

# CUDDINGTON AND DINTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Governor Visits Policy



'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16 is central to all that we do as a Christian school community. We work together to nurture the well-being, learning and development of everyone, empowering all to shine as individuals through clearly understood values and behaviour, founded in the Christian faith.

<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>September 2020</b>
<b>Date adopted by Governing Body</b>	<b>29.9.20</b>
<b>Date for next review by Governing Body</b>	<b>September 2023</b>

## **Rationale**

The Governing Body have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards, establish and monitor school policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. The Body is also held to account for the school's performance. The Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and will test this assumption during a school inspection. This policy includes a sample Governors' Visit report form, which will help guide discussion on the issues raised and provide a formal record for OfSTED of the Governors' structured involvement in the work and life of the school.

The governing body is a corporate body and every governor will visit the School as a representative member of that body, not as an individual. An effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding, benefits the whole School community.

## **Policy Aims**

To enable Governors to:

- Provide an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out their School visits.
- Gain insight into the life of the school
- Create and develop relationships with staff, children and where appropriate parents.
- Better understand the Governors' roles in raising standards.
- Have a better understanding of the school's current performance, practice, strengths and areas for further development; enabling more targeted and effective challenge and support.

## **Organisation**

The organisation of the governor visits at Cuddington and Dinton C of E School Visit programme. The programme of visits will be organised as follows.

Annually:

- Governor training will be attended by all Governors on a Teaching and Learning theme. This will be organised by the Development Governor and will happen in the Summer term

Termly:

- The English, Maths and RE Governors will meet with the subject leaders and undertake a learning walk, with the curriculum leader, looking at specific areas of their designated curriculum area. This will be agreed with the curriculum leads.
- The SEND Governor will meet with the SENCO to discuss provision and progress for the SEND pupils. A learning walk will not take place as identification of these pupils would be inappropriate.
- Curriculum leaders will present to the Teaching and Learning Committee on their aspect of the curriculum.
- The Safeguarding Governor will meet with the Headteacher and review Pupil safety on a learning walk.
- The Health and Safety Governors will meet termly with the Caretaker and SLT to review Health and Safety. A report will be produced and presented to the Finance Committee.

Half Termly:

- The Chair and Vice Chair will meet the Headteacher (in person/ virtually/ phone call) to discuss ongoing issues.

## **Overarching principles**

The Governors of Cuddington and Dinton C of E School recognise that one of the best and most effective ways they can get to know their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work. To this end the Governors undertake official termly 'monitoring visits' to the school to review and explore a specific aspect of practice. (These visits are not an inspection, but a 'fact finding' and

observational opportunity and a platform to help Governors ask questions and understand practice.)

To further support the effectiveness of their work the Governing Body also appoint a link Governor to key areas of the school practice, such as SEND, and review other areas of practice. Other visits to the school are be agreed with the Headteacher in advance and focus on ensuring the aims outlined above are fulfilled.

### **The main purpose of Governor visits**

A Governor visits school to:

- Increase the governing body’s first-hand knowledge about the school and its daily operation; thus helping to inform ongoing and future strategic decision making.
- Keep under review the way in which the school is operating and performing and what it is doing to manage areas requiring further development.
- Experience the impact and progress resulting from the implementation of the school improvement plan and school policies.
- Demonstrate to staff that the Governing Body takes its responsibilities very seriously.
- Establish and develop good professional working relationships with staff, especially those that are linked with an individual area of responsibility, e.g. Special Educational Needs or Health and Safety.
- See in context some of the monitoring systems employed by the school.
- Demonstrate that the Governing Body is contributing to the school’s self-evaluation process.
- Show support and encouragement to staff and children.

### **What are Governor visits not about?**

Governors’ visits to classrooms are not a form of inspection in terms of making judgements about the professional expertise of members of staff, especially with regard to the quality of teaching.

A school visit is also not about:

- Checking on the progress of their own or known children
- Monopolising staff time
- Arriving with inflexible or pre-conceived ideas
- Pursuing personal agendas or issues

### **Benefits of Governor visits to school**

<b>Potential Benefits to Governors</b>	<b>Potential Benefits to Teachers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have a greater understanding of pupils’ needs.</li> <li>• To recognise and celebrate success.</li> <li>• To establish and develop effective relationships with the staff.</li> <li>• To monitor the implementation of the School Development Plan.</li> <li>• To increase their first-hand knowledge of the school which will inform strategic decisions.</li> <li>• To understand the environment in which staff work and teachers teach.</li> <li>• To recognise different teaching styles and understand the environment in which teachers teach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand better the Governors’ roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion.</li> <li>• To get to know and build positive relationships with Governors.</li> <li>• To feel valued.</li> <li>• To appreciate and value the role and responsibilities of all Governors.</li> <li>• To ensure Governors understand the reality of the classroom and the school.</li> <li>• To share an understanding of the specific area, including recent developments.</li> </ul>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To see policies and schemes of work in practice.</li> <li>• To find out what resources are used, what resources are needed and prioritise them.</li> <li>• To get to know the children.</li> <li>• To show support and encouragement to staff and pupils.</li> <li>• To demonstrate that the Governing Body is contributing to the school's self-evaluation process.</li> <li>• To develop individual Governor's roles in terms of their specific responsibilities e.g. Special Needs, Maths etc.</li> <li>• To inform future decision-making.</li> </ul> |  |
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**Our governor visits will be organised as follows:**

**Before the visit:**

- Agree a mutually convenient time to visit with the Headteacher/class teacher or subject coordinator. Avoid stressful or busy periods in the School calendar.
- Clarify the purpose of the visit (see suggestions in Appendix 3) and agree this with the Headteacher and relevant staff. Agree together how best to approach the identified focus to make effective use of everyone's time.
- Prepare for your visit by reading any relevant documents (**Appendix 2**)
- Ensure that you are aware of the core principles underlying the governor visits to school and abide by them.

**During the visit:**

- Remember this is a visit, not an inspection. Governors are visiting to learn more about the School and to gather information to inform decision making by the governing body. It is not the governors' role to judge the quality of the teaching. Monitoring staff performance and the quality of teaching and learning is the job of the Headteacher.
- Remember that you are an invited guest.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, the School's Child Protection policies and procedures.
- Be punctual and sign in.
- Try hard not to disrupt the normal working of the School by monopolising the teacher's time.
- Smile and listen. Try to relax and enjoy yourself.
- Think carefully about what you say and do. Remember that a visit by a governor can be stressful for staff. Be courteous, tactful, positive and interested. Avoid criticism e.g. Never make a comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.
- Try not to draw too much attention to yourself. Avoid overtly making notes as this can be disconcerting. Instead, write down your thoughts as soon afterwards as is practical.
- Remember that you are representing the governing body. Governors should be prepared to explain policies but should avoid giving personal opinions which could be misinterpreted as the views of the governing body.
- Avoid making promises on behalf of the governing body.
- Observe previously agreed levels of confidentiality.
- If you have seen something that worries you, contact the Headteacher to discuss.
- Discuss your visit with the Headteacher and agree a draft of any written report with the Headteacher, and with staff, as appropriate. Be prepared to take the comments of others on board before you circulate your report to governors and the clerk.

- Reflect upon your visit. After the visit, the Governor will then complete a visit form (**Appendix 1**) and send this to the Headteacher to check. At each full Governing body the Headteacher will summarise the visits for that term.

### **Evaluating the visit**

Following a visit, governors may reflect on the following questions:

- How did the visit go?
- Were you clear about your objectives?
- What, if anything would you do differently next time?
- Are there further areas you would like to explore?
- How has the visit helped you, the School and/or the governing body? E.g. in collecting monitoring evidence, in greater understanding of a particular aspect. Monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy Governors' visits will be an agenda item at termly governing body/committee meetings.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The governing body is responsible for ensuring this policy meets the needs of Cuddington and Dinton C of E School and is regularly reviewed and monitored for its effectiveness. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring all staff, children and parents are aware of this policy and that it is fully implemented.

### **Policy monitoring and evaluation**

The Governing body will review this policy every 3 years, or sooner if necessary. This review will consider:

- Are we doing what we set out to do?
- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits identified in the policy?
- Are we more able to make informed decisions?
- Are the visits deepening understanding of progress towards meeting targets identified in the School Development Plan?
- Do staff feel affirmed and valued?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we improve the policy and practice?

Appendix1 Governor Visit report form Cuddington and Dinton C of E School



Church of England School

Date:	Class	Staff
Governor/s	Lesson/activity	
Link to SDP:		
Account of visit:		
Further questions/ thoughts:		
Strategic actions for Governing Body:		
Actions following visit/ focus for next visit:		

## Appendix 2 Suggestions for the focus of a governor visit

One or more of the following will provide a focus for a visit, with the agreement of the relevant staff:

- The implementation and impact of a key policy
- Progress in an aspect of the School Improvement Plan
- Progress on areas identified during an Ofsted or SIAS inspection
- Provision for identified groups e.g. Free School Meals
- Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Provision for more able pupils
- How the ECM outcomes are promoted
- Particular subjects, key stages or classes, Cross-curricular areas e.g. English and Maths & ICT
- INSET days or training sessions, staff or departmental meetings, as appropriate
- Pupil participation
- Impact of the religious character (in Church Schools)
- Deployment of staff,
- The impact on the school of any key changes e.g. impact of increased staffing in Support roles
- Educational Visits – provision and impact
- Collective Worship

In addition to any special focus to a visit, governors may learn more about some of the following areas:

- The variety of teaching and learning styles
- Availability, deployment and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils — are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?
- Relationships
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- How the pupils are grouped
- How different abilities are catered for with differentiated tasks
- Examples of children and young people's work, written and oral
- Displays in open areas and classrooms e.g. learning walls, reflection of community in images round the school.
- Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space and working conditions
- Classroom facilities: lighting, layout, storage, furniture and décor
- Facilities for outdoor play and learning outside the classroom.
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources and associated storage

Further information about Governors roles and further questions can be found on Governor Hub.