




## Governor Monitoring Visits Policy

Policy Originator	Staff consulted: <i>November/December 2023</i>
Governor Responsible	Chair of Governors
Last reviewed	Spring 2024
Ratified on	27.03.2024
Review period	Annual
Signed	

## **Context**

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. The Governors visiting programme is an integral part of the school's yearly monitoring calendar.

The Campsbourne School and Extended Services Governing Body aim to visit the school each month to focus on an aspect of the School Development Plan or one of the Governors statutory duties. Each Governor is encouraged to make at least one visit a year during school time and governors will often monitor an area of the School Development Plan in pairs in accordance with the agreed timetable.

### **Visits enable Governors to:-**

- See the school at work and see 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

### **Before making a visit** Governors will:-

- Contact the member of staff and agree a date, time and focus for the visit
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit including any information which they would like available e.g. assessment data, children books etc
- Draw up a timetable for the visit with the member of staff including any learning walks which involve planned class visits. class

### **On the day of the visit** Governors will remember to:-

- Arrive on time and clarify the timetable with the member of staff
- Act as a guest and only participate in a class at the invitation of the teacher
- Ask questions which enable a greater understanding of their area of responsibility and provide challenge for the staff member
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering

### **After the visit** Governors will:-

- Remember to thank the teachers and children
- Complete the Governor Visit Proforma, reporting on the focus. The completed form should be given to the member of staff and then, after any possible alterations, forwarded to the Head Teacher before circulating to the governing body and staff
- Governors must report without giving opinions and where possible individuals should not be able to be 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 Head teacher 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**

Advice on conducting learning walks

### **Rationale**

The Governing Body at Campsbourne School and Extended Services has a responsibility to keep in touch with what is happening in the classroom. Although their role is strategic, it is important that they have some understanding of the practicalities of the job. Meeting children, talking to staff and seeing lessons underway will help members of the Governing Body to understand some of the issues they are required to discuss and make decisions about with greater clarity.

### **Objectives**

Members of the Governing Body should aim to:

- Inform their decision-making by having visited the school at least once during the year.
- Be aware of the feelings of members of staff and the issues they face by having had a more lengthy discussion with at least one member of staff during the year.
- Read and keep up-to-date with school newsletters and other documents that are set out.
- Introduce themselves and spend time discussing the school with some of the children from the school.

### **The benefits of visiting classrooms**

- Provide governors with a better understand of the challenges staff have to manage.
- Develop closer links between governors and teachers

### **For governors these include:-**

- More informed understanding of classroom life and practice.
- Opportunity to meet and chat with the children.
- Opportunity to meet class teachers and put faces to names.
- Seeing policies and schemes of work in action
- Finding out what resources are being used and what are needed.

### **For Teachers these include:-**

- Opportunity to find out more about the role of the Governors.
- Having the chance to illustrate the theory and policy in practice.
- Opportunity to draw attention to any issues or questions they wish to raise.
- Opportunity to reflect upon practice through discussion.

### **What to Avoid**

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 Head teacher and other education professionals.

It might be wise for governors to avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present. They should also be aware of 'pursuing personal agendas' and make sure they fulfil the code of conduct.

Please remember that members of staff are very busy people whose 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.

### Ground Rules

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Never</b>
Before	-Arrange details of visit. -Agree purpose of visit -Discuss the context of the class to be visited.	-Turn up unannounced
During	-Keep questions for the class teacher until after the visit is over -Remember confidentiality -Stick to the times and purpose agreed -Be sensitive to the mood in the classroom and the expectations of the children.	-Assume a different role -Walk in with a clipboard -Interrupt the teacher -Distract the pupils from their task
After	-Thank the teacher and the pupils -Feedback to the governing body	-Leave without acknowledgement -Break rules of confidentiality

### Conducting the Learning Walk

After planning your learning walk with the class teacher or subject coordinator you might have agreed to:

- Talk to the children about what they are doing
- Meet with the class teacher or coordinator to discuss particular issues or set the context

Please remember that visits do not require judgement on the teacher.

It might also be useful to clarify some 'what ifs' beforehand. For example

- What if I see children misbehaving when the teacher doesn't?
- What if a pupil asks me how to do something?
- What if I have a suggestion to make?

### Providing Feedback

It is important that a time is agreed between yourself and the staff member to discuss the learning walk you have taken part in or visited. During this feedback you might refer to notes you have made. The structure might include:

1. Asking the staff member for any further clarification of the lessons or for their views on how it went.

2. Giving your own impressions on what you saw
3. Providing any positive comment.
4. Raising any issues that appeared to develop.
5. Any further questions you might have
6. A summary of the feedback you will be giving to the governing body.

At the end of the feedback both you and the staff member should be clear about what you will be sharing with the governing body- there should be no surprises!

The **Governors' Learning Walk** pro forma should be completed as soon as possible after the visit. It should reflect the discussion you have had with the teacher.

The report should be copied to:

- The Head teacher
- The member of staff concerned
- The clerk to the governors

### **Policy Review**

The policy should be reviewed every year. The key questions should be:

- Has every Governor visited at least one lesson during the year?
- Has every Governor had a conversation with the subject leader they are linked to?
- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits identified in this policy?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make policy and practice even better?

## Proforma for Governor Visits and Learning Walks

Part 1: Plan the walk	
<b>Name and role of governor(s)</b> Link Governor Role	
<b>Name and role of staff member(s)</b>	
<b>Date and time of visit</b>	
<b>Agreed focus</b> <i>Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that haven't been agreed with the member of staff. This should be purposeful visit.</i>	<i>E.g. To see the implementation of the new strategy to improve attainment of Key Stage (KS) 2 boys.</i>  <i>What are you hoping to see, hear and learn?</i>
<b>Relevant school objective or priority</b> <i>This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SIP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.</i>	<i>Percentage of pupils achieving 'greater depth' in writing improves at KS2.</i>
<b>Safeguarding Focus Question</b>	
<b>EDI Focus Question</b>	
<b>Questions to ask</b> <i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SIP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit.</i>  <i>Share these questions with the staff member you're <u>visiting in advance</u>, so they can prepare.</i>	<i>Ask staff: what do you do if you think a student needs further support?</i>  <i>Ask pupils: if you need help with something, what do you do?</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're 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:*

- *Don't ask them for views on a specific teacher*
- *Don't record pupils' names*
- *How does what you observed, learnt link to outcomes for learners*

### General notes on the school environment and overall atmosphere

#### *Note:*

- *Whether the governors' vision and view of the school is replicated on the ground*
- *Any issues with the school site you see e.g. broken equipment or lack of resources*
- *What did you learn? Record good practice,*

**What I have learnt and what I wish to feed back to the board, school**

*Aspects I would like clarified/questions that I have*

*Record any learning, Impacts*

**Discussion points for the governing board / link governors**

*What specific area requires feedback?*

**Anything else you would like to tell me today**

*Any further info required?*

*A follow-up visit required to understand development, progress etc*





*Signed:* \_\_\_\_\_

*(Governor/Member)*