



Provincial Visitation

Guidance for Jesuit Schools of the British Province



revised 2015



A M D G

Dear Colleague,

Each year, the Jesuit Provincial Superior visits each of the Jesuit communities and works of the province. This is a custom and practice established by St Ignatius himself.

The purpose of the annual Visitation is to create and sustain a strong link between the centre (the Jesuit curia) and the various institutions of the province, including the schools.

Through the Visitation (and, of course, in other ways throughout the year), the Jesuit identity and mission of the school community is affirmed and strengthened as the school is invited to give an account of the work it has done “living and learning for the greater glory of God and the common good.” (St Ignatius, *Constitutions* Part IV)

The Visitation is also an important occasion when the Provincial, on behalf of the Society of Jesus, can recognise and celebrate the good work done, and thank everyone in the school community for what they have achieved.

Preparation for a Provincial Visitation should be woven into the routine self-evaluation with which schools are familiar. Visitation day itself should be an occasion of celebration and thanksgiving.

This guidance has been prepared to help schools prepare for, and make the most of, the annual visit of the Provincial.

Adrian Porter SJ
Delegate for Education
British Province of the Society of Jesus

The Aims of the Provincial Visitation

The law of the Society of Jesus requires each Provincial Superior (“the Provincial”) to make a visitation of the houses and works of his province each year.¹

Since the beginnings of the Society, responsibility for particular works has been left in the hands of the local Superior and the Director of Work. But the ties between central policy (determining both the apostolic priorities of Jesuit works and the manner in which they are to be carried out or “our way of proceeding”) and those in the outlying works have always been strong. In Jesuit parlance this is known as “governance”. Indeed the Provincial is required to work with and through those with local responsibility.²

One of the practical ways in which these ties of governance are maintained is through the annual Visitation of the Provincial.

The day of the Visitation itself, affords an opportunity

- for the Provincial to meet some of the staff, pupils, governors and parents of the school and to manifest the bond between the school and the rest of the Province and, indeed, the whole Society, and to reaffirm the school’s identity and mission;
- for the Provincial to preside and preach at the Eucharist which is the centre of the Christian life of our schools;
- for the Provincial to note and celebrate some of the achievements and successes of the past year for the greater glory of God and the common good;
- and for the Provincial to challenge, inspire and reassure the members of the school community as they continue to be called to live out the *magis*.

Each school is free to construct activities which give the Provincial the opportunity to achieve these aims in a way that is most in accord with the style and manner of the school. However, the Visitation should be characterised by an air of celebration, affirmation of its teachers and pupils, and a re-articulation of its mission.

In anticipation of the Provincial’s Visitation, schools are asked to prepare an Apostolic Report. This document should form part of the wider process of self-evaluation of the school. The Apostolic Report should be reviewed each year and a new report prepared which highlights areas of continued success, developments, and any weaknesses or aspirations which remain to be addressed. The Apostolic Report should give an accurate picture of the school as an apostolate of the Society, in partnership with its lay staff, for the service of the Church.

¹ “Provincials and Superiors of Regions should every year visit the houses and works of the Province or Region.” (*Manual for Juridical Practice of the Society of Jesus*, Rome 1997) n.283

² “Provincials should govern houses and apostolic institutes of the Province through local Superiors and Directors of works, whom they should help in fulfilling their offices.” n.284

Visitation Day

Meetings

The Visitation should include opportunities to meet those responsible for the Jesuit identity and mission of the school including:

- the **head teacher** (30-minutes; plus 15-minutes at the end of the day for feedback)
- members of the **school leadership team** (as a group, not necessarily everyone; 30-minutes)
- the **Chair of Governors** (20-minutes)
- the **Lay Chaplain** / Director of Chaplaincy (30-minutes)
- the **Head of Religious Studies** / RE Co-ordinator (20-minutes)
- a group of **pupils** (a group of no more than 8 pupils, it is good not to have too wide a range of ages in the group; 20-minutes)

There should also be an opportunity to meet staff, especially those who particularly contribute to the school's Jesuit identity and mission. This might be over lunch, or in a specific meeting (20-minutes) but should not be scheduled just as coffee in the staffroom (although this is also a good thing to do so that the Provincial can meet a wider group of staff more casually, including support staff). See also *An Occasion for Celebration* below.

The Provincial will meet any Jesuits assigned to the school during Visitation of the Jesuit community which usually happens at the same time as the Visitation of the school.

Tours

There is no need to include a general tour of the school if the Provincial has done it in a previous year. It would, however, be good for him to see any new building, significant renovations, or developments.

Celebration of Mass

If possible, the Visitation should include a Mass for the whole-school or some substantial part of the school. Fr Provincial will preside and preach.

The choice of Mass text and readings either needs to be a significant feast (the patron of the school, or St Ignatius himself, or another saint, Jesuit or otherwise, whose feast lies close to the date of Visitation) or a Mass of thanksgiving. The readings need to be sent to the Delegate at least a week before Visitation day.

An Occasion for Celebration

If possible there should be a reception for staff at which the Provincial can mingle and chat. This may also afford an opportunity for the Provincial to be introduced to the staff with some words of welcome from the Head, and for the Provincial to say a few words of thanks. This might be a wine

and cheese reception to which all staff are invited at the end of the school day. If at all possible it should be more than just being in the staffroom during a regular break.

If possible, there should be some tangible element of celebration for pupils (which fits the needs of the school but might include anything from the traditional half-holiday, to an early finish, an extended playtime, or a doughnut and drink!).

The Memoriale

It is a traditional practice of the Visitation for the Provincial to write a short *Memoriale* following his visit which is sent to the school to be shared with governors, the school leadership team and staff.

The *Memoriale* will draw attention to things which struck the Provincial as significant and which are closely linked to the Jesuit identity and mission of the school. It may also include encouragement to persist with initiatives and practices which promote that Jesuit identity and mission.

The Apostolic Report

The school is asked to prepare an Apostolic Report and to send a copy to the Provincial Delegate for Education at least two weeks before the day of the Visitation.

The report will enable the Provincial to grasp how the school’s Jesuit identity and mission has been manifest over the course of the year. He is able to comment on the things that strike him as important and to give thanks and encouragement to staff and pupils.

It is suggested that the report covers four areas of the apostolic life of the school:

1 Religious Education	An overview of RE provision, resourcing and achievement.	Prepared by the Head of Religious Studies / RE Co-ordinator
2 Chaplaincy	An overview of the chaplaincy programme, provision and uptake.	Prepared by the chaplain or director of chaplaincy
3 Pastoral Care	An overview of the structures, resourcing and effectiveness of pastoral care in the school.	Prepared by senior pastoral staff and the chaplaincy
4 Highlights of the Year	This short section enables the Provincial to know about some of the highlights of the year across the wide-ranging activities of the school.	Prepared by the school leadership team

The school is, of course, free to shape the report as it sees fit and in any way that is of greater help to its own review and development planning.

Apostolic Report – Section 1

Religious Education

The Head of Religious Studies or RE Co-ordinator should be invited write this section of the Apostolic Report. S/he is, of course, free to shape it in any way that reflects the school's priorities and way of accounting for the department's work (or the work of teachers who teach RE in the primary schools). However, writing the report under the following four headings may be helpful.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 Curriculum | This section sets out the school's RE curriculum year by year. It is sufficient to indicate topic headings. Detailed content is not required. It may be that this information can best be presented in a simple scope and sequence table. |
| 2 Staffing and resources | This section lists those members of staff teaching RE, their qualifications and recent CPD training, and how much RE teaching they do. It also describes the rooming and resources of the subject. |
| 3 Examination results | <p>For secondary schools, this section sets out public examination results in religious studies over the past six years. It is useful to give:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of candidates entered• %-age grade A* and A• %-age grade A* - B• %-age A* - C• Pass Rate <p>There could also be a brief commentary on the results and the trends the data shows.</p> |
| 4 Commentary | You are invited to write a short commentary on the state of RE teaching in the school, its successes and challenges, strengths and weaknesses, what goes well and what is more difficult, it plans for the future, and any perceived threats. |

Before writing the report, the Head of RE may find it useful to recall and reflect upon what *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education* document has to say about religious education in a Jesuit school:

A religious dimension permeates the entire education

(34) Since every programme in the school can be a means to discover God, all teachers share a responsibility for the religious dimension of the school. However, the integrating factor in the process of discovering God and understanding the true meaning of human life is theology as presented through **religious and spiritual education**. Religious and spiritual formation is integral to Jesuit education; it is not added to, or separate from, the educational process.

(35) Jesuit education tries to foster the creative Spirit at work in each person, offering the opportunity for a **faith response** to God while at the same time recognizing that faith cannot be imposed. In all classes, in the climate of the school, and most especially in formal classes in religion, every attempt is made to present the possibility of a faith response to God as something truly human and not opposed to reason, as well as to develop those values which are able to resist the secularism of modern life. A Jesuit school does everything it can to respond to the mission given to the Society of Jesus ‘to **resist atheism** vigorously with united forces.’

(36) Every aspect of the educational process can lead, ultimately, to **worship of God** present and at work in creation, and to **reverence for creation** as it mirrors God. Worship and reverence are parts of the life of the school community; they are expressed in personal prayer and in appropriate community forms of worship. The intellectual, the imaginative and affective, the creative, and the physical development of each student, along with the sense of wonder that is an aspect of every course and of the life of the school as a whole; all can help students to discover God active in history and in creation.

Apostolic Report – Section 2

Chaplaincy

The school’s chaplaincy is invited to reflect on its work using the eight headings of the *Model for School Chaplaincy*³ used in the Province.

Areas of Chaplaincy Activity	Characteristics of Jesuit Education	Some questions which may help reflection and response
Encounter with Jesus Christ	Christ is proposed as the model of human life. Everyone can draw inspiration and learn about commitment from the life and teaching of Jesus, who witnesses to the love and forgiveness of God, lives in solidarity with all who suffer, and pours out his life in the service of others. (CJE 61)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is Jesus Christ presented in the school? • Could it be said that the presentation has a high impact? • Do the various aspects of the witness of Christ’s life get told? • Is the presentation of Jesus perceived as ‘good news’?
Personal Philosophy of Life	The educational process has one common goal: the formation of a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are pupils encouraged to form their own philosophy of

³ A *Model of School Chaplaincy* was developed for the Jesuit Schools’ Chaplains’ Conference in Edinburgh in November 2011. It is available on the Jesuit Institute website.



	balanced person with a personally developed philosophy of life. (CJE 32)	<p>life?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are role models put before them in a regular and attractive way? • How does the school educate its pupils emotionally?
Prayer	Jesuit education offers a progressive initiation to prayer, following the example of Christ who prayed regularly to his Father. All are encouraged to praise and thank God, to pray for one another, and to ask God’s help in meeting the needs of the larger human community. (CJE 67)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the school a ‘school of prayer’, instructing pupils and staff how to prayer and affording opportunities and encouragement to do so? • Are prayers used in more than a routine way in the school day? • Are the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius explicitly used as a “progressive initiation into prayer”?
Worship	A Jesuit school is a community of faith which expresses this faith through appropriate religious or spiritual celebrations. (CJE 68)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school have a planned calendar of liturgical celebrations which reflect the great seasons and feasts of the Church’s year and also the feastdays of the Jesuit tradition? • Are many pupils and staff involved in a variety of ways in school liturgy? • Does the school plan spiritual celebrations outside the liturgy (at assemblies, on special occasions)?
Social Outreach	Talents are gifts to be developed for the good of the human community (CJE 82) . . . Today or prime educational objective must be to form men and women for others (CJE 82) . . . There are opportunities in Jesuit education for actual contact with the world of injustice. (CJE 80)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school have a clear focus on and engagement with service of others? • Are there many and varied opportunities for pupils to be “men and women for others”? • Does the school adopt a policy of “Think globally, act locally” in its outreach activity?
Leadership	The goal of Jesuit education today is to educate leaders in service. (CJE 110)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities are given to pupils to fulfil leadership roles? • Does the school specifically aim to form “leaders in service”? • Are there opportunities for religious, spiritual and liturgical leadership? • Does the chaplaincy provide formation for leadership?



<p>Involvement in the Life of the Church</p>	<p>In ways proper to a school, concrete experiences of church life are available to all students through participation in church projects and activities. (CJE 103)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school deliberately makes experiences of church available to pupils and ensure a majority are involved in them? • How does the school ensure it is not an isolated island but engaged with the activity of the wider church? • How does the school involve the local bishop?
<p>Pastoral Care</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the chaplaincy specifically contributes to the global pastoral care provision of the school.

Some questions to help reflection on the reach and effectiveness of the chaplaincy programme

1. Is the chaplaincy programme made-up of a wide variety of activities across the seven areas of chaplaincy activity plus pastoral care? [nb. the provision of pastoral care will be shared with others across the school community]
2. Does the programme provide for joining and non-joining opportunities? [ie. pupils who want to participate in activities of an ongoing nature and others who will join one-off activities only]
3. Is recruitment to chaplaincy activities good? [this is about the numbers game; are steps taken to ensure pupils getting involved in chaplaincy activities are not just the self-selecting; could every pupil point to chaplaincy involvement?]
4. How well are pupils who need more accompaniment or encouragement to participate identified and engaged?
5. Are school departments and activities encouraged to take responsibility for elements of *Cura Personalis*, and are they enabled to see how they are contributing to the Jesuit identity and mission of the school? Is this articulated and celebrated?
6. Does the school explicitly form pupil leaders? And what contribution does the chaplaincy make to this?
7. Is there identification and formation of a core adult team to promote the Jesuit identity and mission of the school?
8. Are parents well aware of the chaplaincy programme and are their opportunities for them to contribute to it?



Apostolic Report – Section 3

Pastoral Care

This section of the Apostolic Report should set out the structures which provide pastoral care in the school, and a brief outline of the approaches and policies which determine the style of pastoral care provision in the school. In particular, you may wish to comment on the ways in which:

- efforts are made for every child to be known as an individual;
- children with specific care needs are monitored and intervention is arranged;
- the school's behaviour policy ensures that an appropriate element of reconciliation and the possibility of a "way back" is built into arrangements;
- the school has practices and structures which help pupils establish the routine and effective practice of reflection on their lives and experience.

It may be useful to reflect on *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education* section on pastoral care before completing this section of the Apostolic Report.

(43) Growth in the responsible use of freedom is facilitated by the **personal relationship between student and teacher**. Teachers and administrators, both Jesuit and lay, are more than academic guides. They are involved in the lives of the students, taking a personal interest in the intellectual, affective, moral and spiritual development of every student, helping each one to develop a sense of self-worth and to become a responsible individual within the community. While they respect the privacy of students, they are ready to listen to their cares and concerns about the meaning of life, to share their joys and sorrows, to help them with personal growth and interpersonal relationships. In these and other ways, the adult members of the educational community guide students in their development of a set of values leading to life decisions that go beyond self: that include a concern for the needs of others. They try to live in a way that offers an example to the students, and they are willing to share their own life experiences. *Cura personalis* (concern for the individual person) remains a basic characteristic of Jesuit education.

(54) The concern for total human development as a creature of God which is the 'Christian humanism' of Jesuit education emphasizes the happiness in life that is the result of a responsible use of freedom, but it also **recognizes the reality of sin and its effects** in the life of each person. It therefore tries to encourage each student to confront this obstacle to freedom honestly, in a growing self-awareness and a growing realization that forgiveness and conversion are possible through the redemptive love and the help of God.

(55) The struggle to remove the obstacles to freedom and develop the capacity to exercise freedom is more than a recognition of the effects of sin; an ongoing effort to recognize **all obstacles to growth** is also essential. Students are helped in their efforts to discover prejudice and limited vision on the one hand and to evaluate relative goods and competing values on the other.

(56) Teachers and administrators assist students in this growth by being ready to challenge them, helping students to **reflect on personal experiences** so that they can understand their own experience of God; while they accept their gifts and develop them, they also accept limitations and overcome these as far as possible. The educational programme, in bringing students into realistic contact with themselves, tries to help them recognize these various influences and to **develop a critical faculty** that goes beyond the simple recognition of true and false, good and evil.

Apostolic Report – Section 4

Highlights of the Year

This should be a short section which highlights maybe up to a dozen of the most notable achievements of the year drawn from across the various activities of the school: academic, sporting, creative and cultural, charitable, clubs and extra-curricular activities, provision for and achievements of pupils with additional needs, involvement in the wider community both local and international, opportunities for personal and social development, buildings and facilities, etc.

A bullet-point list is fine.

This section will be used by the Provincial to inform his comments and preaching so that what he says can be linked to specific examples in the recent life of the school that are recognised by pupils and teachers.

Using the Apostolic Report for Diocesan Inspection

There is no reason why the Apostolic Report prepared annually for the Jesuit Provincial Visitation should not be used for a diocesan inspection (known as a Section 48 inspection in state schools). Even though the diocese may have its own requirements, it may be good to argue for using the Visitation report as an alternative.

The bishop has a right to visit and inspect schools in his diocese and to exercise oversight of their apostolic work. However, Jesuit schools are apostolic works of a religious order and therefore also come under the direction of their own Ordinary who is the Provincial. Canon law prescribes that these two authorities “must proceed by way of mutual consultation” (canon 678.3).

The schools of religious orders retain their right, while complying with general directives issued by a bishop for all schools in his diocese, to order their internal affairs according to their own charism. The Jesuit charism (ie. its identity and mission, and “way of proceeding”) are strongly articulated in *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education* and should be proposed as the template against which any diocesan inspection is carried out.

Canon law on the rights of bishops in regard to the schools of religious orders

[677] §1 Superiors and members [of the institute] are faithfully to hold fast to the mission and works which are proper to their institute. According to the needs of time and place, however, they are prudently to adapt them, making use of new and appropriate means.

[678] §1 In matters concerning the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship and other works of the apostolate, religious are subject to the authority of the Bishops, whom they are bound to treat with sincere obedience and reverence.

§2 In the exercise of an apostolate towards persons outside the institute, religious are also subject to their own Superiors and must remain faithful to the discipline of the institute. If the need arises, Bishops themselves are not to fail to insist on this obligation.

§3 In directing the apostolic works of religious, diocesan Bishops and religious Superiors must proceed by way of mutual consultation.

[803] The diocesan Bishop has the right to watch over and inspect the catholic schools situated in his territory, even those established or directed by members of religious institutes. He has also the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of catholic schools; these directives apply also to schools conducted by members of a religious institute, although they retain their autonomy in the internal management of their schools.

