



Dream Believe Achieve

GOVERNOR VISITS TO SCHOOL POLICY

Review of this Policy: This policy will be reviewed biannually by the Governing Board
Revised: September 2020
Review date: September 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

- This policy was agreed in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, the Governing Body and the staff of the school.

2. BACKGROUND (see Annex A)

- The Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum.
- Governors are also held to account for their own school performance. Ofsted assumes that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.
- One of the ways in which a governor can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and children and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms.
- Visits will be undertaken as part of a strategic programme to assist the Governing Body in fulfilling its statutory duties, its role in monitoring and evaluation and to improve its understanding of the school to ensure informed decision making.

3. AIMS OF THE POLICY

- The policy aims to ensure: -
 - That governors are fully conversant with their duties in relation to school visits;
 - That teachers fully understand the purpose of governor visits;
 - That all involved understand how these visits fit into the statutory and strategic purpose of the governing body;
 - That all involved fully understand what a governor will and will not do;
 - That all involved know what will happen following a governor visit and how information will be used;
 - That all involved will understand how the success of this policy will be measured.
- School visits by members of the governing body a key component to being an effective school governor and have potential benefits to both governors and staff: -
- Benefits to governors: -
 - recognise and celebrate success
 - develop relationships with the staff
 - get to know the children
 - recognise different teaching styles
 - understand the environment in which teachers and other staff work
 - see policies and schemes of learning in action
 - inform decision-making
- Benefits to staff: -
 - help governors understand the reality of the classroom
 - get to know the governors
 - understand better the governor roles and responsibilities
 - have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion

4. PURPOSE OF GOVERNOR VISITS

- Visits are undertaken to: -
 - Improve governing body knowledge of the school and the people that work in it;
 - Assist the governing body in monitoring the implementation of the SIP;
 - Assist a governor to fulfil a specialist governor role such as SEND;
 - Assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties including monitoring and evaluation;
 - Assist the governing body in making informed decisions.

- Governors will not pursue any personal agendas or arrive with inflexible or preconceived ideas.
- Governors will not visit their own child's class on official governor visits.
- Governors will not make any judgements about student's work, behaviour, any teacher's classroom practice or issues relating to the day to day running of the school. Those are the responsibility of the Headteacher.

5. PLANNING THE VISIT

- Visits will be undertaken only as part of a strategic programme formally organised by the governing body or one of its committees and with approval of the Head.
- Frequency of visits will depend on the complexity of the areas of responsibility allocated to them and the availability of appropriate staff and timetabling.
- The Head will be kept informed of, and agree, the subsequent details of the planned visit.
- At least one week's notice of a visit will be provided to teachers.
- Governors will make themselves fully acquainted with Health and Safety procedures, including fire safety, prior to any visit.
- Governors will make themselves fully acquainted with safeguarding procedures prior to any visit.

6. DURING THE VISIT

- Governors will at all times report to reception upon arrival and follow the procedure for visitors in order to provide a good example for other visitors.
- If visiting a classroom, the governor will arrive at the time planned to avoid disrupting the learning and follow the agreed purpose of the visit.
- Governors must be aware that some teachers may feel nervous or stressful about having a visitor in the classroom.
- At the end of the visit governors will thank everyone concerned, including the children.
- Governors should be aware of their behaviour and avoid any implication that they are inspecting, such as by using a clipboard.

7. FOLLOWING THE VISIT

- After visiting the school the governor will: -
 - Give some time and thought to reflection;
 - Consider what went well and what did not go so well with respect to their involvement in the visit;
 - Consider how the visit has helped them in their role as governor;
 - Consider what they would do differently in a future visit;
 - Following completion of the Record of Governor Visit (Annex B) the governor will report back to the governing body or committee as appropriate.

8. MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF THE POLICY

- The success of this policy will be measured by the following:
- The extent to which: -
 - Governors become involved in visits to school;
 - Governors make more informed decisions;
 - Staff feel comfortable with governor involvement in their school;
 - Governors feel more involved in school;
 - Governors can demonstrate an enhanced understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, needs and priorities.

Annex A – Extracts from The Governors’ Handbook, October 2020

In all types of schools, governing bodies should have a **strong focus on three core strategic functions**:

- a. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- b. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- c. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governors need to know their school, if accountability is going to be robust and their vision for the school is to be achieved. Many governors find that visiting, particularly during the day, is a helpful way to find out more about the school. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors can see whether the school is implementing the policies and improvement plans they have signed off and how they are working in practice. Visits also provide an opportunity to talk with pupils, staff and parents to gather their views.

Governors are not inspectors and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching or extent of learning. They are also not school managers and should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school. Both are the role of the headteacher. If governors wish to spend time within a classroom, they need to be very clear why they are doing so.

Effective governing bodies hold their headteacher and other senior school leaders to account for improving school performance by asking the right questions. This might include asking:

- Which groups of pupils are the highest and lowest performing, and why? Do you have credible plans for addressing underperformance or less than expected progress? How will we know that things are improving?
- Which year groups or subjects get the best and worst results and why? How does this relate to the quality of teaching across the school? What is your strategy for improving the areas of weakest performance?
- How are you going to raise standards for all children, including the most and least able, those with special educational needs, those receiving free school meals, boys and girls, those of a particular ethnicity, and any who are currently underachieving?
- Have your decisions been made with reference to external evidence, for example has the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Toolkit been used to determine Pupil Premium spending decisions? How will you know if your approach is working? Will the impact of decisions and interventions be monitored and supported, using appropriate tools such as the EEF DIY Evaluation Guide?
- Do we have the right staff and the right development and reward arrangements?
- What is the school’s approach to implementation of pay reform and performance related pay? If appropriate, is it compliant with the most up to date version of the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document?
- Is this a happy school with a positive learning culture? What is our track record on attendance, behaviour and bullying? Are safeguarding procedures securely in

place? What are you doing to address any current issues, and how we will know if it is working?

- How good is our wider offer to pupils? Is the school offering a good range of sports, arts and voluntary activities? Is school food healthy and popular?
- Do we listen to what pupils and parents are telling us?

Ofsted has published the criteria that inspectors will use to judge the effectiveness of a school's governance⁸. These criteria are consistent with the core functions of all governing bodies set out above. Inspectors will look at the extent to which governing bodies:

- carry out their statutory duties, such as safeguarding, and understand the boundaries of their role as governors
- ensure that they and the school promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), cultures and lifestyles; and support and help, through their words, actions and influence within the school and more widely in the community, to prepare children and young people positively for life in modern Britain
- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction, including long-term planning (for example, succession)
- contribute to the school's self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching, and reviewing the impact of their own work
- understand and take sufficient account of pupil data, particularly their understanding and use of the school data dashboard
- assure themselves of the rigour of the assessment process
are aware of the impact of teaching on learning and progress in different subjects and year groups
 - provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety, including by using the data dashboard, other progress data, examination outcomes and test results; or whether they hinder school improvement by failing to tackle key concerns or developing their own skills
 - use the pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively
 - are providing support for an effective headteacher
 - monitor performance management systems and understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression, including the performance management of the headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management
 - engage with key stakeholders
 - are transparent and accountable, including in terms of recruitment of staff, governance structures, attendance at meetings, and contact with parents and carers



Record of Governor Visit

Dream Believe Achieve

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|--|--------------|
| Date: | |
| Governor: | |
| School staff: | |
| Purpose of visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Improve governing body knowledge of the school and the people that work in it;</i> ○ <i>Assist the governing body in monitoring the implementation of the SIP;</i> ○ <i>Assist a governor to fulfil a specialist governor role such as SEND;</i> ○ <i>Assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties including monitoring and evaluation;</i> ○ <i>Assist the governing body in making informed decisions.</i> | |
| Actions/ activities/ outline of visit: | |
| | |
| Evaluation: | |
| <i>What went well/ what did we learn/ how will this impact</i> | |
| | |
| Feedback to: | Date: |