



# Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School



## Draft Governor Visits and Protocol Policy

### Our Mission Statement :

*'Love One Another As I Have Loved You' (John 13:33-34)*

Agreed by Governors on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Signed

Chair of Governors

Review date : September 2025

### Safeguarding Statement:

'Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of all children and expects all staff, parents and volunteers to share this commitment.'

### Our Vision

As a Catholic school that puts Christ at the centre, we are committed to encouraging everyone to 'Be the Best They Can Be'

### Values and Ethos

We believe that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God and we value the equality of all, reject discrimination of any kind, and welcome the diversity of different cultures.

## 1. Introduction

The Governing Body has a duty to oversee the direction and policies of the school, to monitor its standards and be held to account for its conduct and performance. Visiting the school is the best way to learn how it functions, and to keep under review how it operates so that you can increase the Governing Body's first-hand knowledge, informing strategic decision making. Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Improvement Plan. The Governing Body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose. Governors should arrange their visits with the Head Teacher who has the responsibility of the day-to-day management of the school.

### **Annual programme of visits**

A programme of visits should be agreed by governors in consultation with the Head Teacher.

### **Protocols or ground rules for visits**

Governors should ensure that visits:

- Are agreed in advance with the Head Teacher
- Have a clear purpose which is agreed in advance
- Have an allocated amount of time, agreed in advance

### **Benefit of visits**

Potential benefits to governors:

- To understand the day-to-day running of the school
- To monitor policies in practice
- To recognise and celebrate success
- To understand the expectations of the staff
- To develop relationships with the staff
- To get to know the children
- To inform decision making
- To monitor the impact of an initiative
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion

### **Types of Governor Monitoring Visit**

Governor monitoring can take several forms e.g:

- Pupil interviews
- Meeting with subject leader, possibly incorporating a book scrutiny
- Learning walk
- Meeting with the Headteacher/SLT
- Attending school events

### **What a visit is not about**

- A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on progress of own children
- Monopolising school/teacher time

## **2. Governor Role in Visits**

### **Before the visit**

- Agree a mutually convenient time to visit with the headteacher/class teacher, avoiding stressful or busy periods in the school calendar
- Clarify the purpose of the visit (see suggestions in Appendix B) 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.
- Agree how you will be introduced to the children and young people and the extent to which you will be involved in any activity or lesson
- Agree a convenient time to discuss your visit with the class or subject teacher. This will also be your opportunity to clarify any issues you are unclear about.
- Prepare for your visit by reading any relevant documents
- Ensure that you are aware of the core principles underlying the governor visits at your 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 punctual, sign in and wear a name badge.
- 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 in 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.
- Only go into the staffroom if you are invited to do so.
- Adhere to Child Protection policies and procedures.
- Observe previously agreed levels of confidentiality.
- Remember to thank the staff for supporting you in your role as governor

#### **After the visit**

- If you have seen something that worries you, you would normally discuss this first with the teacher.
- 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.
- Send a note to thank the relevant staff and pupils. Be open and honest; recognise and celebrate achievement.
- Reflect upon your visit: Is there anything you would like to explore further?

#### **How to feedback after the visit**

- Complete a record of the visit (Appendix A)
- Completed report to be shared at Full Governor Meeting

### **3. Governor Role in Informal Visits**

Visits may also take place in an informal capacity. E.g.

- To support with fundraising events
- To volunteer to support pupils in class e.g. hearing readers
- Support a school activity e.g. sports day; residential visit
- To share in whole school events e.g. masses, assemblies

Whilst such visits may be informal, they can greatly add to a Governor's understanding of the school and provide valuable opportunities to increase the Governor's profile within the school community.

Although informal, a record of the visit should be made (Appendix A)



# Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School



## Governor Visit Record Sheet

<b>Name</b>		<b>Date of Visit</b>	
<b>Focus of Visit</b>			
<b>Summary of visit</b>			
<b>Any other comments/questions</b>			
<b>Signed (Governor)</b> _____			

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 inspection
- Provision for identified groups e.g. SEND, Pupil Premium, EAL
- Particular subjects, key stages or classes, Cross-curricular areas
- The use made of the buildings, the site or Resources e.g. Interactive Whiteboards
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Health & safety
- Extended Services including Extra-Curricular activities
- INSET days or training sessions, staff or departmental meetings, as appropriate
- Pupil participation e.g. attend a school council meeting
- Impact of the religious character
- 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
- Prayer and Liturgy

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 engaged, attentive, resilient, caring?
- 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