



Kenmore Park Infant & Nursery School



Governor Visits to Schools Policy



The pack includes the following:-

Governor Visit Policy

Governor Questions Template

Governor Visit Form Template

Approved by Full Governing Body

Ratified by the Governing Body: 16th October 2024

Documents to be reviewed annually at the first FGB of the new school year.

Article 12

A right to be listened to

Article 23

A right to special help if you need it

Article 28

A right to learn



GOVERNORS VISITING POLICY

PURPOSE

One of the important responsibilities of Governors is that of monitoring progress in the school. This can be achieved through the analysis of statistical data, reports from the Headteacher and senior staff and Governors visiting the school to see progress in action.

It is mandatory that visits by Governors are conducted in a positive and supportive way, whilst giving the Governor an opportunity to ask questions and find out more about a particular aspect of school life. It's the only way governors can observe for themselves how specific policies and procedures work in practice. It also gives them the opportunity to see and speak with pupils and staff, to hear for themselves what is and isn't working. For these visits to be informative and useful to all parties, it is helpful for a protocol of visiting to be agreed and observed.

The purpose of a Governor visit to the school is to:-

- Know and understand the school so that Governing Body decisions are well informed.
- Monitor the School Development Plan (SDP) targets (progress and impact).
- See evidence of children work.
- Understand the impact of Pupil Premium funding.
- Observe our Visions and Values around the school.
- Discuss planning and policies with subject leader.
- Inform other Governors.
- Be prearranged with all parties involved.
- Be an opportunity to be positive about the school.
- Have a clear focus.
- Be a positive experience for all involved.
- Provide an opportunity for exchange of information.
- Provide an opportunity to build relationships with staff and children.

Governor visits are not:

- To inspect the school.
- To make judgements on the quality of teaching.
- Unannounced and unplanned.
- An opportunity to quiz children.
- Unfocussed.

INTRODUCTION

The Governance Handbook says that Governors need to know their schools if accountability is to be robust and that visiting the school during the day is a helpful way to find out more. The Governing Body will see for themselves whether the school is implementing the policies and improvement plans and how they are working in practice. Ideally every Governor should make a visit to the school at least once a year.

The policy is to aid Governors and school staff to ensure that Governor school visits are structured, productive and enjoyable for all concerned.

Aims

School visits by members of the Governing Body are a key component to being an effective school Governor and have potential benefits to both Governors and staff.

Ofsted will judge how effectively governors monitor the school

It's the chair's job to be sure that effective processes are in place and that the board is organised in such a way to monitor improvement at all levels.

Though the inspection framework changes from time to time, Ofsted will always want to see evidence of how well the board exercises its monitoring function when it judges a school's leadership and management.

Ofsted inspection assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This depends on Governors assessing performance data presented to them and have the understanding of what happens in the classroom.

It is important to Ofsted that the Governing Body makes an impact on school improvement and visiting the school to see it in operation and to be aware of standards and progress are important aspects of this crucial role.

Benefits to Governors

- 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 and other staff work.
- To see policies and schemes of work in action.
- To inform decision making.
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them.

Benefits to Staff

- To help Governors understand the reality of the classroom.
- To get to know the Governors.
- To understand better the Governors roles and responsibilities.
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion.
- To have the opportunity to share expertise.
- To highlight the need for particular resources.

Benefit to children

- To help improve their journey through school
- To improve the impact of their learning and ensure the best possible outcomes
- To promote pupil voice

TYPES OF VISITS

Classroom – visiting classrooms to get a feel of classroom life. The protocol agreed might allow Governors to chat with children once they are working independently or in pairs/groups. Also to observe the impact of a recent school improvement project e.g. literacy lessons to observe improvements in the teaching of writing. In order to undertake their role with objectivity, ideally, Governors will **not monitor** classes containing their own children.

Meetings with groups of children, staff or parents – a meeting with a representative group can provide a Governor with an invaluable opportunity to gather information and opinions as well as develop relationships with members of the school community. The focus for the meeting

and questions need to be planned in advance. This can be a particularly good way to gather information about the impact of development planning e.g. a meeting with a group of middle leaders could be a good way to gather information about the role of middle leaders and the impact of any training.

Breaks and lunchtimes – planning opportunities for Governors to spend time informally with staff and children during breaks and lunchtimes adds to any visit. These times can be crucial to the development of good personal relationships with underpin all effective Governing Bodies. This can include time to visit the playground and/or canteen and chat with the children and supervisors. Joining staff on a coffee break.

Touring the learning environment – a tour of the school and grounds is an opportunity to observe the displays, resources and specialist teaching equipment.

The Framework for Governor Visits

Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school by staff. It is important that Governors remember to respect the teachers and the children, support the Headteacher and staff and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body. As such, all Governors must adhere to the highest standards of confidentiality. Any observations comments will only be shared with the Subject Leader and the Headteacher but not with other staff or with parents and carers.

New Governors should arrange with the head teacher a school visit, as part of their Governor induction. This first visit helps Governors to familiarise themselves with the school and staff. All visits, other than new Governor visits, will have a clear focus linked to the SDP and relevant policies. Governors may also visit the school and inform Governors on other curriculum events such as school trips, class assemblies, parents' information evenings and special events. Governors and staff should be aware that the visits do not replace professional inspections or the monitoring role of the head teacher, and Governors should not voice any judgments about the effectiveness of any teaching or on children's work, that they may observe during the visit.

Before the Visit

In advance of the visit the Governor will need to plan the visit to ensure that they are clear about its purpose. A minimum of one weeks' notice should be given prior to a visit. Allow sufficient time for the subject lead, member of school staff to prepare documentation to be emailed out at least two weeks prior to the visit date.

The SDP document informs Governors as to what will be monitored/observed and why. Agree the plan with the Subject Leader, Headteacher of the purpose of your visit. In Appendix A, you will find examples of the types of questions you can ask or you can ask the school leadership for specific type relating to a specific area.

The actual date, timing and length of any particular visit shall be arranged in advance by the Governor concerned with the Subject Leader involved in the visit.

During the Visit

The Governor should be on time for the visit and only cancel if absolutely necessary. Visiting Governors will observe the standard school rules for visitors (for example signing in). In the school the Governor should:

- Stick to the agreed focus of the visit

- Establish with the subject leader what is expected from them, for example should they take part in working with a group of children, should they talk to the teacher or teaching assistant during the lesson etc.
- Always observe confidentiality
- Thank the children and staff at the end for their help with the visit.

After the Visit

Thank staff for hosting the event.

Discuss what you have observed with staff involved and use the opportunity to ask questions and clarify anything you are unclear about.

Be positive and encouraging.

There will be an opportunity for the Governor and subject leader to have a discussion and also to discuss what they intend to put into their report back to the Governing Body.

A short report should be prepared by Governors, using the template attached electronically to this report within one week of the visit date. (See Appendix B).

This report helps to focus on what was actually learnt about the school and to pass this information onto the Governing Body. This report will form part of the Governors monitoring role, therefore it should contain states of fact on what was observed or what was not observed. It should contain information to assist decision making and evaluation by the whole Governing Body e.g. when reviewing the impact of a particular policy. It may be appropriate to give some recommendations. Please remember that the Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the quality of teaching, so you do not make a professional judgement when observing lessons.

The report should:

- Summarise the visit
- Be mainly factual and relate to the SDP
- Cover any points of discussion

When complete, the report should be sent to the Headteacher and subject leader for review.

The report should then be presented at the next appropriate meeting of the PAD Curriculum Committee. The Governor will then report back to the Full Governing Body.

The Governor must ensure that the Governors operative has an electronic copy to email out to Governors and a hard copy will be kept in the school office in the file called "Governor Visits".

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Examples of types of questions to ask:-

1. What activities or interventions are being carried out by the school within this area of focus?
2. How are staff evaluating the impact of these activities and interventions?
3. What impact is the school having on the pupil's learning?
4. How is this area of focus supporting ambitious expectations for what all children can achieve?
5. To what extent is this area of focus helping to support the breadth, depth and relevance of the curriculum to help meet the needs and interests of children, learners and employers, nationally and in the local community?
6. What more can we do to meet the needs of particular groups?
7. To what extent is professional development and the performance management process helping the school to progress in this area?
8. What improvements could be made to provision/processes?
9. How is this area of focus helping to promote equality, tackle bullying and discrimination?
10. Is the school narrowing the achievement gaps between groups of children?
11. Which groups require particular attention?
12. How is this area of focus helping the school to promote British values?
13. What else can the school do?
14. How is this area of focus helping to safeguard and protect children, including from radicalisation and extremism? What else could be done?
15. What difference is this going to make for the pupils, and how will we know?
16. What more can the governing body do to support you in your work in this area?

If you require specific questions or information relating to a certain subject area, please refer to the school leadership for more information.

Governor visit feedback

Visit Made by:		Visit date:	
Purpose of visit:	To monitor rates of progress <input type="checkbox"/> To find out new actions which have taken place since my last visit <input type="checkbox"/> To find out how children who are finding things difficult are supported <input type="checkbox"/> SDP audit visit <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Observations/ Activities Comments:	Work scrutiny <input type="checkbox"/> Visit to classrooms/learning walk <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson observation <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting with Subject Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Issues discussed			
Follow up actions			
Signed			
Date report submitted			

Governor visit feedback - EXEMPLAR

Visit Made by:	Governor for English, Mrs Y	Visit date:	01/02/15
Purpose of visit:	To monitor rates of progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To find out new actions which have taken place since my last visit <input type="checkbox"/> To find out how children who are finding things difficult are supported <input type="checkbox"/> SDP audit visit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:		
Observations/ Activities	Work scrutiny <input type="checkbox"/> Visit to classrooms/learning walk <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lesson observation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting with Subject Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:		
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I looked through the school development plan for English with Miss X, the English Coordinator. • We looked at the rates of progress which are tracked through the school data. Many of the children were making very good progress. This could be due to a number of reasons – the provision the children who are falling behind are receiving/the feedback from the teachers which shows children the next steps to achieve, etc. • We saw a Literacy intervention run by one of the Teaching Assistants. The child seemed to really enjoy it – so did I. It was 1:1 and the support was targeted. 		
Issues discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An explanation of how children are chosen for the interventions. ○ A discussion around what happens if children don't make expected rates of progress on their interventions 		
Follow up actions	Next term, I will track the children seen on this visit by reviewing the impact on their learning of their attendance and the intervention.		
Signed			
Date report submitted			

Governor visit feedback –NON-EXEMPLAR

Visit Made by:	Governor for English, Mrs Y	Visit date:	01/02/15
Purpose of visit:	To monitor rates of progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To find out new actions which have taken place since my last visit <input type="checkbox"/> To find out how children who are finding things difficult are supported <input type="checkbox"/> SDP audit visit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Observations/ Activities	Work scrutiny <input type="checkbox"/> Visit to classrooms/learning walk <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson observation <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting with Subject Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
Comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I looked through the school development plan for English with Miss X, the English Coordinator. • We looked at the rates of progress which are tracked through the school data. Many of the children were making very good progress but there seemed to be groups who weren't making progress and the coordinator wasn't able to tell me why this was the case at the time. • We saw a Literacy intervention run by one of the Teaching Assistants. The child didn't answer enough questions correctly. I stepped in and asked her some better questions and helped her finish her work. 		
Issues discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I spoke about how the Teaching Assistant could improve. ○ I told the Coordinator all the children had to make progress and told her some ways she could do this. ○ 		
Follow up actions	Next term, I will come in and help in another subject		
Signed			
Date report submitted			

APPENDIX C

Methods of monitoring:

How to carry out a remote visit

Work with your school to find out how you can get the information you need remotely.

Be sure to speak to your Chair and headteacher about what options your school can offer – don't demand videos if your school isn't set up for this, or can't provide them easily.

Examples of how this could work:

- Ask to have paperwork shared with you over a video call or by email (depending on [UK GDPR](#) requirements)
- Check if the documents you want to see are available on the school's website
- Arrange meetings with members of staff over the phone or using video call software
- Ask the school to film a learning walk for you, or see if they'll take you on a walk using video call software
- Arrange a group video call with pupils if you want their opinions
- Ask the school to scan / take photos of pupils' work to share with you

How to gather information

All governors should have [access to data and know how to use it](#). They should also be aware of the resources available to them to collect evidence and benchmark their specific areas of concern, such as:

- [Analyse school performance](#) (ASP) - This replaced RAISEonline. We have articles on how to use the site to:
 - Analyse your [primary school's data](#)
 - Analyse your [secondary school's data](#)
- [School performance tables](#)
- School exam results (SATs, GCSEs and A-levels)
- [Get information about schools](#)
- The school's latest Ofsted report
- [Parent View](#) - Ofsted's parent surveys
- National statistics on [school and pupil numbers](#)
- The Department for Education's (DfE's) site for [financial benchmarking](#)

In addition to data, the governing board can effectively monitor school performance through:

- Concise, focused [reports from the headteacher](#), heads of departments and subject leaders
- External reports, for example, from the school improvement partner, consultants and accrediting boards
- Presentations from school staff, pupils and external experts
- Your school's [self-evaluation form](#) (SEF)
- Internal performance monitoring information, such as [key performance indicators](#) (KPIs) set by the board
- [Formal and informal visits](#) to the school
- Discussions with parents, pupils and staff
- [Pupil](#) and [parent and staff](#) surveys
- Attendance at events i.e. school play, summer fairs.