

SIAMS Information for Schools

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Methodist Schools



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
EDUCATION OFFICE

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SIAMS Information for Schools

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 section 48 inspection was suspended as part of COVID-19 legislation. Since the reintroduction of inspection 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. This means that it will no longer be possible for schools to calculate with certainty the academic year of the next inspection.
- 1.7. Therefore, 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.
- 1.8. For the duration of the first cycle of inspections, the list of schools that are expected to be inspected during the following academic year will be published before the end of the Summer Term.
- 1.9. The list will be shared with Diocesan Education Teams and will be published on the Education pages of [the Church of England website](#).
- 1.10. The list will not be published in chronological order or according to the term within which an inspection will take place, and nothing should be read into the position of a specific school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.
- 1.11. 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.
- 1.12. As an exception, the list for the academic year 2021-2022 will be published in September 2021. However, schools can assume that the first year will initially be spent 'catching up' with the inspections that should have taken place between March 2020 and July 2021, but that were postponed.
- 1.13. Schools will be given one week's notice of the date of their SIAMS inspection. SIAMS inspections will only be adjusted or deferred in exceptional circumstances. Please refer to the SIAMS Inspection Deferral Policy, which is available on the Education pages of [the Church of England website](#).

2. SIAMS EVALUATION SCHEDULE SEPTEMBER 2021 AND DIOCESAN TRAINING

- 2.1. There will not be a brand-new Evaluation Schedule when inspections resume in the Autumn Term 2021.
- 2.2. However due to the changes experienced by schools and education more generally since March 2020, some elements of the 2018 Schedule are inappropriate in 2021.
- 2.3. Therefore, a small number of tweaks have been made. For example, where the 2018 Schedule interrogated pupil performance data, the September 2021 Schedule will explore how the curriculum has been effective in enabling pupils to progress in their learning, especially in the recent context of the pandemic.
- 2.4. Schools will also be given ample opportunity to demonstrate how their Christian vision has enabled flourishing during this time. There are no new criteria relating to this, but inspection-day discussions rooted in existing criteria will allow schools to share their experiences and the impact of their vision.
- 2.5. The revised Evaluation Schedule (September 2021) is available on the Education pages of [the Church of England website](#).
- 2.6. Diocesan Education Teams are responsible for the provision of training for schools in matters related to SIAMS.

3. SIAMS SELF-EVALUATION

- 3.1. Although self-evaluation is not a statutory element of the SIAMS process, it makes a significant contribution to enabling the inspector to understand the life and work of the school.
- 3.2. It is, therefore, to the school's benefit to share a summary of their self-evaluation with the inspector.
- 3.3. Ongoing self-evaluation is a process that is for the benefit of the school community. It provides a context for their reflection, evaluation, and future planning. It 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. Such self-evaluation can result in lengthy, 'live', and often-changing documentation. This does not need to be shared with an inspector. In fact, an inspector is unlikely to have time to read it.
- 3.5. A non-statutory summary, no longer than two sides of A4, is helpful for the purposes of inspection. With an emphasis on vision, impact, and transformation it will help an inspector to use the limited time available to them to gain an accurate picture of the school.
- 3.6. Inspectors will ask schools if they have such a document during the initial conversation. If they do, the inspector will request it.

- 3.7. Schools are asked to NOT allocate grades to each strand as part of their self-evaluation, as this is not how the SIAMS Schedule works.
- 3.8. There is one over-arching inspection question (*How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?*), and self-evaluation should be focused on answering this question, evaluating whether the school is a Good Church school.
- 3.9. At the time of inspection, inspectors will collate evidence that seeks to demonstrate that the school is a Good Church school. Any evaluation carried out by the school and shared with the inspector will contribute to the evidence base.

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 will be contacted by a SIAMS Officer to inform them of the date of their inspection and the name of the inspector. This communication will take the form of a telephone call in the morning.
- 4.1.2. If the SIAMS Officer 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.
- 4.1.4. The inspector will ask the school to forward any summary 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).
- 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 which will largely provide opportunities for discussions about the lines of enquiry (LOE).
- 4.1.6. The inspector will send the school the SIAMS Inspection Contract, which should be signed by the Chair of Governors.

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. 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 their 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 and that they have access to a telephone should it be needed.
- 4.3.3. At the end of the inspection day, the inspector will provide the school with the provisional outcomes, which are subject to quality assurance.
- 4.3.4. Colleagues 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 until the final report has been received.
- 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 Appeals and Complaints Policy, which is available on the Education pages of [the Church of England website](#).

4.4. After the inspection

- 4.4.1. The inspector will send the school the draft report for factual accuracy checks within 10 working days of the inspection.
- 4.4.2. The school should respond within 24 hours. At this stage, only factually inaccurate amendments will be made, unless the inspection is subject to an appeal or a complaint.
- 4.4.3. Once the report has been finalised, it will be published on the '[A Church Near You](#)' website within four working days. It should be shared by the school with its community.

4.5. Quality Assurance and Inspector Training

- 4.5.1. There is a national SIAMS Quality Assurance (QA) Team. Members of this team routinely quality assure 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. 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 act as a second inspector of the school. Therefore, as for a shadow inspection, if your inspection is a sign-off, your school is not being inspected by two inspectors.
- 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. 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 either a shadow or a sign-off inspection. They will check that the headteacher is content with this arrangement and 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.
- 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. Schools 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 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 school teams will reciprocate in the way that 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 only relevant personnel 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. SIAMS DUTY DESK

- 7.1. Should the need arise to suspend an inspection due, for example, to reasons of ill-health, the inspector will contact the SIAMS Duty Desk to inform the National SIAMS Team of events and/or to seek advice.
- 7.2. All inspectors who are considering awarding a grade of either Ineffective or Excellent must also contact the Duty Desk before the final feedback meeting.
- 7.3. The QA Inspector on the Duty Desk will challenge the inspector to outline the evidence that supports their judgement.

- 7.4. The QA inspector will not tell the inspector what grade to award.
- 7.5. It is important to note that all decisions on judgements and inspection grades are made by the inspector and not by the Duty Desk.
- 7.6. It is also important to note that all grades are subject to change as part of the quality assurance of the report. Outcomes shared with the school on the day of the inspection remain provisional until the end of the QA process.
- 7.7. Please note: The SIAMS Duty Desk is for inspector use only.

8. COVID-19

- 8.1. It is possible that the number of cases of COVID-19 in a school may render an inspection unwise on health and safety grounds at any time in the week before the date of the inspection.
- 8.2. Headteachers are asked to keep the inspector apprised of any increase in school COVID-19 cases during the week before the inspection and to make decisions about external visitors in line with their risk assessment.
- 8.3. If numbers of COVID-19 cases increase unexpectedly on the day of the inspection, the headteacher and inspector must together agree on the wisdom of continuing the inspection.
- 8.4. If an inspection is more than halfway through, and the inspector believes that they have sufficient evidence to make a judgement, they should discuss this with the headteacher. If both parties agree, the inspector should write the report as planned, using the evidence that has been collected.
- 8.5. If either party believes that insufficient evidence has been gathered to enable the inspector to make a valid judgement, the inspection should either continue via an online platform or completion should be delayed.
- 8.6. The headteacher and inspector may agree, either on the day of the inspection or during the week before, that some meetings are better conducted using an online platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
- 8.7. Inspectors will take lateral flow tests both before and after an inspection and will inform the school should they have a positive result.
- 8.8. In such an event, the National SIAMS team will either reschedule the inspection or allocate a different inspector.