

Policy: Governor Visits and Procedure Policy
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Holy Trinity Church of England (VA) Primary School



Believe • Achieve • Inspire •

Governor Visits and Procedure Policy

SCHOOL VISION

Our vision is for our pupils to flourish in an inclusive, inspirational place of learning where we are happy, respectful, kind and safe.

At Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School our Christian vision shapes all we do.

*"I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live."
Ecclesiastes 3:12.*

- we facilitate opportunities so every child can flourish in a place where they feel **safe, happy and confident**.
- staff **well-being** and professional development is valued and supported in order to fulfil their roles, **inspire** others and experience personal **fulfilment**.
- the school provides facilities that enables our pupils to reach their potential in an **optimum learning environment**.
- the **school plays a central role within our community** and enjoys strong **links with the church, local companies and other schools**.
- we create a culture of vigilance to **safeguard** all children.

'I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.'
Ecclesiastes 3:12

Introduction

The Governing Board has a statutory duty to oversee the policies and direction of the school, to monitor its standards and be held to account for its conduct and performance.

Visiting the school is not a statutory requirement but they can be an extremely important way of learning how the school functions, and to keep under review how it operates so that you can increase the Governing Board's first-hand knowledge, informing self-evaluation and strategic decision making. It is recognised that the amount of time that a Governor can commit to a visit will vary but in general Governors should expect to make at least one visit a year.

Governor visits should be strategic, statutory and/or informal and align to the priorities determined on the School Development Plan so that the Governing Board can monitor how these are progressing. The Governing Board should develop a plan of visits throughout the year to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose.

Purpose for Governor Visits

The potential benefits to Governors:

- To recognise and celebrate success
- To get to know the staff
- To show themselves as part of the school
- To improve knowledge of the school, its staff, needs, priorities, strengths and weaknesses
- To monitor and assess the priorities outlined in the School Development Plan and observe policies in action
- To assist the Governing Board in fulfilling its statutory duties and demonstrate their role as critical friend
- To develop an understanding of issues facing the school to inform decision making
- To understand the environment in which teachers teach
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

The potential benefits 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

The potential benefits to pupils:

- To ensure Governors understand the reality of the classroom and school life
- To get to know Governors
- To understand better Governor roles and responsibilities
- To give feedback about the school to the Governors

The potential benefits to parents:

- To ensure Governors understand the issues that parents have
- To get to know Governors
- To understand better Governor roles and responsibilities
- To give feedback about the school to the Governors

Protocols or Ground Rules for Visits

- Staff and Governor should agree in advance the date and focus of the visit linked to SDP and strategic priorities.
- Staff should have the opportunity to explain the context of any visit to the Governor against the SDP.

***'I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.'* Ecclesiastes 3:12**

- Governors will not judge or interrupt lessons by asking teachers questions or involving themselves.
- Governors may talk to students during class visits but must not ask questions about the teacher or distract them from learning.

Annual Programme of Visits

- A programme of visits should be planned and spread evenly across the school year in consultation with the Headteacher.
- Visits should be planned on areas of the priorities that have been identified within the School Development Plan.
- Regular analysis of this schedule enables Governors to see what areas/activities receive visits and those that do not.

Forms of Visits

- Meeting with staff
- Classroom visits
- Pupil interviews
- Looking at pupils' work
- Meeting with staff groups
- Reviewing areas and resources of the school

Visit Focus

Visits should be arranged which focus on the School Development Plan priorities to inform on progress. Although not an exhaustive list visits may focus on:-

- Safeguarding procedures
- Impact of the religious character (Collective Worship and RE lessons, living the vision)
- Particular subjects, key stages or classes
- The use made of the buildings or the site
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Additional educational needs
- Literacy and numeracy
- Lunch and break times
- The use and condition of resources e.g. furniture or technology
- Deployment of staff, e.g. caretaker, office staff, teaching assistants
- 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. 'Discreet' information can be gathered on these visits which build on your knowledge of the school. 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 Headteacher.
- 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 as a volunteer not a Governor.
- Attending a school function or educational visit.
- Visit in relation to your position as the local priest or councillor.

Visits in the role of Governor should be recorded in the Governor visits folder to log the fact that a Governor has visited the school and a report visit form (Appendix 1) should be completed and handed to the

Headteacher for discussion and action. Any other pertinent information needs to be shared with the Headteacher and other Governors.

Monitoring and Review of School Visit Policy

The policy should be monitored regularly to reflect on procedure.

- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits we identified?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make our practice even better?
- What impact have we had?

Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school by staff. It is important that Governors remember to respect the professionals and the children, support the Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Board. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed, the Governor Visits will be an enjoyable experience for all involved, and will result in effective monitoring by the Governing Board, which will impact on and contribute to school improvement.

Preparing for a Visit

- Check the agreed policy for Governors' visits.
- Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the School Development Plan? What are the relevant school Policies? How does this determine the activities I am monitoring?
- Discuss the agenda with the Headteacher/subject leader well in advance and seek approval for your visit and agree a date that is suitable.
- Find out if there is a prompt/question sheet/checklist, agreed by staff and Governors, to guide Governors' visits.
- Discuss the proposed agenda with the staff involved.
- Be clear beforehand exactly what you are observing. Try to prepare questions for staff in advance. The teacher may be able to guide you on this.
- Discuss with the Headteacher/class teacher if any supporting information is available – Ofsted report, School Development Plan, performance data.
- Ensure that you are familiar with child protection, safeguarding, health and safety procedures.

Day of the Visit

On the day of the visit, the Governor will:

- Arrive on time, sign and date the Governor visits book and state the purpose of the visit. You will wear the Governor lanyard for identification.
- Clarify the timetable with the relevant member of staff who is co-ordinating the visit.
- Act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher.
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering.
- Remain on task throughout the purpose and duration of the visit.
- Take time to enjoy the visit and adhere to school safeguarding policy and procedures.

After the Visit

After the visit the Governor will:

- Thank the teacher and children, sign out and hand over the Governor lanyard.
- Meet with the Headteacher to give a verbal report, and to raise any issues if possible.
- Complete the Governor Visit Report (Appendix 1) online in a timely manner and forward to the Headteacher, reporting on the focus.
- After any necessary alterations, the Headteacher will make the report available to the Governing Board and staff.

- Governors must report their findings in a factual manner, and where possible, individuals should not be identifiable.
- Once shared with the Governors, all visit reports will be stored in the Governors section of the school website and hard copies will be stored in the record of visit file located outside the main office.

It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements should not be made arbitrarily.

Visits are not about:

- Inspection
- Checking on Governors' own children or their class standing
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

This policy was adopted by Holy Trinity CE Primary School and agreed by the Standards, Achievements and Curriculum Committee and ratified by the Full Governing Board.

Approved by.....on behalf of the School Governing Board.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Governor Visit Report

Our vision is for our pupils to flourish in an inclusive, inspirational place of learning where we are happy, respectful, kind and safe.

Name of Governor	
Date of Visit	
Agreed Focus for Visit (linked to SEF, SDP & Key priorities)	
Name of Staff	
HUGG shared? (if subject area)	
Staff wellbeing check in	
Next Steps/follow up from previous monitoring	
Key Area in SDP: Monitoring Findings from this visit	
Actions used to identify findings	
What outcomes have been identified as a result of my visit	
How I witnessed the vision in action during my visit <i>(See above)</i>	
Impact of this visit	
Aspects I would like clarified/Questions I have	

To be shared with the school staff and school Governing Board.

Signed:
(Governor)

Signed:
(Headteacher/Staff member)

Governor Visits Protocol

In order to ensure clarity for the Governor conducting the visit and for the staff member meeting with the Governor, the following guidelines are in place:

Prior to the visit:

- All subject areas that are a focus in the current SDP have a nominated link Governor (See Appendix 1)
- The timings of meetings will be agreed in accordance with the SDP priorities
- The **staff member will contact the appropriate Governor via school email to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet** to discuss their HUGG (action plan for SDP)
- The subject leader will share their HUGG via email with the Governor prior to the arranged visit

During the visit:

- The meeting will take place in the school building
- Both the staff member and the Governor will be aware of previous visits for the subject/improvement area and be aware of previous action points/next steps
- The subject leader will share their Subject Leader File with the Governor pointing out monitoring activities and any data relevant to their subject (including any national/local comparisons)
- The meeting will focus on steps already taken towards achieving HUGGS and identify next steps
- The subject leader will show the Governor any relevant displays around the school environment that will enable to the Governor to get a sense of how the subject area is celebrated and developing
- If it is appropriate, Governors may look at pupils' work as part of their visit. They may also interview pupils to gain insight into pupils' views.

After the visit:

- The Governor will produce a Governor Visit Report and share with the staff member and the Headteacher
- The visit report will be shared with Governing Board on the Governor Zone of the website
- The Headteacher will update the rolling list of Governor visits to ensure a reference of next steps is accessible