

# SIAMS Information for Schools

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Methodist Schools



THE CHURCH  
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# SIAMS Information for Schools

## 1. Scheduling and notification of SIAMS inspections

- 1.1. Church schools should receive a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection every five years from the date of the previous inspection.
- 1.2. Whilst COVID-related 'catch-up' continues, legislation requires that a SIAMS inspection will be carried out within eight years of the date of the previous inspection. Thereafter, scheduling will return to a five-year cycle.
- 1.3. In general, under the revised legislation, SIAMS inspections will take place between one and two years after the academic year in which they would have taken place before the Covid-related suspension. There will, however, be some inspections that fall outside of this general principle.
- 1.4. A list of the schools that are expected to be inspected in an academic year will be published in the summer on an annual basis until all schools have been through their first cycle of inspection.
- 1.5. The list will be shared with Diocesan Education Teams for circulation to schools, and will be published on the SIAMS pages of [the Church of England website](#).
- 1.6. The list will not be published in chronological order or according to the term within which an inspection will take place, and nothing should be read into the position of a specific school on the list.
- 1.7. This policy comes with the caveat that the list is an 'expected' not a 'guaranteed' list. It is possible that extraordinary circumstances will lead to unannounced changes, but these will be avoided if possible.
- 1.8. Schools will be given one week's notice of the date of their SIAMS inspection. Inspections will only be deferred in exceptional circumstances. Please refer to the Inspection Deferral Policy, which is available on the SIAMS pages of [the Church of England website](#).

## 2. 2023 SIAMS Framework and Diocesan/MAST Training

- 2.1. The 2023 SIAMS Framework is available on the SIAMS pages of [the Church of England website](#).
- 2.2. SIAMS judgements place schools into one of two main categories.
  - 2.2.1. **J1** – The inspection findings indicate that [insert school name] School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.
  - 2.2.2. **J2** – The inspection findings indicate that [insert school name] School has strengths, but that there are also issues that leaders need to address as a matter of priority. These issues relate to [RE, collective worship, Christian vision] and are listed in the areas for development.
- 2.3. There are six possible reasons for a J2 judgement.

- 2.4. Diocesan Education Teams and/or MAST are responsible for the provision of training for schools in matters related to SIAMS. Please contact them direct for further information.

### 3. SIAMS Self-Evaluation

- 3.1. The key purpose of ongoing self-evaluation is to enable a school to reflect meaningfully on the impact of its vision, policy, and practice. It is, first and foremost, a process that is for the benefit of school communities and will be most useful when conducted in a reflective, honest, rigorous, and evidence-based manner.
- 3.2. Although not a statutory element of the SIAMS process, it also makes a significant contribution to thorough, accurate and insightful inspection.
- 3.3. The occasion of a SIAMS inspection enables schools to present evidence of how they achieve the outcomes that are addressed within the IQs. Self-evaluation helps inspectors to evaluate as broad and relevant an evidence base as possible, and to reach accurate judgements.
- 3.4. Self-evaluation can refer to provision but should have an overwhelmingly evaluative focus on impact in order to be of maximum use to the school.
- 3.5. There are six (seven in the case of a VA or formally VA school) Inspection Questions (IQ), and all self-evaluation should be focused on answering these questions.
- 3.6. Rigorous and meaningful ongoing self-evaluation will result in lengthy, 'live', and often-changing documentation. This should not be shared with an inspector.
- 3.7. A non-statutory summary, (**one** document only, no longer than three sides of A4), is helpful for the purposes of inspection and should signpost inspectors to other sources of evidence. With an emphasis on vision, impact, and transformation it helps inspectors to use the full time available to gain a comprehensive picture of the school and to reach accurate judgements. This document should be a summary of the school's own longer self-evaluation.
- 3.8. It is recommended that self-evaluation documents are written with close reference to the 2023 SIAMS Framework.

### 4. Step-by-Step Guide to the Inspection Process

#### 4.1. One week before the inspection

- 4.1.1. One week before the date of the inspection, the school is contacted by a member of the National SIAMS Team to inform them of the date of their inspection and the name of the inspector. This communication takes the form of a telephone call in the morning.
- 4.1.2. If the SIAMS Team is unable to make contact by telephone, they will send an email with details of the inspection, requesting confirmation of receipt.

- 4.1.3. Later the same day, the inspector contacts the school to speak with the headteacher or, in their absence, to the most senior member of staff available.
- 4.1.4. The inspector asks the school to forward any summary self-evaluation and other initial sources of evidence, on the day of notification. This enables the inspector to write the pre-inspection plan (PIP).
- 4.1.5. The inspector also discusses the draft timetable and asks the headteacher to begin to draw together some elements of the inspection day. The inspection day will consist of a number of meetings that will largely provide opportunities for discussions about the lines of enquiry (LOE). It is likely therefore that the draft timetable will need to change before finalised later in the week, in light of the inspector's initial scrutiny of evidence.

## 4.2. During the week before the inspection

- 4.2.1. Once the inspector has received the school's evidence, they write the pre-inspection plan (PIP), which includes the inspection LOE. They use the evidence provided by the school, as well as the school website and other publicly available information.
- 4.2.2. The inspector emails the PIP to the school 48 hours before the start of the inspection.
- 4.2.3. The day before the inspection, the inspector telephones the headteacher to clarify their understanding of the LOE and to finalise the timetable.

## 4.3. The day of the inspection

- 4.3.1. The inspector plans to be in the school by 8am and to leave by 6pm.
- 4.3.2. The school should ensure that the inspector has a private place to work.
- 4.3.3. At the end of the inspection day, the inspector provides the school with the provisional judgement/s and provisional areas for development, which are subject to quality assurance. Please note: provisional judgement/s and provisional areas for development may change during the quality assurance process.
- 4.3.4. Representatives from the Diocesan Education Team and/or MAST are spoken to as part of the evidence-gathering process and they may be invited by the school to attend the final feedback meeting, either in person or via a video link.
- 4.3.5. The outcome of the inspection remains confidential until the final report has been received.
- 4.3.6. The inspector outlines the timescale and protocol for the school's receipt of the draft report for factual accuracy checks.
- 4.3.7. Should the school wish to raise a concern that it has not been possible to resolve on the day of the inspection, or which they have not felt comfortable raising during the final feedback, they



should follow the SIAMS Appeals and Complaints Policy, which is available on the SIAMS pages of [the Church of England website](#).

#### 4.4. After the inspection

- 4.4.1. The inspector usually sends the draft report to the school for factual accuracy checks within 10 working days of the inspection. If it is anticipated that there will be a delay to this timeline, the inspector will contact the headteacher to alert them to this.
- 4.4.2. If the QA process has determined a change to the inspection judgement/s, the inspector notifies the school of this change before sending the draft report for factual accuracy checks.
- 4.4.3. The school should respond within 24 hours of receipt of the draft report. At this stage, only factually inaccurate amendments are to be made, unless the inspection is subject to an appeal or a complaint.
- 4.4.4. If the inspection is subject to a complaint or an appeal when the draft report is received, or if the school decides at that point that they intend to raise an appeal or a complaint, they should follow the appropriate policy and not accept the draft report.
- 4.4.5. Once the report is finalised, it should be published on the school's website.

#### 4.5. Quality Assurance and Inspector Training

- 4.5.1. Members of the national SIAMS Quality Assurance (QA) Team quality assure all reports prior to their publication.
- 4.5.2. New SIAMS inspectors are trained every year. As part of their training, inspectors are required to 'shadow' experienced registered inspectors so that they have the opportunity to observe SIAMS inspection in practice.
- 4.5.3. Inspectors who are still undergoing training and who join an inspection as a 'shadow' play no part in the inspection itself, and act as a silent observer. Their focus is entirely on observing and on learning. Therefore, if there is a 'shadow' present, a school is not being inspected by two inspectors.
- 4.5.4. Before being registered to inspect alone, all inspectors must also carry out a 'sign-off' inspection. Inspectors are joined by a QA sign-off assessor on their sign-off.
- 4.5.5. The role of the sign-off assessor is to monitor and assess the performance of the inspector and not to routinely act as a second inspector of the school. The sign-off assessor acts as an engaged observer as, at times, they may need to intervene to ensure that the school experiences a full and fair inspection. This may mean that the sign-off assessor occasionally adds to the questions being asked by the inspector.

4.5.6. The sign-off assessor maintains communication with the headteacher during a sign-off inspection in order to check that the headteacher is satisfied with the process and with the conduct of the inspection.

4.5.7. All registered SIAMS inspectors are also subject to routine quality assurance of their inspection practice (QAI) and are therefore, on occasion, accompanied by a member of the Quality Assurance Team. QAI does not mean that a school is being inspected by two inspectors, as the focus of the QA activity is entirely on the practice of the inspector.

4.5.8. When a member of the National SIAMS Team telephones the school to notify them of the date of their inspection, they let the headteacher know whether their inspection is a shadow, sign-off, or QAI inspection. They will answer any questions that the headteacher may have.

## 5. Safeguarding and Inspection Practice

- 5.1. SIAMS inspectors carry, and must display at all times, an identification badge issued by the Church of England Education Office. At times, this will be in the form of a digital badge.
- 5.2. This badge presupposes valid (within three years) DBS clearance and inspectors should not be asked to produce additional proof of a current DBS.
- 5.3. Inspectors should adhere to school safeguarding protocols, including those for raising a concern, so these should be shared by the school at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 5.4. Inspectors should not remove any documentation from the school, especially those containing pupils' names.

## 6. Professional Courtesy

- 6.1. Members of school teams can expect to be treated professionally, and with dignity and respect, at all stages of a SIAMS inspection.
- 6.2. Inspectors are tasked with inspecting in a Christian manner, without fear or favour, and in doing so they:
  - 6.2.1. demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and understanding of all SIAMS documentation and processes
  - 6.2.2. communicate clearly and fluently, both orally and in writing
  - 6.2.3. demonstrate professional courtesy
  - 6.2.4. maintain confidentiality
  - 6.2.5. uphold safeguarding.

- 6.3. It is expected that members of school teams will reciprocate in the way in which they treat inspectors, acting courteously and professionally, and maintaining purposeful and productive communication throughout the process.
- 6.4. Schools are particularly asked to do the following.
- 6.4.1. Work with inspectors to enable them to carry out their visit in an open, honest, and impartial way.
  - 6.4.2. Recognise that, on occasions, inspectors need to observe practice and talk to staff and others, including pupils, alone.
  - 6.4.3. Work with inspectors to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy providing evidence – or access to evidence – in a manageable way.
  - 6.4.4. Ensure the health and safety of inspectors while they are on school premises.
  - 6.4.5. Keep the outcome of the inspection restricted and confidential to only relevant personnel until after the report has been quality assured.
  - 6.4.6. Bring any concerns about inspection to the attention of inspectors in a timely and suitable manner.

## 7. Useful documents

Schools may find the following links useful. All SIAMS policy documents are available on the SIAMS pages of the Church of England website – link below.

- [SIAMS Inspections | The Church of England](#)
- [Religious Education | The Church of England](#)
- [Collective Worship | The Church of England](#)
- [Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good](#)
- [Valuing All God's Children](#)