



## Governor Monitoring Visits to School Protocol & Guidance Notes

Policy Status	Other
Governing Body Approval	11 07 2018
Ownership	FGB
Date for Review	31 07 2021

## **Purpose of this guidance document**

Governor monitoring can take several forms including pupil interviews, meeting with subject leaders, walking around the school, work scrutiny and evaluation of data, attending a school external trip or entering lessons. The purpose of this document is to ensure that governors who intend to enter the school environment for any such visit have clear protocols to guide them. These protocols pay regard to the professional role that teachers and teaching assistants undertake.

## **The Law**

The law states that individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish. However, in order to develop their understanding of the school, there is an expectation that governors will need to be able to visit from time to time. These visits enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school, increasing the governing body's first-hand knowledge and helping to inform their strategic decision making.

The law states that governors should arrange their visits with the Headteacher, who has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school. While visits to the school by governors can be useful and informative, they do not replace professional inspection or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the Headteacher.

The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should have a clear purpose. Visits should generally relate to the schools' improvement priorities.

## **Annual programme of visits**

A programme of governor visits should be planned and spread evenly across the school year in consultation with the head teacher and the appropriate member of staff who is responsible for the area being monitored/visited. It is planned to complete at least 9 governor visits across the year and should include a mixture of pupil interviews, meeting with subject leaders, walking around the school, work scrutiny and evaluation of data, attending a school external trip or entering lessons.

The head teacher should make sure that no individual teacher or teaching assistant is overburdened with observation, ensuring that the number of visits is reasonable and agreed in advance.

## **Purposes of governor visits**

Visits may take place in a formal or informal capacity. It is vital that everyone is clear about the capacity in which they are visiting and not to confuse the role. There may be occasions when governors visit the school but they are not acting in their formal governor role. Examples include

- To provide support at a school event
- To help in a class
- To speak to a teacher in relation to their own child 🏠 Attend a school function

The overriding purpose of a formal governor visit is to gather evidence. Where visits by governors are undertaken, the outcomes should be used for whole school evaluation purposes but must not be used to make judgements about the competence of individual teachers/ teaching assistants.

While notes may be taken about the specific agreed focus, there should be normally no written notes about an individual teacher or teaching assistant taken during a short visit to a classroom during a visit. The written record of the visit should share generalised observations and outcomes around the agreed focus. No individual member of staff should be identifiable in the written record of the visit.

On completion of a visit governors are asked to complete a visit monitoring form. These can be found as appendices to these guidance notes as follows:

### **Appendix A: Classroom Visit Monitoring Form.**

### **Appendix B: Visit Monitoring Form for a Learning Walk, Work Scrutiny, Evaluation of Data, pupil/teacher discussion.**

### **Appendix C: Governor External Trip Monitoring Form.**

## **What governor visits are ...**

- To recognise and celebrate success
- To develop relationships with the staff
- To get to know the children
- To recognise different teaching styles
- To understand the environment in which teachers teach
- To monitor policies in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them
- To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion

## **Monitoring and review of school's governor visit programme**

The school's governor visit programme should be monitored and reviewed annually. Governors should review

- whether the visits are achieving the potential benefits they anticipated
- whether there have been any unexpected benefits
- the ways in which the practice can be further improved

### **Preparing for a governor visit**

Governors should

- Check the agreed school policy / protocol for governors' visits 📄 Clarify the purpose of the visit.
- Discuss an agenda with the head teacher and or subject co-ordinator well in advance.
- Make sure that the date and time chosen is suitable.
- Send the proposed agenda to the staff involved. Ask how they would like governors to participate during the visit.
- Discuss with the subject co-ordinator if any supporting information is available – Ofsted report, improvement plan, performance data for the governor to read before the visit 📄 Be clear beforehand exactly what you are looking for.
- Prepare any specific questions and submit to staff in advance.

### **During the classroom visit**

Governors should

- Remember they are making the visit on behalf of the governing body
- Be punctual
- Keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible.
- Decide with the teacher how they will be introduced to the class and what their role in the classroom will be.
- Get involved with the children
- Remember it is a visit not an inspection.
- Observe discretely.
- Avoid distracting the teacher during the lesson from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest.
- Be courteous and friendly 📄 Be prepared to interact.
- Not lose sight of the purpose of your visit.
- Listen to staff and pupils.

### **After the governor classroom visit**

Governors should

- Discuss what they have observed with the teacher or subject co-ordinator 📄 Clarify any issue they are unclear about.
- Consider together whether the purpose of the visit has been achieved.
- Thank the teacher for supporting them in their role as a governor.
- Be open, honest and positive.
- Make notes as soon as possible after the observation while it is still fresh in the mind.
- Submit their report (see Appendices A, B & C) to the head teacher and any staff involved in the visit to check for accuracy and clarity, being prepared to amend it if necessary
- Reflect on how and whether the visit has helped the governing body fulfil its duties
- Forward their agreed report to the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors and Clerk to the Governing Body for review at the next appropriate Q&S committee/governing body meeting.

APPENDIX A.

## Governor Monitoring Visit

Date of Visit ..... .....	Name of Governor  Please tick which of the following you are focusing on .....
<input type="checkbox"/> FS/KS1 Lessons	<input type="checkbox"/> KS2 Lessons
<input type="checkbox"/> Assembly	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch Break
	What did you see to evidence these statements?
<p><b><u>Values and Attitudes</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do adults and children treat each other with respect, courtesy &amp; fairness?</li> <li>• Do they have good attitudes to learning and behaviour?</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Routines and Conduct</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are routines secure for children?</li> <li>• Are they calm, orderly and considerate when moving around the school?</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Safety and Appearance</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do pupils care for the school facilities and school environment?</li> <li>• Do they assess risk appropriately and make sensible choices?</li> <li>• Is the standard of uniform good?</li> </ul>	

<p><b><u>Children's Voice</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the children listened to by adults and each other?</li> <li>• Are there plenty of opportunities for them to give their opinions?</li> <li>• Are their opinions respected?</li> <li>• Is there evidence of mutual support and collaboration? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they respect other people's similarities and differences?</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Children's View</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When talking to children do they show enjoyment, enthusiasm and confidence about school? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they feel safe at school?</li> <li>• Do they know who to go to if they have a problem?</li> </ul>	
<p>Add any comments relating to particular issues seen or record any good practice to share with Governing Body/School:</p>	

Original to Headteacher

**APPENDIX B.**

**Governor Visit**

Date of Visit ..... Name of Governor .....
School Improvement Plan focus .....

<p><b>Nature of Activity</b> e.g. learning walk, work scrutiny, evaluation of data:                  pupil/teacher interview/discussion                  .....</p>	
<p>What evidence is there that SLT are on track with this aspect of the SDP?</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.</p>
<p>What evidence is there of impact on teaching?                  E.g. plans/routines</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.</p>

<p>Does performance data / children's work show impact of actions?</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.</p>
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Original to Head teacher

Copy to Chair Q&S/Chair/Clerk

**APPENDIX C.**

**Governor Visit – School Trips**

Date of Visit .....	Name of Governor .....
Class .....	Key Stage .....
Name of Visit .....	

<p><b>Nature and focus of the Visit</b> .....</p> <p>.....</p>	
<p>Organisation – including due attention to Health and Safety</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Behaviour and engagement of the children	..... ..... .....
Impact of the visit, is it enthusing, challenging and exciting children?	..... ..... .....
Any other comments?	..... .....

Original to Head teacher

Copy to Chair Q&S/Chair/Clerk