

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspiring everyone to **REACH** through Faith, Hope, Love

At St Joseph's, we strive for academic excellence through encouraging resilience, empathy, aspiration and challenge. We have high expectations for ALL so that we can be 'The best we can be.' With Faith, Hope and Love at the heart of our school family, our children feel safe, secure and supported.



Governor Visits Policy

Our ethos is one that nurtures education through recognition and celebration of all children's experiences and achievements, whatever the context. Each child is unique and made in the likeness of God. Every child should succeed at their own level and be praised for this success

Approved by the L&R Committee: 13th May 2019

Review Date: Extended to November 2024

1 Rationale

All governors of a Catholic school have a responsibility to uphold the distinctive ethos of the Catholic school they serve. In addition, the full governing body is responsible for the strategic direction of the school and is actively involved in school improvement. Active membership of the Governing Body includes not only attending Governor events, meetings and sub-committees, but also having a commitment to involvement in various aspects of school life, including as a link governor. It is in this context that the following policy should be read.

2 Introduction

Visiting school is a valuable opportunity for governors and should be a regular event, where possible. All governors should aim to make an individual visit at least three times a year.

At St Joseph's, governors are warmly welcomed and are frequently invited to attend school productions, Masses and a variety of other school events.

At other times, governors should make individual visits with a particular school development plan or other focus (such as subject link, or year group link) in mind.

Newly appointed governors will need to make an early visit to school to meet with the Headteacher and familiarise themselves with staff, pupils and the ethos of the school.

The headteacher and staff actively support extending governor's knowledge and understanding of Education and may wish to invite them to attend staff meetings and INSET or other training, where appropriate.

By observing pupils and mixing with teaching and support staff, a governor can get to know the school. Governors do not visit to make judgements but to gain an understanding of the school, issues affecting it and importantly, to note the conditions in which pupils and staff work to ensure a good learning environment.

3 Purpose of visits

Visits are undertaken to:

- Improve governing body knowledge of the school and people who work in it.
- Assist the governing body in monitoring the implementation of the School Development Plan (SDP).
- Assist a governor to fulfil a specialist (or link) governor role, such as Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).
- Assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties.
- Assist the governing body in making informed decisions.
- Show governing body support for the school.

Benefits to governors and staff are to:

- recognise and celebrate success
- develop relationships with staff
- get to know the children
- recognise different teaching styles
- understand the environment in which teachers and other staff work
- see policies and schemes of work in action
- find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

4 Aim of this policy

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for governor visits that will ensure they are conducted in an appropriate way with the following objectives:

- To enable participants to make the most effective use of visits;
- To ensure that visits are conducted properly;
- To ensure pupil safety and effective learning at all times;
- To contribute to school improvement;
- To enable the governing body to carry out its statutory duty acting as a 'critical friend'; 'Critical' in the sense of its responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness, asking challenging questions, pressing for improvement and fulfilling its strategic role. A 'friend' because it exists to support and promote the interests of the school, the law, the parents and most importantly its pupils.

5 Planning visits

Governors do not have the right to enter school without the headteacher's approval and should not turn up without prior arrangement. Sufficient notice must be given of the intended visit, with a minimum notice of 5 school days.

Visits will have a specific focus, agreed in advance with the headteacher, with due regard for the governors' year plan, linked to the SDP. Each visit will almost always include an opportunity to participate in lessons and spend time with staff and pupils within an ordinary working day. Governor visits are not an inspection, but a fact finding and observational visit.

In planning the focus for the visit, governors should include at least one aspect of the REACH curriculum. It is not necessary to observe or report on all 5 aspects.

6 Protocol

When planning a visit, governors must give due consideration to timing the visit so as to minimise disruption to school teaching and learning and staff commitments. Governors should also be mindful that release time will need to be organised by the senior leadership team (SLT).

	Always	Never
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inform the headteacher or assistant headteacher of your intended visit.• Contact the relevant staff member by email to organise a date, time, length and focus of the visit.• Agree how they will be introduced to pupils and be involved in the lesson or activity they are observing (or learning walk) and whether or not they would be able to speak to the children.• Read any appropriate documents (policies)• If possible, prepare questions for staff in advance.• Be conversant with key information on the school curriculum – Intent Implementation Impact, SDP, class blogs etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turn up unannounced for a focussed/formal visit• Expect to go into a classroom without prior arrangement, or with less than one week's notice.• Visit during SATS week without the visit being authorised by the headteacher or member of the senior leadership team.

	Always	Never
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared, organised and punctual. • Report to the school office and sign in. • Address the teacher as Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms + surname when speaking to them in front of children and parents. • Fulfil the agreed purpose of the visit. • Observe class rules/guidelines • Listen to staff and pupils. • Jot down discussion points to consider later at a feedback session (or by email) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturb the flow of the lesson. • Make professional teaching judgements - that is the responsibility of the headteacher. • Undermine the authority of staff or interfere with staff teaching. • Go into the staff room unless you they are invited.
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the member(s) of staff and pupils. • Provide positive feedback to staff and pupils at the earliest opportunity. • Complete a Visit Form (see Appendix A) and send to the headteacher as soon as possible, preferably within 5 school days of the visit and include any identified key issues for the governing body to action. • Respect confidentiality arising from any aspect of the visit (never use children's names in reports) • Raise any concerns privately with the headteacher or assistant headteacher on the day of the visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave without a word of thanks. • Leave the school without giving some feedback. • Discuss observations with other members of staff, parents or individual governors (except the Chair) unless given permission to do so.

7 Reporting to the governing body

Once the headteacher has discussed the contents of the visit form with the relevant staff member and the content has been agreed, the headteacher will notify the governor that the form can be circulated to the governing body.

The governor should then submit the form to the clerk who will circulate it to governors for their information and 'note' the visit for discussion at the next Learning and Standards Committee meeting, or Resources Committee meeting, if appropriate.

Governors may also be invited to provide verbal feedback at a full governing body meeting.

8 Filing

Visit forms are filed by the clerk in a folder in the school office, to be available to Ofsted inspectors on request.

Appendix A

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

GOVERNOR SCHOOL VISIT RECORD

Good Governance Reminders:

- Agree date of visit with Head Teacher/ staff member
- Minimise disruption to the school
- Give minimum 5 days' notice of intended date of visit

NAME(S):		DATE OF VISIT	
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FOCUS OF VISIT:

e.g. Policy monitoring, Friday Curriculum, Year link visit

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AIM OF VISIT:

	Tick if aim achieved

OFSTED ACTION / SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN / REFERENCE(S):

e.g. SDP reference, Governor year plan reference, Intent/Implementation/Impact

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STRUCTURE/TIMETABLE OF VISIT:

e.g Learning walk, meeting, pupil conferencing

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KEY PERSONNEL TO MEET:

Position	Name	

KEY QUESTIONS/ISSUES FOR GOVERNORS TO EXPLORE:

List of agreed questions/focus of visit

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Comments on Visit focus

Report on all areas listed in 'Key Questions....' Above.

General comments

Include any observations not relating to visit focus, of which governors should be made aware.

REACH aspect observed

List all aspects observed, to include an explanation e.g. Resilience, Aspiration

Provision for vulnerable children

Comment on evidence seen for provision made for vulnerable children, if appropriate

ANY KEY ISSUES ARISING FOR GOVERNING BODY:

List any concerns/issues which governors need to review or action

FOCUS FOR NEXT MEETING

Make a note of any areas which you have agreed with staff member that you intend to focus on at your next scheduled meeting (including proposed date)