



ST. GERARD'S
CATHOLIC
PRIMARY AND
NURSERY SCHOOL

Governor's Monitoring Visit Policy



St Gerard's Catholic Primary School

"Guided by God, St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School is an inspiring and aspirational community where we learn to love, hope, dream and achieve."

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

“St Gerard’s Catholic Primary and Nursery School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment”.



Rationale

The Governing Body at St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School has a responsibility to keep in touch with what is happening in the classroom. Although their role is strategic, it is important that they have some understanding of the practicalities of the job. Meeting children, talking to staff and seeing lessons underway will help members of the Governing Body to understand some of the issues they are required to discuss and make decisions about with greater clarity.

Objectives

The Governing Body should aim to:

- Inform their decision-making by having visited at least one lesson during the year.
- Be aware of the feelings of members of staff and the issues they face by having had a lengthier discussion with at least one member of staff during the year.
- Read and keep up-to-date with school newsletters and other documents that are set out.
- Keep up-to-date with their nominated class, introduce themselves and spend time discussing the school with some of the children from the class.

Roles and Responsibilities

Some of our Governors are already linked to a particular subject. They are:

- Literacy Governor
- Numeracy Governor
- Religious Education Governor
- Early Years Governor
- Governor linked to Special Needs

In addition to this, we aim to link most Governors to a subject they have a particular interest in. This does not mean that their visits should be exclusively geared to that subject. However, it is anticipated that at some point during the year they will take time to talk to the subject leader.

We also believe it is important that Governors take a particular interest in one class and class teacher to whom they can describe their role. The following are the class links established at present.

Early Years – David Chambers

Class 1 – Stella Murray

Class 2 – Geoff Golson

Class 3 - Carmel Brady

Class 4 – Christine Godwin

Class 5 - Elaine Davies

Class 6 - TBA

The annual schedule of visits is as follows:

Term	Visiting governors
Autumn half-term 1	Early Years Governor Safeguarding Governor
Autumn half-term 2	Headteacher PM Governors English Link Governor SEND Governor Educational Visits Governor GDPR Governor
Spring half-term 1	Maths Link Governor Safeguarding Governor
Spring half-term 2	Religious Education Educational Visits Governor
Summer half-term 1	Health and Safety Governor Pupil Premium Governor
Summer half-term 2	RSHE Governor PSHE / Equality Governor Well being Governor

It is the responsibility of each Governor to introduce themselves to the teacher and class and make themselves available according to the demands of the timetable and school year.

The benefits of visiting classrooms

Closer links between Governors and teachers has potential benefits to both.

For governors these include: -

- More informed understanding of classroom life and practice.
- Opportunity to meet and chat with the children.
- Opportunity to meet class teachers and put faces to names.
- Seeing policies and schemes of work in action
- Finding out what resources are being used and what are needed.

For Teachers these include: -

- Opportunity to find out more about the role of the Governor.
- Having chance to illustrate the theory and policy in practice.
- Opportunity to draw attention to any issues or questions they wish to raise.
- Opportunity to reflect upon practice through discussion.

What to Avoid

It is important for all parties to note that governors' visits are not a form of inspection and do not involve governors making a judgement about teaching in any official capacity. That remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and other education professionals.

It might be wise for governors to avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present. It can cause discomfort for everyone! They should also be aware of 'pursuing personal agendas' and make sure they fulfil the code of conduct as it is outlined here.

Please remember that members of staff are very busy people whose first priority must be the children. There may be times when arrangements have to be changed or alterations made. Please 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.

Before the visit

- Arrange details of visit.
- Agree purpose of visit
- Discuss the context of the lesson to be observed.
- Agree role within the lesson
- Do not turn up unannounced

During the visit

- Keep to the role agreed
- Keep questions for the class teacher until after the visit is over
- Please remember confidentiality
- Stick to the times and purpose agreed
- Be sensitive to the mood in the classroom and the expectations of the children.
- Assume a different role
- Don't walk in with a clipboard
- Don't interrupt the teacher
- Don't distract the pupils from their task

After the visit

- Thank the teacher and the pupils
- Discuss the visit with the teacher at their convenience
- Feedback to the governing body
- Leave without acknowledgement
- Break rules of confidentiality

Conducting the observations

After planning your visit with the class teacher or subject coordinator you might have agreed to:

- take part in a lesson acting as classroom helper during your visit
- do a formal observation-taking no immediate role other than talking to the children about what they are doing
- work with a small group
- introduce yourself to your linked class and answer any of their questions
- meet with the class teacher or coordinator to discuss particular issues or set the context
- Observe - focussing on an agreed area/issue that the class teacher would like some feedback on e.g. the involvement of a particular group of pupils.

Please remember that observations do not require judgement on the teacher.

It might also be useful to clarify some 'what ifs' beforehand. For example:-

- What if I see children misbehaving when the teacher doesn't?
- What if a pupil asks me how to do something?
- What if I have a suggestion to make?

Providing Feedback

It is important that a time is agreed between yourself and the class teacher to discuss the lesson you have taken part in or observed. During this feedback you might refer to notes you have made. The structure might include:

- Asking the teacher for any further clarification of the lesson or for their views on how it went.
- Giving your own impressions on what you saw
- Providing any positive comment.
- Raising any issues that appeared to develop.
- Any further questions you might have
- A summary of the feedback you will be giving to the governing body.

At the end of the feedback both you and the teacher should be clear about what you will be sharing with the governing body- there should be no surprises!

The **Governors' visits to classrooms** pro forma should be completed as soon as possible after the visit. It should reflect the discussion you have had with the teacher. The report should be copied to:

- The Headteacher
- The subject leader
- The teacher concerned
- The clerk to the governors

Policy Review

- The policy should be reviewed every two years. The key questions should be:
- Has every Governor visited at least one lesson during the year?
- Has each Governor made links with their allocated class?
- Has every Governor had a conversation with the subject leader they are linked to?
- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits identified in this policy?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make policy and practice even better?

This policy to be reviewed in September 2024

Governor's Visit Template (To be completed after the visit and sent to the Clerk of Governors)

Governor Name		Governor responsibilities	
Key tasks/activities			

Action	Agree focus of visit with the governing board at the start of the academic year. This should relate to the key responsibilities above and the school's priorities relevant to the area of responsibility.	Date of Visit	
		Staff member visited	
		Purpose of visit	
Feedback on Findings	Include date report circulated to governing board/feedback given at a meeting/any external verification.		
Any further action required	Include any actions or follow-up required as a result of the visit.		