SIAMS Duty Desk Policy for Inspectors

Restricted Document: For Inspectors only

September 2022

Methodist Schools

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION OFFICE

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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.

4. The SIAMS Duty Desk will be staffed by a QA Inspector every day on which inspections are scheduled to take place.

5. The Duty Desk is for inspection-day enquiries only. Outside of the day of the inspection, inspectors should contact the National SIAMS Team on siams@churchofengland.org.

6. The Duty Desk can be contacted on telephone 020 7898 1866. Inspectors should have this number saved on their phones and/or recorded on their inspection paperwork.

7. Inspectors should ensure at the start of an inspection that they have either mobile phone signal or confidential access to a landline.

8. The Duty Desk will be staffed from 9.00am to 5.00pm. If inspectors need to contact the Duty Desk outside of these hours on the day of an inspection, they should telephone the National Director of SIAMS on 07909 212568. Please ensure you have this number with you when on inspection. Please also contact the National Director of SIAMS if you are unable to get through to the Duty Desk number, and if your enquiry is both urgent and time-sensitive.

9. Inspectors should have the school's name and Unique Reference Number (URN) to hand. The Duty Desk will ask for this information before responding to enquiries.

10. It is recommended that inspectors build into their timetable sufficient reflection time to allow them to contact the Duty Desk should they need to. Consulting the Duty Desk does not mean that inspectors are able to go beyond the 6pm finish.

11. QA Inspectors staffing the Duty Desk will record all enquiries on a Duty Desk form.

1. INSPECTORS SHOULD CONTACT THE DUTY DESK IN THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS.

1.1 The inspector has been prevented on the morning of the inspection from arriving at the school or is anticipated to be significantly late.

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1.1.1 This could be for the following reasons:

a) The inspector has broken down or had a road traffic accident.

b) Ill health prevents the inspector from conducting an inspection.

1.1.2 The Duty Desk will:

a) contact the school if the inspector is unable to

b) arrange for the inspector to receive help if necessary

c) arrange for the inspection to be rescheduled.

1.1.3 Any obstacles to the inspector carrying out the inspection that arise before the day of the inspection should be brought immediately to the attention of the SIAMS Management and Training Officer via email: siams@churchofengland.org.

1.1.4 The inspector should arrive to start the inspection at 8am and should contact the school in the first instance if they are going to be late. As per section 1.1, the inspector should also contact the Duty Desk if they are going to be significantly late (after 9am).

1.2 The inspector believes that the inspection should be halted or moved online.

1.2.1 Reasons for this include:

a) an unexpected increase in cases of COVID-19 once the inspection has commenced, that leads the inspector and headteacher to conclude that the inspection cannot continue for health and safety reasons

b) a serious incident, such as a death, that adversely affects the school

c) sudden ill-health

d) serious deterioration in weather conditions, especially early in the day once the inspector is on site.

1.2.2 The Duty Desk will:

a) ascertain whether the inspection can continue online or whether the inspector and headteacher agree that sufficient evidence has been gathered and provisional judgements can be made

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b) advise the inspector on COVID testing in line with the SIAMS COVID-19 Policy, if appropriate

c) find out if the inspector is able to get home and arrange for help if necessary.

1.3 The inspector believes that evidence suggests that a judgement of Ineffective should be awarded.

1.3.1 Before contacting the Duty Desk, the inspector should have:

a) all relevant evidence to hand and be ready to talk the Duty Desk through the reasons for the Ineffective grade

b) a coherent case for the grade with accurate reference to the Ineffective criteria in the Evaluation Schedule

c) maintained close communication with the headteacher throughout the inspection but not confirmed the provisional grade

d) already requested all further evidence that might have an impact on the grade and considered the impact of this additional evidence.

1.3.2 The Duty Desk will:

a) ask the inspector to talk them through the relevant evidence

b) challenge the Ineffective grade, requiring the inspector to defend it

c) check that the inspector has maintained regular communication with the headteacher and that they have requested further evidence that could improve the grade

d) ask the inspector to confirm that they believe that a judgement of Ineffective is correct, based on the evidence

e) remind the inspector that the grade remains subject to Quality Assurance of Reports (QAR) and that they should make it clear at the Final Feedback that the grade is provisional

f) remind the inspector to ask the two final feedback questions.

1.4 The inspector believes that evidence suggests that a judgement of Excellent should be awarded.

1.4.1 Before contacting the Duty Desk, the inspector should have:

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a) all relevant evidence to hand and be ready to talk the Duty Desk through the reasons why a judgement of Good is inappropriate

b) a coherent case for the grade with accurate reference to the Excellence guidance

c) maintained close communication with the headteacher throughout the inspection but not confirmed the provisional grade.

1.4.2 The Duty Desk will:

a) ask the inspector to talk them through the relevant evidence, explaining why a judgement of Good is inappropriate

b) challenge the grade of Excellent, requiring the inspector to defend it with reference to the Excellence guidance

c) ask the inspector to confirm that they believe that a judgement of Excellent is correct, based on the evidence

d) remind the inspector that the grade remains subject to QAR and that they should make it clear at the Final Feedback that the grade is provisional

e) remind the inspector to ask the two final feedback questions.

1.5 The inspection has gone very wrong for a reason that is not listed in this Policy or the inspector is dealing with an emergency, and they require support.

1.5.1 Before contacting the Duty Desk, the inspector should:

a) ensure they are speaking in private

b) be ready to share pertinent details of the situation

c) understand that they will need to make a decision about how to proceed, in consultation with the Duty Desk.

1.5.2 The Duty Desk will:

a) listen to the inspector's account of the situation with which they are dealing and reassure them

b) ask the inspector to explain the stance being taken by the headteacher/school leaders

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c) help the inspector to decide what they need to do next and advise on how they should proceed.

1.6 The inspector is carrying out their first or second solo inspection and would appreciate some advice on key aspects of the inspection day.

1.6.1 Before contacting the Duty Desk, the inspector should:

a) ensure they are speaking in private

b) be ready to share pertinent details of the situation, including that this is their first or second solo inspection

c) understand that they will need to make a decision about how to proceed, in consultation with the Duty Desk.

1.6.2 The Duty Desk will:

a) check that the inspector is coping and find out if they require any specific help immediately

b) listen to the inspector's account of the situation with which they are dealing and reassure them

c) ask the inspector to explain the stance being taken by the headteacher/school leaders

d) help the inspector to decide what they need to do next and advise on how they should proceed.

2. INSPECTORS SHOULD NOT CONTACT THE DUTY DESK IN THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS.

2.1 It is not the day of the inspection.

2.1.1 In such circumstances, inspectors should contact the National SIAMS Team on siams@churchofengland.org.

2.2 The inspector cannot decide between two grades

2.2.1 The inspector should evaluate all evidence that has been gathered with reference to the Evaluation Schedule.

2.2.2 The inspector should request further evidence as appropriate.

2.2.3 The inspector must reach a provisional judgement and share this with the school leaders before leaving the school.

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2.3 The inspector has a query that can be answered by referring to the SIAMS Toolbox (Policy Handbook, Templates, and Guidance Documents)

2.3.1 The inspector should ensure that they have all Toolbox documents with them, either as hard copies or electronically.

2.3.2 The inspector should refer to policy and guidance documents and proceed accordingly.

2.4 The inspector wishes to check a grade of Good or Requires Improvement

2.4.1 The inspector should evaluate the evidence with reference to the Evaluation Schedule and reach an evidence-based judgement.

2.4.2 The inspector must reach a provisional judgement and share this with the school leaders before leaving the school.

2.4.3 The inspector should rase any concerns with the QA Inspector at the start of the QAR process, highlighting any uncertainty about the grade/s awarded.

2.5 The school challenges or does not accept the judgement/s

2.5.1 The inspector should adhere to Stage One of the SIAMS Appeals Policy (section 3.2). Subsequent steps of the SIAMS Appeals Policy should be followed as part of the QAR process.

2.5.2 The inspector should record any challenge or objection made by the school on an evidence form and notify their QA Inspector at the start of the QAR process.

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