

# Governor Visits

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Every governing body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its schools' policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors are also held to account for their school's performance.

"Inspectors will seek evidence of the impact of those responsible for governance" (November 2019 -Section 5 School Inspection Handbook page 65).

Inspectors will consider whether governors:

- Work effectively with leaders to ensure the clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- oversee the financial performance of the school, making sure that its money is well spent, including the pupil premium.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a governing body can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and pupils and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms.

If school visits are done well, they will add to governor's understanding of their school, its staff and pupils.

This policy draws on other policies and best practice in some settings. It includes a sample governors' visit pro-forma, which will help provide discussion on the issues raised and also provide a formal record for Ofsted of the governors' structured and systematic involvement in the work and life of the school. It should not however, form part of any other evidence base (eg performance management)

## **Why visit?**

Many governing bodies link governors to areas of responsibility or subjects as a way of monitoring the curriculum. This will involve governors visiting the school and classrooms and taking the opportunity to discuss issues with a Senior Link and relevant coordinator.

Developing the role of link governor allows the governing body to focus in more depth on particular areas of school life:

- The management of the school's resources
- The condition of the building and its use
- The development of teaching and support staff

- A specific subject area or a particular year group or class

By visiting a school and becoming better informed, governors will be:

- More aware of the needs of the school
- More able to approach staff to meet those needs
- In a good position to support the school in its' community.

**What are the benefits to governors and staff?**

<b>Governors</b>	<b>Staff</b>
To establish and develop effective relationships with staff	To get to know and build positive relationships with governors
To have a greater understanding of pupil's needs	
To recognise and celebrate success	To feel valued
To monitor the implementation of the school development plan	To demonstrate progress against actions in the development plan
To increase knowledge of the school which will inform strategic decisions	
To understand the environment in which staff work and teachers teach	To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom and school
To see policies and schemes of work in practice	
To find out what resources are used, what resources are needed and prioritise them	To highlight the need for further resources
To show support and encouragement to staff and pupils	
To demonstrate that the governing body is contributing to the school's self-evaluation process	To demonstrate that the school is working in partnership with governors
To develop individual governor's roles in terms of their specific responsibilities	To share an understanding of the specific area

**What are governor visits NOT about?**

Governors should be aware that visits to the classroom are not a form of Inspection. It is not the remit of governors to make judgements about the professional expertise of staff or the quality of teaching and learning.

A school visit is also NOT about:

- Checking on the progress of your own or known children
- Monopolising staff time
- Arriving with inflexible or preconceived ideas
- Pursuing personal agendas or issues
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**How often should link governors make visits?**

This would be at the discretion of the school and head teacher and would probably depend on the number of governors available to take on each responsibility as well as the size of the school. It would be recommended that a rolling programme of visits was arranged with each governor attempting to make an average of two or three visits each year. These visits might include a variety of approaches to information gathering.

**Who schedules the visit?**

This would be the member of staff to whom the Head teacher had delegated this responsibility.

**Visit preparation**

An important part of the visit preparation is to establish the “ground rules”.

There is some suggested guidance attached to this policy. Agreeing protocols will save time.

**What should and should not happen**

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Before</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review action points in the school development plan</li> <li>• Agree the purpose of the visit with the Head teacher or link teacher</li> <li>• Arrange details of the visit</li> <li>• Try to visit at different times of day over the year</li> <li>• Discuss with the head teacher the focus for the visit and the nature of the link governor involvement</li> <li>• Agree level of confidentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn up unannounced for a focused, formal visit</li> <li>• Expect to go into a classroom without prior arrangement and recommended minimum notice of one week</li> <li>• Visit during an examination week without the visit being authorised by the HT</li> </ul>
<b>During</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared, organised and punctual</li> <li>• Report to the school office to sign in</li> <li>• Fulfil the purpose of the visit</li> <li>• Observe school/ class guidelines</li> <li>• Jot down discussion points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monopolise staff</li> <li>• Interrupt the teaching or talk to the teacher while he/she is teaching</li> <li>• Behave like an Inspector!</li> <li>• Walk in with a clip board and take copious notes</li> </ul>
<b>After</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank the member(s) of staff and pupils</li> <li>• Discuss your visit experience as soon as possible after the visit</li> <li>• Feedback appropriately to the Head teacher</li> <li>• Discuss Health &amp; safety issues if relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave without a word of thanks and without giving feedback</li> <li>• Discuss observation with other members of staff, parents or individual governors (except the chair) unless given permission.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the visit form and give a copy to the Head teacher / copy to lead link governor</li> <li>• Keep the record of your visit to refer to before your next visit</li> </ul>	
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**What should I do if you are visiting a classroom?**

Before visiting there are some questions you should clarify with your link person.

- When I come into the classroom where would you like me to sit?
- What should I do if pupils ask for help?
- Would you like me to be involved in the lesson?
- What should I do if I see a pupil behaving inappropriately?
- Do you mind if I ask pertinent questions if I'm not sure about detail when helping (e.g. methods used for calculations)

**Focus of the visit**

A visit can be to see the school generally, to attend a meeting with the coordinator or other adults and pupils or a specific classroom visit

Visits can focus on

- The condition and maintenance of the premises/ use made of buildings and premises
- Security on site / monitoring of health and safety
- School systems – e.g. Assembly, Break and lunchtimes
- The use and condition of resources / environment and use of displays
- The deployment of support staff / specific intervention programs
- To see a class or teacher lead an Assembly / to attend a performance or special event / Join a class or year group on an educational visit
- Extra-curricular activities of training courses delivered at the school

The classroom

- Observation of particular curriculum areas
- To gain an understanding of the process of assessment and tracking pupil cohorts and their attainment
- Assessing a group of pupils working on a task

**After the visit**

It is essential that warm thanks are given and a comment on the focus agreed.

Remember as a governor you are visiting on behalf of the governing body and not in a personal capacity. It is not appropriate to make either judgements or promises on behalf of the governing body.

Staff should also realise that governors are not able to address every day matters that would normally be sorted out as a matter of good line management.

Any expression of concern should be shared with the Head teacher / SLT as soon as possible.

Oral and written feedback should be given to:

- The member of staff involved
- The Head teacher
- The appropriate committee or lead link governor

It would be best if written feedback could be completed with the member of staff present or at least sent to the member of staff to be checked for accuracy.

The written reports should be discussed with the Chair of governors, filed and made available to the appropriate committee or whole governing Body.

### **Monitoring and evaluation of the governing body's policy**

Governors should review this policy annually. The review should consider:

- Are we doing what we set out to do? Are we achieving the benefits outlined in the policy?
- Have I learned more about the School?
- Are we better informed and able to make good decisions?
- Do staff feel affirmed and valued as a result of increased governor involvement?
- Have I helped the governing body fulfil its' duties? Is it helping us to review School development priorities?
- How can we make the policy and practice even better?

## Governing Body School Visit Policy

Pre and post-visit checklist for the School and Governor

School	Governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do we know why the governor is visiting?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have I made a formal appointment with the Head teacher / SMT?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do we know what the governor is expecting to see?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do I know the specific purpose of the visit?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the focus for the visit also a focus in our School Development plan?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have I arranged my time so that I can be sure to be punctual?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have we drawn up a timetable for the visit?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have I thought about how I will approach the teacher in the classroom or the subject lead?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do individual members of staff know when they are going to be visited?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have I thought about what I will actually do while I am in the school?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have other key members of staff been informed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will I give feedback to staff, Head teacher and Governing Body?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the appropriate documentation ready and available?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have I remembered that what I see or hear or might find out is confidential and not for sharing with other Governors or parents in general?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can I build on this for the next visit?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did I address any difficulties I met?</li> </ul>

### Epinay Business and Enterprise School –Link Governor Report

**NAME OF GOVERNOR:**

**DATE OF VISIT:**

**PURPOSE/SCOPE OF VISIT:**

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MEETING/VISIT (including site(s) visited and the staff met with)**

**KEY PERFORMANCE DATA GATHERED DURING VISIT**

**KEY FINDINGS/OBSERVATIONS**

**The positives:**

**Areas for possible further development:**

**I NEED TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:**

**ANY FURTHER ACTION**

**Governor:**

**Lead:**

Policy approved by Governors: Feb 2021

Date of next review by Governors: Feb 2022