

Governor Visits Policy

Reviewed by	Approved by	Date of Approval	Version Approved	Next Review Date

Rationale

In order to carry out their role responsibly and effectively it is important for governors to know the Academy well. One way to achieve this is through Academy visits, this also meets the requirements of those link or named governors. Visits provide an opportunity to develop an awareness and understanding to help in the strategic role of governors as well as develop teamwork with Academy staff. Visits help provide an understanding of the way in which the Academy operates to embed its ethos and achieve its aims.

Purpose

- Observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements of the pupils.
- Understand the views and values of the staff and pupils.
- Evaluate the resources and the environment of the Academy.
- Observe the operation of policies.
- Awareness of changes and different approaches to teaching and learning.
- Improve knowledge of the ethos of the Academy and awareness of the work on the curriculum.
- Assist the whole governing body to fulfill its statutory role.
- Improve governor understanding of the needs of the Academy and the priorities for the Academy Improvement Plan.
- Monitor and evaluate the Academy Improvement Plan in action.
- Help governors to be better able to support the Academy community.
- Highlight the needs for particular resources.

Approach to visits

- All governors to visit at least once a year during the working day.
- Governors are welcome to informally visit the Academy (by prior appointment) e.g. assemblies or attend events by invitation.
- Visits to focus on key topics (often Ofsted areas of focus) such as safeguarding and behavior and should link to the Academy development plan.
- Meetings with the Principal or Curriculum lead to be made by appointment.
- Governors are expected to be present at the beginning of a lesson - this will enable the teacher to introduce them to the class and explain the reason for their presence.
- Governors to be aware of the confidentiality of what they see and hear.
- Governors to be discreet so as not to disrupt the lesson in progress.

Format for visits

Most visits will take place in the classroom and staff will have been consulted about the date and purpose of the visit. This will enable them to prepare any information related to the focus of the visit and to set up a programme for the governor. This might include:

- Supporting a group of children on a set task, informal observations of children at work. Opportunities to speak with children on their work in progress.
- Opportunities for observing displays of work in the classroom, which show progress over time.
- Opportunities for pupils to demonstrate work to governors.

Reporting

Do

- Prepare the report in draft as soon after the visit as possible. (Governors visiting as a pair will need to get together to discuss observations and conclusions.)
- Discuss the draft with Principal, in case there are mistakes or misunderstandings that need to be clarified.
- Provide the clerk with a copy of the report at the earliest opportunity to ensure it is included in the next available committee or LGB meeting.
- Come to the meeting prepared to make a short verbal introduction to the report and answer any questions other governors may have.
- Think to yourself: what can I do to make my next visit even more effective.

Don't

- Be lengthy. A single A4 sheet is often sufficient.
- Name staff or pupils except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when in a teacher's class for a lengthy period of time). Check with the Principal if you are unsure.
- Hand round the report at the meeting; governors will have had no opportunity to read it and give it proper attention.
- Go through your report in full detail, or read it out verbatim. This lengthens meetings unnecessarily.
- Write like an inspector (even if you are one), and don't make written observations about the quality of teaching and learning. If there are concerns, raise them with the Principal verbally.
- Parent Governors – Don't focus on your own child or observe an area/lesson which your child is involved in (if possible).

Appendix A

A good example of a Governor visit report

Purpose of visit

To tour the Academy to make informal contact with staff and to observe behaviour in class, assembly and at break time. To monitor the quality of the learning environment

Links with the Academy Development Plan

Behaviour and its impact on the quality of teaching and learning are key elements of the action plan. The Academy is due to move to new premises and we are trying to maintain standards in the old building.

Governor observations and comments Two year five pupils accompanied me and were very positive about their experiences in the Academy. Throughout the Academy, the atmosphere was calm and I observed staff intervening with pupils when they weren't concentrating – both in class and in assembly. In one class the children were coming to the end of a 40 – minute session on writing and they were totally focused, quiet. One supply teacher was doing D and T and the children were competing to build the strongest, tallest tower that could have a ping-pong ball balanced on the top. This was proving very popular. They were all totally engaged. The courtyard area was very overgrown and the children told me that it used to be looked after but not much was happening now. The one bench was damaged. The children said they thought it would be good to tidy it up and have more seats out there. Displays throughout the Academy were well-presented and colourful. There was lots of children's work and it was all recent. My 'guides' proudly showed me examples of their work that was displayed. Assembly included presentation of golden apples for good behaviour and a presentation to a teacher who was leaving. Children were well behaved and attentive. Cheering and clapping at the end did not get out of control. Not clear if that was the daily of act of worship? At playtime all the staff seemed to be out on the playground. I wondered what breaks they have during the day.

Any key issues arising for the governing body

Positive news re behaviour and displays. Follow up idea of turning the courtyard area into an attractive space for children to have lunches, relax etc. How are we managing the daily act of worship? Is there a programme of themes? Are children involved in delivering? Are our values being promoted through this medium? How are playground rotas managed? Do our teachers have a break?

Action following governing body meeting *(Record any action agreed by the governing body with regard to this visit)*

Agreed chair would send a letter to staff congratulating them on the impact of their work to improve behaviour. In addition agreed I would write a letter to be read in assembly to say how much I had enjoyed my visit and how impressed I was by the behaviour of children in classes and in the playground. Link governor to discuss with Academy council what they would like to see happen with the courtyard and whether they could help. Following that head to write to parents via the newsletter to see if they'd help. Furniture that will be purchased for the new Academy to be purchased early for use in the courtyard Ask Head to report to the next GB meeting on how we manage the daily act of collective worship – themes etc. GB reassured by headteacher and staff governors that the playground rota is equitable and effective.

Governor Visit Record

Purpose of visit <i>(Previously agreed with the Principal/ teacher)</i>	
Links with the Academy Improvement Plan/ Governor Curriculum area responsibility <i>(How does the visit relate to a priority in the Academy Improvement Plan)</i>	
Governor observations and comments <i>(What did you see? What did you learn? Would you like anything clarified/explained?)</i>	
Any key issues arising for the governing body <i>(How resources are allocated, the way the Academy communicates, implementation of key policy)</i>	
Action following governing body meeting <i>(Record any actions agreed by the governing body)</i>	
Name	Date