



THE DWASTRE

Education Trust

Policy Name: GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

Author: Woolpit Academy Governors

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Publish on Trust website: Yes

Publish on Academy websites: Yes

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Oswald". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the "Signed:" label.

Chair of Directors



GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

Introduction

“Governors need to know their school if accountability is going to be robust and their vision for the school is to be achieved. Many governors find that visiting, particularly during the day, is a helpful way to find out more about the school. Through prearranged visits that have a clear focus, governors can see for themselves whether the school is implementing their policies and improvement plans and how they are working in practice

Governors are not inspectors and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching or extent of learning. They are also not school managers and should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school. Both are the role of the headteacher. If governors wish to spend time within a classroom, they need to be very clear why they are doing so”

(Department for Education Governance Handbook January 2017)

1. General Principles

Governing boards have a key role in monitoring the progress and performance of the schools/academies they govern. Governor visits enable governors to evidence and play a strategic role in the management of the school by helping them to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. Governor visits are a vital part of the governing boards monitoring duties.

The governing board should plan visits to cover a wide range of the schools work and each visit should have a clear focus and purpose linked to a key priority in the school development plan (or equivalent) of one of the Boards statutory duties. It is expected that each governor will make at least one formal visit over the course of the academic year during school time.

Our governor visits are undertaken to:

- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Improve governing board knowledge of the school and the people that work in it;
- Work in partnership with staff
- Assist the governing board in monitoring the implementation of the school development plan (or equivalent)
- Assist governors to fulfil their delegated specialist roles such as safeguarding
- Enable governors to contribute to the body of evidence that supports school improvement and development
- Assist the governing board in fulfilling its statutory duties
- Assist the governing body in gathering information to assist with policy making and decision making

Before the visit

- Visits should be undertaken as part of a programme of visits formally organised by the governing board or one of its committees. The approval of the headteacher must be gained prior to any visit and if any other staff will be impacted this should be agreed with the appropriate member of the SLT
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations of the visit



- Plan what classes will be visited and when
- Prepare several questions

On the day of the visit

- Arrive in good time and report to reception following the procedure for all visitors
- Clarify the timetable and protocol for your visit with the staff involved in your visit
- If visiting a classroom arrive at the planned time to avoid causing unnecessary disruption and follow the agreed purpose of the visit.
- Act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher
- Be aware of your behaviour and avoid any implication that you are making judgements or inspecting, such as by using a clipboard. Some teachers may be nervous or stressed about having a visitor in the classrooms. Be supportive not interfering

After the visit

- Thank the teachers and children (be careful not to disrupt the lesson if leaving part way through)
- Take some time to reflect on the visit both in terms of what you learnt about the school but about the visit in general (what went well, what could have been better with respect to your involvement, what you might do differently)
- Contact the headteacher afterwards or on the day to raise any concerns or issues arising during your visit to enable any context for these to be included in your report.
- Complete a governor visit report outlining the purpose and result of the visit.
- Share your draft report with the headteacher and any staff involved during the visit to ensure accuracy and clarity. After any alterations the report should be circulated to the governing board and all staff involved in the visit
- File the report accordingly and be prepared to report back at the next governing body or committee meeting

Remember

The purpose of your visit is not to make judgements about individual pupils work or behaviour, staff expertise, classroom practice or quality of teaching or issues relating to the day to day running of the school. Those are the responsibility of the headteacher.

DOs and DON'Ts for Visit Reports

Do	Don't
Prepare the report in draft as soon after the visit as possible. (Governors visiting as a pair will need to get together to discuss observations and conclusions.)	Be lengthy. A single A4 sheet is often sufficient.
Type the report wherever possible. This eases comprehension and circulation.	Write like an inspector (even if you are one), and don't make written observations about the quality of teaching and learning. If you have concerns, raise them with the member of staff concerned or the headteacher.



<p>Enable the draft to be considered by the headteacher and staff involved in your visit. This will enable mistakes or misunderstandings to be clarified. (A visit can only be a snapshot of the school or a class at a particular time.)</p>	<p>Name pupils or comment on individual pupil behaviour. Check with the headteacher if you are unsure about naming individual staff members.</p>
<p>Email a copy to all governors and the clerk before the next governing body meeting, following which (like other governing body papers) it will be available for public inspection.</p>	<p>Hand round the report at the meeting; governors will have had no opportunity to read it and give it proper attention.</p>
<p>Come to the meeting prepared to make a short verbal introduction to the report and answer any questions other governors may have.</p>	<p>Go through your report in full detail, or read it out verbatim. This lengthens meetings unnecessarily.</p>
<p>Think to yourself: what can I do to make my next visit even more effective?</p>	<p>Don't assume that a single visit will be enough!</p>



Governor Visit Report Form

Academy:

Governor name	Governor responsibility (SEN, Safeguarding, Committee Chair etc.)	Date and time of visit
Purpose of the visit and how this links to the SDP (previously agreed by the GB with the headteacher)		
Planned questions	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
Summary of activities (observing classes, speaking to staff and pupils, looking at resources etc.)		
Comments about the visit (such as how long did the visit last, what did you see, what did you learn, what would you like clarified?)		
Any key issues arising for the governing board? (for example the way resources are allocated, the way the school communicates, progress in implementing policies)		
Outcomes and actions (record any impact/actions agreed including those arising from the visit agreed at the subsequent FGB meeting)		
Any other comments or observations (for example evidence of British Value and SMSC development)		
Signed		
Dated		