

St. James' CE Primary School is committed to the safeguarding of our pupils and staff.

St. James CE Primary School



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Governor Visits Policy

Flourish
Respect Courage
Friendship Develop
StrongGrowth
Community StJames' Strive
God Trust Kindness
Freedom Unique Perseverance
DeepRoots Positivity
WholeChild
Responsibility

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Statement of Vision and Values

In consultation with pupils, parents, governors, community members and staff our vision and values were generated based on our inspiration from the Parable of the Sower and how this links to our children and their journey with us.

Our School Vision:
Within our community we strive to develop deep **roots**, strong **growth** and freedom to **flourish** as a unique and whole child of God.

Matthew 13 - The Parable of the Sower – ‘... but the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it.produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.’



Values

We decided at St James CE Primary School that **Kindness and Respect** are values which we feel underpin our vision and are incorporated in all we do and say – so therefore these two values will be taught alongside all the other six values we have chosen.

½ termly focus	Value
Autumn 1	Responsibility
Autumn 2	Friendship
Spring 1	Perseverance
Spring 2	Trust
Summer 1	Courage
Summer 2	Positivity

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Governors Visiting School

Governors' school visits

Introduction

Governing Bodies have a statutory duty to promote high standards of educational achievement at their school and they must monitor the school performance to that end. Governors cannot do this unless they know the school well. Individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish. However, it is valuable for governors to visit, as invited guests, in order to learn more about their school, in addition to attending governor's meetings and school functions. Visiting during the school day, and finding out more about the opportunities for learning that the school offers, can be one of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of being a school governor.

The cycle of formal visits is identified at Governing Body meetings and will be made by Governors with designated responsibilities, for example Special Educational Needs, Health and Safety, English, Maths, Pupil Premium and Safeguarding with the school lead in that area. Visits can also be related specifically to the priorities identified on the School Improvement Plan. The formal visit can last up to half a day, in which individual Governors act as the representative of the Governing Body, with the expectation that they will write a written report and share their findings with the rest of the committee.

Why governors make school visits

Governors visit to learn, not to inspect. As noted above, Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their school, and must monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in this respect. Well planned governor visits will support governing bodies in discharging this duty. Impressions and observations gained will help governors in their role. However, governors should be mindful that it is part of the *headteacher's responsibility to manage the school and the staff in accordance with the aims, objectives and policies which have been approved by the governing body.

*Headteacher referenced throughout this policy refers to the Executive Head / Head of School

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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
- 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

Formal visits

In consultation with the headteacher and staff, the governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school activity and each visit should have a clear focus. Visits may be linked to priorities in the school development or improvement plan and would not ideally be confined to the classroom. Governors have limited time, and what they learn should also add to what the governing body as a whole knows about the school.

Governors' visits might focus on:

- The implementation and impact of a key policy
- Progress in an aspect of the School Improvement Plan
- Progress on areas identified during an Ofsted or SIAMS inspection
- Provision for identified groups
- Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Provision for More & Most Able outcomes are promoted
- Particular subjects, key stages or classes, Cross-curricular areas e.g. English and Maths & Computing / ICT
- The use made of the buildings, the site or Resources e.g. Technology
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Health & safety
- Extended Services including Extra-Curricular activities

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- INSET days or training sessions, staff or departmental meetings, as appropriate
- Pupil participation e.g. attend a school council meeting
- Impact of the religious character
- 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
- 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
 - Pupil movement on site
 - Storage and cloakroom facilities for pupils

Informal visits

Governors who visit the School informally do so in a more personal capacity, much as a parent might do, but always with the knowledge and approval of the headteacher. Such visits add to individual governors' knowledge and understanding of the school and can strengthen relationships and foster trust and respect between governors and staff and the wider School Community. Governors should always reply to special invitations and make an effort to attend. An encouraging 'thank you' letter following the event will be welcomed by the staff and pupils.

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Informal visits can take many forms, e.g. attending school assemblies, open days and events; accompanying school trips; helping in class or running a stall at the school fair. Attending a parents/carers consultation event or Open Day is a particularly valuable opportunity for governors to seek opinions and to explain the work of the governing body.

Informal visits are a valuable complement to formal visits - not an alternative.

Protocol for Visiting Governors

Preparing to Visit

Governors, who are planning on making a visit to school, whether it is formal or informal, need to have made prior arrangements with their link school member of staff or the Headteacher.

They need to be clear about the purpose of the visit and what they will be focussing on. The length of the visit will be agreed beforehand, and any additional information that may be useful will have been circulated prior.

It is important that everyone involved in the visit is prepared for it, and that all teachers are aware of its purpose and aims. For example:

- To get to know the staff and develop a supportive relationship
- To get to know the school and to get to know the children
- To focus on their particular area of responsibility
- To demonstrate being a "critical friend" of the school
- To hold the school to account, evaluating its progress

During the Visit

- Governors should remember that they are not visiting the school in an inspectorial role
- Governors will observe any school rules and/or routines
- Governors will not cause any disruption or interruption to the normal running of the school or class
- Governors will adhere to the school's Confidentiality and Safeguarding /Child Protection Policies.

Conclusions

- Be supportive of the Headteacher and all her staff
- Be calm
- Ask questions: what, why, how, where
- Beware of giving opinions and making judgements

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- Acknowledge that you represent the full Governing Body and as an individual Governor you are a guest of the School.

Governors' Lesson Observations

Although not all the visits by Governors will involve lesson observations, sometime will be spent in classrooms. As well as watching the teaching and learning that takes place, there will also be the opportunity to move around and talk to the pupils about their work, as well as the look at the classroom environment i.e. displays, resources, books labelled equipment etc. When carrying out lesson observations it is important that all Governors are aware that there are children with special needs in every classroom and teachers use a variety of appropriate strategies for dealing with the behaviour. This behaviour may be challenging. Governors may also participate in Learning Walks with a member of the leadership team.

Follow up to the Visit

At the end of their time in school the Headteacher will try to meet with Governors to discuss the visit.

All formal visits should be reported back to the full Governing Body. When reporting back it is important to remember that the Governor visit should relate to their responsibilities as governors. It is the Head Teacher's job to manage the school, in accordance with the aims and objectives and policies approved by the Governing Body. To judge the quality of teaching and learning in the school requires specialist skill, and Governors are not expected to make those judgments based on short occasional visits. When Governors use visits to gain information to help in them in their role, they do so as observers and not as inspectors.

The report should be written. A brief written report serves better than an oral report in that it helps to clarify the issues for discussion or suggestions for further action. However as a written report, like other papers from the Governing Body, it is open to public inspection, therefore it should avoid naming individuals. It should not be tabled at the meeting, but given to the Clerk in time for distribution with the agenda. The report may also be discussed with the Head teacher and the Chair of Governors in advance of the meeting if necessary.

After the visit checklist, it is important that:

- Governors thank the relevant school staff
- Governors discuss their school visit with the Headteacher or member of SLT

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- *Governors* respect rules of confidentiality at all times
- *Governors* complete the relevant proforma for their visit
- *Governors* circulate and present the report to other members of the Governing Body at their next full meeting

Monitoring the Effectiveness of Governor Visits

All *Governors* are accountable to the *Governing Body* for the formal visit that the individual has made on their behalf. The visit will always contribute to the relationship between the *Governing Body* and the staff. Reflecting on a visit can make subsequent visits more effective. *Governors* should always ask themselves:

- Were the objectives for the visit clear?
- Were they realised and if not why not?
- What if anything could have been done to make the visit more useful?
- Did you require any additional information to enable you to place the visit in context?

All *Governors* are welcome to visit St. James' CE Primary, in the belief that they will help to keep the *Governing Body* better informed about the work of the staff, pupils, and parents. It is our intention that this policy should support the development of a good working relationship with the *Governing Body* and the staff, so that we all work together on planning how best to support the aims and objectives of the school and uphold our school vision, values and motto.

Reviewed: November 2023

To be reviewed: November 2025