shaped, in large part, by the impression of the school they have gained through pre-inspection checks e.g. on the website, from the [Catholic Self-Evaluation Document \(CSED\)](#) and discussions with the Headteacher.

Every inspector is expected to look at a school’s website before an inspection. They may do a media search on the school, headteacher and chair of governors. They will look at parental questionnaires to ascertain the views of parents, form an impression of pupil progress through any attainment data and look at the last Section 48 report. It is likely they will also view the latest Ofsted report.

The inspector will be testing out the ‘key lines of enquiry’ – if governors carried out a similar exercise, what would their ‘key lines of enquiry’ be?

Tips for preparing for the meeting

Is key evidence readily accessible?

Key documents include:

- minutes of recent governing body meetings, including any committees
- recent headteachers' reports
- reports of governor visits
- records of governor training
- feedback from parents
- school self-evaluation
- school development plan
- parental, pupil or staff surveys

Top Tip: Highlight the evidence and cross-reference it. Do minutes show evidence of governor ambition about RE/ Catholic Life and Mission/Collective Worship?

Have you agreed which governors will meet the inspector?

Inspectors will either request a face-to-face meeting or a telephone call with the chair of the governing board, or where appropriate the chair of the multi-academy trust, and as many governors as possible, especially link governors for RE / Catholic Life and Mission / Collective Worship where appropriate.

What picture of the school will the inspector have already gained?

Make sure you are familiar with all the publicly available information about the school and the story it tells. Inspectors will have seen the last Section 48 report, the last Ofsted report and reports of any monitoring visits. They will have scrutinised parental questionnaires and looked at whether your website is informative about / promotes RE, RSE, Catholic Life and Mission and Collective Worship. As a result of what this information is telling them, they will have decided on 'lines of enquiry' for the inspection.

Future tip: How could you make it easier for inspectors to access key information on your school website? For example, how about a section on the Catholic Life and Mission of the School – evidence of progress in key areas for improvement?

Be able to talk about strengths and areas for improvement

How well do governors understand RE school data and assessment information?
What do they know about the quality of work in books and the progress pupils make.
Is there evidence that governors ask probing questions about outcomes for pupils?

It is very likely that you will be asked to identify strengths and weaknesses, and it is important to be able to back up what you say. For instance, if you say that the quality of teaching is a strength, you will need to explain how you know this (for example: you

have monitored the effectiveness of marking in pupils' books; you have spoken to pupils who can explain their learning objectives; progress data is showing improvements during the year).

Does the data/other monitoring information indicate that some groups of pupils are not performing as well as others? For example, if disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND are not progressing as well as their peers, explain why you think this is and what actions are being taken and considered to address this disparity. What about more able pupils? **Be honest**, but be clear about the actions that are being taken and considered. The inspector will be keen to see that you know what is going on and are being proactive about making improvements.

Be able to demonstrate opportunities for staff professional development

How do staff access professional development?

Do all relevant staff get to further their knowledge and understanding in R.E, Catholic Life and Mission (including Catholic Social Teaching) and Collective Worship (Prayer and Liturgy)? Eg *What staff training has there been in CSI? How are staff informed about new RED?*

Do staff get the opportunity to study for external qualifications e.g. CCRS, MA in Catholic School Leadership?

Be able to talk about the effectiveness of the governing board in terms of the strands of Catholic School Inspection

Have a record of training you have undertaken as a governing body. This will demonstrate that governors are taking their responsibilities seriously. What impact has this had?

Do all governors sign a [Code of Conduct](#) annually?

Have governors carried out a risk assessment?

Be able to talk about how you communicate with key stakeholders

This includes parents, staff, pupils and the wider community. This might be in the form of surveys, letters, or meetings, but inspectors will want to know how you have listened to suggestions and what difference these have made.

If you have Early Years provision...

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) is crucial to a child's development since it lays the foundation for future learning and development. Do you know about the standards of RE in the Early Years?

If you have a Sixth Form...

Be able to talk about the progress and achievement of learners and how high expectations are set. Know the difference between A level Religious Studies courses and Core Sixth Form Religious Education, and the school's provision for both.

Finally make sure you mention anything that you really want inspectors to know about. Do celebrate and highlight successes!

There is no 'one size fits all' checklist of questions the inspectors will ask.

This quick checklist is not exhaustive, but outlines key areas that will help you prepare for Catholic School Inspection.

Checklist	Y/N
The time of the governing board meeting / phone call with the inspector(s) has been agreed.	
Governors have been identified to be available to speak to inspectors, with alternative arrangements in the event of unavailability.	
The school's website is up to date, promotes the Catholic ethos of the school and provides information about RE, RSE, the Catholic Life and Mission of the school and its provision for prayer and liturgy.	
The school's policies for RE, Collective Worship and RSE are up to date and published on the website.	
Governors can talk to inspectors about pupil behaviour and how it reflects the Catholic ethos of the school.	
Governor minutes clearly show how the headteacher and senior leaders are challenged and supported in terms of RE, Catholic Life and Collective Worship.	
Governors can speak confidently about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how any weaknesses are being addressed. What are the school's 3 greatest strengths and 3 crucial areas for development? What is the story here? (i.e. Tell me about X/ why you are saying that you are good / that this area needs improvement?)	

<p>Governors can explain the RE curriculum.</p> <p>Is it planned and sequenced towards cumulative knowledge and skills for all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)?</p> <p>Do pupils enjoy their learning? How do you know?</p> <p>How does the school give pupils with SEND the support they need to succeed?</p>	
<p>Governors can talk about the wider RE and Catholic Life opportunities learners have, including after-school clubs and trips/visits.</p>	
<p>Governors can give examples of how the school contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development. How does it prepare them for mission and service in the world?</p>	
<p>The headlines of in-school assessment data are understood by governors. Governors can tell the story of the school's performance for different groups of pupils including SEND, disadvantaged and more-able pupils and how the school is addressing any gaps in learning due to Covid-19.</p>	
<p>Governors are actively involved in monitoring RE, Catholic Life and Mission and Collective Worship. Governor visit reports evidence monitoring against school improvement priorities.</p>	
<p>Governors can articulate how funding is used to support, RE, RSE and the Catholic Life and Mission of the school.</p>	
<p>Governors can talk about how the school communicates effectively with parents and carers, including parents of children with SEND.</p>	
<p>Governors are clear that the school is compliant with regard to the current Religious Education Directory, and with directives of the Bishops' Conference and the local bishop with regard to the RE curriculum.</p>	

All documents for CSI are available to download at
<https://catholicschoolsinspectorate.org.uk/inspection-documents>

Or from the diocesan website
<https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/religious-education-school-inspections-2/>

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