

Governor Visits

St George's School: A Church of England Academy.

DIGNITY HOPE
COMMUNITY
WISDOM
HUMILITY
KINDNESS



Approved by:

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1. Aims

St George's is a Church of England Academy where pupils, staff and governors work together, in the knowledge and love of God. We try to act out our faith in daily life, with Christ as our example. Within our strong Christian, Anglican context, we seek to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of our pupils, growing together as a caring and supportive community whilst preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of their adult lives. Governors play a vital role in providing challenge and ensuring the Christian Distinctiveness is at the forefront of every decision made and every member of the community flourish.

Governors play a crucial role in maintaining the values and culture of our church school. They serve as the link between the school community and the wider church community, ensuring that the values of community, kindness, wisdom, dignity, humility, and hope are upheld. Governors are responsible for setting the school's vision and direction, as well as monitoring its progress and making decisions that impact the future of the school. Their work helps to create an environment where students feel valued and supported, and where they are encouraged to grow in knowledge and character. By embodying these values themselves, governors serve as positive role models for the students and staff, helping to create a culture of positivity, respect, and hope for the future.

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow when making visits to the academy. Governors do not have an automatic right to enter St George's, however they will always be welcomed. When they do so, they are invited guests. This policy sets out the procedure which all governors are expected to follow when visiting St George's and how they are expected to report back on that visit to the governing board.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all governors understand their role and purpose so school visits are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved.

2. Guidance and scope

2.1 Governors are observers.

They must know the Academy in order to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors will:

- Observe whether the school is properly implementing school policies, and actions from the school improvement plan
- Observe how those procedures are working in practice
- Have the opportunity to gather the views of pupils and staff

2.2 Governors are not inspectors.

- They will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom
- Will not manage the academy or interfere in the day-to-day operations

For those governors who wish to spend time in a classroom, they will make it clear about their purpose in doing so.

This policy takes account of best practice and guidance from the [Governance Handbook](#) (section 3.4.2).

3. Visits programme

Governors will carry out regular school visits in order to meet the 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

Governors will carry out school visits according to the following schedule:

Every visit should have a clear, prearranged focus. This is important because it helps those governing use their time, as well as that of school staff, productively. The focus of the visit will generally relate to the governing board's monitoring of the school strategy or to developing a rounded understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

In most cases, the visit should link to objectives and targets set out in the vision and strategy formulated by the governing board and the Academy.

Visits should involve the member of staff responsible for the objective or target meeting with the member of the governing board in order to provide background information and context, showing the initiative in action, and if possible providing the opportunity for them to speak to children or staff members who are affected by it. Examples of what a visit could focus on include:

- The use of resources such as how the premises are utilised, a new teaching resource in action or a demonstration of an IT system)
- Monitoring the implementation of a particular policy for example safeguarding, homework, lesson planning
- Monitoring progress towards specific targets from the school/academy development plan for example meeting with the subject lead of an area for improvement and learning about the strategy adopted and how this translates through to classroom practice and children's learning
- Gaining an understanding of a particular curriculum area or year group
- Gaining an understanding of the process of assessment and tracking pupil cohorts

- Gaining an understanding of how a particular issue (e.g. provision of ICT, boys' achievement, literacy) is dealt with on a day-to-day basis

During any visit to the academy it is important to remember that the role of those governing is strategic, not operational. Visits by members of the governing board should not be confused with inspections.

The itinerary will follow from the focus: for most a meeting with the relevant member(s) of staff will be involved; for some, spending time in a classroom talking to the children about their work or the resources they use may be an appropriate part of the visit. Sometimes a focus group of children or staff would be useful for example if you were exploring attitudes to an attendance policy.

Most of the time school visits will have a key focus on the governing boards monitoring role, but there are some occasions where this won't necessarily always be the case. For example, a new member of the governing board may 'tour' the school as part of their induction or those governing may attend a parents' evening as a means of engaging with parents. If the school has parent or pupil councils, it can be useful for members of the governing board to meet with these groups or sit in on meetings.

4.1 Reviewing visits

After each visit to the school, individuals should take time to reflect and consider anything they might do differently in future visits. In addition, the governing board should review their school visits protocol every academic year. The review should consider:

- Are our visits proving useful?
- What benefits, particularly unexpected benefits, have come from our visits?
- Are we better informed and enabled to make sensible decisions?
- Is there anything we need to change about how visits are conducted, taking into account feedback from school staff?
- What should I do if I have concerns about staff?

4. Senior Lead Links

Link Governor Area	Leader
Christian Ethos/RE	Mrs Fallon
Disadvantaged	Mrs Fallon
SEND	Mr Kerr
Safeguarding	Mr Connaughton
Inclusion	Mr Connaughton
Curriculum	Mr Scott
CEIAG/RSE	Mrs Shashvar
Knowledge/Homework	Miss Ashton
Pupil leadership and rewards	Mr Hobbs
Assessment and Data	Mr Nield
Staff induction and ECT	Mrs Blake
Teaching and Learning	Mrs Danson

4.1 The Role of the Link Governor

LGC's need to know their school if accountability is going to be robust and their vision for the school is to be achieved. Many Governors find that visiting their school, particularly during the day, is a helpful way to familiarise themselves with the school, its Staff and Pupils. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, Governors can see for themselves whether the school is implementing agreed Policies, Improvement Plans etc and how they are working in practice. Visits also provide an opportunity to talk with Pupils, Staff and Parents (depending on the suitability of the occasion) when the views of these stakeholders (along with other means, e.g. Pupil Voice) will assist Governors to enhance their knowledge of the School Community.

Governors are not Inspectors so it is not their role to assess either the quality/method of teaching or extent of learning. Additionally, Governors are not School Managers and should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the School. Both of these roles are proper to the Headteacher and the leadership Team. If Governors wish to spend time within a classroom, they need to be very clear why they are doing so and only at the invitation of the Staff member that they have gone to see." (Adapted from the Governance Handbook 2019, Section: 3.4.2 School Visits, page 25 paras 34&35)

The Link Governor's prime function is to effectively liaise between the School and the LGC, as a "critical friend", on matters related to their particular designated field of responsibility.

This will be achieved in the following ways:

- (a) By getting to know the professionals in the Link Governor's designated area and obtaining a sound understanding of that area, including issues that Staff are encountering together with their proposed solutions (e.g. identification of the issues, planned solutions and the results once the planned solution(s) are implemented).
- (b) Attending the relevant Governor Training Courses in order to appreciate and understand Statutory requirements, especially in regards to the impact that are likely to have on the School.
- (c) Regular meetings with the designated Staff member for the Link Governor's area, e.g. Head of Department, Assistant Headteacher (SLT Departmental Link) etc. Meetings with the designated Staff member should be at least once a Term with the option to have additional meetings should both parties feel that they would be beneficial.
- (d) When arranging a Meeting, advise the designated Staff member of any specific points that the Link Governor wishes to raise at the Meeting, so that the designated Staff member has time to gather the information that will be required for the discussion.
- (e) Provide regular feedback to the Governing Body and the Headteacher, via either written or verbal Reports.
- (f) By remembering that the relationship between Governors and Staff is a partnership with the sole aim of providing the best education possible, for all of the children in our care, in a safe environment with an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

5. During a visit

Governors should know how to conduct themselves appropriately during visits in order to minimise disruption for staff and pupils and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent.

Governors will:

- Be on time and meet with the headteacher ahead of the visit
- Always wear a visitor's badge
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the headteacher for a specific purpose
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them
- Ensure all parties are clear about why a governor wishes to spend time in the classroom, if they wish to do so
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils
- Pass on any concerns the staff raise with the relevant people
- Be friendly but professional and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner than would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the chair of governors or headteacher after the visit

Link Governor Reports

The Link Governor's Report to Full Governing Body, following on from their visit to the School, should have been previously approved (as a correct record) by the designated Staff member (who should also have had the opportunity to register any comments on a draft copy of the Report). A copy of the final Report should also be sent to the Headteacher for information. It is suggested that the Link Governor keep a copy of the Report for their records. All Reports should be circulated to the Governing Body, in advance of its next half Termly Meeting(s), following which the Report should be placed in the Governors' Section of the Governor Hub.

Governor's learning visit – Link Governor template

Learning walks are where you'll go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area. You're likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils. Use this as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask

Part 1: plan the walk	
Name and role of governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Agreed focus <i>Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that haven't been agreed with the member of staff.</i>	E.g. To see the implementation of the new strategy to improve standards in lessons through the delivery of curriculum booklets.
Relevant school objective or priority <i>This might be taken from the development plan or the academy overarching vision.</i>	
Questions to ask <i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the ADP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit. Share these questions with the staff member you're visiting in advance, so they can prepare.</i>	Ask staff: Ask pupils:

Part 2: on the walk

General notes from discussions with staff

Tips:

Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who', 'where' and 'can you show me...'

Don't be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with

Remember you're not there to pass judgment on staff or inspect them

When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers

General notes from discussions with pupils

Remember:

Don't ask them for pupils' views on a specific teacher

Don't record pupils' names

General notes on the school environment and overall atmosphere

Note:

Whether the vision of the school is replicated on the ground

Any issues with the school site you see e.g. broken equipment or lack of resources

What successes stood out on the learning walk and why?

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the headteacher or chair of governors

Collective Worship Observations – Governors

Name and role of observer		
Name of person delivering		
Theme		
Readiness to begin the act of collective worship	Answer	Comments
Is there an effective use of music or other on entering / leaving worship?	YES/NO	
Is there a candle visible or some other focal point for worship?	YES/NO	
During the act of worship		Comments
Who is leading worship?		
Is there a thought-provoking theme which is introduced well and challenges the students' thinking?		
Is the atmosphere conducive to worship and reflection? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was there a sense of atmosphere on entering and leaving worship? 		
Structure What is the structure of the act of worship? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break between notices and worship Opening greeting Lit Candle Bible verse passage 		
Content How is the Bible used within this act of worship? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does it underpin the main message of the worship and how? Was the theme developed effectively? Was the provision appropriate for age range? Was there a sense of respect for integrity/individuals? Were the Academy's Christian values clarified and affirmed? Could you distill the message of worship offered into one sentence? 		
Delivery Was there a balance of styles of communication? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were they relevant / appropriate to the development of the overall theme? Do pupils and staff seem engaged and interested? Is there a clear focus for reflection, prayer, silence etc.? 		
Are students engaged throughout? How?		
Is the worship offered secure to the Christian Ethos?		

Does the worship content provide opportunities for students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development?				
Is there any student response to the content of worship which indicates respect for other people's beliefs and cultures?				
Are students from different faith backgrounds catered for within the act of worship?				
Is worship relevant to students? (Please include any overheard comments.)				
Are any students withdrawn from worship and how are they catered for?				
How did recognisably Anglican elements contribute to this act of worship?				
How does this act of worship help participants develop their understanding of Jesus?				
Ending the act of collective worship		Comments		
Is the act of collective worship ended in an appropriate manner and do children leave the room in an orderly fashion?				
General aspects of worship		Comments		
What impact is worship making on pupils? (Please check google feedback sheet)				
Do students plan, organise and deliver worship, as part of the worship offered in the morning meetings				
Morning Meeting		Answer	Comments	
Can you see a virtualit spirituality board which is up to date and relevant		YES/NO		
Is the spirituality board up to date and well presented?		YES/NO		
Can you see the following displayed on the morning meeting Spirituality Board?	Theme of the week?	YES/NO	The College saint?	YES / NO
	Prayer	YES/NO	Bible Verse	Yes/No
	Value of the week	YES / NO	The School's Mission Statement?	YES / NO

**This form is based on the Diocesan form available from Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education (2017).*

Strand 6: The impact of collective worship

In a Church school collective worship should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring.

In this strand the following must be explored:

The ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision.

In developing collective worship that is inclusive, invitational and inspiring the school community needs to evaluate the extent to which worship:

- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
- b) Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.

Strand 6: Grade Descriptors

- c) Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- d) Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

Worship is invitational offering everyone the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity. All those who wish to be so are actively engaged in worship. Prayer is a natural and valued part of the culture of the school. It is not compulsory or forced. All those who wish to do so will have regular opportunities to pray and reflect. Pupils talk about the value of prayer and reflection both in formal and informal contexts and how being still and reflective in their own lives can be helpful. As appropriate to context, pupils speak of their personal use of prayer and reflection. Pupils recognise that worship provides meaningful opportunities to contribute to their spiritual development. Statutory obligations are met in context.

Worship is creative and pupils talk about how it often inspires them to action. It has variety, for example, involving music and liturgy, silence, story and reflection and, where appropriate, the Eucharist. Most staff and pupils talk about how worship causes them to reflect on their behaviour, values and attitudes. Worship ensures pupils develop an appreciation of the variety of elements and styles found in the diversity of liturgical and other traditions of the worldwide Anglican/Methodist Church and its diversity of expression within the UK. Worship provokes thoughtful and respectful responses from pupils. They are aware of the central importance of the Eucharist/Communion to Christian worship.

Planning for collective worship ensures that pupils have opportunities to encounter the teachings of Jesus and explore the relevance of his teaching in today's world. Pupils talk about the meaning of the different elements of Christian worship including belief in the trinitarian nature of God.

An effective shared approach to planning allows appropriate opportunities for pupils to gather, engage and respond. The planning, monitoring and evaluation of collective worship involves a range of members of the community. Pupils are actively involved in this process, often taking a consultative role. Most leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.

The local church community is regularly involved in collective worship, providing practical support and encouragement.

Collective Worship Observation Record – Senior leaders

Context of the activity			
Evaluation and evidence			
Summary			
What is the impact of collective worship on the students present?	<input type="checkbox"/>	How effective is the leadership of worship in promoting the distinctive ethos as a Church school?	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Overall judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prompts to consider

Pupils are:

- engaged, interested and responding well
- actively involved (e.g. they take part through drama, role play, readings, etc)
- able to take a lead (e.g. they make choices that affect the worship)
- enjoying worship
- moved / made to think

Presentation:

- is varied in pace, format, emotional tone eg: there are lively and quiet times)
- appeals to the senses
- allows for a variety of learning styles
- allows for a range of responses
- includes effective use of eye contact, variation in tone and pitch, body language and gesture
- is clearly related to pupil's previous learning and experiences

Content is:

- relevant to the pupils' age, interests, ability
- referenced to religious texts/holy books
- related to the school curriculum
- linked to distinctive Christian values
- linked to distinctive human values
- inclusive of all faiths and none
- well resourced

The leader succeeds in:

- creating an appropriate emotional environment
(eg secure, warm, lively, amusing, challenging and / or reflective etc)
- promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- providing appropriate opportunities for meaningful reflection, not only but including silence