

GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY



**Kindness, Respect, Collaboration, Resilience, Aspiration, Courage,
Friendship**

This policy was adopted and approved by the Governing Board: March 2025

The policy is to be reviewed by: March 2029



The purpose of this policy

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their school and must monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in this respect. Through visiting our school, governors can get to know it better. The Governing Board is a corporate body and every governor will visit the school as a representative member of that body, not as an individual. An effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding, benefits the whole school community. This policy will provide an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out their school visits.

The organisation of the governor visits at St James & St John Church of England School

~~This policy has been produced by the Headteacher, governors and staff.~~

Visit programme

The programme of visits will be organised as follows:

- Governors will aim to carry out a school visit once per term with a member of staff.
- Governors will agree a meeting time with the member of staff they are visiting prior to the meeting, liaising with the Headteacher
- The visit should typically last for one hour but could be longer or shorter depending on the nature and context of the governor visit.
- If there are any barriers that prevent a governor from visiting in person these could be overcome by a virtual visit.
- Annual whole school staff and governor catch up meetings to take place.

Content of visits

- A programme of visits will be drawn up termly at the fully Governing Board meeting.
- The focus of these visits will be linked to the school development plan.
- Governors will use the agreed list of suggested questions.
- Governors will only seek the views of the pupils in the presence of a member of staff.
- If governors see any areas of concern, these should be reported immediately to the Headteacher.
- All visits or work samples looked at must remain completely confidential unless there are safeguarding concerns.

Staff involvement

- The Governor Visits policy is shared with all staff and updated annually.

Reporting

- Verbal feedback will be shared prior to the governor completing the visit form and sending it to the member of staff visited for accuracy and agreement.
- The visit will be reported to other governors via uploading and publishing on Governorhub and discussion at full Governing Board meetings.

Procedure for carrying out visits at St James & St John Church of England School

Our governor visits will be organised as follows:

Before the visit

- Agree a mutually convenient time to visit with the Headteacher/class teacher/member of staff.

- Clarify the focus of the visit and agree with the Headteacher and relevant member of staff.
- Agree together how best to approach the visit to make effective use of everyone's time.
- Agree how you will be introduced to the children/young people and the extent to which you will be involved in any activity or lesson.
- Agree a convenient time to discuss your observation with the staff member. This will also be your opportunity to clarify any issues you are unclear about.
- Prepare for your visit by reading any relevant documents.

During the visit

- **Remember that this is a visit, not an inspection.** Governors are visiting to learn more about the school and to gather information to inform decision making by the Governing Board. It is not the governors' role to judge the quality of the teaching. Monitoring staff performance and the quality of teaching and learning is the job of the Headteacher.
- Remember that you are an invited guest.
- Be aware of and adhere to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Be punctual and sign in.
- Try hard not to disrupt the normal working of the school by monopolising the staff member's time.
- Smile and listen, try to relax and enjoy yourself.
- Think carefully about what you say and do. Remember that a visit by a governor can be stressful for staff. Be courteous, tactful, positive and interested. Avoid criticism and never make a comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.
- Try not to draw too much attention to yourself. Avoid overtly making notes as this can be disconcerting. Instead write down your thoughts as soon afterwards as is practical.
- Remember that you are representing the Governing Board. Governors should be prepared to explain policies but should avoid giving personal opinions which could be misinterpreted as the views of the Governing Board.
- Avoid making promises on behalf of the Governing Board.
- Only go into the staffroom if you are invited to do so.
- Observe previously agreed levels of confidentiality.
- Remember to thank the staff for supporting you in your role as a governor.

After the visit

- If you have seen something that worries you, discuss this first with the staff member or Headteacher as appropriate.
- Agree a draft of any written report with the staff as appropriate. Be prepared to take the comments of others on board before you circulate your report to governors and the clerk.
- Send a note/email to thank the relevant staff. Be open and honest; recognise and celebrate achievement.
- Reflect upon your visit.

Reporting on your visit

Following a visit, governors will share their thoughts and impressions with the Governing Board via Governor Visit form. Give staff the opportunity to comment on the governor visit. Copies of approved and finalised written reports should be uploaded to Governorhub. Reports will be kept in the relevant section of Governorhub.

Evaluating the visit

Following a visit, governors may reflect on the following questions:

- How did the visit go?
- Were you clear about your objectives?
- What, if anything would you do differently next time?

- Are there further areas you would like to explore?
- How has the visit helped you, the school and/or the Governing Board? e.g. in collecting monitoring evidence, in greater understanding of a particular aspect.

Monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy

Governors' visits will be an agenda item termly at termly fully Governing Board/committee meetings. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Health and Safety committee. The views of the staff will be sought. The Governing Board will consider if governor visits are contributing to the information that the Governing Board has about progress towards meeting priorities and targets identified in the School Development Plan.

Governor Visit Report

St James & St John Church of England School Governing Board Visit Report	
Name:	Date:
Classes/staff visited:	
Focus of Visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Description and focus of visit)• (Reference to SDP, delegated responsibilities, etc)	
Summary of activities e.g. talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Summary of activities that you would like to do/have done as part of your visit)	
What have I observed as a result of my visit? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Summary of the key facts that you have learned, impressions formed as a result of your visit)	
Where did I see the vision and values in action today?	
Ideas for future visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (How you would like to follow up your visit (if appropriate))	
Other Comments (Governor): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Other comments you may have related to your visit)	
Staff and Headteacher comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Any comments the staff member or Headteacher have in relation to your visit, your findings, your questions etc)	
Signed (Governor)	Date:
Signed (Teacher/Designated Lead/Headteacher)	Date:

Appendix 3 Suggestions for the focus of a governor visit

One or more of the following will provide a focus for a visit, with the agreement of the relevant staff:

- The implementation and impact of a key policy.
- Progress in an aspect of the School Improvement Plan.
- Progress on areas identified during an Ofsted or SIAMS inspection.
- Provision for identified groups e.g. EAL pupils, GRT, boys, girls, disadvantaged...
- Provision of the EYFS curriculum
- Equality of provision.
- Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- Provision for Gifted and Talented pupils.
- Particular subjects, key stages or classes, Cross-curricular areas e.g. Literacy and Mathematics and ICT.
- The use made of the buildings, the site or Resources e.g. Interactive Whiteboards.
- The condition and maintenance of the premises.
- Health & safety.
- Extended Services including Extra-Curricular activities.
- INSET days or training sessions, staff or departmental meetings, as appropriate.
- Pupil participation e.g. attend a school council meeting.
- Impact of the vision and values
- Deployment of staff.
- The impact on the school of any key changes e.g. impact of increased staffing in Support roles.
- Educational Visits – provision and impact.
- Collective Worship.

In addition to any special focus to a visit, governors may learn more about some of the following areas:

- The variety of teaching and learning styles.
- Availability, deployment and role of support staff.
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils — are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?
- Relationships.
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils.
- How the pupils are grouped.
- How different abilities are catered for with differentiated tasks.
- Examples of children and young people's work, written and oral.
- Displays in open areas and classrooms e.g. learning walls, reflection of community in images round the school.
- Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?).
- Use of space and working conditions.
- Classroom facilities: lighting, layout, storage, furniture and décor.
- Facilities for outdoor play and learning outside the classroom.
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources and associated storage.

Appendix 4 Governor visits - suggestions for staff

Visits to the School are valuable in enabling governors to carry out their monitoring and evaluating role, and their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school. Governors will not be making judgements about the quality of teaching and learning, as most are not trained to do so. Visits are an excellent way for governors to understand how teaching and learning takes place in the school and to deepen their knowledge of the school and the curriculum. Individual governors do not have the automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish - they are the school's invited guests.

The most effective visits will be well planned.

- The date of a visit should be mutually agreed, and have an explicit focus and purpose agreed in advance by all concerned.
- Agree a convenient time to talk to the governor about what they have seen and to answer any questions that they may have. You have an important part to play in raising the governors' awareness of what happens in our school and why.
- Feel free to say that it is not convenient for a governor to come into your classroom at a particular time.
- Do raise any concerns about the visits with your line manager or the Headteacher.
- Prepare your class for the visit of a governor and agree how you will introduce them.
- Be aware that a visit can be stressful for governors and staff alike.
- Inform the governor if you wish them to be involved in the lesson, and what it would be helpful for them to do.
- Don't leave a governor alone with the class, even if they are willing for you to do so.

Appendix 5 Possible questions for subject-linked governors

The full Governing Board retains the responsibility for raising standards. A nominated governor who takes a special interest in a curriculum area or areas of the school development plan can help to ensure that this issue remains high profile on the Governing Board's agenda. The following questions will help you as you find out about teaching and learning across the school. Use them as a guide in a meeting or on school visits – it is not intended you work systematically through the list.

Discuss with your Headteacher how best to use these questions to help you gradually build up a picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Your role, in partnership with the Headteacher, is to provide a link between your Governing Board, its committees and the staff of your school.

Achievements and attitudes

For the core subjects:

- What are the broad trends in the school's achievement in Phonics, English, Mathematics and Science
 - compared to similar schools?
 - in relation to the national rates of increase?
 - in relation to the national picture in terms of gender?
- How do children's results in Phonics/English/Mathematics/Science compare?
- How do they compare with other subjects?

For all subjects

- Where have we improved? Do we know why?
- Are there differences between the achievement of different groups, and if so, why?
- What aspects of the subject do pupils find easy and which hard?
- What is being taught and when?
- What is being used to support teachers delivering the subject?

Are there significant differences in the performance of:

- girls and boys?
- looked after children?
- child carers?
- pupils with special educational needs?
- gifted & talented pupils?
- pupils with English as an additional language?
- the majority and any other minority ethnic groups, such as those of Indian or African ethnicity?

Has any CPD taken place?

In meetings with the subject co-ordinator can you tell how much progress pupils are making?
For e.g. you could look at:

- Key Stage test results and teacher assessments.
- The work of a range of pupils – average, below average and above average.
- Other evidence.

Special Needs

- How are pupils with SEN integrated into lessons?
- What interventions are taking place?
- How have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) been adapted to support children in their lessons?
- How are we progressing with meeting the objectives stated on an EHCP?

Management of the subject

- How is the role of the co-ordinator developing?
- Does the School Improvement Plan address the identified needs?
- What is the allocation of funding to the subject for this financial year?
- How has it or will it be spent?
- Is there a need for additional resources for any aspect of the work?
- What further training to teachers and support staff need?
- How much additional support does each class have?
- How is the support used and what impact does it have?
- (English only) Does the school offer a range of reading books catering for all abilities, cultural backgrounds and tastes, especially boys? Are pupils using the library? What links does the school have with the local library?
- How does the school use all its resources (ICT, books, materials and displays) to promote Reading, Writing or Mathematics?

Communication

- How are parents kept informed about pupil progress?
- What steps are being taken to encourage parents to support their children's learning?
- How are governors kept informed about standards and the progress of pupils?
- How do governors celebrate the school's achievements and successes?