St Catherine's
CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governor Visits Policy



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1. Rationale

Governors are expected to monitor the implementation of policies and plans and to evaluate the progress that the school is making. Much of the monitoring will be undertaken through reports from the Headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff to the Governing Body and its committees.

However, it is also good practice for governors to visit the school during the school day to see the impact of policies and plans on practice. An effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding and respect, benefits the whole school community.

School visits are one way to facilitate appropriate challenge by the Governing Body and to provide timely support and praise where good practice is observed.

Governor visits contribute to the Governing Body's strategic role and support links between Ofsted's key areas, the School Self Evaluation Form (SEF), the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and statutory policies.

Governor visits must always be supportive and strategic. They are **not** inspections, nor are they opportunities to assess individual staff performance or become involved in the day-to-day management of the school.

2. Aims and Purpose

This policy provides a framework for governors to undertake focused monitoring visits so that they can:

- Improve their knowledge of the school, its staff, needs and priorities.
- Develop a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development in order to ask informed and strategic questions at Governing Body and committee meetings.
- Build effective working relationships with staff, particularly senior and subject leaders beyond the Headteacher.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the context in which staff work.
- Observe how policies and plans are implemented on a day-to-day basis in relation to:
    - Achievement and progress
    - Behaviour and safety
    - Teaching and learning
    - Leadership and management
- Monitor and evaluate priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan.
- Assist the Governing Body in fulfilling its statutory duties by reporting findings to the appropriate committee or Full Governing Board (FGB).

3. Link Governors

Some governors will hold a linked governor role (e.g. safeguarding, SEND, curriculum areas, attendance, vulnerable pupils). Where applicable, visits will focus on the governor's designated link area, enabling governors to develop expertise and continuity in monitoring.

4. Timing of Visits

- The Curriculum Committee will conduct one learning walk per year.
- Other committees and governors with linked roles will agree the timing and focus of visits in advance with the Headteacher or relevant senior leader.
- Visits will be planned across the academic year to align with monitoring priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan.

5. Before the Visit

A carefully planned visit provides meaningful evidence to inform strategic decision-making.
In advance of each visit:

- The specific focus, agenda, duration and arrangements will be discussed and agreed with the relevant senior leader or designated contact.
- The agenda and any relevant documentation will be shared with the governor and staff involved at least one week prior to the visit.
- Governors will prepare by reading all relevant documents and guidance.
- All staff involved will be fully informed of the focus of the visit in the interests of transparency.
- Governors and senior leaders will agree the key lines of enquiry and possible questions in advance.

6. During the Visit

Professional Conduct

- Governors must sign in at reception, wear their school ID badge or visitor badge at all times, and sign out at the end of the visit.
- Governors must maintain strict confidentiality at all times.
- Staff may need to anonymise information about individual students or staff. Governors must not discuss identifiable information outside the Governing Body.

In Classrooms

If classroom visits are part of the agreed focus:

- Governors must avoid making judgements about the quality of teaching.
- Governors should:
    - Be positive and interested.
    - Smile, engage appropriately and show appreciation.
    - Ask questions at suitable times without interrupting learning.
    - Speak to students or staff when appropriate and not during direct teaching.
- Governors must avoid sending negative or evaluative messages.

At the End of the Visit

- The governor will discuss observations with the relevant senior leader and clarify any uncertainties.
- Key points to report to the committee or Full Governing Board will be agreed jointly.
- Governors will complete the agreed visit proforma (Appendix A or B).
- Any urgent safeguarding, health and safety or conduct concerns must be reported immediately to a senior leader or Headteacher.
- Governors must remain courteous and professional at all times.

7. After the Visit

- A draft record of the visit (using the proforma) will be shared with the senior leader involved and copied to the Headteacher in the first instance.
- Governor visits will be included as a standing agenda item at Full Governing Board meetings.

8. Activities Not Considered Monitoring

The following are **not** considered formal monitoring visits:

- Attending school functions where not invited in a governor capacity.
- Volunteering at a school event.
- Parent governors visiting the school to discuss matters relating to your own child.

Appendix A Diocese of Worcester Governor Monitoring Form

The school's Christian vision							
1. Which general area are we looking at?	Christian distinctiveness		Collective Worship		Religious Education		
2. What specifically are we trying to find out? Links to Evaluation Question(s) from SIAMS framework Links to School							
3. How will we find our evidence? Planned meetings/ observations/tasks	Headteacher		Co-ordinator		Children		
	Parents		Learning walk		Children's books		
	Worship		Documents		Other		
4. Who will carry out the monitoring?							
5. When?							
6. With whom will the results of this monitoring be shared?							
7. When and how will governors follow up any recommendations?							

8. Key questions for the agreed monitoring activities in No. 3	**9. What have we learnt?** Focus on the impact on the children. List both positive and negative.

Appendix B

School monitoring visits

Name of school/trust:
Name of governor/trustee:
Name of lead staff member:
Date of visit:

Focus of visit
Visits should focus on: *looking at the implementation of strategic priorities and key policies agreed by the governing board* *evaluating progress: are the things we are told about actually happening?* *seeking assurance that the needs of all pupils are being met*

Summary of activities

What happened during the visit, including information learned. For example:

Meeting staff with responsibility for specific areas (such as safeguarding or SEND).

Talking to staff and pupils.

Observing a lesson (as part of getting to know the school, not making judgements about quality of teaching).

Positive observations

Relate this back to the focus of your visit. For example:

Pupils are actively engaged and motivated during lessons.

Pupils conduct themselves in a respectful manner such as during transitions between lessons or break times.

Areas for improvement

Relate this back to the focus of your visit. For example:

Accessibility issues for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Staff morale or workload concerns raised by teachers or support staff.

Summary of activities

Monitoring progress

How progress will continue to be monitored and reported to governors, including:

questions for clarification from the executive leader

discussions for the board

follow-up actions to be taken