

SIAMS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When can I expect a SIAMS?

The Ofsted and SIAMS inspection schedules are completely independent. The scheduling for a SIAMS inspection is determined by the grade of your last SIAMS inspection.

- Schools judged to be good or better will be inspected on a 5 yearly cycle
- Schools judged to be less than good will be inspected at any point after 3 years from the date of the last inspection, but within 5 years.

In exceptional circumstances, where the Diocese or CE Education Office have concerns about a school or academy that warrants the consideration of an earlier inspection, the CE Education Office will make a case to the DfE so that funding can be sought to bring forward the inspection. We advise all schools graded as RI (satisfactory) to work on the basis of a 3 year cycle.

What is the purpose of SIAMS?

The purpose of SIAMS is:

- to provide an evaluation of the impact of the school's distinctively Christian vision for all stakeholders (governing body, multi-academy trust, school community, parents, diocese, CE Education Office) and the wider public
- to meet the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 for schools who have a religious character
- to make a significant contribution to the improvement of church schools

The inspection focuses on the impact that the Christian vision of the school has on pupils and adults.

What does a SIAMS inspection entail?

The inspector will look at the school's Christian vision, the provision the school makes because of the vision and its impact – ie. how effective the school is in enabling pupils and adults to flourish. Schools will become effective through different strategies, approaches and styles which reflect their own unique local context and church tradition. Inspectors will diagnose how each school has a positive impact on pupils and adults given their context and vision. A school's vision and the impact of this vision, is explored through seven key strands and answers the key 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?'

In making their judgement the inspector will evaluate a range of evidence both prior to and during the inspection.

How will I be notified of an inspection?

A member of the Diocese administration team will phone the school to inform them of their inspection. They will try to speak to the Headteacher of the school and will give them the name of the inspector undertaking the inspection. Once the school has been notified, the inspector will call the school to speak to the Headteacher and talk through the arrangements for the inspection.

If, in exceptional circumstances, the headteacher cannot be contacted, the member of Diocesan admin team will ask to speak to another member of the senior leadership team.

Schools are given 5 working days' notice of inspection, in order to give them sufficient time to ensure that key staff and stakeholders can be available on the day of the inspection.

How long is a SIAMS inspection?

Most inspections in primary schools are carried out within one day by one inspector. In secondary schools the inspection usually takes two days. Very occasionally there may be two inspectors; a lead inspector and a colleague. The school will be informed about this at the time they are notified of the inspection. As part of its QA procedures the Diocese regularly undertakes shadow inspections. The school will be asked, at the time of the initial phone call, if they are happy for the shadow inspection to take place. The person shadowing the inspection does not intervene in the inspection process. They are there to observe and ensure that the inspection process is carried out in accordance with the guidance.

What happens if a SIAMS inspection is scheduled at the same time as an Ofsted inspection?

SIAMS and Ofsted inspections are independent inspections. In the event that a school receives an Ofsted inspection on the same day that a SIAMS inspection is due to take place, it has been agreed by the CE Education Office and Ofsted that the two inspections may be conducted simultaneously. However, both teams should avoid over-inspection of individual teachers and take into consideration the well-being of the school community. Feedback from both inspections may take place at the same meeting. The relationship between section 5 and section 48 inspectors is governed by a protocol between Ofsted and the CE. This protocol can be found in Appendix A of the SIAMS Handbook. The handbook can be downloaded from the CE Education Office website.

Can the date of an inspection be changed?

The funding for inspections is agreed between by the CE Education Office, DfE and Dioceses and secured in the academic year preceding an inspection. Dioceses are responsible for ensuring that all agreed inspections take place at the agreed time. A SIAMS inspection can take place on any day of the week that a school is in session. The 5 working days' notice of inspection should give schools sufficient time to ensure that key staff and stakeholders are available on the day of the inspection. An inspector, depending upon their own availability and any particular circumstances at the school, may be able to be flexible to suit the particular situation of the school. For example, where an RE subject leader only works part-time. Except in exceptional circumstances, an inspection should take place within one week of notification.

If at all possible, we try not to schedule inspections during the first and last week of term or during SATs week.

In exceptional circumstances a school can request that the date for the inspection is deferred or adjusted beyond the term in which the inspection is scheduled. If the Diocese agrees that deferment or adjustment is necessary, a formal submission to the Education Office stating the reasons is made in accordance with the Deferral Policy. This can be found in Appendix F of the SIAMS Handbook. Examples of the type of situations that may involve an adjustment or deferral include:

- a major incident, such as a fatal accident involving a member of staff or pupil
- the HT or a member of the school's senior leadership team being the subject of a current police investigation which would be compromised by the inspection
- the school has been or is closed to all pupils for at least half of the period for which the inspection has been scheduled
- at least three-quarters of the pupils will not be at school for at least half of the period for which the inspection has been scheduled
- the school is due to close

Other exceptional circumstances will be judged by the CE Education Office.

The Diocese cannot make a unilateral decision about deferral or adjustment.

What happens when the inspector calls?

The inspector will have undertaken some initial analysis of the school from the information in the public domain, including previous inspection reports (SIAMS /Ofsted), the school website and published data.

During the phone call the inspector will aim to establish a professional relationship with the HT, confirming factual information and focusing on practical issues, such as the organisation of the timetable for the inspection day. This initial phone call is likely to last for around 1 hour.

Schools should ensure their website is up to date, meets statutory requirements and includes a number of key documents relevant to its church school status. Diocesan Guidance on a church school website can be found on the Diocesan Education website [<https://schools@chichester.anglican.org>].

What documents will I need to send to the inspector before the inspection?

The more information that is provided via the school website the fewer the documents a school will need to email to the inspector prior to the inspection. Key documents an inspector is likely to request include any SIAMS related self-evaluation documents, relevant policies, SDP, specific action plans, scheme of delegation (academies) and the school's IDSR.

There is no obligation for the school to provide their self-evaluation in any specific format. A school should consider the most appropriate and effective way of evaluating itself as an effective church school and all documentation should be meaningful and manageable working documents. The Diocese and the CE Education Office have produced a number of templates for self-evaluation which can be found on the Diocesan Education website.

Schools should ensure that any self-evaluation documentation is succinct, clear, evaluative and strategic. Avoid lengthy and descriptive documents – an inspector will not have time to

read them. An inspector is keen to **establish the thread between context, vision, provision and impact**, so make sure that all relevant documentation establishes this link.

Based on their analysis of the school's website and the key documents sent, the inspector will send the school a PIP (Pre-inspection Plan) prior to the inspection, which outlines the key lines of enquiry they will follow during the inspection.

What happens on the day of the inspection?

The inspector will arrive at by 8.00. The timetable for the day will have been agreed with the HT in advance of the inspection. A suggested timetable is provided by the CE Education Office for inspectors to follow. During the day inspectors will seek to verify the school's self-evaluation about its own effectiveness and arrive at a judgement about its effectiveness as a church school based on the criteria set out in the current SIAMS Evaluation Schedule. Written documentation provided by the school is not in itself an indicator of effectiveness.

During the day the effectiveness of the school's evaluation will be reviewed with key individuals and groups. An inspector will expect to carry out learning walks, observations/drop ins and scrutinize data alongside senior leaders. It is the school's responsibility to provide supporting evidence for the inspector to verify. An inspection is most effective when conducted with the active co-operation of the school. We encourage school leaders to be as pro-active as possible. Although the day necessarily involves the inspector asking lots of questions, these should form the basis of dialogue between the inspector and key individuals/groups. During the day there will be opportunities for the inspector and headteacher to discuss the progress of the inspection and share their thinking. This ensures that leaders are aware of the picture that is emerging and prepare themselves for the final summary feedback.

Who will the inspector want to talk to during the inspection?

Inspectors ask to speak to key people/groups such as pupils, staff, governors, subject leaders, senior leaders, parents and clergy. In addition to meeting with individuals/groups in timetabled discussions, the inspector is likely, over the course of the day, to speak informally to additional people e.g. parents at the school gate, pupils at playtimes and lunchtime, midday supervisors and kitchen staff, adult volunteers who might be visiting the school etc.

What happens if key individuals are not available on the inspection day?

If a key individual, such as the Chair of Governors or the vicar, is not available on the day of the inspection an inspector may request to speak to the person concerned on the phone. This is usually agreed between the HT and the inspector during the initial phone call.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

A final feedback session will be timetabled for the end of the day. As feedback between the headteacher and inspector is an on-going throughout the inspection, the final feedback session is only a summary. The inspector will share the key findings and provisional judgements. The format for current final feedback is provided by the CE Education Office and is **very short**. A school should therefore consider carefully who to invite to the final feedback. Prior to the final feedback the inspector will arrange a more detailed feedback session with the HT. During this session the inspector is likely to agree the key actions with the HT. All

grades are provisional and are subject to change during the QA process. The details shared at the final feedback are confidential.

The final feedback is unlikely to take place before 4.30. An inspector should leave the school by 6pm. The Diocese tries, where at all possible, to attend final feedback sessions.

When can I share the judgements with other people?

You cannot share the content of the report or the grade given until you are sent the final pdf report for publication. Following the inspection, the inspection report is subject to a quality assurance process. Once the report and the inspector's judgement have been approved, a pdf of the draft report will be sent to the HT for a **factual check**. The report is still confidential at this stage and should not be shared with anyone. Once the QA process is complete, the school will be sent the final report (pdf) for publication. The report should be published on the school website. The Diocese aims to publish the report within 15 working days.

What happens if the school is not happy with the inspector or the way the inspection has been carried out?

At various points during the inspection there are opportunities for the Headteacher to voice any concerns they have about the inspection process and the conduct of the inspector.

Schools should ensure that they raise any concerns with the inspector. Following the inspection, the school will be sent a Diocesan Inspection Feedback Form. We are keen to hear your comments about the SIAMS inspection process and take your feedback seriously. We feedback comments, suggestions and concerns to the CE Education Office.

If there is a disagreement between the inspector and the school concerning the outcome of the inspection, the Diocese will attempt to resolve this with the school. If resolution cannot be reached the school can, if it wishes, raise an appeal or complaint. The procedure for this is set out in Appendix H - SIAMS Handbook. If the school is unhappy with the inspection experience, because of the conduct of the inspector, the school should follow the complaints policy (Appendix I – SIAMS Handbook).