

Stanford in the Vale CE Primary School

Policy for Governors' Visits to School



Updated: April 2019

Review: April 2021

The governing body is the 'accountable body' in a school – accountable to parents, pupils, the local authority and Central Government through Ofsted. It is responsible for everything from Health and Safety and Child Protection to the school budget, Teaching and Learning and pupil progress. As governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum, governors need to know what progress is being made towards targets set out in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Visiting the classroom and/or talking to staff and children can help to support this process.

Ofsted inspection assumes that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This depends on governors assessing performance data presented to them by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and through the Curriculum and Communication Committee in the context of an understanding of what happens in the classroom.

It is also important to Ofsted that the Governing Body makes an impact on school improvement and visiting school to see it in operation, and to be aware of standards and progress are important aspects of this crucial role.

This policy outlines the purposes, protocols, commitment and reporting arrangements for school visits by governors. It is recognised that visits occur for a variety of reasons and, thus, the policy allows some flexibility. It is intended to cover both classroom visits, co-ordinator meetings and visits to the whole school.

Governors are not qualified to assess standards but they need to visit lessons / speak to staff in order to:

- Appreciate and understand the work of the staff (teachers and support staff) and how the pupils are learning;
- Be aware of the response of pupils to their work and check that the pupils are aware of what they are learning;
- Be aware of resource issues;
- Be able to ask appropriate questions and hold sensible discussions with the professionals;
- Understand as fully as possible the meaning of the results of monitoring reported to them.
- Understand how actions on the School Improvement Plan are being addressed.

N.B. Governors are not inspectors and are not present in a lesson to make judgements about the professional expertise of the teachers. That remains a task for the head and/or other education professionals. It would be inappropriate, therefore, for governors to:

- Make judgements about the quality of teaching;
- Report on the progress of individual children;
- Pursue personal agendas;
- Monopolize teachers' time;
- Arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas.

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Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be adhered to regarding classroom visits. Observations and comments should be shared with the teacher concerned, and with the headteacher, but not with other staff or with parents. The approach of a governor should be to ask for explanations of anything not understood, not to make assumptions.

Reports to the Governing Body should not identify individuals in a critical manner: this is not the role of a governor.

Minimum commitment

Individual governors have differing amounts of time to commit to an exercise such as classroom visits. It is important, however, that all governors should try to make visits at some time, beyond that initial general visit to the school when one is newly appointed to the governing body. A governor should aim to make a visit *at least* three times a year.

Ground rules

It is useful to follow some basic rules in planning visits.

School Visits – an Aide-Memoire

What is the purpose of the visit?

- What has prompted my decision to visit?
- Who has prompted my decision to visit?
- Is the reason specific or general?
- What are my/other people's expectations?
- How can my visit benefit the teacher?

How shall I carry it out?

- What particular areas of the school am I interested in?
- What particular activities am I interested in?
- What particular age-group(s) am I interested in?
- Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?
- What questions should I ask?
- Who should I ask?

Did I achieve my aim?

- To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?
- Which of my questions did I answer?
- To what extent did I fulfil my own/other people's expectations?
- What difficulties did I meet and why?

Is there any follow-up?

- Have I recorded my experiences?
- Did I 'report back' to the head and staff?
- Have I prepared a report for the next governors' meeting?
- How can I build on this for the next visit?

	Always	Never
Before	Arrange details of visit Agree purpose of visit Discuss the context of the visit Agree role	Turn up unannounced

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During	Sign in on arrival and wear a governor badge Keep to the role agreed Keep questions for the class teacher until after the visit is over Please remember confidentiality Stick to the times and purpose agreed Be sensitive to the mood in the classroom and the expectations of the children Not be left alone with the children	Assume a different role Walk in with a clipboard Distract the pupils from their task
After	Thank the teacher and the pupils Discuss the visit with the teacher at their convenience Feedback to the governing body through a report, within two weeks of the visit, which has been checked with the visiting teacher and headteacher beforehand	Leave without acknowledgement Break rules of confidentiality

Monitoring and Review

The policy is to be reviewed regularly by the C & C committee.

Informal Visits

There are different occasions during the school year when we would encourage governors to visit. These include:

- Whole school sharing assemblies
- School productions
- Open evenings
- Parents evenings
- Church events
- Sporting events

Other informal visits are very welcomed, especially if it is to celebrate in our success.

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Name:	Date:
Focus of visit / SIP Link:	Classes/staff visited
Objectives of visit: 1. 2. 3.	
Summary of activities e.g. talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch etc.	
What have I learned as a result of my visit?	
Positive comments about the visit	
Impact on the pupils	

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Aspects I would like clarified/questions that I have:

Ideas for future visits:

Any other comments:

Signed _____ (Governor)