



GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

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Staff:	Headteacher
Notes:	Non-Statutory
Next Review Date:	Autumn 2024

Headteacher: Mrs Kate Collins



INTRODUCTION

1. Aims

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow when making visits to the school. Governors do not have an automatic right to enter Sandfield Primary School. However, it is valuable for governors to visit, as invited guests, in order to learn more about their school. Visiting during the school day to develop their understanding and help fulfil their statutory responsibilities, can be one of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of being a school governor

This policy sets out the procedure which all governors are expected to follow when visiting Sandfield Primary School and how they are expected to report on that visit to the Local Academy Committee.

2. Guidance and scope

This policy takes account of best practice and guidance from the Governance Handbook (section 3.4.2).

2.1 Governors are observers

Governors must know their schools in order to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors will:

- Observe whether the school is properly implementing school policies, and actions from the school improvement plan
- Observe how those procedures are working in practice
- Have the opportunity to gather the views of pupils and staff

2.2 Governors are not inspectors

Governors:

- Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom
- Will not manage the school or interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school
- For those governors who wish to spend time in a classroom, they will make it clear about their purpose in doing so.

3. Visits programme

Governors will carry out regular school visits in order to meet the board's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness. Visiting the school in person provides a valuable insight into how the school operates as well as an opportunity to put other information in context. A well-planned programme of visits forms an important element of the local governing committee's strategic role. Visits also help to build positive relationships with staff and demonstrates commitment to the school. There are two types of visits:

Formal monitoring visits, where governors discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member

Learning walks, where governors will go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area and are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils. These more informal visits are not a replacement but complement the formal monitoring visits.

This may include:

- The playground
- the wider school environment
- health and safety

- parents'/carers' consultation evenings
- meetings with senior staff
- shadowing staff and/or pupils
- looking at a sample of pupils' work in a particular subject area
- attending a school assembly or celebration
- reporting on the school's extra-curricular activities

3.1 Governors for health and safety, special educational needs, and safeguarding

These governors will attend:

- A termly 1:1 monitoring visit with corresponding staff leads
- Ad hoc meetings as required or requested on issues specific to their areas of responsibility

3.2 Subject lead governors

Subject lead governors will attend:

- A monitoring visit with the subject lead at the end of each term

3.3 All governors

All governors will:

- Carry out at least one visit each year
- Attend at least one school assembly / educational event in the year

4. Before a visit

Governors will:

- Notify the headteacher and the chair before scheduling a visit, even if the headteacher will not be involved in the visit. They should be made aware just as a matter of courtesy
- Schedule an appointment with relevant members of staff in order to avoid friction and ensure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient. Generally, governor visits are more productive when conducted during a school day
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time and thank all staff at the end of the visit
- Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance with the chair, the headteacher and/or relevant member of staff
- Send questions in advance to the staff member so everyone can feel properly prepared
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures

5. During a visit

Governors should know how to conduct themselves appropriately during visits in order to minimise disruption for staff and pupils and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent.

Governors will:

- Be on time and be met by the head teacher / member of the senior team before the visit
- Always sign in and wear a governor's lanyard
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the headteacher for a specific purpose
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them

- Ensure all parties are clear about why a governor wishes to spend time in the classroom, if they wish to do so
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils
- Be friendly but professional and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils
- Discuss the visit, including any concerns, with the headteacher immediately or soon after the visit

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner than would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the chair of governors or headteacher after the visit

6. After a visit

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable as appropriate. In completing the report, governors will ensure to:

- Remain observational, and describe only what they see
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit, and its strategic role
- The report should be written on the standard monitoring form (see Appendix).
- Once complete, governors will share their draft reports to the relevant staff member to check for accuracy and then to the Headteacher. Once their comments have been taken into account, a final agreed written report should be emailed to the clerk for inclusion in the board pack for the next GLAC meeting
- Send a thank you email to those that contributed to the success of the visit.
- Reflect on how well the visit went so you can do better next time

7. Audience

This document is available to all members of the school community. There is a copy available on request from the school office.

8. Resources

www.gov.uk has many resources including the latest version of the Governors Handbook.

9. Safeguarding and health and safety

Ensure your actions keep yourself, the children, staff and school community safe. Follow the Safeguarding and Health and Safety guidelines of the school.

10. Special educational needs

If a governor has any Special Educational Needs they need to share these with the Headteacher so that appropriate arrangements can be made to ensure monitoring can be undertaken.

11. Equal opportunities

All governors are expected to undertake visits and reflect the Equal Opportunities policy of the school.

Sandfield Primary School

Record of Governor Monitoring Visit

Part 1: plan the visit	
Name and role of governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Agreed focus <i>Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that haven't been agreed with the member of staff.</i>	
Relevant school objective or priority <i>This is likely to be taken from the school development plan (SDP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.</i>	
Activities to be Undertaken <i>Eg: learning walk, talking to pupils, data analysis, attend an assembly etc</i>	
Questions to ask <i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SDP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit.</i> <i>Share these questions with the staff member you're visiting in advance, so they can prepare.</i>	

Part 2: At the Visit
What is the school doing within this area of focus?

How do you know the school's actions are having an impact?

What successes stood out and why

School self-evaluation in this area: Are we Outstanding, Good or Requires Improvement?

Discuss with member of staff where they think we are now and what steps are required on the route to Outstanding. What evidence did you see to support the assessment?

Questions and clarifications to follow either with the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors or in a GLAC meeting