The Rosary Catholic Primary School

Aspire, Believe, Achieve: Together in Christ

Governor Visit Policy
September 2024

Policy Approved by:	Learning and Achievements Committee
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The Rosary Mission Statement

'Together, God's children,

We realise our dreams,

Inspiring and encouraging one another to reach our true potential,

Transforming our world through our unique gifts.

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Statement of intent

Through this policy, The Rosary Catholic Primary School aims to embed effective procedures concerning governor monitoring visits. Each governor is expected to make at least two visits during the academic year, demonstrating the governing board's role in the strategic management of the school by helping to evaluate and improve practice.

Governor visits inform understanding of the school's practices and procedures, allow opportunities to speak to pupils and teachers, enable the identification of resource needs, and allow governors to see the SDP in action.

For staff, governor visits allow staff the chance to find out more about governors, provide an opportunity to draw attention to issues or questions they wish to raise, and provide an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss current practice.

Governors must:

- Remember to respect school staff and pupils.
- Support the Executive Headteacher and the Head of School
- Acknowledge that they represent the full governing board.

By following the agreed principles and procedures, governor visits will be pleasant, purposeful, and will significantly contribute towards school improvement.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- DfE (2014) 'The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013'

1.2. The policy operates in accordance with the relevant school documents, including, but not limited to:

- Governor Record of Visit Form

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. Governors are responsible for:

- Meeting their target of two visits per academic year.
- Understanding the needs of staff members through discussions with staff and their link subject lead
- Completing a Governor Record of Visit after the visit
- Reporting their observations to the full governing board during a full governing board meeting.
- Familiarising themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

2.2. The Head of School is responsible for:

- Facilitating governor visits.
- Discussing completed visits with governors, prior to a report being made to the full governing board.

2.3. A number of governors are linked to particular subjects or areas of the school's provision. Staff and Governors can access this information on Governor Hub which is updated termly with any changes.

3. Annual schedule

3.1 The annual schedule will be agreed at the first Full Governing Body meeting of the year.

4. Etiquette

4.1. Governor visits are not a form of inspection, and governors will not make judgements concerning teaching or other areas of school provision in any official capacity.

4.2. Governors will avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present.

4.3. Governors will not pursue personal agendas during visits.

4.4. Governors will remain flexible and understand that the school must make pupils' education the priority, and that this may sometimes lead to the rearranging of visits.

4.5. Governors will never visit the school unannounced.

4.6. Visits are not an opportunity for governors to check on individual children or monopolise the time of staff.

5. Preparing for a visit

5.1. Governors will arrange visits at least one week prior to the date of the proposed visit.

5.2. Before a visit, governors will:

- Agree a clear, purposeful focus for the visit.
- Consider how the area of focus will be identified and observed during the visit.
- Discuss the context of the activities to be observed.
- Agree their role within the activities.
- Refer to their Governing Board Monitoring Plan to ensure the visit's focus is strategic and in line with the school's priorities for improvement.
- Read the documentation relevant to the focus of the visit, e.g. the school's Behavioural Policy, and prepare relevant questions, where appropriate.
- Read Appendix A regarding suggested questions/activities you could carry out in your role as Link Governor

6. During a visit

6.1. During a visit, governors will:

- Adhere to their agreed role at all times.
- Make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school.
- Where visiting activities involve lesson observations, not ask questions, interrupt the teacher or distract pupils during the lesson.
- Spend time in a classroom only when they have provided a clear reason for doing so.
- Adhere to confidentially agreements.
- Adhere to the agreed times and purpose.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the pupils and the wider school community.

7. After a visit

7.1. After a visit, governors will:

- Thank the staff, and pupils where appropriate, involved in the visiting activities.
- Discuss the visit with the staff involved in the visiting activity at their convenience.
- Completing a Governor Record of Visit
- Provide feedback regarding the visit to the full governing board.

7.2. After a visit, governors will not:

- Break confidentiality agreements.

8. Providing feedback

8.1. A time will be agreed between the governor and staff, at the staff member's convenience, to discuss what was observed during the visit.

8.2. During the discussion, governors will adhere to the following framework:

- Ask staff for their views on what happened during the visit
- Present governors' observations
- Provide positive feedback
- Raise any issues

- Ask further questions
- Thank staff for the opportunity

8.3. By the end of the discussion, both the governor and staff members will be clear as to what information will be shared with the Head of School and full governing board.

8.4. The Governor Record of Visit will be completed as soon as possible after the visit.

8.5. The Head of School and governors will discuss the observations prior to the distribution of the Governor Record of Visit.

8.6. A copy of the completed Governor Record of Visit. will be provided to:

- The Executive Head Teacher and the Head of School
- The subject leader
- The relevant staff members
- The clerk to governors

8.7. A copy of the report will be circulated to all governors at the next appropriate committee or governing board meeting.

8.8. The governing board will ensure all board members have the opportunity to discuss and ask questions regarding the final report and the visit undertaken.

9. Monitoring and review

9.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of School and the chair of the governing board.

9.2. When reviewing the success of the policy, the Head of School and chair of the governing board will take the following into consideration:

- Has every governor conducted at least two visits during the academic year?
- Has every governor made links with their allocated subject or area of provision?
- Has every governor met with the staff members they are linked to?
- Are visits achieving the desired outcomes?
- What worked well?
- What did not work well?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can practice be improved?

9.3. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all stakeholders.

Governor Record of Visit

Key Discussion Points
Progress since last visit
Strengths
Areas for Development (lined to School Development Plan)
Pupil Voice – Notes (as applicable)
Book Look – Notes (as applicable)
EYFS

KS1
LKS2
UKS2
Learning observation (as applicable)

Appendix A

Role of the Link Governor for – Special Educational Needs

It may be felt that a Staff Governor could have a conflict of interest when becoming the link for safeguarding.

What does the SEN Link Governor do?

The list below is not exhaustive, but gives a general guide.

- Strive to ensure that all pupils with SEN get the help they need to access the curriculum and to participate fully in the life of the school.
- Meet with key post-holders in the school.
- Raise awareness of SEN issues at GB meetings.
- Give up to date information on SEN provision within the school.
- Help review policies on provision for pupils with SEN
- Ensure that parents have confidence in the provision.
- Attend training in order to keep up to date with developments in this area.

Questions a Link Governor might ask:

1. What are the key documents that I need to know about to be a good link governor? (This should include a discussion about the SEN Code of Practice.)

2. Can you explain the role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)?

3. How is the SENCO updated on current best practice – both locally and nationally?

4. How regularly is the SEN policy reviewed and by whom? Could I be involved in future?

5. How are pupils identified as having special educational needs and how are the parents involved?

6. How effectively do teachers in all year groups meet the learning needs of pupils with SEN? (This should include a discussion about Individual Education Plans (IEPs).)

7. Do pupils with SEN get access to all areas of the curriculum? (if not, why not?)

8. What difference is pupil premium money making to standards?

Role of the Link Governor for – Health and Safety

What does the Health and Safety Link Governor do?

The list below is not exhaustive, but gives a general guide.

- Meet with key post-holders in the school to discuss relevant policies and practice. This should include risk assessments.

- Walk around the school and its perimeter to see at first hand health and safety in practice.

- Raise awareness of health and safety issues at GB meetings. This should include e-safety.

- Help review policies and provision for health and safety, ensuring that staff receive the training that they need.

- Attend training in order to keep up to date with developments in this area.

Questions a Link Governor might ask:

1. What are the key documents that concern health and safety?

2. How are risk assessments carried out and how frequently? What did the last ones show?

3. What are the current health and safety priorities in the asset management plan?

4. What sort of training on health and safety do new staff receive? How regularly is this updated?

5. What issues have arisen in the accident book over the last year?

6. Is there an on-going maintenance plan for the school? Are resources allocated with regard to value for money?

7. Let's tour the school site and discuss its condition and recent improvements.

Role of the Link Governor for – English

What does the English Link Governor do?

The list below is not exhaustive, but gives a general guide.

- Take a special interest in English across the school.
- Ensure that English issues remain high on the school's agenda.
- Attend in-school training where possible
- Meet with the co-ordinators / heads of subject
- Be involved in the school's attempts to inform and involve parents in their child's learning
- Ask about resourcing of English.
- Attend external training in order to keep up to date with developments in literacy.

Questions a Link Governor might ask:

1. Is English taught well here in all year groups?
2. How is pupil premium money being used to support pupils and is this having an impact?
3. How is the school developing a love of reading amongst all pupils?
4. What picture does the data paint of standards of English over the last 3 years?
5. How is appraisal being used to improve standards of English throughout the school?
6. How are support staff trained to support low attainers with their English skills?
7. What advice and guidance is provided for parents about how English is taught and how they might support their children at home?

Role of the Link Governor for – Maths

What does the Maths Link Governor do?

The list below is not exhaustive, but gives a general guide.

- Take a special interest in Maths across the school.
- Ensure that numeracy issues remain high on the school's agenda. (For example, is it given priority in the school's development plan?)
- Attend in-school training where possible
- Meet with the co-ordinator / head of subject to discuss their perceived strengths and areas for further development.
- Be involved in the school's attempts to inform and involve parents in their child's learning
- Ask about resourcing of Maths.
- Attend external training in order to keep up to date with developments in Maths.

Questions a Link Governor might ask:

1. What training is provided for new and existing staff to ensure that they are confident to deliver Maths effectively?
2. Is Maths taught well here in all year groups?
3. How is progress in maths tracked?
4. Does RAISE online identify any areas of concern relating to Maths?
5. How is pupil premium money being used to improve standards?
6. How are teaching resources being used to inspire pupils? (This might include Computing)
7. Let's go to the library / book corners and look at books about number.

Role of the Link Governor for Computing

What does the Computing Link Governor do?

The list below is not exhaustive, but gives a general guide.

Role of the link governor for – Computing

- Take a special interest in Computing across the school.
- Ensure that Computing issues remain high on the school's agenda.
- Attend in-school training where possible
- Meet with the co-ordinator / head of subject
- Be involved in the school's attempts to inform and involve parents in their child's learning
- Ask about resourcing of Computing and whether it is being used to improve learning.

Questions a Link Governor might ask:

1. How are staff being trained to get best use of Computing?
2. How is use of Computing across the school monitored and what does this show about good practice and areas for development ?
3. Does Computing really improve learning? How do you know?
4. How does Computing contribute to the school's main priorities (as in the school development plan)?
5. What plans are being made to improve Computing provision in the school and what resources will this require?
6. How rigorous are procedures to ensure that all children are safe when using the internet?
7. How are children from disadvantaged backgrounds being helped to develop their Computing skills? (This might include use of pupil premium money.)

Role of the Link Governor for – Personal Social & Health Education (PSHE)

What does the PSHE Link Governor do?

SRE – Sex & Relationships Education SEAL – Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning

The list below is not exhaustive, but gives a general guide.

- Take a special interest in PSHE across the school.
- Ensure that PSHE issues remain high on the school's agenda.
- Attend in-school training where possible.
- Meet with the PSHE co-ordinator.
- Be involved in the school's attempts to inform and involve parents in their child's learning.
- Ask about resourcing of PSHE. and the use of external speakers.
- Attend external training in order to keep up to date with developments in PSHE.

Questions a Link Governor might ask:

1. Is PSHE taught well in all year groups? (Ideally this should be a discrete subject not just intensive focus days.)

2. How is the school developing PSHE in conjunction with SRE(*) and SEAL(**)?

3. How does the school assess, record and report PSHE?

4. How is appraisal being used to improve standards of PSHE teaching throughout the school?

5. How are staff trained to deliver PSHE? (Especially sensitive issue such as the SRE elements.)

6. What advice and guidance is provided for parents about how PSHE is taught and how they might support their children at home?

(*) SRE – Sex & Relationships Education (**)SEAL – Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning

Role of the Link Governor for Religious Education (RE)

What does the RE Link Governor do?

Ensure that there is provision for

Religious Education in the Curriculum Collective worship through school assemblies Pupils and teachers to be exempted from such provision; and in accordance with legal requirements

Ensure that:

- the programme of religious education is undenominational
- the core syllabus for religious education as specified by the Department of Education, is taught in the school
- the school is accessible to pupils of all religious denominations for teaching in subjects other than religious education
- no pupils will be excluded directly or indirectly from the other advantages provided by the school
- pupils are partly or wholly excused from attendance at religious education if their parents make such a request
- there is no variation in payments from public funds in respect of a pupil because of his/her non-attendance at religious education
- Ministers of religion and other suitable persons, including teachers, to whom parents do not object, are given reasonable access at convenient times to pupils to provide religious education according to the tenets of a particular religious denomination or otherwise
- Ministers of religion and other suitable persons, including teachers, to whom parents do not object, are given reasonable access at convenient times to pupils to inspect and examine the religious education provided
- teachers who request part or whole exemption from teaching religious education, are granted it provided the request to the Board of Governors is made solely on the grounds of conscience
- teachers who are so exempted by the Board of Governors, are not paid at a lesser rate or deprived of, or disqualified from, promotion or any other advantage because of this exemption.

Role of the Link Governor for – Child Protection

Under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, governing bodies must ensure that they exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
Essentially this duty will require governing bodies to have appropriate child protection procedures in place.

Each school should have procedures for handling suspected cases of child abuse in accordance with local Area Child Protection Committees (ACPC) Procedures, including those to follow if a member of staff is accused. Schools should have a designated senior teacher with responsibility for child protection together with a nominated governor.

What does the Child Protection Link Governor do?

The list below is not exhaustive, but gives a general guide.

- Liaise with head teacher/designated teacher over child protection issues

- Have responsibility for the oversight of procedures relating to allegations made against the head teacher

- Ensures that all governors and staff know the name of the nominated governor

- Ensures that Governor Services has been informed of the name of the nominated governor

- Knows who the designated teacher is and whether they have attended appropriate training

- Ensures that the local authority officer responsible has been notified of the name of the designated teacher

- Discusses with the Chair that there is an annual item on the governing body agenda regarding for example:

- changes to child protection policy and procedures (the policy should be reviewed annually)

- curriculum issues around child protection (such as safe environment, protective behaviours, personal safety, bullying, racial awareness, sex and drugs education)

- training undertaken by designated teacher, other staff and governors

- the number of incidents/cases

- reporting regularly to the governing body, making recommendations where appropriate, either via a governors' committee or to full governing body meetings.

Ensures the school has a child protection policy and procedures in place that all staff are in line with local ACPC policy

The school has a bullying and anti-racism policy in place

All staff and parents are familiar with the child protection policy and bullying and anti-racist policies

All staff working within the school receive induction to child protection procedures and training appropriate to their role and responsibilities

The school provides a safe school environment by having regard to school security and appropriate security checks on all staff and volunteers

All staff are aware of the indicators of possible abuse

All staff are familiar with the referral process and who is the designated teacher

All staff keep accurate records

Role of the Link Governor for – Attendance

What does the Attendance Link Governor do?

The list below is not exhaustive, but gives a general guide.

- Promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Understand, promote and review the attendance and behaviour policy to ensure it is understood by all, reviewed regularly, consulted on and disseminated
- Ensure the school has a clear policy on attendance and promote it within the school community
- Work with key personnel at school to set, maintain and review attendance targets at different levels (e.g. by pupil or year group)
- Attend termly attendance meetings with Head teacher. EWO. ACE team and report attendance issues and data to the governing body
- Work with and support all staff with any attendance issues that arise
- Ensure clear systems are in place to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are off site
- Ensure and review the procedures for collecting, analysing attendance data frequently (e.g. weekly) to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Understand and use data to help devise solutions to improve attendance and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Work with student council and pupils to establish causes for absence and “fun” ways to address them.
- Ensure the Governing body is aware of the attendance levels and the level of persistent absence in school
- Ensure Governors are familiar with their schools agreed attendance target and should monitor the progress the school is making towards it

Questions an Attendance Link Governor might ask:

Poor behaviour and attendance may be linked to personal challenges that pupils may be facing or, in some cases, influences from outside the school. Governors should be aware of any impact these may have for individuals/families or groups of pupils and of how to look at how these could be addressed.

1. What is your school’s attendance target?

2. What is the overall level of attendance?

3. Does the school have an Attendance Policy and when was it updated?

4. What is the level of persistent absence (children with attendance of 85% and below)?

5. How many persistently absent (PA) pupils are there?

6. Who are the PA piles i.e. SEN, CIC, (LAC) Behavioural needs?

7. What resources are in place to support them and how frequently are they monitored?

8. What strategies / interventions does your school use to improve attendance?

9. How is the impact of these interventions measures and how often are they reviewed?

10. Are all staff aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance in school and is there a senior member of staff allocated to attendance?

General Questions for Classroom visits

- What have you been learning about in ***** this term? What did you find out about ….? What does (…) mean?
- What's the best / most interesting topic you've looked at this year?
- What do you like about *****?
- Show me the best piece of work you've done in this subject this year. Explain to me about it.
- How are you going to put that information down in your book?
- What new work have you learnt in ***** recently?
- Why do we need to learn *****?
- How can you check your answer?
- Tell me what you did in your last lesson in this subject? What did you find out?
- How are you going to write that down?
- How are you going to set your work out?
- Why do we need to know about ….?
- What is the hardest problem you've tackled in ***** this term? What made it so hard?
- Can you show me anything you have done in ***** earlier this year?
- Have you done any visits away from school to do with *****? Tell me about them.
- What do you remember most about the ***** you have done so far this year?
- What ***** have you learnt recently?
- Why is it good to do *****?

Subject Specific Questions for Classroom visits

Join one of these other tables. Start with 'what do we have to do on our table'? to check whether children understand what they have to do and can explain it.

Some subject examples of things to talk about:

English:

What's the best poetry you've read this year? What do you like about poetry? What can a poem do that a story cannot? Show me the best story you've written so far this year. Explain to me how you put it together, and where you got your ideas from. How do you learn spellings? What writing have you done recently, other than stories? How do you do that kind of writing?

Maths:

What new work have you learnt in maths recently? Why do we need to learn that kind of maths? How will you tackle that problem? Is there any other way you could do it? How can you check your answer? What investigations have you been doing in maths? Talk me through that, step by step.

Science:

Why do we need to set that experiment up like that? How will you be recording the information you collect? What do you think will happen when ….? Why do you say that? Why do we need to know about ….? Why does this (plant) do well in that kind of environment?

Design & Technology

What is the hardest design problem you have tackled this term? What made it so hard? If we say something is well designed, what do we mean? If you were starting that again, would you do anything differently? How could you make it better?

Computing

What new programs or operations have you learnt how to do on the computer this term? Can you think of any examples where you have used computers to make your work easier or better in subjects?

History:

What resources did you use for your work on the Romans / Vikings / the Victorians … this term. What interested you most about life in those times? What did you learn about the lives of people who lived then? Would that have been a good time to be alive? Why (not)?

Geography

Which localities have you been looking at recently? What is special about them? What is the most interesting place you have studied? How has it changed over the years? Have you done any field work visits in geography?

Governors' monitoring of non-curriculum aspects of school life

The environment –

- What is the school like to work in?
- Is this a good place to work and play?
- What are the good points?
- Is the school clean, tidy and safe?
- Is it attractive?
- What can be improved?
- How much of the budget should be put to improvements?

The relationships and climate –

- Does the ethos of the school live up to the aims and objectives that governors have for the school?
- Examples of where they think it does, and where they think it doesn't.

Behaviour –

- Does this match what are policy says?
- When children behave well, are they recognised, encouraged and rewarded?
- When they misbehave, or disrespect other children or adults, are they clear about how they can make amends and how they should behave?
- Are those who misbehave dealt with fairly?
- Are children clear about what is expected of them?
- Do they know the school's expectations and routines?

Governors can gather evidence on planned visits to lessons, assemblies, the play areas and grounds, the dinner hall.