



Fairfield Primary School

A Guide to Governor Visits

WHY VISIT?

The purpose of the visit is not to inspect the school but to monitor that school policy is reflected in school practice.

Visiting the school is an important aspect of governors' work. To be really effective and fully involved governors must get to know the school. This means visiting the school to meet and talk to pupils and staff, to get a feel for how things work. In this way governors will:

- Learn more about their roles and give meaning to work undertaken in governing body and committee meetings
- Build relationships with pupils and staff by getting to know them and the challenges they face
- Be better equipped to carry out their important monitoring and evaluation role

It is important to develop a culture in school that encourages and supports governor visits since in certain circumstances visits may become potentially stressful for both staff and governors.

Recognising tensions, being explicit about purpose, and building trusting and professional relationships are the key to ensuring that visits are a valuable experience for all concerned.

Governors need to know what is happening in the school by addressing the following questions:

- How successful are the governors' policies?
- Are targets for improvements being met?
- What are the key issues facing staff?
- What are the problems and how can staff be supported?

PROCEDURE FOR GOVERNOR VISITS

Planning

- A schedule of visits is agreed annually — the schedule is linked to key priorities in development or action plans and aims to take account of the needs of new governors, new initiatives and the 4 year rolling programme for curriculum development
- Visits must have a clear purpose.

Before the Visit

Meeting with the Subject Coordinator/Management Team:-

- Discuss an agenda/timetable for the observations.
- Discuss the subject policy documents.
- Agree how you will be introduced.
- Be positive, friendly and encouraging

During the Visit

- Make sure that you arrive on time
- On arrival remember to follow the school's security procedures
- Make sure the head knows that you are on site
- Remember that you are not inspecting the school
- Remember that the school is a workplace for lots of people
- Remember that you are there to learn
- Stick to the purpose of your visit
- Avoid getting drawn in to any discussion on personal or general staff grievances
- Look relaxed, get involved and blend in
- Observe discreetly; remember that note taking is disconcerting for everyone
- Talk to staff and pupils, show interest and enthusiasm
- When appropriate ask questions, be courteous, not critical
- Keep an open mind, be flexible and 'go with the flow'
- Look for opportunities to give praise

After the Visit

- Thank staff for hosting your visit

- Discuss what was observed with the member of staff
- Allow staff to explain and check out understandings
- Ask for explanations on anything about which you are unsure
- Be positive, friendly and encouraging
- Make your notes as soon as possible whilst observations are still fresh in your mind
- If appropriate, discuss your observations with the Head/Head of Department
- Agree arrangements for any follow up visits
- Reflect on what you have seen and how this connects to the priorities of the school.

Reporting Back to the Governing Body

- Complete the governor visit *pro-forma* and send to staff a copy of the draft for comments
- Be prepared to amend your report in the light of comments
- Ensure that the Head Teacher receives an agreed copy of the report in good time for distribution for the next Full Governors' Meeting

GOVERNOR VISITS REPORT PRO-FORMA

Visit made by		On	
Purpose of visit			
Observations made, including observation of the pupils' attitude to learning			
Additional comments			
In support of the above visit I/we have <input type="checkbox"/> Talked to children about their learning <input type="checkbox"/> Visited lesson(s) and reported back to the governing body <input type="checkbox"/> Spoken to the co-ordinator about policy and practise			
Signed		Date	

Policy	<i>Governor Visits</i>
Last Reviewed	<i>February 2015</i>
Ratified by Governing Body	<i>March 2015</i>