

GOVERNORS' VISITS POLICY

Introduction

1. Governing boards have three core functions:
 - Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
 - Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of the staff
 - Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.
2. In order to carry out these functions, governors will draw on a range of evidence, including their visits to the school.

Purpose

3. The purpose of governors' visits follow directly from the core functions of the governors.
4. The principal purposes are as follows:
 - To enable governors to ensure that progress is being made against the objectives and priorities in the school improvement plan
 - To enable governors to see for themselves whether the school is implementing policies approved by the governing body and how they are working in practice
 - To provide information about the use of resources to assist in decision-making on financial matters.
 - To enable governors with special responsibilities (e.g. SEND, English, etc.) to better understand issues related to those responsibilities
5. Other purposes are:
 - To ensure governors have an understanding of the operation of the school to support them in their strategic role
 - To provide governors with up-to-date knowledge of standards, content and teaching of the curriculum in school
 - To enable governors to understand the environment in which staff work, and its impact on the emotional and physical safety of pupils
 - To develop positive relationships between governors, staff and pupils.

Process

6. Each visit should have a clear, pre-arranged focus to help governors and staff to use their time productively. Most of the time, visits will focus on the principal purposes, but this will not necessarily always be the case, for example, a new governor may tour the school as part of their induction.
7. Governors should meet members of staff responsible for the area of interest in order to receive background information and context. Governors should also, if possible, speak to pupils or other staff members involved.
8. During visits, governors must remember that the role of the governing body is strategic, not operational. Acceptable activities, for example, would be to seek an understanding of how a particular policy is managed, how staff are made aware of the policy, whether any issues have arisen, how they have been dealt with, lessons that have been learned when things go wrong, how the policy is audited and how the findings are acted upon. ^[1]_[SEP]
9. Examples of issues a visit could focus on include:
 - Monitoring progress towards specific targets from the school improvement plan, for example, meeting with the subject lead and learning about the strategy adopted and how this translates through to classroom practice and children's learning ^[1]_[SEP]
 - Monitoring the implementation of a particular policy, for example safeguarding, homework, lesson planning
 - Gaining an understanding of a particular curriculum area or year group
 - Gaining an understanding of the process of assessment and tracking pupil cohorts
 - Gaining an understanding of how a particular issue is dealt with on a day-to-day basis, for example, provision of ICT, boys' achievement, literacy, etc.
 - Examining the use of resources, such as premises or a new teaching resource.
10. Governors will be expected to complete at least two visits per year.
11. When the school improvement plan is approved, usually at the first full governors' meeting in the academic year, governors should ensure that responsibility for each section of the plan should be allocated to various governors so that some of their visits can be focused on those particular sections, as well as their subject responsibilities and any other relevant matters.
12. Governors will confirm with the headteacher the purpose of each visit at least 48 hours in advance of the visit.
13. Governors will complete promptly a report after each visit (see appendix 1) focused on the agreed purpose of the visit.
14. The initial draft report of each visit will be shared with the headteacher in the first instance. Once completed and agreed, it will then be shared with the full governing body.
15. The reports of governors' visits should be used as part of the evidence to review the success, or otherwise, of the implementation of the school improvement plan.

Appendix 1

Governor's visit report form

Governor & area of responsibility	
Date and duration of visit	
Area of School/Staff/Class visited	
Purpose of visit	
Governor's comments on focus of visit	
Staff Comments	
Pupil Comments	
Link with School Improvement Plan & reference	
Any Safeguarding Issues	
Issues to be raised as a result of the visit	
Signatures	