



This policy belongs to

**Tibberton CE Primary School and
St Lawrence CE Primary School
Federation**

Governor Visits

Revised: Spring Term 2022

Consultation with Staff & Governors

and adoption of policy: Spring Term 2022

Review Date: Spring Term 2024

Governors' Visits to Schools Policy

Every Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to monitor the school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors are also held to account for the school's performance.

The Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.

One of the ways a Governor can get to know about the school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and pupils and finding out what goes on. We believe that, done well, school visits will add to Governors' understanding of the school and the pupils.

This policy has drawn on other schools' policies and has been shared with school staff and Governors prior to approval.

In our Federation, the Governing body holds responsibility for both schools and members will be invited to join the schools for significant events during the year, and to get to know the schools.

The schools will support Governors with their monitoring role by inviting staff to present at meetings or to prepare reports for dissemination in relation to school priorities and the School Development Plan (SDP). All formal visits will be agreed with the Executive Head Teacher prior to taking place.

Types of Governor Visit

Type of visit	Governors involved	Staff involved	Frequency	Responsibility for organising
The school in operation	All members of FGB	All staff	Each Governor to visit at least once each year, spread across the terms, formal and informal	Governor and relevant staff
Classroom visit/ Learning walk	Named link governor	Relevant staff	At least once a year	Governor and relevant staff
School improvement focus	Named link governor	Relevant staff	Following committee meeting with specific focus	Named link governor and relevant staff
Quality assurance	Named link governor	Relevant staff	Following committee meeting with specific focus	Named link governor and relevant staff

Why Visit?

A Governing Body has a duty to oversee the direction and policies of the school, to monitor its standards and to be held accountable for its conduct and performance.

Visits should be undertaken as:

- A. Part of the strategic programme to-
Improve Governor knowledge of the school, its staff, needs, priorities, strengths and weaknesses.

Monitor the progress of the priorities as outlined in the development plan.
 Help the Governing Body fulfil its statutory duties.
 Acquire knowledge to enable the Governing Body to challenge as appropriate.
 Monitor the impact of Christian distinctiveness and links with the church.

B. Critical Friend-

Monitoring and challenging the progress of plans, budgets, standards of education and achievement.

C. Accountability-

Annual reports and meetings, publication of minutes, surveys of parental views.

Members of our Federation Governing Body are linked to school improvement priorities based on their experience, interest and expertise in a particular field. This will involve individual Governors visiting the schools and classrooms and taking opportunities to discuss issues with the Executive Head, Heads of School and relevant subject lead.

Governors will also be expected to focus on specific areas, for example: the management of schools' resources; the condition of buildings and their use; the development of teaching and support staff; a specific subject area; a particular class or year group.

By visiting the schools and becoming better informed, Governors will be: more aware of the needs of the schools; well placed to bring any concerns to the Executive Head's attention; in a good position to support the schools in their communities, including the Church communities.

The main purpose of school visits.

The main purpose of a Governor visit to school is to:

- Increase first-hand knowledge
- Keep under review the ways in which the schools are operating
- Experience the impact and progress of the implementation of the SDP and policies
- Demonstrate to staff that the Governing Board takes its responsibilities seriously
- Establish and develop good professional relationships with staff
- See in context some of the monitoring systems of the federation
- Demonstrate that the Governing Body is contributing to the schools' self-evaluation process
- Show support and encouragement to staff and children.

What are the benefits to Governors and Staff?

Governors	Staff
To establish relationships with the staff	To get to know Governors and establish positive relationships with them
To understand pupils' needs	
To recognise and celebrate success	To feel valued
To monitor the implementation of the SDP	To appreciate and value the role and responsibilities of Governors
To increase their first-hand knowledge of the school	
To understand the environment in which staff work	To ensure Governors understand the reality of the classroom and the school

To see policies and schemes of work in action	
To find out what resources are used, what resources are needed, and to prioritise	To highlight the need for further resources
To show support and encouragement to staff and pupils	To feel supported by Governors
To demonstrate that the Governing Board is contributing to the school's self-evaluation process	
To develop links with a class, year group or subject area	
To develop the Governor's role in terms of specific responsibilities, e.g. safeguarding	To share an understanding of the area of specialism/ leadership

Governors' visits **are not** a form of inspection. They are not to make judgements about the professional expertise of members of staff, especially with regard to the quality of teaching. The purpose of a school visit is not to check on the progress of Governor's own or known children neither is it to monopolise staff time. Governors should not arrive with pre-conceived ideas nor to pursue personal agendas or issues.

How often should I visit and who schedules the visits?

This will depend on the number of Governors available to take on the area of responsibility and the availability of school staff. Visits should always be agreed in advance with the Executive Head or Head of School.

Visit Preparation.

Establish ground rules before hand to assist in the smooth running of a visit, making the visit more beneficial to all parties and enjoyable.

Governor's Visit Forms have been attached to this policy and can be partially completed before the visit.

Shoulds and Should Nots for a Visit.

	Always	Never
Before (at least one week prior to visit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the action points in the SDP Agree the purpose of the visit with the EHT or HoS Arrange the details of the visit Try to visit at different times of the day Relevant member of staff draws up a schedule for the visit- when, where, with whom, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn up unannounced for a focused, formal visit Expect to go into a classroom without prior arrangement and a recommended minimum notice of one week Visit during a SATs or test week without SLT agreement

	<p>duration, time for feedback?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with SLT context of the visit and what is to be visited and involvement 	
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared, organised and punctual • Report to the school office and sign in • Fulfil the agreed purpose of the visit • Observe school/ class guidelines • Jot down discussion points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monopolise staff • Interrupt the teaching or talk to the teacher while he/ she is teaching • Behave like an inspector • Walk in with a clipboard and take copious notes
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the member/s of staff and the pupils • Discuss observations as soon as possible after the visit • Feedback appropriately to the EHT or HoS • Discuss Health and Safety issues if relevant • Complete the visit form and give a copy to the EHT • Prepare to present records of your visit at the next FGB meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave without a word of thanks or giving some feedback • Discuss observations with other members of staff, parents or individual governors (except the Chair) unless given permission

A week before a classroom visit, there are some questions you should clarify with the Executive Head, Head of School or class teacher:

- When I come in, where should I sit?
- What should I do if a pupil asks for help?
- Would you like me to be involved in the lesson?
- Do you mind me asking pertinent questions if I'm not sure about detail when helping a pupil?
- What should I do if I see a pupil behaving inappropriately?
- What should I do if I am concerned about anything I see?

The focus of the visit.

A visit could be to see the school generally in operation, or to see a specific lesson/ year group/ subject.

The School in Operation

- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- The use made of buildings and premises
- Security on site
- Break and lunch times
- The monitoring of Health and Safety
- The use and condition of resources e.g. furniture and subject equipment
- Office procedures e.g. budget monitoring

The Classroom Visit

- Observation of a particular curriculum area alongside SLT to understand progress made in that subject
- The implementation of the curriculum
- Gain an understanding of the process of assessment
- Observe and assist a group of pupils working together on a task
- The impact of educational visits
- To see the impact of the Christian distinctive ethos of the school
- The impact of class sizes and mixed year groups
- To join an act of Worship (SMSC)
- To gather pupil voice

School Improvement Priority

- To establish the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation
- To understand how performance management is used to improve teaching standards
- To understand how well leaders ensure that the curriculum raises outcomes for all pupils
- To establish the capacity of leaders to bring about further improvement
- To establish the extent to which middle leaders are developed
- To establish the impact of governance
- To understand the engagement of parents
- To establish effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements to ensure safe recruitment and that all pupils are safe

Learning Walks

Any learning walks should be planned beforehand, be part of an annual schedule and be integral to the monitoring and evaluation cycle. They must have a clear purpose that has been communicated with staff. Confidentiality is essential and must be maintained at all times.

Learning walks increase Governors' knowledge and understanding of the school through seeing first-hand how it operates. They also show support and encouragement and enable governors to celebrate successes and achievements.

There are different types of learning walk, tailored to the school priorities.

General

Often a first visit/ for a new Governor e.g.

- Introductory sessions, viewing the entrance and reception areas along with corridors and administrative areas
- To visit the playground in use
- To visit classrooms to see displays and learning walls
- To talk with children

Specific subject focus

- To focus on a specific priority within the SDP
- To focus on how children learn in a particular subject, e.g., maths, and how well a particular programme is working
- To understand displays, resources and equipment in a subject area
- To meet with a subject lead to understand staff's contribution to that subject area

Specific aspect

- Health and Safety
- Compliance regarding statutory assessments
- Behaviour
- Pupil premium
- Inclusion and disadvantaged pupils
- Lunchtimes and breaktimes
- After school activities

Following learning walks, it is vital that there is feedback to the Headteacher / Executive Head so that they may feed back to key staff and that a record of the visit is completed and shared.

After a Visit

We all need feedback after we have been visited or observed. This can be a sensitive area but it is essential that warm thanks are given and a comment on the focus agreed.

Remember you are making a visit as a Governor, on behalf of the Governing Board, not in a personal capacity therefore it is not appropriate to make judgements or promises. Staff should also realise that Governors are not able to address everyday management matters.

Any expression of concern should be shared with the Heads of School or Executive Head as soon as possible. Comments should be limited to the focus of the visit unless health and safety is being compromised- this should always be reported immediately.

The Governing Body will review this policy in line with its agreed cycle and consider if visits are achieving the benefits and objectives identified in this policy.

Governing Body School Visit Policy

Governor's Visit Proforma

Governor name:

Date of visit:

Focus of visit:

Area of the school visited:

Sources of information:

E.g. head of school, class teacher, subject lead, talking to children.

General comments:

Summary of information learnt:

Points to discuss at the next Governors meeting:

Signed:

Received and discussed with Executive Head

Received by the Full Governing Body

Date:

Pre and Post Visit Checklist for School and Governor	
School	Governor
Do we know why the Governor is visiting?	Have I made a formal appointment with the Headteacher?
Do we know what the Governor is expecting to see?	Do I know the specific purpose of the visit?
Is the focus of the visit also a focus in our school development?	Have I arranged my time so that I can be sure to be punctual?
Have we drawn up a timetable for the visit?	Have I thought about how I will approach the member of staff?
Do individual members of staff know that they are going to be visited?	Have I thought about what I will actually do during the lesson?
Have other key members of staff been informed?	How will I give feedback to the staff, Executive Head and Governing Body?
Is the appropriate documentation ready and available?	Have I remembered that what I see or hear or might find out is not for sharing with other Governors or parents in general?
	How can I build on this visit for next visit?
	How did I address any difficulties I met?