

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

New Inspector Training Application and Course Guidance

The training course

- SIAMS New Inspector Training is managed centrally by the Church of England Education Office.
- The course is led by a team of tutors from the national group of quality assurance (QA) officers.
- The cost of training is £1150. The programme represents a significant commitment for the participant, the diocese and the Church of England Education Office. This is in line with the level of professional responsibility carried by inspectors in reporting publicly on the effectiveness of Church schools.

The cost covers:

- four taught days
- an individual tutorial on the final taught day
- preparation tasks for each day
- copies of all training materials and inspection documents
- two shadow inspections with experienced inspectors
- individual written and oral feedback on assessed tasks
- the sign-off inspection process mentored and assessed by a QA officer from Church of England Education Office
- inspector registration with the Church of England Education Office for the year immediately following the successful completion of the course.

The participant is required to:

- attend all taught and inspection days
- attendance should be agreed with employers at the application stage where this is appropriate
- complete pre-reading tasks for taught days
- complete assessed tasks within given timescales
- provide information required by the Diocese and Church of England Education Office.

Inspection skills

There are five core inspection skills.

- Analyse evidence and identify lines of enquiry
- Follow evidence trails
- Make secure judgements
- Communicate clearly both orally and in writing
- Behave professionally

All taught sessions and assessed tasks are directly aligned to these skills.

Elements of the training

1. Shadow inspections

The diocese allocates two suitable shadow inspections for the course participant between day 2 and day 4 of the training. The diocese will have advance notice of these dates in order to plan ahead.

The first shadow is solely for observation in order to familiarise the trainee with the process of inspection. There are no tasks required although participants are advised to complete an evidence form for some activities in order to practise their skills.

The second assessed shadow has tasks attached, including writing a pre-inspection plan (PIP), a report and completing evidence forms. The tasks are assessed by the course tutors.

2. Sign-off inspection

The sign-off inspection takes place once the participant has successfully completed all four days of the training course and the assessed tasks linked to the shadow inspection. The course leader allocates a QA Assessor for each of the sign-off inspections.

Detailed guidance on the shadow and sign-off inspections is provided to both the course participant and the diocese.

3. Assessment

The requirements for assessment are made clear to participants at the beginning of the course as the tasks require time to be planned into diaries. Assessment is through written tasks based on the shadow inspection and sign-off inspection. Written and oral feedback is given for each task. It makes clear if the participant has demonstrated competency in the required skills, notes particular strengths and identified points for development. If participants do not meet the required standard, they will be asked to repeat the task.

Assessment of the sign-off inspection includes a much broader evaluation of the participant's skills in managing the process, maintaining a secure written evidence base and communicating with members of the school community.

Detailed guidance and criteria are in place for the evaluation of the pre-inspection plan, report writing, feedback and the management of the inspection. These conform to Church of England Education Office guidance documents.

Acceptance onto the course does not guarantee that participants will be signed off as a qualified SIAMS inspector. In order to achieve registered SIAMS inspector status, participants must successfully complete the training course and submit and pass all written assessment tasks connected to the shadow and sign-off inspections.

When course participants have completed the sign-off inspection, they must not begin inspecting until they have been registered as an accredited inspector and have received their Church of England Education Office inspector badge.

The Application Process

The application form is published on the Church of England Education webpages. It is also sent out to those who have already enquired about the training and to diocesan SIAMS managers.

Prospective applicants are advised to discuss their intention to apply to train to become a SIAMS inspector with their diocese (either the diocese in which they live or in which they work). The diocesan SIAMS manager will be able to discuss the role of a SIAMS inspector, the prospective applicant's suitability for the role and the diocese's capacity to support a new inspector and offer work.

The support of the diocese

Applicants for New Inspector Training must have the support of their diocese in order to apply. This is demonstrated in Part 5 of the application form that must be filled out and signed by the Diocesan Director of

Education and the SIAMS manager. This section must include a statement from the diocese outlining whether the applicant has the experience, knowledge and skills required to be a SIAMS inspector. If the applicant is already known to the SIAMS manager/DDE then the statement can be based on this prior knowledge of the applicant. If the applicant is not known, the diocese should interview the applicant in order to ascertain their experience, professional skills and suitability for the role. This could be done in person or by telephone. It is advised that the applicant is interviewed against the eligibility criteria (see below). In the statement from the diocese we are particularly looking for confirmation of the following:

- whether the applicant has a thorough understanding of Church school leadership and management, and the phases of education
- whether the applicant has the interpersonal and communication skills that are required to effectively interact with all people in the school community and to probe for evidence
- whether the applicant has the analytical and evaluative skills to process information, consider evidence and make sound judgements.

It is recommended that the applicant is interviewed once they have filled in the application form so that the interview and the diocesan statement can draw upon the applicant's written statement and CV.

Level of commitment required

Applicants must understand the level of commitment involved in becoming a SIAMS inspector.

SIAMS Inspectors must:

- carry out at least three inspections per year (*This is the minimum number of inspections deemed vital for the development and maintenance of inspection skills*)
- have the time and capacity to attend annual diocesan and national ongoing training for inspectors to maintain their registration
- be willing to travel in order to carry out inspections
- have up to date and relevant DBS clearance (please see the [SIAMS Handbook](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-school-inspections) <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-school-inspections> for advice on this) and professional indemnity insurance
- maintain an inspection and training record that is used as evidence to apply for inspector badge renewal.

A SIAMS inspection involves a significant time commitment. It takes a minimum of three days, or more for a VA secondary school. This is at least one day to prepare, one day gathering evidence in the school and one day to write the report.

If the applicant's ability to inspect within the diocese (through which they are applying) is compromised (e.g. because they work for the diocese as an advisor, or they have connections to many schools), they will need to contact other dioceses in order to obtain inspection work. The travel implications should be considered as the inspector cannot claim travel/other expenses.

Eligibility Criteria

The following experience, knowledge and skills are essential for successful completion of the training. They will, therefore, be used as criteria for acceptance onto the course.

- Current or recent experience of leadership at a senior level in successful Church schools and a sound understanding of school leadership and management
(*If this experience includes leadership in a school judged inadequate by Ofsted, this should be discussed with the diocesan SIAMS manager prior to making an application.*)
- A clear understanding of the phases of education the participant intends to inspect
- An up-to-date knowledge of:
 - the Christian character of Church schools

- the requirements for religious education and collective worship in Church schools
- performance data in schools
- recent national developments in Church school policy and practice
- the Church of England Vision for Education
- Sympathy with the aims of Church schools and a sound understanding of the Christian faith
- Ability to listen and establish positive working relationships
- A fluent command of the English language and the ability to communicate both in writing and orally in a clear and engaging way
- Strong analytical and evaluative skills to process information, consider evidence and make sound judgements
- Strong organisational skills and the ability to follow protocols and procedures
- Competency in IT such as confidence in using Microsoft Office, including converting documents into appropriate formats
- Have access to facilities for printing documents for use during inspections or appropriate tablet/laptop to work electronically

Additional support

In the application form, applicants are asked to outline any access or specific needs they may have that might affect the training or carrying out an inspection. It is important these are discussed at an early stage so that trainers, the Education Office and the supporting diocese will then be able to offer the advice and support needed to make sure the participant has the equal opportunity to succeed. If you would like to discuss any of this before submitting, or after submitting your application, please contact Derek Holloway (contact details at the end of this document).

Assessment of applications

The Church of England Education Office assesses the training course applications with the course leader and confirms with the applicant whether they have been successful in their application or not. When an application does not appear to be strong enough to be successful, or more information is required, the School Character and SIAMS Development Manager will take up references and contact the relevant SIAMS manager. Applicants will be informed whether or not their application has been accepted once the situation has been discussed with the Diocese.

Important note

The Church of England Education Office reserves the right to make the final decision on whether a course participant has successfully completed the training days, the assessed tasks and the sign-off inspection, and therefore whether they can be registered as an accredited inspector.

If you would like to discuss anything about the application process or the training course please contact Derek Holloway at derek.holloway@churchofengland.org or 020 7898 1490.