



9th July 2019

Dear Colleague

Important SIAMS Update from Diocesan SIAMS Manager

I am pleased to be writing to you all with some key information about SIAMS in our diocese.

I am conscious that this is a lengthy communication but it is an important one.

Thank you

Firstly, and most importantly, I want to thank you all, so very much, for the way in which schools are embracing the 'new' (or not quite so 'new' now!) SIAMS Evaluation Schedule. Our advisory team never ceases to be impressed by the way in which schools are choosing very bespoke visions, which suit their contexts, and are rooting these in biblical underpinning. It is very powerful where the vision is then shaping strategic decisions and is becoming part of the culture of church schools.

Inspection Statistics

This week sees the last SIAMS inspections of this academic year. For those of you who are interested in statistics, at this moment in time the judgements made of schools in Salisbury diocese in 2018-2019 are:

- 28% of schools have been judged to be 'excellent'
- 66% of schools have been judged to be 'good'
- 6% of schools have been judged to 'require improvement'
- 0% of schools have been judged to be 'ineffective as a church school'

(Data based on 32 schools: 29 primary phase schools, 1 middle school and 2 secondary schools)

These are statistics of which we should, collectively, be very proud and I thank you and your teams for all of the hard work which you undertake every day.

Self-Evaluation

Over the course of the last two terms, our advisory team has been sharing the message that there will be some national changes in the SIAMS Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). These national changes are due to two main reasons:

- a) There have been changes in expectations from Ofsted about the length of self-evaluation documentation (i.e. much shorter), in large part due to workload. It is important for the Church of England Education Office to take account of this in its self-evaluation guidance.
- b) With the very best of intentions and quite understandably, there have been examples of church schools, nationwide, producing very lengthy self-evaluation documents which clearly have absorbed very significant amounts of time ... and which have not always, crucially, focused on capturing 'impact'.

The national Church of England Education Office has been working with some schools to trial different means of self-evaluation ahead of publishing this information in the Autumn.

I am, however, more than aware that schools, rightly, want to know the expectations as quickly as possible to support your self-evaluation. I fully understand and agree with the need to know at this stage. Therefore, having consulted with the team in the national Church of England Education Office, I am delighted to share the following guidance which will all be part of information shared in the Autumn:

- Schools can present their SIAMS SEF in any way that is right for each school. There is not a prescribed format.
- The key priority in a SIAMS SEF is to focus on **IMPACT**, i.e. to outline **what the school does because of its Christian vision** and then to give emphasis to **how the school knows that what it is doing is making a difference. i.e. How does what is happening demonstrate the vision being lived out?**
- Schools are advised to put as much as possible on their website. Any information which is on the website will not need to be repeated in the SIAMS SEF. Instead a note to cross-reference to specific website pages will suffice. The guidance below has been issued by the Education Office of the Church of England in regard to advised website contents.

School website:

The school website will be the first 'source of information' that any inspector will look at to find out about your school. We recommend that there is a dedicated page/tab on your site covering what it means to your school community to be a church school in your context. This should avoid the need to put descriptive detail in your SIAMS SEF material. This page/tab might include:

- A statement of your school vision and how it is distinctively Christian through reference to a Christian narrative, biblical text or theological ideas. Include any associated values!
- Relationships with your local church or churches and the mutually beneficial links these bring. This will include the role of church workers in school (if applicable) and the school's involvement in the life of the local church community.
- Links you have with charities and organisations that help you to encourage your pupils to be courageous advocates for change. Links with the local community including faith and belief communities.
- Any policies or documents that reflect your understanding of, and approach to, spiritual development.
- Details of what you are doing to support the mental health and wellbeing of both pupils and staff.
- Collective worship policy and practice, RE policy and practice and Behaviour Policy and practice.

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be many other exciting things happening at your school that you might want to include.

- When sharing data/outcomes, schools are asked to purely attach any documentation in which this is already recorded, rather than repeat it in the SIAMS SEF.

So, what format might our SIAMS SEF take?

- Schools are welcome to continue using the existing SIAMS SEF template (although if you find yourself exceeding 15 pages of information about the seven strands, it is advised that you look again to ensure that you are simply capturing key impact). There honestly is no expectation that schools capture everything that they do in a SIAMS SEF. Rather, it is meant to focus on key areas of impact. (From an inspection point of view, it provides the

inspector with a sense of the school's work ... much more will be found out on the day of inspection and through the school website).

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you have already completed the existing SIAMS SEF template, and it is longer than 15 pages, please do not worry! What you have done is, in fact, a great piece of work. Thank you. We just advise that you ensure that the SEF focuses on impact!

- Schools might present their SIAMS SEF as a flow diagram, mind map, or in another such creative format. It is, though, essential, that schools refer to the focus questions* in the SIAMS Evaluation Schedule to ensure that flow diagrams/mind maps, etc. do respond to the school's impact in respect of these questions.
- Schools may develop their own SEFs which combine the expectations from Ofsted with those from SIAMS. If schools make this decision, that is fine so long as the key focus questions* are responded to in the SEF.

A reminder that an inspector will need to consider the Focus Questions* below as part of an inspection process. It is, therefore, important, that a SIAMS SEF expresses the impact of a school's work in respect of each focus question*.

The SIAMS Evaluation Schedule also lists further questions which a school may consider as part of its self-evaluation within each strand.

SIAMS Focus Questions*

Strand 1: Vision and Leadership
In this strand the following must be explored:
How well the school has developed and implemented an inclusive and distinctive Christian vision, monitoring its impact to ensure the school's original foundation is maintained.
How well the school lives out that Christian vision in relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders.
Strand 2: Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills
In this strand the following must be explored:
How well the school's staff and leaders apply their Christian vision to ensure curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities meet the academic and spiritual needs of all learners.
Strand 3: Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy
In this strand the following must be explored:
How well the school's Christian vision supports the character and moral development of all pupils, giving them aspiration for themselves and hope for the communities of which they are a part.
How well the school's Christian vision inspires the whole school community to engage in social action and to be courageous advocates for change in their local, national and global communities.
Strand 4: Community and Living Well Together
In this strand the following must be explored:
How well the school's Christian vision promotes social and cultural development through the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation that encourages good mental health, and enables all to flourish and live well together.
Strand 5: Dignity and Respect
In this strand the following must be explored:
How well the school's Christian vision creates an environment that embraces difference where all pupils, whatever their background or ability, can flourish because all are treated with dignity and respect.
Strand 6: The impact of collective worship
In this strand the following must be explored:

The ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision.
Strand 7: The effectiveness of religious education In this strand the following must be explored:
How effective the school is in ensuring pupils flourish through the provision of high quality religious education reflecting the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
How effective the school is in ensuring that religious education expresses the school's Christian vision.

I am more than aware that sometimes 'looser' SEF requirements can pose a challenge in themselves as schools seek to find a format which is right for them. Our PSA Adviser visits to schools next year will support you in this process and please remember, too, that we will be running a series of SIAMS SEF Writing days when our advisory team will work with you to ensure that your SIAMS SEF is robust, manageable and, above all, helpful to you. Templates and a variety of formats will be shared on these occasions.

The dates and venues for the SIAMS SEF Writing days are:

[Click here for SIAMS Self Evaluation courses - 3 venues](#)

Excellence In SIAMS

I will also be leading 'Excellence in SIAMS' events, free to all schools with a PSA subscription, to share learning from inspections nationwide about what constitutes 'excellence' and looking at 'excellent' practice. I look forward to working with many of you on these occasions. Again, for your information, the dates and venues for these opportunities are:

[Click here for Excellence in SIAMS course - 4 venues](#)

Please note that the session being held at the Diocesan Education Centre on 25/03/2020 is open to all schools but will include a specific focus for secondary schools as part of the input.

Once again, I thank you for your commitment to SIAMS and for your hard work, day after day, in your schools. Thank you so much for your support with SIAMS in this first year of the 'new' Schedule! You should all take a moment to pause and congratulate yourselves on this work.

I wish you all a very restful and happy Summer Holiday when it arrives!

With my very best wishes,

Neil Revell

**Neil Revell
Diocesan SIAMS Manager**