

Subject: **UPDATE:** Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS): Guidelines for Schools and Inspectors based on the 2018 SIAMS Inspection Framework

From: Ryan Parker, RE & Christian Ethos Adviser/SIAMS Manager **Date:** February 2020

For: Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, RE Coordinators, School Incumbents & SIAMS Inspectors **Reference:** SIAMS 2/19-20

**GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS AND INSPECTORS
BASED ON THE 2018 SIAMS INSPECTION FRAMEWORK
(DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS)**

Denominational inspections are known in the Church of England as the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (Section 48 Inspections (S48)). From September 2018, the Evaluation Schedule has one inspection question: *How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?* This is explored through seven strands:

- Vision and Leadership
- Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills
- Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy
- Community and Living Well Together
- Dignity and Respect
- The impact of collective worship
- The effectiveness of religious education

One overall grade is awarded, reflecting the contribution of these strands to the flourishing of pupils and adults in a church school. In addition, a standalone grade is awarded in all schools for collective worship. In Voluntary Aided (VA) schools (and former VA schools) a grade is also given for religious education (RE). This grade is based solely on the quality of teaching and learning in RE.

Scheduling

From September 2018, the scheduling of S48 inspections is on the following basis:

- For a school previously inspected for S48 as 'good', 'outstanding'¹ or 'satisfactory', a five-year cycle of SIAMS inspection is the norm.
- For a school previously inspected for S48 as 'ineffective', the next inspection will take place after three years from the date of the last S48 inspection, but no later than five school years from the end of the academic year within which the last inspection took place.
- Where a school chooses to convert to academy status, including becoming part of a multi-academy trust, the date and the outcome of the last S48 inspection for the predecessor school will be used to determine the timing of the first S48 inspection of the new academy. This is different to the scheduling practice of Ofsted.
- Where a new school has been created by the amalgamation of two or more predecessor schools (under one URN), the new school can be scheduled according to the outcome and timing of the inspection of any of the predecessor schools, ideally when this would allow for an inspection within five years.
- When a new academy or a free school opens, a S48 inspection should be scheduled by the diocese at a suitable point before five years from the date of opening. It is suggested that three years from opening is sufficient time for the new school to have developed and embedded an ethos that would be helpfully informed by inspection. Thereafter, the timing of inspections should be in line with the general guidance above.
- All S48 inspections are scheduled independently from Ofsted Section 5 inspections, with timing determined by the previous S48 outcome.
- Inspections can take place anytime during the academic year. For instance, a school graded 'good' in March 2015 will have their next inspection scheduled within the academic year 2019-20. The school should not expect that the inspection will take place in the same month as the previous inspection.

Process (from phone call)

- The school will receive an email or phone call from the SIAMS Manager. This will inform the school that they are to be inspected, the date of the inspection and the name of the inspector. The notice period is five working days. An email will be sent confirming details discussed in this conversation.
- The inspector will then contact the school within twenty-four hours to discuss key aspects of the inspection process, agree any documentation and outline required meetings (allow 20-30 minutes for this conversation). A schedule pertaining to the day of inspection will be discussed. The inspector will notify the SIAMS Manager that this conversation has taken place.
- As part of the initial telephone call with the headteacher (or most senior staff member available), the inspector may request documents to be emailed, including:

¹ Note, the descriptor 'outstanding' has been changed to 'excellent' from September 2018.

- any SIAMS-related school self-evaluation (SEF);
 - relevant policies (e.g. for assessment, behaviour, mental health, religious education, collective worship, SEND);
 - the school's development plan for the current and previous year;
 - any action plans related to SIAMS;
 - in the case of an academy, the inspector may request any scheme of delegation that sets out the levels of delegation to the local governing boards (sometimes called a local governing body committee); and
 - the school's IDSR (Inspection Data Summary Report).
- Many of these documents may be on the school website; it is acceptable to refer the inspector to these online versions.
 - The inspector will also request documents to be made available on the day of inspection (e.g. work samples, analysis of responses from pupil and parent surveys).
 - Please note that an inspector will not be allocated to consecutively inspect the same school.
 - Inspectors should have no or minimal links with the school to be inspected. It is deemed a conflict of interest if the inspector has, for example, a relative or close friend in the school, led SIAMS-related training within the last three years or been employed as a member of staff in the school previously. The school should contact the SIAMS Manager immediately if they perceive there to be a conflict of interest.

Before the inspection

- The school makes sure that the requested documents are sent to the inspector.
- The school will receive a contract from the inspector. The headteacher should check and ask the chair of governors or a foundation governor to sign it. It can be returned to the inspector by email or given to him/her on the day of the inspection.
- The inspector will use the initial evidence to draft a Pre-Inspection Plan which outlines the focus, pattern and nature of inspection activities. This will be sent to the headteacher at least 24 hours (excluding weekends) before the inspection.

During the inspection

- The inspection will take place over a whole school day, or two days for a secondary school. The timetable for the day will be drawn up through discussion between the school and inspector. The inspector has the right to change the inspection timetable in the light of developments during the inspection day.
- During the inspection, the school should provide documentation which supports their self-evaluation which should include information about achievement and progress. The inspector will provide guidance on what might be helpful when they contact the school.

- The inspector will verify the self-evaluation of the school. They will do this through: meeting with staff, governors, clergy,² parents, pupils and others to ascertain the effectiveness of the school's distinctive Christian vision and how this enables pupils and adults to flourish; learning walks, observations of lessons and acts of worship, in whole or in part; scrutiny of pupils' work (in conjunction with members of the school's leadership) and meeting with school leaders.
- Feedback is an ongoing process throughout the inspection day. In particular, inspectors must arrange a mid-inspection feedback with the headteacher or nominated senior leader. This will be an opportunity to report on emerging findings and potential areas for development. It will also be a chance to request extra evidence and adjust the afternoon timetable as needed. In the case of a one-day inspection this will occur around lunchtime, for a two-day inspection at the end of the first day.
- The final feedback takes place at the end of the day(s). The inspector will share their findings and provisional judgements with senior leaders. Please note that these judgements are both provisional and confidential to those in the feedback meeting. This is due to the quality assurance process that the report goes through before being made public.
- The inspector must check that the school is satisfied with the way the inspection has been conducted and is aware of its rights to appeal or complain.

The report

Following the inspection, the inspector will send the report to a critical reader for purposes of quality assurance. Once a draft has been agreed between the critical reader and inspector, the inspector will forward it to the school to be checked for factual accuracy. The school should respond to the inspector within 24 hours of receipt of the report for factual checking. If this is likely to take longer, the school should inform the inspector as soon as possible.

After the factual accuracy check has been completed, the inspector will send the final report to the school, normally within 10 working days. At this point, the report can be shared with governors, parents and made public.

The inspector will also send the report and related paperwork to the SIAMS Manager and to the SIAMS Administrator. The SIAMS Manager will send a Microsoft Word copy of the report, with the inspector claim form, to the Church of England Education Office.

All SIAMS reports will be placed on the 'A church near you' section of the Church of England website and the Schools pages of the Diocese of St Albans website.

The final inspection report will include a cover page (one side of A4) plus a commentary on the inspection findings on the main inspection question that covers the seven strands of the Evaluation Schedule. In the case of VA and former VA schools, there will be a separate section on the outcomes of teaching and learning in RE.

² It may be the case that it is not possible to meet with clergy if a parish is in vacancy. Inspectors will take account of this and it will not reflect negatively on the school. Please see briefing paper GC 1/19-20 'What to do when there is a clergy pastoral vacancy' for further information. This can be found on www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/GC1-1920-What-to-do-in-a-clergy-vacancy.pdf

Issues of concern, disagreement and complaints

The school will be notified of their right to complain and appeal throughout all stages of the SIAMS inspection process. These processes are detailed in Appendix G of the SIAMS Handbook 2019.

Deferral Policy

There may be rare cases when diocesan staff or schools identify exceptional circumstances or concerns that warrant consideration of a delayed inspection. The SIAMS Handbook (2019) outlines the procedure for requesting a deferred inspection in accordance with the protocol agreement between the Church of England Education Office and the Department for Education.

There are two ways of moving an inspection: adjustments (moving an inspection from one term to another term in the same academic year) and deferrals (moving an inspection from one academic year to another). Further details can be found on pages 40-42 of the SIAMS Handbook.³

There are very limited circumstances in which an adjustment or a deferral can be applied for. Listed below are some examples of the type of things that might warrant an adjustment or a deferral:

- a. The school has experienced a major incident, such as a fatal accident involving a member of staff or pupil.
- b. The headteacher or a member of the school's senior leadership team is the subject of a current police investigation which would be compromised by an inspection of the school.
- c. The school is closed to all pupils – for example, owing to adverse weather conditions – for at least half of the period for which the inspection has been scheduled.
- d. At least three quarters of the pupils will not be at school – for example, owing to a school trip or a religious festival – for at least half of the period for which the inspection has been scheduled.
- e. Other exceptional circumstances which, in the judgement of the Education Office, justify deferral or cancellation of the inspection as the named religious authority in the Section 48 Agreement with the Department for Education.

In all cases, requests for a deferral must be made in writing to the Diocesan SIAMS Manager.

Once the diocese is satisfied that they need to request an adjustment or a deferral, they will need to make a request to the Education Office School Character and SIAMS Development Manager (derek.holloway@churchofengland.org). It cannot be a unilateral decision by the diocese or any of its officers. This request should be in the form of an email, so there is an evidence trail, from the SIAMS Manager or the Diocesan Director of Education with an explanation of the reasons relevant to the individual circumstances of the school which is the subject of the request. The School Character and SIAMS Development Manager will then make a decision on whether an individual school can have its inspection adjusted or deferred or not.

³ www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/SIAMS-Handbook-revised-Sept-19-FINAL.pdf

Applications to adjust or defer a planned inspection on the following grounds will not be accepted as pupils at the school are still receiving education:

- The headteacher is out of school
- The school has been judged to require improvement by Ofsted
- Difficult relations between the governing body and the senior leadership team
- The school wants more time to improve in order to secure the best judgement
- An imminent change of leadership
- The diocese hasn't been able to secure enough inspectors

On occasion, it may happen that a SIAMS inspection is scheduled and an Ofsted team contact the school to inform them they will be inspecting on the same day or turn up to do a no-notice inspection on the day of the SIAMS inspection. In such a situation, it is possible for both inspections to take place concurrently, indeed there may be advantages to this. However, if the headteacher feels that the two inspections running concurrently will place too much pressure on the school staff, governors or pupils, the SIAMS inspector must stand down. The diocese, in conjunction with the inspector, will then arrange for the inspection to take place at the earliest date possible.

On occasion, the situation may occur that a school has had an Ofsted judgement that has resulted in the school being re-brokered by the Regional Schools Commissioner into a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). In such circumstances, it is recognised that to conduct an inspection of a school which will report to school leaders and governors who are about to stand down is of limited value and may add a significant burden to the school community. It is therefore possible to defer the inspection until the first term in which the new MAT school leadership is in place. If there is no immediate likelihood of the re-brokering process going ahead, then the SIAMS inspection should take place.

Effective working with diocesan consultants prior to and following the SIAMS inspection will support your school's development and improvement as a church school. This is free for schools in the Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Detailed information about the SIAMS process is available on the Schools pages of the diocesan website:

www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools/inspections-siams/

Contact details:

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