

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools – SIAMS

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An Evaluation Schedule for Schools and Inspectors

September 2021

# Contents

Introduction .....	3
Strand 1: Vision and Leadership .....	5
Strand 2: Wisdom, Knowledge, and Skills .....	7
Strand 3: Character Development: Hope, Aspiration, and Courageous Advocacy .....	8
Strand 4: Community and Living Well Together .....	10
Strand 5: Dignity and Respect.....	11
Strand 6: The impact of collective worship .....	12
Strand 7: The effectiveness of religious education .....	14
SIAMS Methodist Principles for Education .....	16
Excellence.....	18
Ineffective as a Church school .....	21
Reporting.....	22
Glossary .....	23

## LINKS TO SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

[Religious Education in Church of England Schools: A Statement of Entitlement](#)

[Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good](#)

[SIAMS Methodist Principles for Education](#)

[Valuing All God's Children](#)

[Collective Worship in Church of England Schools: Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring](#)

# Introduction

BY DR MARGARET JAMES, NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF SIAMS

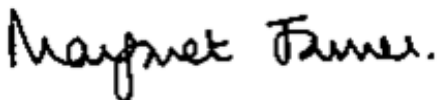
In March 2020, for the first time since the inception of section 48 inspection and as a direct consequence of COVID-19, the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) was suspended. As a country and as an education sector, we have been through extraordinarily difficult times since then, and we have all been changed irreversibly as a result. Some, adults and children alike, have suffered personal trauma and loss, and we have all shared in national and global sadness. We have also become accustomed to unprecedented restrictions to our way of life and new methods of working and educating.

From the Autumn Term 2021, SIAMS inspections resume. However, it would be unwise and unreasonable to simply expect inspection activity to pick up from where it left off almost 18 months ago or to write a brand new SIAMS Evaluation Schedule with new criteria.

Therefore, instead, we have a revised Evaluation Schedule. The September 2021 Schedule allows for the interpretation and implementation of the existing criteria within the context that COVID-19 has created. SIAMS inspection retains its primary focus on the effectiveness and impact of the school's Christian vision, and the overarching inspection question remains the same. School communities will be encouraged and enabled to share stories and narrative evidence of ways in which their Christian vision has enabled and continues to enable them to bring about flourishing in the lives of those whom they serve and with whom they work. Some of this work will have taken place at the height of the pandemic, during lockdowns and periods of home learning. Some of it will pre-date the pandemic, and some will reflect work that has continued since life has regained some semblance of its former normality.

A small number of criteria, for example, those relating to progress data, and teaching and learning in religious education have had to be refocused in the absence of national assessment data. Where this is the case, SIAMS inspection will explore decisions that have been made about the curriculum and the impact of these decisions on learners. They are not additional criteria; rather, they are replacements in instances where former criteria would now be irrelevant or unreasonable. Updated guidance and clarity on Excellence are also included. A separate version of the Schedule, with all revisions clearly annotated, is available.

I am delighted to be at the helm of the work of SIAMS at this time of development and change and I look forward to our work together on improving and affirming the experience of pupils in Church schools in England.



Dr Margaret James, National Director of SIAMS

# Inspectors will grade the school on the following over-arching inspection question:

“How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?”

## The question is explored through seven strands:

**Strand 1: Vision and Leadership**

**Strand 2: Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills**

**Strand 3: Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy**

**Strand 4: Community and Living Well Together**

**Strand 5: Dignity and Respect**

**Strand 6: The impact of collective worship**

**Strand 7: The effectiveness of religious education.**

# Strand 1: Vision and Leadership

## NOTE

In considering the vision and leadership of a Methodist school, particular attention should be paid to [MA1](#) and [MA2](#) of the Methodist Principles for Education.

## IN THIS STRAND THE FOLLOWING MUST BE EXPLORED:

- How well the school has developed and implemented an inclusive and distinctive Christian vision, monitoring its impact to ensure the school's original foundation is maintained.
- How well the school lives out that Christian vision in relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders.

In developing vision and leadership in a Church school, the school must evaluate:

- a) To what extent is the school's vision and its associated values grounded in a clear theology firmly rooted in a Christian narrative? To what extent do leaders show awareness and understanding of current thinking in Church school education?
- b) To what extent does the school's Christian vision shape school policies, actions, and Church school development plans? How is priority given to collective worship and to religious education (RE)?
- c) How well do leaders ensure that the school's formal partnerships are supported, sustained, and informed by the school's Christian vision and associated values? This includes how well school leaders work with the local diocese/circuit and churches.
- d) How well do leaders ensure that all staff members at all levels are supported in the development of their understanding of the school as a Church school? How well are future Church school leaders prepared and supported through professional development leading to improved practice?
- e) How well do governors ensure that a robust and continuous self-evaluation process is in place that involves the school community in evaluating their effectiveness as a Church school?

## STRAND 1: GRADE DESCRIPTORS

In a Good Church school that enables pupils and adults to flourish...

The leaders have developed a Christian vision that reflects its local context. The school's policies on admissions demonstrably reflect its Christian vision by being welcoming to pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties, and by being inclusive of different faiths and of pupils from diverse backgrounds. Leaders, including governors, explain how biblical teaching roots the school's vision giving it coherence, relevance, and sustainability. Governors articulate the school's vision with passion and recent relevant practical illustration. The school uses its vision to shape development plans and school policies and actions. Leaders explain how the school's vision informs both the choice of, and relationships with, a range of local, national and global educational partners. Leaders are aware of current developments and debates in Church school education, and this informs their practice.

Leaders ensure that worship celebrates difference and encourages respect and dignity. It raises aspirations. Worship engages creatively with the school's Christian vision and associated values showing respect for and giving dignity to all wherever they may be on their spiritual journey.

Worship is an important way in which pupils are invited to reflect upon the school's vision and associated values. It is a time when they reflect on significant local, national and international events.

Reflecting the [Church of England Statement of Entitlement](#) religious education (RE) is well resourced. Leaders ensure that: sufficient dedicated curriculum time is given to RE; RE leaders and teachers have access to regular high quality professional development; RE continuing professional development (CPD) is appropriate, funded, and monitored; and RE leaders have opportunities to monitor RE lessons. In secondary schools, the school seeks to employ specialist RE teachers. Where relevant, all pupils follow a recognised externally accredited and appropriate RE qualification at KS4.

Leaders ensure that the distinctively Christian nature of its vision is maintained, remains discernible and is effectively applied within any multi-academy trust (MAT) or federation partnerships into which it enters. Many MAT policies may be adopted but key policies are adapted to reflect the school's vision. School to school partnerships reflect ethical choices in line with the school's vision. A distinctive feature of the school is that it understands itself as a partner with the local church and diocese/Methodist community. Leaders are proactive in seeking and maintaining mutually beneficial partnerships with the local church and diocese/Methodist community.

All staff members and governors have opportunities to develop their understanding of Church school education. Effective use is made of diocesan/Methodist schools and national training events and leaders can demonstrate how this has led to improved practice. Leaders ensure that senior and middle leaders have regular opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of strategic Church school leadership and this has demonstrable impact on pupil learning and flourishing.

Leaders and governors ensure that there is an ongoing process in place that evaluates the effectiveness of the school as a Church school. This is based on evidence and analysis, includes most groups in the school community, and informs school improvement.

Governors/academy directors maintain the school's original foundation by ensuring that the school is engaged with diocesan and national/Methodist schools initiatives and can explain how the school has developed as a Church school since the previous denominational inspection.

*If the school's vision and leadership appear to fall short of this, an inspector may judge the school to require improvement or to be ineffective.*

# Strand 2: Wisdom, Knowledge, and Skills

## NOTE

In considering wisdom, knowledge, and skills in the context of a Methodist school, particular attention should be paid to **MA4** and **MA5** of the Methodist Principles for Education.

## IN THIS STRAND THE FOLLOWING MUST BE EXPLORED:

- **How well the school's staff and leaders apply their Christian vision wisely and sensitively to ensure that the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities meet the learning and spiritual needs of all learners.**
- In developing wisdom, knowledge and skills in a Church school, the school must evaluate:
- a) How effective is the school at meeting the learning needs of all pupils through the curriculum? How effective is the school in identifying and supporting those who are more vulnerable and who may have additional learning and personal needs?
  - b) How well does the school support all pupils in their spiritual development enabling all pupils to flourish?

## STRAND 2: GRADE DESCRIPTORS

In a Good Church school that enables pupils and adults to flourish...

The school has a broad and balanced ambitious curriculum which is shaped by its Christian vision, an understanding of the peculiar circumstances within which it stands, and a recognition that each pupil is a unique individual. This ensures the rounded development of the whole child through their learning, progress, and spiritual development. Leaders use ethical arguments to justify making bold curriculum decisions to ensure that pupils experience an exciting and relevant curriculum that enables them to make progress in their learning and to flourish.

School leaders and teachers explain how the Christian vision underpins curriculum decisions and ways in which learning is fostered, and they illustrate the positive impact that these decisions have on children and young people's learning and development. This includes pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and the most able. As a priority, the school is enabling its vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties, and those who experience barriers when accessing remote learning, to flourish and make progress in their learning.

The school has a clear and secure understanding of and approach to the spiritual development of all, that is distinguishable from social, moral, and cultural development. Equally rich spiritual opportunities, regardless of age, exist across the curriculum and these enable the development of curiosity through questioning that helps adults and pupils to explore and articulate spiritual and ethical issues. Pupils value learning and enjoy questioning, listening, and responding creatively across a range of subjects.

*If the impact of the school's vision on pupils' wisdom, knowledge, and skills appears to fall short of this, an inspector may judge the school to require improvement or to be ineffective.*

# Strand 3: Character Development: Hope, Aspiration, and Courageous Advocacy

## NOTE

In considering character development in the context of a Methodist school, particular attention should be paid to **MA3** and **MA4** of the Methodist Principles for Education.

## IN THIS STRAND THE FOLLOWING MUST BE EXPLORED:

- How well the school's Christian vision supports the character and moral development of all pupils, giving them aspiration for themselves and hope for the communities of which they are a part, including when circumstances are difficult.
- How well the school's Christian vision inspires the whole school community to engage in social action and to be courageous advocates for change in their local, national, and global communities.

In developing character, the school must evaluate:

- a) To what extent does the school's vision and its associated values develop aspiration in all pupils, giving them resilience to cope well when things are difficult and the perseverance to overcome barriers to their own learning and to make positive choices?
- b) How do leaders make sure all pupils have curriculum opportunities to look beyond themselves, ask 'big questions', think globally about life, and develop an understanding of disadvantage, deprivation, and the exploitation of the natural world?
- c) How well does the school community connect its ethical and charitable activities to the school's vision and associated values? Do leaders provide opportunities for all pupils to engage in social action and to understand how they can challenge injustice?

### STRAND 3: GRADE DESCRIPTORS

In a Good Church school that enables pupils and adults to flourish...

There is a demonstrable culture of aspiring to be the best you can be: the person God created you to be. Pupils say how the school's Christian vision and associated values help them to make positive choices about how they live, learn, approach difficult circumstances, and behave.

Leaders ensure that there are opportunities across the school curriculum to explore many 'big questions' about life and to discuss and develop pupils' understanding of disadvantage, deprivation and the exploitation of the natural world. Leaders demonstrate how spending decisions (where possible), fundraising, charity partnerships and social action projects reflect the school's Christian vision. A demonstrable feature of the school is the way in which it encourages its pupils to think about wider global society, as appropriate to context.

Pupils talk about ways to challenge injustice and inequality and take advantage of curricular and extra-curricular activities to engage in social action projects. This goes beyond a sense of compassion to a concern for justice.

*If the impact of the school's vision on attitudes and approaches to hope and aspiration appears to fall short of this, an inspector may judge the school to require improvement or to be ineffective.*

# Strand 4: Community and Living Well Together

## NOTE

In considering community and living well together in the context of a Methodist school, particular attention should be paid to **MA3** and **MA6** of the Methodist Principles for Education.

## IN THIS STRAND THE FOLLOWING MUST BE EXPLORED:

- **How well the school's Christian vision promotes social and cultural development through the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation that encourages good mental health and enables all to flourish and live well together.**

In creating a community where all live well together, the school must evaluate:

- a) To what extent does the school's Christian vision and associated values underpin relationships at all levels in the school community, enabling pupils to disagree well and to practise forgiveness and reconciliation? Is this reflected in the school's behaviour, exclusion and attendance policies?
- b) How well do leaders ensure there is support for good mental health in children and adults and a sense of belonging that embraces and celebrates difference?

## STRAND 4: GRADE DESCRIPTORS

In a Good Church school that enables pupils and adults to flourish...

Pupils are observed to behave well and relationships between all members of the school community are generally supportive. This is clearly attributed to the school's Christian vision and associated values by many. The school behaviour policy and other related policies coherently reflect the vision. Pupils have the opportunity to seek forgiveness and reconciliation, and this is reflected in the school's behaviour, exclusion and attendance policies and practice. When conflicts do arise, these are dealt with in a way that reflects the articulated Christian vision and associated values of the school.

There are planned curriculum opportunities to explore different points of view and pupils are given the skills they need to disagree well and to live with contradictory convictions. The school has in place effective systems for the early identification of issues connected to mental health and wellbeing. Policies support pupils with mental health difficulties making use of expert advice as needed. Pupils and adults feel confident to express their views and concerns and say they are listened to and are given opportunities to participate in school decisions.

*If the impact of the school's vision on the ability of those in the school community to live well together appears to fall short of this, an inspector may judge the school to require improvement or to be ineffective.*

# Strand 5: Dignity and Respect

## NOTE

In considering dignity and respect in the context of a Methodist school, particular attention should be paid to **MA5** and **MA6** of the Methodist Principles for Education.

## IN THIS STRAND THE FOLLOWING MUST BE EXPLORED:

- **How well the school's Christian vision creates an environment that embraces difference where all pupils, whatever their background or ability, can flourish because all are treated with dignity and respect.**

In creating a school environment built on dignity and respect, the school must evaluate:

- a) How well does the Christian vision and associated values enable dignity and value all God's Children\*, ensuring through policy and practice the protection of all members of the school community?

- b) How well does the whole curriculum provide opportunities for all pupils to understand, respect and celebrate difference and diversity?
- c) Does the school have an approach to relationships and sex education (RSE) that ensures children are able to cherish themselves and others as unique and wonderfully made, and to form healthy relationships where they respect and offer dignity to others?

\*See the [Valuing All God's Children Report](#)

## STRAND 5: GRADE DESCRIPTORS

In a Good Church school that enables pupils and adults to flourish...

There is a demonstrable culture where all members of the school community, whatever their background, disability, ethnicity, gender, identity, learning difficulty, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation are welcomed and treated with dignity and respect as people created in the image of God.

Leaders are successful in ensuring that all curriculum areas encourage respect for difference, diversity, and ways of living. Pupils say that they feel safe to express their views without being made fun of in a culture of mutual respect. Pupils show respect for difference and staff will challenge any prejudicial behaviour and language, for example that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist or denigrates pupils on grounds of ability or disability. There are effective procedures in place to ensure that pupils are protected from all types of bullying or harassment and that any incidents that do occur are dealt with effectively and are appropriately recorded. These policies are up to date, regularly reviewed and evaluated.

The school offers age appropriate and coherent relationships and sex education that reflects the school's Christian vision and supports pupils to form healthy relationships.

*If the impact of the school's vision on creating a culture that is characterised by dignity and respect for all appears to fall short of this, an inspector may judge the school to require improvement or to be ineffective.*

# Strand 6: The impact of collective worship

In a Church school, collective worship should be inclusive, invitational, and inspiring.

## NOTE

In considering the impact of collective worship in the context of a Methodist school, particular attention should be paid to **MA5** and **MA6** of the Methodist Principles for Education.

## IN THIS STRAND THE FOLLOWING MUST BE EXPLORED:

- **The ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision.**

In developing collective worship that is inclusive, invitational, and inspiring, the school community needs to evaluate the extent to which worship:

- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship, and reflection whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home.
- b) Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- c) Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- d) Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

## STRAND 6: GRADE DESCRIPTORS

In a Good Church school that enables pupils and adults to flourish...

Worship is invitational, offering everyone the opportunity to engage, whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity. All who wish to are actively engaged in worship, whether they are engaged in learning in school or at home. Prayer is a natural and valued part of the culture of the school. It is not compulsory or forced. All who wish to will have regular opportunities to pray and reflect. Pupils talk about the value of prayer and reflection both in formal and informal contexts and how being still and reflective in their own lives can be helpful. As appropriate to context, pupils speak of their personal use of prayer and reflection. Pupils recognise that worship provides meaningful opportunities to contribute to their spiritual development.

Statutory obligations are met in context.

Worship is creative and pupils talk about how it often inspires them to action. It has variety, for example, involving music and liturgy, silence, story and reflection and, where appropriate, the Eucharist. Staff and pupils talk about how worship causes them to reflect on their behaviour, values and attitudes. Worship enables pupils to develop an appreciation of the variety of elements and styles found in the diversity of liturgical and other traditions of the worldwide Anglican/Methodist Church and its diversity of expression within the UK. Worship provokes thoughtful and respectful responses from pupils. They are aware of the central importance of the Eucharist/Communion to Christian worship.

Planning for collective worship ensures that pupils have opportunities to encounter the teachings of Jesus and explore the relevance of his teaching in today's world. Pupils talk about the meaning of the different elements of Christian worship including belief in the trinitarian nature of God.

An effective shared approach to planning allows appropriate opportunities for pupils to gather (either face to face or online), engage and respond. The planning, monitoring, and evaluation of collective worship involves a range of members of the community. Pupils are actively involved in this process, often taking a consultative role. Most leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.

The local church community is regularly involved in collective worship, providing practical support and encouragement.

*If collective worship falls short of being inclusive, invitational, and inspiring an inspector may judge it to require improvement or to be ineffective.*

# Strand 7: The effectiveness of religious education

In a Church of England or Methodist school, religious education (RE) should be non-confessional and is considered an academic subject. Inspectors will consider the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools and academies that were former VC schools.

## NOTE

In considering the effectiveness of religious education in the context of a Methodist school, particular attention should be paid to [MA1](#) and [MA4](#) of the Methodist Principles for Education.

## IN THIS STRAND THE FOLLOWING MUST BE EXPLORED:

- How effective the school is in ensuring pupils flourish through the provision of high quality religious education reflecting the [Church of England Statement of Entitlement](#).
- How effective the school is in ensuring that religious education expresses the school's Christian vision.

In developing effective religious education, the school must evaluate the extent to which:

- a) Through effective curriculum planning, RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement, or Methodist equivalent, develops religious literacy and meets statutory obligations.
  - i. How well does RE help pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith through the exploration of core theological concepts using an approach that critically engages with text?

- ii. How well does RE help pupils consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide.
  - iii. How well does RE enable all pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of other major world religions and worldviews and their impact on society and culture.
  - iv. How well does RE give pupils a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions.
- b) Do teachers share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development? Are there rigorous and effective systems that enable teachers to know how and what pupils are learning in RE?



- c) How well do pupils make progress in RE as a result of a rich and engaging curriculum?

## STRAND 7: GRADE DESCRIPTORS

In a Good Church school that enables pupils and adults to flourish...

Curriculum planning for RE is effective, reflecting a good balance between theology, philosophy and human science. Pupils are able to engage with religious text and theological ideas. They have developed age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis and interpretation. In this way well-constructed and coherent RE provision results in pupils who give an age-appropriate thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith with some reference to theological concepts.

Pupils demonstrate an informed and respectful understanding of a range of religions and worldviews. RE lessons provide a safe space for pupils to discuss religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ideas. Pupils explain ways in which their thinking has been challenged. Statutory obligations are met and RE is largely in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.

The school leader of RE has put in place systems that enable teachers to know what and how well pupils learn in RE. These, in turn, enable the creation of effective and ambitious curriculum plans. Good practice is shared within the school and with other schools through involvement with local, national and regional groups. The school leader for RE has regular opportunities to share new ideas and pedagogy, ensuring that all staff teaching RE do so with confidence and to a high standard.



As a result of the rich and engaging RE curriculum, which reflects and takes account of up-to-date thinking and developments in the subject, teaching and learning is consistently graded good through regular school monitoring (verified at inspection). As a result, pupils respond keenly, learning and progressing well. This includes pupils with SEND and the most able. As a priority, the school is enabling its vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to flourish in their RE learning.

*If the effectiveness of religious education falls short of this, an inspector may judge it to require improvement or to be ineffective.*

# SIAMS Methodist Principles for Education

In inspecting a Methodist school, or a joint school where Methodism forms part of the Trust Deed, inspectors should use the following guidance to understand how the Methodist character of the school can be identified in the context of the overall inspection framework.

## **PUPILS SHOULD LEARN ASPECTS OF THE METHODIST STORY, ITS HISTORY, TRADITIONS AND IDENTITY AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO BELONG TO THE METHODIST CHURCH TODAY.**

Inspectors must therefore consider:

- whether pupils have an understanding of the life and influence of John Wesley and its implications for present day Methodists
- the ways in which the community life of the school reflects a breadth of Methodist practice, tradition and perspective
- the extent to which the school is rooted in the Methodist community, local, national and global, reflecting its traditions and perspectives as follows.

### **MA1. ‘CONSIDER, WITH DEEP AND FREQUENT ATTENTION, THE PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH YOU STAND’<sup>1</sup>**

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- the extent to which the school has thought through its Christian vision and values according to its context, so that it works effectively as a church school within its particular community
- how the school expresses connexionalism through its relationships with MAST, with other Methodist schools and with the Methodist Church locally and nationally.

### **MA2. ‘THE WORLD IS MY PARISH’<sup>2</sup>**

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- the ways in which the activity of the school encourages children to live on wider map, to understand and challenge injustice and to engage in active global and local citizenship, doing ‘all the good you can’.<sup>3</sup>

### **MA3. ‘LET EVERYONE ENJOY THE FULL AND FREE LIBERTY OF THINKING FOR HIMSELF’<sup>4</sup>**

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- the extent to which pupils learn to ‘live with contradictory convictions’ through their experience of a liberal education in which they develop reason, engagement and participation
- the ways in which the school is underpinned by a Methodist approach, guided by scripture, tradition, reason and experience.

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<sup>1</sup> John Wesley Advice to the People Called Methodist (October 1745).

<sup>2</sup> John Wesley Journal (June 1739) (the exact wording is ‘I look upon all the world as my parish’.)

<sup>3</sup> Attributed to John Wesley –although not a direct quote as a whole, it reflects several of the phrases in his extensive sermon writings.

<sup>4</sup> John Wesley Advice to the People Called Methodist (October 1745).

#### MA4. 'FOR ALL, FOR ALL'<sup>5</sup> AND 'I AM MORE ASSURED THAT LOVE IS OF GOD THAN THAT ANY OPINION WHATSOEVER IS SO'<sup>6</sup>

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- how the school reflects the fundamental Methodist commitment to the value of all people through strong policies for inclusion which are evidenced throughout the everyday life of the community
- the extent to which the school's vision for the value of education is empowering for the people of its community, enabling all children to aspire, flourish, and achieve.

#### MA5. 'WATCHING OVER ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE'<sup>7</sup> AND 'THE BIBLE KNOWS NOTHING OF SOLITARY RELIGION'<sup>8</sup>

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- the extent to which the school is characterised by high quality relationships between its members and the way children are learning to live together in community
- the strength of the school's pastoral care
- the opportunities that children have to support each other's physical and spiritual wellbeing.

#### MA6. 'SINGING THE FAITH'<sup>9</sup> AND 'HEARTS STRANGELY WARMED'<sup>10</sup>

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- the extent to which pupils have the opportunity to experience worship in the broad Methodist tradition: engaging and inclusive, formal and informal, traditional and modern, enthusiastic and contemplative
- how music and singing is used as means of confidently expressing deeper values and convictions.

People interested in deepening their understanding of the Methodist presence in public education might watch the Methodist Schools introductory video 'Doing all the good we can' at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utzOW6fLRQQ> or read Wesley's short 'Advice' about Methodism.

People might, however, also look at the practice of contemporary Methodism to see how Methodism is active today – in worship, in Fresh Expressions of church, in foodbanks and social care, engaged in national issues through the Joint Public Issues Team, Action for Children and Methodist Homes and internationally through All We Can and Christian Aid. For example, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLtn2z\\_NaXY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLtn2z_NaXY).

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Wesley, from the hymn Let earth and heaven agree (358 in the current Methodist hymn book). The final verse ends: 'For all my Lord was crucified, for all, for all my saviour died'

<sup>6</sup> John Wesley Letter to James Erskine (March 1745).

<sup>7</sup> John Wesley Advice to the People Called Methodist (October 1745).

<sup>8</sup> In his preface to the 1739 hymn collection, John speaks of the importance of community in faith development, quoting advice given by an un-named 'serious man' whom he had sought out while trying to find his own way in faith as a student at Oxford

<sup>9</sup> Singing the Faith is the title of the Methodist hymn book authorised by the Conference of 2010. The title reflects the emphasis, from the time of the Wesleys, on singing together as a way of consolidating community and learning the faith

<sup>10</sup> Wesley describes his transformative experience of God's love, in May 1738, in his journal at the time 'I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.'

# Excellence

## INTRODUCTION

Excellence is likely to emerge from the coming together of three foundational principles.

- Deep, Christian-vision-driven thought and discussion
- Innovative, exemplary, and courageous action
- Life-changing, life-lasting transformational impact.

Sometimes, despite the best and most exhaustive efforts of the community, some seed will fall on stony ground and will not bring forth the expected fruit. Nonetheless, the cumulative ministry of the school creates, actualises, and nourishes a vision of what each person can be.

The Excellent Church School knows that what it is doing is deeply Christian and those within it can articulate its encompassing broad theology. This theology is embedded within and embodied by all actions in and across the life of the school. It is aspired to by all and in all.

As Aristotle taught us, one swallow does not make a summer, neither does one fine day. The Excellent Church school knows this. It lives out an excellent, life-affirming, and transformational Christian education day by day, policy by policy, action by action, changing lives for the better as a matter of extraordinary and exceptional routine.

Flourishes of excellent practice are to be commended and these will be highlighted within a report wherever they are identified, and their impact noted. However, to be awarded the grade of Excellent, a school must demonstrate exceptional, comprehensive, cohesive, coherent, widespread, sustained, and deeply-theological Christian-vision-driven practice akin to that which is illustrated below. This type of practice, provision, and impact should be inherent across and fundamental to all aspects of the daily life of the school.

The following illustrations of Excellence are not a checklist. They are not a series of grade descriptors. They are not prescriptive, and they are not exhaustive. They are illustrative and aspirational.

## EXCELLENCE

The following principles coalesce to create what can be described as an Excellent Church School.

### SPIRITUALITY

- People in the school community are continually drawn to reflect on the essential and inherent meaning and mystery of life.
- There is a rich culture of deep reflection that is readily expressed.

### COMMUNITY

- By building peace and resourcing resilience, the possibility of wholeness is made real for all within the community.
- Watching over one another in love is the unforced, strikingly normal, spontaneous yet intentional culture of the school.

### CONNECTION

- The school contributes deeply and meaningfully to, and is enriched by, the community, religious, and spiritual life of its local area. It serves and is served by goodness.
- Located within, but not constrained by, its own sense of tradition and identity, its partnerships are marked by principle, generosity, and grace.

### TRANSFORMATION

- Being part of the school community changes lives and equips people themselves to be agents of change.
- The embedded perspective of living on a wider map creates a dynamic, active, and relentless compassion for God's world.

### CURRICULUM

- A deep understanding of a Christian education leads to the creation and holistic implementation of an innovative, bold, cohesive, spiritual, ethical, empowering, and transformational curriculum.
- Challenging and searching considerations of wisdom, knowledge, and truth give rise to an inherently risk-taking yet safe and respectful community within which each person experiences and benefits from the full and free liberty of thinking for themselves.

### INCLUSION

- Within a deeply loving culture of an all-encompassing acceptance of people that transcends tolerance, difference is celebrated as an expression of the incarnate image of God.
- Active acceptance sets people free, empowers them, and equips each one to live the fullness of life that God intends.

### ACHIEVEMENT

- Consistently high levels of expertise, knowledge, and skill in adults create a culture of learning and development in which pupils enjoy achievements that routinely surpass expectations.
- Resilience, character, resourcefulness, success, failure, and a strong sense of community coalesce to enable people to flourish and to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles.



## Features of excellence to be found across all strands



# Ineffective as a Church school

If, in the judgment of the inspector, the school has not maintained its distinctive Christian foundation and more than one of the following criteria apply, it is likely that the school will be judged to be ineffective as a Church school. Before giving this provisional judgement, the inspector will discuss the evidence with the SIAMS Duty Desk. Before being made final, the evidence presented in the report will be evaluated by the appointed Quality Assurance (QA) Inspector.

For a school in a MAT an 'Ineffective as a Church school' judgement will trigger a recommendation that the nature and appropriateness of the MAT's support for the distinctive nature of the school should be reviewed by the Diocesan Board of Education.

1. The school's leaders have failed to establish and sustain a Christian vision for the school that has sufficient regard to the school's original foundation and to promoting behaviour and relationships based on dignity and equality.
2. The school's leaders have not established systems to ensure effective Church school governance including a system that monitors the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school's Christian vision.
3. The school's leaders have not taken sufficient notice of the advice provided by the local diocese in line with national guidance, including in particular [Religious Education in Church of England Schools: A Statement of Entitlement](#) and [Valuing All God's Children](#).
4. The school's leaders have failed to ensure that collective worship reflects the school's distinctive foundation or funding agreement.
5. The school's leaders have failed to ensure that the provision of religious education in the school reflects the school's foundation or funding agreement.
6. The overall quality of education and its outcomes do not meet the needs of many pupils. Provision affords little regard to the needs of vulnerable pupils including those with learning difficulties and there is little or no evidence that this is improving in any consistent way.

# Reporting

If Ofsted has judged a school to be requiring improvement or inadequate **within the twelve months preceding** the SIAMS inspection it is unlikely that the school will receive a judgement of more than one grade higher in the SIAMS inspection. If both collective worship and religious education are requiring improvement it is unlikely that the school could be good overall.

If leaders, including governors, cannot articulate how biblical teaching roots the school's vision, giving it coherence, relevance and sustainability, the school could not be good overall.

In the case of a joint school, inspected under the SIAMS framework, it will not be possible for the school to achieve a grading of good or better if it does not equally reflect the ethos of each of the religious bodies of its trust deed. So, for example, a joint Methodist/Anglican school must show that it reflects both Methodist and Anglican inspection priorities.

The inspector will award one grade for the school. They will then in all schools also give a grade specific to the impact of collective worship. In VA schools and former VA schools only, an additional grade will be given specifically for the effectiveness of RE.

# Glossary

## SCHOOL'S VISION

The school's Christian vision and associated Christian values. The school's vision should be specific to the school's particular context and foundation. It should also have regard to the Church of England Vision for Education and/or Methodist principles as well as any diocesan vision for education.

## LEADERS

All those involved in the strategic development and implementation of the school's progress as a Church school including the headteacher, the senior leaders of the school, the middle leaders, school governors/academy directors/ federation executives and MAT leaders including CEOs.

## WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Pupils, all school leaders (see above), staff (including all support staff), parents and all those in the local community involved in the school.

## LOCAL CHURCH COMMUNITY

The local Anglican church connected to the school, other local churches, and the diocese. In the case of the Methodist Church, the local Methodist church, other local churches, and the circuit. If the local church connected to the school is unable or unwilling to offer the support required by the school, it is the responsibility of the school to make sure it seeks support from the diocese or wider Methodist community.

## FORMAL PARTNERS

May include the diocese/circuit, the local church and deanery, a multi-academy trust, a federation of schools, school to school relationships (including with schools in other countries), early years settings, local authority and children's services, child, and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

## INFORMAL PARTNERS

The local community, including parents.

## GOVERNORS

Where 'governors' is used in this document it refers to the governing body of the school and includes academy directors and members.

## THE GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The grade descriptor for 'Good' describes what is expected of most Church schools. 'Requires Improvement' is described as practice that is 'not yet Good'. These descriptors are not exhaustive, and inspectors will use their professional judgement.

## THEOLOGY

In the context of RE, conversations about foundational beliefs within religions and worldviews; examining the key ideas or concepts in religions and belief systems. \*

## PHILOSOPHY

In the context of RE, conversations about thinking, reasoning, and making judgements: investigating the nature of knowledge, reality, and morality and the way in which we reason about them. \*

## HUMAN SCIENCE

In the context of RE, conversations about the human dimension of religions and beliefs: enquiry into the lived and diverse reality of religions and beliefs in the world today. \*

## RELIGIOUS LITERACY

The ability to hold age-appropriate informed conversations about religion and belief.

## CHURCH SCHOOL

Church of England, Methodist or joint Church of England and Methodist/Roman Catholic schools and academies.

*\* These definitions are taken from the Balanced RE project developed and written by Jane Chipperton (Diocese of St Albans), Gillian Georgiou (Diocese of Lincoln), Olivia Seymour (Diocese of York) and Kathryn Wright (Diocese of Norwich).*

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