



Governor School Visits Policy



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FGB

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1. Aims

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all Governors to follow when making visits to the school. Governors do not have an automatic right to enter Gastrells Community Primary School. When they do so, they are invited guests.

This policy sets out the procedure that all Governors are expected to follow when visiting Gastrells and how they are expected to report back on that visit to the governing board.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all Governors understand their role and purpose, so school visits are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved.

2. Guidance and Scope

This policy takes account of best practice and guidance from the [maintained schools governance guide](#) (section 3.3.3).

2.1 Occasional Visits (e.g. learning walks)

Governors will visit the school on an occasional basis as such visits enable Governors to:

- Fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school

- Observe whether the school is implementing its policies and improvement plans
- Observe how its policies and improvement plans are working in practice

Individual Governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish.

2.2 Focused Visits (e.g. formal monitoring visits)

Governors will also take part in focused governor monitoring visits, which should be:

- In line with school improvement plan (SIP) priorities
- For a specific purpose linked to the governing board's responsibilities, such as safeguarding
- Pre-arranged with the Headteacher

2.3 Governors are not inspectors

Governors:

- Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom
- Will not manage the school or interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school

For those Governors who wish to spend time in a classroom, they will make their purpose in doing so clear.

3. Visits Programme

The Headteacher will work with Governors to plan a schedule of visits with the focus on the SDP/SIP priorities, the Ofsted Framework, and meet the board's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness.

There are 2 types of visits:

- **Formal monitoring visits**, where Governors discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member
- **Learning walks**, where Governors will go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area and are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils

Governors will carry out school visits according to the following schedule:

3.1 Governors for health and safety, special educational needs (SEN), and safeguarding

These Governors will attend:

- A termly 1-to-1 monitoring visit with corresponding staff leads, Headteacher, SENCo /Assistant SENCo, Caretaker
- Ad-hoc meetings as required or requested on issues specific to their areas of responsibility

3.2 Subject lead Governors

Subject lead Governors will attend:

- A monitoring visit with the subject lead as required in the Headteacher's School Monitoring Schedule developed in response to school priorities
- A learning walk in agreement with the Headteacher/subject lead, linked to school priorities.

3.3 All Governors

All Governors may expect to:

- Carry out at least 1 learning walk/monitoring visit each term
- Attend at least 1 school assembly in the year
- Attend at least 1 educational visit in the year

4. Before a visit

Governors will:

- Notify the Headteacher and the chair before scheduling a visit, even if the Headteacher will not be involved in the visit. They should be made aware as a matter of courtesy.
- Schedule an appointment with relevant members of staff in order to avoid friction and ensure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient. Generally, Governor visits are more productive when conducted during a school day
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time
- Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance with the chair, the Headteacher and/or relevant member of staff
- Send questions in advance to the staff member, so everyone can feel properly prepared
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures

5. During a visit

Governors should know how to conduct themselves appropriately during visits in order to minimise disruption for staff and pupils, and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent.

Governors will:

- Be on time and meet with the Headteacher ahead of the visit
- Always wear a visitor's badge
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the Headteacher for a specific purpose
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them
- Ensure all parties are clear about why a Governor wishes to spend time in the classroom, if they wish to do so
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils
- Pass on any concerns the staff raise with the relevant people

- Be friendly but professional, and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner than would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors after the visit

6. After a visit

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable, using the form attached as Appendix A (monitoring visit) or Appendix B (learning walk), as appropriate. In completing the report, Governors will:

- Always use neutral language
- Remain observational, and describe only what they see
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit and its strategic role

Once complete, Governors will submit their reports to the following people, in the following order:

- A more experienced Governor for feedback – if they've been in place for less than 1 year or have no previous experience in a particular area,
- The relevant staff member and Headteacher, both as a courtesy and to check for accuracy
- The Chair of the governing board or the relevant committee, as agreed

Appendix 1: Template report for a monitoring visit

Formal monitoring visits are where a governor discusses the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Governor's Name:			<u>Circulation:</u>	
Reporting to :				
Member of staff		Date of visit		
Aims of visit (Agreed Focus): Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that have not been agreed with the member of staff. 1. 2. 3. 4. DON'T FORGET TO CHECK/ASK ABOUT/CONSIDER: • Subject report provided by subject lead • Subject crib sheet – link here • Curriculum map on website including foundational knowledge (especially in EYFS and KS 1), key information, knowledge retrieval, how pupil progress is tracked – remember Intent – Implementation – Impact • School Improvement Plan context/priorities • Provision for and monitoring of Pupil Premium children • Provision for and monitoring of children with SEND • Safeguarding • Classroom visit and pupil voice (where appropriate) Further optional information at the end of this document on: • Pupil voice questions • Classroom checklist • Governor questions about foundational knowledge				Tick if aim achieved

Aim 1. <i>report against aim</i>	
Aim 2. <i>Report against aim</i>	
Aim 3 <i>report against aim</i>	
Aim 4. <i>report against aim</i>	

General Comments including safeguarding, Pupil Premium ,SEND

Was the subject curriculum map reviewed?	
Are the relevant parts of the School Improvement Plan on track?	

Research and analysis - Strong foundations in the first years of school 8 October 2024

Foundational knowledge: This refers to the knowledge that children need to be able to retrieve accurately and automatically in order to carry out complex tasks.

Curriculum considerations for leaders

- Does the curriculum prioritise children's communication and language?
- How do you make sure that the curriculum gives enough emphasis to other foundational knowledge and skills, such as addition facts, handwriting and how to write simple sentences (depending on year group and EYFS/national curriculum requirements)?
- Do whole-school approaches get in the way of children learning important foundational knowledge in the early years and key stage 1? Do these approaches (for example, to extended writing or reading comprehension) expect children to do too much too soon?
- When activities are designed, to what extent is the focus on what children should learn and practise and how all children will benefit?
- To what extent does the curriculum reflect children's starting points? Does it sufficiently emphasise the knowledge and skills that children need to learn so that they are not held back later?

Pedagogy considerations for leaders

- How do you make sure that all children get enough practice to become fluent in using important foundational knowledge?
- How are tasks broken down to focus on small steps of learning and to prepare children for what comes next?
- What routines help children to maintain attention without overloading their working memory?
- How are distractions kept to a minimum to help children focus?
- Does instruction involve all children, including those who find learning more difficult?
- How do you make sure that children with lower starting points have enough opportunities to interact with adults?
- To what extent have you considered what children are thinking during play-based learning?
- Do all staff understand how play can develop children's language and executive functioning and help them to learn important knowledge?
- Do staff know how to address children's speech, language and communication difficulties?

Personal development, behaviour and attitudes considerations for leaders

- How do you help children to get on with others and learn well? In particular, how do you help children who have less previous experience of this than others?
- How do you make sure that activities enable children to learn and to be able to do what you expect? How do you make sure that activities are not too complicated?

Appendix 2: Template report for a learning walk

Learning walks are where a governor goes around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area. You are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils. Use this as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Part 1: Plan the walk	
Name and role of governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Agreed focus <i>Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that have not been agreed with the member of staff.</i>	
Relevant school objective or priority <i>This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SIP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.</i>	
Questions to ask <i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SIP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit. Share these questions with the staff member you are visiting in advance, so they can prepare.</i>	

Part 2: On the walk

General notes from discussions with staff

Tips:

- *Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who', 'where' and 'can you show me ...'*
- *Don't be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with*
- *Remember you are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them*
- *When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers*

General notes from discussions with pupils

Remember:

- *Do not ask them for pupils' views on a specific teacher*
- *Do not record pupils' names*

General notes on the school environment and overall atmosphere

Note:

- *Whether the Governors' vision of the school is replicated on the ground*
- *Any issues with the school site you see, e.g. broken equipment or lack of resources*



GOVERNOR MONITORING VISIT

What successes stood out on the learning walk and why?

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the Headteacher or chair of Governors