



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist** Church 

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

**A framework for inspection and self-evaluation of Church of England  
and Methodist schools**

**September 2013**

## Summary

This framework sets out the expectations of the National Society (NS) for the conduct of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. It is designed to be used as the basis for the external moderation of a school's SIAMS referenced self-evaluation.

By agreement with the Methodist Church, the SIAMS process will be used for Section 48 inspections in Methodist schools. The use of 'Church school' in this document refers equally to Anglican, Methodist and Anglican/Methodist schools as appropriate.

The framework provides a process for evaluating the extent to which church schools are 'distinctively and recognisably Christian institutions'<sup>1</sup>. This phrase from the Dearing report 2001 is further explained and developed in the Chadwick report<sup>2</sup> March 2012, as is summarised below:

1. Distinctiveness must include a wholehearted commitment to putting faith and spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum.
2. The Christian ethos must permeate the whole educational experience.
3. The importance of clearly ascribed Christian values and their outworking in the life of schools is widely accepted but may need embedding.
4. High quality religious education and collective worship should continue to make major contributions to the church school's Christian ethos.
5. Pupils should be enabled to engage seriously with and develop an understanding of the person and teachings of Jesus Christ.
6. Every child should be enabled to flourish in their potential as a child of God, as a sign and expression of the Kingdom. This is at the heart of the Church's distinctive mission.

The framework sets out the four elements of the SIAMS process:

### The main features of SIAMS inspection

This section identifies the principal objective of the inspection, which is to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school. Four core questions are set out which address the impact that a church school has on all the learners. This section also covers the purposes, principles, and code of practice for SIAMS.

### The Inspection

The focus of the inspection for a church school is identified. The recommended practice for carrying out the inspection and verifying the school's self-evaluation findings is established. This section explains the importance of flexible and differentiated approaches to inspection in the context of self-evaluation. This context now includes evaluation of school performance data to evaluate a school's achievement. The core purpose of any church school is to maximise the learning potential of every pupil within the love of God. Ground rules for inspection are set out and sources of evidence are identified.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium* – 2001, Lord Dearing

<sup>2</sup> *The Church School of the Future Review* – March 2012, Dr Priscilla Chadwick

## **Judgements and Reporting**

This section is a guide to making effective evaluations and sound judgements in response to each of the core questions. These have remained the same in this framework, although the evaluation statements, supplementary guidance and explanations given in the grade descriptors have been altered to reflect the changing climate in church schools in relation to school improvement. The standard National Society reporting protocol is set out.

### **The SIAMS Process**

The process covers the contractual procedures for the governing body of the school and the actions to be taken by the school, the diocese/district and the inspector.

## **Contents:**

### **Introduction**

#### **The main features of SIAMS inspection**

- 1. The purposes of SIAMS inspection**
- 2. The core principles for inspection**
- 3. The relationship with the Ofsted inspection**
- 4. Code of practice for SIAMS inspection**
- 5. The principal objective of self-evaluation and inspection**

### **The Inspection**

- 6. The focus for self-evaluation and inspection**
- 7. School self-evaluation**
- 8. Differentiation of inspection activity.**
- 9. Evaluation of the self-evaluation findings**
- 10. Some ground rules for evaluation**

### **Judgements and Reporting**

- 11. Making judgements**
- 12. Writing the report**
- 13. The summary judgement**
- 14. Specialist schools and academies**
- 15. Reporting on the admissions policy of the school**

### **The SIAMS Process**

- 16. Contractual procedures under the Education Act 2005**

## **Introduction**

In the Education Act 2005 (Section 48) the governing body or foundation governors of schools which have a religious character are held responsible in law for the appointment of a person to undertake the inspection of denominational education and collective worship. The governing body or foundation governors are, however, required to choose the inspector after consultation with their respective Diocesan Board of Education or denominational authority (section 48(2)).

### **The main features of SIAMS inspection**

#### **1. The purposes of SIAMS inspection are:**

- **to provide an evaluation of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the church school for the governing body, the school, the parents, the diocese/district, the National Society or Methodist Church and the wider public**
- **to meet the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 for schools which have a religious character**
- **to verify the outcome of the school's self-evaluation**
- **to make a significant contribution to improvement in Church schools.**

SIAMS inspection focuses on the effect that the Christian character of the church school has on the learner. Schools will become effective by means of a variety of strategies, approaches and styles, which reflect their particular local context or church tradition. Inspectors should carefully diagnose how the impact that each church school has on the learner is achieved and how the learner's personal and educational needs are being met. They will not apply a preconceived template of what a distinctive or effective church school should be like.

#### **2. The core principles for SIAMS inspection are:**

- **to focus on learners**
- **to relate sensitively to the self-evaluation and context of the school**
- **to apply the highest possible standards of inspection practice**
- **to focus on the evaluation of distinctiveness and effectiveness**
- **to stimulate and evaluate improvement and affirm success.**

#### **3. The relationship with the Ofsted inspection**

SIAMS inspection reports will provide a different but complementary perspective on church schools in relation to Ofsted and HMI findings. Therefore, where the timing of the inspections allow, inspectors should establish an appropriate working link with a lead inspector. However, with the variety in inspection practice and with OFSTED inspecting the better schools less frequently, Ofsted inspections and SIAMS may no longer be coupled.

#### **4. Code of practice for SIAMS inspection**

SIAMS inspectors will maintain the highest standards of professional practice at all times. They will always seek to secure the full co-operation of everyone involved in the process, inspire confidence in the fairness and accuracy of judgements and make a valuable contribution to improvement.

#### **Inspectors are expected:**

- to carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy and sensitivity
- to be aware of the particular relationships the school has with its local community, church/es and diocese or Methodist church
- to do all they can to minimise the pressure on those involved with the inspection in the school,

giving priority to their best interests and well-being

- to respect the confidentiality of information about individuals and the work they do
- to maintain purposeful and formative dialogue with all those being inspected, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly
- to evaluate objectively, be impartial and have no previous connection with the school which could compromise their objectivity
- to report honestly and fairly, ensuring that judgements are accurate, reliable and based on secure and sufficient evidence.

#### **4. The principal objective of self-evaluation and inspection**

**The principal objective of the inspection is to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school so to ensure that learners' academic, personal and spiritual needs are being met.**

A church school's self-evaluation, verified by inspection, will seek to judge how well the school's distinctive Christian character and values ensure the development and achievement of the whole child or young person.

Towards this objective, inspectors should seek answers to four core questions.

- **How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?**
- **What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?**
- **How effective is the Religious Education?** (Only in VA schools -see section 6 below)
- **How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?**

The order of the core questions is not hierarchical. Together they provide a basis for evaluation that meets the principal objective.

**The inspection will address each core question, using these evaluation statements as a guide.**

**How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?**

##### **Rationale:**

Pupils should be learning in our church schools to their potential. Maximising learning is paramount. Learners have academic, personal and spiritual needs, all of which should be addressed in a loving environment where distinctively Christian values and teaching are encountered.

Inspectors must evaluate:

- how well the Christian character contributes to the academic achievement, personal development and wellbeing of all learners, regardless of their ability or background
- how effectively the Christian character supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all learners whether they are Christian, of other faiths, or of none
- how effectively the distinctively Christian character shapes the relationships between all members of the school community
- how well the Christian character promotes an understanding of and respect for diverse

communities

- o the contribution of religious education to the Christian character of the school.

### **What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?**

#### **Rationale:**

At the heart of the Christian faith is its lived out expression in worship. In daily worship pupils and members of the school community will observe, encounter and be impacted by the living faith of Christians. The Anglican or Methodist expression of that faith will reflect the parish or local church traditions and those of the world-wide Anglican or Methodist communion. For each pupil and member of the community spiritual development will be fostered, together with positive attitudes towards the search for a faith to live by.

Inspectors must evaluate:

- o the extent to which learners and adults engage with collective worship, its relevance and the way it makes a difference to members of the whole school community
- o the extent to which collective worship is distinctively Christian, setting out the values of the school in their Christian context
- o how well collective worship develops personal spirituality within the school community through a range of experiences, including a focus on prayer
- o how well collective worship enables participants to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ and a Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- o how effectively the school community is involved in the planning, leadership and evaluation of collective worship

### **How effective is the religious education?**

#### **Rationale**

At the heart of religious education (RE) are core beliefs which impact on the way of life of adherents. For Christians, Jesus Christ, as the resurrected Son of God, is the example to follow. His teachings, from which derive Christian values and principles, are the root of the aims and expectations a church school lives by.

Inspectors must evaluate:

- o the achievement of learners in RE
- o the quality of teaching and learning in RE
- o the effectiveness of the curriculum in RE and especially the teaching of Christianity
- o The effectiveness of the leadership and management of RE

### **How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?**

## **Rationale**

The living faith and clarity of vision of the school leaders are paramount in setting the example of policy and practice in the church school. Rooting the school in the Christian narrative enables a working environment where spirituality is central to the well being of individuals and the community as a whole.

Inspectors must evaluate:

- o the extent to which leaders articulate an explicit Christian vision that has impact on standards of achievement, the distinctively Christian character of the school and the well-being of the whole school community
- o the extent to which school leaders secure the impact of this vision through evaluation and strategic planning
- o how well leaders prepare for future leadership across church schools
- o the effectiveness of partnerships with the church, the diocese/district and the wider community, including the parents and carers.
- o if the arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements

## The Inspection

### 6. The focus for self-evaluation and inspection

The core questions address the **four** main areas of focus for self-evaluation and inspection in voluntary aided church schools and Church of England designated academies and, normally, **three** in voluntary controlled and foundation church schools.

- o **Distinctive Christian character**
- o **Collective worship**
- o **Religious education** (when inspected\*)
- o **Leadership and management**

Each area of focus identifies the areas of **evidence** upon which self-evaluation and inspection judgements are made. The National Society framework supports the evaluation of the extent to which these areas of focus contribute to the Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness of a church school so that learners' potential is maximised.

\*Whilst the effectiveness of religious education is inspected by statute in voluntary aided schools and by funding agreement in Church of England designated academies it is expected that the broader impact of RE on the character of all church schools will be evaluated in the school's self evaluation and verified through SIAMS.

### 7. School Self-Evaluation - is the church school a reflective organisation?

Inspectors will need as complete a picture as possible of how the school **sees itself** before inspection. This will usually be summarized in the school's self evaluation document accompanied by or including the SIAMS self-evaluation material, which will assist the inspector to formulate hypotheses and plan specific areas of focus for the inspection. The school's self-evaluation should indicate how well the school develops the whole child or young person by means of its Christian character, principles and values. In the case of RE in voluntary aided schools, inspectors will also evaluate the school's judgement on standards and trends in attainment and achievement. Other forms of self-evaluation, which will be explored during the inspection, may include the results of in-depth internal reviews and research and oral and other informal evaluations.

Evidence, on which the school's self-evaluative judgements are based, may be drawn from a number of sources. These will include:

- o feedback from learners, staff, parents, governors and others
- o evaluation of collective worship and learning activities
- o evaluation of learners' work and achievement
- o evaluation of statistical data and school performance information.

Schools are strongly recommended to use the National Society's self-evaluation guidance (or the self-evaluation support material recommended by their Diocesan Board of Education or Methodist Church).

### 8. Differentiation of inspection activity.

The starting point for SIAMS is the **school's self-evaluation** summary. This provides a holistic account of the school's character and performance. Inspectors should also take account of self-evaluation

material specifically related to the school's Christian character and the evaluation statements for SIAMS.

As the inspector's time in school is at a premium, an inspection strategy is required in which an early analysis of the school's self-evaluation and performance will determine the focus, pattern and nature of inspection activities. The preparation of a SIAMS Inspection Briefing (SIB) is essential to the planning and efficient conduct of the inspection. This should normally be sent to the Headteacher at least 24 hours (excluding weekends) before the inspection.

Where the inspector perceives that the process of self-evaluation, in relation to the Christian character of the school as it meets the needs of learners, is **secure** the inspection will focus on verification of the findings. If it is clearly **ineffective**, the inspector will be required to secure sufficient evidence to make judgements and to assist the school in developing effective self-evaluation. In the case of **developing** self-evaluation, the quality of the evidence may be varied and/or lack depth. In this case a range of differentiated approaches will be appropriate.

Inspection is predicated on self-evaluation and performance outcomes and is most effective when conducted with the active co-operation of the school. This means that evaluation and evidence can be reviewed with the school's governors, teachers, leaders, learners, parents and other key members. The verification of some of the school's findings on its effectiveness and impact will rest to a significant extent on the views of learners. The school has the responsibility to provide self-evaluation and supporting evidence. The inspector has the responsibility to verify those findings & to make an accurate diagnosis as to why the impact of the church school on the learners is as it is.

Questions should be carefully formulated to form the basis of discussions with the key people involved in the church school; including learners, teachers, RE coordinators/subject leaders, school leaders, foundation governors, parishioners, clergy, chaplains and parents. All will have a valuable story to tell.

Policies, plans and assertions, whether communicated orally or in writing, are not in themselves indicators of effectiveness. Inspectors will need to determine whether key events, such as acts of worship, are a regular and embedded feature of the school's life and whether there is evidence of a genuine pattern of evaluation of their impact on the ethos of the school.

Church schools make up a highly diverse 'family' of institutions across nursery, primary and secondary phases. The SIAMS Framework seeks to evaluate the impact that these church schools have on all their learners' academic and personal achievement. This is not achieved by description of the quality or style of provision alone.

Where the previous SIAMS inspection has judged the school to be outstanding in the summary judgement, and the diocese/Methodist Church has determined that there have been no significant and adverse changes in the school's intake, staffing, governance, clergy or context, the next SIAMS inspection should focus on those issues identified in the Focus for development. Where no such issues have been identified, inspectors should evaluate how well standards have been sustained or improved, noting any subsequent innovation or regression. If, however, there have been any significant or adverse changes in the school's circumstances since the last inspection the inspector must carry out a full SIAMS inspection.

The inspector will report progress on the issues identified in the previous Focus for Development under the appropriate core question/s.

## **9. Evaluation of the self-evaluation findings**

Inspectors should satisfy themselves that self-evaluation findings are based on secure evidence and accurate evaluation by:

## **Verifying school improvement targets and standards of achievement**

Inspectors will come to a view on the accuracy of school targets and the achievement of learners in collaboration with the school leadership and the evidence from data analysis and OFSTED/HMI reporting. All pupils' needs are considered in this judgement.

**Listening to Learners.** Reflection on the views and experiences of the recipients of a church school education will be the most effective way of judging the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school. Inspectors should take account of the views of learners expressed through school councils and pupil voice evidence.

Inspectors are encouraged to be familiar with Listening to Learners, available from the Estyn website.

**Discussion with staff, governors, clergy, parents and others,** to verify the self-evaluation findings on the Christian distinctiveness of the school as it impacts on learners.

**Observation of lessons and acts of worship,** in whole or in part. Where possible this should be undertaken in conjunction with members of the school leadership.

**Evidence trails,** which pick up on examples of evidence supporting self-evaluation to diagnose what action, policy or habit, gave rise to it.

**Dialogue with the school leadership** during the course of the inspection day(s) will ensure that leaders are aware of the picture which is emerging; this will enable school leaders to supply additional evidence where appropriate and prepares them for the final summary feedback.

SIAMS inspection involves arriving at a number of qualitative judgements which can be supported by quantitative information. This is a challenge that can only be met by a combination of appropriate experience and high quality inspection skills. This type of judgement will be best secured by the triangulation of different types and sources of evidence and the use of professional judgement.

### **10. Some ground rules for inspection:**

- o take all relevant evidence into account when making judgements
- o ensure that evidence is sufficient before arriving at a conclusive judgement
- o probe deeper where there is concern or uncertainty about evidence
- o provide evidence for judgements on all the Core Questions
- o check the school's assertions or policies against evidence of their impact.

## Judgements and Reporting

### 1.1. Making judgements

In making and reporting judgements inspectors should provide answers to the core questions.

These answers will underpin the evaluation of the overall distinctiveness and effectiveness of a church school in meeting the needs of learners and meet the statutory requirements for SIAMS. The evidence to meet them will be drawn from the areas of focus as summarised in the school's self-evaluation process. The report will contain **one** overarching summary judgement on how distinctive and effective the school is as a church school. This will be based on the ratings given on the **National Society Judgement Record (JRF)**. This is available online on the Church of England website, Education section 'Inspecting Our Schools'

This should be a carefully balanced evaluation of all the evidence available from across the inspection. Each contribution needs to be weighed according to its importance; an overall judgement should not be arrived at by a simple aggregation of ratings. Inspectors should record whether or not the school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and RE (where inspected under Section 48).

The main judgements will be rated on the scale 1-4. The summary judgement will be in written form but reflect the overall ratings given for the main judgements. This will facilitate the generation of the overall judgement on the church school and provide important research data from all schools inspected. Inspectors should use the National Society SIAMS grade descriptors available in the Evaluation Schedule at: available online on the Church of England website, Education section 'Inspecting Our Schools'

<b>1</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

For example:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>1-4</b>
<b>How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?</b>	1
<b>What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?</b>	2
<b>How effective is the religious education?</b>	3
<b>How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?</b>	2

A record will also be made of adherence to the statutory requirements for collective worship and RE (when inspected):

<b>The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education</b>	<b>Y</b>

It is essential to the SIAMS inspection process that inspectors underpin their inspection with a reliable evidence base in which they record their evaluation and related evidence. Forms which may be used to record evidence can be found SIAMS Annex 3 and are available online on the Church of England website, Education section 'Inspecting Our Schools.'

## 12. Writing the report

The audience for SIAMS reports includes parents, school governors, parishioners and church members, and the wider public, as well as Headteachers and other education professionals. Therefore the National Society's framework for inspection and inspection training programmes are designed to assist inspectors to produce accessible, succinct and evaluative reports.

Each core question will require a judgement followed by a succinct evaluation and at least one example of underpinning evidence. The evaluation statements are likely to be a rich source of such examples, but the report should not attempt to answer each one in turn, but draw on them as required to justify judgements.

THE FINAL INSPECTION REPORT SHOULD INCLUDE A COVER PAGE PLUS A COMMENTARY ON CORE QUESTIONS, NO LONGER THAN TWO SIDES OF A4 IN 12pt GILL SANS MT FONT. An outline SIAMS report form for completion by inspectors can be found online on the Church of England website, Education section 'Inspecting Our Schools'

The completed SIAMS report (after being quality assured by a trained critical reader) the NSJRF should be sent electronically with the inspector's claim form to the relevant Diocesan Board of Education and/or the Methodist Church who will forward them to the National Society.

## 13. The summary judgement

**How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church of England (or Methodist as applicable) school?**

The main report will open with a **statement** that sets out the inspector's overall judgement on the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness using the SIAMS grading. In reaching this judgement the inspector must consider the impact of the school's Christian character on meeting the needs of learners as priority and take into account the evidence provided under each core question.

## 14. Specialist schools, federations, amalgamations and academies

The status of the school should be indicated the section of report describing the school's context. In specialist secondary schools and academies inspectors may comment on the impact that any specialist status has had on the Christian distinctiveness of the school if this is significant. There may, for instance, be significant evidence of how a church school links spiritual development with the school's specialist focus or sponsors in an academy.

## 15. Reporting on the admissions policy of the school

Where any significant concerns arise in relation to a school's admissions policy they should be addressed under the evaluation statement: 'the effectiveness of partnerships with the church and the local community, the diocese/division including and the wider community including the parents and carers' as an element of the core question on leadership and management. Inspectors should **not** make any judgement on admissions arrangements which are already in accordance with the legal framework under which the school is governed.

## **The SIAMS Process**

### **16. Contractual procedures for SIAMS under the Education Act 2005.**

It is the responsibility of the governing body of all voluntary and foundation schools to ensure that a denominational inspection is carried out when the school has been identified for inspection by the diocese or Methodist Church (see\* below). The law states that in voluntary aided schools the whole governing body selects the inspector, while in controlled and foundation schools it is the responsibility of the foundation governors alone. In the case of an academy, the inspection of denominational education and collective worship is undertaken through a requirement in its funding agreement with the Department for Education (DfE).

In each case the choice must be made after consultation with the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) and/or the Methodist Church (section 48(2)). In practice, the DBE or the Methodist Church will usually have identified a suitable inspector in advance which enables the SIAMS inspection to take place within the designated period. The National Society has recommended that SIAMS inspection should take place within one week of the school being notified by the diocese or Methodist Church. A model contract, which governors may use, is available online on the Church of England website, Education section 'Inspecting Our Schools'

In some instances the governors may wish the inspector to widen the scope of the inspection or to spend more time in the school than would normally be the case. If that happens, and an increase is agreed in the inspector's fee, then the inspector will claim the normal grant available through the National Society and any additional fee should be paid to the inspector by the governing body.

Inspectors should provide the school with a draft of their report for checking for factual accuracy as soon as possible after inspection and in line with diocesan quality assurance procedures.

For each inspection the inspector will be paid according to the DfE Section 48 grant rate in force at the time. Payment will be made on receipt by the National Society from the appropriate diocesan office of a completed SIAMS report, and NSJRF. Payment will not be made to inspectors who submit reports independently of the relevant diocese. For Methodist schools, the Methodist Church and/or Diocesan Office will notify the National Society. For payment to be made each report must be accompanied by a completed NS claim form which is available online on the Church of England website, Education section 'Inspecting Our Schools'

When the inspector submits the final version of the SIAMS report with NSJRF to the diocese and/or the Methodist Church, the completed claim form must be attached. All reports with NSJRFs and claim details must be forwarded to the Society electronically by the appropriate diocesan or denominational authority. Payment will be made by BACS.

Where the governing body of a school employs an inspector without the approval of the diocesan or denominational authority, that inspector is required by Government regulation to submit a written claim, including bank details, and a SIAMS report to the diocese in which the school is legally situated or to the Methodist Church. The diocese/Methodist Church will forward the claim and report to the Society for payment provided it is satisfied that inspection has taken place, that the inspection has been carried out to an acceptable standard by a fit and proper person and where a report is produced which satisfies the statutory requirements for Section 48 inspections.

Schools should refer to their diocesan/Methodist Church for guidance on the timetable of the inspection process.

\* Inspections under SIAMS (section 48) are scheduled independently of the Ofsted inspection cycle with timing determined by the last section 48 inspection for individual schools. All schools with a 'good' or 'outstanding' section 48 inspection must be scheduled for their next section 48 inspection in the 5<sup>th</sup> year from the end of the school year in which they were last inspected. Any school with a section 48 judgement that was less than 'good' must be scheduled for their next section 48 inspection in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year from the end of the school year in which they were last inspected. Diocesan or Methodist SIAMS managers identify the schools to be inspected and inform the National Society of the dates of the scheduled inspections each term.

If, in exceptional circumstances, particular concerns warrant consideration of earlier inspection, the diocese needs to set out the case to the National Society so that funding can be agreed with the Department in advance.

## **SIAMS ANNEXES**

The annexes are accessible in Word format available online on the Church of England website, Education section 'Inspecting Our Schools'

- 1. Standard Reporting Pro-forma**
- 2. Judgement Recording Form**
- 3. Inspector's Monitoring Sheet/Evidence form**