



St Peter & St Paul
CofE Primary School

Governor Visits Policy

2019 - 2023

(This policy has been drafted having regard for the school's Christian ethos.)

	Date	Signed
Agreed by Staff:	October 2019	Mr Steve Ginn Head Teacher
Agreed by Governors:	October 2019	Mrs N Ford Chair of Governors
Lead:	Strategic Leadership Committee	
Review date:	July 2023	

Our School Mission Statement

We see it as our mission to grow the whole child - intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually. To provide them, within a Christian environment, with every learning opportunity possible and to empower them to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Governor Visits Policy

“If governing bodies are to monitor and evaluate the school’s work they need to visit the school. When handled well these visits build up trust and respect between staff and the governing body, and they allow governors to monitor the school’s work in a way that is far more supportive than if they just attend meetings.

The visits to school by governors work well when the focus of the visit is agreed in advance and understood by all involved” (Ofsted)

Rationale:

Governor’s visits serve two purposes – to enable individual governors to see the school in action and to provide reports to the governing body on the school’s progress towards achieving the improvements and targets set out in the School Improvement Plan.

Aims:

Visits to the school by governors are very important as through them governors can:

- Increase the Governing Body’s understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Show staff and pupils that they are interested in the life, work and achievement of the school.
- Support the school’s work.
- See evidence of school policies in action.
- Fulfil a portion of their monitoring role.
- Increase the Governing Body’s understanding of the teaching and learning process.
- Gain information which will allow them to ask informed questions during governing body meetings by gaining first-hand knowledge of the working of the school.
- See how resources purchased by the budget are being used by the school community – particularly pupils.

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for governors to make focused visits to the school so that they can build an effective working relationship with the staff and have a better understanding of the context in which they work. Governors will observe policies and plans being implemented on a day-to-day basis, and their findings should help the whole governing body and its committees make well-informed judgements about the progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the school improvement plan. This process will enable the governing body to recognise and celebrate the efforts and successes of pupils and staff and to identify further areas for development.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Governing Body will, during the first part of the autumn term, with the help of the Head Teacher and staff, organise a schedule of visits throughout the year. The aim will be to achieve a minimum of one formal visit per governor per term. (Visits may be conducted in pairs.) The Head Teacher will guide the governing body on the areas of the curriculum, policies and school improvement plan priorities and targets to be covered each term. Governors are also welcome to attend events/activities on an informal basis.

When organising and conducting a visit, governors will be courteous and considerate at all times, respecting the professional roles of the Head Teacher and staff. They will also respect confidentiality with regard to staff, pupils and parents both during and after any visits.

Teachers and other staff will at all times be courteous and considerate to governors, recognising the contribution made by the governing body to the school. They will make practical suggestions on the focus for governors' visits so as to ensure that they are productive for all concerned. Whenever practical, they will invite their link/subject governors to relevant staff meetings, training sessions and class activities.

Types of Visits:

a) Informal

Some visits to the school will be less formal than others. It is important that the governing body maintains a profile at school events – sports days, assemblies, lunches and the school play, for example, so that both staff and pupils feel supported.

It is also important that governors stay in touch with the specific class to which they are linked.

Governors' visits to school are not however just about visiting classrooms. Governors need to familiarise themselves with other areas of the school as well such as the school grounds, playground and sporting facilities. It is also useful for governors to see how pupils and parents come into and leave the school each day, how break and lunchtimes are spent and how shared spaces like the school hall, learning resource area/library and corridors are utilised. Spaces that are used by the premises, administrative and kitchen staff are also useful to visit at appropriate times.

A checklist of some items which may be observed on an informal visit is attached to this policy as Appendix A.

b) Formal Visits

Formal visits to the school – those 'commissioned' by the governing body, where governors are acting as representatives of the governing body – require more careful planning than informal visits.

Formal visits should have a clear focus and should be linked to priorities in the school improvement plan, school self-evaluation or be designed to see policies/programmes in action. They may also be designed around seeing how the school's values, vision or aims impact on the daily life and work of those in the school community.

Some visits will also relate to specific responsibilities or subject areas that certain governors have or be because a governor is linked to a specific class in the school.

Prior to a formal visit taking place:

- The purpose and focus of the visit should have been agreed.
- The schedule and timings should have been agreed.
- Those being visited/observed should have been advised and provided with details about how long the visit will last, what is being observed and what governors may do during the visit.
- Governors' should have familiarised themselves with any relevant documentation.
- Governors' should be made aware of the names of those people who they are going to visit and if it is a classroom visit, what they are going to see and how it is preferred that they will act in a lesson.

Visits to the classroom are not about making judgments about the quality of teaching and learning in the school. That responsibility is properly the preserve of the Head Teacher and senior staff as part of the line management and performance management processes in school.

New Governors:

Visits to the school by new governors are an extremely important element of their induction programme.

It is useful if new governors visit at various times during the school year to familiarise themselves with the differing activities that take place during each of the school terms.

Procedure in the Event of Concern:

Where a serious concern arises from a visit, it is vital that it is discussed immediately with the Head Teacher. If you are not satisfied with the response and remain concerned, your next step should be to talk to the Chair of Governors.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

At the end of each visit, the governor(s) involved will discuss what they observed with the teacher and clarify any points that they are uncertain about. They will also complete the visit evaluation form, a copy of which is attached to this policy as Appendix B. A copy of the completed evaluation form should

be submitted to the Head Teacher, within two weeks of the visit, for filing in the Governors Minute Book and another copy forwarded to the Link Governor.

Governors' visits will also be an agenda item at a termly meeting of the governing body and governors' should be prepared to share the information contained on their completed evaluation form at that time. This will allow information gained at the visit to help shape the whole governing body's understanding of the progress being made towards meeting priorities and targets. Governors should also be prepared to share what went well on the visit and what if anything should be reconsidered.

Conclusion:

Whatever the focus of a governors' visit, it should in some way increase the collective knowledge and understanding of the whole governing body. It should also be seen as a positive experience for everyone involved.

Eye Primary School acknowledges the importance of governors visiting school as a vital tool in ensuring that the governing body can evaluate the impact of their plans and policies on the day-to-day operation of the school, raise their awareness of life in the classroom and develop positive relationships between teachers and governors thus fostering a sense of partnership.

Period of Review:

This policy will be reviewed every four years.

Appendix A

What Can Governors Observe on an Informal Visit?

External Appearance

Are the school grounds tidy, attractive and well maintained?
What is the general state of external decoration?
Is the school entrance welcoming?
Are there adequate signs directing you to the reception area?

The School in General

Is the reception area well maintained?
Is there an adequate visitor signing-in procedure?
Are there lots of examples of children's work displayed?
What is the standard of the displayed work?
What is the overall atmosphere in school?
What sort of a general welcome did you receive?
What is the general state of the internal decoration?
Are common areas and classrooms welcoming and well maintained?
Are there any obvious examples of community links?
What is the general standard of pupil dress and behaviour in school?
How effective are communications, within and outside of school, with parents, governors, community and interest groups?
How is success and behaviour measured and rewarded in the school?

The Classroom

Were you welcomed into the classroom?
Do the pupils appear engaged and motivated?
Is there a pleasant and purposeful learning atmosphere?
Do the pupils appear interested in their topic?
Do the lessons appear to be interactive?
Are there a range of activities available – differentiated for different groups?
Is the noise level appropriate to the activity?
What is communication like in the classroom?
Is the classroom organised so that all children can be involved in the lesson?
Does the classroom organisation appear to promote independence?
Do effective behaviour strategies appear to be in place, eg. reward systems, etc.?
Are the Teaching Assistants and other adults being utilised effectively?
Does there appear to be an atmosphere of mutual respect?
How is the classroom resourced?
Are there any areas where resources could be improved with extra finance?
Is there an appropriate state of cleanliness/decoration within the classroom?
Are displays in the classroom attractive and useful for the pupils?
Has sufficient attention been paid to issues of health and safety?

Appendix B

<p style="text-align: center;">St.Peter & St.Paul CofE Primary School</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Governor Visit Form</p>
<p>Name of Governor:</p> <p>Date of Visit:</p>
<p>Purpose of visit:</p>
<p>Observations:</p>
<p>Action Points:</p>
<p>Details of how action point implementation will be monitored:</p>

Document History

Version	Date	Comments
Issue 1	February 2014	
Issue 2	July 2015	Amended to add new areas of responsibility in line with the Record of Committee Membership. New visit reporting form template attached.
Issue 3	April 2016	Removed list of Specific Roles and Responsibilities as a current copy is always available through the office.
Issue 4	October 2019	Reviewed and approved.