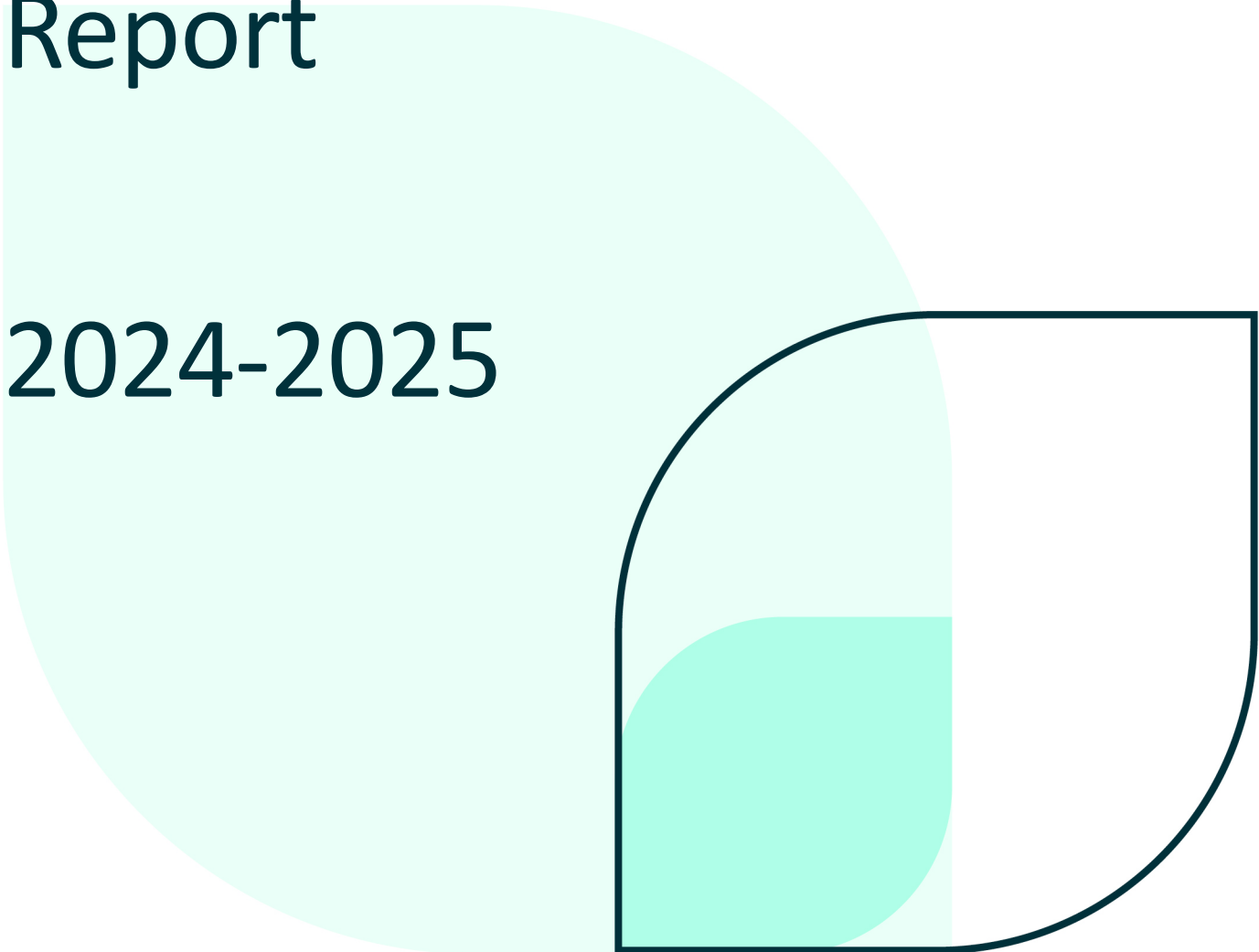


# The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Annual Report

2024-2025





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## Introduction by David Tait | Deputy Director of SIAMS

This year's Annual Report examines the fruits of the second full year of the operation of the September 2023 SIAMS Framework. The system of compassionate accountability envisioned in the Framework and encapsulated in the approach of 'inspection in a Christian manner' draws together experts who each contribute to an evaluation of Church school effectiveness.

- Leaders as experts in the life, work and ministry of their school
- Inspectors as experts in evaluating what it means to be a school that is contextually faithful to its foundation as a Church school.

The scope and content of the SIAMS Framework combine to set out the essence of what each Church school could be as they find expression in their own unique context.

Evidence continues to demonstrate that SIAMS inspections are being carried out in a way that minimises stress on school leaders whilst ensuring a robust and incisive evaluation of school effectiveness. The depth and clarity of the data gleaned from inspection provide knowledge to all who are invested in the rich ecology of Church schools: the National Society for Education (NSE), Church of England Diocesan Boards of Education (DBEs) and education teams, Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST) and, not least, school leaders including governors. These insights ensure that those responsible for doing so are deftly placed to offer the most appropriate training, guidance and support to Church schools. SIAMS inspection holds schools to account: rejoicing in each school's successes as the inspection report amplifies and evaluatively tells the school's story whilst also giving direction as to priorities for development.

As you read on, you will find the overarching points that emerge from this year's inspection data and the attendant recommendations to inform your own work either in or with Church of England schools.

SIAMS inspectors have carried out 912 inspections in the last academic year, accounting for approximately one-fifth of all Church of England and Methodist schools in England. As such our body of evidence is significant and continues to expand. In the last 24 months we have inspected approximately 40% of all Church schools. Feedback tells us that school inspection need not be a negative experience but can actually be positive for those involved. The narrative around inspection is beginning to change. Inspection in a Christian manner is yielding an increasingly rich harvest of positive change borne of compassionate accountability. Several of the findings and reflections on what inspection evidence is telling us in 2024-25 are strikingly similar to that which emerged in 2023-24. This is not a reason to be disheartened. Rather, we should be encouraged. It demonstrates that our evidence is not ephemeral or a mirrored symmetry of the rapid churn of educational mores. It is rooted in compelling evidence of impact. The work that schools undertake to yield this rich vision-driven harvest of lives transformed takes time and energy and a deep attention to context. It is rarely achieved by 'tick box' actions. It is transformational rather than presentational. It is testament to the glory of God. Indeed, as the second century theologian Irenaeus said, 'the glory of God is a human being fully alive.'<sup>1</sup>

In 2024-2025, SIAMS carried out a second nationwide survey, gathering the opinions of school leaders, Diocesan Boards of Education, representatives of MAST, inspectors, and quality assurance

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Oldfield *Fully Alive* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2025).



inspectors. The data that emerged through these surveys and a summary of the analysis are included at Annex 1 of this report. The information gleaned feeds directly into our systems and processes and informs this annual report.

I would like to thank everyone who is involved with SIAMS inspection. Each comprise the many parts of one body. Each ensures that pupils and adults in Church of England and Methodist schools are experiencing an education that puts fullness and abundance of life at the centre of their vision for the transformation of every community served.



# Executive Summary

## 1. How a school's Christian vision is enabling pupils and adults to flourish

- 1.1. Evidence from inspections is unequivocal. Where leaders understand their school's context and develop a theologically appropriate vision in response to this, the vision is effective in transforming lives. It enables leaders to lead effectively in a supportive culture focused on human flourishing in such a way that is faithful to the Christian foundation of the school.
- 1.2. Leaders' understanding of what roots a Christian vision theologically in terms of scripture, the teaching of the Church and God-given human reason continues to strengthen. Similarly, leaders demonstrate increasing understanding of the context in which their school is situated and the communities they serve. Leaders demonstrate an increased confidence to move away from adherence to 'box-ticking criteria' and to do wisely that which they discern to be right for their school context. Leaders' access to high quality training in understanding context, vision and the interplay between the two appears to be having the intended impact. Whilst a small number of schools continue to focus on the immediate demands of an upcoming inspection, this is less common than previously observed. The specific needs of the community and the foundation of their school are typically to the fore in leaders' thinking and decision making. This means that increasing numbers of Church schools are purposefully serving their communities and are alert to how a meaningful understanding of vision helps to curate an appropriate Christian vision.
- 1.3. Leaders are using a variety of approaches to make the school's vision a living reality. Values are the most frequently used tool in this regard; another is the use of approaches linked to character education. Ways of working such as these are effective when they emanate from the vision.
- 1.4. Inspection is only ever a snapshot in time. It tells part of a school's rich, granular story at one particular moment. Where vision-driven leadership is most effective, leaders do not use the occasion of an inspection to change or adapt something they know to be working less effectively than it should. Nor do they maintain the status quo where it is less than effective because they know an inspection is upcoming. Rather, effective leaders are bold and courageous. They step outside of the inspection cycle and make the right vision-driven and context-informed decisions for their school community when they are needed. They respond to the demands of the moment as they seek to serve the current reality of their context. They are adaptable and adept.
- 1.5. School governance is a demanding task. Governors undertake a vital role in ensuring that Church schools are effectively living up to their Christian foundation. Inspection evidence demonstrates that governors frequently undertake monitoring activities linked to the Christian vision of the school. In too many cases, however, they are failing to turn this information into an evaluative consideration of the effectiveness of the school's vision-driven work. This inhibits their ability to understand the impact of the school's vision on pupils and adults. In turn, it stymies improvement as governors may be unaware of what needs to improve and why. A lack of coherent knowledge of what the school is doing well and what needs to improve is continuing to hinder the improvement of too many Church schools. Similarly, it diminishes the substantial time,



energy and commitment that governors give to their role. In this regard, inspection findings are little changed from previous years.

- 1.6. There is strong evidence that where there is convergence and subsequently coherence between a school's vision and that of a multi academy trust (MAT), the MAT is playing a significant role in supporting and enhancing the school, as a Church school. This mutuality of investment in the school's vision-driven work is bearing fruit. Where individual school and MAT visions do not align or where a MAT adopts a 'hands off' approach to the school as a Church school there are often missed opportunities for the development and strengthening of the school as a Church school.
- 1.7. Progress is being made in addressing the propensity for some schools to only engage with expert external support in the academic year leading up to a SIAMS inspection. Evidence suggests that more schools are engaging in an adaptive and responsive way to training and that this is securing improvement in effective vision-driven work. Where cyclical training is available, schools at all stages are aided in their ability to self-improve. This is a trend that needs to be accelerated if improvement is to be more widely seen in schools' vision-driven work across the Church school estate.

## **2. How a school's curriculum reflects its Christian vision**

- 2.1. In the vast majority of Church schools, the curriculum is constructed to reflect the vision. In this way the vision can be said to be giving life and direction to the curriculum. This is typically manifest in the ways in which leaders construct a curriculum that widens horizons, raises aspirations and enables flourishing by supporting pupils to be open to more.
- 2.2. In a Church school, spiritual growth, development and flourishing must sit at the heart of any curriculum. Spirituality can never be a bolt-on or additional extra. It is an intrinsic component of an holistic education. Human flourishing in each of its manifestations, including spiritual flourishing, must be central to any curriculum in a Church school. This includes both the taught and what is often referred to as the 'unseen' or 'hidden' curriculum. If a vision is truly a Christian vision for education, then spiritual development and growth must already be part of it. A curriculum cannot therefore reflect the vision if spiritual growth is not an inherent part of it.
- 2.3. Inspection evidence indicates that there has been a continued strengthening of leaders' understanding of the interconnectedness of spirituality, the curriculum and the spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults. In the vast majority of Church schools, opportunities abound for pupils and adults to explore what it means to be human and to explore relationships in terms of connectedness to self, others and the transcendent.
- 2.4. There are, however, a number of caveats. Disturbingly, a substantial minority of Church schools have a poor understanding of spirituality. A number have not considered deeply how spiritual flourishing can be supported through the curriculum. The rate of improvement is not rapid enough.
- 2.5. Typically, schools in which spiritual flourishing through the curriculum is a development point have not considered in sufficient depth how the school's curriculum should enable the holistic formation of pupils. The connection between context and spiritual growth is not explicitly understood. The school's provision therefore lacks nuance, and opportunities for the formation of both pupils and staff are missed. In such scenarios, where spiritual growth occurs, it is typically incidental and fortuitous rather than explicitly planned for.



### **3. How daily collective worship is enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually**

- 3.1. Worship sits at the beating heart of the vast majority of Church schools. It is typically inspirational, inclusive, and invitational. Inspection evidence demonstrates that the provision for worship is strong across Church schools in England. Provision in including elements of Anglican and Methodist liturgy and practice demonstrates fidelity to the traditions of the churches. Worship is typically strongly rooted in scripture.
- 3.2. However, whilst provision is strong, the suitability of this provision in curating space for spiritual flourishing is diminished when schools do not have a coherent understanding of spirituality. In these schools the impact of worship is inhibited by a confusion as to its purpose. Leaders are unable to comment in an informed way about how worship leads to spiritual flourishing for pupils and adults. This is because the link between provision and impact is not deeply understood. If leaders are unsure as to what spirituality and spiritual flourishing means they are unable to determine if it is happening in practice.
- 3.3. Schools frequently focus on involving pupils in the planning and leadership of worship. This is typically because they believe that this is fruitful in terms of enabling/enhancing their spiritual flourishing. Where this is successful, it is because leaders understand their community, and are confident that the opportunity to be involved in leading worship is what is required to support and promote spiritual flourishing. Where spiritual flourishing because of worship is strong, leaders understand that for some pupils the opportunity to lead worship does not mean that they will automatically flourish spiritually. This underlines, once again, the importance of leaders understanding and responding to the unique individual school context.

### **4. How a school's Christian vision is creating a culture in which pupils and adults are being treated well**

- 4.1. Findings from inspections indicate that Church schools are typically places of nurture and care. They are communities in which pupils and adults are treated with dignity and are affirmed in their God-given worth.
- 4.2. Similarly, when things do go wrong in the complex, interdependent eco-system that is a school community, relationships are typically restored and lost worth reclaimed.
- 4.3. The evidence from inspection relates to pupils and adults from a diverse range of backgrounds. It is therefore reasonable to assert that Church schools are generally places of inclusion where, irrespective of background or need, the dignity and worth of each are upheld.
- 4.4. Christian vision is reported as being a key factor in this work. It is most evident where leaders have a strong understanding of their context and are therefore aware of the needs in the school community. Consequently, provision is an appropriate response to these.
- 4.5. Evidence of impact in terms of people being treated well in the school community typically uses language related to worth, value, being known, dignity, respect, compassion, nurture and forgiveness. The culture created is typically manifest in observed behaviours and an approach based on loving acceptance, reconciliation and forgiveness.
- 4.6. Strong provision for good mental health is a logical outworking of a vision-driven and contextually appropriate approach to the way in which people are treated well.



Inspection evidence demonstrates that, in the vast majority of Church schools, strong provision for the wellbeing of pupils and staff is enabling human flourishing.

- 4.7. Deep probing and triangulation of evidence with different diverse groups within the school community has been a focus for inspectors this year. This was in order to determine if the unique groups that comprise any school community are being treated well. This focus will continue in the next academic year to provide assurance that those leading Church schools hear the voices of those who are not otherwise heard, and that they fulfil their calling to the 'least, last, lonely and lost' as they ensure all are treated well.

## 5. How a school's Christian vision is creating an active culture of justice and responsibility

- 5.1. Schools look outwards to serve others as well as inwardly to the wellbeing of members of the school community. There is a balance of rights and responsibilities as the internal culture resulting from the vision translates into an ethic of responsible, justice-seeking service.
- 5.2. Inspection evidence indicates that where work related to justice is an authentic and meaningful outworking of the school's vision it leads to benefits for both the school community and those with whom the school partners.
- 5.3. However, inspection evidence indicates that there remains some measure of misunderstanding whereby the scope of justice is reduced to the concept of 'courageous advocacy'. Whilst this may form a helpful conceptual tool for schools to think through their work related to justice, it cannot fully capture the richness of the work. Where there is too great focus on 'courageous advocacy' in isolation, schools must ask themselves what the intended focus and benefit of their 'courageous advocacy' work is. It should, of course, be justice, God's justice. This is the substance of the inspection question. It is understanding something, in an age and stage appropriate sense, of what the Kingdom of God is. This might helpfully be conceptualised as a community of generous self-giving care in which the disturbed are comforted and the comfortable disturbed.
- 5.4. Where practice is less strong, evidence suggest that schools are focussing unhelpfully on partnerships where the intended benefit for both the school community and partner is unclear. In such instances, the partnership often lacks a mutuality of purpose. Schools should therefore ask themselves how any partnership is an effective expression of the school's vision, and if the intended benefits are clear and subsequently fruitful in practice. Partnership must be intentional and informed and not simply a compliance response to an inspection question.
- 5.5. Similarly, where a school's work is a response to a one size fits all schema or package rather than a contextually appropriate outworking of the school's vision, its effectiveness is limited. Opportunities are missed and the work can be superficial.
- 5.6. Schools' work in relation to this inspection question must remain a focus for training, guidance and support from those with a responsibility to provide them. Improvements in effectiveness in the 2024-25 academic year are heartening but it will take time for this message to filter through to schools in order that the full effectiveness of the potential for work in the scope of this inspection question can be realised.
- 5.7. Where practice is strong, partnerships with the local church(es) and diocesan education teams and/or MAST, and MATs are impacting directly on the quality of schools' work.



- 5.8. Similarly, where there is alignment and coherence between the school's vision and that of the trust, this partnership is enhancing the effectiveness of the school as a Church school and leading directly to human flourishing.
- 5.9. A multiplicity of wider partnerships is also beneficial to Church schools. These typically include other individual schools, clusters of schools within a locality or grouped by characteristic, charities and community organisations.

## 6. Religious education

- 6.1. Unsurprisingly, given its provision and profile in a Church school, RE is frequently cited as both a school strength and/or development point in SIAMS reports. Strengths related to RE typically include the effectiveness of the curriculum, effectiveness of subject leadership, and teaching and learning about Christianity. Development points are typified by:
  - aspects relating to teaching and learning about a range of religions other than Christianity
  - teaching and learning about worldviews
  - understanding of diversity within/diverse expressions of Christianity
  - assessment to support learning, and monitoring
  - evaluation of the subject to lead to improvements.
- 6.2. The prevalence of development points related to RE suggests that there is, in some schools, a degree of uncertainty as to the purpose and place of RE in the curriculum. Where RE is under-resourced (both in terms of financial investment of resourcing, including training, and/or time dedicated to teaching) the result is a diminution in quality. Conversely, where the opposite is the case and RE is prioritised as an academic subject, it is an effective expression of the school's Christian vision and pupils are acquiring substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge.
- 6.3. As made clear in the 2023-2024 annual report, a reasonable conclusion to draw is that the availability, extent, and quality of RE advice, training, and support to schools, from bodies such as DBEs and MAST are likely to be inconsistent. Plausible reasons for this are likely resource driven - both on the part of schools and those tasked with providing guidance and support. It is reasonable to conclude that resourcing constraints are likely to be linked both to finances and to time.
- 6.4. The picture across the country is mixed. Provision of support and therefore its impact is inconsistent. Pupil experience is, in turn, fragmented and this has a direct impact on the quality of RE.
- 6.5. Core RE at KS3 (specifically Y9) and in KS4 continues to be inconsistent. This relates to both its presence and, when provided, its quality. Evidence suggests that this arises as a result of schools' decisions to enter pupils for GCSE RE a year early whilst also not providing core RE. This undervaluing of RE is depriving significant groups of the benefits of good RE.
- 6.6. A similar situation persists at KS5. Here, RE is all too often not provided or, where it is, it is insufficiently discrete, unnecessarily fragmented, or of too poor quality to benefit pupils.
- 6.7. A further range of factors can be identified from inspection evidence that exacerbate the challenge to provide high quality RE in Church schools. These include:
  - insufficient teacher subject knowledge
  - ineffective assessment practices



- timetabling pressures and decisions
- financial and time resourcing
- the quality of CPD for those who teach RE
- the consequences of the absence of RE from the EBacc in KS4.

It is reasonable to contend that the limited attention given to RE in initial teacher training and early career development exacerbates the impact of the above challenges.

- 6.8. Arresting this downward spiral of baked-in decline in RE requires immediate and ongoing nationwide attention. The responsibility for this rests at the macro, system level. In schools, RE teachers and leaders cannot be held accountable for systemic challenges. The need for action is pressing.

## 7. Other observations

- 7.1. As noted in the introduction, it is striking that many of the issues raised in this report as requiring attention are similar, indeed often identical to those raised in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.
- 7.2. On one hand, this might at a surface level be seen as a cause for disconsolation. The pace of improvement is too slow and, as a result, opportunities for the flourishing of pupils and adults in our Church schools are being missed. There is some truth in this observation.
- 7.3. Alongside this an alternative, more nuanced and hopeful perspective can be posited. Change takes time and this is especially the case where it is to be deeply embedded and meaningful. Whilst there is never an excuse for inaction, there is a balance to be struck between the urgency of the mandate for improvement that inspection evidence gives, and the time needed for thoughtful, long-term changes to be embedded. Urgency must be balanced with sustainability. Vision must look to the long term and beyond the bounded horizon of the all too prevalent compliance culture that can characterise the educational landscape.
- 7.4. Fruitful areas for continued focus for improvement in Church schools include:
- Christian vision, cognisant of context and the impact of this
  - Christian spirituality and spiritual development
  - Justice understood as an expression of God's Kingdom
  - Teaching of non-religious worldviews
  - Teaching of religions other than Christianity
  - An understanding of diversity within Christian belief and practice.
- 7.5. Whilst emerging evidence suggests that schools are increasingly taking a longer-term view of improvement, it remains the case that schools often only engage deeply with expert training and guidance 'focused on SIAMS' in the year before and/or the year of their SIAMS inspection. This is impeding the speed of improvement across the Church school sector. Improvement needs to take place in response to need, to enable human flourishing and as a necessary good in and of itself. It cannot simply be a response to inspection. Indeed, the spirit of the [Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021](#) whereby the Diocesan Board of Education is to 'promote or assist in the promotion of church schools in the diocese' would be commensurate with an ongoing and cyclical approach to expert school support and guidance.
- 7.6. Church schools and those responsible for providing them with training and advice should therefore accelerate the prioritisation of engagement with such expertise as



part of a regular, cyclical process of improvement. SIAMS inspection should not be the rationale for the instigation of, or engagement with, such support. The value of ongoing training and support is about schools being equipped to fulfil their calling and mission. About the essence of 'being' a Church school, rather than a response to the occasion of an inspection.



## Recommendations for action: school leaders

1. Access regular appropriate expert training and advice on context cognisant Christian vision. Apply this learning to the life and work of the school.
2. Engage in a cyclical and ongoing programme of development as a Church school. Do not prioritise this in terms of time or other resource as a response to the occasion of an inspection. Be bold in instigating change where this is needed and do not allow the inspection cycle to affect the timing of the work that is necessary to enable the flourishing of pupils and adults.
3. Prioritise governors' attendance at expert training on effective and sustainable ways to monitor and, crucially, how to evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of the vision-driven work of a Church school. Such monitoring and evaluation should include a focus on the impact of provision on all different groups in the school, leading to improvement.
4. Pay attention to the fundamental interconnectedness between spirituality, the curriculum and spiritual flourishing. Apply this understanding to both the curriculum and worship.
5. Ensure that the school's work on justice is an authentic expression of the school's Christian vision that draws on an understanding of the Kingdom of God.
6. Ensure that decision-making and resource-allocation enable subject leaders for RE to have access to the most up-to-date training and resources. This should align with the expectations set out in the [Church of England Statement of Entitlement for RE](#).
7. Regularly access high-quality and relevant expert training for all who lead and teach RE. This should include a focus on non-religious worldviews, religions other than Christianity and an understanding of diversity within Christian belief and practice. It should also address issues of monitoring and evaluation of the subject to lead to subsequent improvement.
8. Ensure that resource decisions have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning in RE. This includes ensuring that teachers are appropriately trained and equipped, and that decisions related to the RE curriculum and its resourcing are evidence based.
9. Ensure leaders' decisions result in all pupils having high-quality RE provision, covering at the very least their legal entitlement. Pay particular attention to decisions that may result in RE GCSE being brought forward to year 9 and that may have a detrimental impact on students' understanding of and performance in the subject and the place of RE in a Church school sixth form.



## Recommendations for action: Diocesan Boards of Education and the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust

1. Ensure that schools have access to regular appropriate training and support on understanding their context and an appropriate theological response to this. Support them to apply their Christian vision to the work of the school.
2. Provide, or establish access to, a cyclical and ongoing programme of training related to Church school effectiveness for Church school leaders. Encourage leaders to step outside of the inspection cycle and prioritise decisions for flourishing as they are needed. Discourage engagement in training and support only as a response to the occasion of an inspection.
3. Provide, or establish access to, training for school governors and multi academy trust trustees on effective ways to monitor, and crucially how to evaluate, the effectiveness of all aspects of a Church school. This should support governors and trustees to support school improvement.
4. Provide, or establish access to, training that addresses the interconnectedness between spirituality, the curriculum and spiritual flourishing. Support schools to successfully apply this understanding to both the curriculum and worship.
5. Provide, or establish access to, training that ensures that the school's work on justice is an authentic expression of its Christian vision that draws on an understanding of the Kingdom of God. Support leaders to apply this training to their work.
6. Provide, or establish access to, accurate and well-informed training, advice, networking and resources for school leaders and teachers of RE, specifically on the following.
  - Christianity as a global, multi-cultural faith.
  - Knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and worldviews other than Christianity.
  - Knowledge and understanding of non-religious traditions and worldviews.
  - Strategies for assessing pupils' progress in such a way that informs curriculum development and enables high-quality and effective teaching.
  - Strategies and knowledge to enable governors and trustees to monitor and evaluate the overall quality and effectiveness of RE.
7. Ensure that advice and guidance are in place for secondary schools about how to provide high-quality core RE for all students, that will both meet basic legal requirements and enable students to flourish in the subject.



## Recommendations for action: the National Society for Education

1. Explore how national leadership training programmes are tailored to systematically and routinely include education on, and information specifically about, Christian vision and Church school distinctiveness.
2. Use all existing national leadership training programmes and networks to play an appropriate part in equipping Church school leaders and governors as well as trustees of multi academy trusts, to understand the specific duty of leading a Church school.
3. Produce guidance for Diocesan Boards of Education that has clarity both on the legal basis of collective worship in Church schools and on the status of the guidance itself. Disseminate this widely so that can be applied to the work of Church schools.
4. Produce guidance for Diocesan Boards of Education that addresses the interconnectedness between spirituality, the curriculum and spiritual flourishing. Disseminate this widely so that can be applied to the work of Church schools.
5. Working in partnership as appropriate, create and distribute resources for Diocesan Boards of Education, school leaders, and teachers of RE. These resources should initially be targeted to help schools in the following.
  - Christianity as a global, multi-cultural faith.
  - Knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and worldviews other than Christianity.
  - Knowledge and understanding of non-religious traditions and worldviews.
6. Ensure that any revisions and updates to the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for RE reflect any government changes to the status of RE and are communicated to dioceses and inspectors in order to inform their training and advice to schools.
7. Explore how national leadership training programmes, such as the suite of NPQs, might be used to help address the current lack of teachers' knowledge about and confidence in the teaching of RE.



# What inspection outcomes in 2024-2025 tell us about Church of England and Methodist schools.

## Detailed findings

### 1. How a school's Christian vision is enabling pupils and adults to flourish

- 1.1. A Church school's vision can be seen as an up-to-date expression of the school's purpose as expressed in its trust deed. Evidence from inspection undertaken in the academic year 2024-2025 demonstrates that the all-encompassing importance of Christian vision continues to be a focus for school leaders. A theologically rooted Christian vision, when most powerful in its impact, is conceived and lived out as a response to the school's unique context. At the same time, it is deeply rooted in the Christian story. A Christian vision, properly constructed, speaks to the inherent worth of every child and adult in the Church school system and understands flourishing as an inherently relational construct. As the [Flourishing Together](#) document makes clear, we cannot flourish alone. It is a collective endeavour.
- 1.2. This purposeful and adaptive focus on vision is encouraging for all involved in the education provided by Church of England and Methodist schools. The Bible is clear that God's purpose is for the flourishing of human society. As the prophet Jeremiah makes clear, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11). Inspection evidence indicates that this is an embodied reality in the vast majority of our Church schools. They are communities where vision-driven work is leading to human flourishing.
- 1.3. Evidence from inspections demonstrates that an appropriately conceived and constructed vision enables the school to understand its purpose. In turn, this enables it to serve the pressing and multi-faceted needs of its community well. The school is able to live out the Church of England's [Vision for Education](#) in terms of human flourishing and service of the common good. The lives of pupils and adults are transformed. There is something inherently relational about this and in theological terms it reflects the relationship at the heart of the Trinity. Human flourishing involves connectedness both to others and to the transcendent. In Martin Buber's <sup>2</sup>terms, Christianity must foreground the I-Thou relationship rather than an I-It relationship. At Christianity's heart lies a relational understanding of the triune God.
- 1.4. Understanding context is not easy. It requires discernment and insight. In the fragile eco system that is a school, challenges can present in unexpected ways. Leaders need to be alert to these challenges. Inspection evidence tells us that leaders are exercising judicious wisdom in understanding the context of their school. This is best understood as both the community the school serves and the community in which it is situated. They can, and often are, different. They do evolve and change. Charles

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<sup>2</sup> M Buber, *I and Thou* (Lushena Classics 2024 edition).



Wesley asserted that the duty of a Christian was to 'serve the current age'<sup>3</sup> It is the 'charge' which with Christians are entrusted. To apply this need to serve as the demands of the current age dictate to a vision can require courage and determination. It requires brave decision-making and a precise focus on intended outcomes. Where these challenges are addressed or navigated, inspection reports demonstrate that schools' visions are having the desired transformative effect. Where identified as necessary, change should not be delayed in a school because of an impending inspection. If the need to change for the benefit of the community has been identified, the work should commence as required.

- 1.5. There is much to celebrate and SIAMS reports detail numerous examples of vision-driven work making a difference. St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School in the Diocese of Blackburn is one such school. The vision is based on Colossians 2:7. In this school leaders ensure that the 'biblical basis of the vision unites the community in a common purpose,' and 'underpins an inclusive and enabling culture.' Leaders understand the context and use this information to ensure that 'regular reviews of the vision with staff and pupils mean that it remains relevant in serving the needs of the community.' Vision as a response to context engenders flourishing.
- 1.6. Similarly, the Christian vision of Bodiam Church of England Primary School, in the Diocese of Chichester serves its context very well. The vision is based on Mark 12:31. The inspection report notes that it is 'a simple, yet profound, vision that results in a close-knit school community, supporting and nurturing each other day by day.' Again, the vision is dynamic not static and responds readily to context. The inspector concludes that 'the more recently added value of aspiration inspires pupils to aim for the best, especially for their very best behaviour towards others.' Vision changes lives for the better when it is adaptive to changing contexts and responds to presenting needs.
- 1.7. Christian visions come in different forms and are presented in different ways. To a degree, this is reflective of the diversity of the Church school estate. Successfully embedded visions draw on Christian theology and are a response to context-driven needs. This theological reflection and framing are rooted in the teachings and traditions of the church as well as in scripture. Inspection evidence indicates that, whilst a small number of visions appear to have been implemented simply for the purposes of inspection, this is no longer common practice. Increasing numbers of school leaders are investing time and energy in reflecting theologically on their context. In doing so they are exploring with wisdom and sensitivity the needs of their school community and the most appropriate theological response to these. Where a vision has most impact, scripture and Christian teaching speak directly to the lived experience of the school community.
- 1.8. As is long established in Church schools, values are the most frequently cited way in which schools make their vision a lived reality. Values, when understood as a way in which the vision is lived out, can give pupils a vocabulary and shared structure in

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<sup>3</sup> C Wesley, from the hymn *A charge to keep I have* (658 in the current Methodist Hymn Book) The second verse begins: 'To serve the present age, my calling to fulfil.'



which to explore and experience the fruits of the vision. Values support vision. They cannot take its place. At St James' Church of England Primary school in the Diocese of Manchester, the 'distinctive Bible-based vision, and its associated Christian values' guide the work of the school. They have been 'skilfully developed' and are 'highly relevant to the school's setting and context'. As a result of this, they are 'transformative for the school community.' Vision responds to context and is transformative in its impact.

- 1.9. Inspection evidence indicates that strong and effective leaders are supported in their development of a Christian vision for their schools. This support typically comes from the diocese and/or MAST, local church and, in the case of some academies, from the trust. This collaboration in bringing together an understanding of theology and context is effective. Co-dependence is a sign of strength.
- 1.10. There is an important caveat here. Where there is alignment and coherence between the vision of the school and that of the trust, the school's vision-driven work is enhanced. This is further strengthened where the trust has the requisite capacity in terms of skill and time resource to support the school in setting and realising its vision. This applies to both majority and minority Church trusts. The key to success is the trust having a vision that has resonance with that of the school. At St Francis' Catholic and Church of England Primary Academy in the Diocese of Portsmouth, vision is described as the 'fibre of the academy.' The Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT) supports the school in its 'quest for further development.' At St Margaret's Church of England Academy in the Diocese of Liverpool, 'mutual respect and a singularity of purpose mark the partnership between the academy and the All Saints Multi-Academy Trust.' As a result, it is 'building on its proud heritage, enabling its community to thrive personally, professionally and through learning.'
- 1.11. Monitoring and subsequent evaluation are necessary activities to enable school leaders to determine if the school's vision is having the intended impact. Evidence from inspection indicates an improvement in the frequency with which leaders move from simply monitoring to an evaluation of impact. This evaluation is effective where analysis is made of all available information, and leaders can use the knowledge that they gain to make evidence-informed decisions for amendments and adaptations to the vision driven work of the school.
- 1.12. This evaluative use of monitoring information works at a series of sequentially developing levels. Most obvious is where evaluative evidence-based information is used to inform developments to structural aspects of school life. This can include, for example, school policies, practices and decisions around how money is spent or allocated. At a deeper level, evaluation can be used to inform and reframe the vision-driven relational aspects of the school's work. This can include informing the partnerships developed, the operation of power dynamics within relationships and strategic decision-making. At the most transformative level, evaluative monitoring information can inform and refresh the rooting of the school's work. This can include, for example, the transformation of beliefs, assumptions and narratives that influence what the community or its individual members do or think.



- 1.13. At Ark St Alban's Academy in the Diocese of Birmingham, the importance of evaluation is well understood. The vision encapsulates the school's belief that each child is unique and that the goal of education is true wisdom. Leaders, including governors, are described as holding the school's priorities with 'relentless determination.' They are 'the plumbline against which all decisions are measured, opportunities examined, and progress evaluated'. As a result, the academy trust and the church are 'strong allies.' This ensures that they are able to support the 'school's astute self-analysis and holistic ambition for fullness of life for all.'
- 1.14. In a similar way in the Diocese of Salisbury, governors of Crockerton Church of England Primary School root their monitoring activity in the vision to "Be Joyful, Grow to Maturity, Encourage One Another, Live in Harmony and Peace." They use questions focused on the vision 'as part of their strategic decision-making processes.' One example is the way in which they 'consider if changes/actions are likely to bring more joy to the life of the school.' This forms the basis of regular monitoring and crucially this is coupled with subsequent evaluation of the impact of the vision. In this way, the information gathered is then used to 'plan the next steps for school improvement.'
- 1.15. In summary, inspection evidence from 2024-2025 indicates that Church school governors and/or trustees are increasingly using monitoring information to probe evaluatively and are therefore equipped with the information they need to support school leaders to take the necessary next steps to ensure the impact of the school's Christian vision. That said, there are still occasions where monitoring does not lead to evaluation. The impact of this monitoring activity is therefore limited. It is not contributing to improvement. Sharpening of practice in this area should be a continued focus for school leaders and those who support them.

## 2. How a school's curriculum reflects its Christian vision

- 2.1. The SIAMS Framework under the auspices of IQ2 presupposes that the school's curriculum will reflect the school's vision and be an outworking of it. Inherent within that understanding of curriculum is the expectation that it will provide for the spiritual development of pupils. A curriculum that reflects the school's vision can only be effective if there is sufficient scope within it for spiritual flourishing.
- 2.2. In Church of England and Methodist schools across the country there is a steady but not rapid trajectory of improvement in the extent to which this is the case. Evidence from inspections in 2024-2025 confirms that some schools have not settled on a context-appropriate understanding of what constitutes Christian spirituality. In some schools, an understanding of spirituality is confined to what takes place in worship and does not extend to the full scope of the hidden and taught curriculum. It is reasonable to conclude that, in these schools, opportunities for spiritual development are fragmentary at best. The incidental nature of provision, in the absence of a coherent understanding, is impeding pupils' spiritual growth and flourishing. Simply stated, if there is not a commonality of purpose in what the school is attempting to achieve and a shared understanding of the process to go about it, any impact is likely to be minimal. The absence of a coherent and consistent approach to spiritual development impedes schools' work in this area.



- 2.3. The prevalence of development points relating to a school's understanding of spirituality or spiritual development suggests that this is very much a work in progress across the Church school estate and must be a continued focus in many schools. It is likely, too, to be a continued focus for those who support schools with expert advice and guidance. Precisely focused training and development are likely to accelerate the pace of improvement. Such acceleration will ensure that all pupils in Church schools have access to a curriculum that supports spiritual flourishing, as is their right. Leaders should be encouraged to understand that an effective Christian vision must have spirituality at its core - an understanding of what it means to be alive, to be human. This is about formation; spirituality being essential to being human.
- 2.4. It is important to draw leaders' attention to the fact that where, spiritual development is a strength of a school, leaders have not acted superficially in response to inspection. Indeed, responding only on the occasion of an expected inspection is likely to prove unhelpful. The school's approach should be a reflection of its Christian vision, which is itself rooted in and responsive to context.
- 2.5. Caution too should be exercised around what might be termed a 'language' of spirituality. This is useful only insofar as it pertains to the shared lexicon used by a school for its discourse on spirituality in order to make it intelligible. It is not about recited definitions or the correct use of specific terminology. It is sufficient that all of those working in the school have a commonality of language to be used. It is therefore a shared school understanding of what is trying to be achieved and sits apart from personal beliefs or approaches. Language has many meanings and indeed some of it is not spoken. Schools should be alert to the fact that not every pupil or adult will express their spirituality verbally but may indeed be flourishing spiritually. This may be the case for example for pupils with a special educational need or disability who do not typically verbalise their thoughts.
- 2.6. At St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary School in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, there is a 'deep, consistent understanding of spiritual growth.' Leaders have engaged in a thoughtful process to understand what is right for their context and have supported staff to have the appropriate language and planned opportunities to talk about spirituality. As a result, 'intentionally planned moments of awe and wonderment feed pupils.'
- 2.7. At Richmond Methodist Primary School in the Darlington Methodist District, there is a shared understanding of spirituality. This provides pupils with the 'language to express the impact of experiences within the curriculum on their spiritual development.' Spirituality is therefore 'woven throughout the curriculum.' The inspector notes, too, that the provision of a dedicated chaplain 'further strengthens the provision for spiritual development.'
- 2.8. The majority of inspection reports indicate that Church schools offer a curriculum that is rich, engaging, and inclusive. Where this is the case, the curriculum is a reflection of the school's vision. Inspection evidence demonstrates that, on the whole, Church schools are offering an education that is inclusive, particularly of those who are vulnerable and that this is leading to pupils' flourishing.



### 3. How daily collective worship is enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually

- 3.1. The frequency with which the centrality of worship to life in Church schools is cited in inspection reports is striking. The role that worship plays in rooting and centring a school community should not be underestimated. Worship continues to be routinely described as 'inclusive, invitational and inspiring.' Where this is the case, worship is a life-giving outworking of the school's foundation.
- 3.2. Worship at Horsley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School in the Diocese of Gloucester is 'a much-cherished part of the school day.' It demonstrates fidelity to the school's Christian foundation, whilst welcoming all. The inspector reports that the 'school's vision permeates through each gathering, reinforcing a love for all.' In this way, 'moving acts of worship' bring the community together and inspire pupils to act.
- 3.3. Schools typically make use of a range of resources and practices that create a rich and varied diet of worship. These are typically rooted in the Anglican and/or Methodist foundation of the school. They enable pupils and adults to engage with worship at a threshold appropriate to them and are inclusive of people from a range of backgrounds. A strong and reciprocal relationship with the local church is often cited as having a profound impact on worship and supporting spiritual flourishing.
- 3.4. Increasing numbers of schools, having thought more deeply about their approach to spiritual flourishing, are integrating their approach to spirituality (under the auspices of IQ2) and their approach to spiritual flourishing as a result of collective worship. This is to be expected. Where a school understands what spiritual flourishing looks like for pupils and adults in the school community, it is likely to be able to respond to these needs and make appropriate provision. The link between an understanding of spiritual flourishing, making appropriate provision in light of this understanding, and spiritual flourishing is clear.
- 3.5. Returning to the Diocese of Blackburn, at Salesbury Church of England Primary School these connections are understood. Worship is described as 'exceptional' and shapes the whole school approach to spirituality. Time spent in worship is 'deeply cherished' because leaders plan thought-provoking themes which pupils and adults use as a source of guidance and then apply their understanding to their own lives. Skilfully crafted questions stimulate deep reflection. This transformative practice permeates school and 'results in spiritual flourishing that fosters a sense of calm, joy and belonging.'
- 3.6. In a small number of Church schools, evidence of spiritual flourishing as a result of worship is less positive. This is typically the result of two broad factors. Firstly, as noted above, where leaders have not established an understanding of what comprises spiritual flourishing, they are unlikely to be able to establish provision that meets the needs of the community. Spiritual flourishing will therefore be ad hoc and sporadic. A second reason is the lack of access to daily collective worship in some schools. This is impeding spiritual flourishing. In short, a lack of worship will result in a lack of opportunities for pupils and adults to flourish spiritually and will impede spiritual growth.



- 3.7. Church school leaders and those who provide them with guidance and advice might therefore find it beneficial to ensure that in each school there is a coherent and context-appropriate understanding of what both spirituality and spiritual flourishing are. This will enable leaders to establish appropriate provision to secure spiritual flourishing. As a bare minimum, leaders have a responsibility to know and understand their responsibilities under the law (especially those related to daily collective worship) and to implement these in order to enable spiritual flourishing.

#### 4. How a school's Christian vision is creating a culture in which pupils and adults are being treated well

- 4.1. That pupils and adults in Church schools are treated well is an intrinsic part of the Church's vision for education. A Christian vision cannot be a Christian vision if this is not the case. One of the beliefs of the Christian faith is that God exists as Trinity: as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God's very self is therefore relational. This helps Christians to understand what God is like: that love, and relationship, are central to God's character and being. Something of this loving and relating must be apparent in the life and work of the Church school. The divine model of love and relatedness should find expression in the lives of pupils and adults for they are made in the image of God. Church schools are called to model this Imago Dei<sup>4</sup> and the inherent dignity and worth of each person in their work.
- 4.2. Inspection evidence to date confirms that this is the case in the vast majority of schools. Furthermore, it is one of the most commonly cited school strengths where care, nurture, inclusion and positive relationships are examples of a culture of people being treated well.
- 4.3. Where this culture is most successfully inculcated, leaders have demonstrated a secure and wise understanding of their school context. They know who is at risk of not being well treated and have acted accordingly to embrace those at risk of being left behind or outside. They understand something of what Martin Luther King termed the 'urgency of now,'<sup>5</sup> of attending to the most pressing presenting needs. The Christian vision of such a school reflects this contextual understanding and responds to it. The vision creates a culture of inclusion. At Allerton Church of England Primary School in the Diocese of Leeds, the school's Christian vision 'drives a strong culture of care and wellbeing' where 'nurture and respect are central to school life.' This is because leaders are mindful of context and 'fervent in their belief that by focussing on the needs of individuals, the whole school community can flourish.' The provision of the support that pupils and adults need is a natural, unforced, expression of the vision.
- 4.4. Evidence is gathered from the rich panoply of Church schools in England. These schools represent a variety of communities that have a breadth of diverse

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<sup>4</sup> A Latin term meaning 'image of God' In Christian understanding humans are created in God's likeness, possessing unique qualities that reflect God's own nature.

<sup>5</sup> King used this phrase in his 1963 'I Have a Dream' speech, in order to emphasise the immediate need for change. Waiting for a more expedient time to address inequality is not an option. Action must be taken in the present to create a more just and godly society.



characteristics in terms of ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status, rurality, size and learning needs. Evidence from inspection, therefore, indicates that pupils and adults from a richly diverse range of backgrounds and needs are treated well and find belonging and sustenance in Church schools.

- 4.5. Benedict' Biscop Church of England Academy in the Diocese of Durham is a school in which people from diverse backgrounds are treated well and flourish. It is a 'community of loving acceptance, where dignity, forgiveness and restoration are lived out daily.' Here each person is valued as 'uniquely made and deeply known.' The school's understanding of its context means that it was able to respond reflectively to riots in the city. As a result, pupils of 'all backgrounds and needs feel included and valued.' Similarly, time is taken to restore relationships when things go wrong, and the school adopts a relational approach that reflects a belief in the 'worth of every person.'
- 4.6. At Cherry Burton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, in the Diocese of Lincoln, treating people well is the 'glue that binds' and characterises the lived vision. A bespoke and often personalised curriculum is available to those who require it. This is grounded in working with families who are 'treated with dignity and respect' in an environment in which there is 'no judgement.' As a result, there is a profound sense that pupils are loved and cared for and, commensurate with the school's vision, given 'roots to grow and wings to fly'. In a similar manner the school focuses on the wellbeing and good mental health of staff. Consequently, a 'culture of generosity' results and the school has a 'reputation for service to its educational partners.'
- 4.7. The direct connection between needs being identified and met, and wellbeing is clear. Inspectors, therefore, frequently describe a school's internal culture as being caring, trusting, forgiving, harmonious and respectful. Similarly, relationships in schools are commented on positively as is the attention paid to supporting good mental health for pupils and adults. Culture creates the nourishing ecology in which people thrive.
- 4.8. In the Diocese of Carlisle, the importance of good mental health is well understood at Selside Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School. Here, strong relationships are 'rooted in Christian love.' This results in good mental health and wellbeing for both pupils and adults. The inspector notes that the school community 'experiences the vision's impact when being cared for through difficult times.' People are treated well when leaders understand what people need in order to experience this abundance and wholeness of life.
- 4.9. This unanimity of positive outcomes in relation to IQ4 will remain a point of additional scrutiny next year in order to ensure and confirm that the evidence of impact is representative of the experience of those from a range of diverse communities, backgrounds and needs who attend Church schools. Greater assurance is needed that all Church schools without fail are places where nobody is left behind. Changes will be made to the inspection timetable to enable more time to be spent with a range of pupil groups. This is in order to triangulate evidence and determine impact as part of the evidence gathering process.



## 5. How a school's Christian vision is creating an active culture of justice and responsibility

- 5.1. Church schools are most effective where the internal culture of the school overflows into the manner in which a school looks outward to serve. Schools do not operate in a sea of isolation. As the seventeenth century priest and poet John Donne crisply encapsulated it, 'No man is an island, entire of itself.'<sup>6</sup> Similarly with the Church school. It is not self-contained and, as an outworking of its vision, should speak prophetically to the community it serves. The school should look through its internal culture to comfort any within the school community who are disturbed. In its outward-facing work on justice and responsibility it should look to disturb those who are comfortable where injustice prevails. Where there is strong coherence between the inward facing culture and the outward facing work and both are driven by the vision, the Church school can have a transformative effect on pupils and adults.
- 5.2. Evidence from inspections in the year 2024-25 suggests a marked improvement in schools' understanding of the substance of this inspection question. A misplaced exclusive focus on 'courageous advocacy' and 'agents of change' and the attendant risk of a potential perception of political impartiality is increasingly giving way to a deeper understanding of justice. This understanding of justice is best understood as the development of an age and stage appropriate understanding of something of the nature of the Kingdom of God. This understands both the 'now' of the Kingdom as God's justice breaks through and the 'not yet' of the Kingdom as human society wrestles with those things that are unjust or unfair. It comprehends something of the Swiss theologian Hans Küng's contention that 'God's kingdom is creation healed.'<sup>7</sup> God's kingdom is not just a future event, but a present reality where creation is being restored and made whole.
- 5.3. The inspection question is about justice and responsibility. Where schools are successfully addressing the substance of the question, they are exploring issues related to justice. Typical areas for exploration referenced in inspection reports include: inequality and issues related to poverty; care for God's creation, peace-making and peacekeeping typically linked to reconciliation; opposing discrimination; hunger, access to water and fairtrade and the environment including issues related to climate, over consumption, energy efficiency and recycling. It is usual for inspectors to reference how this work is underpinned by the cultivation of just attitudes such as compassion, kindness and service. In this way, there is a dynamic interplay with the internal culture of the school explored in IQ4.
- 5.4. At Ilfracombe Church of England Secondary Academy in the Diocese of Exeter the importance of justice is understood well. The school has a long history of 'working for the greater good' and this 'focus on taking responsibility readily extends into an impetus to work for others.' As a result, pupils are ambitious for their world and are confident to speak out against injustice. They are active in a range of issues but have

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<sup>6</sup> J Donne, from the poem 'No man is an island' in *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, 1624

<sup>7</sup> H Küng, translated by Edward Quinn, *On Being a Christian* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), p231



a particular vocation to the 'protection of their beautiful coast.' Staff work hard to enable pupils to 'see things differently.' The partnerships the school has developed 'challenge pupils to think about what 'life in all its fullness' really means.' The inspector goes on to describe the 'life changing' impact of partnership visits. An understanding of the kingdom of God is real and active and it is rooted in the school's own understanding of its context.

- 5.5. Similarly, at Weldon Church of England Primary School in the Diocese of Peterborough, pupils have developed an age-appropriate understanding of justice and responsibility. The inspector reports that 'pupils have an understanding that the world is not equal and want to make things better.' Crucially, this understanding translates into meaningful action where pupils are empowered to be active citizens. The work on justice and responsibility is a theologically appropriate outworking of the school's vision which is itself a response to the school's context. As a result, the experiences in which pupils engage 'nurture a deep sense of moral purpose.' Through the eco-warrior committee, for example, pupils become 'dedicated stewards of God's creation' and 'actively reflect the values of care and sustainability.'
- 5.6. There is a continued prevalence of development points, however, related to this inspection question. This was mentioned in the previous annual report and suggests that this is an area of the work of Church schools that continues to require more accurate and deeper understanding and, subsequently, more effective focus.
- 5.7. It must be noted that work around justice is about developing a deep and meaningful understanding of what justice is and how it can be achieved. It is not a progression from acting at a local, then national and finally an international or global level. It is context-dependent and context-driven. The progression in understanding of justice is not one of expanding concentric geographical circles. Rather, it is greater depth and coherence of understanding of how God's justice breaks through into a broken world as we join in the co-creation of God's Kingdom to restore and to renew.
- 5.8. Another fruitful area that schools and those who provide them with expert guidance and advice might wish to explore is the interconnection between a school's work on justice and responsibility and its work on spiritual flourishing. How might an increased understanding of justice and responsibility and confidence to work against injustice be an expression of spiritual growth?
- 5.9. When considering this inspection question, if appropriate for them, schools may wish to explore some relevant partnerships. Evidence is indicating that the most common partnerships in 2024-2025 were with the parish church, the diocesan education team, the trust (for academies), and the immediate local community. This mirrors the findings in the previous academic year.
- 5.10. Engagement with partners where the relationship is intentional, and an outworking of the school's Christian vision, appear to be broadening the horizons of both pupils and adults in the school. Partnerships are typically mutually beneficial. An outward-facing culture creates a broad range of opportunities for pupils and adults to flourish holistically. For school staff this is often the opportunity to work with a range of professionals from a variety of educational settings.



- 5.11. At All Saints Church of England First School, Church Leigh, in the Diocese of Lichfield, partnerships are important in the life and work of the school. They support the ways in which the school's Christian vision is a lived reality. Strong partnerships with local churches shape and enhance collective worship. Similarly, the trust's vision resonates with that of the school and this 'strengthens the school's Christian foundation.' Consequently, the fruits of partnership working are 'an ambitious curriculum, valuable training opportunities for adults and a committed focus on wellbeing.'
- 5.12. A similar pattern of constructive partnership can be seen at Stanground St John's Church of England Primary School in the Diocese of Ely. When evaluating the impact of the school's vision, leaders make good use of external support from the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust and the Diocese of Ely Board of Education. As a result, 'leaders and staff are continually improving practice for pupils and families.' The culture is one in which the community is 'working well together, reflecting Jesus' teaching of loving one another.'
- 5.13. The narrative evidence base, as well as the judgement evidence, on the ways in which schools and trusts work together has strengthened over the 2024-2025 academic year. Scrutiny of the benefit to schools of being part of a trust remains limited at present, though less so than in 2023-2024. Continued scrutiny next year will bring further clarity as the inspection evidence base expands.

## 6. Religious education – general comments

- 6.1. RE remains, as in previous years, the most commonly referenced area of the work of the school in inspection reports. This reflects its high status in the life of a Church school. It is not at all uncommon for RE to be included as both a strength and a development point for the same school and in the same inspection report. This is telling as it foregrounds the broad range of elements of RE and the extent of variation in the quality of these.
- 6.2. Inspection evidence indicates that, over the year 2024-2025, notable strengths in RE in inspection reports were:
  - 6.2.1. subject leadership
  - 6.2.2. the breadth and effectiveness of the curriculum - school based decisions on how to apply the relevant syllabus to the school's context in terms of the curriculum in that school
  - 6.2.3. teaching of and learning about Christianity, and
  - 6.2.4. the way in which RE is an expression of the school's vision, especially in matters of inclusion, acceptance and diversity
- 6.3. Conversely, the most commonly occurring development points relating to RE include:
  - 6.3.1. teaching of and learning about a range of religions other than Christianity
  - 6.3.2. teaching of and learning about non-religious worldviews
  - 6.3.3. understanding of diversity within the Christian faith/diverse expressions of Christianity
  - 6.3.4. use of assessment to support teaching and learning, and



6.3.5. monitoring and evaluation of the subject in such a way that leads to improvements.

6.4. Where schools prioritise and resource (both in terms of time and finance) high-quality subject leadership it appears that this enhances both the quality of the curriculum and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Where the inverse is the case, both the curriculum and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are weaker.

## **7. The effectiveness of a school's religious education curriculum –specific comments**

7.1. Inspection findings indicate that the national 'state of play' is little changed from findings in previous years. This underlines both the scale and urgency of the task facing schools and those who support and advise them.

7.2. The frequency of development points relating to Christianity as a global, multi-cultural faith, knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and worldviews other than Christianity and knowledge and understanding of non-religious traditions and worldviews indicates the need for high-quality resources to support teaching and learning in these areas.

7.3. Inspection evidence indicates that, in approximately two thirds of schools, the curriculum content effectively supports understanding of Christianity as a diverse global faith. In approximately four fifths of schools, curriculum content enables pupils to make sense of religions other than Christianity including the diversity of belief, practice and tradition within those religious traditions. Furthermore, in approximately two thirds of schools the curriculum content enables pupils to make sense of non-religious traditions and worldviews including the diversity of belief within them. Where schools' RE curricula, in general terms, appear to be limited in their quality this is likely to be a result of under-resourcing.

7.4. Over the last four years, SIAMS evidence indicates that there is some gradual improvement in RE in Church schools. This rate of improvement is too slow. It is possible that the lack of notable improvement is a result of the five-year inspection cycle and schools prioritising their responses to RE to align with this cycle. It is also likely to be reflective of the range of pressures on school leaders more generally.

7.5. As reported last year, there is a responsibility on writers of Agreed Syllabi to ensure that the syllabi themselves are always of the highest quality, and that they are as freely and as easily resourced as possible.

7.6. There is also a responsibility on the governors of VA schools and on multi academy trust trustees, all of whom have the freedom and responsibility to select a school's RE syllabus, to do so wisely and commit sufficient resource to the subject. There is a further responsibility to translate a high-quality syllabus into a high-quality curriculum.

7.7. Inspection evidence demonstrates that expert, informed leadership is essential in ensuring the RE curricula is of a high quality. Furthermore, expert training for all



teachers of RE elevates confidence and supports the delivery of an effective curriculum.

- 7.8. As noted in previous years, in some schools, KS4 RE is not provided for pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 unless they have been entered for RE GCSE. This is neither good nor effective practice. It is also a disregard for the law. It is compounded by the fact that, in some schools, pupils are entered for GCSE RE at the end of KS3, in Year 9, at which time the school ceases to provide core RE. This means that the curriculum is narrowed to the examination syllabus at a premature stage.
- 7.9. The situation with regard to core RE in KS5 remains concerning. It is a legal requirement that all pupils in secondary schools, including those in KS5 are provided with RE. This is over and above any public examinations, such as GCSE and A Level. Inspection evidence reveals that this is often not the case, with KS5 RE either being omitted or unrecognisably merged with other subjects. Where it is taught, in approximately one third of schools, core RE at KS5 is not deemed to be of a high quality.

## **8. The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education – specific comments**

- 8.1. Inspection evidence from VA schools and academies that were formerly VA schools provides us with insight into the quality of teaching, learning, assessment, and pupils' progress in RE. The national landscape in RE remains strikingly similar to that which was reported in last year's annual report: a mixed but slowly improving picture.
- 8.2. The foci for improvement in terms of IQ7 emerge clearly from inspectors' findings. In approximately two thirds of schools, the quality of teaching about non-religious traditions and worldviews is enabling pupils to gain systematically deeper knowledge and understanding as they progress through school. In approximately four fifths of schools, inspection evidence indicates that schools are using a range of disciplinary lenses (theology, philosophy, human and social sciences) successfully in the teaching of RE. Finally, in approximately four fifths of schools, assessment reflects pupils' understanding of increasingly complex content over time. The challenge is to bring about improvement in those schools where the quality of teaching is less strong.
- 8.3. This calls into question the confidence of those who teach RE and the effectiveness of the support they receive to be successful in their work. Some of this is related to subject knowledge, which can be addressed with high-quality resources and routinely accessible ongoing expert support. There are likely too, to be issues related to the limited amount of time devoted to the teaching of RE in initial teacher training and ongoing continuing professional development.
- 8.4. The pressing concern remains that, taken together, these factors point to a trajectory of decline in the quality of RE which, if not reversed in schools, will possibly accelerate. The delivery of a high-quality curriculum by expert teachers will lead to pupils flourishing in their learning in RE. The reverse is also true: where the curriculum and/or its delivery are less than ideal, pupils will not flourish in their learning in RE. It is then reasonable to assume that fewer and fewer will go on to engage in religious study at



KS5 and university. This is likely to narrow further the pool of those who will become specialist teachers of RE. The system is fragile, and change is required in order to address these issues.

- 8.5. The Church of England's Vision for Education (2016) is unequivocal on the need for religious literacy and the vital importance of understanding both religious and non-religious worldviews. This understanding allows pupils to navigate the complexity and diversity of the world in which they live. High-quality RE leads to stronger than average outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Where it is taught well it fosters character formation and pupils' spiritual development. High-quality RE is indispensable. Successful outcomes are a result of a strong curriculum, high-quality resources, well-trained staff and effective and accurate assessment.
- 8.6. The challenges noted above threaten the realisation of these aims. There is the risk of a self-fulfilling and predictable cycle of decline in the overall quality of RE. This will have a negative impact both on pupils and wider society. It will make the realisation of the Church's vision for human flourishing and the common good more difficult to achieve. Flourishing is realised in community and in communion with others. We do not flourish alone. The role of RE in fostering understanding and harmony should not be underestimated; nor should the missed opportunity for societal flourishing that poor quality RE provision engenders.
- 8.7. There are of course striking examples of high-quality RE expertise in Church schools across England. This is typically the result of committed and well-supported leadership in schools and expert training and advice from diocesan education teams or similar. This is, however, inequitable across the country. Too much variation in quality exists. All pupils in all Church schools deserve nothing less than to flourish in their learning in RE through an effective RE curriculum that is challenging, accurate, well-sequenced, well-balanced, relevant and diverse.
- 8.8. There is a corollary between a poorly crafted curriculum and/or lack of staff confidence in teaching RE and a poor understanding and use of assessment. As noted above, whilst in most schools assessment is effective, in approximately a fifth of Church schools, assessment in RE is not fit for purpose. This means that too many teachers are not in a position to accurately ascertain pupils' needs and flexibly teach the curriculum accordingly. Strengthening teachers' understanding of the purpose of assessment in RE and how they might accurately use assessment to tailor learning to pupils' needs remain fruitful areas of work for those who provide expert guidance and support to schools.
- 8.9. One of the roles of governors and trustees is to monitor and subsequently evaluate the quality of a school's RE provision. They need training and support in order to be able to accomplish this successfully. The quality of this work is mixed. Supporting successful monitoring and evaluation should, therefore, remain a focus for those who provide expert advice and guidance to Church schools. It should form a routine part of governors' wider monitoring and evaluation.

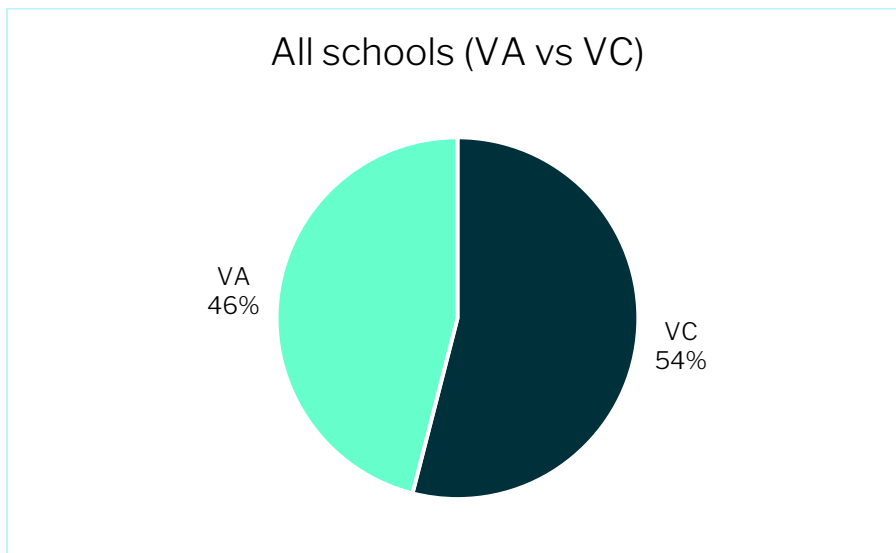


# Inspection data

## Notes:

1. The following data was extracted on 17 July 2025.
2. Total 912 inspections between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 and 31 July 2025. These were made up of 901 inspections with a J1 judgement and 11 inspections with a J2 judgement.
3. The J2 data set is too small at 1.2% to generate meaningful results. Analysis has been included but should not be directly compared with results from J1 data.
4. It is worth noting that the proportion of J2 judgements is lower than in 2023-2024 when it was 1.9%.

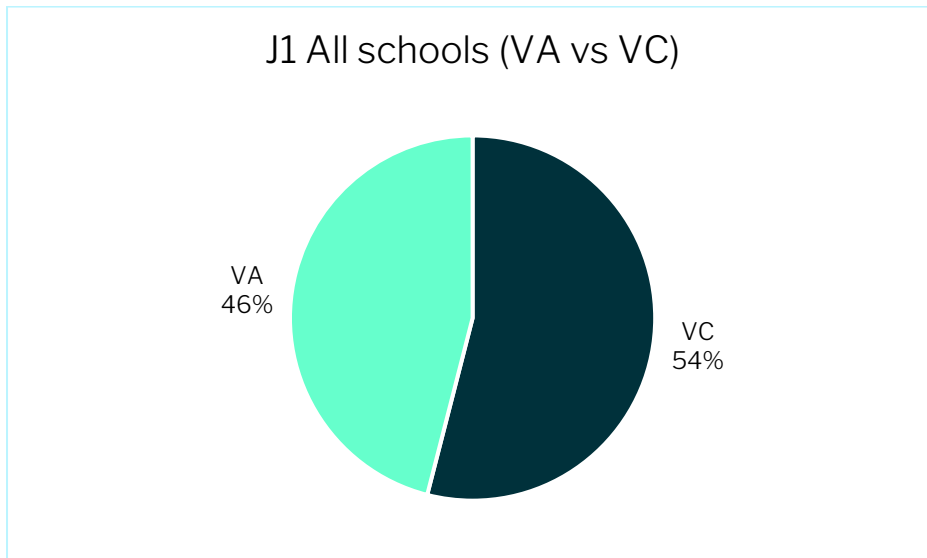
## All schools - VA vs VC



- Total 912 inspections (418 VA and 494 VC).

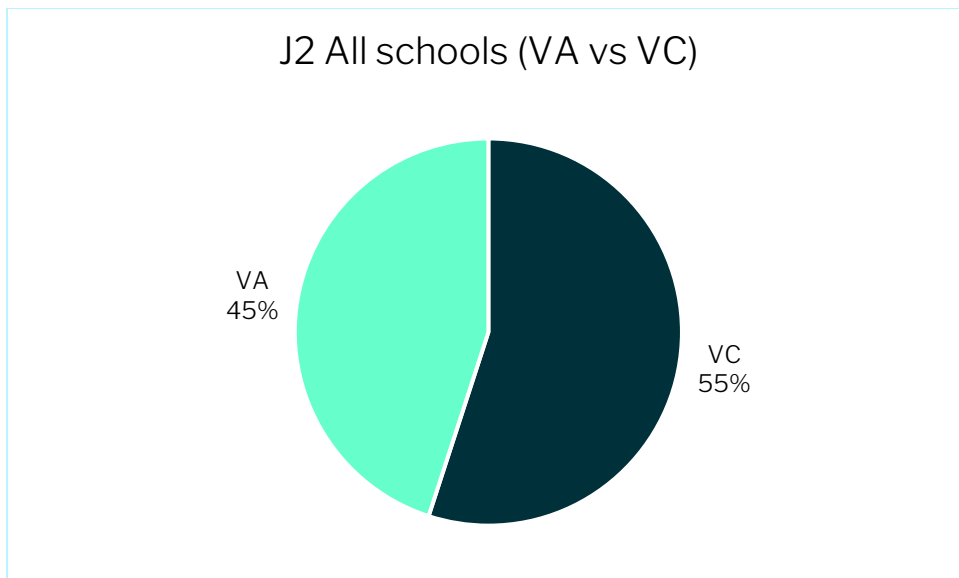


### J1 All inspections (VA vs VC)



- Total J1 inspections = 901 (413 VA and 488 VC inspections).

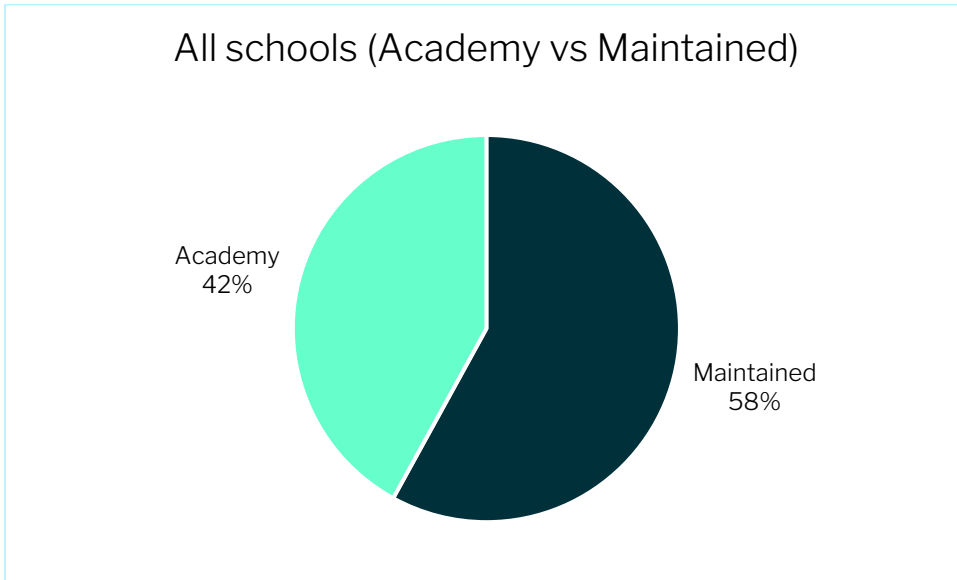
### J2 All inspections (VA vs VC)



- Total J2 inspections = 11 (5 VA and 6 VC inspections).

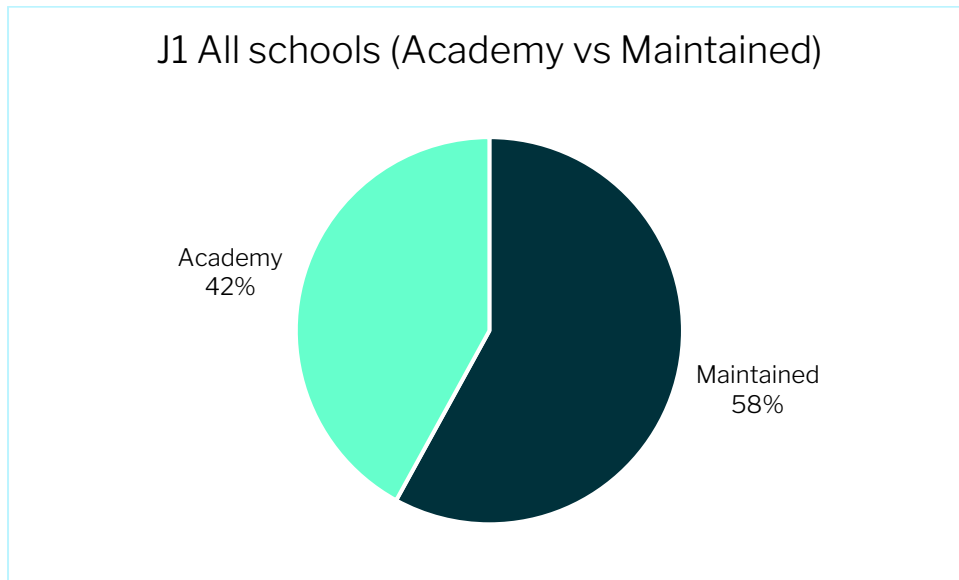


### All schools – Academy vs Maintained



- Total 912 inspections (382 Academy and 530 Maintained).

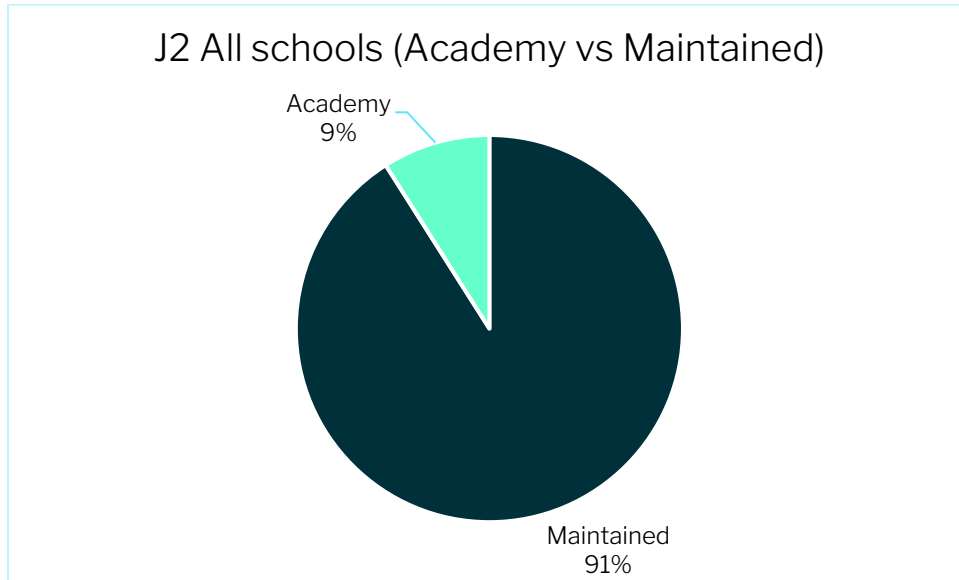
### J1 All inspections (Academy vs Maintained)



- Total J1 inspections = 901 (381 Academy and 520 Maintained).



## J2 All inspections (Academy vs Maintained)

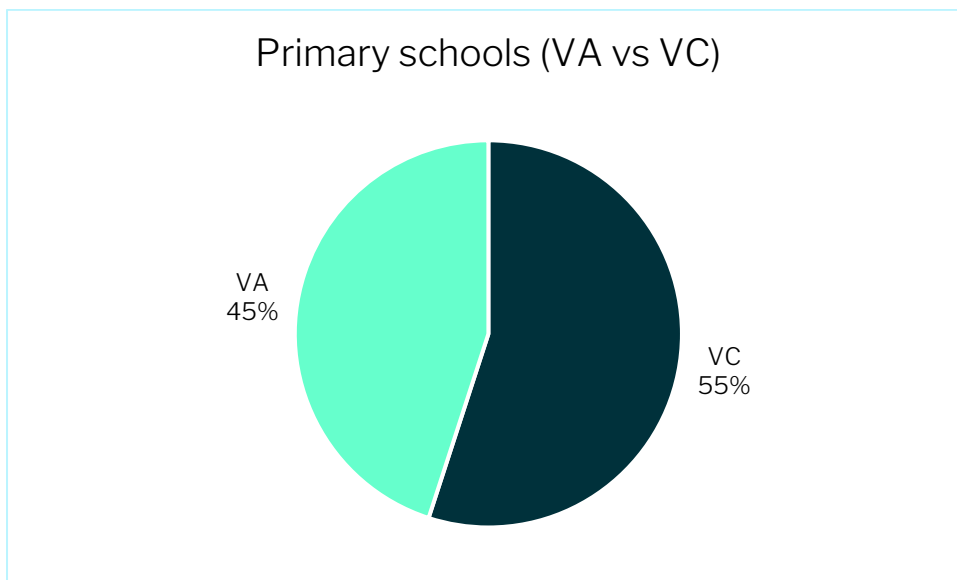


- Total J2 inspections = 11 (1 Academy and 10 Maintained).

## Primary schools

1. Includes First, Middle Deemed Primary and Primary school inspections.
2. Total Primary inspections = 872.
3. Out of all of the primary school inspections 863 were J1 judgements and 9 were J2 judgements.

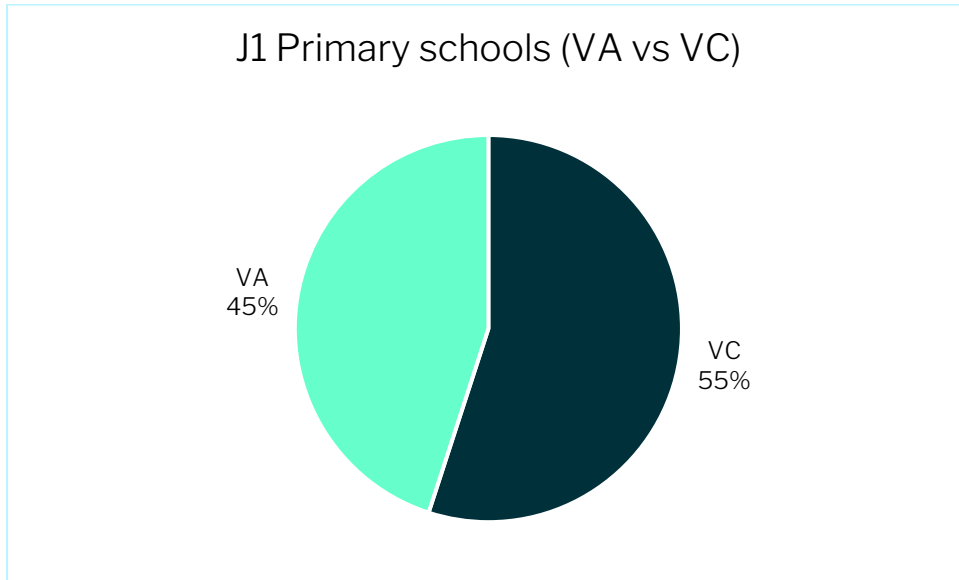
## Primary - VA vs VC



- Total 872 Primary inspections (392 VA and 480 VC schools).

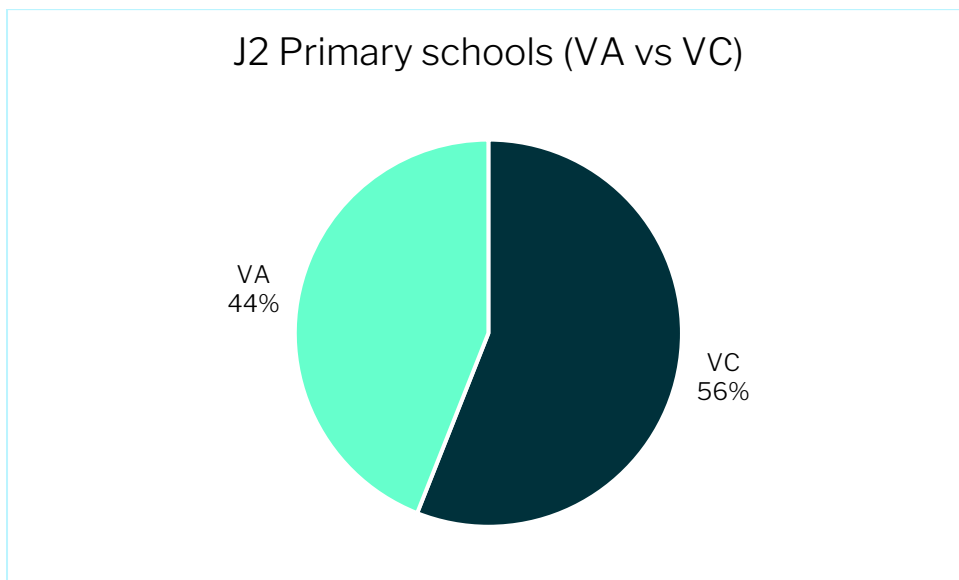


### J1 Primary inspections (VA vs VC)



- Total J1 Primary inspections = 863 (388 VA and 475 VC inspections).

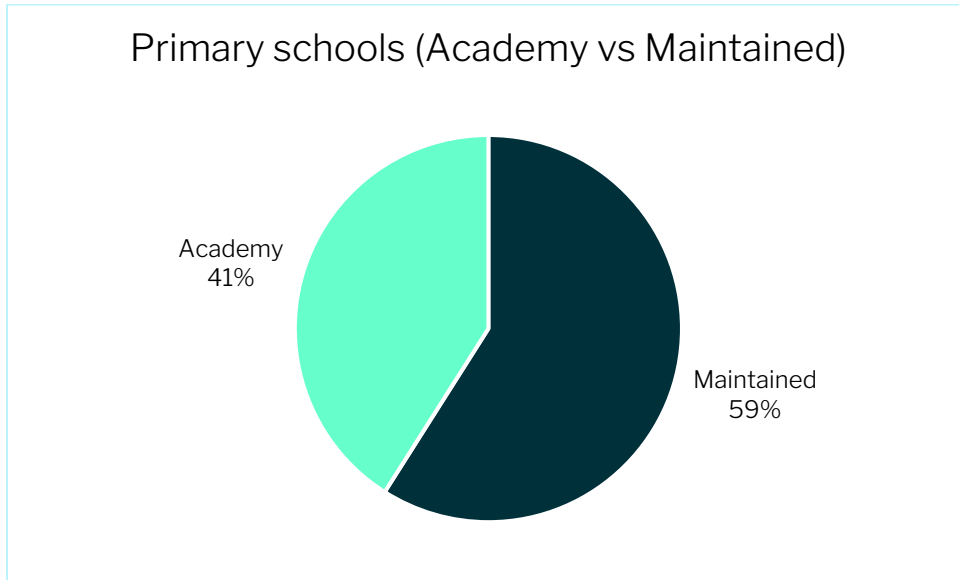
### J2 Primary inspections (VA vs VC)



- Total J2 Primary inspections = 9 (4 VA and 5 VC inspections).

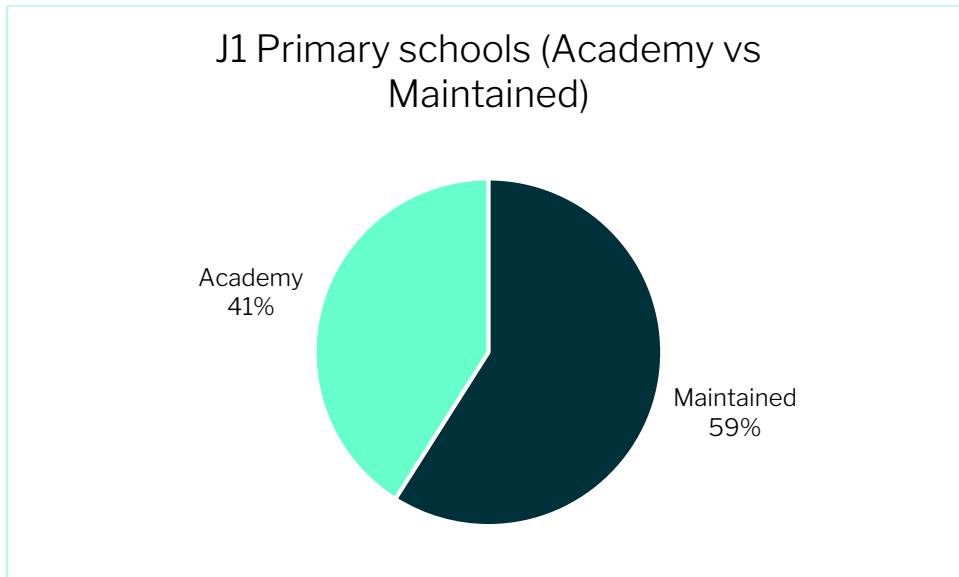


## Primary – Academy vs Maintained



- Total 872 Primary inspections (354 Academy and 518 Maintained schools).

## J1 Primary inspections (Academy vs Maintained)



- Total J1 Primary inspections = 863 (354 Academy and 509 Maintained).

## J2 Primary inspections (Academy vs Maintained)

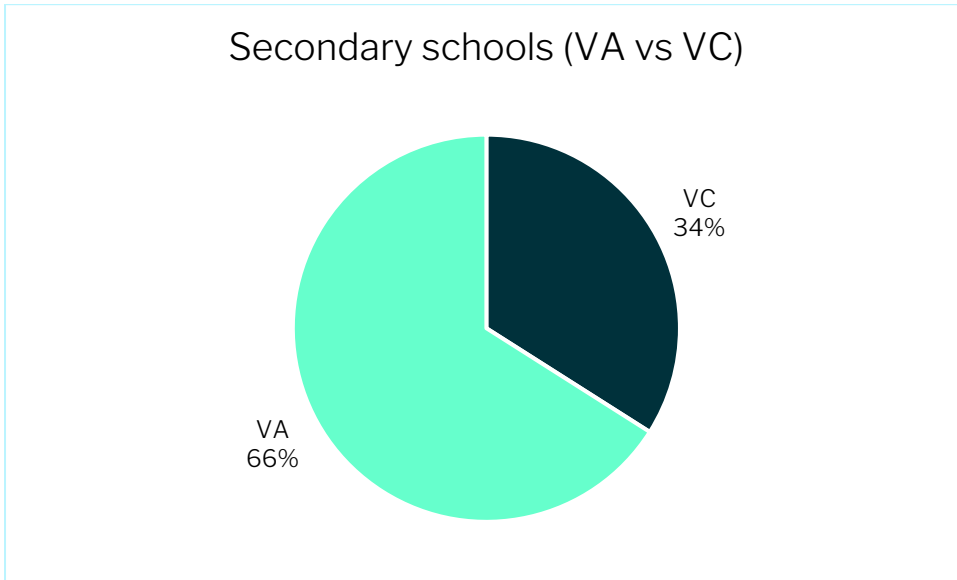
- Total J2 Primary inspections = 9 (0 Academy and 9 Maintained)



## Secondary schools

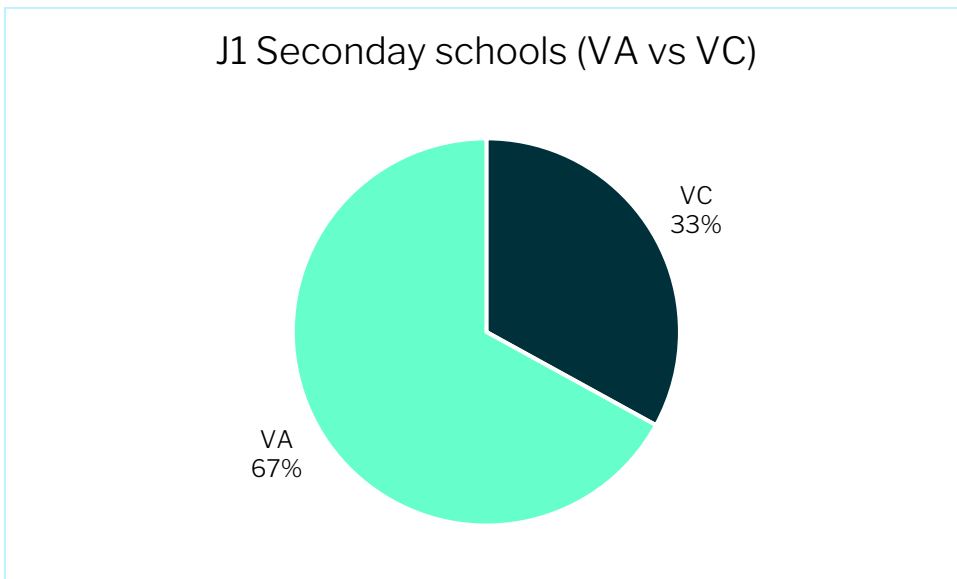
- Includes Middle deemed Secondary and Secondary school inspections.
- Total Secondary inspections = 38.
- Out of all the secondary school inspections 36 were J1 judgements and 2 were J2 judgements.

## Secondary - VA vs VC



- Total Secondary inspections = 38 (25 VA and 13 VC).

## J1 Secondary inspections (VA vs VC)



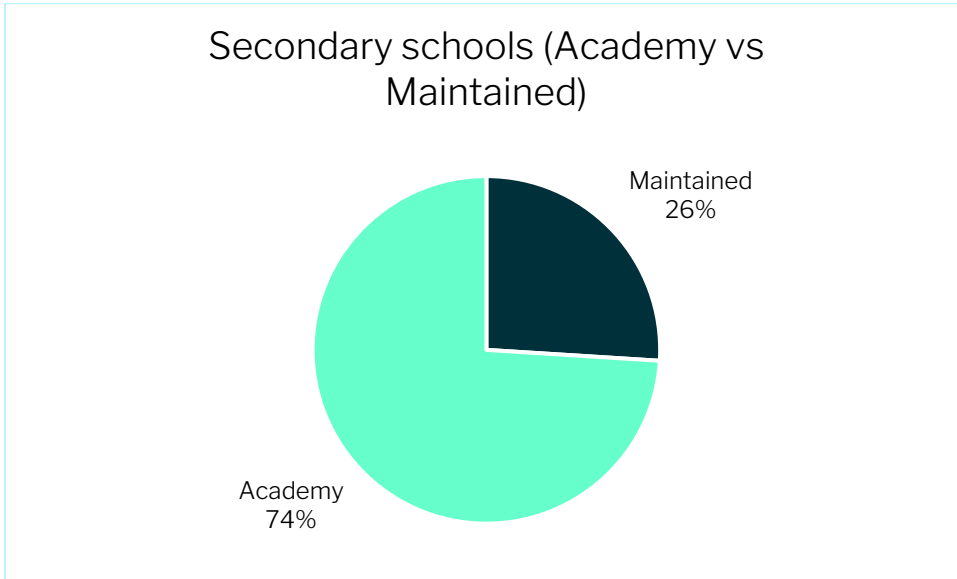
- Total J1 Secondary inspections = 36 (24 VA and 12 VC inspections).



## J2 Secondary inspections (VA vs VC)

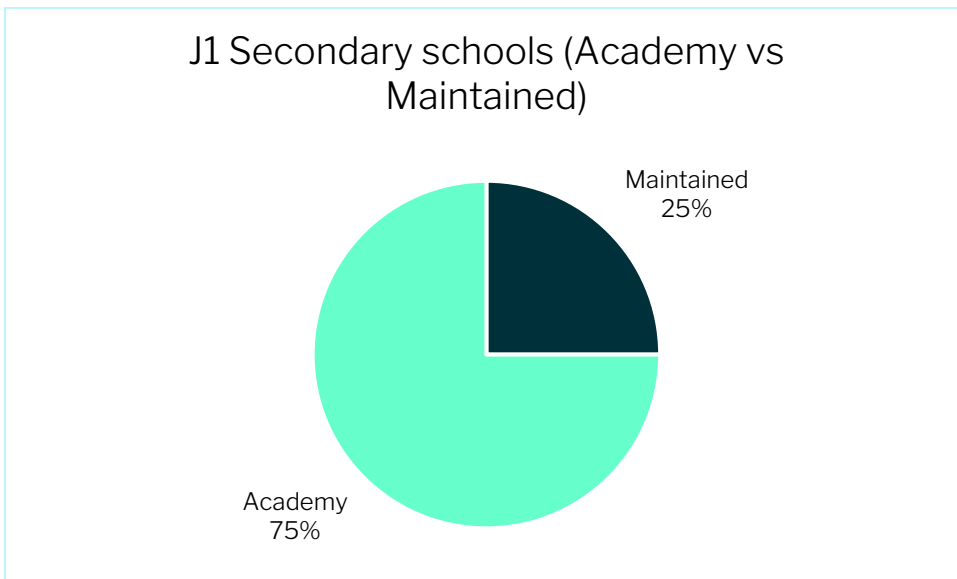
- 2 J2 Secondary inspections (1 VA and 1 VC).

### Secondary - Academy vs Maintained



- Total Secondary inspections = 38 (28 Academy and 10 Maintained).

## J1 Secondary inspections (Academy vs Maintained)



- Total J1 Secondary inspections = 36 (27 Academy and 9 Maintained).



## J2 Secondary inspections (Academy vs Maintained)

- 2 J2 Secondary inspections (1 Academy and 1 Maintained).

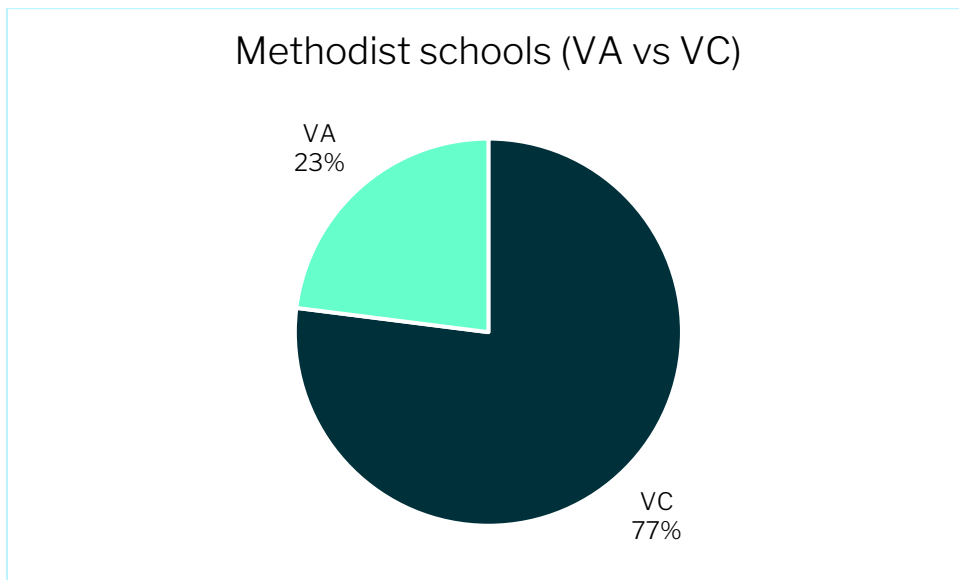
### All through schools

- 2 inspections.
- 1 VA and 1 VC.
- All Maintained.
- All J1s.

### Methodist schools

- Results taken from schools that are categorised as Methodist Primary and Joint Church of England/Methodist Primary, and Church of England/Methodist/United Reform Church/Baptist.
- 13 inspected in total (5 = Methodist and 8 = Joint).
- All Primary schools and all J1 judgements.

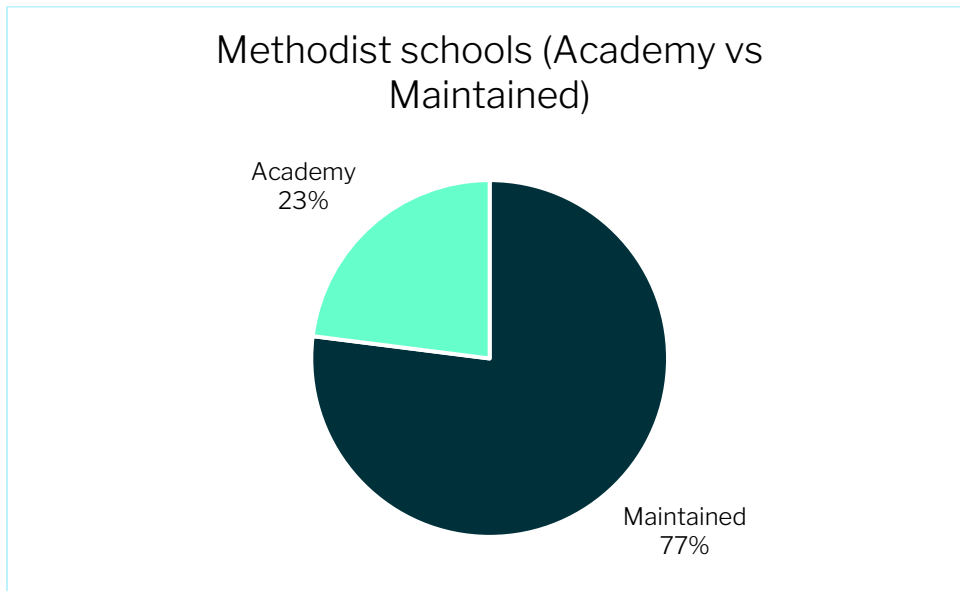
### Methodist - VA vs VC



- Total Methodist inspections = 13 (3 VA and 10 VC).



### Methodist - Academy vs Maintained



- Total Methodist inspections = 13 (3 Academy and 10 Maintained).



## Church of England/Catholic schools

- Results taken from schools that are categorised as Joint Church of England/Catholic Primary and Joint Church of England/Catholic Secondary.
- 5 inspected in total (4 Primary and 1 Secondary).
- 3 J1s (2 inspections were Catholic led and therefore did not result in a SIAMS judgement) They were inspected under the Catholic inspection framework and a SIAMS inspector attended as an observer.
- All inspected as VA schools.
- 3 were Academy and 2 Maintained.

## J2 inspections – IQ data

- Total number of J2s = 11.
- Unable to see pattern in the results which is likely due to the small data set.
- Most schools were a J2 outcome because they couldn't answer one of the IQs (total 4). Full breakdown below:
  - In 4 schools 1 of the IQs couldn't be answered.
  - In 3 schools 2 of the IQs couldn't be answered.
  - In 1 school 3 of the IQs couldn't be answered.
  - In 1 school 4 of the IQs couldn't be answered.
  - In 1 school 5 of the IQs couldn't be answered.
  - In 1 school 6 of the IQs couldn't be answered.
- IQ6 was the IQ that most commonly couldn't be answered as it came up for 9 of the J2 inspections. This was a similar result to last year where IQ6 was also the most common reason for J2s. The frequency of being unable to answer the other IQs are listed below:
  - IQ1 = 4.
  - IQ2 = 3.
  - IQ3 = 2.
  - IQ4 = 1.
  - IQ5 = 4.
  - IQ6 = 9.
  - IQ7 = 5.



## Diocesan data

### 1. Diocese of Bath & Wells

- Total number of inspections = 24 (23 Primary, 1 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	10	13	17	6
Number of Secondary inspections	0	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>

### 2. Diocese of Birmingham

- Total number of inspections = 9 (8 Primary, 1 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	6	2	3	5
Number of Secondary inspections	1	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

### 3. Diocese of Blackburn

- Total number of inspections = 38 (36 Primary, 2 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	31	5	3	33
Number of Secondary inspections	2	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>



#### 4. Diocese of Bristol

- Total number of inspections = 17 (15 Primary, 2 Secondary).
- 2 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	4	11	6	9
Number of Secondary inspections	2	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>

#### 5. Diocese of Canterbury

- Total number of inspections = 24 (22 Primary, 2 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	11	11	8	14
Number of Secondary inspections	0	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>

#### 6. Diocese of Carlisle

- Total number of inspections = 18 (18 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 1 J2 inspection.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	12	6	4	14
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>



## 7. Diocese of Chelmsford

- Total number of inspections = 27 (27 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	8	19	10	17
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>

## 8. Diocese of Chester

- Total number of inspections = 29 (28 Primary, 1 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.
- 1 school shared with Chester and Liverpool diocese (counted once in overall data analysis).

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	14	14	13	15
Number of Secondary inspections	1	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>

## 9. Diocese of Chichester

- Total number of inspections = 42 (41 Primary, 1 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	9	32	8	33
Number of Secondary inspections	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>34</b>



## 10. Diocese of Coventry

- Total number of inspections = 17 (17 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	6	11	12	5
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>

## 11. Diocese of Derby

- Total number of inspections = 33 (33 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	12	21	10	23
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>

## 12. Diocese of Durham & Newcastle

- Total number of inspections = 15 (14 Primary, 1 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	10	4	8	6
Number of Secondary inspections	1	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>



### 13. Diocese of Ely

- Total number of inspections = 19 (19 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	7	12	11	8
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>

### 14. Diocese of Exeter

- Total number of inspections = 27 (25 Primary, 2 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	10	15	20	5
Number of Secondary inspections	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>

### 15. Diocese of Gloucester

- Total number of inspections = 18 (18 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 1 J2 inspection.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	11	7	4	14
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>



## 16. Diocese of Guildford

- Total number of inspections = 10 (10 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	6	4	5	5
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

## 17. Diocese of Hereford

- Total number of inspections = 14 (13 Primary, 1 Secondary).
- 1 J2 inspection.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	6	7	7	6
Number of Secondary inspections	0	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>

## 18. Diocese of Leeds

- Total number of inspections = 31 (31 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	11	20	10	21
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>



## 19. Diocese of Leicester

- Total number of inspections = 17 (17 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	3	14	11	6
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>

## 20. Diocese of Lichfield

- Total number of inspections = 52 (49 Primary, 3 Secondary).
- 2 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	8	41	24	25
Number of Secondary inspections	1	2	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>

## 21. Diocese of Lincoln

- Total number of inspections = 33 (33 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	5	28	10	23
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>



## 22. Diocese of Liverpool

- Total number of inspections = 24 (20 Primary, 4 Secondary).
- 1 J2 inspection.
- 1 school shared with Chester and Liverpool diocese (counted once in overall data analysis).

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	13	7	6	14
Number of Secondary inspections	4	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>

## 23. Diocese of London

- Total number of inspections = 32 (27 Primary, 4 Secondary, 1 All through).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	27	0	4	23
Number of Secondary inspections	4	0	4	0
Number of All through inspections	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>

## 24. Diocese of Manchester

- Total number of inspections = 33 (31 Primary, 2 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	17	14	8	23
Number of Secondary inspections	2	0	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>



## 25. Diocese of Norwich

- Total number of inspections = 23 (23 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	17	6	15	8
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>

## 26. Diocese of Oxford

- Total number of inspections = 58 (57 Primary, 1 Secondary).
- 2 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	25	32	21	36
Number of Secondary inspections	0	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>36</b>

## 27. Diocese of Peterborough

- Total number of inspections = 23 (23 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 1 J2 inspection.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	6	17	15	8
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>



## 28. Diocese of Portsmouth & Winchester

- Total number of inspections = 19 (17 Primary, 1 Secondary, 1 All through).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	5	12	3	14
Number of Secondary inspections	1	0	1	0
Number of All through inspections	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>

## 29. Diocese of Rochester

- Total number of inspections = 20 (18 Primary, 2 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	8	10	9	9
Number of Secondary inspections	2	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

## 30. Diocese of Salisbury

- Total number of inspections = 33 (32 Primary, 1 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	18	14	22	10
Number of Secondary inspections	1	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>



### 31. Diocese of Sheffield

- Total number of inspections = 7 (7 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	6	1	4	3
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>

### 32. Diocese of Southwark

- Total number of inspections = 13 (13 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	13	0	3	10
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>

### 33. Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham

- Total number of inspections = 13 (13 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	3	10	5	8
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>



### 34. Diocese of St Albans

- Total number of inspections = 35 (31 Primary, 4 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	18	13	8	23
Number of Secondary inspections	2	2	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>

### 35. Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

- Total number of inspections = 21 (21 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	6	15	12	9
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>

### 36. Diocese of Truro

- Total number of inspections = 3 (3 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	3	0	3	0
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>



### 37. Diocese of Worcester

- Total number of inspections = 21 (19 Primary, 2 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	5	14	8	11
Number of Secondary inspections	0	2	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>

### 38. Diocese of York

- Total number of inspections = 18 (18 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	4	14	7	11
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>

### 39. Methodist schools

- Total number of inspections = 13 (13 Primary, 0 Secondary).
- Includes 8 Joint Church of England / Methodist and 5 Methodist Primary inspections.
- 0 J2 inspections.

	VA	VC	Academy	Maintained
Number of Primary inspections	3	10	3	10
Number of Secondary inspections	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>



# Annex 1: 2025 SIAMS Survey Data Analysis

Surveys carried out between April & July 2025

## 1. I believe that SIAMS development points help schools to improve.

	Schools/Trusts		Diocese and MAST	
	Responses	Percentage	Responses	Percentage
Yes	272	92%	63	98%
No	15	5%	1	2%
I do not have enough information to answer this question	8	3%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Observations

- 1.1. There is general agreement across dioceses and schools (schools 92%, dioceses 98%) that SIAMS development points are useful tools for school improvement. Very few respondents felt they had insufficient information with which to answer the question.
- 1.2. Where inspectors carefully and precisely diagnose and lucidly communicate appropriate development points they are salient in enabling schools to improve their practice over time.
- 1.3. In this way inspection is supporting school improvement across the Church school estate.



## 2. A role of SIAMS inspection should be to validate a school's own self-evaluation.

	Schools/Trusts		Dioceses	
	Responses	Percentage	Responses	Percentage
Yes	277	94%	51	80%
No	16	5%	10	15%
I do not have enough information to answer this question	2	1%	3	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Observations

- 2.1. There is general agreement across dioceses and schools that one of the roles of SIAMS inspection is to validate the school's own self-evaluation.
- 2.2. The agreement amongst schools is slightly higher than that among diocese (schools 94%, dioceses 90%). This may reflect differing perceptions as to the accuracy of a school's self-evaluation.
- 2.3. Where there is strong coherence between the inspector's judgement and the school's view of its effectiveness as a Church school, school leaders are like to see the inspection outcome as a validation of their own self-evaluation.
- 2.4. It is important that self-evaluation is understood as an ongoing process in which schools engage in order that they can best serve the needs of their communities. It is not the preparation of another document simply for the purposes of inspection. Self-evaluation is a reflective process and way of working, not simply a static document.

## 3. Our diocesan/MAST offer to schools focuses specifically on schools that are on the current and next year's SIAMS lists.

	Responses (Diocese and MAST)	Percentage
Yes	23	36%
No	38	59%
I do not have enough information to answer this question	3	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Observations

- 3.1. Just over a third of diocesan training and support offers to schools focus specifically on schools that are due to be inspected.
- 3.2. This suggests that there may be an unhelpful focus on only those schools due inspection. It begs the question as to the quality and breadth of support and training offered in the 3-4 years in which a school does not fall into this inspection window category.
- 3.3. A focus on consistent and well-matched support is necessary if a school is to live up to its foundation as a Church school. A cyclical programme of support and development should never simply be the response to an inspection cycle or timeframe. To do so is to impede the effectiveness of the Church school. It actively mitigates against the ability of the school to live up to its foundation.

## 4. Our school specifically focuses on matters related to SIAMS as the year of inspection approaches.

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	196	66%
No	91	31%
I do not have enough information to answer this question	8	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Observations

- 4.1. Just over a third of schools focus specifically on matters related to SIAMS in the timeframe in which they are due to be inspected. This mirrors almost exactly the proportion of dioceses who focus their offer on schools due to be inspected.
- 4.2. As indicated above, this suggests that there may be an unhelpful focus on matters regarded as pertaining to SIAMS only in the year preceding inspection. This is likely to be working against the effectiveness of the school as a Church school. It may extend the longevity of elements of practice that are unhelpful and impede the instigation of changes that are necessary to enable flourishing.
- 4.3. A consistent focus on the effectiveness of the school as a Church school over time and irrespective of the inspection cycle is necessary if a school is to live up to its foundation as a Church school. A school's engagement with a cyclical programme of support and development should never simply be the response to an inspection cycle timeframe.



## 5. CPD for all teachers of RE has a high priority in our school.

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	259	88%
No	30	10%
I do not have enough information to answer this question	6	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Observations

- 5.1. In the vast majority of schools (fully nine tenths) continuing professional development for those who teach RE is seen as a high priority. This is encouraging.
- 5.2. Worryingly, in 10% of schools CPD in RE is not regarded as a high priority. We can speculate as to the reasons. Financial constraints and time pressures being likely factors.
- 5.3. This underlines the need for all of those who teach RE to have access to expert support and guidance with regards to pedagogy in RE. Until this is the case, improvement in the subject is likely to be hampered.

## 6. It is important that inspectors demonstrate compassion whilst they are holding a school to account through inspection.

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	295	100%
No	0	0%
I do not have enough information to answer this question	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Observations

- 6.1. Unsurprisingly, the response is unanimously in agreement with the statement.
- 6.2. It is hoped that this balancing of compassion and holding to account, demonstrates that compassionate accountability is an achievable reality for Church schools. It is not merely posturing or sloganeering.
- 6.3. Evidence from individual school post-inspection feedback would certainly give weight to this contention. Over 99% of feedback agrees that the inspection was conducted in a Christian manner.



## 7. A pre-inspection plan that sets out the threads that an inspector will follow in gathering their evidence is a useful document for a school that is being inspected.

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	287	97%
No	5	2%
I do not have enough information to answer this question	3	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Observations

- 7.1. A strikingly high proportion of respondents commend the utility of a pre-inspection document setting out the threads that the inspector will explore whilst gathering evidence of impact to answer each of the inspection questions.
- 7.2. The pre-inspection plan (PIP) can be seen as a vital component in the wider approach of inspecting in a Christian manner. It helps to scaffold an effective working relationship in which inspection is the coming together of two experts- the inspector and school leader- in a collaborative endeavour to gather the necessary evidence on which the inspector than can then make judgements.

## 8. One week's notice of an inspection is too long.

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	8	3%
No	281	95%
I do not have enough information to answer this question	6	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Observations

- 8.1. The vast majority of respondents are content that a week is not an excessively long notification period.
- 8.2. Whilst it does mean that every notification period spans a weekend, it does allow time for the establishment of an informed relationship between inspector and school leader(s) before the inspection day. No doubt, some would prefer a longer notification period and some a shorter one. A week is reasonable in balancing sufficient time for schools to be prepared for the practicalities of the day whilst not being so long as to allow the school time to change anything of substance in its working or approach.

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