September 2026, v5.0

Appointment and Management of Inspectors handbook

Added: Paragraph 46, footnote 5 to clarify the meaning of 'less than good'. All subsequent footnotes renumbered.

Added: Paragraph 48 to include a new procedure for off-rolling inspectors who have been inactive for more than three years. All subsequent paragraphs renumbered. Text reads as follows:

Sponsoring dioceses are responsible for monitoring the inspection activity of their inspectors. An inspector who has not carried out an inspection during the previous three school years will normally be regarded as inactive. This does not apply to inspectors who are temporarily ineligible to inspect but continue to attend mandatory training with the intention of resuming inspection, as described in paragraph 46, or to inspectors who have had a legitimate leave of absence under paragraph 47. There may also be other circumstances in which the sponsoring diocese considers that an inspector should not be regarded as inactive. Where an inspector is regarded as inactive, the sponsoring diocese must inform the inspector that they are to be off-rolled and notify theCatholic Schools Inspectorate accordingly. The Catholic Schools Inspectorate will then revoke the inspector's licence and remove their name from theRegister of Licensed Inspectors. An inspector who has been off-rolled may only resume inspecting by reapplying through a sponsoring diocese and completing the appointment process set out in Part One of this handbook.

Changed: Section heading from 'Tackling underperformance of inspectors' to 'Tackling concerns about inspector performance and conduct'.

Updated: Paragraphs 49–51 to clarify that the procedure applies to concerns about both inspector performance and conduct; to identify the range of sources from which concerns may arise; to confirm that a formal complaint is not required for the procedure

to be initiated; and to clarify that responsibility for managing concerns rests with the inspector's sponsoring diocese.

Updated: Paragraph 52 to clarify the procedure where concerns arise in a diocese other than the inspector's sponsoring diocese. The diocese in which the concern arises must formally communicate the concern and relevant information to the sponsoring diocese, which is responsible for investigating and managing the concern.

Added: Paragraph 53 to provide for an inspector to be made temporarily ineligible to inspect, without prejudice, where the nature or seriousness of concerns makes it inappropriate for them to continue inspecting while the matter is investigated. The sponsoring diocese must inform the inspector and notify the Catholic Schools Inspectorate, which will inform all dioceses of the inspector's temporary ineligibility without communicating details of the concerns or investigation. All subsequent paragraphs renumbered.

Updated: Paragraph 54 to clarify the sponsoring diocese's responsibility to inform the inspector of concerns, provide an opportunity to respond, and determine whether no further action is required or the matter should proceed to Stage 2. Where temporary ineligibility has applied and no further action is required, eligibility may be restored.

Added: Paragraph 59 to require the sponsoring diocese to notify the Catholic Schools Inspectorate of the inspector's eligibility status when the procedure has concluded. Where eligibility is restored, the Inspectorate will inform all dioceses; where a licence is withdrawn or revoked, the Register of Licensed Inspectors will be amended and dioceses informed as appropriate. All subsequent paragraphs renumbered.

Updated: *Appendix 02: Eligibility criteria* to clarify what is meant by 'good or better' following the changes to the Ofsted framework in November 2025. Text for this section now reads:

*In **England, prior to November 2025**, a statutory inspection carried out by Ofsted is 'good or better' if none of the evaluation areas is graded as less than good.*
*In **England, after November 2025**, a statutory inspection carried out by Ofsted is 'good or better' if:*

- the school is not in a category of concern
- AND leadership and governance were evaluated as 'expected standard' or better
- AND no more than two evaluation areas in total have been evaluated as less than 'expected standard'

Updated: *Appendix 02: Eligibility criteria* to clarify what is meant by 'good or better' in relation to ISI inspections. Text now reads:

*In **independent schools not subject to inspection by Ofsted**, a statutory (usually ISI) inspection is 'good or better' if:*
*- Prior to September 2023, a school meets all of theIndependent Schools Standards in its Compliance Inspection, **and** it has also been judged to be good or excellent in both key outcomes (the achievement of the pupils and the personal development of the pupils) of its EducationalQuality Inspection.*
*- After September 2023, a school meets all of the inspection standards **and** no serious weaknesses were identified in any of the inspection sections of the school's provision.*

Updated: Template 03: Application to link to the new CSI website, replacing the broken link.

Inspection handbook

Updated: paragraph 66, final feedback requirements amended to include encouraging schools to complete the post-inspection evaluation as part of the Catholic Schools Inspectorate's quality assurance processes, and to reflect the revised arrangements for central publication of inspection reports.

Updated: Paragraphs 69-73: report drafting, moderation and publication processes revised to reflect the optional Stage One electronic drafting process, the mandatory Stage Two reporting process, final review and factual accuracy checks, and central publication of reports by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate.

Updated: Paragraph 119, bullet 6 to remove the reference to pupil leadership and to make the nature of pupil involvement more consistent with the requirement of the PLD. Text now reads:

how skilled relevant staff are in helping pupils to prepare well-constructed celebrations of prayer and liturgy, and in facilitating their engagement and participation, including forming them to undertake appropriate liturgical ministries, according to the norms of the Church.

Updated: CW2 descriptors following paragraph 121, to reflect the change made in paragraph 119, bullet 6. Grades for CW2.6 now read as follows:

Grade 1: *Relevant staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to prepare well-constructed prayer and liturgy and in facilitating their engagement and participation, including forming them to undertake appropriate liturgical ministries with understanding and skill. They have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the liturgical norms of the Church and are adept at communicating them so that pupils understand their purpose and value. As a consequence, pupils are able to reflect these norms faithfully in their engagement, participation and ministry.*
Grade 2: *Relevant staff are skilled in helping pupils to prepare well-constructed prayer and liturgy and in facilitating their engagement and participation, including forming them to undertake appropriate liturgical ministries. They have a good understanding of the liturgical norms of the Church and are able to help pupils reflect these norms appropriately in their engagement, participation and ministry.*
Grade 3: *Relevant staff have limited ability to help pupils prepare prayer and liturgy or to facilitate their engagement and participation. They have only a superficial understanding of the liturgical norms of the Church. As a consequence, pupils are insufficiently formed to undertake appropriate liturgical ministries.*
Grade 4: *Relevant staff lack the skill to help pupils prepare prayer and liturgy or to facilitate their engagement and participation. They have little or no understanding of the liturgical norms of the Church. As a consequence, pupils*

are not formed, or are inadequately formed, to undertake appropriate liturgical ministries.

Updated: CW3.6 Grade descriptors for grades 3 and 4 to remove the reference to pupil leadership, to make these more consistent with the descriptors for grades 1 and 2 and the requirements of the PLD. Grades 3 and 4 for CW3.6, now read as follows:

Grade 3: Leaders, including chaplains, provide limited support to others in preparing experiences of prayer and liturgy and facilitating participation in them. As a result, pupils and staff lack confidence in preparing prayer and liturgy, engaging and participating in it, or undertaking appropriate liturgical ministries, and this is detrimental to the quality, relevance or accessibility of the prayer and liturgy opportunities provided.
Grade 4: Leaders, including chaplains, provide little, if any, support to others in preparing experiences of prayer and liturgy or facilitating participation in them. As a result, pupils and staff are rarely, if ever, enabled to contribute to the preparation of prayer and liturgy, to engage and participate fully, or to undertake appropriate liturgical ministries.

Changed: Header before paragraph 160 changed to *Pupil engagement in prayer and liturgy*

Updated: Paragraph 160 to remove the reference to pupil leadership and to make the nature of pupil involvement more consistent with the requirement of the PLD. Text now reads:

Pupils' engagement in prayer and liturgy, including their involvement in its preparation, may require support from adults. Inspectors should consider how effectively pupils are enabled to engage in prayer and liturgy, to contribute to its preparation, to participate where appropriate, and, following suitable formation, to undertake appropriate liturgical ministries, taking account of their age and capacity and the support they require.

Updated: *Appendix 07.1: What compliance with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales requires in relation to religious education* to clarify curriculum time expectations for EYFS and Year 1 in primary school. Misleading headers which wrongly

referenced age-ranges that did not align with the norms of the RED have been corrected. The text for the revised exemplar section of the Appendix now reads:

In EYFS

The bishops have not specified what proportion of curriculum time should be devoted to religious education before the first year of compulsory schooling. Nevertheless, appropriate provision for religious education should form part of the curriculum experienced by children in Catholic early years settings that fall within the scope of the school's inspection.

Where a school admits younger children, including two-year-olds, inspectors should include this provision within their inspection activities. They should visit the provision and observe any relevant learning activities taking place, which might include, for example, painting, role play or other activities through which religious learning is being developed.

Given that there are unlikely to be timetabled subjects at this stage, inspectors should not necessarily expect a discrete religious education activity to be taking place at the time of their visit. Rather, they should consider relevant learning where it occurs within the provision and explore through discussion how religious education is planned and experienced more generally. Inspectors should also consider the learning environment and discuss with the religious education coordinator and, where appropriate, the EYFS lead how religious education is planned and provided, and how this fits within the wider EYFS curriculum. The requirement for religious education to constitute 10% of taught curriculum time does not apply to this provision.

Inspectors should recognise that teaching and learning in the EYFS may look significantly different from provision elsewhere in the school. Learning will commonly take place through a combination of adult-led activity, child-initiated learning and continuous provision rather than solely through discrete, timetabled lessons. Inspectors who are unfamiliar with early years practice should draw on the expertise of the school's EYFS lead to understand how the curriculum is organised and delivered and how religious education is experienced by children within that provision.

This guidance applies equally to Reception. Although the Religious Education Directory provides a model curriculum for the EYFS, the bishops' requirement for religious education to constitute at least 10% of curriculum time applies to each year of compulsory schooling. The formal 10% curriculum-time compliance test therefore applies from Year 1 onwards. Inspectors should nevertheless evaluate the religious education curriculum provided in Reception, taking account of the distinctive nature of EYFS pedagogy and the ways in which religious education is planned and experienced through adult-led activity, child-initiated learning and continuous provision.
Further details on how this can be achieved can be found in the relevant section of the Religious Education Directory.

In Year 1

From Year 1, religious education must constitute at least 10% of each repeating cycle of taught curriculum time. In some schools, continuous provision may continue into the early part of Year 1 as part of pupils' transition from the EYFS. Where this is the case, inspectors should take account of the way in which the curriculum is delivered when determining compliance. The 10% entitlement should not necessarily be understood as requiring all religious education to be delivered through discrete, timetabled lessons. Where continuous provision forms part of the taught curriculum in Year 1, inspectors should consider the totality of planned religious education provision when determining whether the 10% requirement is met. Religious education delivered through continuous provision may contribute to this entitlement where it is deliberately planned as part of the religious education curriculum and contributes to the intended learning. Inspectors should therefore consider what pupils are being enabled and expected to learn through the provision and how this relates to the planned religious education curriculum.
Schools should be able to explain how their organisation of the Year 1 curriculum secures the required entitlement. Inspectors should exercise professional judgement in evaluating this evidence and should not require schools using continuous provision to translate every element artificially into

minutes of discrete religious education lessons. Taken as a whole, however, the provision must demonstrate that religious education constitutes at least 10% of taught curriculum time.

The subsequent paragraphs read as before but with more accurate references to the phase of schooling to which the expectations apply, referring to the compulsory years of primary school, the compulsory years fo secondary school, and sixth form.

Updated: Appendix 08.1 *Complaints policy t*o reflect the revised arrangements for recording formal complaints through the online Diocesan Complaint Log and to refer dioceses to Administration Guidebook Template 07.

Updated: Template 09.2 to reflect the changes made in paragraph 66 to include encouraging schools to complete the post-inspection evaluation as part of the Catholic Schools Inspectorate's quality assurance processes.

Updated: Template 10.1: report checklist revised to reflect the optional Stage One electronic drafting process and mandatory Stage Two reporting process, the automatic calculation of aggregate grades, and the requirement for reported strengths to reflect the overall balance of the inspection findings.

Removed: Template 13.2 Diocesan Complaint Log, which has now been moved to the Administration Guidebook and renamed as Template 07 and changed to an online form maintained by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate. All subsequent Template numbers remain unchanged.

Comparative Grade descriptors

Updated: Grade descriptors for CW2.6 to reflect the updates in the inspection handbook

Updated: Grade descriptors for grades 3 and 4 for CW3.6 to reflect the updates in the inspection handbook

Administration Guidebook

Updated: Throughout, terminology and report-tracking arrangements revised to reflect the role of the report moderation reader and the timescales for report drafting, moderation, Stage Two reporting, factual accuracy checking and final publication.

Updated: Paragraph 32 to include reference to the new Template 08: *Catholic Schools Inspectorate online forms*.

Updated: Paragraph 38 to include reference to the new Template 08: *Catholic Schools Inspectorate online forms*.

Updated: Post-inspection process (paragraphs 40 onwards) - report drafting, moderation, factual accuracy and publication arrangements revised to reflect the optional Stage One drafting process, mandatory Stage Two reporting, final review through the Inspectorate Portal and central publication of reports on the CES website.

Updated: Paragraph 54 to include reference to the new Template 08: *Catholic Schools Inspectorate online forms*.

Added: Paragraphs 61-67 as a new section: *In the event of a complaint, setting out the administrative process and timescales for receiving, recording, investigating and responding to formal complaints and for any subsequent diocesan review.* All subsequent paragraphs renumbered.

Updated: *Template 04: Protocol for cross-diocesan inspections in England and Wales* to require the sponsoring diocese to confirm that an inspector is currently eligible to inspect before a cross-diocesan allocation is made.

Updated: *Template 04* to clarify that where concerns about an inspector's performance or conduct arise in a commissioning diocese, the concerns and relevant information must be formally communicated to the sponsoring diocese, which is responsible for considering, investigating and managing the matter.

Added: Provision to *Template 04* requiring the sponsoring diocese to inform the inspector and notify the Catholic Schools Inspectorate where an inspector is made temporarily ineligible to inspect. The Inspectorate will inform all dioceses of the inspector's eligibility status while maintaining confidentiality about the concerns or investigation.

Added: Provision to *Template 04* requiring the sponsoring diocese to notify the Catholic Schools Inspectorate of the inspector's eligibility status when the matter is concluded, so that dioceses can be informed where eligibility is restored.

Added : Template 07 *Diocesan Complaint Log*, providing instructions for accessing, completing and updating the online complaint record and a record of the questions contained in the online form.

Added : Template 08 *Catholic Schools Inspectorate online forms*, providing a single point of access to the online forms used in the administration of inspections and the appointment and management of inspectors.

Quality Assurance Handbook

Updated: Paragraph 14, the quality assurance of inspections: provision added for quality assurance visits to be nationally coordinated by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate from time to time to ensure the standardisation of inspection practice and grading across dioceses.

Updated: Template 02, criterion 3.1.3 post-inspection feedback checks amended to include whether the lead inspector explained and encouraged completion of the post-inspection evaluation.

Updated: Template 03 *Moderation of inspection reports checklist* reflect the revised requirement that strengths identified on the front page of an inspection report should reflect the balance of the inspection findings and need not include a strength from each key judgement area.