



CHRIST THE KING SCHOOL

GOVERNORS VISITS POLICY

GOVERNORS' VISITS TO SCHOOLS

Every Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum.

Governors are also held to account for their own school's performance.

The Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a Governor can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and pupils and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms.

If school and classroom visits are done well they will add immeasurably to Governors' understanding of their school, its staff and its pupils.

This model policy has drawn on other schools' policies and on recommendations from Headteachers and Governors. It also includes a sample Governors' Visits report pro-forma which will help provide discussion on the issues raised and also provide a formal record for OfSTED of the Governors' structured involvement in the work and life of the school. It should not, however, form part of any other evidence base e.g. a member of staff's performance management.

GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY AND GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

This policy is to aide governors and school staff to ensure that governor school visits are structured, productive and enjoyable for all concerned.

2. Aims

School visits by members of the governing body are a key component to being an effective school governor and have potential benefits to both governors and staff.

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 and other staff work
- To see policies and schemes of work in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

Benefits to staff

- To help governors understand the reality of the classroom
- To get to know the governors
- To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- To have the opportunity to share expertise
- To highlight the need for particular resources

3. Guidelines

It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgments should not be made arbitrarily. The visit is not about:-

- Inspection
- Making judgments about the professional expertise of the teacher.
- Checking on your own children
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

In order to undertake their role with objectivity, ideally, governors will not visit classes containing their own children nor will they begin monitoring until they have received suitable training as part of their induction course. A member of the school teaching staff will

accompany

Governors on their visits in order to support them in their role.

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 Head of School and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body. As such, all governors must adhere to the highest standards of confidentiality.

. How is a visit organised?

• Initial visit to the school by a new governor

After the appointment of a new governor, the Welcome Letter from the Governing Body Chairman and Headteacher invites the new governor to make arrangements to visit the school. This general visit would include a tour around the school, an opportunity to be introduced to the staff and provides the governor with an opportunity to collect some of the school documents listed in their information checklist within the Welcome Pack. Parents with children at the school should undertake this visit as they are undertaking a new role within the school and this visit would provide them with a broader perspective of the school.

It will not be necessary to write a report after this visit, but the governor should inform the governor responsible for training that the visit has taken place.

• Subsequent visits to the school

In advance of the visit:

Plan the visit to ensure that you are clear about its purpose e.g.:

- To gain background information and get to know the school or class or year group
- To develop relationships with the staff
- To visit a specific age group, subject area or activity
- To look at school premises to find out what resources are needed.
- To inform decision making
- To see how a particular policy or procedure is carried out
- To carry out Health and Safety reviews and review school practices.

Agree the plan with the Head of School, member of staff and the governing body or governing body committee and arrange a convenient time to visit.

See appendix 1.

5. What to look for in the classroom?

Possible areas for focus could include:

How do the pupils react to the presence of the Head of School or yourself?

How friendly and relaxed are the pupils?

How interested are the pupils in their work?

Do the pupils have an understanding of what they are doing?

How well behaved and courteous are the pupils?

In what ways does the school provide a varied and interesting environment?

How are the needs of all the pupils being met equally?

Do pupils work in a group or individually on a particular task?

Are the same relative number of questions asked by girls and boys?

6. Written feedback report

This report helps to focus on what was actually learnt about the school, and passes this information on to the governing body. The report will form part of the governors monitoring role, therefore it should contain statements of fact on what was observed or what was not observed. It should contain information to assist decision-making and evaluation by the whole governing body e.g. when reviewing the impact of a particular policy. It may be appropriate to give some recommendations. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the quality of teaching, so governors should not make professional judgments when observing lessons.

Reports should be informative, to the point and should not include any pupil names.

The report should set out the objectives for the visit and indicate how well or otherwise they were met. Draft reports need to be sent to the Headteacher for approval before circulation to the Governing Body.

See appendix 1

7. Level of commitment

In order to ensure a work-life balance for both staff and governors, a maximum commitment should be a half-day equivalent per term to make a staff visit, meet up with staff and produce a report. In order to ensure no one teacher is overloaded, governors must ensure that they copy the Head of School with all correspondence.

8. Monitoring and review

The Curriculum Committee will monitor this policy to ensure a reasonable

distribution of visits across the year and across subjects, classes, year groups and teachers. The Curriculum Committee will also plan a programme of visits and review this policy at the first meeting of the academic year.

9. Informal ways of getting to know the school

Governors are actively encouraged to participate in the life of the school and are always welcome to attend school masses, class liturgies, Christmas and Easter productions etc. the dates of which are published regularly in the school newsletter and sent out to all governors. These visits are not included as part of this policy.

Appendix 1

School Visits – an Aide Memoire

What is the purpose of the visit?

What has prompted my decision to visit?

Who has prompted my decision to visit?

Is the reason specific or general?

What are my/other people's expectations?

How can my visit benefit the teacher?

How shall I carry it out?

What particular areas of the school am I interested in?

What particular activities am I interested in?

What particular age-group(s) am I interested in?

Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?

What questions should I ask?

Who should I ask?

Did I achieve my aim?

To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?

Which of my questions did I answer?

To what extent did I fulfil my own/other people's expectations?

What difficulties did I meet and why?

Is there any follow-up?

Have I recorded my experiences?

Did I report back to the head and staff?

Have I prepared a short report for the next governors' meeting?

How can I build on this for the next visit?

Please remember to be sensitive to the circumstances and flexible in your expectations.

No two days are ever the same.

Keep an open mind about what you see.

Education and classrooms have changed a great deal since you were at school and practice is very different. Don't expect to see the formal type of lesson you might remember from your own childhood.

By all means ask questions (preferably at the end of the lesson) but be sensitive to the extra demands of differentiation and inclusion that teachers now face.

Frequency of Visits

Safeguarding	Termly and as and when staff appointments are made.	FGB	Audit new staff files Check SCR Safeguarding policies	Head of School School Business Manager
RE	Termly	Curriculum	School Development Plan RE Action Plan Assemblies and Liturgical Celebrations Joint class visit with RE Manager to 1 x KS1 1 x KS 2 class RE policy Section 48 SEF 48 Book scrutiny	RE Manager
Maths	Termly	Curriculum		Maths Manager

English	Termly	Curriculum		English Manager
SEN	Termly	Curriculum		SEN Manager
EYFS	Termly	Curriculum		EYFS Phase Leader
Health and Safety	Termly – beginning of each new term	Finance and Buildings	Health and Safety Audit and follow up	School Business Manager
Staff Development	Autumn term	Curriculum	CPD records Planned PD	Head of School

Record of Visits Proforma

Christ the King Catholic Primary School	
LINK GOVERNOR MEETING	
Autumn Term – Vision & Targets	
Curriculum Area	
Link Governor	
Lead teacher	
Lead teacher background	
Vision linked to School Development Plan (CTK SDP)	
Where are we now? (Current)	Where do we want to go? (Future)
How do we get there? (Targets to achieve this.)	

<p>Agreed focus for Spring Term meeting.</p>	

Christ the King Catholic Primary School LINK GOVERNOR MEETING Spring Term - Resources	
Curriculum Area	
Link Governor	
Lead teacher	
<p>Discussion on Autumn Term agreed focus developments</p>	
<p>Progress made since last meeting</p>	
<p>Learning Environment strengths.</p>	<p>Learning Environment areas for improvement.</p>

Resources			
<i>*possibility of amending headings (greater relevance with area)</i>			
Online	People/Talents	Other	
Online ways forward	People/Talents ways forward	Other ways forward	