



Assessed distance learning course C

Evaluating how well a Church of England school meets the needs of all learners

This short piece of guided distance learning contains four tasks. The final task, task 4, will be assessed. The assessed task is to write the section of a SIAS section 48 inspection report on how well the school meets the needs of learners through its distinctive Christian character, using the evidence provided for you.

Tasks 1 to 3 will not be assessed directly but, during the assessment of Task 4, material you submit for these three tasks will be used to support the assessor in clarifying issues and in coming to a conclusion, where necessary.

For reference, you will need a copy of:

- the SIAS inspection framework.

The evidence base you will work from consists of:

- extracts from **the school's SEF (document C1)**
- extracts from **the school's self-evaluation as a Church of England school (document C2)**
- **the on-site evidence** collected by the inspector that relates to this key question (**document C3**) (*note that this is not the complete evidence base for the inspection*).

In addition, you will be provided with:

- the inspector's **other report sections** on collective worship and the leadership and management of the school as a church school (**document C4**)
- the **relevant criteria** from the SIAS framework and the relevant detailed criteria for school self-evaluation from the SIAS toolkit (**document C5**)
- **the answer sheet (document C6)**

Obtaining the materials you need

Download the evidence base and other materials onto your computer from the National Society's website (www.natsoc.org.uk) and either work on screen or from a printed copy of the materials.

When you have downloaded the answer sheet, please save it as a Word file (Word 97 to 2003 format), using the following filename:

DLC_yourNSIN_yoursurname.doc (**example:** DLC_999_Church.doc)

Please submit your answer sheet as an attachment to an email to Peter Churchill (peter.churchill@c-of-e.org.uk).

If you submit your answer sheet by 17.00 on 25 September 2008, your submission will be marked by the end of October. The assessment will continue to be available until the end of the year, and the final date by which should submit your answer sheet is 17.00 on 5 January 2009. Submissions received after 25 September may not be marked until January, although we hope to mark most of these during the autumn term.

The assessment

The task will be assessed using the National Society's standards for inspectors, both in the general expectations and more specifically in the skill areas highlighted below by →. Feedback to inspectors will be through an overall grade on the currently used four point scale and feedback on key strengths and areas for improvement.

NS Standards for Inspectors

General expectations

Inspectors will be expected to possess high levels of:

- generic and SIAS specific inspection skills
- knowledge and understanding of Anglican Church schools
- familiarity with the NS inspection framework & processes
- communication skills
- professional knowledge & integrity

Skills required for SIAS

Verification of SSE – Inspectors will have the capability to:

- set up an effective inspection strategy
- differentiate and apply appropriate inspection processes
- undertake a developmental dialogue with school on SSE outcomes.

Securing evidence – Inspectors will have the capability to:

- sample evidence by/from learners, staff and others
- listen to learners and contextualise responses
- engage in diagnostic dialogue
- observe and record learning, worship and the life of a school
- →evaluate a range of different categories of evidence
- →evaluate statistical data on school performance.

Judgement – Inspectors will have the capability to:

- →diagnose the reasons behind outcomes
- →evaluate evidence and make sound judgement
- →identify the standard of distinctiveness and effectiveness of a Church school.

Writing – Inspectors will have the capability to;

- →write to the SIAS framework format for reports
- →explain clearly in writing why they have made their judgements
- →write to a high standard of succinctness and clarity.

Inter-personal – Inspectors will have the capability to:

- inspect with credibility as an educational professional
- provide developmental feedback in course of inspection
- provide appropriate formal feedback
- work to the SIAS framework Code of Practice.

Assessment criteria

The criteria below are 'best fit' criteria, as they apply to the assessment task.

1. Outstanding

Inspectors display a high level of analytical and interpretational skills in using evidence, reaching insightful conclusions. In doing so, they demonstrate a very broad understanding, in depth, of the distinctiveness of Church of England schools and the SIAS inspection framework, and of what is important in the evidence. Text to grade match is transparent. The text focuses on key features of the school, not the framework criteria. Inspectors' judgements are supported by convincing and explicit arguments that draw on a wide range of relevant and telling evidence. Illustrations and explanations are very well chosen to highlight key elements that give rise to the judgement. Writing is concise, logical and conveys very clear judgements, with a high level of sensitivity to the context of the school.

2. Good

Inspectors demonstrate the ability to analyse and interpret evidence accurately and reach secure conclusions. In this, they draw on a good understanding of the distinctiveness of Church of England schools and the SIAS inspection framework, and of the key features of the evidence that is important. Grades match the text. The text includes key features of the school and does not emphasise framework criteria. Inspectors' judgements are based on a range of evidence and are supported by secure arguments. Explanations and illustrations are well chosen to support the judgement. Writing is concise and conveys clear judgements, taking into account the specific context of the school.

3. Satisfactory

Inspectors demonstrate the ability to reach generally sound conclusions using evidence, possibly missing some points or including occasional minor errors. This is supported by a sound understanding of the distinctiveness of Church of England schools and the SIAS inspection framework, and how some pieces of evidence are more important than others. Grades are secure but not always well supported by text. The text has a strong focus on criteria with some material to relate judgements to the school. Inspectors' judgements are consistent with the evidence, although some potential exemplification or illustration is missed. Judgements are explained with sufficient supporting argument and exemplification. Inspectors' writing conveys judgements accurately, although minor improvements may be needed before it is good enough for publication. Writing is generally clear, although it may be a little too long or too brief, and it is sufficiently sensitive not to offend the school.

4. Inadequate

Inspectors' interpretations of evidence are not secure, containing significant errors of analysis or interpretation. Their understanding of the distinctiveness of Church of England schools and/or the SIAS inspection framework is insufficiently broad or detailed to support their analysis. The importance of some pieces of evidence is missed. The text does not support the judgement. The text focuses on the criteria without sufficient material to link the judgement with the context of the school. Inspectors' judgements are assertions without sufficient supporting argument or illustration, or they are inconsistent with the evidence. Illustrations do not match the judgement and/or explanations are not explicitly argued, or are wrong. Inspectors' writing is not sufficiently clear to convey the reasons for the judgements, is too long, too short, or insensitive.

Preliminary task 1

Distance learning text 1

A section 48 inspection is about communicating an informed external evaluation of a school to support its improvement. Evaluation in this context means bringing an experienced eye to a range of evidence, analysing it, interpreting it in the context of the school, and coming to a conclusion. The process is not about personal preferences, however, and inspectors will need to use the criteria in the National Society's SIAS Framework to come to clear judgements.

School self-evaluation plays a big part in this evaluation, of course, and inspectors will sometimes find their views mirror precisely those of the school. However, school self-evaluation often does not go far enough, and focuses too much on what the school does rather than on the impact of its actions. Inspectors need to be aware of this and focus strongly on the extent to which the school's provision and the actions of staff have an impact on students' achievements and other outcomes, in all areas of school life.

Task 1

Investigate the evidence base to find out what you can about the impact of the school's Christian values on learners and the extent to which Christian values permeate the life of the school. Record in your answer (brief bullet points) the most important features of the school (maximum 5) you have highlighted and, for each, state what impact you feel this has on learners.

Please respond on the answer sheet: Task 1

Preliminary task 2

Distance learning text 2

When they begin to explore the evidence, inspectors sometimes find that pieces of evidence are not clear, are not entirely consistent or, at its worst, contradictory. In such cases, inspectors often have to gather further evidence to resolve potential mismatches between pieces of evidence. Such evidence needs to be recorded carefully so that there is a clear evidence trail to the judgement reached.

The inspector's task is then to weigh up the evidence, taking account of its impact on learners, before using the inspection criteria to come to considered view. This process is much more than counting how many points there are for or against a particular view. Rather, it should be a thoughtful analysis of the relative importance of each piece of evidence.

Task 2

Consider pupils' spiritual development. The school's SEF (4c) says, "*Pupils are encouraged to care for one another. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and we promote all of these areas of development strongly.*" In support of this, the CofE school self-evaluation (1C) says, "*Pupils' spiritual development is promoted through the Mission Statement and demonstrated through school's ethos*", and this is illustrated by some examples (1E). However, the mission statement quoted in the CofE self-evaluation (1C) suggests a greater emphasis on a caring than a spiritual dimension and, commenting on spiritual growth, the CofE self-evaluation notes (2C) that "*We have not collected information on this. We think it helps our pupils to understand themselves better and to develop a spiritual dimension in their lives.*"

Identify the piece(s) of on-site collected evidence (max 3) that resolve the issue to your satisfaction. Record these as brief bullet points in the answer sheet with their source(s), and briefly summarise evaluatively the evidence on the matter, as you would in an inspection.

Please respond on the answer sheet: Task 2

Preliminary task 3

Distant learning text 3

Inspection criteria are designed to make inspection judgements transparent, in that if other inspectors (or the school) were able to use the same evidence, they would come to the same conclusions. The criteria in the SIAS framework should be used when coming to an overall conclusion about each key question, but the more detailed criteria used in the SIAS self-evaluation toolkit are valuable in focusing on each of the supplementary questions during the inspection. These are 'best fit' criteria and inspectors need to use their professional judgement in coming to conclusions, weighing up the importance of the relevant evidence.

Inspectors should always use the criteria to support judgements before writing the text of a report section, not just when a difficult decision is close. Testing out a judgement against the criteria above or below the chosen one is usually a good way of firming up the judgement.

Task 3

Highlight for your own use the criteria (or parts of the criteria) that would enable you to make a judgement on the evidence you have included in Task 2. You may find using a range of colours is helpful. Then highlight the evidence base, again for your own use, to indicate where there is significant evidence about this key question and the supplementary questions in the SIAS framework noted below. On your answer sheet, indicate which **one** supplementary question is best supported by the evidence (irrespective of grade), and which **one** supplementary question is least well supported (again, irrespective of grade).

- **How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?**
 - To what extent do all learners feel valued and special?
 - How well do the school's Christian values impact on learners and enable them to flourish as individuals?
 - How well does the Christian ethos support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners, whether they are Christian, of other faiths or of none?
 - How are Christian values evident in the relationships between staff and learners, amongst learners and between staff?
 - How well is the school environment used to encourage spiritual development?

Please respond on the answer sheet: Task 3

The assessed task 4

Distance learning text 4

The purposes of the text in a section 48 inspection report is to support, convincingly, the overall judgements about the school and the four key questions. It should also draw readers' attention to any particular strengths and areas for development that the inspection has identified. It is important also to ensure that the report reads consistently and that a reader obtains a good understanding of why the inspector reached the judgement in the heading. Best practice suggests that the first few sentences should support the judgement clearly, leaving areas of strength and focus areas for development until later in the paragraph.

Task 4

Come to a judgement (note that this should be one of the four: *outstanding*, *good*, *satisfactory* or *inadequate*) about how well the school meets the needs of learners through its distinctive Christian character. Use the evidence you have highlighted above in task 3, together with, where helpful, the other evidence provided and the written sections of the report on CW and leadership and management.

Finally, write the paragraph for the report. You may wish to refer to the National Society's guidance on writing SIAS inspection reports.

Include in your paragraph:

- the main reason(s) for the judgement you have reached
- any key strengths or weaknesses that you feel should be included
- any illustrations that will support your arguments

Please restrict your answers to approximately 200-250 words. Any submissions with fewer than 150 words or more than 300 words will be returned unmarked.

Please respond on the answer sheet: Task 4