

Important Diocesan Education Team Update #25, Fri 10 July 2020

Dear colleagues,

As we approach the end of term, I can only imagine the mixed emotions that you will be having as you find new and innovative ways of saying goodbye to groups of children and young people, and begin to welcome others. That is just one more aspect of the losses that we are navigating in education and one which I know you will be approaching with your usual creativity and imagination. It is at times like these that we need to focus on keeping on keeping on, just taking one day and one situation at a time.

I have a few important pieces of information to share with you as this week draws to a close.

- **SIAMS**

- Attached is a letter from Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer for the Church of England, with the latest update on SIAMS inspections. As we had anticipated, it is now confirmed that **there will be no SIAMS inspections until after the end of 2020**. It is possible that the DfE will lift the suspension of s48 from January 2021, but we do not yet have confirmation of that. Changes to the legislation on s48 / SIAMS will mirror those for Ofsted and we will find out more over the course of the Autumn term. We will also find out more about how the scheduling of postponed and imminent inspections will be approached at that time.

- **VA Schools Admissions**

- A small number of VA schools and academies in the Diocese of Worcester have faith / church attendance as part of their Admissions Policy oversubscription criteria. In light of the recent and ongoing closure of churches for public worship, those schools and academies that do have such criteria are required to seek an in-year variation. If this applies to your school, Gilly Maxim will be in touch with you early next week setting out what you need to do. This information comes with apologies for its lateness but the DfE have only just finalised their requirements with the Church of England Education Office.

- **VA Schools Asset Management Planning (VA schools only)**

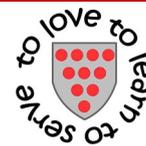
- Heads and governors of VA schools should now be familiar with the DfE's new requirement for asset management plans as part of bidding for funds through the School Condition Allocation (SCA) system. The DBE's Asset Management Plan, which contains details of the SCA bidding process and conditions, is available on our [website](#). If you are a head of a maintained VA school and have not yet sent me your own asset management planning documentation, please do so as soon as you are able to. Email [me](#) if you would like a reminder of what needs to be included.

- **Risk Assessments for September wider reopening**

- As you will have seen in the DfE's most recent guidance for the further expansion of provision from September, updated risk assessments will be required by all schools over the summer. Dudley or Worcestershire LA should be in touch with you shortly with details of how they plan to support you in this task and we anticipate a repeat of the previous arrangements by both LAs respectively. Let either [Tim](#) or [me](#) know if you expect to hear from your LA but have not done so by the beginning of August.

- **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)**

- The new RSHE requirements remain statutory from September 2020, with the DfE's understanding that schools will introduce updated provision as soon as they are able to over the course of the 2020-21 academic year. If you have not already booked a place on the RSHE training that we have arranged for 22nd and 23rd September, I would urge you to contact [Laura](#) as soon as possible so that you do not miss out.
- The training makes specific reference to the Church of England vision for education and documents such as Valuing All God's Children, but also covers all statutory requirements. It is therefore suitable for colleagues from community schools and academies if they would like to join in, as long as they are happy to bear with the specific CofE references.



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- **Religious Education**

- All VC schools in **Worcestershire** should now have registered for and be using the new 2020-2025 Agreed Syllabus for RE. **Please note, its use is a statutory requirement for all community and VC schools in Worcestershire.** The DBE encourages VA schools and CofE academies to also use this new RE AS. Please contact [Laura](#) if you need a reminder of how to access the syllabus and associated resources.
- **RE Leads**
 - As personnel change over time, it is easy for us to lose contact with certain members of your staff. I would therefore ask that you reply to [Laura](#) with the name and contact details of your RE and Collective Worship Lead/s so that we are able, at times, to communicate directly with them with updates and news of specific support and training. Please ensure that you have their consent to share their details with us.

- **Never the Same October Conference**

- We have now finalised the programme for the Zoom Headteachers' and Senior Leaders' Conference on the morning of Friday 23rd October and we will be in touch shortly with details of how you can book places. The Bishop of Dudley will be formally welcoming our new headteacher, head of school and executive headteacher colleagues at the start of the conference and, if this describes you, you will receive a separate invitation. This is always a special element of our annual conference and we hope to extend as warm a welcome as usual, albeit over the ether on this occasion.

- **And finally...**

- I hope that you will not be surprised to know that all of us in the Diocesan Education Team keep you in our thoughts and prayers every day. I have enjoyed writing this newsletter to you every week since we entered our new normal in the middle of March, and it is hard to believe that we are now almost at the end of the summer term. However, when I come to this 'And Finally' section, I am struck each week by both the privilege that it is to work with you and the responsibility I feel to try to be a little bit inspirational now and again! Such pressure. The truth is quite simply that I have no inspiration other than to ask God what it is that He is saying that we need to hear collectively. In doing so today, I am drawn to the following verses from Philippians.

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

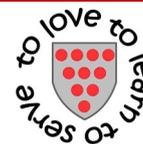
It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and...all of you share in God's grace with me...

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best...filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God."

Have a good weekend and remember that the end (of term at least!) is now in sight.

With best wishes,

Margaret James, DDE



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9 July 2020

To all Church of England Schools
Headteachers and Governing Bodies

Section 48 – SIAMS Inspection Autumn 2020

Thank you for all that you have been doing in these challenging times to enable pupils to continue to access education which is so vital for their wellbeing and future. We know that the complexity of the challenge is huge and that you are working tirelessly for the benefit of your pupils, staff and communities.

This note is particularly concerned with denominational inspection under s.48 otherwise known as SIAMS.

The obligation for schools with a religious character to ensure that they have a s.48 inspection is currently disapplied as part of the Coronavirus Act and accompanying legislation. Guidance issued by DfE to schools about September 20 explains how Ofsted will be expecting to operate as schools fully open in September. Whilst Ofsted have the flexibility to 'inspect' in a different way under s.8 there is no equivalent for s.48 inspection and so inspection under s.48 cannot be reintroduced until the disapplication is lifted, which will happen at the same time as s.5 inspections are reintroduced for Ofsted. Currently this is expected to be January 2021, but it may have to be later and that will be reviewed during the course of the Autumn 20 term and a final decision will be made by the DfE towards the end of this calendar year.

This means that there **will definitely be no s.48 SIAMS inspections for the remainder of 2020** and we will be in touch in the Autumn term once we are clear about how the scheduling of inspections will happen in 2021 to enable us to catch-up with inspections for schools that will have missed their inspection between March 20 and January 21 and also rework our scheduling timetable for the future.

Please be assured that we will be working both nationally and at a local diocesan level to ensure that the reintroduction of SIAMS will happen in a timely way that enables schools to continue to focus on the many challenges and complexities that you will face as schools, underpinned by our commitment to ensuring that the Christian character and ethos of our schools continues to promote our vision for education which seeks the flourishing of all.

Yours with warmest greeting

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