

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Governor Visits Policy

Date agreed: September 2016

Review date: Autumn 2017

Conduct of Visits

There is no better way to get to know the school and acquire information than by visiting the working school.

Although Governors are a part of the school community, they nevertheless visit the school as guests. It is therefore important to remember to observe normal courtesy and protocols for the visit.

Checklist for Governors visiting the school

For the Governing Body:

Do:

- Plan a timetable of visits so that every governor has the opportunity to visit during the year.
- Agree an explicit purpose and plan for each visit which has been communicated to all parties.
- Consider different styles of visit, for example, paired visits where an experienced governor partners a less experienced one.

For individual Governors:

Do:

- Use the Governors' Signing In Book to sign in and out whenever you visit the school
- Negotiate a mutually convenient time with the head teacher, teacher, etc, to ensure that the visit is expected
- Discuss before your visit what the focus will be
- Make a point of listening rather than talking
- Try to draw on at least two sources of evidence (read, observe, listen) that are relevant to the agreed focus of the visit
- If you would like to look at pupils' work ask the teacher if this is acceptable and ask the pupils' permission
- Talk to the teacher, other adults in the classroom and pupils, as long as this does not disrupt the lesson
- Be polite, tactful and sensitive
- Visit at different times of the day, term, year
- Try to attend any special occasions, especially if regular daytime visits are difficult
- Try to attend when you have been specifically invited
- Go in as a helper where appropriate and possible

Don't:

- Interrupt the teacher while he/she is teaching
- Use a clipboard – make the minimum number of notes during the visit
- Go in unannounced or, arrive in the middle of a lesson
- Criticise the performance of a teacher as Governors are not inspectors and should not make judgements on the effectiveness of teaching
- Make promises to staff on behalf of the Governing Body

After the visit

Immediately after the visit, discuss the visit with the teacher, addressing the focus for the visit, but avoiding passing judgements. Ask questions, be positive, say what you liked.

As soon as possible after the visit write a very short report (see Appendix I) clearly stating the most important points of your visit. It should not be a narrative but an analysis. Include a comment about the focus of the visit, possibly linked to a curricular policy, how the pupils were engaged, use of resources.

Discuss any concerns with the Headteacher and, where possible, show your report to the Headteacher to ensure that it does not contain inaccuracies.

The document will form part of the Governing Body's papers and is therefore a public document. It should not, therefore, mention the names of individuals, either children or teachers. Send a copy of your report to the Chair of Governors for inclusion with the Governing Body papers. The Visits Form should be kept by the Headteacher who will then lodge it in an appropriate file that will be housed in the Headteacher's office.

Some suggested focus/questions for visits

1. To monitor a national curriculum subject

Questions:

- Are the staff teaching the subject appropriately experienced and trained?
- Are the resources adequate to deliver the curriculum?
- Do pupils enjoy the subject, are they on task, will they meet their targets (in the opinion of the teacher?)
- Are there particular issues that the teacher would like to bring to the governors attention?

2. A school policy

Questions:

- Are the staff aware of the policy?
- Is it being implemented consistently? Give examples if possible
- Are there any suggestions for improving how the policy operates?
- Are changes necessary before the next proposed date for review?

3. A target from the School Improvement Plan/OFSTED

Questions:

- Are the action points being implemented to target dates?
- Is there any measurable improvement to date? If not, how does the staff member subjectively assess the progress?

- Is there any documentation that Governors could see that relates to the target?

St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Governor Visit
Report Form

Governor's Name:

Responsibility:

Aim of visit:

Class visited:

SUMMARY OF VISIT

Signed:

Date: