

SIAMS Information for Schools

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1. Scheduling and notification of SIAMS inspections

- 1.1. In 'ordinary times', schools can expect to have a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection every five years from the date of the previous inspection.
- 1.2. In March 2020, the requirement for a section 48 inspection was suspended as part of COVID-19 legislation. Since the reintroduction of inspections in the Autumn 2021, SIAMS has been made subject to a temporarily different scheduling requirement.
- 1.3. Until all schools have received their first SIAMS inspection in the 'post-Covid' suspension years, legislation requires that inspection will be carried out within eight years of the date of the previous inspection. Thereafter, scheduling will return to a five-year cycle.
- 1.4. 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.
- 1.5. There will, however, be some inspections that fall outside of this general principle.
- 1.6. To aid transparency for all involved in SIAMS inspection, a list of the schools that are *expected* to be inspected in an academic year will be published on an annual basis until all schools have been through their first cycle of inspection. The list will be published on the [SIAMS website](#) in the summer term.
- 1.7. The list will not be published in chronological order or according to the term within which an inspection will take place, and nothing should be read into the position of a specific school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.
- 1.8. 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. When changes need to be made to the List, they will be made as early in the academic year as possible.
- 1.9. Schools will be given one week's notice of the date of their SIAMS inspection. Inspections will only be adjusted or deferred in exceptional circumstances. Please refer to the Inspection Deferral Policy, which is available on the [SIAMS website](#).

2. 2023 SIAMS Framework and Diocesan Training

- 2.1. The 2023 Framework marks a change in many aspects of inspection practice and reporting. Grades are replaced by judgements; the context of the school plays a central role; the impact of the trust, if the school is an academy, is scrutinised; and criteria are replaced by high level questions that have a focus on the impact of the school's theologically rooted Christian vision.
- 2.2. The Framework is available on the [SIAMS website](#).
- 2.3. Diocesan Education Teams are responsible for the provision of training for schools in matters related to SIAMS. Please contact your local diocesan team 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 the school community and will be most useful when conducted in a rigorous, robust, and evidence-based manner.
- 3.2. Although not a statutory element of the SIAMS process, self-evaluation makes a significant contribution to a thorough, accurate and insightful inspection.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. Schools may make whatever self-evaluation they have available to inspectors. It is unlikely, however, that inspectors will have time to read a lengthy self-evaluation document that covers several years of the school's work. If schools can highlight, focus, or abridge a lengthy document, this will enable inspectors to focus on the most recent and relevant parts of the school's work.
- 3.5. Given the nature of the evidence that SIAMS inspection scrutinises, the more an inspector is able to become familiar with a school before the day of the inspection, the better they will be able to understand the school and reach fair and accurate judgements.

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

4.1. One week before the inspection

- 4.1.1. Five working days before the date of the inspection, the school will be contacted by a member of the National SIAMS Team to inform them of the date of the inspection and the name of the inspector. This communication will take the form of a telephone call, usually 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 will contact the school to speak with the headteacher or, in their absence, to the most senior member of staff available. The discussion will include the following areas:
 - The school's Christian vision and its theological roots
 - Information about how the school is organised
 - Information about the leadership and governance structure
 - Key partners and collaborations, including church/es
 - Number on roll (NOR)
 - Planned admissions number PAN and number of church places (VA only)
 - Number of pupils currently withdrawn from RE and from collective worship (if any). Number of families this represents.
 - Information about RE (if not outlined in policy or on website). How RE is organised, who teaches RE, syllabus followed, additional resources
 - Information about collective worship (if not outlined in policy or on website). How it is organised, who manages it.
 - Contextual factors:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) - is this above/below/in line with national averages?
- Disadvantage- is this above/below/in line with national averages?
- Ethnicity- how ethnically diverse is the school pupil population?
- % of pupils who speak English as an Additional Language
- Pupil mobility
- Service children
- Attendance -% year to date/previous 12 months
- Persistent absence - % year to date/previous 12 months
- Exclusions- year to date/previous 12 months
- Staff turnover, stability and recent significant appointments
- Significant events in the life of the school, including trauma, bereavement

4.1.4. The inspector will ask the school to forward relevant self-evaluation and other initial sources of evidence, on the day of notification. This will enable the inspector to write the pre-inspection plan (PIP). Inspectors will not ask schools to send information on non-working days.

4.1.5. The inspector will also discuss the draft timetable and will ask 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 it is finalised later in the week, in light of the inspector's initial scrutiny of evidence. A copy of the SIAMS timetable *guidance* that the inspector will share with the school is included in Appendices 1 and 2.

4.2. During the week before the inspection

4.2.1. Once the inspector has received the school's evidence, they will write the PIP, which will include the inspection LOE. This is so that the school has insight into the type of evidence that the inspectors requires. They will use the evidence provided by the school, as well as the school website and other publicly available information.

4.2.2. The inspector will email the PIP to the school 48 hours before the start of the inspection.

4.2.3. The day before the inspection, the inspector will telephone the headteacher to clarify understanding of the LOE and to finalise the timetable.

4.3. The day of the inspection

4.3.1. The inspector will plan 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 will provide the school with the provisional judgements and provisional areas for development, which are subject to quality assurance. Please note: *provisional judgements and provisional areas for development may change during the quality assurance process.*

- 4.3.4. Representatives from the Diocesan Education Team will be 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 to the school team and those present at the final feedback until the final report has been received. This is because of the need for outcomes to be confirmed through the QA process.
- 4.3.6. The inspector will outline 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 Complaints Policy, which is available on the [SIAMS website](#).

4.4. After the inspection

- 4.4.1. The inspector will usually send the school the draft report 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, during the quality assurance process, it is deemed that the judgement to text match is insecure, the inspector will make the appropriate changes to the judgements and will inform the school immediately.
- 4.4.3. Once the quality assurance process is complete, the inspector will send the draft report to the headteacher for a factual accuracy check. The school should respond within 24 hours of receipt. At this stage, only factually inaccurate amendments will be made, unless the inspection is subject to a complaint.
- 4.4.4. If the inspection is subject to a complaint when the draft report is received, or if the school decides at that point that they intend to raise a complaint, they should follow the appropriate policy and not accept the draft report.
- 4.4.5. Once the report has been finalised, it should be published on the school's website.

4.5. Quality Assurance and Inspector Training

- 4.5.1. There is a national SIAMS Quality Assurance (QA) Team. Members of this team quality assure all reports prior to their publication.
- 4.5.2. All registered inspectors receive annual essential training in inspection practice, knowledge, and skills. In addition, new inspectors are trained every year in order to increase the inspector workforce.
- 4.5.3. As part of the New Inspector Training programme, inspectors are required to 'shadow' experienced registered inspectors so that they have the opportunity to observe SIAMS inspection in practice.

- 4.5.4. Inspectors who are still undergoing training and who join an inspection as a 'shadow' will play no part in the inspection itself, and will act as a *silent* observer. Their focus is entirely on observing and on learning. Therefore, if there is a 'shadow' present at your inspection, you are not being inspected by two inspectors.
- 4.5.5. 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.
- 4.5.6. 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 will act 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.
- 4.5.7. Sign-off assessors will maintain communication with headteachers during a sign-off inspection in order to check that the headteacher is satisfied with the process and conduct of the inspection.
- 4.5.8. All registered SIAMS inspectors are also subject to routine quality assurance of their inspection practice (QAI) and will therefore, on occasion, be accompanied by a Quality Assurance inspector. QAI does not mean that a school is being inspected by two inspectors and the focus of the QAI activity is entirely on the practice of the inspector.
- 4.5.9. When a member of the National SIAMS Team telephones the school to notify them of the date of their inspection, they will 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.

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. Their school knowledge and expertise is an important element of any SIAMS inspection, and inspectors will always be keen to listen and to understand the context of the school.
- 6.2. Specifically, in a SIAMS inspection, inspectors are tasked with inspecting professionally and in a Christian manner, without fear or favour. Therefore, they will:
 - 6.2.1. demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and understanding of SIAMS documentation

- 6.2.2. manage the inspection as a sequential process
 - 6.2.3. communicate clearly and fluently, both orally and in writing
 - 6.2.4. demonstrate professional courtesy
 - 6.2.5. maintain confidentiality
 - 6.2.6. uphold safeguarding
 - 6.2.7. manage conflicts of interest.
- 6.3. It is expected that members of school teams will reciprocate in the way in which they treat the inspector, 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 the inspector to enable them to carry out their visit in an open, honest, and impartial way.
 - 6.4.2. Recognise that, on occasions, the inspector will need to observe practice and talk to staff and others without the presence of a manager.
 - 6.4.3. Work with the inspector 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 the SIAMS inspector while they are on the premises.
 - 6.4.5. Keep the outcome of the inspection restricted and confidential to the school team and those present at the final feedback until after the report has been quality assured.
 - 6.4.6. Bring any concerns about the inspection to the attention of the inspector 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](#)

Appendix 1 – Guidelines for School Timetable (One day inspection)

School name		Inspection date	
Time	Inspection Activity	Inspector's notes – timings, people to be included, work scrutiny details etc	
8am	Arrival at school and introductions	10	
	Inspector's lunch	20	
	Inspector reflection time before mid-point update to headteacher	30	
	Mid-point update to headteacher	20	
	Inspector reflection and document review	30	
	Inspector – final reflection on grades	20	
	Headteacher and inspector – initial feedback	15	
	Inspector – final feedback prep	15	
	Final feedback	20	
No later than 6pm	Inspector leaves school		

The headteacher is asked to draft a timetable following guidance from the inspector during the initial call, and return it to the inspector by XXXX.

Please note: *this will be a draft timetable only and the inspector may need additional/fewer meetings and/or for timings to be amended.*

The inspector is likely to need to meet/speak with the following people/carry out the following activities. Timings are suggested and will be finalised by the inspector depending on the inspection lines of enquiry. Each meeting will have specific foci, depending on the lines of enquiry and the need to triangulate evidence. Combine these meetings if this is helpful.

Activity	Timing (up to) (minutes)
Pupils from each key stage in at least 2 groups, with RE books – one group in the morning; one in the afternoon – selection to be discussed	20-30 per group
Governors – as many as are available/specific requests of inspector	30
MAT trustees (and CEO)	30
Staff – range of roles, responsibilities, length of service	30
RE Lead/Head of Department – to include work scrutiny with RE Lead – inspector to give guidance of what is wanted	40
Collective worship lead	20
Collective worship	15-20
Parents – selection to be discussed – plus separate meeting in the playground	20 +
Representative/s from the church	20
Representative from the diocese/Methodist schools trust	15
Learning walk – of learning environment	30
Social times e.g. breaktimes, catching parents in the playground if they contribute to the LOE	20-30

Time	Inspection Activity	Inspector's notes – timings, people to be included, work scrutiny details etc
DAY 2		
8am	Arrival at school	
	Inspector's lunch	20
	Inspector – final reflection on grades	20
	Headteacher and inspector – initial feedback	15
	Inspector – final feedback prep	15
	Final feedback	20
No later than 6pm	Inspector leaves school	

The headteacher is asked to draft a timetable following guidance from the inspector during the initial call, and return it to the inspector by XXXX.

Please note: *this will be a draft timetable only and the inspector may need additional/fewer meetings and/or for timings to be amended.*

The inspector is likely to need to meet/speak with the following people/carry out the following activities. Timings are suggested and will be finalised by the inspector depending on the inspection lines of enquiry. Each meeting will have specific foci, depending on the lines of enquiry and the need to triangulate evidence. Combine these meetings if this is helpful.

Activity	Timing (up to) (minutes)
Pupils from each key stage in at least 4 groups, with RE books –across both days– selection to be discussed	20-30 per group
Governors – as many as are available/specific requests of inspector	45
MAT trustees (and CEO)	45
Staff – range of roles, responsibilities, length of service. Suggest 2 groups	30 per group
RE Lead/Head of Department – to include work scrutiny with RE Lead – inspector to give guidance of what is wanted	90
Collective worship lead	60
Collective worship on both days	15-20 each day
Parents – selection to be discussed – plus separate meeting in the playground	20 +
Representative/s from the church	30
Representative from the diocese/Methodist schools trust	30
Learning walk – of learning environment on both days	60 per learning walk