



Diocese of Durham

Blessing our communities in Jesus' name



8th January 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

SIAMS – new Statutory Inspection Evaluation Schedule for Schools

I would like to make you aware of the new Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Schedule for Schools, which requires all Church of England schools to be inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

This schedule came into effect in September 2018, however as a diocese we made the decision to implement the new schedule from January 2019 to allow time for our schools to familiarise themselves with the new inspection process.

SIAMs will inspect the effectiveness and distinctiveness of Church schools. This is true for all schools of a religious character. The need to review the inspection process at this time has come about because of the changing educational landscape and the fact that an increasing number of Church schools are in Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) often mixed MATs. The previous schedule didn't take sufficient account of this. There is also a need to ensure that the original foundation of Church schools is maintained in these new arrangements. However, SIAMS is mainly an opportunity to celebrate success and share good practice in our schools.

SIAMs inspectors will grade the school on the following 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?'

Under the previous SIAMS system, there were four possible grades. A school might have been awarded 'outstanding', 'good', 'satisfactory' or very rarely 'inadequate'. The SIAMS process has now been reviewed and these grades have been changed. The old 'outstanding' grade has now gone, and the criteria that would previously have attracted an 'outstanding' grade have been merged with those for a 'good' grade. A new grade of 'excellent' has been introduced with a higher threshold than the old 'outstanding' grade. It will be awarded only in exceptional circumstances. There is no longer a 'satisfactory' grade but 'requires improvement' might be awarded instead. Very occasionally a school may be deemed 'ineffective' as a Church school. Should this be the case the Diocese will work with that school to ensure it is adequately supported to being at least 'good'.

We are very proud of the work in our schools and look forward to this being celebrated in the SIAMs reports under the new schedule in the coming years.
ours sincerely

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