



St John's Church of England Primary School

Finding the light in ourselves and each other
Inspired by the Gospel according to John (chapter 8, verse 12)

School Visits Policy

An aspirational school that encourages every child regardless of their background to 'soar on wings like eagles' in their learning and personal development (Isaiah 40:31)

Approved By	FGB
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Policy aims

This policy aims to ensure that all governors understand:

- the purpose of monitoring visits
- the expectations for carrying out visits including preparation, expected conduct and reporting back to the governing board

Purpose of visits carried out by governors

Boards must know their schools in order to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors will:

- better understand their school's strengths and areas for development
- observe whether the school is implementing actions from the school development plan
- determine if agreed policies and procedures are working in practice
- identify how resources are being used
- show staff and pupils that they are interested in the life, work and achievements of a school
- have the opportunity to gather views of pupils and staff
- experience the culture and ethos of the school

Monitoring visits should focus on:

- strategic priorities and key policies agreed by the governing board
- the evaluation of progress: are the things people say are happening actually happening?
- seeking assurance that the needs of pupils are being met (such as safeguarding and SEND)

Frequency and type of visits

Governors will carry out regular school visits in order to meet the board's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness.

There are 2 types of visits:

- Formal monitoring visits, where governors discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member
- Learning walks, where governors will go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area and are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils

The frequency of governance visits should be in accordance with the schedule established by the governing board and agreed with school leaders and relevant staff. Visits should be scheduled to allow governors to see relevant activities and strategic milestones.

Arranging and preparing for visits

Visits should be arranged through the headteacher, with adequate notice, and agreed with the relevant members of staff.

Due regard should be given to:

- how the visit fits with the schedule of board and committee meetings, to allow for timely feedback and discussion
- how to avoid visits clashing with important events and/or busy periods in school life
- the workload implications for staff who are likely to be involved in the visits

Governors are encouraged to prepare for their visit. This may include:

- reading and familiarising yourself with the governing board's protocol for visits and the expected conduct
- reading and familiarising yourself with the school's policy for visitors (this is different from the governor visits policy) that includes relevant health, safety and safeguarding instructions
- reading the background information relating to the focus of the visit, such as relevant section(s) of the strategic plan, performance data, policies, stakeholder information
- clarifying the purpose of the visit with the head teacher and or relevant member of staff
- confirming the visit schedule and activities

Conduct on visits

When visiting the school in a governing capacity, you should:

- arrive in good time and follow the school's procedures (such as signing in and producing identification)
- adopt a friendly approach that puts everyone at ease
- be respectful of the school at work and if you wish to take notes, check that those you are with are comfortable with this
- if you are taking notes, be clear with everyone that this is for feedback purposes and that you are not recording judgements (for example on the quality of their teaching)
- ask relevant questions that are closely linked to the purpose of your visit
- acknowledge the staff and pupils you meet

Governors are not inspectors and will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and will not manage the school or interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school.

Governors are also expected to behave in line with the governing board's code of conduct, being aware of the need to maintain confidentiality.

Expectations following a visit

A report (in the agreed format) should be completed as soon as possible after each visit (ideally within 2 weeks). A draft will be shared with the headteacher and any other members of staff involved in the visit and, when agreed, a final version will be shared on Governor Hub and included in the papers for discussion in the next governing board meeting (this may be the full governing board or a committee, as appropriate).

School Visit Report

Name of school: St John's Church of England Primary School

Name of Governor leading the visit:

Name of lead staff member:

Date of visit:

Focus of visit

Visits should focus on:

- *strategic priorities and key policies agreed by the governing board*
- *the evaluation of progress: are the things people say are happening actually happening?*
- *seeking assurance that the needs of pupils are being met*

Summary of activities

For example:

- *meeting staff with responsibility for specific areas (such as safeguarding or SEND)*
- *talking to staff and pupils*
- *experiencing a lesson being taught (as part of getting to know the school, rather than making judgements about quality of teaching)*
- *seeing examples of pupil work*

What have I learned and how will I feed this back to my board?

Relate this back to focus of your visit.

What is the school doing within this area of focus?

What successes stood out and why?

How do you know the school's actions are having an impact?

Remember:

- *Include specific evidence that demonstrates the positive impact the school is having in this area*
- *Where a positive impact has not been made yet, note down why that is and what steps are being taken to make progress*

Add any further evidence you would like to see to help you make a better assessment of the impact

Discussion points for the governing board

Include and key points which you feel the governing board need to discuss/take forward

Summary of activities

Any other comments

An opportunity for the relevant staff member to provide comments on your report.