

9 July 2020

To all Church of England Schools
Headteachers and Governing Bodies

Section 48 – SIAMS Inspection Autumn 2020

Thank you for all that you have been doing in these challenging times to enable pupils to continue to access education which is so vital for their wellbeing and future. We know that the complexity of the challenge is huge and that you are working tirelessly for the benefit of your pupils, staff and communities.

This note is particularly concerned with denominational inspection under s.48 otherwise known as SIAMS.

The obligation for schools with a religious character to ensure that they have a s.48 inspection is currently disapplied as part of the Coronavirus Act and accompanying legislation. Guidance issued by DfE to schools about September 20 explains how Ofsted will be expecting to operate as schools fully open in September. Whilst Ofsted have the flexibility to 'inspect' in a different way under s.8 there is no equivalent for s.48 inspection and so inspection under s.48 cannot be reintroduced until the disapplication is lifted, which will happen at the same time as s.5 inspections are reintroduced for Ofsted. Currently this is expected to be January 2021, but it may have to be later and that will be reviewed during the course of the Autumn 20 term and a final decision will be made by the DfE towards the end of this calendar year.

This means that there **will definitely be no s.48 SIAMS inspections for the remainder of 2020** and we will be in touch in the Autumn term once we are clear about how the scheduling of inspections will happen in 2021 to enable us to catch-up with inspections for schools that will have missed their inspection between March 20 and January 21 and also rework our scheduling timetable for the future.

Please be assured that we will be working both nationally and at a local diocesan level to ensure that the reintroduction of SIAMS will happen in a timely way that enables schools to continue to focus on the many challenges and complexities that you will face as schools, underpinned by our commitment to ensuring that the Christian character and ethos of our schools continues to promote our vision for education which seeks the flourishing of all.

Yours with warmest greeting



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