



Governing Body Visits/Monitoring and Evaluation Policy

Policy Approved/Updated	November 2023
Policy Review Date	November 2024
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Our Mission Statement

At Holy Cross, we are very proud of our school motto and our Catholic ethos; **Loved, Valued, Challenged.**

Loved: We love one another as Jesus taught us – our friends, our families and those who we may never meet.

Valued: We value everyone – everyone is important; pupils, staff, parents, governors, and members of the community– no matter their race, religion ability or need. We try to live like Jesus taught us.

Challenged: We challenge each other – not only with our learning but challenge each other to be more merciful to others, have a little more understanding of others’ needs and challenge each other to be better people.

Our Vision

At Holy Cross, we aim to develop a caring Catholic community based upon the life and example of Jesus Christ, which envelopes the life and lives of everyone and everything in our school. It is through Christ’s message of love and forgiveness that the children, staff, both teachers and ancillary, parents and governors, preserve the essential Catholic ethos of the school.

The school aims to provide a challenging curriculum that reflects our philosophy, broadly balanced and relevant, and to support the development of the whole child to his/her full potential. At Holy Cross, everybody matters, therefore we encourage all to show respect to each other and the environment.

Purpose of Governing Body Visits/Monitoring and Evaluation

The school’s main aim is to:

Develop our children with active and creative minds, a sense of understanding and compassion for others and the courage to act on their Catholic beliefs.

Agreed areas for monitoring

Key areas would include the following:

- Policies and procedures.
- Adherence to statutory liabilities and responsibilities (see statutory guidance and decision planner).
- Logging and recording of key data (see statutory inclusions Principal’s termly report).
- Standards of achievement and attainment.
- Teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management.

- Effectiveness of governance.
- Budgets and resource management.
- Confirm and strengthen the prayer life of the school.
- Assessment without Levels.
- Accelerating improvements in mathematics/ensuring tasks provide challenge to more able.
- Stakeholder feedback/parental feedback.
- Engagement with Stakeholders.
- School strengths and weaknesses.
- Ongoing building maintenance, upkeep, and renewal.

Key monitoring documents

- School Improvement report and plans.
- OFSTED report on the school.
- School Self Evaluation systems.
- School Improvement partner reports.
- Headteacher's termly report (must include certain statutory information).
- Attainment data.
- Development or action plans.
- Financial and budget reports.
- External audit reports.
- Health and safety inspection reports.
- Statutory documentation and guidance.
- Meeting minutes.

Reporting and evidence gathering

Agreed outcomes from monitoring activities will be formally recorded in the following ways:

- Full Governing Body meeting minutes – (evidence of key decision and actions).
- Sub Committee meeting minutes _ (evidence of strategic discussion, challenge and support).
- Financial reporting – (financial comparisons and benchmarking).
- Budget reporting – (formal review of budgets with agreed minutes).
- Governor Visit reports (signed by both staff and governor and logged in file in Headteacher's office).
- Audit reports (both internal and external).
- Policy revision following ongoing review.
- Improvement plans.
- Self-Evaluation Form.
- Action plans – (following on from any relevant stakeholder feedback).

We agree and understand that information regarding our school may be published and we will comply with statutory requirements regarding Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Confidentiality.

Governor information

- School Visits - an Aide Memoire
- Governor Monitoring Visits Policy
- Guidelines for Governors
- Governor Visit Record
- Governor Visits Monitoring & Evaluation Record

School visits

What is the purpose of the visit?

What has prompted my decision to visit?

Who has prompted my decision to visit?

Is the reason specific or general?

What are my/other people's expectations?

How can my visit benefit the teacher?

How shall I carry it out?

What particular areas of the school am I interested in?

What particular activities am I interested in?

What particular age group(s) am I interested in?

Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?

What questions should I ask?

Who should I ask?

Did I achieve my aim?

To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?

Which of my questions did I answer?

To what extent did I fulfil my own/other people's expectations?

What difficulties did I meet and why?

Is there any follow-up?

Have I recorded my experiences?

Did I 'report back' to the head and staff?

Have I prepared a short report for the next governors' meeting?

How can I build on this for the next visit?

Context

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. The Governors visiting programme is an integral part of the school's yearly monitoring calendar. Governor visits and monitoring take place at regular intervals in school. Each Governor is encouraged to make at least one visit a year during school time and governors will often monitor an area of the School Development Plan.

Visits enable Governors to:

- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Get to know the staff and demonstrate their commitment to the school
- Give active support to the staff and the activities of the school
- Be aware of the effect of change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- Evaluate resources and discuss with staff further requirements
- Gain first hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- Work in partnership with the staff

Before making a visit Governors will:

- Contact the Headteacher and agree a date, time and focus for the visit
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit
- Plan which classes will be visited
- Draw up a timetable for the visit with the Assistant Principal or subject-coordinator
- Deputy Headteacher and/or the subject coordinator ensure that all staff are aware of the visit and the expectations on them

On the day of the visit the Governor will remember to:

- Arrive on time and clarify the timetable with the Headteacher/subject coordinator
- Act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering
- Be calm and enjoy the visit

After the visit the Governor will:

- Remember to thank the teachers and children
- Meet with the Headteacher to give a verbal report, and to raise any issues that arose
- Complete the Governor Visit Record, reporting on the focus. The completed form should be given to the Headteacher and then, after any possible alterations, the form will be circulated to the governing body and staff
- Governors must report without giving opinions and where possible individuals should not be able to be identified
- It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements should not be made arbitrarily

The visit is not about:

- Inspection
- Making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on your own children
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas
- Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school by staff. It is important that Governors remember to respect the professionals and the children, support the Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed then Governor Visits will be an enjoyable experience for all involved and will result in effective monitoring by the Governing Body, which will contribute to school improvement.

Governor Visit Record

Governor name _____

Date of visit _____ Start/Finish times _____

Class/Event/Staff visited _____

Purpose of visit (previously agreed with Headteacher)

Links with the School Development Plan (how does the visit relate to a priority in the School Development Plan?)

Governor observations and comments (e.g. what did you see? What did you learn? What would you like clarified?)

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)

Action following governor body meeting (Record any action agreed by the governing body with regard to this visit)

Any other comments

Signed _____ Signed _____

(Governor)

(Headteacher/Coordinator)

Monitoring the School Development Plan

Focus area in school improvement plan _____

Source of evidence of progress	Comment and impact

Evaluation and impact

Signed _____ Date: _____
(Headteacher)

Signed _____ Date: _____
(Governor)

Governor Visit Monitoring and Evaluation Record

Date/time/length of visit	
Governor name	
Responsibilities area	
Staff member(s) involved	

Purpose of visit:

Post Ofsted Action Plan Link	School Improvement Plan Link
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Planned activities

Outcome of visit

Issues for the Governing Body

Teachers/Headteacher comments

Follow up actions/suggested focus for future visits

Signed (Governor) _____

Signed (Headteacher) _____

Conducting classroom visits

Contents

1. Rationale
2. Objectives
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. The benefits of visiting classrooms
5. Things to avoid
6. Ground rules
7. Conducting the observations
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1. Rationale

The Governing Body at Holy Cross Primary 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.

2. 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 more lengthy 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.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

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

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. Ground Rules

	Always	Never
Before	Arrange details of visit Agree purpose of visit Discuss the context of the lesson to be observed Agree role within the lesson	Turn up unannounced
During	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 Walk in with a clipboard Interrupt the teacher Distract the pupils from their task
After	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

7. 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?

8. 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

9. 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?