



Governor Visits policy

APPROVED BY:	Board of Governors
APPROVED BY SIGNATURE (Chair):	
DATE APPROVED:	February 7th 2024
REVIEW CYCLE:	Bi-annually
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	February 2026

Introduction

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. Through visits, governors will have the opportunity to observe policies and plans being implemented on a day-to-day basis, and their findings should help the whole governing body make well-informed judgements about progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the School Development Plan. It may not though be possible for every governor to be available during the day – this will depend on personal and work commitments. However, **all** governors should do **some** visits; the frequency and type of visit will vary according to availability and role.

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Development Plan and cover a wide range of areas. Each visit should be agreed beforehand and have a clear purpose. In the first instance Governors should arrange these visits with the Headteacher who has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school.

Benefits

To governors:

- Recognise and celebrate success
- Develop relationships with staff
- Get to know the children
- Recognise different teaching styles
- 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
- Allow governors to fulfil their core strategic functions

To staff:

- 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

What a visit is not:

- A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise of the teacher

- Checking on progress of own children
- Pursuing personal agenda
- Monopolising school/teacher time

Roles and responsibilities of governors, Headteacher and other staff

The governing body will, with the help of the Headteacher and staff, organise an annual schedule of school visits throughout the year. The aim will be to achieve a minimum of one visit per governor per year. Visits may be conducted in pairs if the terms of reference allow. The Headteacher will guide the governing body on the areas of the curriculum, policies and school improvement plan priorities and targets to be covered each term. Individual governors or pairs of governors will, with the guidance of the whole governing body, identify an aspect of the school's work to focus on in order deepen their understanding.

Monitoring and review of governors' school visit policy

This policy should be monitored and reviewed annually.

- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits we identified?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make our practice even better?

Preparing for a visit

- Check the agreed protocol for governors' visits
- Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the School Development Plan? What are the relevant school Policies? How does this determine the activities I am interested in?
- Discuss an agenda with the Headteacher, and or subject leader/co-ordinator well in advance. Make sure that the date chosen is suitable
- Use the governor school visits pro forma (Appendix 1)
- Send the proposed agenda to the staff involved. Ask how they want governors to integrate into the lesson or learning walk? It might be possible for you to see a copy of any documents beforehand. Discuss with the member of staff if any supporting information is available
- Be clear beforehand exactly what you are looking for. Try to prepare questions and submit to staff in advance

During the Visit

- Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the governing body, **it is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on behalf of the governing body.**
- Be punctual, courteous and considerate at all times, respecting the professional roles of the Headteacher and staff
- Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the class will be

- Get involved with the children
- Remember it is a visit not an inspection
- Observe discretely
- Don't distract the teacher during the lesson but be prepared to talk and show interest
- Interact, don't interrupt
- Listen to staff and pupils

Teachers and support staff will at all times be courteous and considerate, recognising the contribution made by the governing body to the school. They may make practical suggestions on the focus for governors' visits so as to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This will include specifying the evidence that could be shared with governors.

After the visit

- Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how?
- Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved
- Thank the teacher for supporting you in your role as a governor. Be open, honest, positive
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind and share the report with the lead member of staff you have visited first for agreement that it is a true reflection of the visit
- Reflect: how did that go? Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learnt more about the school? Have I gained more confidence in helping the governing body fulfil its duties?
- Complete the governor visit form (Appendix 1) with what you learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. This will be easier if the visit had a focus.
- Send a copy of the agreed report to the Headteacher and Clerk

Visit Focus

Although not an exhaustive list visits may focus on:

- Particular subjects, key stages or classes
- The use made of the building or the site
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Special Educational Needs
- Specific subjects, eg Maths, PSHE
- The use of ICT equipment
- The impact on the school of any changes
- Impact of specific targets identified in the School Development Plan
- Impact of Staff Development Training

Informal Visits

Visits may also take place in an informal capacity. It is vital that everyone is clear about the capacity in which they are visiting and not to confuse the role. Informal visits may include:

- Chair making a regular visit to the Headteacher
- Volunteering at school events/trips/in the class
- Obtaining information from the office relating to meetings
- As a parent to speak to a teacher in relation to your own child

Appendix A

Record of a delegated governor's visit to the school - Formal

NAME:	DATE:
DELEGATED GOVERNOR ROLE:	
Focus of visit, links with the School Improvement Plan. <i>(How does the visit relate to a priority in the School Improvement Plan?)</i>	
Areas and summary of planned activities. Including departments or areas of school visited, staff and pupils that the governor met during the visit <i>(Previously agreed by the Board of Governors with the Headteacher)</i> <i>(Governors should refer to staff by their role or job title and not by name)</i>	
Observations, comments, questions asked and answers reported to the governor <i>(e.g. what you saw; questions asked with answers and what you learned relating to the focus of the visit; how long the visit lasted)</i>	

Aspects I would like clarified and 3 key questions I would like to raise

1.

2.

3.

Actions for the Board of Governors to consider

(e.g. the way resources are allocated; the way the school communicates; progress in implementing a key policy)

Signed: (Governor)

Meeting to be considered at: