



SIAMS Essential Information Factsheet

SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools)

Under the Education Act 2005 all CE schools are subject to a Section 48 inspection. The inspection is based on the SIAMS Evaluation Schedule ([SIAMS- Evaluation Schedule for Schools and Inspectors, September 2021](#)). All Church of England school inspections and denominational inspections of academies are inspected against this schedule. The schedule sets out the expectations for the inspection and evaluates the extent to which church schools are distinctively and recognisably Christian institutions. The primary objective of a SIAMS is to evaluate both the effectiveness and distinctiveness of a school as a church school. It asks 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?’

This question is explored through 7 strands:

- Vision and Leadership
- Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills
- Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy
- Community and Living Well Together
- Dignity and Respect
- The Impact of Collective Worship
- The Effectiveness of Religious Education

The [SIAMS Evaluation Schedule](#) was revised and amended in September 2021. School leaders should ensure they are familiar with the updated schedule. This can be downloaded from the Church of England Education Office (CEEO) website and from Diocese of Chichester (DOC) Education website on the [SIAMS Inspection page ‘Key Documents’ box](#).

SIAMS Scheduling

All Section 48 inspections (SIAMS) are scheduled separately from Ofsted inspections. An inspection will usually be carried out every 5 years from the date of the previous inspection.

In March 2020 the requirement for Section 48 inspection was suspended as part of the COVID-19 legislation. Since the re-introduction of inspection in the Autumn term 2021, SIAMS has been made subject to temporarily different scheduling. Until all schools have received their first SIAMS inspection in the ‘post Covid’ suspension years, legislation requires that inspection will be carried out within 8 years of the date of the previous inspection. Thereafter, scheduling will return to a 5-year cycle. In general, under the revised

legislation it is likely that SIAMS inspections will take place between 1 -2 years after the academic year in which they would have taken place before the Covid-related suspension. For the academic year 2021-2022 schools can assume that inspections will be those that should have taken place between March 2020 and July 2021.

As a result of the pandemic, schools will not be able to calculate with certainty the academic year of their next inspection. Before the end of the Summer Term each year the CEEO will publish the list of schools that are expected to be inspected during the following academic year. The list will not be published in chronological order or according to the term within which an inspection will take place. It is possible that extraordinary circumstances may result in unannounced changes to the list.

All schools listed on the CEEO Inspection List should contact their School Effectiveness Officer to discuss their preparation and readiness for inspection.

Notification of Inspection

Schools will be given 5 working days' notice (1 week) of an inspection and will be contacted by the CEEO SIAMS Officer to inform them about the date of the inspection and the name of the inspector. The school will be notified by telephone. If the SIAMS officer is unable to make contact by phone an email will be sent.

The inspector will call the school later the same day to talk about the arrangements for the inspection and information they require. The inspector will want to speak to the Headteacher or, in their absence, the most senior member of staff available. The inspector will ask the school to forward any summary self-evaluation and other initial sources of evidence. During this phone call the inspector will discuss and agree the draft timetable. Following this call the inspector will send the school the SIAMS Inspection Contract, which should be signed by the Chair of Governors. This initial phone call is likely to last about 1 hour.

The week Prior to Inspection

Once the inspector has received documentation from the school, they will write the PIP (Pre-Inspection Plan) which will outline the Lines of Enquiry the inspector wants to pursue during the inspection day. The inspector will use the evidence sent by the school, information from the school website and other publicly available information as the basis for the PIP. The PIP will be sent to the school 48 hours prior to the start of the inspection. The day before the inspection the inspector will telephone the HT to clarify the Lines of Enquiry and finalise the timetable. Headteachers should keep the inspector fully apprised of COVID-19 numbers in the school.

The Inspection Day

The inspection day usually lasts from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.. The inspector will need a private place to work and should have access to a telephone. An important part of the inspection day will consist of meetings which will provide opportunities to discuss the lines of enquiry and triangulate evidence, in order to reach a judgement about the school's effectiveness and distinctiveness. The inspector will seek to verify a school's self-evaluation against the Evaluation Schedule 2021 criteria.

At the end of the inspection the inspector will provide the school with the provisional outcomes of the inspection. These are subject to quality assurance and must remain confidential until after the final report has been received. At the feedback meeting the inspector will outline the timescale and protocol for report writing and publication.

Members of the Diocesan Education team will be spoken to as part of the evidence gathering process. Where possible the link School Effectiveness Officer will try to attend the final feedback meeting, either in person or via a video link. As part of the inspection day the inspector will be making a judgement about the effectiveness of the school's partnership with the Diocese.

If the school has any concerns or questions about the inspection process the Headteacher should raise these with the inspector at the earliest possible point during the inspection. It is essential that any concerns the school has about the inspection are brought to the attention of the inspector in a timely and suitable manner.

Should the school wish to raise a concern about the inspection that it has not been possible to resolve on the day of inspection or to raise at the final feedback, the school must follow the SIAMS appeals and complaints procedure, as outlined in the [SIAMS Appeals and Complaints Policy](#) (September 2021). This policy can be found on the CEEO website and in the 'Key Documents' box on the SIAMS Inspection page of the DOC Education website.

Post Inspection

A draft report will be sent by the inspector to the school within 10 working days of the inspection for a factual accuracy check. The school should respond to this within 24 hours. Only factually inaccurate amendments can be made unless the inspection is subject to an appeal or a complaint.

The final report will be published on the 'A Church Near You' website within 4 working days and will subsequently be uploaded to the Diocese of Chichester Education website. The final report should be shared by the school with its community and should be available on the school's website.

Adjustment and Deferral

If a school wishes to request an adjustment or deferral they should refer to the CEEO '[SIAMS Inspection Deferral Policy](#)' before contacting the CEEO. Any school seeking a deferral or adjustment should copy Rosemary Black into the email request made to the CEEO SIAMS Officer.

Inspection and COVID-19

The CEEO has published a new [SIAMS COVID-19 Policy](#).

In the days leading up to the inspection it is possible that the number of COVID-19 cases in a school may render an inspection unwise on health and safety grounds. Headteachers are asked to keep the inspector apprised of the number of COVID-19 cases during the week prior to the inspection and to make decisions about external visitors in line with their risk assessment. If the number of cases increases unexpectedly on the day of the inspection, the headteacher and inspector must make a joint agreed decision about the continuation of the

inspection. Specific information can be found in the CEEO [SIAMS Information for Schools](#) document and the SIAMS COVID-19 Policy.

Getting the Most out of the SIAMS Inspection

A positive SIAMS inspection, just like a good Ofsted inspection, should be valuable professional development for school leaders. Some elements of the inspection day will be undertaken jointly by the inspector and headteacher. To make the most of the inspection, school leaders must ensure they can present a clear and confident case about how the school's Christian education is making a difference to pupils, adults and their school community. School leaders need to be able to talk about their school context - both the opportunities and challenges that it presents - and how this has shaped their vision. They need to be able to unpack the vision statement – articulating precisely what 'flourishing' of pupils, adults and the school community looks like – and should present clear evidence to support this. Make sure as a school leader you are confident, knowledgeable and proactive.

Preparing for SIAMS - School Self-Evaluation

It is essential that all schools are familiar with the SIAMS Evaluation Schedule September 2021 and other key CEEO and DOC SIAMS related documents. All these documents can be found in the Key Documents box on the [SIAMS page of the DOC Education website](#). At the very least all school leaders need to have read:

- **SIAMS Evaluation Schedule 2021**
- **CE Vision for Education (2016)**

The CEEO recommends a school produces a summary of self-evaluation for the SIAMS inspector. This summary should be no longer than 2 sides of A4. The DOC has produced a [Self-Evaluation Summary template](#) for schools to use as the basis for this summary. This can be downloaded from the Key Documents box on the SIAMS inspection page of the DOC education website.

The Diocese of Chichester expects all its schools to evaluate their distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England school on an ongoing basis. In addition to a self-evaluation summary (for the SIAMS inspection), we recommend all schools use a self-evaluation document which they use as the basis for their self-evaluation. The DOC has produced a template for school self-evaluation which can be downloaded from Key Documents box on the School Effectiveness page of the website.

When reflecting on their effectiveness schools should ensure they address the following questions:

- **How does our context shape our vision?**
- **What is our vision?**
- **What does our vision have to say about wisdom, hope, dignity and community?**
- **How does our vision inform our decision making and key actions?**
- **What difference is our vision making to pupils, adults and our school community?**

This will enable school leaders to articulate the effectiveness of their Christian vision, (the Biblical basis and rationale for the vision, how the vision has informed key decision making and actions and the difference the vision is making to the pupils, adults and school community) at inspection.

FAQS about the Inspection Day

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 as a SIAMS inspection, 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.

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 between the headteacher and inspector in advance of the inspection. A suggested timetable is provided by the CEEO 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 (September 2021). Written documentation provided by the school is not in itself an indicator of effectiveness.

The effectiveness of the school's vision 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 will 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 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. Different inspectors like to organise meetings differently. While inspectors are encouraged to hold round table discussions with groups, the demands of evidence gathering often mean that sessions have a more question and answer feel!

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/online. This is usually agreed between the HT and the inspector prior to the inspection day either at the initial or follow-up phone call.

What happens if we have a COVID-19 outbreak?

It is possible that the number of Covid cases in a school may render the inspection unwise. Headteachers are asked to keep the inspector apprised of any increase in numbers during the week before inspection. If numbers of Covid cases increase unexpectedly on the day of inspection, the headteacher and inspector will together agree on the wisdom of continuing the inspection. Detailed information about all Covid related matters is included in the CEEO [Covid- 19 Policy](#) which can be downloaded from the Church of England website or from the Key Documents box on the SIAMS Inspection page of the DOC Education website

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 on-going throughout the inspection, the final feedback session is only a summary. The inspector will share the key findings and provisional judgements. The final feedback tends to be very short. A school should therefore consider carefully who to invite to the final feedback. Prior to the final feedback the inspector usually arranges a more detailed feedback session with the HT. During this session the inspector is likely to agree the key actions with the HT. The details shared at the final feedback **are confidential**. The final feedback is unlikely to take place before 4.30 and an inspector should leave the school by 6pm. A member of the Diocesan education team, where at all possible, will try to attend final feedback session in person or online.

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 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.

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. If the school's concerns cannot be resolved with the inspector on the day of inspection the headteacher and Chair of Governors should refer to the CEEO [SIAMS Appeals and Complaints Policy](#) September 2021.