

Policy/Document: Governor Visits and Links



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Governor Visits

*“The governing body should plan **visits** (whether to experience learning first-hand or to interact with leaders and other staff) to cover a wide range of the school’s work and each visit should have a clear purpose. They do not replace professional inspection, or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the Headteacher.”*

A Guide to the Law for School Governors (September 2008)

Governors visit their school to enhance their understanding of the school's work and to help fulfil their responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating the school's priorities as set out in the School Development Plan (SDP), and the specific interests of the particular department/area.

At the first Full Governing Body meeting of the academic year, link governors and their area of responsibility should be agreed. This will then be published to staff. Ideally each link governor should make a *minimum* of one class visit in each academic year, in addition to a discussion with a senior member of staff during the first term before visiting.

Governors will not make any personal judgements about pupils' work or behaviour; any teacher's classroom practice or issues relating to the day to day running of the school. Governors should not pursue any personal agendas or arrive with inflexible preconceived ideas. This is not in any way an “inspection”, but a method for Governors to familiarise themselves with the school and its work.

There is no such thing as an ‘informal *GB visit*’- if governors are in school for non-governance reasons (e.g. as a parent) that is, of course, fine, *but if you are wearing your GB hat and the outcomes may constitute part of the ‘holding the school to account’ agenda’ (HtStA), it is formal.*

Attendance at school events is essentially in the role of a visitor, so you may be supporting the school or possibly representing the governing body e.g. at Parents Evenings, so this is not HtStA.

A file will be kept by the Clerk of visit reports.

PROTOCOLS FOR VISITS – Subject Leadership

Before a visit the governors should:

- contact the member of staff to arrange a suitable date to meet; this should be informed by the SDP and not randomly decided
- notify the school office and the Headteacher/Deputy Head of a planned link visit.

During the visit governors should:

- report to reception upon arrival and follow the procedure for visitors, including safeguarding procedures.

After the visit governors should:

- prepare a report and share this with the subject leader, Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. Should there be any concerns following a visit they will be discussed with the Headteacher.
- the report will be filed in the office, emailed to the Chair of the relevant committee and copied to all governors for consideration at FGB.

Suggested Focus for the meeting:

- Pupil progress and attainment.
- Curriculum subject priorities as set out in the school's action plan.
- The relationship between the curriculum lead's action plan and the School Development Plan.
- Any curriculum / Assessment changes.
- Any particular problems and how these are being addressed.
- New resources that are making a difference and work well.
- New resources which would be helpful to have to improve learning and raise standards.
- Collaborative planning.
- Differentiation.
- Homework and impact on learning.

These could be discussion points, rather than rigid questions.

PROCEDURE FOR A CLASS VISIT:

Attending Lessons:

Prior to attending a lesson or part of a lesson (learning walks):

- SLT will share the agreed focus of the visit with relevant staff and liaise with those class teachers involved. *It is strongly recommended that all visits should be with an accompanying leader to enhance the 'holding to account' function.*
- Teachers/leaders will inform governors about the aims/learning outcome of the lesson.
- Governors will inform the office of the details so as to avoid any confusion about the visit.

Protocol during lesson visits/learning walks:

- Governors should arrive punctually so that learning is not disrupted.
- Teachers/accompanying leader will introduce the governor to pupils.
- Governors will stay seated while teachers are explicitly teaching.
- Governors should note some of the key features of the lesson, such as:
 - what the pupils are learning
 - how learning developed
 - pupil engagement
 - links to the SDP or subject action plan
 - what children thought about their learning
 - learning tailored to individual needs
 - resources used
- When the pupils are working, governors may wish to move around the room and speak to pupils, as appropriate. Take your cue from the leader accompanying you.
- At the end of the lesson governors should thank the children and the teacher for their hospitality.
- There should be no discussion of the lesson with the accompanying leader *while in the lesson: save this for afterwards.*

After the visit governors should:

- The governor should produce a brief report *on an agreed template* to be shared with the teacher, Headteacher, Deputy Head SLT and the Governing Body.

VISITS BY GOVERNORS IN THEIR CAPACITY AS LINK FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY, MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS, RISK MANAGEMENT AND OTHER AREAS NOT DIRECTLY LINKED TO THE CURRICULUM.

- Visits should be agreed with the Headteacher/appropriate line manager in advance
- The office should be notified of the date and time of the proposed visit
- Following the visit, a report should be prepared, agreed with the line manager and lodged with the Clerk to be shared with the FGB.