

St Matthew's Bloxam Church of England (VC) Primary School



Governor Visits Policy

September 2023

GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for governors to make focused visits to the school so that they can build an effective working relationship with the staff and have a better understanding of the context in which they work. Governors will observe policies and plans being implemented on a day-to-day basis and their findings should help the whole governing body make well-informed judgements about the progress being made towards the key priorities, actions and success criteria in the School Improvement Plan. This process will enable the governing body to recognise and celebrate the efforts and successes of pupils and staff and to identify further areas for development.

Visits are not about making judgements on the quality of teaching; that is the headteacher's responsibility. Nor are they about checking the progress of individual children or pursuing personal agendas.

Who was consulted

All staff contributed to this policy and will be consulted over the course of the year on its impact.

Relationship to other policies

The focus of a visit could be on one or more of many of the policies in place in the school, on an element of the curriculum, or on a specific aspect of the School Improvement Plan.

Roles and responsibilities of headteacher, other staff and governors

The governing body will, with the help of the headteacher and staff, organise a schedule of visits throughout the year. The aim will be to achieve at least two visits per governor per year. The monitoring and evaluation schedule (appendix 1) provides more detail.

The suggestions are that the following areas are visited 2/3 times a year: English, Maths, EYFS, Safeguarding, e-Safety, SEND, Health and Safety, Pupil Premium/Attendance, RE/Collective Worship. These visits will consist of a learning walk through the classes and a one-to-one meeting with the subject lead. Discussions will focus on areas from the School Improvement Plan, data and children's books. For some areas, discussion with pupils will also be relevant to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Individual governors or pairs of governors will, with the guidance of the whole governing body, identify an aspect of the school's work to focus on. This will enable individual governors to deepen their understanding by focusing on areas where they have an interest or expertise. The aim will be for them to explore an aspect of the school in some detail, increasing their confidence and knowledge. In turn this will help to maximise the effectiveness of the

governing body team and to enrich discussions about the school's performance.

When organising and conducting a visit, governors will be courteous and considerate at all times respecting the professional roles of the headteacher and staff. Working to the annual agreed schedule agreed with the head and staff, they will confirm with the member of staff leading the visit, the date, timing and focus of each visit at least one week in advance. This will include agreeing what will be observed and to whom it will be useful to talk. If time permits they will discuss the proposed agenda with any staff involved. They will prepare by reading relevant documentation and guidance.

At the end of each visit, the governor(s) will discuss what they have observed with the teacher and clarify any points they are uncertain about. They will discuss their observations with the headteacher and agree how and when they will report to the governing body. (See appendix 2 and 3)

Teachers and support staff will at all times be considerate and courteous, recognising the contribution made by the governing body to the school.

They will make practical suggestions for the focus of the governor's visits so as to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This will include specifying the evidence that could be shared with governors. (See appendix 4) Whenever practical they will invite their link/curriculum governor to relevant staff meetings and training sessions.

Questions will be invited from governors, while being sensitive to issues of confidentiality. (See appendix 5) Although these focus on English, Maths and SEND, many of these can be adapted to other areas of the curriculum.

Pupils will, with the guidance of their teacher, talk about their books and their work with governors. Pupils will talk about their experiences of school including their opinions on staying safe and behaviour. (See appendix 4 for some ideas for discussion with pupils)

Monitoring and evaluation

Governor's visits will be an agenda item at the termly meeting of the governing body. At the final meeting of each academic year the link governor will report the number of visits conducted and the areas of focus. By reviewing the minutes of meetings when reports of visits were discussed, the governing body will judge the extent to which the information gathered informed the whole governing body's understanding of the progress made towards meeting priorities and targets. Staff governors will feedback from colleagues. They will be asked to identify what worked well and what if anything needs to be reconsidered. They will also be asked to describe the extent to which their understanding of the governing body's role has been enhanced.

This policy will be reviewed in September 2026

Appendix 1 Monitoring and Evaluation Schedule 2023-2024

Month	Leaders	Governors	Report on GHub	Assessment	Other
September	Assessment grids for subject areas	Approve the safeguarding policy and KCSiE		Reception Baseline	Informal learning walks
	Pupil Premium Review	Agree committee membership			HT appraisal
	Sports Grant Review	All governors to have completed or signed up to safeguarding training			
	Action Plans for the year	Sign declarations on Governorhub			
	Safeguarding	Safeguarding - HM			
	PP/Attendance - Helen	PP/Attendance Helen B			
October	SEND - Helen	SEND - Hazel		PPM	Appraisals – HT and CTs
	PSHE - Lois	PSHE – Hazel			Boosters for Year 6 start
					Church - Harvest festival
					Leadership drop ins
November					LSA appraisals
					Parent's Evenings
December	Termly review of progression in subject			Sonar – input autumn assessments	Learning environment
	Writing moderation				Nativities/carol concert
	EYFS - Helen	EYFS - Debbie			Church - Christmas
	H&S – Jo B	H&S - Livingstone			
January	SEND inc SRP – Helen	SEND - Hazel		PPM	Parent questionnaires
	Pupil Premium/attendance - Helen	PP/Attendance – Helen B			Prayer stations changed in class

	Maths - Emily	Maths - Lee			
		Evaluate the appropriateness of the SIP and SES (milestones for autumn – discuss at Jan FGB)			
February	English - Lauren	English - Alex			Learning walks
	Safeguarding - Anita	Safeguarding - Hazel			
March	EYFS - Helen	EYFS - Debbie		Sonar – input spring assessments	Book monitoring
	PE - Jo	PE - ??			
	Sports Grant Review				
April	Art/DT - Richard	Art/DT - ??		PPM	Mid-term appraisals - CTs
					Prayer station changed
					Parents Evenings
May	Humanities - Sammy	Humanities - Lee		SATs	Mid-Term appraisals - LSAs
June	Pupil Premium/attendance - Helen	PP/Attendance – Helen B		Year 1 phonics screening	Reports
	Science - Helen	Science - ??		Year 4 multiplication check	
	Computing - Helen	Computing - ??		EYFS data	
				Sonar – input summer assessments	
July	Safeguarding - Anita	Safeguarding - Hazel		Reports and termly reports to parents	Data for end of year attainment and progress
	EYFS - Helen	EYFS - Debbie			Next teacher meetings
	SEND inc SRP – Helen	SEND - Hazel			

Appendix 2



St Matthew's Bloxam C of E Primary School Governor Monitoring



Term/Year:

Date:

Governor/s carrying out monitoring:

Reporting to:

Objective:	
Areas of Development from School Improvement Plan	
	Met with: Activities carried out:
	What I/we found out
	Evidence

	Areas for further action/development by school:
	Areas for further action/development by governors:
	How will we communicate actions/next steps:
	Observations relating to general behaviour of the children:
	Observations made regarding the visibility of the School Vision:
	*Safeguarding comments:
	Other comments or questions as a result of this monitoring visit:

***Possible safeguarding questions to ask**

- Do you feel safe in school (why)
- Who would you talk to if you had any worries?
- What would you do if anyone upset you?
- Are there any places in school that you do not think are safe?
- What would you do if you saw someone in school you did not know?
- How do you stay safe on the computer?

Appendix 3

Collective Worship Visit Report

Leader of CW	
Date and time	
Location	
Name of Governor	
Theme and details	

Checklist

Lighting of candles	Yes/No
Christian theme	Yes/No
School values represented	Yes/No
Participation of children	Yes/No
Prayers and/or reflection	Yes/No

Additional information:

Appendix 4

Things to observe when visiting a classroom

- Relationships between staff and pupils
- Relationships between pupils
- Availability and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitudes of pupils – are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- Displays
- Ethos – the atmosphere and values are evident (high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- What is relevant to the focus of the visit?

Appendix 5

Questions for governors to ask

The full governing body retains the responsibility for raising standards. A nominated governor who takes a special interest in a curriculum area or areas can help to ensure that this issue remains high profile on the governing body's agenda. The following questions will help you as you find out about teaching and learning across the school. Use them as a guide in a meeting or on school visits – it is not intended you work systematically through the list.

Discuss with your headteacher how best to use these questions to help you gradually build up a picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Your job, in partnership with the headteacher, is to provide a link between your governing body, its committees and the staff of your school.

Achievements and attitudes

For the core subjects:

What are the broad trends in the school's achievement in English and maths:

- Compared to other schools?
- In relation to the national rates of increase?
- In relation to the national picture in terms of gender?

How do the children's results in English/maths/science compare? How do they compare with other subjects?

For all subjects:

Where have we improved? Do we know why?

Are there differences between the achievement of different year groups, and if so, why?

What aspects of the subject do pupils find easy and which hard?

Are there significant differences in the performance of:

- Girls and boys (NB reading and writing)?
- Children in care?
- Child carers?
- Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities?
- Higher achieving pupils?
- Pupils with English as an additional language?
- The majority and any other minority groups, such as travellers?

In meetings with the subject co-ordinator, can you tell how much progress pupils are making?

For example, you could look at:

- Key Stage test results and teacher assessments
- The work of a range of pupils – average, below average and above average
- Other evidence

Special needs

How are pupils with SEND integrated into lessons?

How are SEND Support Plans being used to support pupils in their lessons?

Management of the subject

How is the role of the co-ordinator developing?

Does the school development plan address the identified needs?

What is the allocation of funding to the subject this financial year?

How has it or will it be spent?

Is there a need for additional resources for any aspect of the work?

What further training do teachers and support staff need?

How much additional adult support does each class have?

Are there any reports of external monitoring in the subject (by the Local Authority)?

(English only) Does the school offer a range of reading books catering for all abilities, cultural backgrounds and tastes, especially boys? Are pupils using the library?

How does the school use all its resources (computers, books, materials and displays) to promote reading, writing and maths?

Communication

How are parents kept informed about pupil progress?

What steps are being taken to encourage parents to support their children's learning?

How are governors kept informed about standards and the progress of pupils?

How do governors celebrate the school's success when things go well?

Appendix 6

Pupils Interviews

Some ideas for discussions

Teaching and learning:

I find that these work best if selected pupils (no more than 6-8 in 20-30 mins) are asked to bring along their book or some work where they feel they have succeeded well (even better if the pupils are from a class you have already observed – I never cover more than one subject in pupil interviews regarding the books). Sometimes, with primary aged pupils, I will ask them to bring their books and ask them to select a piece of work at the beginning of the meeting. For secondary aged pupils, depending on the subject, they might wish to bring something that is not in their book, so prior knowledge of the task may be more appropriate.

I then ask each pupil in turn to show their work to the group and outline the task or the learning they did, using some of the following questions to tease out more information about their learning. Obviously these can be made simpler for younger pupils and more in depth for older ones.

- How do you know you were successful (in your learning)?
- What helped you during the lesson to know how to succeed well?
- How do you know what to do in order to improve?
- What feedback did you get from your teacher (I usually ask them to read this out to the group)?
- How helpful did you find the feedback?
- If the feedback was unhelpful, what feedback would you have found useful?
- Did you get any oral feedback or help during the lesson?
- What sort of lessons/ ways of learning, do you find are the best for you?
- Do you find that the teaching or teachers in some subjects make it easier for you to learn than others, if so why/how?
- What do you do in a lesson if you get stuck?
- What tests do you have? How do they help you to learn?
- How much homework do you have to do? What form does it take and how useful do you find it?