

Hunstanton Primary School



Governor Visit Policy

Approved by:	Governing body
Approval date:	November 2024
Review cycle:	Every three years
Review date:	November 2027
Person responsible:	Headteacher

The purpose of this policy

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their school and must monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in this respect. Through the school, governors can get to know it better and build stronger relationships with the school community. The governing body is a corporate body and every governor will visit the school as a representative member of that body, not as an individual. An effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding, benefits the whole school community. Governors should be mindful that it is part of the Headteacher's responsibility to manage the school and staff in accordance with the aims, objectives and policies which have been approved by the governing body. This policy will provide an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out their visits to Hunstanton Primary School.

Governors' school visits provide an excellent opportunity to:

- gain a deeper understanding of how the school works and the teaching and learning process
- build stronger relationships with the school community, based on trust and respect
- demonstrate to staff that governors take their role seriously, are interested in and value the work of the school
- recognise and celebrate staff and pupil achievement
- monitor the implementation of school policies in action and assist the governing body to evaluate their impact.
- collect evidence to contribute to the monitoring of progress of elements within the school's development or improvement plan and assist the governing body to evaluate their impact
- enable individual governors to ask informed and challenging questions at governing body meetings and to inform collective decision making
- find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

Formal visits

In consultation with the Headteacher and staff, the governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school activity, and each visit should have a clear focus. Visits may be linked to priorities in the School Improvement and Development Plan and may not be confined to the classroom. A programme of monitoring visits will be devised by the Headteacher at the beginning of each academic year and governor roles and responsibilities will be allocated at the first full governing body meeting of the academic year.

Governors' visits might focus on:

- The implementation and impact of a key policy
- Progress in an aspect of the School Improvement and Development Plan
- Progress on areas identified during an Ofsted inspection
- Provision for identified groups e.g. Pupil Premium or Special Educational Needs
- Particular subjects, key stages or classes e.g. English, Maths etc.
- The use made of the buildings, the site or resources
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Health & safety
- Extended Services including Extra-Curricular activities
- Pupil participation e.g. attend a school council meeting
- Deployment of staff
- The impact on the school of any key changes e.g. impact of increased staffing in support roles
- Educational Visits – provision and impact
- Collective Worship

In addition to any special focus to a visit, governors may learn more about some of the following areas:

- Availability, deployment and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils
- Relationships
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- How different abilities are catered for with differentiated tasks
- Examples of children and young people's work, written and oral
- Displays in open areas and classrooms e.g. learning walls, reflection of community in images round the school.
- Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space and working conditions
- Classroom facilities: lighting, layout, storage, furniture and décor
- Facilities for outdoor play and learning outside the classroom.

- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources and associated storage

Informal visits

Governors who visit the school informally do so in a more personal capacity, much as a parent might do, but always with the knowledge and approval of the headteacher. Such visits add to individual governors' knowledge and understanding of the school and can strengthen relationships and foster trust and respect between governors and staff and the wider School Community. Governors should always reply to special invitations and make an effort to attend. An encouraging 'thank you' letter following the event may be welcomed by the staff and pupils.

Informal visits can take many forms, e.g. attending school assemblies, open days and events; accompanying school trips; helping in class or running a stall at the school fair.

Informal visits are a valuable complement to formal visits – not an alternative.

Before the visit

- *Agree a mutually convenient time to visit with the Headteacher/class teacher or head of department. Avoid stressful or busy periods in the School calendar*
- *Clarify the purpose of the visit and agree this with the Headteacher and relevant staff. Agree together how best to approach the identified focus to make effective use of everyone's time.*
- *Agree how you will be introduced to the children and young people and the extent to which you will be involved in any activity or lesson*
- *Prepare for your visit by reading any relevant documents*
- *Ensure that you are aware of the core principles underlying the governor visits at your School and abide by them.*

During the visit

- **Remember this is a visit, not an inspection.** *Governors are visiting to learn more about the School and to gather information to inform decision making by the governing body. It is not the governors' role to judge the quality of the teaching. Monitoring staff performance and the quality of teaching and learning is the job of the Headteacher.*
- *Remember that you are an invited guest.*
- *Be aware of, and adhere to, the School's Safeguarding policies and procedures.*
- *Be punctual, sign in and wear a name badge.*
- *Try hard not to disrupt the normal working of the School by monopolising the teacher's time.*
- *Smile and listen. Try to relax and enjoy yourself.*

- *Think carefully about what you say and do. Remember that a visit by a governor can be stressful for staff. Be courteous, tactful, positive and interested. Avoid criticism e.g. Never make a comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.*
- *Try not to draw too much attention to yourself. Avoid overtly making notes as this can be disconcerting. Instead, write down your thoughts as soon afterwards as is practical.*
- *Remember that you are representing the governing body. Governors should be prepared to explain policies, but should avoid giving personal opinions which could be misinterpreted as the views of the governing body.*
- *Avoid making promises on behalf of the governing body.*
- *Only go into the staffroom if you are invited to do so.*
- *Observe previously agreed levels of confidentiality.*
- *Remember to thank the staff for supporting you in your role as governor.*

After the visit

- *Discuss your visit with the Headteacher and agree a draft of any written report with the Headteacher, and with staff, as appropriate. Be prepared to take the comments of others on board before you circulate your report to governors and the clerk.*
- *Send a note to thank the relevant staff. Be open and honest; recognise and celebrate achievement.*
- *Reflect upon your visit. Your views will inform the review of the policy and procedures.*

Reporting on your visit

Following a visit, governors will share their impressions with the governing body by completing a copy of the monitoring form attached to this policy. Copies of the monitoring reports should be given to the Headteacher and Clerk and subsequently made available to governors on GovernorHub.

Evaluating the visit

Following a visit, governors may reflect on the following questions:

- How did the visit go?
- Were you clear about your objectives?
- What, if anything would you do differently next time?
- Are there further areas you would like to explore?

- How has the visit helped you, the School and/or the governing body? E.g. in collecting monitoring evidence, in greater understanding of a particular aspect.

Monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at full governing body meetings. This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. The governing body will consider if governor visits are contributing to the information that the governing body has about progress towards meeting priorities and targets identified in the School Improvement and Development Plan.

Governor monitoring area:	
Date Attended:	Name of Attendee:
Outline of monitoring visit:	
Links to SIDP / Curriculum Development:	
Action points:	