

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Washington Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 5AA

*Living, Loving and Learning as Children of God*

**GOVERNOR VISITS**

**POLICY**

**2015**

Approved by Committee:

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Approved by FGB

16 November 2015

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Next Review date:

November 2018

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# **Governor Visits Policy**

## **Introduction**

“Individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish. But they need to be able to visit from time to time in order to develop their understanding of the school to enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school. Governors should arrange their visits with the headteacher, who has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school. It is often useful to draw up a policy on governors visits to cover things such as giving notice, constructive feedback and handling concerns. The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should have a clear purpose. Visits by governors can be useful and informative. They do not replace professional inspection or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the headteacher”.

‘A Guide to the Law for School Governors’

## **Planning a visit**

All visits are agreed and planned within governor meetings. It is important for individual governors to remember that when they visit the school, they act as representatives of the governing body, which has corporate responsibility for the overall leadership of the school.

Visits will have a clear focus linked to a curriculum subject, a school policy, an aspect of the School Development Plan, the induction of a new governor or some other specific area of the management of the school.

In the Autumn Term, the governing body will decide on a programme of visits for the following year. The foci will be clearly identified. This will be reviewed each term and the date and timing of specific visits will be arranged by the governor concerned, in consultation with the headteacher and other staff involved.

If a governor is going to spend time in a classroom this will be discussed with the class teacher so that both are clear how long the governor is coming for, what they are going to look at and what they are going to do.

## **Purposes of Governor Visits**

The main purpose of any governor visit to the school is to undertake monitoring of an agreed aspect of the school. This focused monitoring is planned in advance within governor meetings and agreed by the headteacher who is able to support effective monitoring by governors by advising on the type of monitoring activities they will undertake during their visit e.g. observation, ‘Learning Walk’, talking to pupils, talking to staff, pupil work scrutiny etc.

Visits to the school also give governors a first-hand impression of what the school is like and what goes on there and therefore give governors a context and background for discussions at governors’ meetings – something of the feel of the school and the flavour of its work that they cannot

otherwise obtain. What governors learn from visiting the school should add to what the governing body as a whole knows about the school.

A subsidiary, but important purpose of visiting the school is to demonstrate to staff that governors' responsibilities are taken seriously and that governors are interested in the school and how it works during the school day.

Governors must remember that visits should relate to their responsibilities as governors and capacities as individuals, and should not go beyond either. Governors are not inspectors and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching or the extent of learning. They are also not school managers and should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school. Both are the role of the Headteacher. If governors wish to spend time within a classroom, they need to be very clear why they are doing so. Also, a visit gives only a glimpse or snapshot of what goes on. Governors should not assume that what is learnt at one or even several visits gives a full and balanced picture. Conclusions may be entirely valid as far as they go and governors should not reject the evidence of their own eyes and ears; but both may need to be checked with others and revised in the light of further evidence.

### **Following a formal visit**

After formal visits, governors should discuss their impressions and any concerns they may have with the headteacher and then complete a written report. (See pro forma below). The report should be a summary of main points from the visit rather than a commentary. This should firstly be shared with the headteacher and other relevant staff (e.g. if the meeting was with a subject leader) Once it has been agreed, it should be emailed or given to the Chair of Governors.

Key points for governors to observe when making a visit:-

- Confirm your visit before you arrive
- Gather and read in advance any relevant information
- Have a clear focus and share your focus with the staff concerned
- Be attentive
- Observe confidentiality
- Observe the school policy for visitors and wear a 'visitors' badge available when signing in at Reception
- Establish with staff what is expected of you
- Talk and share your experience with the teacher and headteacher
- Be prepared to give written feedback to the governing body
  
- When governors visit the school it is important that they do not make judgments on the quality of teaching they see. The headteacher is responsible for monitoring teaching in the school
- Evaluate the visit yourself by asking the following questions:
  - were the objectives of the visit fulfilled?
  - was everyone involved properly prepared?
  - did you see what you wanted to see?
  - what would you do differently next time?

- were there areas you would like to know more about?
- what effect has the visit had on you, the school and the governing body?

If governors have any concerns as a result of their visit, they must always raise them with the Headteacher without delay.

### **Safeguarding**

St Anne's Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all volunteers working in the school and having contact with children have had the appropriate supervision and level of checks including DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check if necessary. All governors are required to hold a full DBS Check.

Advice on this process can be sought from the School Bursar.

Approved: November 2015

Next Review: November 2018

**St Anne's Primary School Pro-forma for Reporting Formal Governor Monitoring Visits**

|                      |  |                        |  |
|----------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| <b>Governor:</b>     |  | <b>Date of Visit:</b>  |  |
| <b>Subject/Area:</b> |  | <b>Staff met with:</b> |  |

**Context and focus of the visit.**

**What's been happening?**

**What's the impact?**

**How do we know?**