



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

### Update Four – September 2006

*This update is also found on the National Society Website*

#### U4.1 News and developments

**The National Society wishes to express deep gratitude for the enormous effort and dedication to all those diocesan officers and inspectors who have worked so effectively to make the first Year of SIAS such a solid achievement.**

Regular meetings have been held with Ofsted officers and with Maurice Smith HMCI.

The advanced notice system and the relationships with RISPs have had many teething troubles and occasional lapses in communication and much work has been put in by diocesan officers and the National Society to resolve issues as they arose and establish durable protocols for co-operation. Overall, however the picture is one of good working relationships with RISPs. Dioceses should continue to let Nick McKemey know where there are problems, as he will always follow these up with Ofsted and the RISPS. RISPs have again been reminded by Ofsted to send Section 5 reports to dioceses. We wish to thank Mike Hoban HMI and his colleagues for their staunch support and the alacrity with which they have dealt with any problems arising.

The “flow” of inspections of Church of England schools has been very uneven this year and the Society is working closely with Ofsted to minimise this for September 2006 onwards.

#### U4.2 SIAS training materials

The National Society has commissioned a film editor to produce an inspection training DVD from the 5+ hours of film material generated for the Faith in the Future Conference in March this year. This DVD is now available for all NS approved training sessions this year and adds a new and innovative dimension to evaluating evidence and directing the focus for inspection activities. Copies will also be on sale from the National Society in the near future.

#### U4.3 Inspection outcomes

To date the NS has received 815 SIAS reports of which 525 have been posted on the NS website.

We are closely examining the patterns of gradings and will shortly be reporting directly to dioceses on their individual breakdowns. This will assist in our objective of further regularising the standard of judgements made across the country. We know from the comparative work we have done with Ofsted that SIAS gradings appear generally slightly more positive than Ofsted's but it must be stressed that this does not mean that they are "wrong" per se. It does however show up any extreme anomalies for closer inspection. A breakdown of grades is given in Fig. 1.

Fig 1.

	Qn 1	Qn 2	Qn 3	Qn 4	Total
Number of ones	126	70	27	87	310
Number of twos	230	230	123	231	814
Number of threes	32	88	60	69	249
Number of fours	3	3	3	4	13

#### U4.4 DfES changes in the administration of Grant payment to inspectors

The National Society has signed an agreement with the DfES that sets out the terms and conditions for the payment by the Secretary of State of a block grant to the National Society to support school inspections conducted under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and also sets out terms and conditions for the distribution of grant by the National Society. Under this agreement the National Society will receive an annual block grant based on an Ofsted estimate of the number of Section 5 inspections of Church of England schools for the year.

**All Section 48 inspections conducted after 1 September 2006 will fall under these new administrative arrangements. Inspections conducted before that time should be processed through the DRE1 arrangements.**

The National Society has consulted with dioceses, the Joint Self Evaluation and Inspection Consultative group (JSEICG), the Treasurer and our legal advisers on the most financially secure and efficient method of distribution for the grant. Taking the Society's obligations under the agreement into account, the following process for distribution will be followed.

**For each inspection the inspector will be paid according to the Section 48 grant rate in force at the time (see below). Payment will be made on receipt by the National Society from the appropriate diocesan office of a complete Section 48 report - including JRF.**

**Payment will not be made to inspectors who submit reports independently of the relevant diocese.**

**For payment to be made each report must be accompanied by a completed NS Claim Form ([Annex 1](#)), which is also found at [www.natsoc.org.uk/schools/inspection/](http://www.natsoc.org.uk/schools/inspection/).**

**It is the inspector's responsibility to complete the claim form. All reports with JRFs and claim details must be forwarded to the Society electronically by the**

**appropriate diocese. Payment will be made by BACS at the end of each month for reports received by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of that month.**

***This means that when the inspector submits the final version of the SIAS report with JRF simultaneously to the school and the diocese the claim form is attached to the diocesan copy.***

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 DfES.

The Society can only store BACS details for inspectors who are registered with the National Society. Non-registered inspectors must submit BACS details with each claim made.

Where the governing body of a school employs an inspector without the approval of the diocese that inspector will be required by the DfES regulations to submit a written claim, including BACS details, and a Section 48 report to the diocese in which the school is legally situated. The diocese will forward the claim and report to the Society for payment provided the diocese is satisfied that inspection has taken place and the inspection has been carried out to a reasonable standard by a person who is fit and proper and where a report is produced which satisfies the statutory requirements for section 48 inspections.

The current rates for Section 48 inspections are;

**VA Primary Schools - £550, VC Schools, the CTC & academies - £450, VA Secondary Schools - £1000.**

#### **U4.5 Inspection and reporting**

The first major challenge we faced this year was the quality of report writing and the communication of judgements. The National Society commissioned Frank Knowles to author a guide on writing SIAS inspection reports. **The updated version of this which incorporates the new guidance from this Update (4) is included as Annex 2 to this Update.** The standards of writing set out in this document form the basis for all inspection and the training and development of SIAS inspectors whether in the diocesan or national context.

The changes in the “culture” of inspection this year have made the preparation for inspection a greater priority than ever. With the very tight time “footprint” in school it has become vital for inspectors to establish a clear focus for their inspection, which takes account of the SEF, “toolkit” SSE and other pre-inspection information. This will help the differentiation of inspection energies and activities and will avoid time-consuming “quarrying” of unnecessary evidence. **This guidance, which incorporates the new guidance from this Update (4) is included as Annex 3 to this Update.**

We trust all dioceses will ensure that all their inspectors become familiar with and use these guidance documents in their SIAS work from now on. They will be the basis for all NS approved SIAS training from now on. **Both these guidance documents are available at [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk).**

## U4.6 The administration of SIAS inspection

Inspectors should verbally agree the *factual* accuracy of their SIAS reports with the school concerned as quickly as possible. Draft reports should then be sent to the diocese for quality assurance (critical reading, sampling, monitoring) **\*within one working week of the inspection.**

The final report should be formally submitted to the school and the diocese by the inspector **\*within three working weeks of the inspection.**

The report, JRF and payment claim form will then be forwarded to the National Society **by the diocese.** (Dioceses should indicate on the JRF that QA has taken place.) The diocese should forward the report with JRF and inspector's payment claim to the National Society ASAP on receipt from the inspector.

*\* The Society understands and accepts that local diocesan guidance may differ on these timelines.*

*We see the prompt and efficient writing and delivery of reports to schools as a both a professional courtesy and a Christian duty. There well-known dangers in trying to write accurate reports after days or weeks have elapsed and minds have become occupied by other matters!*

**Any reports submitted “independently” by inspectors will be not be accepted by the Society until they are “signed off” by the relevant diocese. (See payment regulations above.)**

**The NSJRF with five numerical ratings should be attached to the report when submitted to the School and governing body.** *The NSJRF includes provision for a rating (1-4) to be made to the Summary Judgement.*

**When sending SIAS reports, claim forms, JRFs, correspondence concerning reports, inspector accreditation communications or any other SIAS inspection information please always use; [sias@natsoc.c-of-e.org.uk](mailto:sias@natsoc.c-of-e.org.uk).**

Some SIAS reports reach the NS **without the attendant JRF.** Inspectors/dioceses must attach these. The NS conducts statistical evaluations of SIAS outcomes and these ratings are essential to that process. Inspectors must insert the **full school name and address** on the report.

## U4.7 SIAS reports – process update

From September 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 SIAS inspectors should always use the Society's templates for SIAS reports and JRF or the local diocesan modification based on these formats.

**THE EVALUATIVE COMMENTARY SHOULD BE NO LONGER THAN TWO SIDES OF A4 IN 11pt ARIAL FONT. THE EVALUATIVE COMMENTARY COMPRISES THE PARAGRAPHS THAT ADDRESS THE THREE OR FOUR KEY QUESTIONS. IT DOES NOT INCLUDE THE FIRST FIVE BOXES ON THE REPORT FORM. (Many dioceses will add their own interpretations to this but this will allow the discipline of succinct writing to be matched by worthwhile evaluation.)**

**The Summary Judgement is always expressed as:**

*The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St S's as a Church of England school are **outstanding/good/satisfactory/inadequate**.*

The Key Questions are answered as:

The school through its distinctive Christian character is *outstanding/good/satisfactory/inadequate* at meeting the needs of all learners.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is *outstanding/good/satisfactory/inadequate*.

The effectiveness of the \*religious education is *outstanding/good/satisfactory/inadequate*.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school are *outstanding/good/satisfactory/inadequate*.

**THE KEY QUESTIONS THEMSELVES ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE REPORT**  
**Reporting on religious education**

**\*IN VC, FOUNDATION CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES/CTC THE IMPACT OF NON-DENOMINATIONAL RE SHOULD BE COVERED AS PART OF THE EVALUATION OF KEY QUESTIONS 1 and/or 4. In these schools a report on religious education is not required by statute and should not be presented a separate paragraph in the report.**

#### **U4.8 Training and Accreditation – an update**

When applying for training to undertake SIAS inspection all applicants must have the endorsement of the diocese within which they normally live and/or work. The application to train is, in the first instance, to this diocese. The National Society will not accept for national initial training or for NS/diocesan partnership training any individual whom the relevant diocese has not endorsed.

Applicants for SIAS initial training will be asked to complete written tasks prior to acceptance for training. These will examine the applicant's knowledge and understanding of Church of England schools and the Church of England's role in education and assess their capacity for evaluative reporting.

NB. Any "Section 23" inspectors who have not trained and inspected for SIAS Section 48 inspection in 2005-6 are required to apply for and undertake full **initial** training before accreditation by the National Society.

In 2006/7 all **new and accredited** inspectors will have tasks assessed by members of the NS/diocesan training teams with reference to the standards set out in the SIAS Framework for Training. For initial trainees satisfactory completion of these tasks will enable provisional NS accreditation subject to completion of at least one shadow inspection and the production of a satisfactory first inspection. The views of the school and the diocese along with the final report will form the basis for the evaluation. The relevant diocese and the NS will monitor this.

With the kind permission of Southwark and Chichester Dioceses the following guidance on **shadow inspections** has been adopted by the National Society.

#### **Purpose**

The National Society requires that all newly trained inspectors take part in a shadow inspection in order to complete their initial training before undertaking an inspection on their own. Occasionally, more experienced inspectors are also asked to do a shadow inspection if they have not attended diocesan training recently or undertaken an inspection for some time.

The purpose of this shadowing exercise is to:

- Provide an opportunity for the shadow inspector to observe and work alongside an experienced Section 48 inspector
- Provide opportunities for the shadow inspector to engage in inspection activities as part of an actual SIAS/Section 48 inspection
- Provide constructive feedback to the shadow inspector in order to identify areas for further development
- Develop the report writing skills of the shadow inspector with close support and guidance from an experienced inspector and diocese officers

## Procedures

Before the inspection, the experienced inspector should contact the shadow inspector to discuss any particular skills which might need to be developed through the shadowing exercise. During the inspection some time will also be needed for informal feedback to the shadow inspector.

The shadow inspector should be given the opportunity to participate in the following activities during the inspection:

- Analysis of the school self-evaluation material
- Some paired observations in which judgements are shared and moderated
- Joint scrutiny of work in order to share and moderate the judgement on standards in RE (in voluntary aided schools)
- Conducting interviews and feedback in the presence of the experienced inspector
- Participation in the feedback to the headteacher at the end of the inspection
- Writing a shadow report, separate from the official report, to be sent to the diocese for a critical read and assessment

## Evaluation

During the inspection informal feedback should be given to the shadow inspector on the inspection activities observed and any areas for development should be discussed. The relevant diocesan officer should provide an evaluation of the shadow inspection report.

**To register as an accredited SIAS inspector with the NS all inspectors or must provide evidence to the NS and their dioceses of:**

- National Society registration form (on [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk)).
- Completion of satisfactory NS endorsed training or retraining on the SIAS Framework for Inspection
- A current (less than 3 years old) Enhanced CRB check
- Current professional liability insurance

After diocesan or regional training sessions it is recommended that the diocese or group representative verifies this data and informs the Society with a list of approved candidates.

Inspectors must also provide the NS with a **digital passport standard** photograph to send **by email** and a completed S48 registration form (on NS website). This is required for the production of the SIAS inspector's identity card.

All inspectors meeting the above criteria should register with the National Society even if they are registered with a particular diocese. This will be their "passport" for work elsewhere which dioceses can rely on. The Society's monitoring of SIAS will include information sharing on the quality of inspection and reporting with dioceses.

It is also expected that NS accredited and registered inspectors will wish to take out membership of the National Society. This contributes to the costs of SIAS identity cards, quality assurance and administration. Inspectors who are based in schools which have NS membership (school or diocesan block) do not need to pay this as it is assumed that the school will recover the inspector's fees. We are aware that becoming and remaining a SIAS inspector often requires a financial outlay by individual inspectors but we hope inspectors will bear in mind that these costs are tax deductible, the NS has reduced training costs by one third and the new fee levels negotiated by the Society with DfES make the recovery of the investment quicker.

#### **U4.9 Proportionate inspections**

Dioceses will be aware of schools which are designated for very light touch Ofsted inspections. The SIAS inspector should be made aware of this and she/he should take care not to undertake any unnecessarily time-consuming inspection activity. **The inspector should, however, always differentiate inspection time, energy and work according to the guidance laid out in Annex II below.**

#### **U4.10 National Society SE Toolkit**

**The revised Toolkit is complete and a new set of grade descriptors, which are also inserted into the NS Framework for Inspection, are included. Both documents are now available at [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk).**

**The National Society wishes all SIAS inspectors and diocesan schools officers a most successful and rewarding new year of SIAS inspection.**

## ANNEX 1.



### SECTION 48 SIAS GRANT CLAIM FORM SEPTEMBER 2006 – AUGUST 2007

Inspectors **MUST** submit this claim form with each Section 48 report. Items marked \* must be completed for every claim.

*Name of School: *Address:  *Diocese: *Postcode: *School URN: *Type of School: Primary VA, Secondary VA, VC Schools, the CTC & academies, *Foundation ( <i>delete as appropriate.</i> ) *Date of Inspection: *Denominational religious education inspected Yes/No
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#### Note

- Banking details will only be held for inspectors registered with the National Society. All other inspectors not registered will have to provide BACS details each time a report is submitted.

*Name of Inspector: *Inspector Number: *Payable to (if different to name above): *Email:  Name and Address of Bank/Building Society:  Postcode:  Sort Code:  Account Name:  Account Number:  Building Society roll number ( <i>if applicable</i> )
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#### Please Note:

- All reports received by The National Society on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month will be processed for payment at the end of that month.
- Reports received after 15<sup>th</sup> of each month will be processed for payment in the next account period.

If the above box has not been filled in does the National Society hold your BACS details? Yes or No (*delete as appropriate*)\*

ANNEX 2.



# **Writing SIAS inspection reports**

## **Guidance for inspectors**

Version 2 – September 2006

The Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) is governed by section 48 of the Education Act 2005. This document provides guidance on writing reports following section 48 inspections conducted under the SIAS framework for the inspection of Church of England Schools. The SIAS framework and other inspection documents can be found on the National Society's website at [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk).

Produced in association with  
**Frank Knowles Evaluation and Training**

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# I Audience and context

In terms of numbers of readers, each section 48 inspection report is written primarily to inform parents and carers about the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the Church of England school their children attend, and to inform those parents who might wish their child to attend in the future. This means you must write each of your reports in accessible, everyday language. But a section 48 report is also an important document for the staff and governors of the school, so you must write it so that it also helps education professionals make use of it in schools. Finally, the diocese, the National Society and the wider public also have an interest in the outcomes of a section 48 inspection and need to be informed in a way that helps their understanding of the school.

A SIAS inspection provides an external view of a school and should be a great support to a school's self-evaluation, enabling staff to consider their own views alongside an external perspective and to have their views confirmed (or otherwise) by the inspection findings. To do this well, your report must provide a fair and accurate account of the school.

The tone and balance of the report are important, too, to gain acceptance of the findings by the school. Grudging praise and a focus on minor weaknesses form a recipe for a challenge to the inspection findings and often hide the main points you are trying to make. Instead, highlight the most important points, positive or negative, and achieve an appropriate balance between strengths and weaknesses.

As with all other school inspections, those undertaken using the SIAS framework are expected to make a significant contribution to school improvement. Your reports must therefore be written in such a way as to support the school improvement process. The SIAS framework helps to do this by focusing on the effect the school has, as a Church of England school, on the learner and how the impact of the school's actions can be maximised.

Following a section 48 inspection, write each SIAS report to:

- inform all readers in accessible language of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England school
- support the school's self-evaluation by providing a fair and accurate external view of the school
- focus on main issues and achieve a sensible balance between strengths and weaknesses
- support improvement by focusing on the learner and the deal each receives in the school.

## 2 Being prepared

Writing an inspection report is not an easy task. You must first of all have come to a clear set of judgements in all the areas required by the SIAS framework for inspection. In addition, you must know why those judgements have been reached and what evidence can be used to substantiate them. This calls for clear thinking. Then you must write the report so that all readers are left in no doubt about your view of the school as a Church of England school and in no doubt about its main strengths and the areas that need improvement.

Clarity does not just apply to the period after the inspection. A successful inspection is the result of careful planning and this in itself requires clear thinking from the outset. Working from the evidence available before the inspection, especially the school's self-evaluation through the National Society's *Self-evaluation Toolkit for Anglican Church Schools*, Ofsted's self-evaluation form (the SEF) or other documentation, you first need to ensure the inspection has a clear focus. This focus leads to a set of issues to explore during the inspection. These issues help you to answer the key questions in the SIAS framework by obtaining enough evidence to secure the required judgements

Confused thinking at this stage means writing will be much more difficult, and the confusion will be reflected in a report that does not hold together well. Clear thinking before writing means that each section of the report will sit comfortably alongside the other sections and, collectively, the sections will present a consistent set of judgements. Then, and only then, the report as a whole will paint a clear and unambiguous picture of the school as a Church of England school.

Good preparation and clear thinking are the keys to writing a good SIAS report. You need to:

- have a clear focus for the inspection before going into the school to gather evidence
- obtain sufficient secure evidence to reach clear judgements in each area of the SIAS framework
- ensure these fit together to give a clear and unambiguous view of the school as a Church of England school before starting writing.

## 3 Evaluative writing

A section 48 inspection report must answer the four key questions set out in the SIAS framework and the report template, and give a summary judgement about the school as a whole. The questions are about effectiveness and impact and, as a result, your writing must be evaluative. Avoid descriptive and narrative styles, therefore.

Each main text section of the report is a single paragraph that covers a key question. The key question is answered with an emboldened, headline judgement. You need to weigh up the evidence gathered for each key question and come to a clear and unequivocal view that this judgement sets out. Then explain why you came to that judgement, drawing on the evidence you have gathered. Cover only the main reasons for your judgement and avoid too much detail. Focus more on the impact of the school's actions on the outcomes for learners, rather than on the actions themselves. You may wish to use an illustration to emphasise a point, but make sure that it is a telling example that really adds to the reader's understanding.

Evaluative writing can still be interesting, however, and you must do all you can to make the writing lively and accessible. This means using short sentences, dealing with one point at a time, and avoiding long and dense arguments. In particular, make sure that your report contains a consistent set of judgements, reached using the grade descriptors, and that the summary judgement is consistent with the others. If you feel that judgements might appear inconsistent to a reader, then you need a very good explanation for the apparent discrepancy.

All this means that you must avoid all speculation about what might happen in the future and avoid telling the school how they could or should do things. Making improvements after the inspection is the school's proper role, not yours as an evaluator.

The report should contain no surprises for the school. You should never introduce new or changed judgements into the report that have not already been rehearsed with the school as part of your oral feedback.

Write your report evaluatively and:

- explain your headline judgements, covering only the main reasons for them and drawing on evidence to support your argument
- focus on the effect of the school's actions on the learners, rather than the actions themselves
- check that all your judgements hang together well and support your summary judgement about the school.

## 4 Using the SIAS framework

The main purpose of the inspection report is to communicate the answers to the key questions in the SIAS framework for inspection. These answers should naturally lead the reader to the list of established strengths and areas included in the section headed 'focus for development'. You need to communicate an overall judgement, too, reached by weighing up the contributions from the different parts of the report.

In writing the report, remember that overall you need to support the school in its development. This means that you need to get to the bottom of issues and write the report so that you don't just praise or criticise through judgements. Your writing should communicate why strengths are so good, so effective practice can be replicated. You need to diagnose why something is weak so that you can tell the school what needs to be done to improve things. Where it is appropriate, you need to comment on the school's self-evaluation as a Church of England school.

All these judgements must hold together and be consistent with the grades on the *National Society Judgement Record (NSJR)*. It is important that you have the SIAS grade descriptors by you so that, once you have drafted the report, you can check each section against the relevant grade descriptor in the framework. A useful technique is to check the judgement and text against the descriptor immediately above and immediately below the one for the grade awarded, just to check that the pitch of the judgement and the writing is right.

You must also adhere to the various technical points in the SIAS framework, such as length and font type and size, and make use of the template supplied by the relevant diocese or available on the National Society's website [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk).

Use the SIAS framework for inspection and:

- answer the four key questions clearly, and support your judgements by explanations, illustrations and references to the school's self-evaluation
- weigh up the contributions of the four sections and give a clear overall summary, together with strengths and areas of focus for development
- ensure the report holds together and matches the framework grade descriptors, and is consistent with the NSJR
- use the standard template and adhere to the two-page maximum text length and the use of 11pt Arial typeface

## 5 Section by section examples

### Context

This section should be brief and include only the most significant information. It should be no longer than 70 words.

#### **Include:**

- the size of the school
- where it draws its pupils from
- the nature of the intake, including the ethnic background of pupils
- recent changes of headship
- recent major building work
- specialist status.

#### **Avoid:**

- numbers of classes
- numbers of staff
- attainment of pupils on entry
- previous management difficulties or ill health of staff
- the school's vision
- inspection judgements

### **Context**

XXXXX Church of England School is a very small school of 44 pupils, all White British, taught in two classes. The school serves a wide rural area. The headteacher took up her post at the beginning of the school year.

### **Context**

YYYYYY Church of England School and Technology College is a smaller than average school serving a wide advantaged area to the north of ZZZZZ. Nearly all students entering the school are from Christian families, including just over 12% of pupils from Black backgrounds. A small number of pupils have other faiths. Up to 10% of students annually are selected for entry for their technological aptitude.

### **Summary judgement**

This section should answer the question “*How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church of England school?*” Although it requires a single answer, the question has two components, covering distinctiveness and effectiveness, and both these areas need covering. These must be covered through the clear judgement, emboldened in the heading in the template, and a very brief piece of evaluative writing to support it. This section should encapsulate the school as a whole, but does not have to include something from every section or summarise every aspect of the school. The text of this section should be as brief as possible and be no longer than 70 words.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of XXXXX as a Church of England school are good**

A dynamic and Christ-centred ethos brings positive values and attitudes to teaching and learning. These values and attitudes are embedded in the school’s mission statement, which is rooted in love, respect and spiritual development. The school’s high expectations of all its staff and pupils are promoted throughout the school.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of YYYYY as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

YYYYY has securely re-established its distinctiveness as a faith school after a difficult period of temporary leadership. It has an innovative 21st century Christian vision for what it can offer to its community. The current headteacher and the governing body are implementing this vision effectively and the school’s ethos, now distinctly positive and Christian, is beginning improve pupils’ learning and behaviour.

### **Established strengths**

These should be clearly and concisely expressed and number no more than four. The strengths should be in order of priority, most important first, and stem from the paragraphs which answer

some or all of the four key questions in the framework. The strengths can be expressed as complete sentences or, alternatively, as fragments of sentences with the main strength in each expressed as a noun (usually with some descriptive text). Only one style should be used in each set of established strengths.

#### **Established strengths**

- The outstanding Christian ethos of the school in which all pupils are nurtured and valued highly.
- High quality acts of worship, including all pupils and contributing greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The Christian principles at the heart of all policies which are lived out in practice by the whole school community.
- Excellent links with the local church and community.

#### **Established strengths**

- The school has a clear Christian vision and high expectations, and is building successfully on the strong foundations laid by senior managers and governors.
- Standards in religious education are high through good teaching by enthusiastic and well-qualified staff.
- Students play a leading role in acts of worship and charity work.

#### **Focus for development**

These areas should be clearly and concisely expressed and number no more than four. The focus areas should be in order of priority, most important first, and stem from the paragraphs which answer some or all of the four key questions in the framework. They should be expressed directly as actions the school can carry out. Avoid suggestions that a school should "*Consider what action should be taken in relation to . . .*" as this section should set out your professional judgement of what needs to be improved.

Avoid beginning these points with "*Continue to . . .*" or "*Further develop . . .*". The areas of focus here should reflect the most important things that need to be done, regardless of whether the school is already taking action. The school's action and its impact so far should be included in the paragraphs relating to the four key questions.

#### **Focus for development**

- Place more emphasis on children's understanding of other faiths within the context of the diocesan syllabus for religious education.
- Improve the writing of older children in religious education lessons so that the work they produce reflects the good writing standards seen in other subjects.

#### **Focus for development**

- Adopt and implement consistently the revised syllabus for religious education.
- Establish strategies for assessing pupils' work in religious education.

- Provide training, with the support of the diocese, for all who are involved in leading acts of worship.
- Improve pupils' spiritual and cultural development by providing more opportunities to learn about faiths and cultures other than their own.

### **Answers to the four key questions**

In each of these sections, you need firstly to provide the clear judgement that answers the key question. This is incorporated in the emboldened heading required by the template. The text of the paragraph is then used to explain and support that judgement. The text must be consistent with the grade given in the National Society Judgement Record and with the verbal equivalent used in the headline judgement.

There is no need to answer all the detailed supplementary questions in the framework. The areas they cover indicate the areas in which evaluations should be made to support the headline judgement. Your views on the most significant of these questions for the school will come through strongly in the text. The main purpose of your writing is to convince the reader that you have a strong argument for reaching your headline judgement, not to cover every detail in the framework.

Taken together, the four sections must make sense and link well to the summary judgement. It is unlikely, for example, that leadership and management will be outstanding if religious education is judged to be only satisfactory, or if the school's distinctive character has little impact on its effectiveness. Equally, an outstanding Church of England school is unlikely to come about through good teaching of RE and satisfactory leadership and management, even if worship is outstanding.

The following examples are not perfect, and could all be improved in one way or another, but they do argue strongly for the grade awarded for each section. Note that they do not all come from the same inspection report.

#### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

The Christian ethos in the school is very strong and permeates every aspect of the school's life, from documentation and displays through to classroom practice. This is the result of a total commitment to the development of the whole child within a supportive school community. Christian values are evident in every part of the school, particularly in the quality of care. Pupils from all cultures feel safe and happy, secure in the knowledge that their beliefs are respected and valued. The school's inclusive approach is a natural way of life in the school and is much valued by parents of all faiths. The Foundation governors provide good support at every level, checking and evaluating the school's progress as a church school, and act as critical friends to the headteacher. The atmosphere around the school is relaxed and very orderly. The children show extraordinary courtesy and consideration to each other and to adults, together with natural good manners. Staff are excellent role models for the children.

*Here, the paragraph does more than enough to convince the reader of the validity of this view of the school as 'outstanding'. The text draws well on the supplementary questions from the SIAS framework but avoids repeating phrases, so the paragraph reflects the individual school well.*

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Despite the lack of space, great care is taken to ensure that acts of worship take place in a well-organised and peaceful environment. Worship has a very good impact on pupils' spiritual development and is central to school life. It has a strong Christian focus and major Christian festivals are celebrated, both in school and in church. Planning of individual acts of worship is good, but the overall programme does not reflect the breadth or variety of opportunities in the Church of England year. Children look forward to the daily acts of worship and enjoy taking part. In one, the careful choice of a lively Christian hymn and the use of symbolism, with the candle of hope lit as the fourth Advent candle, captured the children's imagination very well.

*This gives a clear message of consistency and makes use of an example to illustrate the Anglican tradition rather than repeat the words from the grade descriptors. Despite the 'good' judgement, there is a clear indication of what needs to be done to improve worship by broadening its focus.*

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

Teaching and learning in RE have improved and are now good. Governors and the senior managers have highlighted RE as a priority within the school development plan and the recently appointed coordinator has brought good subject knowledge and vision to the development of the subject. Their combined efforts have already improved pupils' achievement in RE and areas for further improvement have already been identified. Assessment strategies within RE are not fully in place, although some work with the diocese is currently underway to revise and enhance this area of the scheme of work. Pupils' attitudes are positive and enthusiastic teaching stimulates their interest. The school uses ICT, music and drama effectively to ensure the subject "comes alive" and good links between RE and PHSE support pupils' moral development. The parish reflects a mainly mono-cultural population and visits to a local mosque and synagogue help give pupils a good understanding of other world faiths.

*In this paragraph the inspector has balanced the good quality of classroom teaching and learning with the weaknesses in assessment to reach a judgement of satisfactory effectiveness. The text uses the supplementary questions from the SIAS framework well and again avoids repeating phrases or extracts from the grade descriptors, so that the paragraph is very specific to the school.*

### **The effective of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is inadequate**

RE and collective worship remain weak and very little has been done to improve these areas since the last inspection. Staff have become involved in the development of a shared Christian vision for the future of the school through consultation with the senior management team but this has taken too long and has not yet been finalised. Governors are not sufficiently involved in the school, although the governing body has now set up a committee structure and made plans for the professional development of governors, including training in developing the Christian ethos of the school. The vicar has a pastoral role with learners and adults in the school and has supported many in times of need. Some members of the community have been identified to fill the long-term vacancies on the governing body but they have not yet been approached. While the school runs smoothly from day to day, behaviour is now satisfactory and standards have improved to average, weak leadership means it has not yet achieved a distinctive place as a Church of England school.

*In what must have been a very difficult decision for the inspector, the grade descriptors have been used correctly here to judge the leadership and management of the school as a church school to be inadequate, although in other respects it is secure. The critical points here are the lack of Christian vision to drive the school's development and the absence, as yet, of any impact of recent actions.*

**Complete inspection reports** are available on the National Society's website [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk) . For your own professional development, it is an instructive exercise to download one and undertake a critique of it, using this guidance.

## 6 Writing style

Writing concisely is a skill and it often takes longer than writing at length as it requires more thought. This section of the guidance lists a range of features of effective and ineffective inspection writing

The most important requirement is to **focus on impact and effect**, avoiding sentences like “*Good teaching is carried out using a well planned scheme of work based on the diocesan syllabus*”. This is a “*So what?*” sentence which tell the reader very little about the school you have inspected. Such outcomes are also unremarkable, as they should occur in nearly all schools. Your report needs to focus on the distinctive features of teaching, and their impact, in that school. State clearly and simply the effect on learners’ achievement and personal development, in the terms set out in the SIAS framework.

Secondly, **keep to the SIAS framework**. Interesting though it might be to do so, you should not provide an audit or critique of features of the school which are not directly linked to their impact or effect on learners in relation to a key question in the framework.

The inspection report must **help the school and support improvement**. Thus you need to highlight the main strengths and state clearly the main areas for improvement. Focus clearly on the main issues for the school, and leave much of the detail to dialogue with the school.

In writing, **be specific and communicate clear judgements**. Tell the reader clearly what is happening at the school. Avoid sentences like “*There are good opportunities for learners to reflect*”. The real issues are whether learners reflect or not, given the opportunities, and on what they reflect. Evaluate how effective the reflection is, diagnose why this is and use the context for the reflection to bring the report to life.

There is no need to repeatedly refer to the fact that you have evidence for your judgements. So **avoid woolly phrases** like “*There is evidence that . . .*”. In conducting the inspection you should gather sufficient secure evidence to substantiate your judgements and report them clearly. State what is going on and diagnose why this is, using your evidence in explanation and illustration.

On the next few pages, annotated examples of writing help to set out an outline of a preferred style of writing. All the examples used, with amendments in some cases, come from published section 48 reports from inspections of Church of England schools. Alongside each example, the symbol ✓ is used to indicate effective writing, and the symbol ✗ to indicate a style, or way of expressing something, that is to be avoided.

- **Write in the present tense**, as this brings a sense of immediacy to the report, even if it is read some time after the inspection. When you need to refer to a specific event that happened during the inspection, then the past tense is needed, of course.

- ✓ Teaching is characterised by academic rigour. In one lesson, sixth form students identified the contribution of a number of scholars to the Design argument for the existence of God.

*The use of the present tense suggests a broader longer-term view of teaching than the lessons observed. Evidence from pupils’ work, teachers’ planning and discussions supports evidence from the few lesson observations, and one of these is used to give a telling example to support the judgement.*

- **Focus on the school you are inspecting** and don't rehearse the key questions or supplementary questions in the SIAS framework.
- ✘ All pupils feel valued and special in the school and the school's Christian values enable them to flourish as individuals.
- Although this is written clearly, the text is drawn entirely from the questions in the SIAS framework and does not reflect the school being inspected or the pitch of the judgement.*
- ✔ Pupils are happy and secure in school. They are valued as individuals and benefit from the warm family atmosphere, showing care and concern for one another.
- Here the framework questions are answered through the use of phrases that relate specifically to the school. For example, the impact of Christian values is shown through the care and concern shown for each other.*
- **Use clear, direct statements and short sentences** that tackle one idea only. Simplicity helps make difficult ideas clear. Complex sentences with many ideas quickly lose the reader's attention as they struggle to work out what the sentences mean.
- ✘ A strong culture of reward and praise is evident everywhere not least in behaviour management which focuses on developing rather than punishing the child and the concept of forgiveness and reconciliation is central.
- One of the main points about the school's behaviour management in this inelegant sentence is lost in a series of subordinate clauses.*
- ✔ The concept of forgiveness and reconciliation is central to behaviour management, which focuses on developing rather than punishing the child. The result is a culture of praise and reward throughout the school.
- Here, the main point, reflecting the nature of the SIAS inspection, comes first, directly stated in its own sentence. The second sentence then considers the impact of this policy. Each sentence expresses a single idea and the text is much more readable.*
- **Highlight the main point** you want to make first.
- ✘ The vicar makes regular contributions to worship. The head teacher has plans to further this with acts of worship in the parish church. While contributing well to the creation of an excellent learning environment and to children's moral and spiritual development, worship makes an outstanding contribution to the life of the school.
- Here, the main point of the last sentence comes at the end, and many readers will not reach it. The first sentence could well be termed "So what?" evidence and the second sentence is speculative.*
- ✔ Worship makes an outstanding contribution to the life of the school. The vicar's weekly contributions set high expectations for pupils' moral and spiritual development, and the calm approach used daily supports the excellent learning environment.
- In this revision, the main point now comes first. The second sentence then explains why the judgement of outstanding has been reached. The speculative sentence has been omitted, as it adds nothing to the inspection judgement and the plans may not come to fruition.*

- **Use simple constructions when starting sentences**, particularly avoiding the tendency to start sentences with “There were . . . .which . . . .”

✘ Worship is important within the life of the school. However, recently there have been several changes of staff which have resulted in some inconsistencies in expectations and practice across the school. There are examples of creative leadership within worship linking areas of the curriculum which provide times of awe and wonder as well as reflection.

*Two consecutive sentences in this report are unnecessarily complex in construction and this makes it harder to understand them.*

✔ Worship is important in the life of the school. Creative leadership has linked worship to areas of the curriculum so that pupils experience periods of reflection in, for example, geography and art lessons. However, several recent changes of staff have resulted in inconsistencies in expectations and practice across the school.

*In this revision, the third sentence has been moved up to provide good exemplification of the headline evaluation, and the concern about inconsistencies is made as a subsidiary point. The complex construction has been removed in each case, making the language more direct.*

- **Explain why you came to your judgements**, selecting the most significant features of the school to write about. Using “because” is often helpful.

✔ The recently appointed senior leaders have contributed significantly to the success of this school because they quickly and very accurately identified its main strengths and weaknesses and then took decisive action to bring about improvement in its ethos.

*The explanation here supports the judgement of good leadership and management stated earlier in the paragraph. It covers self-evaluation, decisive leadership, and specifies the area in which the main improvement was made. Its main drawback is its length, and the sentence could well have been split without losing too much impact.*

- **Communicate your judgements clearly**, and don’t avoid them or hide them with descriptive accounts of incomplete developments.

✘ Teaching and learning [of religious education] are satisfactory. A policy document is currently being produced and schemes of work are being written in line with the Diocesan Guidelines. The GCSE syllabus is under review at present and it is expected that all pupils will take the full course at the end of Year 11.

*The headline judgement is clear, but what follows leaves the reader to infer that teachers are not supported by a clear policy and scheme of work and that the GCSE entry policy has not been resolved.*

✔ Teaching and learning are satisfactory but teachers do not benefit from a clear school policy or scheme of work for RE, which is currently being written. Not all pupils who want to can take a full GCSE course at the moment, but the curriculum is under review for next year to make this possible.

*Here, the weaknesses are clearly stated, with indication of what the school is doing about them. Depending on its significance, it may have been appropriate to highlight inconsistencies in teaching between classes as a result of the lack of a scheme of work.*

- **Highlight specific areas for development**, without giving advice about how to bring about the changes needed.

- ✓ Establish a clear system for coordinating religious education throughout school, including regular checks on the quality of teaching and how effectively pupils learn.

*This tells the school what is needed, without suggesting how the coordination is set up or the monitoring and evaluation is carried out. It also avoids the use of the term ‘monitoring and evaluation’, which is not readily understood by parents.*

- **Write evaluatively from the evidence**, avoiding speculation, personal preferences and advice.

- ✗ More opportunities for pupils to use the school’s interactive white boards as teaching aids in most lessons would enhance this provision, further stimulating thinking at all levels and contributing to personalised learning.

*This sentence makes several assumptions about the value of interactive whiteboards when the main issue is the quality of teaching that goes with their use. It also proffers advice that implies that personalised learning and thinking are best stimulated by using interactive whiteboards when other strategies can do this equally well.*

- ✓ Teaching uses interactive white boards effectively to stimulate thinking at all levels but many opportunities are lost for pupils themselves to use them to increase their involvement in the lesson.

*Here, the positive point hidden in the phrase “further stimulating thinking” has been highlighted and the key point that teachers, not pupils, use them has been made clearly. This sentence is entirely evaluative, and does not speculate about the value of whiteboards.*

- Use the **active voice** rather than the passive to bring life to the writing.

- ✗ Prayer is said on a class basis before lunch and at the end of the school day. A choir is provided for worship at the parish church and school worship and the number of families attending the Christingle service has shown a recent increase.

*This pair of sentences is written mainly in the passive voice (“... is said ...” and “... is provided ...”), mixed with an active past tense at the end of the second sentence.*

- ✓ Children participate well in prayers in class before lunch and at the end of the day. The school choir contributes well to worship in school and at festivals at the parish church. As a result, attendance at the Christingle service has increased.

*The active language here is livelier and more evaluative. In the revised version, the editor took the opportunity to clarify which services the choir attended to make more sense of the last sentence, and to focus on the impact of the school’s work on the community..*

- Use **everyday language** and avoid jargon.

- ✘ However, the school's senior leaders and governors have not given consistent attention to the ongoing development of some key aspects of its Anglican foundation. Limited use has been made of the YYYYY Diocesan or National Society's self-evaluation toolkit as an audit of where the school stands in respect of self-knowledge and what needs to be prioritised for continuing improvement.

*This sentence is full of problems: "ongoing development" is tautologous; "key aspects" is not precise enough and fudges the issue; parents will not know what the "toolkit" is; "prioritised" is clumsy; and the sentences are padded by extra words.*

- ✔ However, the school's Christian ethos has declined since the last inspection, and does not promote pupils' spiritual development. The school's senior leaders and governors have not done enough to review the school's effectiveness as a Church of England school and are not aware of what needs to be done to improve the situation.

*In this revision, the specific area of weakness is highlighted, and the lack of self-evaluation is linked to the absence of a clear plan for improvement*

- **Make the report come to life**, choosing words carefully and avoiding overused words.

- ✔ Children achieve well in religious education. They talked enthusiastically about how women are portrayed in the Old Testament, for example, giving vivid examples from their work to illustrate their views.

*This telling example gives a feel for the way children were engaged in their work but also indicates that the work involved more than recall of facts by referring to pupils' views on the topic.*

ANNEX 3.



# **Preparing for SIAS inspections**

## **Guidance for inspectors**

Version I – August 2006

The Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) is governed by section 48 of the Education Act 2005. This document provides guidance on preparing for section 48 inspections conducted under the SIAS framework for the inspection of Church of England Schools. The SIAS framework and other inspection documents can be found on the National Society's website at [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk).

Produced in association with

**Frank Knowles Evaluation and Training**

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## I The importance of careful preparation

The amount of time available when inspecting a school under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 is very limited. This single fact means that it is important to do as much of the work as possible before the inspection and use the time in school wisely to collect evidence that is not available beforehand.

But there are other reasons, too, for preparing each inspection carefully. The more focused you make the inspection, the easier it is to collect telling evidence that will help answer the key questions in the SIAS framework. Careful preparation enables you to plan how and from where you intend to gather your evidence. By communicating the inspection focus and issues to the school, the school's leaders are able to seek out and provide evidence to support your exploration of aspects of the school. This targeted gathering of evidence is at the heart of efficient inspection practice.

By letting the school know your initial thinking, you also improve the quality of dialogue you have with staff in the school. They know about your early, but tentative, views about the school and the analysis that led to them. With this information, senior leaders will normally find it much easier to engage in professional discussion with you in some depth. Staff can also discuss among themselves the issues you raise beforehand and prepare themselves more effectively for discussions. In this way the inspection is undertaken with rigour but in true partnership with the school.

All this suggests strongly that your inspection preparation should be recorded in written form in your inspection evidence base, for your own future reference. Communicating key points to the school helps senior staff reflect upon the issues you have raised. This is best done by summarising your pre-inspection work in a brief document for the school, the *SIAS Inspection Briefing (SIB)*.

Careful preparation, generating a focus for the inspection and inspection issues, all of which are communicated to the school, means that:

- the inspection makes the best use of the time in school
- the school knows where the inspector is starting from
- the inspection starts with a clear view of what evidence is needed and where it is likely to come from
- the school is better able to provide the evidence that is needed and the evidence gathering is efficient
- the dialogue with the school is more likely to be profitable.

To support this, inspectors need to construct an *SIAS Inspection Briefing (SIB)* for presentation to the school.

## 2 The elements of pre-inspection preparation

Inspection preparation begins with an **analysis** of the available evidence. This is important as it provides a starting point for your thinking. Thorough analysis helps you identify potential strengths and areas for development, and helps you to focus the inspection on them.

You also need to develop a tentative view of each of the aspects you are inspecting. These **hypotheses** will clearly only be tentative at this stage, as the inspection has not taken place and evidence from the inspection may well mean your views change. Nevertheless, they do provide starting points for your work during the inspection.

Your analysis and hypotheses should lead naturally into a set of **issues** that you will explore when you are gathering evidence in the school. The clearer these issues are, the more likely you are to run an efficient inspection, collecting just as much evidence as you need, and no more.

The fourth element is to **summarise** your analysis, your tentative views so far, and the issues you intend to explore during the inspection, all in your *SIAS Inspection Briefing (SIB)*. You should then provide the school with this document, by email, post or other means, so that the headteacher and other staff can read and digest it before you arrive at the school. The headteacher may also wish to pass it to governors.

Inspectors often worry that schools will challenge their tentative findings. This should not be a concern as the SIB encourages the sort of discussion that will explore such issues during the inspection. It is, after all, a document that sets out the areas for exploration during the inspection, not a draft of the inspection report.

That done, you are finally in a position to **plan** how you will spend your time during the inspection. This involves deciding what evidence you need, and how you will obtain it, and where it will be found. Of course, there is always the chance that you will need to change tack part-way through the inspection because other issues arise. That sort of re-planning is always acceptable and happens frequently in inspections of all types.

Pre-inspection preparation has five key elements:

- analysing the available evidence
- coming to tentative views of the school and aspects of its provision
- identifying issues to explore during inspection time in school
- summarising all this for presentation to the school in the *SIAS Inspection Briefing (SIB)*
- planning how you will gather your evidence.

## 3 Making a record of your analysis

At this stage of the inspection, the evidence you have available will be in written form. You are likely to have available:

- the toolkit used to support the school's self-evaluation as a church school
- any summary self-evaluation document, such as a diocesan self-evaluation form (SEF), the school has constructed
- the school's Ofsted SEF
- the previous section 48 (or section 23) inspection report.

The most suitable way of analysing these documents is to consider what they tell you under the four main key questions in the SIAS framework. It is not necessary to extract material from original evidence to insert in your analysis, as that merely repeats what is in the evidence. What is needed is your analysis of the evidence, linking it to other pieces of evidence and leading to your view of the school in relation to each of the key questions. Any other material you have from the school can be analysed in the same way.

The format of the record of your analysis is not critical. Some inspectors prefer to use blank sheets of paper, writing the relevant key question(s) on the top of each. Others prefer to work on sheets pre-printed with key headings and prompts. These, and other ways, are equally acceptable. Another way of analysing the evidence is by source, with subheadings related to the four key questions. What is important, however, is to summarise what you have written and, while doing so, ensure that the text you use is evaluative. This will help you to bring the different elements of the analysis together more easily and to help you generate a hypothesis and issues to explore under each key question.

In a similar way, the style in which you record your analysis is not critical. Some inspectors prefer to use continuous prose and others use bullet points exclusively. Other inspectors mix styles or use diagrams to form their record. The only critical point, as noted above, is that a clear summary emerges from each piece of analysis.

When recording your analysis of pre-inspection documents:

- structure your analysis under the four key questions in the SIAS framework
- record what you make of the evidence and refer to its source, rather than merely repeat the evidence
- summarise each significant element of your analysis with a clear view, at this stage of the inspection, to support your hypotheses and help generate the issues to explore
- format and style are not important issues, as long as your analysis leads to a clear summary.

## 4 Sample analysis records

### *Extract from the record of an inspector's pre-inspection analysis*

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

*Previous s23 report:* not helpful, as very descriptive. Governors, especially foundation governors, said to be supportive of the school, although it is not clear what support they gave. Leadership and management (different HT) not as dynamic as they seem to be now, with a lack of self-evaluation appearing to be the main issue.

*SEF:* Current HT records a wide range of self-evaluation activities (including observation of lessons, work analysis, discussions with pupils) with examples of impact. HT convincing about how impact of actions is evaluated as part of the development cycle. Involvement of governors through committees in making decisions on the basis of staff evaluation papers and seems strong. Foundation governors noted in SEF for their leadership on church school matters – suggests their role is better defined now than that at time of previous report.

*Toolkit:* Shows HT has considered leadership and management in relation to the distinctive character of the school and how this can be developed in coordinators, who seem not to have had a very strong role in the last few years (SEF). GB seems now much more intent on promoting the Christian ethos than came through in previous report. Key actions taken include changes to worship, behaviour management, greater involvement of local church and introduction of a school council. Impact on school's ethos seems good, judging by the evaluations in the SEF and toolkit.

#### **Summary**

Evidence so far suggests a considerable revitalisation of the ethos of the school since the last s23 inspection and an improved focus on what it is to be a Church of England school. This seems to have been led strongly by the HT and the foundation governors, and supported by the whole governing body. It is not clear yet what the involvement of staff has been in the broad approach, though some seem to have prepared evaluation papers.

#### *Commentary*

*In this set of extracts covering a particular aspect of leadership and management, the inspector has focused on one pre-inspection source of evidence in each paragraph, while making links with the other material available. So the third paragraph, primarily about the toolkit, refers both to the previous report and the Ofsted SEF.*

*Nearly all the text comes about as a result of the inspector reflecting on the available evidence, referring to sources but not repeating material unnecessarily. The summary focuses on the positive impact of actions taken by school leaders on the school as a church school, without repeating what is included in earlier paragraphs.*

*Although it does not result in a hypothesis about leadership and management as a whole, this*

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*aspect of leadership and management is positively recorded and will feed directly in to the overall hypothesis that will appear in the SIB.*

**Extract from the record of an inspector's pre-inspection analysis**

**How effective religious education?**

- Toolkit indicates that standards are above average and progress is good. RE also noted as matching standards in core and other subjects - school-based data on standards in RE noted. Suggests HA pupils do well.
- SEF suggests good data analysis overall, and points to recent low standards in English (tests), history, and geography (TA), potentially conflicting with the toolkit.
- School's website contains a signposted sections on RE, showing pupils' work of good quality, some very good, supporting the schools view of above average standards.
- Curriculum links with literacy, ICT, history and art reflected well in both SEF and toolkit. Website also notes some enrichment clubs linked to Bible study.
- Toolkit suggests teaching and learning are good, with consistent planning, challenging tasks and effective questioning by teachers identified as strengths in the SEF and toolkit through regular monitoring, observations by HT and diocesan adviser. Children said to use religious vocabulary increasingly as they move through the school. Evidence of good use of ICT (IWB) and artefacts.
- Pupils' reports said to include strong focus on RE and contribution to worship. Other faiths (toolkit) seem more focused in CW than RE, and cultural development is not given high profile.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour said to be good in the SEF. The contribution RE makes to pupils' moral development seems limited, but spiritual development clearly seen in reflective poems from RE about a range of New Testament stories on the website.
- Staff said in toolkit to enjoy working in a church school and like teaching RE. This ties in well with the overall view of the school in the SEF and the toolkit, where much is made of the ethos of the school, but shows little to suggest that the contribution RE makes to its Christian character is recognised. Toolkit treats RE as just another subject.

**Summary**

Some unanswered questions about standards in relation to other subjects but standards in RE itself seem above average (but need to be checked thoroughly). The toolkit suggests that teaching and learning might be good but will need exploring in the light of suggested mismatch of standards with core and other subjects. Links well with what seems to be good attitudes to RE and behaviour. Main strength seems to be RE's contribution to spiritual development, and need to explore the place of RE in the school, and its contribution to moral and cultural development.

*Commentary*

*Here the inspector has taken an issue at a time and combined available evidence in each bullet point, where a range of evidence was available. The summary presents some hypotheses and suggests issues that should come through in the SIB.*

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*The inspector has not recorded much in this set of notes about the leadership and management of RE, although comments about central monitoring and evaluation suggest that the role of the RE coordinator need exploration. The inspector has not brought this through to the summary and so this could well be lost. It may, however, be well covered in the leadership and management sections.*

## 5 Setting the main focus for the inspection

In a section 48 inspection you will need to gather a lot of evidence in a very short time. This might be through observation, the analysis of pupils' work and school documentation, or discussion. Your pre-inspection analysis may well throw up a host of ideas for areas to explore in the inspection, but you will not have time to explore them all. It is essential to set out your priorities, so that you can focus most of your effort on gathering evidence in the most important of the areas. This will also help the school to work with you in providing the sort of evidence you need.

You can take this further, once you have recorded your analysis and completed the SIB, and determine a **main focus** for the inspection. If a very significant potential weakness emerges during your pre-inspection work, you will almost certainly wish to focus on that. Equally, you could select a significant strength in a good school as the main focus, to determine how such a good outcome has been achieved.

The quality of the school's self-evaluation is another important factor in setting the focus for the inspection. The SIAS framework suggests the school's self-evaluation will fall into one of three broad categories – secure, developing, or ineffective. Although these are not inspection judgements to be communicated in the inspection report, they do give a good steer to the main focus of the inspection. No matter what issues are explored, the way you explore them will be different, depending on the security of the school's self-evaluation.

Where the school's self-evaluation is very secure, you will tend to verify the school's view as you explore issues from the SIB. Where self-evaluation is ineffective, you have a dual role in supporting the school in improving the self-evaluation process and ensuring that you have sufficient evidence to get to the bottom of the main issues you have identified. Developing self-evaluation will often lead to a mix of these approaches, depending on the issue you are exploring and the availability of evidence from the school. For a recognisably higher-achieving school, the inspection still needs to add value and a strong emphasis on the way the school's self-evaluation focuses on the distinctiveness of the school as a church school is likely to be appropriate, especially if the school receives a reduced tariff section 5 inspection.

When setting the main focus for the inspection:

- prioritise your pre-inspection findings carefully to ensure you focus most effort on the most important issues
- take account of the security of the school's self-evaluation to determine how you might approach the gathering of evidence
- consider how the school can work in partnership with you in providing evidence to support the inspection.

## 6 Key Features of the *SIAS Inspection Briefing*

The *SIAS Inspection Briefing* (SIB) is an evaluative document that results from careful thought. It is not sufficient to repeat material provided by the school through the use of a self-evaluation toolkit, a self-evaluation form on the school as a Church of England school, or the Ofsted self-evaluation form (SEF). It must present to the school your analysis and views so far, based on the evidence available to you, but in a way that does not pre-judge the outcomes of the inspection. It must also indicate the issues you intend to follow up during the inspection. There is no need for a context section to set the scene, as this has been done for you by the school in the documents it has provided.

The SIB needs to cover the ground of the *SIAS* inspection framework and you should structure it according to the four key questions in the framework:

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

Each section of the SIB is best structured under three subheadings: **summary analysis**; **hypothesis**; and **issues to explore**. The style is flexible and the text could be in continuous prose, bullet points, or a combination of the two. The SIB should be no longer than three A4 pages of text (that is, a maximum of four sides, including the cover).

Most importantly, the SIB must be a professional document that models the sort of evaluative writing expected from schools in their own self-evaluation. This means you must give enough time to preparatory work so that you can analyse the evidence thoroughly, record your analysis in whatever form you choose and prepare the SIB.

A sample SIB is included in section 10 of this guidance, and a template for use by inspectors is available on the National Society's website: [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk).

The *SIAS Inspection Briefing* (SIB) is a document, shared with the school, that is:

- written evaluatively, setting out the inspector's views so far
- a summary of your pre-inspection analysis, identifying hypotheses and issues to explore during the inspection
- structured according to the key questions in the *SIAS* framework
- the result of thorough preparatory work.

## 7 Summary analysis

The summary analysis must help the school understand how you have come to the tentative conclusions you have reached in the hypotheses and why you will be exploring a particular set of issues during the inspection. One of the main areas to cover in the analysis is the school's view of itself, expressed in documents relating to the school as a Church of England school and Ofsted's SEF. Here you will need to consider how well the school's evaluation of its performance and provision is supported by the evidence available.

Depending on the quality of the self-evaluation recorded in these documents, you may be convinced by the school's account of itself and the accuracy of its evaluation. In such cases the analysis will reflect this view. However, if you find inconsistencies within the school's documentation, or if the school's documents are more descriptive than evaluative, you may wish to challenge the school's views or suggest the need for more evidence. No matter what you write, it is important to be both sensitive and tentative.

Sensitivity is important because the school will work in partnership with you during the inspection. Senior staff will read the SIB as a professional critique of the aspects of its work relevant to a SIAS inspection and will expect the school's documents to have been valued highly as evidence in the pre-inspection phase. Tentativeness is important because schools are often concerned that inspectors have made their minds up before coming into the school, when the purpose of the inspection is to use the evidence available in the school to explore the issues in the SIB.

### **Include:**

- your interpretations of the school's evidence
- coverage of the relevant subsidiary questions in the SIAS inspection framework
- how effectively issues from the previous inspection have been tackled
- potential strengths and areas for development
- tentative views so far.

### **Avoid:**

- material merely copied from school documents
- descriptive material not supporting an evaluation
- premature inspection judgements
- commenting on the quality of the documentation itself (you are more interested in the evidence it contains)
- views unrelated to the SIAS inspection.

You will not, of course, include every piece of your analysis in the SIB, as it is designed to be a summary. You will need to focus on the most important areas that will influence the inspection, therefore. It is also important to achieve a balanced view of the school at this stage of the inspection, avoiding an over-critical approach, as the analysis will lead directly to your hypotheses.

The following extracts illustrate some successful and less successful practice in writing the summary analysis sections for a SIB.

### **Analysis – example 1**

- ✓ SEF details support mechanism now in place for middle managers from the leadership group. But it isn't obvious from the toolkit how potential inconsistencies are avoided between the different line managers who monitor T&L in RE on one hand, and the HT and diocesan adviser, who also monitor T&L, on the other. It is not clear whether they use the same focus, for example, when observing lessons. SEF shows that improving standards in RE is a priority, but it is not clear how the two systems work together to do this.

### *Commentary*

*This short piece notes a potential issue about the school's dual-track monitoring process and,*

*drawing together material from SEF and toolkit, uses a good understanding of monitoring and evaluation to recognise it. This point would undoubtedly be an area to explore in the inspection.*

### **Analysis – example 2**



- Previous report says Christian ethos is very good, pupils well motivated to succeed, relationships between staff and pupils very positive.
- SEF states that learners' personal development and well-being are outstanding.
- Toolkit notes enthusiasm of pupils for school is high, and that they enjoy RE and collective worship especially. School has conducted a questionnaire with pupils to obtain their views.

#### *Commentary*

*This repeats statements from the various evidence sources without any attempt at analysis. If the inspector were to proceed to the inspection thinking that all was well, this would be entirely concluded on the basis of the school's assertions and the previous report. The inspector needed to consider what the school used as evidence for outstanding personal development and high levels of enjoyment, and see whether these actually fitted the criteria for the grades awarded by the school. It is also not possible, on the basis of the evidence put forward here, to determine the inspector's tentative view at this stage of the inspection.*

### **Analysis – example 3**



- Collective worship was very strong in the previous (s23) inspection, and the toolkit gives several examples of creative approaches to worship that suggest it may well have improved.
- Pupils' high levels of participation in CW are well evidenced in pupil questionnaires about the Christian ethos of the school, and in the summary of CW evaluation outcomes in the toolkit. The school's grade of outstanding is well supported in the toolkit.
- The SEF indicates how the school has ensured that CW in classes is meaningful on non-assembly days, although from the comments these seem to be broadly Christian rather than stemming from the Anglican tradition.

#### *Commentary*

*In each of these bullet points, the inspector has given a personal view of the evidence found in different sources, as well as including sufficient detail to support that view, so the school know where the hypothesis has come from. The inspector is prepared to take on trust from the school the reported outcomes of questionnaires, but has a healthy scepticism about the content of class CW.*

### **Analysis – example 4**



The school has a "common vision of excellence", and a "highly committed and hardworking staff." The "experienced leadership group" has "good knowledge of the school" and the "leaders are highly visible and approachable". (SEF)

At coordinator level "curriculum leader for RE is reflective and leads improvement." There is "good teamwork among teaching, education support and admin staff that builds on Christian family traditions". (Toolkit)

The HT has "established a cycle of self-evaluation and curriculum area reviews" and these lead to feedback to co-ordinators. "Middle leaders have had good quality training

on classroom observation from specialist” but are “reluctant to see colleague’s lessons regularly”. (SEF)

Standards in RE are “high and improving all the time.” In the last review a year ago “the RE coordinator had several areas for improvement”, one of which was “improve the consistency of teaching”. (Toolkit)

#### *Commentary*

*While there is nothing wrong with approach of taking elements of evidence from two sources, this example falls down on two counts. First, the extensive use of quotes from the school’s documents is pointless, as the school already knows this information. We can usually presume the headteacher wrote both the SEF and toolkit, or oversaw their writing, and is unlikely to need reminding. The extensive quotations also detract from the ability of the inspector to provide any analysis. Second, the inspector has made no attempt to draw together the various strands of this evidence to suggest that all is not well with RE in this school. The inconsistency in teaching from the toolkit and the reluctance to undertake observations from the SEF raise the question of whether the school’s self-evaluation is actually effective. If introduced as an issue for inspection without analysis, the school will not necessarily make this connection, and so the SIB needs to make it, explicitly.*

#### **Analysis – example 5**

- ✓ The last inspection showed good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. This was attributed to the school’s Christian ethos, which was strong. This does not sit easily alongside the SEF, which reports that the school’s recent evaluation of pupils’ personal development still found good behaviour but their attitudes to learning needed more attention, with much off-task chatter in classes.

SMSC was good at the last inspection, with outstanding cultural development. The SEF indicates, through the rich cultural activities in and out of class, that this is likely still to be outstanding, but the evidence for spiritual development improving to outstanding since the last inspection is thin, and relates mainly to the fact that the school now complies fully with the law on CW. Spiritual development is covered in least depth in SMSC, and the toolkit does not make the sort of links between the Christian ethos and SMSC usually expected.

The toolkit quotes from the outcomes of a pupil survey on self-esteem, and suggests that the school’s focus on the most and least able has left a vacuum where middle ability pupils do not feel sufficiently valued. Setting this alongside the other evidence suggests a deterioration in meeting the needs of all learners through the school’s Christian character, conflicting with the school’s evaluation of good.

#### *Commentary*

*Here the inspector carefully assembles a range of contradictory evidence from the SEF and toolkit to suggest the school’s self-evaluation in this area is inaccurate. The deterioration is suggested, rather than stated as a fact, both because the view is based only on the evidence so far available, and also to avoid pre-judgment and support the exploration of the issue during the inspection.*

#### **Analysis – example 6**

- ✓ The school’s self-evaluation processes are clearly described in the SEF and focus strongly on first-hand observations of lessons. The toolkit takes this further for RE and CW, summarising recent observations supporting the ‘good’ grade given and leading to a priority in the school’s development plan for improving pupils’ participation in CW. This suggests a well organised and rigorous process of evaluation of practice.

Both SEF and toolkit describe the use of questionnaires to evaluate pupils’ attitudes to school and their responses to lessons. Outcomes are reported as very positive with

very strong responses for RE in particular and also suggests that self-evaluation is strong.

Foundation governors appear to take a particular interest in the outcomes of the RE and CW evaluations, and the toolkit suggests they are fully involved in identification of strengths and areas for development when the development plan is produced.

The toolkit shows no evidence of this evaluation extending into whether the Christian character of the school is promoted strongly and whether it has an impact on pupils. Little mention of the distinctiveness of the school as a church school in the SEF, also suggesting this may well be an area that is not well enough evaluated.

#### *Commentary*

*This passage is very reflective and focuses on apparent strengths in the school's self-evaluation of delivery of lessons and CW, and in gaining pupils views, but notes a lack of focus on one of the most important elements of a Church of England school, its distinctiveness. This suggests that the school may well focus more on the detail, rather than the 'big picture' of what the school is like as a whole, where the focus on distinctiveness might come through more strongly. The inspector has been careful to balance the potential strengths of some elements of self-evaluation with the area which is likely to be one to explore within leadership and management.*

#### **Analysis – example 7**

- ✓ • The SLT appear to have had a strong focus on the ethos of the school but as the SEF and toolkit cover similar ground, it is not clear whether this has been related to the school's Christian character, but the absence of any specific mention suggests not. The school's view that behaviour is still a major issue raises questions about the impact of actions taken.
- Little seems to have been done from the SEF to deal with very low standards throughout the school and nothing suggests a drive to improve teaching, although the school now has specialist staff in post, including for RE. This sits uneasily with the satisfactory grade for L&M in the SEF and the good grade in the toolkit, where the work on ethos seems to have been the determining factor in making it good, despite its lack of reference to the Christian character of the school.
- The governors seem to be very supportive of the HT, but the SEF and toolkit both suggest that they do not question, only receive and approve. The foundation governors seem to have no voice over the vision of the school as a church school, seeming to go along with the rest of the GB very readily, a point noted in the toolkit.

#### *Commentary*

*This school seems to be in trouble. The lack of focus on teaching and learning is a major issue when standards are very low. From the Church of England perspective, the lack of mention of the school's distinctiveness is also a serious issue. Other factors, such as the lack of impact of the school's actions and weaknesses in governance, suggest that the leadership and management of the school will need exploring in considerable depth.*

## 8 Hypotheses

The summary analysis in the SIB should lead logically to your hypotheses. You will normally only need one broad hypothesis for each of the four key questions in the SIAS framework for inspection. Sometimes, however, differences between key stages, for example in RE, or other specific features of the school may mean that more than one hypothesis is necessary.

The main purposes of the hypotheses are to communicate your view of each aspect of the school, so far, to its senior leaders and to signal where the inspection will start from. The issues to explore during the inspection should then stem from the hypotheses, with any detail coming from the preceding analysis.

Your hypotheses should be direct and clearly stated, giving an overview of where you stand on each the four key questions, at this stage of the inspection. So as not to pre-judge the school, hypotheses should be written tentatively. To avoid any possible upset or offence, they should be written in sensitive language. It is best to avoid questions, as schools see these as very challenging, especially where the evidence suggests the school is not doing as well as it should. Where a particular potential strength and/or a particular area for development stands out, it is acceptable to make reference to that in a rider to the hypothesis.

Where there is insufficient evidence to form a view, it is acceptable to state this. However you should, wherever possible, come to a tentative view, even if it is likely to change during the inspection, as it does set the scene for the issues you wish to explore. You also need to come to a single tentative judgement and not hover between two grades. At this stage, you can afford to make your view clear, accepting that it could well change later.

### **Include:**

- a view of the key question taken as a whole
- concise sentences containing single points
- tentative and sensitive language
- normally one, but no more than three hypotheses for each section.

### **Avoid:**

- too much detail
- definite judgements, as they pre-judge the school
- questions, as they can be seen as threatening to schools
- 'sitting on the fence'
- further detailed analysis following the hypothesis.

The following extracts illustrate some successful and less successful practice in writing hypotheses for a SIB. The examples are in the same order as those related to analysis in Chapter 7 and refer to the same issues, so they can be tracked through.

### **Hypothesis – example 1**

- ✓ Leadership and management of the school as a church school appear to be good, with potential strengths in the way the Christian vision has been restated and promoted recently. The way the school splits responsibility for monitoring RE, while involving several staff, suggests that some areas of self-evaluation may only be satisfactory.

### *Commentary*

*The overall hypothesis that the area is likely to be good is clearly stated, but does not pre-judge the inspection findings. The only other points to be made here are to identify a potential strength and to*

suggest that something the school feels is good may well turn out to have some areas for development.

### **Hypothesis – example 2**

- ✘ The school meets the needs of all learners well and its Christian ethos permeates the whole school and supports learning well

#### *Commentary*

*This hypothesis, though concise, prejudices the school. It also does not say much specific about the school, focusing more on restating criteria. The last part of the sentence does not relate, as it should, to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.*

### **Hypothesis – example 3**

- ✔ The evidence at this stage of the inspection supports the school's view that collective worship is outstanding and has a profound impact on pupils. Pupils' participation in whole-school worship seems to be at a very high level, although the acts of worship in classes may not relate strongly enough to Anglican practice.

#### *Commentary*

*In this hypothesis, the inspector has chosen to focus the content on the way the school's own grade is supported. This is a clear view from the inspector but also makes explicit the recognition of the value of the school's self evaluation. Again, it highlights a specific potential strength, but also the area which will appear as an issue to explore during the inspection.*

### **Hypothesis – example 4**

- ✘ RE is likely to be good in this school because of the strong Christian vision and commitment to high standards. However it might not be as strong if the monitoring of RE as not taken place regularly, and that might reveal weaker teaching. In addition, any inconsistencies in teaching might well stem from the leadership and management of the subject, where areas for improvement have been identified.

#### *Commentary*

*In evaluating, even tentatively, RE as good on the basis of the analysis put forward in Chapter 7, this hypothesis is very weak as it merely restates the school's views. The second main problem with this hypothesis is that, after the first sentence, it stops being the hypothesis it should be and becomes speculative thinking, without the depth of analysis that is needed. All the material after the first sentence should have been moved into the analysis section, the speculation removed and a clear evaluative statement constructed.*

### **Hypothesis – example 5**

- ✔ The school, through its Christian character, appears to meet the needs of its learner satisfactorily. Although the school's self-evaluation suggests that this area has improved since the last inspection, and cultural development may well remain outstanding, the evidence so far on spiritual development and the way pupils feel valued indicate that these aspects may well have declined.

#### *Commentary*

*This sort of hypothesis is probably the most difficult to write. It directly challenges the school's self-evaluation, and needs to do it in a way that does not alienate the school. Here, the repetition from the analysis, not usually a good idea, has brought in a potential strength, and the evidence for the*

lower than expected grade is rehearsed to enable the school see how the inspector has come to that conclusion.

### **Hypothesis – example 6**

- ✓ The leadership and management of this school as a church school appear to be good with some potential strengths in self-evaluation. The evaluation of the distinctiveness of the school and its Christian character do not come though strongly, however, suggesting this element may well only be satisfactory at best.

#### *Commentary*

*This hypothesis provides a tentative overview of leadership and management of the school, based on more evidence than is presented in example 6 in Chapter 7. The inspector has highlighted the possibility that there will be some strengths in the area of self-evaluation, without indicating which those areas are, as they have already been identified in the analysis. The concerns about the focus of self-evaluation are highlighted, again through a clear but broad statement, with a view that they are not likely to be as good as for other areas of leadership and management. Given the importance of this issue, it is as well to indicate that this likely to be weaker in case it does become one of the main areas of focus for the inspection.*

### **Hypothesis – example 7**

- ✗ The leadership and management are inadequate and the governing body does not provide the support it should, leading to an inadequate school overall.

#### *Commentary*

*This hypothesis is seriously flawed on several counts. First, it is far too definite, as the inspection has not yet taken place. Second, the issue about governance is not about support, but the level of challenge given to the headteacher and the role of the foundation governors in bringing a focus on the school's Christian ethos to the governing body. Third, it is not appropriate to come to conclusions about the school as a whole before an inspection, as the purpose of the pre-inspection work is to determine what areas of the school need exploration. Only when the evidence in those areas is available can a decision be made about the school as a whole. However, it is acceptable to suggest that the answer to one of the key questions is likely to be negative (on the evidence so far), as that view is important when exploring the relevant issues during the inspection.*

*A more appropriate hypothesis in this case may have been:*

*“The leadership and management of the school as a church school appear to be inadequate, with monitoring, evaluation and governance potential areas for development.”*

*This is tentative, gives a link into the main issues for exploration, but its directness leaves the school in no doubt about the angle from which the inspector will be coming.*

## 9 Issues to explore during the inspection

Each section of the SIB should conclude with a set of issues to explore during the inspection. These should stem from the hypothesis immediately preceding the issues, and relate to the analysis that you undertook and summarised in the SIB.

Common sense suggests that you should only select a small number of the most important issues to pursue – typically two or three in each section, but certainly no more than four. Too many could well prove difficult to pursue in the time available during the inspection.

The issues you choose need to be sharply focused, using material from your analysis, so that you can immediately see what evidence you need and how you will obtain it. In short, they lead directly into evidence trails. A lack of focus tends to lead to inspections that rely too much on framework criteria without having the depth of diagnosis that is needed. A sharp focus all helps to make sure that you can track back from the issues to the analysis, and that no issues are presented ‘out of the blue’.

Some inspectors prefer to write issues as questions, while others prefer simple statements of what is being explored. Either is acceptable. However, if you do use questions, make sure they are open ended, and don’t just ask questions that cry out for ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answers.

### **Include:**

- sharply focused issues that will drive the inspection
- usually two or three issues per section
- issues that lead naturally into the collection of evidence.

### **Avoid:**

- generic issues that will be covered anyway
- having more than four issues
- questions that just demand a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer
- issues that come out of the blue.

The following extracts illustrate some successful and less successful practice in writing issues for a SIB. Again, the example numbers follow through from the examples in Chapters 7 and 8, so you can keep track of how each issue is dealt with at the pre-inspection stage and how the issues link back to the analysis.

### **Issues – example 1**

- ✓ • Track the way the Christian vision has been restated and promoted, as a potential strength of leadership and management.
- Explore the relationship between the leadership team’s and the RE coordinator’s monitoring and evaluation of RE and how these two processes contribute to the school’s plans and actions for improving standards in RE.

### **Commentary**

*The first of these issues is to gain further information about a potential strength so that this view is*

secured. It also ensures that there is sufficient detail to write something specific about the school in the report, rather than writing about the criteria. The second issue is vital in getting to the bottom of the way RE is monitored and evaluated by two distinct groups. It may be that the two systems dovetail well, and the issue is resolved. However, if they do not, this could well provide the evidence trail for an area of focus for the inspection report. Both are, therefore, priority issues to explore.

### **Issues – example 2**

- ✘ • Do pupils feel valued?
- How does the school promote SMSC?
- Is pupils' personal development good, and if so why is it not outstanding?

#### *Commentary*

All these issues are problematic. The first two are not specific enough to the school and are repeated broadly from the SIAS framework, and they will not focus the inspection securely. The third is derived from the SEF and not the SIAS framework and, though interesting, is outside the remit of a section 48 inspection. The first also asks a question demanding a 'Yes' or 'No' answer and, although the second asks a more open question, both can be seen as threatening to the school. The last issue has a sting in its tail, in that, although it might seem to suggest a positive approach, the way it is written could be seen by the school to challenge the SEF in a particularly unhelpful way.

### **Issues – example 3**

- ✘ • Confirm the hypothesis that collective worship is outstanding
- Check the class-based collective worship for Anglican practice.

#### *Commentary*

The first issue is not specific enough, as it sets a focus for the inspection that is as broad as the SIAS framework. A more profitable approach would have been to focus on the participative nature of worship and explore what effect this had on pupils. The second seems very straightforward at first reading, but could well represent a misunderstanding of the SIAS framework. The framework does not expect all acts of worship to be set in a particular Anglican style, but to support pupils' understanding of Anglican faith and practice – a very different evaluation. These issues are disappointing, given the more appropriate analysis and hypotheses evaluated in Chapters 7 and 8.

### **Issues – example 4**

- ✓ • To what extent does monitoring of teaching in RE bring about consistent classroom practice?
- How effective have the actions taken by the RE coordinator been in improving standards in the subject?

#### *Commentary*

Despite the weak analysis and hypothesis, this inspector has focused in on the right issues – consistency of teaching and leadership and management by the RE coordinator. Rather than

challenge the RE coordinator by treating the issue as a question of the regularity or effectiveness of monitoring, the inspector has left a more open but clear first issue to explore. Similarly, the second issue could well have challenged the coordinator to say what actions have been taken, but the inspector chose a more subtle route that assumes that actions have been taken (even if the inspector suspects they have not) so that the RE coordinator is able to engage with, rather than be defensive about, the question.

#### **Issues – example 5**

- ✓ • Explore the school's approach to supporting pupils' spiritual and cultural development in the context of a Church of England school
- Identify the main ways in which the school, through its Christian ethos, values its pupils and what they bring to the school.

#### *Commentary*

*Here the inspector has combined the exploration of spiritual and cultural development to avoid appearing negative; the issue can be neutral as the hypothesis is challenging enough in itself. Similarly, there is no need to restate in the challenging hypothesis in the second issue and so the issue is written neutrally, although it does give very useful areas to explore with pupils. In both cases the focus is sharp and the explorations will throw considerable light on the areas covered in the hypothesis.*

#### **Issues – example 6**

- ✓ • Explore how the school evaluates its distinctiveness as a Church of England school and the effectiveness with which it promotes a Christian vision among its stakeholders.
- Explore how the priorities for CW and RE in the school's development plan can be tracked back to the monitoring and evaluation of RE and CW, and identify potential strengths in the process.

#### *Commentary*

*The first of these issues is designed to check the extent to which the school takes its distinctiveness seriously, as well as making a judgement about the quality of evaluation in this area. The second, unusually, suggests working from the priority in the development plan and searching for evidence trails back to the first-hand monitoring and evaluation. The reverse route is likely to have been equally effective. The purpose of identifying strengths is to see whether elements of this process can be transferred, as is likely, into the context of the evaluation of the distinctiveness of the school.*

#### **Issues – example 7**

- ✓ • Explore the rigour with which the school evaluates the quality of teaching and learning in RE and the impact of the actions already taken in raising standards in the subject.
- To what extent do the school's foundation governors understand their role in relation to the school's status as a Church of England school, and to what extent do they challenge other governors and senior leaders to bring about the necessary improvements?

### *Commentary*

*The two focuses of monitoring and evaluation and of governance are reflected in one key issue each. The inspector has resisted the temptation to get involved in areas of the school covered by the section 5 inspection (for example, monitoring of teaching and learning generally, and the governing body's role in monitoring and evaluation), preferring to be very specific about RE. This issue of governance is tackled through exploring the specific role of foundation governors, and how well they fulfil it. These are challenging areas to explore in a single day's inspection, and the directness of the revised hypothesis suggested in example 7 in Chapter 8 is needed to ensure the school is in no doubt over the importance of the issues to be explored.*

## **10 A sample SIB**



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

### SIAS inspection briefing

# SAMPLE

**School:** St Joseph's Church of England (VA) Primary School

**Date of inspection:** 31 August 2006

**Inspector:** Joan Smith

## Introduction

The *SIAS Inspection Briefing* (SIB) is a summary of the inspector's pre-inspection evaluation, drawing on the evidence available at that time, and provided for discussion with the school. It identifies the main focus for the inspection and the particular issues that will be explored during the inspection before coming to conclusions about the four key questions in the SIAS framework for inspection. It will form the basis for discussion with the school's senior leaders during the inspection.

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

### Summary analysis

Toolkit and SEF are very clear about the way the school's work is rooted in Christian values and how this drives its ethos. Both go some way to support the school's view that this area is outstanding. Children said to adopt Christian values as their own and incorporate Christ's teaching and prayer in their own lives, but toolkit focuses more on opportunities than outcomes, suggesting that the area may be good if outcomes are not as strong. School puts much emphasis on individual needs, with the SEF detailing what seems to be good assessment processes, clear tracking systems to check progress, and regular reviews. Toolkit notes that support for pupils with special educational needs is based on Christian values.

Evidence of good behaviour and attitudes in SEF and toolkit, and of pupils taking responsibility and of good cooperation with staff. Good example given of use of playground buddies for peer mediation. Little evidence at this stage of how Christian values influence relationships in the school. SMSC appears strong with the prospectus putting it at the heart of worship, and evidence of strong focus on pupils' SMSC development. Again, less evidence of outcomes but much on provision at this stage.

### Hypothesis

The school seems to meet the needs of learners well and to base its work on a strong set of Christian values, suggesting good (grade 2) for this area.

### Issues to explore during the inspection

- How far the opportunities provided have had an impact on pupils' SMSC development.
- The extent to which pupils have engaged with Christian values and prayer in their own lives.
- How the Christian character of the school has influenced relationships.

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

### Summary analysis

Toolkit quotes extract from CW policy which focuses worship on 'fundamental and most precious beliefs and values', although prospectus does not mention a Church of England approach. Daily worship includes weekly visit to St Joseph's church for worship led by vicar. School's self-evaluation notes how well pupils enjoy worship, particularly their participation, which seems to be an improvement since the last (s23) inspection. Pupils involved also in some class planning of CW on Tuesdays. Strong evidence of evaluation of CW by pupils and staff, supporting the school's view that CW is outstanding.

Toolkit asserts that children incorporate prayer into their daily lives, but little evidence at this stage of when or where this happens, particularly as prayer boxes are planned and not fully in place. Previous (s23) inspection gave spiritual development as a strength, also reflected in very recent Ofsted (s5) inspection. The vicar said in toolkit to provide input about the Eucharist via teaching about the Last Supper, but there seems to be no school Eucharist in place. Given that the school describes St Joseph's as very low Anglican, Eucharist and Anglican practice may not be high on the school's agenda.

## **Hypothesis**

While high levels of participation in worship suggest that CW is at least good, the absence of evidence of any development of Anglican practice suggests that it may not be outstanding, and the impact of CW may well be good (grade 2) overall. The evaluation of CW may well be a strength.

### **Issues to explore during the inspection**

- How far the school develops an understanding of Anglican practice among pupils.
- Confirm the suggested high levels of participation in CW.

## **How effective is religious education?**

### **Summary analysis**

RE is seen as a core subject along with En, Ma and Sc. Recent Ofsted (s5) inspection reports that standards are high and achievement outstanding. Toolkit evidence from data and work analysis matches standards in RE with those in En, Ma, and Sc. Teaching said to be consistently good and sometimes outstanding (SEF and toolkit). Assessment and marking in RE are in line with other subjects.

Toolkit suggests RE makes a strong contribution to pupils' SMSC development, particularly the weekly contribution to teaching from the vicar, which has a spiritual focus. Pupil evaluations show most pupils think RE is their favourite subject, and attitudes to RE seem very good. Not clear at this stage how far RE contributes to the distinctive Christian character of the school or whether it is seen as another subject, albeit a very successful one.

### **Hypothesis**

The high standards and achievement suggest that the effectiveness of RE is at least good (grade 2), and possibly outstanding.

### **Issues to explore during the inspection**

- The contribution RE makes to the distinctive character of the school.
- Achievement in RE, as a potential major strength of the school.

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

### **Summary analysis**

The toolkit is fairly thin in this area, focusing more on what appears to be a very good evaluation of CW and standards in RE than on the school's distinctiveness as a church school. Potential inconsistencies between the toolkit (L&M graded 1) and the evidence (no text mention of Church of England in toolkit, mission statement or prospectus) suggest that the leadership of the school may not have focused sufficiently on its effectiveness as a church school. There is also little to suggest the school includes this area in its self-evaluation, identifies appropriate areas for development but appears a little generous. Toolkit and SEF describe a supportive governing body that holds the school to account over standards but it is not clearly what input it makes outside this area. Staff morale seems to be good, but little in the SEF of toolkit about their involvement.

There is strong evidence of regular contact with parents and extensive consultation on many issues. Parents and pupils contribute regularly to the school's self-evaluation. The toolkit suggests strong links with St Joseph's Church and with the cathedral through its annual schools festival.

### **Hypothesis**

Many aspects of leadership and management appear good, suggesting that this area is likely to reach good (grade 2). However, the significant lack of focus on the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Joseph's as a church school means that leadership and management are unlikely to be outstanding.

#### **Issues to explore during the inspection**

- How far the leadership and management of the school are grounded in a distinctive Christian vision.
- The extent to which the governing body, and the foundation governors in particular, challenge the school to account for itself as a Church of England school.
- How effectively the staff are involved in the leadership and management of the school.

#### **Main focus for the inspection**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How far the school has a distinctive Church of England ethos, as against as broadly Christian ethos, and the contributions made to this by RE, CW and the leadership and management of the school.</li></ul> |
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*Note: the name of the school and the inspector used in this sample SIB are fictitious.*