The Westborough School

The policy for governors' visits to school.

Autumn Term 2021

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 model policies and best practice in school settings. It includes a sample governors' visit pro-forma, which will help provide discussion on the issues raised and 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.

The policy has been agreed between staff and governors so there is a clear understanding of the process.

Ratified by The Westborough School Local Governing Body: July 2021

Signed……..(Chair) Date……..

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary and no later than July 2023.

The Policy for Governors' visits to school

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Why visit?

There is no "one size fits all". Governing bodies have a variety of ways of gathering first hand evidence to inform their work with the school. At Westborough we have **link governors**.

The role of the link governor

The role of the link governor will vary according to the nature of the appointment. However, in general a link governor role involves the following tasks:

- Making pre-arranged visits to the school, with a clear focus
- Keeping the Governing Board informed about the area for which they are responsible, and acting as a link between governors and staff
- Supporting the member(s) of staff who is(are) responsible for the particular area / subject
- Developing knowledge in the specialist area and taking part in relevant training
- Ensuring the School has relevant policies in place
- Monitoring the implementation of the school's strategy in the specialist area

Specific areas of responsibility for Link Governors for 2021-2023

Curriculum
Health and Safety
Pupil and Sports Premium
Safeguarding
SEND
Wellbeing

By visiting the school and becoming better informed, governors will be able to:-

- Recognise and celebrate success
- Develop relationships with the staff
- Get to know the children
- Understand the environment in which school staff work
- See policies and learning in action
- Collaborate where necessary with decision making
- Find out what resources are available and/or needed

Governors' visits can also benefit staff who will:-

- Help governors understand the reality of the classroom
- Get to know governors
- Better understand the governors' role and responsibilities
- Have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- Highlight the need for particular resources.

What are governors' visits **NOT** about?

Governors should be aware that visits to a classroom or office 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

Who schedules the visit?

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors will prepare the rolling programme of visits.
The clerk will work with governors and the school to arrange visits.

Focus of the visit

A visit can be to see the school generally, to attend a meeting with thecoordinator or other adults and pupils or take part in a learning walk.

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
- The use and condition of resources / environment
- 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 or training courses delivered at the school
- Attending a parent open evening – available to talk with parents and carers / gather views and promote the work of the school
- Observation of particular curriculum areas
- To gain an understanding of the process of assessment and tracking pupil cohorts and their attainment
- To monitor Safeguarding, SCR, training
- Pupil voice and wellbeing
- Staff wellbeing

Visit preparation

An important part of the visit preparation is to establish the ground rules. Agreeing protocols will save time.

What should and shouldn't happen

	ALWAYS	NEVER
BEFORE	• Agree the purpose of the visit with the Head teacher, or link teacher. • Arrange details of the visit • Try to visit at different times of day over the year • Discuss with the head teacher the focus for the visit • Agree level of confidentiality	• Turn up unannounced for a focused, formal visit • Expect to go into a classroom without prior arrangement and recommended minimum notice of one week • Visit during an examination week without the visit being authorised by the HT
DURING	• Be prepared, organised and punctual • Report to the school office to sign in • Fulfil the purpose of the visit • Observe school/ class guidelines • Jot down discussion points	• Monopolise staff • Interrupt the teaching or talk to the teacher while he/she is teaching • Behave like an inspector • Walk in with a clip board and take copious notes
AFTER	• Thank the member(s) of staff and pupils • Discuss your visit experience as soon as possible after the visit • Feedback appropriately to the Head teacher • Discuss Health & safety issues if relevant • Complete the visit form and give a copy to the Head teacher • Keep the record of your visit to refer to before your next visit	• Leave without a word of thanks and without giving feedback • Discuss observation with other members of staff, parents or individual governors (except the chair) unless given permission.

After the visit

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

Remember that 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/SMT assoon as possible
Oral and written feedback from meetings should be given to:

- The member of staff involved
- The Head teacher
- The LGB

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 and made available to the LGB.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Local Governing Body's policy

Governors will review this policy regularly. The review will consider:

- Are we doing what we set out to do? Are we achieving the benefits outlined in the policy?
- Have we 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?
- Is it helping us to review School development priorities?
- How can we make the policy and practice even better?

The Westborough School - LGB Governor School Visit.

Governor's visit Form		
Name:	Governor responsibility:	Date: Duration of visit:
Link to Academy Improvement Plan /School self- evaluation / subject action plan priorities;		
Purpose/focus of visit (follow-up from previous visit):		
Governor Comments:		
Comments from school staff involved:		
Any key issues arising for the governing Body?		
Focus for next visit:		
Signed: Governor: ---------- Staff member(s) ---------- Head teacher / SMT ----------		

EXAMPLE Governor's visit Form

Name: Anonymous	**Governor responsibility**: Teaching & Learning	**Date**; March 5th **Duration of visit:** 2 hours

Link to SDP / Self-evaluation / Action plans

- SDP 3- Raising standards in writing – ensuring children have opportunities for writing across other subjects / SEF – Teaching & Learning

Purpose / focus for this visit (follow-up from previous visit)

- To join the Y3 class for part of their history lesson – sit with the lower ability group
- Talk with the Literacy lead (Y3 teacher) about cross-curricular writing links forY3 children

Governor comments:

- The Y3 class were really interested in the topic on Egyptians – The groupdescribed the research they'd done and showed me some models they'd made which were on display. They were very proud of these
- There were some lovely books available –fiction and non-fiction though somewere a bit dog-eared. A few of the words were quite hard for a few children but they wanted to know the names of objects and tried hard to read.
- The teacher had used some objects at the beginning of the lesson and thechildren said what they'd found out. I was impressed with what they knew
- The children wrote a diary entry. They were keen to write and said they liked it when the subject was exciting and they knew lots about the Egyptians

Teacher comments:

- I try to provide practical stimulus and use a lot of books as a stimulus for writing lessons so that children have something to write about. I also like toget visitors in and to take children out on visits but it isn't always possible
- History links seemed to be going well but it is more difficult in some subjects

Possible focus for next visit:

- Meet with the coordinator to discuss resources and progress with literacylinks with other subjects
- Support visit to local museum

Key messages for governors

- Budget resources spend –some new books and practical resources tosupport writing in other subjects
- Use of Pupil premium to fund some creative activities to widen pupil's experiences

Signed:

----------Governor

----------Member of staff

----------Head teacher