



## Governor's visits to school policy

Signed:  **Headteacher**

 **Chair of Governors**

**Date: April 22      Review Date: April 25**

Every governing body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors are also held to account for their school's performance. "The contribution of governors to the school's performance is evaluated as part of the judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management"

In making the judgement on Leadership and management in School, inspectors will consider:

- The leaders' and governors' vision and ambition for the school and how these are communicated to staff, parents and pupils
- Whether leaders and governors have created a culture of high expectations, aspirations and scholastic excellence in which the highest achievement in academic and vocational work is recognised as vitally important Inspectors will consider whether governors:
- Work effectively with leaders to communicate the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school and develop a culture of ambition.
- Provide a balance of challenge and support to leaders, understanding the strengths and areas requiring improvement at the school

One of the best and most effective ways in which a governing body can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and pupils and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms. If school visits are done well they will add to governor's understanding of their school, its staff and pupils.

There is no "one size fits all". Governing bodies have a variety of ways of gathering first hand evidence to inform their work with the school. Some schools have link governors who are allocated subjects, classes or year groups as a way of monitoring the curriculum. Others organise focused "groups" or "working parties" (eg curriculum and standards / Behaviour and wellbeing) as this gives them more flexibility around the focus of the visit and around who is identified to carry out particular activities.

A number of governors may have specific responsibilities, for example maths, health & safety or special needs. Quite often this is linked to the school's main priorities identified in the School Development Plan.

Developing the role of link governor allows the governing body to focus in more depth on particular areas of school life, for example

- The management of the school's resources
- The condition of the building and its use
- The development of teaching and support staff
- A specific area or a particular group of children

By visiting the school and becoming better informed, governors will be:

- More aware of the needs of the school
- More able to approach staff to meet those needs
- In a good position to support the school within the community.

### What are the benefits to governors and staff?

Governors	Staff
To establish and develop effective relationships with staff	To get to know and build positive relationships with governors
To have a greater understanding of pupil's needs	To feel valued
To recognise and celebrate success	To highlight the need for further resources
To monitor the implementation of the school development plan	To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom and school
To demonstrate progress against actions in the development plan	To share an understanding of a specific area
To increase knowledge of the school which will inform strategic decisions	To have an opportunity to demonstrate and / or explain practice
To understand the environment in which staff work	
To find out what resources are used, what resources are needed and prioritise them	
To see policies and schemes of work in practice	
To show support and encouragement to staff and pupils	
To demonstrate that the governing body is contributing to the school's self evaluation process	
To demonstrate that the school is working in partnership with governors	
To develop individual governor's roles in terms of their specific responsibilities	

### What are governor visits NOT about?

Governors should be aware that visits to the classroom are not a form of Inspection. It is not the remit of governors to make judgements about the professional expertise of staff or the quality of teaching and learning.

A school visit is also **NOT** about:

- Checking on the progress of your own or known children
- Monopolising staff time
- Arriving with inflexible or preconceived ideas
- Pursuing personal agendas or issues

### How often should link governors make visits?

A rolling programme of visits will be arranged, with link governors visiting at least termly. These visits might include a variety of approaches to information gathering.

### Who schedules the visit?

The headteacher will schedule this alongside the Governing body

### Visit preparation

An important part of the visit preparation is to establish the “ground rules” There is some suggested guidance attached to this policy. Agreeing protocols will save time.

What should and shouldn't happen

Always	Never
Review action points in the school development plan	Turn up unannounced for a focused, formal visit
Agree the purpose of the visit with the Head teacher	Expect to go into school without prior arrangement and recommended minimum notice of one week
Arrange details of the visit	Visit during unsuitable times such as first weeks for new starters, or other such inappropriate times
Try to visit at different times of day over the year	Monopolise staff
Discuss with the head teacher the focus for the visit and the nature of the link governor involvement	Interrupt the staff whilst working with the children
Agree level of confidentiality	Behave like an Inspector!
Report to the school office to sign in	Leave without a word of thanks and without giving feedback
Fulfil the purpose of the visit	Walk in with a clip board and take copious notes
Observe school/ class guidelines	
Jot down discussion points	
Thank the member(s) of staff and pupils	
Discuss your visit experience as soon as possible after the visit	

Feedback appropriately to the Head teacher	
Discuss Health & safety issues if relevant	
Complete the visit form and give a copy to the Head teacher / copy to lead link governor	

**Before visiting there are some questions you should clarify with the Head teacher or teacher**

- When I come into school, where would you like me to sit / stand?
- What should I do if pupils ask for help?
- Would you like me to be involved in the session?
- What should I do if I see a pupil behaving inappropriately?

**Focus of the visit can be**

- to see the school generally
- to attend a meeting with adults and pupils or a specific classroom visit
- to assess the condition and maintenance of the premises/ use made of buildings and premises
- to look at security on site / monitoring of health and safety
- to evaluate school systems – eg group times
- to look at the use and condition of resources / environment and use of displays
- to evaluate the deployment of support staff / specific intervention programs
- to see a class or teacher lead group
- to attend a performance or special event
- to join a class or year group on an educational visit
- to attend a training courses delivered at the school
- to attend a parent open evening – e.g. be available to talk with parents and carers / gather views and promote the work of the school
- to observe particular curriculum areas or areas of provision
- to gain an understanding of the process of assessment and tracking pupil cohorts and their attainment

**Remember that as a governor you are visiting on behalf of the governing body and not in a personal capacity. It is not appropriate to make either judgements or promises on behalf of the governing body.**

Any expression of concern should be shared with the Head teacher / SMT as soon as possible

Oral and written feedback should be given to:

The member of staff involved

The Head teacher

The appropriate committee or lead link governor

It would be best if written feedback could be completed with the member of staff present or at least sent to the member of staff to be checked for accuracy.

## **Monitoring and evaluation of the governing Body's policy**

### **Governors should review this policy annually.**

The review should consider:

- Are we doing what we set out to do? Are we achieving the benefits outlined in the policy?
- Have I learned more about the School?
- Are we better informed and able to make good decisions?
- Do staff feel affirmed and valued as a result of increased governor involvement?
- Have I helped the governing body fulfil its' duties? Is it helping us to review School development priorities?
- How can we make the policy and practice even better?
- Do we know why the governor is visiting?
- Have I made a formal appointment with the Head teacher / SMT?
- Do we know what the governor is expecting to see?
- Do I know the specific purpose of the visit?
- Is the focus for the visit also a focus in our School Development plan?
- Have I arranged my time so that I can be sure to be punctual?
- Have we drawn up a timetable for the visit?
- Have I thought about how I will approach the teacher in the classroom or the subject lead?
- Do individual members of staff know when they are going to be visited?
- Have I thought about what I will actually do while I am in the school?
- Have other key members of staff been informed?
- How will I give feedback to staff, Head teacher and Governing Body?
- Is the appropriate documentation ready and available?
- Have I remembered that what I see or hear or might find out is confidential and not for sharing with other Governors or parents in general?
- How can I build on this for the next visit?
- How did I address any difficulties I met?



# Governor's visit Form

Name:

Governor responsibility:

Date:

Areas of school / staff visited:

Purpose of visit:

Link with School  
Development Plan /  
School self- evaluation

Brief notes

Any key issues arising for the governing Body?

Comments from link teacher

Signed: Governor

Signed HT

