



GOVERNORS' VISITS TO SCHOOL POLICY

Introduction

Governing Bodies have a statutory duty to promote high standards of educational achievement at their school, monitor performance and develop an understanding of how well the school is doing. One way in which governors can acquire up to date knowledge is to make periodic visits to the school, in addition to attending governors meetings and school functions.

Governors should arrange their visits with the headteacher. The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should have a clear purpose.

Purpose of the visit

Visits are undertaken:

- To enable Governors to be better informed at Governors' meetings and to be able to contribute first hand knowledge.
- To gain better understanding of particular areas of the curriculum
- To understand more about the deployment of the school resources
- To be better informed about the implementation of the school's policies
- To get to know the staff better
- To talk to the staff and pupils about their experiences in school
- To be able to demonstrate that the Governing Body of school take their responsibilities seriously

Governors are not there as inspectors and are not to make any judgements about pupil's work, behaviour, any teacher's classroom practice or issues relating to the day to day running of the school, that is the responsibility of the headteacher. Governors should not pursue any personal agendas or arrive with inflexible preconceived ideas.

(See Appendix 1 for ideas of what to look for).

Planning the visit

- ✓ Arrange a date and time for the visit
- ✓ Agree the purpose / focus of the visit with the headteacher
- ✓ Agree the length of the visit
- ✓ Ask if there is any information that should be read prior to the visit

On the day of the visit and during the visit

- Arrive on time and ensure you have signed in at reception and collected a visitor's badge.
- Take informal notes if it will help you prepare your report /feedback for other governors.
- When visiting classrooms be aware that teachers are working and lengthy discussions are not possible when teaching. Arrangements can be made to discuss the visit afterwards.

- Governors should always be mindful to be supportive to teaching staff and pupils. Some teachers may feel nervous or stressful about having a visitor in the classroom.
- After the visit thank the member of staff and the children.
- At the end of the visit meet with the headteacher and discuss your visit.
- Prepare your feedback / report. **(See Appendix 2)**
- Email your feedback / report to the headteacher who will arrange for it to be circulated to governors at the next governing body meeting.

A brief written report using the agreed proforma serves better than an oral report in that it helps clarify the issues for discussion or suggestions for further action. However as a written report, like other papers from the governing body, it is open to public inspection, it should avoid naming individuals. The report must be emailed to the headteacher in time for distribution with the agenda.

Procedures in the event of a concern

Where concerns exist, it is vital that they are discussed immediately with the headteacher.

It is our intention that this policy should support the development of a good working relationship with the governing body and staff, so that we all work together on planning how best to support the aims and objectives of the school. A good reputation is very hard to gain and very easy to lose. As a governor you are part of the team aiming to build this good reputation. It can be extremely damaging if concerns are expressed to the community.

Related documentation

Appendix 1 - ideas for visits

Appendix 2 - Report / feedback proforma

Appendix 3 - Protocol for governor visits

This policy was originally agreed and ratified by the Governing Body in: November 2017

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Date of next review: February 2020

APPENDIX 1

What can governors observe on a visit?

External Appearance

- Are the school grounds tidy, attractive and well maintained?
- What is the general state of external decoration?
- Is the school entrance welcoming?
- Are there adequate signs directing you to the reception?

The school in general

- Is the reception area well maintained?
- Is there an adequate visitor signing-in procedure?
- Are there lots of examples of children's work displayed?
- What is the overall atmosphere in school?
- What sort of a general welcome did you receive?
- What is the general state of the internal decoration?
- Are there any obvious examples of community links?
- What is the general standard of pupil dress and behaviour in school?
- How effective are communications, within and outside the school, with parents, governors, community and interest groups?
- How is success and behaviour measured and rewarded in the school?

The classroom

- Are pupils busy and active within the classroom?
- Are pupils interested in their topic?
- How is the classroom resourced?
- Are there any areas where resources could be improved with extra finance?
- Were you welcomed into the classroom?
- Is there plenty of pupils work displayed?
- What is the standard of the displayed work?
- What is communication like in the classroom?

**Plaistow Primary School
(Appendix 2)**

GOVERNOR VISIT REPORT

Name:	Date:
Focus of visit	Classes/staff visited
Summary of activities e.g. talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch, etc.	
What have I learned as a result of my visit?	Positive comments about the visit
Aspects I would like clarified/questions that I have:	
Ideas for future visits:	
Any other comments:	

Thank you for making the visit - please email a copy of your completed form to the headteacher janine.st.pierre@plaistow.newham.sch.uk

Appendix 3
Protocol for visiting governors

	ALWAYS	NEVER
B E F O R E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the purpose of the visit • Agree how much time for the visit • Agree when you will discuss the visit with the headteacher • Consider practicalities (dress, parking, time of arrival, who to report to etc) 	Turn up unannounced
D U R I N G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself to staff and pupils • Observe the school rules and/or routines • Note and praise the positive • Ask questions to increase understanding • Remain focused on the purpose of the visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause any disruption or interrupt the normal running of the school or class • Arrive with preconceived ideas • Make professional judgements about staff expertise (governors are not inspectors) • Pursue your own personal agenda/ focus on the progress of your own child. • Monopolise the children's or staff time
A F T E R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the staff & pupils • Discuss the visit with the headteacher • Respect the rules of confidentiality at all times • Compile a report / feedback using agreed framework • Raise concerns sensitively with the headteacher • Email your report / feedback to the headteacher 	Leave without a word

The Role of Link Governors

- Link Governors have no additional powers or responsibilities than any other Governor.
- Governing Bodies have link Governors to be better informed about key areas within the school.
- This allows the link governor to develop a better understanding of the work being undertaken and share this with the rest of the governing body.
- It shows others who look at the governing body that we are serious about our role and that we do not just rely on what we are presented with at the governing body meetings.

Link Governors will need to meet with the relevant member of staff each term for about an hour, this can be arranged at a mutually convenient time.

Link Governors should prepare a short written report that can be presented at the next full meeting or sub-committee meeting.