



*Status: FINAL*

*Approval Date: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018*

*Review Period: Three Yearly*

*Requirement: Optional*

*Delegation: Curriculum & Achievement Committee*

## GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

### 2018 - 2021

#### Introduction

The governing body has three main roles. They are strategic direction, critical friend and accountability. Visiting the Academy in session helps to develop and understand the roles and is the best way to learn how the Academy functions so that you can increase the governing body's first-hand knowledge and inform strategic decision making.

Through visits governors will have the opportunity to observe policies and plans being implemented which will help make well-informed judgements about progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the Academy improvement plan. The number and frequency of visits will vary.

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the Academy Improvement Plan and cover a wide range of activities. Each visit should be agreed in advance and have a clear purpose. Governors should arrange these visits with the Headteacher who has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Academy.

#### What is a Link Governor?

The term 'link governor' is used for specific areas e.g. numeracy, literacy, equality, SEN etc. These are not statutory requirements, but are good practice. Guidelines are similar for all specific roles and will be agreed between Senior Leadership Team and Local Governing Body. A good working relationship between the relevant specialist within the school and the link governor will enhance the success of this initiative. The link governor could undertake some or all of the following:

- Become informed about relevant documents and legislation; Ofsted criteria for evaluating the subject provision; local and national issues impacting upon the subject.
- Liaise with Faculty Leaders to become informed about staffing arrangements and training; the condition and availability of resources; curriculum and timetable arrangements; special needs provision; reference to the academy development plan; assessment and recording procedures for the subject; which visits and visitors are planned.
- Establish and maintain effective lines of communication between the Faculty Leaders and the governing body; report back to governing body meetings.
- Help to keep parents informed via the school prospectus, newsletter and meetings.

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## Potential benefits

To governors:

- Deepen understanding and increase confidence and knowledge about the working of the school
- Recognise and celebrate success
- Develop relationships with staff
- Get to know the children
- Recognise different teaching styles
- Understand the environment in which teachers teach
- Monitor policies in action and implementation of reviewed policies.
- Find out what resources are needed and prioritise them
- Inform decision making

To teachers:

- Ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- Get to know governors
- Understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- Have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- Highlight the need for particular resources or training.

## Governor visits are not

- A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise of the teacher
- An opportunity to check on the progress of own children
- An opportunity to pursue a personal agenda
- The chance to monopolise Academy/teacher time

## Roles and responsibilities of governors, head teacher and other staff

It would be helpful if the governing body could, with the help of the Headteacher and staff, organise an annual schedule of visits throughout the year. The Headteacher will guide the governing body on the areas of the curriculum; policies and Academy improvement plan priorities and targets to be covered each term. Individual governor or pairs of governors will, with the guidance of the whole governing body, identify an aspect of the Academy's work to focus on in order deepen their understanding.

## Monitoring and review of governors' Academy visit policy

This policy should be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure that:

- Visits are achieving the potential benefits we identified?
- What unexpected benefits have there been?
- Practice is reviewed regularly.

***It is recommended that all Governors have undertaken a learning walk with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.***



## GOVERNOR VISITS GUIDANCE

### Preparing for a visit (School & Governors)

- Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the Academy Improvement Plan? What are the relevant Academy Policies? Link to a policy review. How does this determine the activities I am interested in?
- Discuss an agenda with a member of the senior leadership team, and or Faculty Leader/Pupil Progress Co-ordinator well in advance. Make sure that the date chosen is mutually agreed and convenient.
- Use the Academy visits pro forma – see Appendix B
- The agenda will be shared with all staff involved.

### During the Visit (Governors)

- Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the governing body.
- Governors do not make judgements or promises - it is a visit not an inspection
- Be punctual, courteous and considerate at all times, respecting the professional roles of the head teacher and staff.
- If visiting a class, agree with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the class will be and what involvement you will have with children.
- Observe discretely - don't distract the teacher during the lesson but be prepared to talk and show interest
- Interact, don't interrupt - listen to staff and pupils

School staff may make practical suggestions on the focus for governors' visits to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This could include specifying the evidence that could be shared with governors. See Appendix A for a list of things which governors could examine/explore. Whenever practical they will invite their link/curriculum governors to relevant staff meetings and training sessions.

### After the visit (Governors)

- Complete Governors Report Form, Appendix B
- Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about.
- Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved
- Thank the teacher for supporting you in your role as a governor. Be open, honest & positive.
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind and share the report with the Headteacher for agreement that it is a true reflection of the visit.
- Reflect on the visit, for example: how did that go? Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learnt more about the Academy? Have I gained more confidence in my role as governor?

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## Reporting your visit (Governors)

All governor visits should be recorded and shared. This helps demonstrate the involvement governors have in the life of the Academy and how they support their own learning.

Write a short summary of what you learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. This will be easier if the visit had a focus. See Appendix B for blank report format and Appendix C for a completed example report format.

You must circulate a draft to the Headteacher and staff involved for them to check the accuracy and clarity. Be prepared to amend it. Aim to achieve a report that is agreed by all those involved.

Have the report added to the next available agenda of the Governing Body and be prepared to answer questions from other governors.

## Visit Focus

Although not an exhaustive list visits may focus on:-

- Particular subjects, key stages or classes.
- The use made of the building or the site.
- The condition and maintenance of the premises.
- Special educational needs.
- Literacy and numeracy.
- The use of ICT equipment.
- The impact on the Academy of any changes e.g. reduced classes in key stage.
- Impact of specific targets identified in the Academy Improvement Plan.
- Impact of Staff Development Training.

## Appendix A – Monitoring & Questions

### Governor Monitoring can take several forms:

- Meeting with Faculty Leaders/PPC/support staff
- Snapshot of a lesson
- Discussions with pupils
- Walk around the Academy
- Attending INSET
- Pupil shadowing

### Aims:

- To know and understand the level of enjoyment pupils have for a subject
- Know the standards of achievement in a subject area
- Know what steps are being taken to improve standards
- Know how well strategic policies approved by governors are working
- Understand what pupils like best/least in the Academy
- To report main findings back to the full governing body

### Observations to make when visiting a classroom

- Relationship between all staff in the classroom and pupils
- Relationship between pupils
- Variety of teaching styles
- Availability and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils – are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- How pupils are grouped
- How different abilities are catered for
- Children's work & Displays
- Ethos – the atmosphere and values that are evident (are expectations high, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space, quality and quantity of equipment and resources
- Health and safety regulations practiced i.e. fire exits kept clear

## Questions

### To ask pupils:

- Tell me about what you are learning today
- Do you like (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Tell me what you most like doing in (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Is there anything you don't like in (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Do you know how you can improve/what your next target is in (select curriculum area being monitored)
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### To ask Faculty Leaders:

- What is your vision for the subject?
- What were the Ofsted findings about the subject?
- What are the strengths of the subject and areas for development? How do you know?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress across the Academy in this subject?
- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?

- What resources does the Academy have for the subject and how are these organised?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching this subject?
- How has your subject audit informed your development plan?

### In the classroom

Question	Possible features of answer	Notes of answer
Help me to understand how you plan your lessons: how do you get from the National Curriculum to deciding what Karen or Tom will be doing in Science today?	National Curriculum Key stage plan Scheme of Work Year/termly/weekly/daily plans Individual plans	
How do you judge how well pupils are learning and making progress?	Questioning in lessons Marking Assessments, including tests SATs Target-setting and achieving Value-added data	
What learning resources are available to your pupils and how do they learn effectively?	ICT – access to computers Use of library Classroom library Use of basics like pens and pencils. Good labelling Borrowed resources	
How do you cope with the needs of different pupils?	Boys v. girls Targeted tracking groups Most able/ SEN English as an Additional (EAL) Languages Behavioural issues Pupils with disabilities	
How do you decide to seat children and arrange the classroom? Does it ever vary and why?	Ability groups Mixed or single age groups Boy-girl patterns Different for different activities	
How do you encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning?	Regular contact Reports Parent consultation events Letters Pupil planners Parent workshops	



## Appendix B - Record for a governor's Academy visit.

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Governor Responsibility:</b>	<b>Staff seen during visit:</b>
<b>Focus of visit</b>	
<b>Reason for visit</b>	
<b>Links with Academy Improvement Plan</b>	
<b>Preparation/background to visit</b>	
<b>Information gathered during visit:</b>	
<b>Any key issues arising for the governing body</b>	
<b>Action following governing body meeting</b>	



## Appendix C – Example - Record for a governor’s Academy visit

<b>Name:</b> John Jones	<b>Date:</b> 01.07.2017
<b>Governor Responsibility:</b> Literacy	<b>Staff seen during visit:</b> Year 6 Team
<b>Focus of visit):</b> Spelling, punctuation, grammar teaching	
<b>Reason for visit</b> Gaining knowledge and understanding of new curriculum	
<b>Links with Academy Improvement Plan</b> Raising GPS levels at KS2	
<b>Preparation/background to visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Curriculum meeting</li><li>• Read Scheme of Work</li><li>• Read Literacy Policy</li><li>• Met with KS2 Literacy Co-ordinator</li></ul>	
<b>Information gathered during visit:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Range of activities to promote GPS</li><li>• Groupings for ability</li><li>• Use of support staff</li><li>• Pupil feedback</li></ul>	
<b>Any key issues arising for the governing body</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff are fantastic – give them a pay rise!</li><li>• Pupils outstanding!</li></ul>	
<b>Action following governing body meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governors to attempt GPS paper</li><li>• Link Governor attend next staff INSET on GPS</li></ul>	