



**CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**St Anne's and St Martins**



**Learning to live by faith and to be known by love**

## **Governor Visits Policy and Procedures**

## Policy Management

<b>Policy owner</b>	FGB
<b>Approved by:</b>	FGB
<b>Date of next review</b>	
<b>Review cycle</b>	Triennial
<b>Policy published on website</b>	Yes – Governor Pages
<b>Date approved and by whom</b>	FGB July 23, H&S addition made as agreed at FGB in Dec 23
<b>Type of Policy:</b>	Non statutory
<b>Template Based on:</b>	The Key
<b>Statutory Guidance</b>	<i>Insert any link to any statutory guidance relating to the policy</i>

## **The purpose of this policy**

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their school and must monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in this respect. Through visiting both schools in the Federation, governors can get to know them better. The governing body is a corporate body and every governor will visit a school as a representative member of that body, not as an individual. This policy provides an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out their school visits. Please remember the governor's role is that of a critical friend NOT an inspector.

Governors' school visits provide an excellent opportunity to:

- gain a deeper understanding of how the school works, the teaching and learning process and of different learning and teaching styles
- build stronger relationships with the school community, based on trust and respect
- demonstrate to staff that governors take their role seriously, are interested in and value the work of the school
- recognise and celebrate staff and pupil achievement
- monitor the implementation of school policies in action and assist the governing body to evaluate their impact.
- collect evidence to contribute to the monitoring of progress of elements within the school's development or improvement plan and assist the governing body to evaluate their impact (This includes Catholic Schools Inspection framework and Ofsted)
- enable individual governors to ask informed and challenging questions at governing body meetings and to inform collective decision making
- find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

## **Arrangements for the Visit**

The following schedule of visits is suggested, but if individual governors can visit more frequently, at the convenience of the SLT and teaching staff, that would be appreciated.

- Subject Governors (Literacy, Maths, RE, wider curriculum and EYFS):
  - ❖ 2 visits a year to each school
  - ❖ 1:1 meeting with the relevant Subject Coordinator to discuss the year ahead and include consideration of the curriculum, planning and anything else the teacher feels the Governing Board should be aware of.
  - ❖ 1 monitoring visit which would involve a learning walk with the subject lead.
- SEN Governor:
  - ❖ two 1:1 meetings with SENCo spread over the school year
- Safeguarding Governors:
  - ❖ Three visits to each school to discuss relevant safeguarding issues with DSL
  - ❖ One visit to review SCR
  - ❖ Annual Safeguarding Review
- Health and Safety Governor:
  - ❖ Three visits each year to each school to include the opportunity to accompany the relevant person during site checks
- Other link governor roles (eg online safety, Catholic Life, finance etc)
  - ❖ 2 visits a year to each school if possible

## **Before the visit**

- Agree a mutually convenient time to visit with the headteacher/class teacher. Avoid stressful or busy periods in the school calendar.
- Inform the clerk of the date of your visit
- Clarify the purpose of the visit. This might be linked to the SDP (see suggestions in Appendix 1) and agree this with the headteacher and relevant staff. Agree together how best to approach the identified focus to make effective use of everyone's time.

- If you have specific questions or things you want to look at on the visit, send these to the staff member so you can both feel more prepared.

### **During the visit**

- Governors visit to learn more about the School and to gather information to inform the governing Board's decision making. It is not our role to judge the quality of teaching: monitoring staff performance is the job of the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head.
- On arrival at the School please sign in and wear your governor name badge.
- Check formalities- security arrangements, use of the staff room etc.
- Look around the entrance, corridors and classrooms at displays and notice boards.
- Be aware of the atmosphere of the school and consider noting some examples of Catholic Life, mutual respect, tolerance, diversity and inclusion as you see them embedded into the curriculum and daily activities of the school.
- On arrival in the classroom please be discreet: the teacher will introduce you when ready.
- If invited, work with the children or join in with group work
- Avoid making promises on behalf of the governors but of course offer to take comments, questions or requests from staff and pupils to the next relevant governors' meeting.
- Aim to keep note taking to a minimum and ensure that you make a record of your visit as soon as possible afterwards
- If you have concerns about anything you've seen, note them down and raise them with the chair of governors or headteacher later
- Confidentiality is paramount and nothing that is viewed within the classroom should be discussed outside the remit of the Governing Board
- Be aware of, and adhere to, the School's Safeguarding Policies
- If you have any safeguarding concerns during your visit please inform the Designated safeguarding lead
- If you have any health and safety concerns during your visit please inform the headteacher and the Health and Safety governor
- Before you leave, remember to thank the member of staff for supporting you in your role as a governor. Offer to forward them a copy of the Visit Record Sheet that you will be compiling.

### **After the visit.**

- Send a note to thank the relevant staff and pupils. Be open and honest; recognise and celebrate achievement.
- Please ensure you make an accurate record of your visit as soon as possible.
- Remember to send a copy to the teacher and headteacher for their comments.
- Each visit record should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors who will forward a copy to the Chair of the relevant Committee. The Chair will then ensure the visits are minuted in future meetings.
- There is a Record Visit template attached to this policy for your assistance (Appendix 2). Please complete it electronically and email it to the Clerk.

### **Ad hoc School Visits**

All Governors are encouraged to attend ad hoc events throughout the School Year.

At these times, even if you are attending on a personal basis as well as representing the governing Board, please ensure that you sign in as a governor, wear your name badge and make a record of your visit. Some examples of these events are:

- Assemblies
- Mass
- School productions
- Sports Day
- Celebration evenings
- Taking part in a school lunchtime to meet pupils
- Fundraising events (e.g. Quiz Night, Summer Fair)
- Parents evenings

## Appendix 1. Suggestions for the focus of a governor visit

One or more of the following will provide a focus for a visit, with the agreement of the relevant staff:

- The implementation and impact of a key policy
- Progress in an aspect of the School Development Plan
- Progress on areas identified during an Ofsted inspection
- Provision for identified groups e.g. BAME pupils, Travellers
- Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Particular subjects, key stages or classes, Cross-curricular areas e.g. Literacy and Numeracy & ICT
- The use made of the buildings, the site or Resources e.g. Interactive Whiteboards
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Health & safety
- Extended Services including Extra-Curricular activities
- INSET days or training sessions, staff or departmental meetings, as appropriate
- Pupil participation e.g. attend a school council meeting
- Catholic life
- Deployment of staff,
- The impact on the school of any key changes e.g. impact of increased staffing in Support roles
- Educational Visits – provision and impact
- Collective Worship

In addition to any special focus to a visit, governors may learn more about some of the following areas:

- The variety of teaching and learning styles
- Availability, deployment and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils — are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?
- Relationships
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- How the pupils are grouped
- How different abilities are catered for with scaffolding
- Examples of children and young people's work, written and oral
- Displays in open areas and classrooms e.g. learning walls, reflection of community in images round the school.
- Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space and working conditions
- Classroom facilities: lighting, layout, storage, furniture and décor
- Facilities for outdoor play and learning outside the classroom.
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources and associated storage

## Appendix 2. School Visit Record Sheet

### Governing Body of the Federation of St. Anne's and St. Martin's Catholic Schools Pro-forma for Reporting Formal Governor Monitoring Visits

Name of Governors present		Date of Visit:	
Name of Staff involved in visit		Name of Governor writing report	

<b>Aim(s) of visit/meeting (make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit)</b>
<b>Relevant school objective or priority</b> ( <i>This might be taken from the school development plan (SDP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.</i> )
<b>Summary of visit/discussion with staff and pupils</b>
<b>Impact of what's been happening/areas for the GB to be aware of/future follow up agreed</b>
<b>Summary of evidence used to inform the report (include any attachments e.g. finance statement, data summary etc.)</b>
<b>Highlights and additional observations from your visit.</b> e.g. Catholic Life, pupil behaviour, mutual respect, tolerance, diversity and inclusion as seen embedded into the curriculum and daily activities of the school. See Visits Policy for clarification.
<b>Date of next visit/meeting at school</b>
<b>Date of FGB meeting at which the report will be discussed:</b>

Please send a copy of your Visit Record to the Clerk to the Governors.

## **Tips for writing the report and during visits**

### **Do:**

- Use neutral language at all times
- Remain observational, and describe only what you see
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit, and its strategic role
- Send your report to an experienced governor for feedback, if you're new to the role
- Send reports to the relevant staff member to check for accuracy, and as a courtesy

### **Don't:**

- Make qualitative judgements, particularly about any incidents you see or when observing teaching and learning practice
- Name any individual teachers or pupils
- Get distracted and talk about other issues that aren't related to the focus of the visit

### **Questions to ask teachers**

- How do you assess how well pupils are learning and making progress?
- What support do you put in place to ensure the needs of different pupils are met?
- What resources are available to your pupils to help them learn effectively?
- How do you engage parents in their children's learning?
- What continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities are available to you?

### **Questions to ask subject leaders**

- What's the quality of teaching of your subject like across the school and how do you know?
- What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?
- What's your vision for the subject and how are you putting this into practice?
- How do you track standards and progress in the subject?
- How do you support teachers to develop their subject knowledge and teaching practice?
- Is your subject well-resourced? If not, what else do you need to support teaching and learning?