



St John's
Church of England
Academy

Part of the



Academy Councillor Visits Policy
Sept 2025 – July 2026

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Statement of Intent

This policy outlines St. John's CE Academy's commitment to implementing efficient procedures for monitoring visits conducted by Academy Councillors. Each Academy Councillor is required to conduct a minimum of one visit per academic year, contributing to the strategic role in school management by participating in the assessment and enhancement of practices.

Academy Councillor visits are used to gain an understanding of the school's practices and procedures, providing opportunities for dialogue with both students and teachers. These visits also facilitate the identification of resource requirements and offer insights into the practical implementation of the School Development Plan.

These visits enable staff to learn more about Academy Councillors, offer a chance to highlight any issues or questions they wish to raise, and provide an opportunity for reflection and discussion on current practices.

Academy councillors are required to:

- Demonstrate respect towards school staff and pupils.
- Provide support to the Headteacher.
- Recognise their role as representatives of the entire Academy Council.

Adhering to the established principles and procedures ensures that the visits by Academy Councillors are both enjoyable and purposeful, making a substantial contribution to school improvement.

Legal Framework

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](#)

Roles and Responsibilities

Academy councillors will be responsible for:

- Meeting their target of one visit per academic year.
- Understanding the needs of staff members through discussions with at least one staff member per academic year.
- Reporting their observations to the full Academy Council at a relevant meeting.
- Familiarising themselves with this policy.

The Headteacher will be responsible for:

- Facilitating Academy Councillor visits.
- Discussing completed visits with Academy Councillors, prior to a report being made to the full Academy Council.

Academy Councillors are linked to particular subjects or other aspects of school. These are as follows:

Subject/Aspect of School	2025 - 2026
Safeguarding, including Online Safety	Sacha Harris
SEND and EDIJ	David Watson
Religious Education	Valerie Cadd
English and Early Reading	All Academy Councillors
Mathematics	Valerie Cadd
Early Years	Rev. Emma Harte
Health and Safety	David Watson
Science	Christine Large
History and Geography	Alison Grange
PSHE including Mental Health and Wellbeing	TBC (Parent Governor)
Design & Technology and Art	Alison Grange
Modern Foreign Languages	Valerie Cadd
Physical Education	Tasmin Ferris
Music	Christine Large
Computing	Christine Large
Collective Worship	Rev. Emma Harte
Sustainability	Sacha Harris

Annual Schedule

Where possible, Academy Councillors should visit during the following terms. Where a visit has to be rescheduled, it must be discussed and agreed by the Chair of the Local Academy Council and Headteacher:

Term	Priority	Academy Councillor
Autumn 1	Single Central Record	Sasha Harris
Autumn 2	Health and Safety	David Watson
	History and Geography	Alison Grange
	DT and Art	Alison Grange
	Safeguarding	Sasha Harris
Spring 1	Single Central Record	Sasha Harris
	Religious Education	Valerie Cadd
	English	All Available
	Mathematics	Valerie Cadd
Spring 2	Collective Worship	Rev. Emma Harte
	SEND and EDIJ	David Watson
	Modern Foreign Languages	Valerie Cadd
	Physical Education	Tasmin Ferris
Summer 1	Collective Worship	Rev. Emma Harte
	Single Central Record	Sasha Harris
	Music	Christine Large
	Early Years	Rev. Emma Harte
Summer 2	Sustainability	Sasha Harris
	Science	Christine Large
	Computing	Christine Large
	PSHE, Personal Development	TBC (Parent Governor)
	Collective Worship	Rev. Emma Harte

Expected Conduct

Preparing for a Visit

Academy councillors are expected to arrange visits with at least two weeks' notice. This arrangement should be made with the Headteacher and the member of staff they are planning to meet. Academy councillors will remain flexible and understand that the school prioritises pupils' education. Operational matters may sometimes lead to visits being rearranged at short notice.

Before a visit, Academy Councillors 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 Academy Councillors' 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 Behaviour Policy, and prepare relevant questions, where appropriate.

During a Visit

During a visit, academy councillors 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 a visit involves 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 confidentiality agreements.
- Adhere to the agreed times and purpose.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the pupils and the wider school community.
- Avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present.

During a visit, academy councillors will not:

- Make judgements concerning teaching or other areas of school provision in any official capacity.
- Pursue personal agendas during visits.
- Check on individual children or monopolise the time of staff.

After a Visit

After a visit, Academy Councillors 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.
- Provide feedback regarding the visit to the full academy council.

After a visit, Academy Councillors will not:

- Break confidentiality agreements.

Providing Feedback

A time will be agreed between the academy councillor and staff, at the staff member's convenience, to discuss what was observed during the visit. During the discussion, academy councillors will adhere to the following framework:

- Ask staff for their views on what happened during the visit.
- Present academy councillors' observations.
- Provide positive feedback.
- Raise any issues.
- Ask further questions.
- Thank staff for the opportunity.

By the end of the discussion, both the academy councillor and the staff member(s) will be clear as to what information will be shared with the Headteacher and the full academy council.

The Academy Councillors' Visit Proforma will be completed as soon as possible after the visit.

The Headteacher and academy councillors will discuss the observations prior to the distribution of the proforma. A copy of the completed proforma will be provided to:

- The Headteacher.
- The subject lead.
- Other relevant staff members.
- The clerk to the academy council.

A copy of the report will be circulated to all academy councillors at the next appropriate academy council meeting.

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

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and the Chair of the Academy Council.

When reviewing the success of the policy, the Headteacher and Chair will consider the following:

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

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all Academy Councillors, staff members and relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date is October 2026.

Local Academy Council Monitoring Proforma

Area		Academy Councillor	
Date		Staff Member	

Context

Brief details about who was at the meeting

Focus of the visit e.g. school development plan priority area
Key questions to ask (to be agreed/shared with the subject lead in advance)
Answers/information shared
Evidence to support answers/information shared
Key learning outcomes
Next steps and additional questions

Suggested Questions for a Subject Lead Focus

- Tell me about your curriculum intent.
- How is this intent implemented throughout the school?
- What is the impact of the implementation?
- How much time each week is devoted to your subject? Do you think it is enough?
- What measures are in place to make sure all pupils can participate fully in your subject?
- How is the curriculum structured to ensure previous knowledge/ skills are built upon?
- How do you ensure the children know more and are remembering more?
- How do you know the children are at the expected standard at the end of a unit?
- How do you ensure the bottom 20% are catered for?
- How are we supporting children who aren't on track? Is this support working? How do you know?
- Is the delivery of your subject consistent throughout school? If not, where are the areas for development?
- How do you support staff with the delivery of your subject?
- What will your subject look like in the future? What are you doing to ensure this happens?

Suggested Questions for SEND Focus

- What percentage of the pupils at St. John's are currently on the SEND Register and how does this compare to national averages?
- Can you give me a breakdown of the categories and numbers of children in each?
- What resources are used to support children with SEND?
- Can you show me these resources in action and the impact that they have?
- What percentage of the pupils at St. John's currently have an EHC Plan and how does this compare to national averages?
- How is this money being spent to ensure children are appropriately supported?
- What actions are taken to support those children who have poor mental health?
- How much time per week are you currently given to carry out your SEND duties and is this enough?

Suggested Questions for Safeguarding Focus

- Does the school have a safeguarding policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with Local Authority guidance?
- Is the Governing Body aware of its role and responsibilities under the new OFSTED inspection framework?
- Does the school operate safer recruitment procedures and are all appropriate checks carried out on new staff and volunteers who will work with children?
- Is there a senior member of the school's leadership team designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with safeguarding issues?
- How are child protection/safeguarding issues monitored?
- Are all staff aware of the procedure that needs to be followed when they have concerns about child protection?
- Does the school have procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers?
- Does the designated person undertake specified safeguarding training?
- Does the Governing Body set clear priorities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and explicitly state these in key policy documents?
- Does the Governing Body review its policies and procedures annually and does it complete the annual self-assessment provided by the Local Authority?
- Does the school run online-safety awareness training for staff, governors, pupils and parents?
- What filtering and monitoring systems does the school have in place to ensure users are safe when online?

Filtering and Monitoring

- Who is responsible for filtering and monitoring and what are their specific roles? What specific training have they received?
- How often do you check filtering and monitoring? How do you do this? Can you show me the log?
- When was the last time you reviewed your filtering and monitoring? What was the outcome?
- What is the policy on the use of personal mobile phones?
- How do staff know how to report a concern?
- Is filtering and monitoring included on the Risk Register?
- Has the school conducted a full review of our online safety provision? When? What were the findings?

For further questions, advice and guidance on Governors' role with regards to Filtering and Monitoring, follow this link:

<https://d1xsi6mgo67kia.cloudfront.net/uploads/2023/07/Questions-for-Governors-and-Trustees.pdf>

EXAMPLE Local Academy Council Monitoring Proforma

Area	Design and Technology	Academy Councillor	Alison Grange
Date	09.01.2024	Staff Member	Marco Ramsay

Context

Academy Councillor, Alison Grange met with DT Subject Lead, Marco Ramsay to discuss DT at St. John's. DT was last monitored by Support and Challenge Partner, Andy Jones on 03.11.2022. The DT Subject Lead has recently left St. John's and Mr Ramsay is currently leading the subject whilst new staff are settling in. The subject will be led by a teacher from September 2024.

Focus of the visit e.g. school development plan priority area

Knowledge Retention: Children will connect new knowledge with what they have learned previously, building a solid base for future learning.

Key questions to ask

Tell me about your curriculum intent.
 How is the curriculum structured to ensure previous knowledge/skills are built upon?
 How do you ensure the children know more and are remembering more?
 How are we supporting children who aren't on track? Is this support working? How do you know?
 Is the delivery of your subject consistent throughout school? If not, where are the areas for development?
 How do you support staff with the delivery of your subject?

Answers/information shared

We want our children to excel in school and beyond, fostering skills for success in our ever-changing world. Our Design and Technology program encourages creative problem-solving, teamwork, and bold thinking, contributing to a curriculum that nurtures creativity and innovation – this is elaborated on, on the school website DT curriculum page. Substantive concept and knowledge maps have recently been developed to show explicitly what prior knowledge and experiences the children have had. Teachers are to refer to these when introducing new knowledge. Children are assessed at the start of each lessons with quick recall/recap questions. Those who cannot answer questions have key concepts reinforced. End point assessments take place at the end of a unit of work to check who has met age-related expectations. This information is used when planning the next unit of work in the sequence. Adults are deployed to support those who are falling behind.

Evidence to support answers/information shared

Curriculum intent displayed on the school website.
 A sample of substantive concept/knowledge maps were seen. Links to prior learning is explicit. These links were also referred to during a lesson visit.
 Evidence of recall/recap questions were evident during a lesson visit.
 A sample of End Point assessment documents were seen.
 During a Y4 lesson visit in which children were designing samosas, the teacher asked about prior learning and children were able recall what they had learnt in Y3 about dips and dippers in relation to a balanced diet.

Key learning outcomes

The progression of Design and technology from Early Years to Year 6 and how the substantive concepts build upon prior knowledge.
 Strategies that children use to recall information from previous lessons.
 The amount of curriculum time given to Design and technology each term – This is often taught in blocks due to the nature of the activities (processes that cannot be achieved by assigning 1 hour per week).

Next steps/additional questions and response

What are the next steps for DT? Mr Ramsay wishes to strengthen links with St. Aidan's Secondary School, arranging children in upper Key Stage 2 to visit for some DT sessions. Mr Ramsay also plans to make links careers explicit in the planning.