**Governor Visits and Protocol Policy**



***“Unlocking potential together in faith and love.”***

*“Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.” (Matthew 28:19-20)*

At The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, we celebrate that each person is unique and loved by God. With Christ at the centre of all we do, we strive to unlock each child’s potential to become the person they are created to be. Inspired by St Peter’s example, we are working together to build a community built on love, faith, forgiveness and service

“Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News!”

Mk 16, 15

**Introduction**

The governing body has a duty to oversee the direction and policies of the school, to monitor its standards and be held to account for its conduct and performance. Visiting the school is the best way to learn how it functions, and to keep under review how it operates so that you can increase the governing body’s first-hand knowledge, informing strategic decision making.

Visits should generally relate to the responsibilities of each Governor and the priorities determined by the School Improvement Plan. The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose. Governors should arrange their visits with the head teacher who has the responsibility of the day to day management of the school.

**Purposes of visit**

Visits are undertaken to:

* improve governing body knowledge of the school and the people that work in it
* assist the governing body in monitoring the implementation of the school development plan
* assist a governor to fulfil a specialist governor role such as inclusion assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties
* assist the governing body in making informed decisions

Governors should not pursue any personal agendas or arrive with inflexible preconceived ideas.

Governors are not to make any judgements about pupils' work, behaviour, any teacher's classroom practice or issues relating to the day to day running of the school. Those are the responsibility of the headteacher.

**Potential benefits**

To governors:

* To recognise and celebrate success
* To develop relationships with the staff
* To get to know the children
* To recognise different teaching styles
* To understand the environment in which teachers teach
* To monitor policies in action
* To inform decision making
* To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

To teachers:

* To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
* To get to know governors
* To understand better the governors’ roles and responsibilities
* To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
* To highlight the need for particular resources

**What the visit is not about**

* A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise of the teacher
* Checking on progress of own children
* Pursuing personal agenda
* Monopolising school/teacher time

**Protocols or ground rules for visits**

Governors should at all times observe protocol and be sensitive to the surroundings

* Consider what should happen and what should not
* Ensure that visits are no longer than 1 hour
* Governors should at all times observe protocol and be sensitive to the surroundings
* The Headteacher must be aware of any visits by a Governor PRIOR to the visit. This includes visits to the School Business Manager or members of the Senior Leadership Team.
* The Headteacher must be copied in to any email that is sent to a member of school staff. Email communication should not happen that relates to school without the Headteacher being copied into the email.
* If you require any information or have questions and need to speak to a member of staff, in the first instance this should be discussed with a member of the senior leadership team (HT, DHT or AHT)
* The expectation is at least one school visit per Governor per year but additional visits are welcome by agreement. Any exception to this should be agreed with the Headteacher.

**How to feed back after the visit**

**Consider:**

* Governors should feed back to the head teacher in the first instance and then also to the member of staff in writing. A written report for the Governing Body must be available for the next full meeting, or committee meeting as appropriate.
* Positive comments, Areas of concern, Questions and suggestions should all be reported.
* Where possible all Governors should use the agreed proforma which is available from the Head Teacher/attached to this policy.

**Annual programme of visits**

A programme of visits should be planned and spread evenly across the school year in consultation with the head teacher and member of staff responsible for the area being monitored/visited.

**Monitor and review of school visit policy**

This policy should be monitored and reviewed annually.

* Are our visits achieving the potential benefits we identified?
* Have there been any unexpected benefits?
* How can we make our practice even better?

**Preparing for a visit**

* Check the agreed policy for governors’ visits
* Clarify the purpose of visit. Is it linked to the School Improvement Plan? What are the relevant school Policies? How does this determine the activities I am interested in?
* Discuss an agenda with the head teacher or subject coordinator well in advance. Make sure that the date chosen is suitable.
* Use the proforma
* Send the proposed agenda to the staff involved. Ask how they want governors to integrate into the learning walk? It might be possible for you to see a copy of any documents beforehand. Discuss with the coordinator if any supporting information is available – Ofsted report, improvement plan, performance data. A copy of this must also be provided to the Headteacher
* Be clear beforehand exactly what you are looking for. Try to prepare questions and submit to staff in advance.

**During the visit**

* Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the governing body; **it is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on behalf of the governing body.**
* Be punctual.
* Keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible.
* Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the classroom will be.
* Get involved with the children.
* Remember it is a visit not an inspection.
* Observe discreetly.
* Don’t distract the teacher during the lesson from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest.
* Be courteous, friendly not critical.
* Interact, don’t interrupt.
* Remember why you are there. Don’t lose sight of the purpose of your visit.
* Listen to staff and pupils.

**After**

* Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how?
* Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved.
* Thank the teacher for supporting you in your role as a governor. Be open, honest and positive.
* Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind.
* Submit your report to the head teacher for approval.
* Reflect: how did that go? Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learned more about the school? Have I helped the governing body fulfil its duties?

**Reporting your visit**

* Write a short summary ‘as a lay governor’ of what you have learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. This will be easier if the visit had a focus.
* You must circulate a draft to the head and any staff involved for them to check the accuracy and clarity. Be prepared to amend it. Aim to achieve a report that is agreed by those involved.
* Circulate this at the next appropriate committee/governing body meeting.

**Visit Focus**

Although not an exhaustive list visits may focus on:-

* Particular subjects, key stages or classes
* The use made of the buildings or the site
* The condition and maintenance of the premises
* Special educational needs
* English and Maths
* The use of ICT equipment
* The impact on the school of any changes e.g. reduced classes in a key stage
* Relative numbers of questions and responses to the teacher from boys to girls

**Informal visits**

Visits may also take place in an informal capacity. It is vital that everyone is clear about

* The capacity in which they are visiting and not to confuse the role.
* The chair making a regular visit to see the head teacher.
* To lend a helping hand with a school event.
* To get information from the office relating to a committee meeting.
* To help in a class.
* To speak to a teacher in relation to your own child.
* Attend a school function or educational visit.

Appendix A

**Governor Monitoring**

Governor monitoring can take several forms:

* Pupil interviews
* Meeting with subject leader
* Snapshot of a lesson
* Walk around the school

**Aims:**

* To know and understand the level of enjoyment pupils have for the subject
* To understand what pupils like best/least in the subject
* To know the standards achieved in the subject
* To know what steps are being taken to improve the subject area
* To report main findings back to the full Governing Body

This year we would like to invite governors who are visiting subject leaders to participate in a Learning Walk. This should take up to 30 minutes.

During the Learning Walk you can expect the subject leader to speak with you about areas listed below.

Please raise questions if you need clarification or more information. Ideally the Learning Walk should take place while the children are in class.

**Pupil interviews: (suggested questions to ask a small group of children when walking around the classroom/s). These questions will help you gain an understanding of pupil attitudes toward the subject.**

* Tell me about what you are learning today.
* Do you like (select curriculum area being monitored)?
* Tell me what you most like doing in (select curriculum area being monitored).
* Is there anything you don’t like doing in (select curriculum area being monitored)?

**Key questions for subject/learning link governor discussion with subject leader (Foundation Subjects)**

* What is your vision for the subject?
* Do you have a set of minimum expectations?
* What were the OFSTED findings about the subject?(This question is mainly for English, maths, science and ICT. Other subjects may have been the focus of a curriculum inspection).
* What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
* How do you keep a track of standards and progress in the subject?
* What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?
* What resources does the school have for the subject and how are these organised?
* Are there any additional resource needs?
* How do you help develop other teachers’ skills in teaching the subject?

Appendix B.

**Things to observe when visiting a classroom**

* Relationship between staff and pupils
* Relationships between pupils
* Variety of teaching styles
* Availability and role of support staff
* Behaviour and attitude of pupils – are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?
* Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
* How the pupils are grouped
* How different abilities are catered for
* Children’s work
* Displays
* Ethos – the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
* Use of space and working conditions
* Quality and quantity of equipment and resources

Appendix c

**Questions for governors to ask (English and mathematics)**

The full governing body retains the responsibility for raising standards of English and Maths. A nominated governor who takes a special interest in English or maths can help to ensure that these issues remain on the governing body’s agenda. The following questions will help you in your role as English/maths governor, as you find out about the teaching of English/math’s across the school. Use them as a guide in a meeting or on a school visit – it is not intended you work systematically through the list.

**Achievements and attitudes**

What are the broad trends in the school’s achievement in English/maths?

* Compared to similar schools?
* In relation to the national rates of increase?
* In relation to the national picture in terms of gender?

Where have we improved? Do we know why?

Are there differences between the achievement of different year groups, and if so, why?

How do our results in English/maths compare with those in other subjects?

What aspects of the subject do pupils find easy and which hard?

Are there significant differences in reading and writing between?

* Girls and boys
* Pupils with special educational needs
* Very able pupils
* Pupils with English as an additional language and the others
* The majority and any other minority groups, such as travellers?

In meetings with the English/maths coordinator can you tell how much progress pupils are making? For example, you could look at:

* Key stage 1 and 2 test results
* The work of a range of pupils – average, below average and above average
* Other evidence – special needs

How are pupils with special educational needs integrated into the daily English/maths lessons?

How have Individual Provision Mapping plans been adapted to support children in their daily English/maths lessons?

Management of the subject

How is the role of the English/maths coordinator developing?

Does the school improvement plan match the identified needs?

How has the budget for this area been spent?

Is there a need for additional resources for any aspect of the work?

How much additional adult support does each class have?

(English) 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 (books, materials and displays, as well as electronic media) to promote reading and writing/numeracy?

**Communication**

How are parents kept informed of progress?

What steps are being taken to encourage parents to support their children in reading and writing at home?



**Pupil Feedback - Questions subject leaders might want to ask pupil**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject:** | **Date:** | **Pupil interviewed:** |
| What have you been learning about in…? | | |
| Do you always understand the learning objective? | | |
| Are you always clear about what you are expected to achieve/have learnt by the end of the lesson? | | |
| How well do you think you understand the work you have been doing? | | |
| What types of work have you done in this lesson? e.g. written, role play, ICT, poster, verbal, visits | | |
| Does your teacher explain the work? Are you given help if you are stuck? | | |
| Do you enjoy this subject? Why/why not? | | |
| Are you given feedback about the work you do? Is it helpful? | | |
| Are you given time to improve your work once it has been marked? | | |
| Why do you think it is important to learn about…? | | |
| Are you asked to evaluate your own work/learning/or other children’s work? | | |

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Governor Visits and Protocol Policy

November 2021

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by Mrs Holt in consultation with the Leadership Team and a nominated Governor.

This policy will be reviewed as appropriate by The Senior Leadership Team

Intended Policy Review Date – November 2024

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Governor)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_