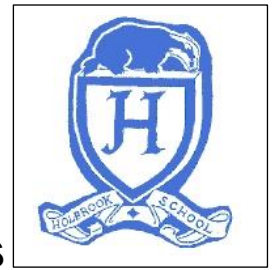




The Federation of Holbrook and Bedenham Primary Schools



Governor Visit Policy

To be used in conjunction with Governor Code of Conduct and attached guidelines.

Context

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. Because 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 school and classrooms 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 School Improvement 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.

Purpose of the visit

Visits are undertaken to:

- Improve governing body knowledge of the school and the people that work in it.
- Assist the governing body in monitoring the implementation of the school improvement plan.
- Assist a governor to fulfil a specialist governor role.
- Assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties.
- Assist the governing body in making informed decisions.

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

- Appreciate and understand the work of the staff (teachers and LSAs) 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.

N.B. Governors are not inspectors and are not present in a lesson to make judgements about the professional expertise of the teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs).

That remains a task for the Executive Head, Head of School and/or other education professionals. It would

be inappropriate, therefore, for governors to:

- Make judgements about the teacher's or LSA's classroom practice; quality of teaching.
- Report on the progress of individual children; judge pupil's work and behaviour.
- Pursue personal agendas; Arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas.
- Monopolise teachers'/LSAs' time.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be adhered to regarding classroom visits. Observations and comments should be shared with the Executive Head, Head of School, 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 class visit *at least* once a year.

Planning the visit

Visits should be undertaken only as part of a strategic programme formally organised by the governing body or one of its committees and with approval of the Executive Head, Head of School. The Executive Head, Head of School should be kept informed of, and agree, the subsequent details of the planned visit. If the visit is to involve any member of staff, then that member of staff must be fully involved in the planning through the appropriate member of the leadership group.

The governor(s) making the visit should make themselves fully acquainted with health and safety procedures, including fire safety, prior to making the visit.

During the visit

Governors will at all times report to reception upon arrival and follow the procedure for visitors and should be handed the Fire Safety leaflet and Code of Conduct leaflet which includes Safeguarding information - they should familiarise themselves with the procedures in place at each school.

If visiting a classroom, the governor must arrive at the time planned to avoid disrupting the learning process, and follow the agreed purpose of the visit. Governors must be aware that some teachers may feel nervous or stressful about having a visitor in the classroom. At the end of the visit thank everyone concerned including the children. Governors should be aware of their behaviour and avoid any implication that they are inspecting; avoid clipboards for example. Governors should make a point of thanking teachers on exit from the classroom.

Following the visit

After visiting the school the governor(s) should:

- Give some time and thought to reflection.
- Complete a visit report outlining the purpose and results of the visit (the visit report will be shared with all appropriate staff involved).
- Raise any concerns sensitively with the Executive Head, Head of School.
- Consider what went well and what did not go so well with respect to your involvement in the visit.

- Consider what you would do differently in a future visit.

Following completion of the agreed monitoring programme, the governor should report back to the Executive Head, Head of School and prepare a report to the governing body using the Governor Visit Report Form.

Review

The policy should be reviewed by the Governing Body in 2016





Signed

Signed _____

Heads of School
Date June 2016

Chair of Governors
Date June 2016

Governor Visit Policy - Guidelines for classroom visits.

What is the purpose of the visit?

- What/who has prompted my decision to visit?
- Is the reason specific or general?
- What are my/other people's expectations?

How shall I carry it out?

- 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?
- 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?
- Have I prepared a governor visit report form for the next governors' meeting?
- How can I build on this for the next visit?

Suggested questions for 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)?

Things to observe in the classroom:

- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils.
- How different abilities are catered for.
- Children's work.
- Displays.
- The atmosphere & values that are evident (high expectations, encouragement, etc).
- Use of space and working conditions.
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources.

Before

Always Arrange details of visit and agree purpose of visit. Discuss the context of the lesson to be observed. Agree role within the lesson.

Never Turn up unannounced

During

Always 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.

Never Assume a different role. Walk in with a clipboard. Distract the pupils from their task

After

Always Thank the teacher and the pupils. Discuss the visit with the Headteacher at their convenience. Feedback to the governing body

Never Leave without acknowledgement. Break rules of confidentiality.

Governor Visit Form:

Name:	School:
Date of Visit:	
Focus of Visit/SIP link:	
Previous agreed actions to be followed up (if applicable):	
Policies reviewed for impact and evidence seen (list): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour• Safeguarding• H&S	
Issues discussed with EHT/HOS/Staff member:	
Staff met:	
Issues discussed with Staff:	
Observations on the Focus of the visit:	
Follow up action agreed:	
Details of actions completed and impact:	
Signed	Date of feedback to the Governing Body

