

Governing board: overview

Date: 2023-24

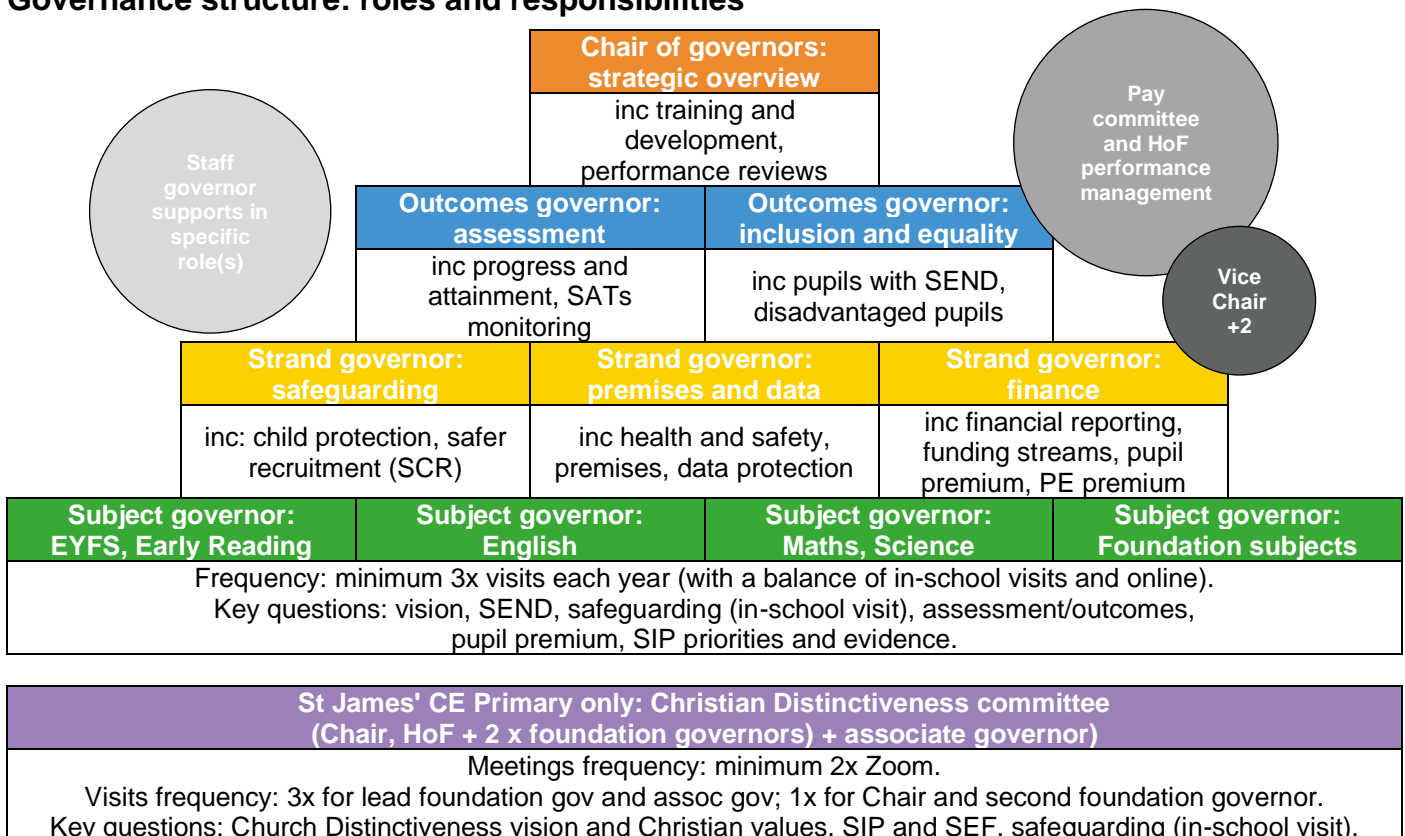
Three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Key features of effective governance:

- **Strategic leadership** that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.
- **Accountability** that drives up educational standards and financial performance.
- **People** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
- **Structures** that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- **Compliance** with statutory and contractual requirements.
- **Evaluation** to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

Governance structure: roles and responsibilities



Governance: 6x half-termly meetings

The general nature of the meetings varies:

Half-term 1:

A key purpose of this meeting is to preview what is coming up, to make sure that individual governors are clear on expectations in terms of monitoring/evaluating (who, where, when, why...).

The agenda items should be quicker to go through, and therefore this meeting has more capacity for additional agenda items.

Half-term 2:

A key purpose of this meeting is for governors to feed back to others, and to challenge school leaders, on the monitoring/evaluating they have carried out since Half-term 1.

Governor visit reports should have been completed and available to all so other governors come prepared to ask questions.

Policies and procedures

Key: **Autumn 1**, **Autumn 2**, **Spring 1**, **Spring 2**, **Summer 1**, **Summer 2**

Annual:	
Establish understanding of the three core functions of governors	...and make it clear what is not a role eg evaluation
Admission arrangements (GB, LA)	confirmation that we follow LA procedure
Single central record of recruitment and vetting checks (live) (G, GB, HT)	Safeguarding Governor ensures checks take place and report back to GB regarding checks in place
Child protection policy and procedures (GB)	sign off in principle; working party deep dives into aspects of safeguarding (inc implementation and practice eg educational visits, online...) and report for Autumn 2)
Allegations of abuse against staff (G, GB, HT)	included in Child protection policy and procedures
Register of admission, attendance (live) (G, GB, HT)	confirmation that GB delegates responsibility to HoF
Register of business interests of headteachers and governors (live)	finalised by Governance Advisor
Instrument of government (GB)	confirmation
Financial procedures	confirmation (including authority levels)
Finance update	written or in-person brief narrative
School complaints (G, GB, HT)	Chair and/or Co-Vice Chair reviews for Autumn 1 meeting
Safeguarding training	all governors complete The Key training at the start of each new term, plus read KCSiE before Autumn 2
SIP	priorities; strand governors pursue monitoring
Pupil outcomes review	headlines; Outcomes Governors deep dive into data
HoF performance management: agree external advisor	confirmation of external advisor
Teachers' pay (GB, LA)	Pay Comm reviews model policy; review teachers' perf mgt
Safeguarding deep dive	working party deep dives into aspects of safeguarding
Pupil premium	review by Outcomes governors
PE premium	review by Foundation subjects governors
SEF: St James' CE Primary	
Optional tour of host school	HoS 20 mins prior to each FGB
Remind of three core functions of governors	...and make it clear what is not a role eg evaluation
Special educational needs and disability (GB): information report (and policy: full review in Cycle A)	Outcomes governors review, ready to report in Spring 1
Equality Policy & Accessibility (Accessibility plan (G, GB, HT); Equality information and objectives (G, GB, HT))	review Equality Data (appendix) every year; deep dive by working party of full document in Cycle A
Finance update	written or in-person brief narrative
Charging and remissions (G, GB, HT)	Finance Governor to review for Spring 1 meeting
HoF performance management: mid-year review	at least some members of committee: Chair, AG, RC, NK
SATs visits	agree visits to each school during KS2 SATs week
Information published on website (live) (G, GB, HT) (check)	audit to be received from a selected governor – allocated in Spring 1; template from HoF
SEF: Moortown Primary SEF	
Spring 2 presentation from selected Sphere leader(s)	confirmed at Spring 1 meeting
Optional tour of host school	HoS 20 mins prior to each FGB
Schools Financial Value Standard	Finance Governor
Remind of three core functions of governors	...and make it clear what is not a role eg evaluation
Health and safety (employer)	H&S Governor reviews and confirms we follow LA procedure
Budget (review and signing off)	confirmation; Sphere Resources Leader
Extended services cluster and memorandum	Inclusion and Equality Governor and Chair
Summer 2 presentation from selected Sphere leaders	confirm at Summer 1 meeting
SEF: Scholes (Elmet) Primary	
Optional tour of host school	HoS 20 mins prior to each FGB
HoF performance management: final year review	committee (Chair, AG, RC, NK) plus advisor
Biennial: Cycle A	
Premises management documents (G, GB, HT)	Premises governor
Data protection (G, GB, HT)	Premises governor
Protection of biometric information of children (GB)	Premises governor
Relationships education (primary) (G, GB, HT)	Strand governor
Capability of staff (G, GB)	confirmation or model policy from LA
Staff discipline, conduct and grievance (GB)	confirm LA model policy; Chair and Vice-Chairs review Code of Conduct
First aid in schools (employer)	confirmation of PG504
Biennial: Cycle B	
Behaviour principles written statement (GB)	working party
Governors' allowances (G, GB, HT)	Full GB
EYFS (GB can delegate)	EYFS Governor
Behaviour in schools (HT can delegate)	HoF; working party checks principles are applied
School exclusion (G, GB, HT)	working party reviews Positive Relationships Policy
Pupils with medical conditions (GB can delegate)	full GB
Children with health needs who can't attend (GB)	full GB
Early career teachers (GB)	confirmation

Governing board: Code of conduct

Date: July 2022

The Governing Body accepts the following principles and procedures:

General

1. I will have responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the schools operate.
2. I recognise that the Head of Federation is responsible for the implementation of policy and internal organisation and management of the schools, and the implementation and operation of the curriculum.
3. I accept that all governors have equal status, and although appointed by different groups (ie parents, staff, Diocese), that every governor's role is to govern the schools in the best interest of pupils, and not to represent the interests of the constituency from which they were elected or appointed.
4. I have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Governing Body has given me delegated authority to do so.
5. I have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as I have responsibility for staff, I will fulfil all the legal expectations as, or on behalf of, the employer.
6. I will encourage open government and shall be seen to be doing so.
7. I will consider carefully how our decisions may affect other schools.
8. The following details for each governor and associate member will be published on the school websites:
 - name
 - category of governor
 - which body appointed them
 - date of appointment
 - term of office
 - date when stepped down (where applicable)
 - names of committees the governor serves on
 - details of any responsibility eg chair or vice chair
 - summary of relevant business and pecuniary interests (as recorded in the register of interests)
 - attendance record at Governing Body and committee meetings over the last academic year

Commitment

All governors are expected to:

- Attend all six of the Governing Body meetings per academic year, subject to extenuating circumstances. Where governors are unable to attend, they must provide notice in advance to the Chair and Governance Professional and reasons for non-attendance.
- Undertake at least three monitoring visits per academic year (with at least two in person visits per academic year). Governors must liaise with both the Chair and the Head of Federation/Head of School (as relevant) before arranging. Governors must ensure that they plan and prepare for visits so that leadership time is used effectively. Monitoring forms must be completed within two weeks of each visit each visit.
- Undertake at least three hours of governor training per academic year, with support from the Chair, Head of Federation, and Governance Professional.
- Register for articles with The Key and keep updated with developments in education, with support from the Chair, Head of Federation and Governance Professional.

1. I acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
2. I will involve myself actively in the work of the Governing Body, attend Governing Body meetings as frequently as possible; I accept that failure to attend at least one meeting every six months may, at the discretion of the Chair and Head of Federation, lead to the termination of my position as governor.
3. I accept my fair share of responsibilities, including membership of committees or working groups.
4. I will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve myself in school activities.
5. Every member of the Governing Body will actively contribute relevant skills and experience

6. I uphold an ethos of professionalism and have high expectations of the governors' role, including an expectation that I undertake whatever training or development activity is need to fill any gaps in the skills I have to contribute to effective governance. If I fail persistently to do this I will be in breach of the code of conduct and may bring the Governing Body or the office of a governor into disrepute – and as such provide grounds for the Governing Body to consider suspension.

Relationships

1. I will strive to work as a team.
2. I will seek to develop effective working relationships with our Head of Federation, staff, parents, the Local Authority, and other relevant agencies (including the Diocesan Authorities where appropriate), and the community.
3. I acknowledge the Governing Body structures and relationships, and will respect the schemes of delegation.

Confidentiality

1. I will observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the Governing Body in meetings and from my visits to school as governors.
2. I will observe complete confidentiality when required or asked to do so by the Governing Body, especially regarding matters concerning individual staff or students.
3. I will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the Governing Body.

Conduct

1. I will encourage the open expression of views at meetings, but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Body or its delegated agents.
2. I will only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Body when I have been specifically authorised to do so.
3. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school I will follow the procedures established by the Governing Body.
4. My visits to school will be undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Body, in agreement with school leaders and staff.
5. In discharging my duties, I will always be mindful of my responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of my school; this includes interaction on social media which should be sensitive and respectful, and in line with the schools' ethos, principles and policies.

Suspension

1. If the need arises to use the sanction of suspending a governor, I will do so by following legal requirements so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

Removal

1. I recognise that removing a governor from office is a last resort, and that it is the appointing bodies which have the power to remove those they appoint.
2. If the need arises to use the sanction of removing a governor or removing the Chair, I will do so by following legal requirements so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

Name of governor:	
Signature:	Date:

Governing board: Diversity indicators form (optional)

Date:

Completion of this form is on a **voluntary basis**. If you prefer not to complete the form but are willing to share information about the characteristics, experiences and background you bring to the governing board, then you can do so by having a confidential conversation with the Chair.

The information you provide will be handled in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation and the data protection responsibilities of the school/trust.

Purpose

A diversity of thought, voices and perspectives is essential to good governance and the effective running of any organisation. This form is designed to gather information for the purpose of diversity monitoring. A strategic approach to diversifying the governing board is both setting an example and demonstrating the board's commitment to achieving diversity and equality at all levels of Sphere Federation.

The purpose of diversity monitoring is not to promote token diversity – no formula is being applied to determine a representative governing board. Members of the governing board are not recruited solely on the basis of their protected characteristics or lived experience.

Use

Your board's responses will be evaluated at an appropriate level (by the chair, Head of Federation and/or governance professional). A high-level summary of responses will be used for discussion, including proposed action eg:

- targeted recruitment to address gaps in experience and diversity
- developing and adapting board practices to ensure full participation
- prioritising training and awareness-raising in identified areas
- addressing potential 'blind spots' through seeking wider advice and perspectives on current and upcoming opportunities, challenges and risks

The chair, Head of Federation and/or governance professional takes into account confidentiality and sensitivity to individual circumstances.

Rationale

The questions asked are based on two broad areas:

- protected characteristics
- personal experiences

In relation to the latter, these questions help us to be aware of a diversity of experience; reasons for this include:

- to be aware of the range of parental experience and take into account any deficit of experience when considering the impact of (current and future) policy and decision making on family life
- to be aware of the different routes its membership took through education and therefore help avoid 'groupthink' or confirmation bias in policy and decision-making
- gaining insight from the experience of looked-after and previously looked-after children will help us to meet responsibilities and hold our schools to account
- gaining insight from those with lived experience of how being in receipt of free school meals impacts on someone's experience of school and the support they require

Additional detail

If you wish to provide additional detail to specific responses or to the issues of diversity and context of Sphere Federation, please do so here or on a separate sheet:

Circle your responses.

1. What is your sex?

female

male

prefer not to say

2. What is your age group?

18 - 40

41 - 61

61 or over

prefer not to say

3. Do you have a disability?

I have a disability and **require additional support** and/or adjustments in order to fully participate as a member of the governing board.

I have a disability but **do not require additional support** and/or adjustments in order to fully participate as a member of the governing board.

I do not have a disability.

prefer not to say

4. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

bisexual

gay or lesbian

straight / heterosexual

other

prefer not to say

5. What is your ethnic group?

Asian or Asian British

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Indian

Pakistani

other – please detail:

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

African background (detail below)

Caribbean

other – please detail:

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

White and Asian

White and Black African

White and Black Caribbean

other – please detail:

White

English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Irish

Roma

other – please detail:

Other ethnic group

Arab

other – please detail

prefer not to say

6. What is your religion?

Buddhist

Christian*

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

Sikh

no religion

other – please detail

prefer not to say

* including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations

7. Approximately, how close do you live to a Sphere Federation school?

up to 2 miles

2-5 miles

5-10 miles

10+ miles

prefer not to say

8. What is your experience of school as a parent or carer?

I am a parent/carer of a child(ren) currently of school age.

I am a parent/carer of a child(ren) who have completed their education.

I am not a parent or carer.

prefer not to say

9. Which type of school did you attend between the ages of 11 and 16?

state

independent

outside of UK

other – please detail

prefer not to say

10. What is your experience of the care system?

I was looked after/in the care of the local authority during all or some of my period of school education.

I was not looked after/in the care of the local authority.

prefer not to say

11. Did you continue your education after leaving school?

further education (sixth form/college)

higher education (university)

apprenticeship route

did not continue my education

other

prefer not to say

12. Were you eligible for free school meals at any point during your education?

yes

no

don't know

not applicable

prefer not to say

Governing board: Register of governors' business and personal interests

Date:

The governing body is required by regulations made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to establish a register which lists, for each member of the governing body and the Head of Federation, any business or personal interests they or any member of their immediate family have which **could conflict with the schools' interests**; to keep the register up to date with notification of changes and through annual review of entries, and to make the register available for inspection by governors, staff, parents and the Directors of Education and Finance or their representative.

For register purposes a close relative is defined as a spouse, parent, sibling, son, daughter or partner. **As a general principle, governors should err on the side of caution** and declare interests that they think could be covered by the guidance above. Such a declaration must be made as soon as a governor becomes aware of the possibility of any such conflict arising or indeed that may be perceived / construed as arising. A good test is for the governor to ask himself / herself whether others would think that the interest is of a kind to make this possible. If the governor thinks this is so or is in doubt then the information should be recorded on the register of interests. Assistance can be sought from the Governor Professional in the first instance if any clarification is required.

Please note all governors should sign and return this form even if they have no interests to declare.

Please ensure this form is returned to the school for retention.

1. **Involvement in companies:** Includes, for example, directorships and company secretary, employee, or any other position where a person or their close relative is actively involved in the running of a company's affairs, where the company has, or may have, a contractual relationship with the school. (Governors must declare any financial interests which could conflict with the school's interests, e.g. work for which a fee is received)

Details (including company / position):

2. **Other personal interests:** Governors must declare any non-financial interests that they consider conflict with the school's interests, for example, if they are involved in an official capacity with an outside organisation which has dealings with the school or if a close relative works or applies for a post in the school or if a governor has links to other educational institutions (e.g. governor elsewhere).

Details:

3. **Shares or other securities:** The holding of shares or other securities in a company or other body with whom the school contracts or is considering contracting, should be declared if the holding exceeds £25,000 or more than 1/100th of the nominal value of the issued share capital, whichever is less. **The size and nature of the holding need not be declared, simply the name of the company.** This requirement does not extend to banks or building societies.

Details:

4. The intention to bid for the purchase of land or property owned by the council or school

Details:

Name of governor:

Signature:

Date:

Governing board: Visits

Date: July 2022

Visits provide an opportunity to develop a good awareness and understanding to help governors in their strategic role as well as to develop teamwork with school staff. Visits help provide an understanding of the way in which the school operates to embed its ethos and achieve its aims. Visits allow governors to support the school through informed decision making.

All governors must undertake at least three monitoring visits per academic year (with at least two in person visits per academic year).

Visits may be virtual visits by Zoom if the purpose of the call is to gather information. Other visits may require an in-person visit to one of the Sphere Federation schools. An in-person visit provides opportunities to check safeguarding procedures are followed, to observe whether children and staff members are happy, and potentially to review books and/ or observe lessons.

What a visit is not

- a form of inspection - governors should not make judgements about individual staff members
- a chance to check on the progress of own children – it is recommended that governors do not visit classes in which they have children/family members
- an opportunity for a governor to pursue a personal agenda – governors are visiting on behalf of the governing body
- a lengthy process which monopolises school/teacher time

The benefits of visits to school

To governors:

- recognise and celebrate success
- develop relationships with staff
- get to know the children
- understand the environment in which teachers teach
- monitor policies in action
- find out what resources are needed and prioritise them
- deepen understanding and increase confidence and knowledge
- inform decision-making

To teachers:

- ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- get to know governors
- understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- highlight the need for particular resources

Before the visit, governors will:

- agree the date of the visit in advance with the Head of School
- clarify the purpose of the visit and how this links to priorities in the School Improvement Plan and agree an agenda with the Head of School; visits should help inform the strategic role of the governing body
- undertake any pre-reading required, such as reviewing related policy documents or guidance material

During the visit, governors will:

- remember the visit is being made on behalf of the governing body and not make any judgements or promises
- be punctual, courteous and considerate at all times respecting the professional roles in school
- follow safeguarding procedures for visitors
- respect confidentiality at all times

After the visit, governors will:

- consider if the purpose of the visit has been achieved and determine any follow up activity that would be useful
- complete the *School Visit Notes* form (below) as a record of the visit and contribute feedback to the governing body or committees; this form should be sent to the school leader (with whom the governor met during the visit), the Head of Federation, and the Chair

Governing board: notes from visits

Date: 2022-23

Name:	Governor role:	
School(s):	Date:	
Purpose of visit <i>(please indicate below)</i>	Arranging and planning a visit <i>(please indicate below)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Observe range of attitudes, behaviour, achievements <input type="checkbox"/> Understand views and values of staff and/or pupils <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate the resources and the environment <input type="checkbox"/> Gain information to assist policy-making and decision-taking <input type="checkbox"/> Governors are known and demonstrate commitment to the school <input type="checkbox"/> Observe the operation of policies <input type="checkbox"/> Give active support to the activities of the school <input type="checkbox"/> Be aware of changes and different approaches to teaching and learning <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate being a critical friend of the school <input type="checkbox"/> Holding school to account, evaluating its progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree a date and time with the headteacher <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify what you will do (time of arrival, departure; who you will see; focus of your visit) <input type="checkbox"/> Remember that you are representing the governing body, and are a guest of the school; governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school buildings <input type="checkbox"/> Remember to respect the professionalism of the teachers and to respect the children <input type="checkbox"/> Be supportive of the headteacher and all staff <input type="checkbox"/> You may wish to make a full report of your visit for the GB; share your observations with the headteacher first	
Key priorities for visit <i>(please indicate below)</i>	TLC points <i>(link governors)</i>	Safeguarding <i>(essential)</i>
Core functions, listed in DfE's Governance Handbook (2017): <input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction <input type="checkbox"/> Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff <input type="checkbox"/> Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent	<input type="checkbox"/> SEND and pupil premium <input type="checkbox"/> EYFS <input type="checkbox"/> SIP priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Bottom 20%: closing the gap <input type="checkbox"/> Any other comments:	<input type="checkbox"/> Signed in correctly <input type="checkbox"/> Good behaviour observed <input type="checkbox"/> Safe physical environment <input type="checkbox"/> Any other comments:
Thoughts in advance of your visit <i>(optional; consider the points above, so that you're clear what to explore)</i>		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 50px;"></div>		
Summary of activity <i>What did you do? What did you see? (eg lesson, meeting) Who did you talk to?</i>		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px;"></div>		
Strengths? <i>eg achievements of the children</i>	Areas to develop? <i>eg learning environment</i>	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px;"></div>	
What do you want to find out more about? <i>eg any clarification needed, concerns to be raised</i>		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px;"></div>		
Who did you share the observations of this visit with? What will happen next? <i>eg headteacher, GB chair</i>		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px;"></div>		
St James' only: Comment on the Christian vision in practice. <i>eg what you saw / heard – and what impact?</i>		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px;"></div>		

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2022.09.23 Gov JR Finance Sphere or 2022.09.23 Gov SB Safeguarding St James'

Governing board: notes from visits

Date: 2023-24

Name:				Governor role:			
School(s):				Date:			
Governor role							
<p>Dos: Question the actions in the school improvement: Are actions up to date? How successful were the actions? How do the actions fit in with our vision and our priorities? Evaluate the evaluations: How do leaders judge the provision? How do they know? How confident are they? (You might want to refer to Ofsted grade descriptors – see a SEF) Check the checks: What monitoring have leaders carried out? Why did they do it? What were the conclusions? What are the next steps? Summary: Ask questions such as Why...? How do you know...? How do you judge the provision? What are your next steps? What is your response to...?</p>				<p>Core functions, listed in DfE's Governance Handbook (2017): Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.</p>			
Please consider...							
SIP priority 1: Sustaining at least good teaching	SIP priority 2: Adaptive teaching	SIP priority 3: Engaging parents with learning	SIP strand priority	SIP strand priority	Early career teachers: how are they being supported?	Safeguarding: refer to KCSiE 2023	St James' CE Primary: Christian distinctiveness
Preparation eg What questions will you ask?							
					Safeguarding:		
Summary of activity eg What did you do? What did you see? Who did you talk to?							
					Safeguarding:		
What do you want to find out more about? eg Is there anything I want to check or challenge (eg with HoF)?							
					Safeguarding:		
Evaluative summary eg How confident are you about the strategic direction and supporting actions? How confident are you about the leader's judgements about provision and outcomes?							
					Safeguarding:		
St James' only: Comment on Christian distinctiveness eg What did you see / hear, and what was the impact?							
					Safeguarding:		

Please save this document using this format: *date Gov initials subject school*
2022.09.23 Gov JR Finance Sphere or 2022.09.23 Gov SB Safeguarding St James'