SIAMS Quality Assurance of Reports Policy

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Methodist Schools

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION OFFICE

SIAMS Quality Assurance of Reports Policy for Inspectors

INTRODUCTION

1. There are three strands of quality assurance within the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) process.

    i. Quality Assurance of Reports (QAR)
    ii. Quality Assurance of Inspection (QAI)
    iii. Duty Desk

2. All three elements come under the remit of the Quality Assurance (QA) Team.

3. The QA Team consists of the National Director of SIAMS, the Deputy Head of SIAMS, and QA Inspectors/critical readers

4. This policy addresses QAR.

5. Critical readers' QAR is the final arbiter of quality and consistency prior to a report being made final and published. It is essential, therefore, that there is a consistent approach across the team and a commitment to certain ways of working.

6. At times, they will need to be insistent about national protocols and expectations, sometimes giving frank messages, yet kindly and with professional compassion.

7. At all times, critical readers should carry out their work in a Christian manner and with a shared commitment to setting consistently high standards of SIAMS inspection practice.

1. QAR: REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

1.1. The key documents for QAR are:

1.1.1. SIAMS Evaluation Schedule (September 2021)

1.1.2. Checklist for Report Writing

1.1.3. SIAMS House Style

1.1.4. QAR Policy

1.1.5. Portal How-To Guide for Critical Readers (for critical readers' use only)

2. QAR: PRINCIPLES

2.1. Inspectors are expected to write their reports with reference to the SIAMS House Style and the Checklist for Report Writing, which are available on the Education pages of the Church of England website. Therefore, the expectations for report writing that are set out in these documents should be already inherent within a draft report when it is sent for QAR.

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2.2. However, there will often be mistakes or oversights in reports and it is the job of the critical reader to point these out to the inspector and to help them find a way through.

2.3. If critical readers note on first reading that a report contains a large number of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors or that it pays little heed to the Checklist for Report Writing they will ask the inspector to review the draft before the first thorough QAR is carried out.

2.4. If critical readers find a lack of coherence on the front page of the report, they will complete the critical read of this section only and return the report to the inspector with their feedback. The critical reader will advise the inspector to address their comments regarding the front page and recheck the inspection findings before resending the report for a second critical read.

2.5. If there are few issues with the front page of the report, the critical reader will complete a full review of the report.

2.6. It is important that a report remains in the ownership of the inspector who has written it and so critical readers will not change the actual text of the report.

2.7. As a matter of course, critical readers will ask questions of the inspector in order to support their own understanding of the context of the school.

2.8. Instead, they will make specific comments in the right-hand column on the report writing page of the portal and possibly some additional general comments in the 'Notes' section. This will enable dialogue, achieving consistency in writing across inspectors, and reducing individuals' dependence on the QAR process.

2.9. If critical readers conclude that the text does not support the grade that the inspector has awarded, they will ask them to review the evidence base and to strengthen the evidence that is presented in the report.

2.10. If the inspector does not have sufficient additional evidence that would lead to a text to grade match, it is likely that the grade will need to be changed. In these circumstances, critical readers should direct the inspector to contact the school to inform them that a change of grade is required.

2.11. Critical readers will be allocated to inspections by the SIAMS portal, according to their availability. It is important, therefore, that they ensure that their unavailability information is kept up to date on their Profile.

2.12. Inspectors should complete the first draft of their report and make it available to their critical reader within 72 hours of the completion of the inspection.

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3. QAR: PROCESS

3.1. Inspectors will write their report by logging into the portal and following the link to the inspection.

3.2. The inspector can choose whether to write the report on a Word document (such as SIAMS report templates 10VA or 10VC) and copy and paste it into the portal; or to write the report directly into the left-hand column on the report section of the portal.

3.3. The inspector can expand the text boxes and once expanded, they will accommodate the word limits that are set out on template 10VB. The portal does not have an in-built word count so inspectors must ensure that they have adhered to the required word limits before the report goes to the critical reader.

3.4. The inspector and the critical reader may both use the 'Notes' section to exchange messages about the report. The content of the 'Notes' section will not be included in the report itself.

3.5. Once the inspector has completed the first draft, taking heed of the Checklist for Report Writing and the SIAMS House Style, they should change the status of the report to 'Critical Reader to Review' and click 'save' at the bottom of the page.

3.6. The inspector can save the draft report and return to it before changing the status if preferred, as long as the first draft is sent to the critical reader within the 72 hours timeframe.

3.7. The critical reader will write their comments in the right-hand column. The portal does not allow for margin comments, but critical readers will ensure that it is clear to which part/s of the inspector's text their comments relate.

3.8. The critical reader may use some abbreviations in order to avoid 'crowding' the available space on the portal. These are set out in Appendix A.

3.9. When the critical reader has completed their first stage of the QAR, the inspector will receive an email notification. This email will contain a link that will take them back to the report.

3.10. The inspector will see the critical reader's comments in the right-hand column. They should act on each comment by editing their own text, but they will not be able to edit the critical reader's comments.

3.11. Once the inspector has completed the second draft of the report, they should repeat step 3.5 above.

3.12. The process will be repeated until the critical reader is content with the report, at which point they will set the status as 'Inspector to Review' and tick the box that says, 'Inspection Review Completed'. Only the critical reader is able to tick this box.

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3.13. Once the inspector has received notification that the review process is complete, they will download the report as a PDF by clicking the 'Report' button at the top right of the screen and forward it to the school for a factual accuracy check.

3.14. The QAR should be complete, and the draft report sent to the school, within 15 working days of the inspection.

3.15. If, in exceptional circumstances, the inspector and critical reader agree that this timeframe will not be adhered to, the inspector should contact the school to let them know and to inform them on which date they can expect to receive the draft report.

3.16. At this point, the critical reader should also inform the Director and Deputy Director of SIAMS of the delay and of the reasons for it.

3.17. Once the inspector has heard back from the school, they will do one of the following.

i. If the school confirms that the report is factually accurate, the inspector will tick the 'School Review Completed' box. This will change the status of the report from 'draft' to 'final'. They will then download the final report and email it to the school. To send this email, the inspector should revert to the original inspection notification confirmation email that they received from SIAMS and 'reply to all'. This will ensure that the correct people are included in the distribution of the final report.

ii. If the school indicates that there are minor factual inaccuracies and/or typographical errors in the draft report, the inspector should correct them and then tick the 'School Review Completed' box. This will change the status of the report from 'draft' to 'final'. They will then download the final report and email it to the school. To send this email, the inspector should revert to the original inspection notification confirmation email that they received from SIAMS and 'reply to all'. This will ensure that the correct people are included in the distribution of the final report.

iii. If the school indicates that they believe there to be inaccuracies in the report that the inspector believes to be more significant than those described in (ii) above, they should draft amendments and then change the status of the report to 'Critical Reader to Review'. This will trigger a notification for the critical reader who will then guide the inspector in how to respond to the school. Once resolved, the inspector should tick the 'School Review Completed' box. This will change the status of the report from 'draft' to 'final'. They will then download the final report and email it to the school. To send this email, the inspector should revert to the original inspection notification confirmation email that they received from SIAMS and 'reply to all'. This will ensure that the correct people are included in the distribution of the final report.

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4. QAR: DO

4.1. Critical readers will always carry out their work in a Christian manner, bearing in mind what it feels like to be on the receiving end of a QAR.

4.2. They will seek to build a relationship with the inspector from the beginning of the QAR process, helping them to feel at ease.

4.3. They should take a coaching approach to the work, encouraging the inspector, and respectfully making suggestions and giving direction, as appropriate.

4.4. Inspectors will also conduct themselves in a Christian manner, treating the critical reader and their comments with respect.

4.5. To ensure high quality report-writing, inspectors and critical readers should check that the:

- 4.5.1. report has a sustained focus on answering the inspection question
- 4.5.2. text matches the grade
- 4.5.3. key findings and areas for development emerge from the text
- 4.5.4. report adheres to report writing guidance, leading to writing that flows
- 4.5.5. report uses evaluative language, rooted in evidence and impact.

4.6. When carrying out QAR, critical readers will:

- 4.6.1. seek clarity in the inspector's writing when necessary
- 4.6.2. refer the inspector to SIAMS policy, protocol, and guidance documents
- 4.6.3. highlight where there are inconsistencies between the text and the grade
- 4.6.4. offer solutions in an invitational style, resisting inviting the inspector to adopt the suggested wording but rather offering it as a model
- 4.6.5. request that their wording is adopted only as a last resort, when all other attempts at improving the writing have failed.

4.7. If critical readers conclude that there are a significant number of issues that need to be addressed as part of QAR, they will highlight the most important first. They will then raise other issues in subsequent drafts once the initial points have been addressed.

4.8. They may also choose to telephone the inspector to talk them through the QAR. Inspectors and critical readers will be able to view each other's contact details through the portal.

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5. QAR: DON'T

5.1. QA Inspectors should avoid:

5.1.1. adopting confrontational language and tone, bearing in mind how it feels to be subject to QAR

5.1.2. directing the inspector to alternative phrases, instead making suggestions and seeking clarification

5.1.3. imposing their own style of writing onto the inspector

5.1.4. correcting basic spelling and grammar errors, instead referring them back to the inspector to be checked

5.2. QA Inspectors should not rewrite parts of the report for the inspector.

5.3. They should not instruct the inspector to start the report again.

5.4. Inspectors should not expect their critical reader to carry out basic checks that are covered in SIAMS documentation.

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APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS THAT MAY BE USED DURING QAR

- AfD Area/s for Development
- Xn Christian
- CW Collective worship
- CA Courageous advocacy
- KF Key Findings
- SpD Spiritual development
- VLF Vision-Leadership-Flourishing

1. Critical readers may also use other abbreviations in order to avoid over-crowding the available space on the portal. If they do so, they will indicate the full meaning followed by the abbreviation on first use.

2. Critical readers may make a comment next to the 'Vision' box on the front page of the report. However, inspectors should remember that neither they nor the critical reader should make advisory comments on a school's vision. Inspectors will evaluate the impact of the vision, making judgements based on this; and critical readers may comment on incorrect references, typographical errors, and/or theological inaccuracies.

3. On the front page of the report, critical readers will indicate whether or not the text of the report matches the grade that the inspector has awarded by using one of the following phrases:

   i. Text grade match

   ii. Insufficient evidence

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