

# *LANGDON*

## *PRIMARY SCHOOL*

### **Governor Visit Policy**

***Reviewed Autumn 2023***

***Agreed by the Governing Body 5.12.23***

***Due for review Autumn 2025***

## **GOVERNOR VISIT POLICY**

The governing board provides strategic leadership and accountability in schools. It has three key functions:

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

Governors draw on a range of evidence in order to carry out these functions and one source of information is their own visits to their school.

The role of the governor is largely strategic, not operational, and includes ensuring vision is being turned into reality, ethos is being embedded and progress is being made against the strategic plan.

Although visiting the school is not a statutory obligation for members of the Governing Body, it can be the best way to learn how the school functions. It is also a way to keep under review how the school operates in order to increase the governing body's first-hand knowledge which will in turn inform strategic decision making.

This protocol applies to school visits made for the purpose of governance and not to visits to the school site that individual may make in other capacities e.g. as parents or members of staff.

The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should relate to the priorities determined by the School Improvement Plan. Governors should arrange their visits with the Headteacher.

There are many potential benefits from governing body visits to school. For example, to governors:

- To better understand their school's strengths and areas for development
- Monitoring the effectiveness of policies in practice
- Identifying how resources are used and finding out what additional resources are needed
- Developing good working relationships with the staff and the pupils
- Understanding the demands of the role and the environment in which teachers and support staff work in order to inform awareness of staff well-being
- Understanding how well the school is doing in relation to previous performance, other schools and national expectations
- Informing decision making
- Determining how well purchased resources are used and whether they offer value for money
- Recognition and celebration of successes

to:

- Ensuring governors understand the reality of the classroom and their role in the school
- Building a good working relationship with governors
- Understanding better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- Having an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- Highlighting the need for particular resources

All governor visits to school will have a clear pre-arranged focus which have been agreed by the full Governing Board. Monitoring visits should focus on:

- Strategic priorities and key policies agreed by the Governing Board
- The evaluation of progress, questioning whether the things that people saying are happening, are actually happening
- Seeking assurance that the needs of pupils are being met, including safeguarding and the needs of vulnerable groups including those with SEND

They must be arranged with adequate notice through the Head Teacher and agreed with the relevant members of staff that they will liaise with. All visits must be of value to the governing board and this value must be demonstrable to outside agencies e.g. Ofsted or the LA.

It is not the role of those governing to form judgements about the performance of school staff during visits and individuals will make every effort to avoid this impression. Governors should also ensure that they do not use their visit to pursue personal agendas, for example, checking on the progress of their own children. All visits that have been arranged with the Head Teacher should be confirmed via email to the Clerk to the Governing Board as soon as possible for the purposes of ensuring that records of visits are collated and stored.

### **Protocols or ground rules for visits**

Members of the Governing Body must arrange visits in advance with the Head Teacher. Visits to classrooms can be carried out by Governors on their own but at times they might undertake joint visits with other governors, class teachers or the Head Teacher. Governors should avoid visits clashing with important events or busy periods in the school timetable and be mindful of the workload implications for staff who are likely to be involved in the visits.

Governors visiting the school will comply with the school's codes of conduct for staff and visitors and with the standards of presentation expected of staff. They will be mindful that they are representing the whole Governing Board through their words and actions.

Governors are encouraged to prepare for their visit. This may include familiarising themselves with the protocol for visits and the expected conduct as detailed in the school's policy for visitors; reading any policies that include information relevant to the focus of the visit or safety and safeguarding instructions and referring to background information relating to the focus of the visit such as the school improvement plan or performance data.

During the visit governors are encouraged to adopt a friendly approach that puts everyone at ease. They should be respectful of the school and staff, ask questions closely linked to the purpose of their visit and share any notes taken for the purpose of feedback with staff and the Head Teacher.

Governors should take the opportunity during the visit or soon afterwards to discuss the visit with the Head Teacher. Any concerns that have arisen during the visit, including issues for improvement or child protection, safety and well being must be communicated immediately with the Head Teacher. Feedback must be robust and honest in order that the Head Teacher is able to make informed decisions about school improvement and pupil and staff safety.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality should be adhered to regarding visits. Comments should be limited to the Head Teacher or teacher with whom the visit was arranged but not with other staff or with parents. Individual children or staff members (other than the member of staff involved with the visit) should not be personally identified in school visit reports.

### **Annual programme of visits**

Governors are welcome to visit the school informally for a number of reasons, such as:

- Lending a helping hand with a school event
- Getting information from the office relating to a committee meeting
- Helping in a class
- Speaking to a teacher in relation to their own child
- Attending a school function or educational visit
- Visiting in relation to their position, such as, the local priest or councillor

More formally, there is an expectation that they will undertake observations and discuss aspects of school life with teachers, parents and students at least three times per year.

In addition, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body will visit the Head Teacher during the year in order to discuss aspects of school improvement, management and well being.

### **Visit Focus**

Formal visits to school will focus on aspects of the School Improvement Plan which influence pupil progress. Although not an exhaustive list visits may focus on:

- Individual subjects, year groups or key stages
- Use of the building and site
- Condition and maintenance of the premises
- Additional educational needs
- Literacy and numeracy
- Religious Education
- Lunchtimes and breaktimes
- Use and condition of resources
- Health and safety of the school site
- Deployment of staff
- Impact on the school of any significant changes

- Vulnerable groups

**After the visit**

Thank the staff for their time and for letting you visit. Feed back to the Head Teacher rather than to individual staff, ensuring that you maintain a strategic overview and do not address operational issues. Any areas of concern should be shared with the Head Teacher as soon as possible.

As soon as possible following a visit to school, and within one working week, Governors are required to complete a record of visit feedback sheet (Appendix 1). A draft of this will be shared with the Head Teacher and any other members of staff involved in the visit prior to distribution and, when agreed, a final version will be included in the papers for discussion in the next Governing Board meeting.

## **Appendix 1**



### **Governor's Monitoring Visit Record Sheet**

<b>Governors:</b>	
<b>Met with:</b> <i>Governors should refer to staff by their role or job title and not by name)</i>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Focus of visit, links to School Development Plan:</b> (How does the visit relate to a priority in the School Development Plan?)	
<b>Areas and summary of planned activities including areas of school visited.</b> (Previously agreed with the Headteacher.)	
<b>Observations, comments , questions asked and answers reported to the governor</b> (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)	
<b>Aspects I would like clarified and key questions I would like to raise</b>	
<b>Actions for the governing board to consider</b> (e.g. the way resources are allocated; the way the school communicates; progress in implementing a key policy)	
<b>Meeting to be considered at:</b>	
<b>Action following governing board meeting and discussion with Headteacher:</b>	
<b>Impact of governor monitoring</b>	

**Signed (Governor):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed (Head Teacher):** \_\_\_\_\_



**Governor's Monitoring Visit – Follow Up Sheet**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Date of original Monitoring Visit:</b>	
<b>Objective of original visit:</b>	
<b>Governor Action Points – follow up actions:</b>	

**Signed (Governor):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed (Head Teacher):** \_\_\_\_\_