



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

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

Revised version April 2009

Summary

This framework sets out the expectations of The National Society for the conduct of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican, Methodist and ecumenical Schools (SIAS) under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. It reflects current educational practice in schools and broader developments in school inspections. It is designed to be used as the basis for the external moderation of a school's SIAS referenced self-evaluation.

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

The framework provides a process for evaluating the extent to which church schools are "*distinctively and recognisably Christian institutions*"¹. The framework sets out the four elements of the SIAS process:

The main features of SIAS 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 Key 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 SIAS.

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. The section explains the importance of flexible and differentiated approaches to inspection in the context of self-evaluation. Ground rules for inspection are set out and sources of evidence are identified.

Judgements and Reporting

This section is a guide to effective evaluation and sound judgement making in response to each of the Key Questions. The standard National Society reporting protocol is set out.

The SIAS Process

The process covers the contractual procedures for the governing body of the school and the actions to be taken by the school and the inspector in relation to the Government grant. An outline timetable sets out the steps to be taken by the diocese/Methodist Church, Ofsted, the school and the inspector in relation to the SIAS inspection.

The on-line annexes include judgement recording, reporting and monitoring forms.

¹ Lord Dearing, *The Way ahead: Church of England Schools in the new millennium*, 2001.

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Introduction

In the Education Act 2005 (Section 48) the governing body or foundation governors of schools which have a religious character are 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 SIAS inspection

1. The purposes of SIAS 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 or local church authority, the National Society 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.**

SIAS inspection focuses on the *effect* that the Christian ethos 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. They will not apply a preconceived template of what a distinctive or effective church school should be like.

2. The core principles for SIAS 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 improvement and affirm success.**

3. The relationship with the Ofsted inspection

SIAS inspection reports will provide a different but complementary perspective on church schools in relation to Ofsted's findings. Therefore, where possible, inspectors should establish an appropriate working link with the Ofsted lead inspector and abide by the agreed protocols for Section 5 and Section 48 inspections. SIAS inspections may be either concurrent with the Ofsted Section 5 inspection or they should be held **as soon as possible** after the Ofsted inspection (normally within three school weeks).

4. Code of practice for SIAS inspection

SIAS 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;
- 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.

5. 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.

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 key 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 Key Questions is not hierarchical. Together they provide a basis for evaluation that meets the principal objective.

The inspection will address each Key Question, using these supplementary questions as a guide.

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

- How well do the school's Christian values have an impact on all learners and enable them to flourish as individuals?
- How well does the Christian character support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all learners whether they are Christian, of other faiths, or of none?
- How well does the Christian character of the school prepare learners to become responsible citizens?
- How well do key Christian values motivate the relationships between all members of the school community?
- How well is the spiritual development of learners enhanced by the school environment?

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

- How positive are learners' attitudes to collective worship?
- To what extent do learners and staff derive inspiration, spiritual growth and affirmation from worship?
- How well does collective worship develop learners' understanding of Anglican traditions and practice? (*References to Anglican should be taken to read Methodist in Methodist schools.*)
- How effectively is the importance of worship demonstrated in the life of the school?

How effective is the Religious Education? (see 6 below)

- How high are the standards and how well do all learners achieve in RE?
- How effective are learning and teaching in RE?
- To what extent do learners of all faiths and of none demonstrate a positive attitude towards RE?
- How well does RE contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all learners?
- To what extent does RE promote the distinctive Christian character of the school?
- To what extent does RE promote community cohesion through an understanding of and respect for diverse faith communities?
- How effectively is the importance of RE demonstrated in the life of the school?

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

- How well has the school leadership (including governors) engaged with distinctive Christian values in developing their vision for the school?
- How well is this vision understood by all stakeholders?
- How well do leaders and governors ensure that this vision is put into practice by all members of the school community?
- How well are leaders and governors preparing for the future leadership of church schools?
- How effective is the partnership between the school, the church and the wider community, including the parents?

The Inspection

6. The focus for self-evaluation and inspection

The Key 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.

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

Each focus identifies the areas of **evidence** upon which self-evaluation and inspection judgements are made. The National Society framework is structured to support the evaluation of the extent to which these areas of focus contribute to the Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness of a church school.

*Whilst the quality 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 SIAS.

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 Ofsted Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and in the SIAS Self-Evaluation Toolkit (or its equivalent), 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.

Schools are strongly recommended to use the National Society Self-Evaluation Toolkit (available on the NS website) or the self-evaluation support material recommended by their Diocesan Board of Education or denominational authority.

8. Differentiation of inspection activity and second cycle SIAS inspections

The starting point for SIAS is the **school's self-evaluation** as summarised in the Ofsted Self Evaluation Form (SEF). This provides an holistic account of the school's character and performance. Inspectors should also take account of the NS Toolkit or other self-evaluation material.

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 will determine the focus, pattern and nature of inspection activities. The preparation of a SIAS Inspection Briefing (SIB) is essential to the planning and efficient conduct of the inspection.

Where the inspector perceives that the process of self-evaluation, in relation to the Christian character of the school, 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 develop 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 that is predicated on self-evaluation 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 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 and 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, if possible, 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 SIAS Framework seeks to evaluate the *impact* that these church schools have on all their learners. This is not achieved by description of the quality or style of provision alone. Where the previous SIAS inspection has judged the school to be outstanding in the summary judgement, and the diocese/denominational authority has determined that there have been no significant and adverse changes in the school's intake, staffing, governance, clergy or context, the second SIAS 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 SIAS inspection.

The inspector will report progress on those issues under the appropriate Key Question/s and include a brief paragraph to support the Summary Judgement.

9. Evidence for self-evaluation

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

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

SIAS inspection involves arriving at a number of qualitative judgements. 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.

10. Verification of the self-evaluation findings

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

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 Estyn: www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/Listening_to_Learners_July2004.pdf

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

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.

Some ground rules for inspection:

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

Judgements and Reporting

11. Making judgements

In making and reporting judgements inspectors should provide answers to the Key Questions.

These answers will underpin the evaluation of the overall distinctiveness and effectiveness of a church school and meet the statutory requirements for SIAS Inspection. 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 (NSJRF)**. This is available online at: <http://www.natsoc.org.uk/siasdocuments> . 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 SIAS Grade Descriptors available at: <http://www.natsoc.org.uk/siasdocuments> .**

1	Outstanding
2	Good
3	Satisfactory
4	Inadequate

For example:

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

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

The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	Y/N
The school meets the statutory requirement for Religious Education	Y/N

It is essential to the SIAS inspection process that inspectors underpin their inspection with a reliable evidence base in which they record their evaluation and related evidence. The **Inspector's Monitoring Sheet** is designed as a working document to assist this process. Included are the SIAS Key Questions supplementary questions. It may be used as a notebook for inspections and for training purposes. The National Society also provides an **evidence form** which may be used instead of or in conjunction with the Monitoring Sheet. (Both are found in SIAS Annex 3, available on line at www.natsoc.org.uk/schools/inspection/2005)

12. Writing the report

The audience for SIAS 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 Key Question will require a judgement followed by a *succinct* evaluation and *one* example of underpinning evidence. The supplementary questions (see pages 6/7 above) 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 BE NO LONGER THAN TWO SIDES OF A4 IN 11pt ARIAL FONT. An outline SIAS report form for completion by inspectors can be found at www.natsoc.org.uk/schools/inspection/2005.

The completed SIAS report and the NSJRF should be sent electronically by the inspector 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* school?

(* or Methodist or Ecumenical as appropriate)

The main report will open with a **statement** that summarises the inspector's overall judgement. (Inspectors are **not** asked to give the school numerical ratings in the report but to use the ratings for the Key Questions as a basis for the written judgement and evaluation.)

14. Specialist schools and academies

In specialist secondary schools and academies inspectors should comment on the impact that any specialist status has had on the Christian distinctiveness of the school. There may, for instance, be significant evidence of how a church school links spiritual development with the school's specialist focus.

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 question: *how effective is the partnership between the school, the church and the local community, including the parents?* as an element of the Key Question on leadership and management. Inspectors should **not** make a judgement on admissions arrangements which are already in accordance with the legal framework under which the school is governed.

The SIAS Process

16. Contractual procedures for SIAS 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 whenever an Ofsted inspection takes place. 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 Children Schools and Families.

In each case the choice must be made after consultation with the Diocesan Board of Education 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 (as they have advance notice of the inspection under the protocol between Ofsted and the National Society) which enables the SIAS inspection to take place as soon as possible after the Ofsted one. A model contract, which governors may use, is available online at: www.natsoc.org.uk/schools/inspection/2005.

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.

For each inspection the inspector will be paid according to the DCSF 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 SIAS report and JRF. Payment will not be made to inspectors who submit reports independently of the relevant diocese. For Methodist or ecumenical 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 found at: www.natsoc.org.uk/schools/inspection/2005.

When the inspector submits the final version of the SIAS report with JRF 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 monthly by BACS.

Payment will be guaranteed for reports submitted by the end of the school term following the term in which the Section 5 inspection took place. A letter of explanation will be required by the Society if a report is submitted beyond that date before payment can be considered in consultation with the DCSF.

Where the governing body of a school employs an inspector without the approval of the diocesan or denominational authority that inspector will be required by Government regulation to submit a written claim, including bank details, and a SIAS report to the diocese in which the school is legally situated or to the Methodist Church. The diocese and/or denominational authority 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 or other denominational authority for guidance on the timetable of the inspection process.

SIAS Updates

The National Society SIAS framework for inspection and self-evaluation of church schools will be updated in the light of inspection experience and any changes to statutory regulations that may occur from time to time. Regular SIAS Updates will identify any official changes that inspectors will be required, by the National Society, to make to SIAS procedures.

SIAS ANNEXES

The annexes are accessible in Word format at: www.natsoc.org.uk/schools/inspection/2005

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