

Protocol for Governor visits



St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Mission Statement:

To love, serve and learn as Jesus shows us

DOCUMENT STATUS

<u>Drafted:</u>	<u>Adopted by Governors:</u>	<u>Implemented:</u>	<u>Last review:</u>	<u>Next review:</u>
September 2018	September 2018	September 2018	September 2021	September 2023

Protocol for Governor Visits

The professional school staff welcome visits from individual governors. This policy explains why such visits are valuable and sets out a framework of reasonable expectations for all parties for the conduct of visits.

Why should a governor visit the school?

The governing body as a collective whole has many essential duties and responsibilities, principal amongst which are:

- To ensure that education at the school is conducted in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and that the school serves as witness at all times to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ;
- To ensure that the school strives, at all times, to achieve excellence in all its pursuits;
- To ensure that all activities in the school are conducted in accordance with the school's Mission Statement.

In the main, the governing body achieves this by receiving reports at its meetings on specific aspects of the school's work from the relevant professionals, including the staff of the school and appropriately qualified and skilled external partners, such as LA officers, the Archdiocese of Liverpool and various government agencies such as Ofsted.

In order to evaluate and understand fully the reports presented to the governing body, it is essential for individual governors to experience the context in which the school works from day to day. This experience and understanding can only come from visits to the school whilst it is in session.

It is important that governors remember the purpose of governor visits is not to assess the quality of teaching or to pursue issues that relate to the day-to-day management of the school other than as agreed with the head teacher. Such visits must be viewed by staff as a genuine interest on the part of the governor rather than an inspection or judgement of the work of an individual.

The most effective visits will be those which form part of a strategic programme to:

- Improve governor knowledge of the school, its staff, needs, priorities, strengths and areas for improvement;
- Monitor and assess the priorities as outlined in the development plan;
- Assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that visits are constructive and are valued as an important part of the school's self-evaluation process.

Planning the visit

A carefully planned visit by a governor can generate evidence that will inform decision-making by the whole governing body or its committees. It is essential that governors and staff are clear about the reasons for such visits and have agreed the way in which the particular visit should be conducted.

1. Before the visit

Every visit should have a clearly defined focus and should be pre-arranged. This focus may be prompted by:

- A specific responsibility for an area of work delegated by the governing body to an individual governor, for example, special educational needs;
- A monitoring activity arising from an action plan;
- A suggestion from the headteacher;
- An issue arising from a discussion within a governing body or committee meeting;
- The need to review a specific policy.

The member of staff who will accompany the governor during the visit should be identified at an early stage and early conversation should take place to discuss and clarify the focus and the practicalities, formalities and courtesies.

2. During the visit

The visiting governor is expected to comply with all normal rules applying to visitors including being punctual, reporting to reception on arrival, signing in and wearing a badge. Be aware that schools run to a very strict timetable. Arriving early or late for an appointment may be disruptive or difficult to manage. Do not expect a member of staff to break off from another activity to accommodate arrival or departure at other than the agreed times.

During the visit, the governor should:

- Be discrete, courteous and respectful to all staff and pupils;
- Avoid communicating any judgements or giving any impression that the visit is an inspection;
- Be open minded and prepared to learn;
- Be prepared to think in ways that may differ from previous experience;
- Engage with pupils if and when invited to do so;
- Show interest in the work;
- Remain objective.

3. After the visit

- Discuss your observations with the relevant member of staff as soon as possible;
- Make notes while the visit is still fresh in your mind;
- Never include comments about individual children – if you have concerns, discuss them privately with the teacher and the Headteacher;
- Remember that monitoring and making judgements about the performance of staff is the role of the headteacher, not the governors. It is a professional matter;
- Prepare a draft report of your observations and share it with the member of staff and the Headteacher;
- If appropriate, and taking their comments into account, prepare a final brief written report to be circulated to the governing body before the next meeting.

4. Preparing a Report to the Governing Body

It will not always be either appropriate or necessary to prepare a report for the governing body (or committee) after each visit, but this could be valuable evidence to inform the governing body's decision making processes, for example if a decision is needed about the investment of significant sums of money.

The report should be written on the Governor visit record form (appendix 1) a copy of which is in Governor file in school office. It should always include a brief evaluation summarising the benefits of the visit. Where a report concerns the work of a specific member of staff, for example a subject co-ordinator, it is essential it is shared with the relevant person and the headteacher before it is issued to other governors. A copy of the written report should be placed in the Governor file in the school office.

Governor's visits will be a fixed item on the agenda for the termly full governing body meeting.

<i>Record form for a Governor visit to St Vincent's Primary School</i>

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Date:</i> <i>Time :</i>
<i>Governor Responsibility:</i>	<i>Staff seen during visit:</i>
<i>Focus of previous visit (if applicable):</i>	
<i>Reason for visit (i.e. routine monitoring, specific focus):</i>	
<i>Links with School Improvement Plan:</i>	
<i>Preparation/background to visit (e.g. reading policy, discussion with Head teacher.)</i>	
<i>Information gathered during visit: (e.g. What you saw, what you learned, what you would like clarified. How long the visit lasted)</i>	
<i>Any key issues arising for the governing body (e.g. the way resources are allocated; the way the school communicates; progress in implementing a key policy)</i>	
<i>Action following governing body meeting (record any action agreed by the governing body with regard to this visit e.g. training for governors, budget decisions)</i>	