

Governor Learning Walk and Visits Policy

#1

This policy was written during the Summer Term 2023.

It will be reviewed every 2 years.

DATE AGREED BY FULL GOVERNING BODY:	20/09/23
REVIEW DATE:	September 2026
REVIEW CYCLE:	3 years
AUTHOR:	Mrs Justine Watkins and Miss Angela Britten
HEADTEACHER:	Mrs Justine Watkins
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS:	Miss Angela Britten
SIGNED:	
TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH:	Aims of the School Instrument of Government Scheme of Delegation, Standing Orders for the Procedural Workings of the Governing Body Committee Terms of Reference Code of Conduct for School Governors.

Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England VC Primary School

Life in all its fullness (John 10:10)

Governor Learning Walk and Visits Policy #1

Context

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking learning walks and visits which focus on an aspect of the SDP and / or one of the Governors' statutory duties demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. Each Governor is encouraged to make one visit a term (3 times a year) during school time to monitor an area of the School Development Plan in accordance with the agreed timetable.

Visits enable Governors to:

- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Get to know the staff and demonstrate their commitment to the school
- Give active support to the staff and the activities of the school
- Be aware of the effect of change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- Evaluate resources and discuss with staff further requirements
- Gain first-hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- Work in partnership with the staff
- Focus on the area or subject assigned to the governor

Before making a visit Governors will:

- Contact the Headteacher or email the teacher and agree a date, time and focus for the visit
- Plan which classes will be visited
- Headteacher and/or the middle leaders ensure that all staff are aware of the visit and the expectations on them.

On the day of the visit the Governor will remember to:

- Arrive on time and clarify the timetable with the admin officer or middle leader
- Act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering
- Be calm and enjoy the visit

After the visit the Governor will:

- Remember to thank the teachers and children
- Meet with the Headteacher or middle leader to give a verbal report, and to raise any issues that arose
- Complete the Governor Visit Proforma, reporting on the focus. The completed form should be given to the Headteacher and then, after any possible agreed alterations, the form will be circulated via email to the governing body and relevant staff
- Governors must report without giving opinions and every effort should be sought to ensure individuals are not identified.

It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements should not be made arbitrarily. The visit is not about:

- Inspection
- Making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on your own children

- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school by staff. It is important that Governors remember to respect the professionals and the children, support the Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed then Governor Visits will be an enjoyable experience for all involved and will result in effective monitoring by the Governing Body, which will contribute to school improvement.

Guidelines for Governors

It is important for all parties to note that governors' visits are not a form of inspection and do not involve governors making a judgement about teaching in any official capacity. That remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and other education professionals.

It might be wise for governors to avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present. It can cause discomfort for everyone! They should also be aware of 'pursuing personal agendas' and make sure they fulfil the code of conduct as outlined in all of the school's policies.

Please remember that members of staff are busy and first priority must be the children. There may be times when arrangements have to be changed or alterations made. Please be sensitive to the circumstances and flexible in your expectations. No two days are ever the same. Keep an open mind about what you see. Education and classrooms have changed a great deal since you were at school and practice is very different. Don't expect to see the formal type of lesson you might remember from your own childhood. By all means ask questions (preferably at the end of the lesson) but be sensitive to the extra demands of differentiation and inclusion that teachers now face.

	Always	Never
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange details of visit. • Agree purpose of visit • Discuss the context of the lesson to be observed. • Agree role within the lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn up unannounced
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume a different role • Walk in with a clipboard • Interrupt the teacher • Distract the pupils from their task
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the teacher and the pupils • Discuss the visit with the teacher at their convenience • Feedback to the governing body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave without acknowledgement • Break rules of confidentiality

Suggested Questions taken from National Governance Association and other documents

Through our monitoring visits we are really trying to answer the following three questions:

- What was the purpose of what you are doing?
- What was the outcome for children?
- How can we monitor/show the impact?

Examples of what a visit could focus on include:

- The use of resources such as how the premises are utilised, a new teaching resource in action or a demonstration of an IT system.
- Monitoring the implementation of a particular policy for example safeguarding, homework, lesson planning
- Monitoring progress towards specific targets from the school development plan for example learning about the strategy adopted and how this translates through to classroom practice and children's learning
- Gaining an understanding of a particular curriculum area or year group
- Gaining an understanding of the process of assessment and tracking pupil cohorts
- Gaining an understanding of how a particular issue (e.g. provision of ICT, boys' achievement, progress of SEN / disadvantaged children) is dealt with on a day-to-day basis

During any visit to the school it is important to remember that the role of those governing is strategic, not operational.

Visits by members of the governing board should not be confused with inspections. For example, if the focus of the visit is the Health and Safety policy, acceptable activities would be to seek an understanding of how the policy is managed, how staff are made aware of the policy, about any issues and how they have been dealt with, what lessons have been learned when things go wrong, how health and safety is audited and how the findings are acted upon. It is not within the remit of the governing board for individual members of the board to tour the school carrying out health and safety checks. Even if you have this expertise through your job, this should be left to professionals contracted by the school for that purpose. It would be useful to highlight the questions you want to ask in advance of the visit.

Example Questions for the board to ask senior leaders, but this is just a selection of suggestions and is CERTAINLY NOT A CHECKLIST. Please select those you think are appropriate for your meeting. No-one should be expected to answer all of this!

- What is our curriculum rationale? What are the key curriculum drivers in this school? (e.g. The National Curriculum, local curriculum, league tables, Ofsted, pupil needs. What is the balance of these?)
- How do we ensure our pupils receive a broad and balanced education?
- How do we know that the curriculum meets the particular needs of each of our pupils?
- How do you ensure there is an appropriate balance in terms of subjects?
- If there were no rules, how would you change the curriculum? If so, what's stopping you?
- How do you ensure that the curriculum across the school promotes the ethos of the school and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?
- What do internal assessments by staff tell us and parents? Is it just pupils' progress through the curriculum? Or does it tell us about the skills, values, and personal qualities they've developed? How does it help parents support their child's learning?
- How could the curriculum be made more exciting/stand out more?
- Have you asked the pupils what they want from the curriculum? And what did they say?
- How are staff encouraged to be more innovative about the teaching of the curriculum?
- How do you know that our assessment systems are robust and accurately measure pupils' progress?
- How are teachers communicating the results of their assessment to pupils and parents?
- What feedback have we had from parents about how well this is done?
- What proportion of the week do pupils spend on the National Curriculum? Is this too much? Too little? Or about right?
- What impact does the behaviour policy have on classroom practice – how do you know?
- How do you monitor whether the behaviour policy is being applied consistently across the school?
- How do you assess/monitor pupils' attitudes to learning?
- What is your vision for the subject? Do you have a set of minimum expectations?
- What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress across the school in this subject?
- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?

- What resources does the school have for the subject and how are these organised? Are there any additional resource needs?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching this subject?

Governor Name	
Focus of visit (curriculum / area)	
Date of Visit	
Focus of Learning Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gather evidence and focus on the curriculum role (subject area) assigned to you as governor. • To make links to the SDP in relation to your visit.
Classes / Staff Visited	
Summary of the learning walk: discussions with staff and pupils, looking at resources, lunchtime, share the children's learning and books etc. (where / when possible).	
What I learned as a result of my visit / discussion around impact of current strategies etc in terms of the School Development Plan (evidence of 5 a Day, evidence based on the discussion with the subject leader – if appropriate).	
Positive comments about the focus:	
Aspects I would like clarified / questions I have for the Headteacher and Teaching and Learning Lead:	

Ideas for focus of next visit / any areas to discuss with the FGB, following the visit:

Signed: _____
(Governor)

Signed: _____
(Headteacher / Teaching and Learning Lead)