


Sparsholt C of E Primary School

Governor Visits Policy 2022-2025



Review Frequency	3 yearly
Reviewed by Full Governing Body	October 2022
Review Date	October 2025
Statutory or Non-Statutory	Non-statutory
Signature of Headteacher	
Signature of Chair	

Introduction

Our vision is to ensure that our school is at the heart of the community, enthusiastically delivering an outstanding education so that all our children experience a rich and diverse curriculum, in a nurturing environment that inspires them to become responsible global citizens. Our core Christian values of Courage, Compassion and Creativity are at the centre of our school community. Our governors are expected to carry out their role with this vision and these values in mind.

Rationale

In order to develop governors' understanding of the school, there is an expectation that governors will need to be able to visit. These visits enable governors to fulfil their statutory responsibility, increasing the governing body's first-hand knowledge, helping to inform their strategic decision making and allowing them to complete any necessary required checks. While visits to the school by governors can be useful and informative, they do not replace professional inspection or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the Head Teacher.

Governor monitoring can take several forms including pupil interviews, meeting with staff, walking around the school or entering classrooms. The purpose of this document is to ensure that governors have clear protocols to guide them. These protocols pay regard to the professional role that all staff including teachers and learning support assistants undertake.

Governors are linked to a priority within the School Improvement Plan, and in their role, they monitor the development and implementation of this part of the plan. The Governors report progress back as appropriate to the Curriculum Committee, Finance & Staffing Committee or Full Governing Body (each to be referred to as a Committee).

The governing body should plan visits that monitor & evaluate the objectives within the School Improvement Plan and each visit should have a clear purpose. In addition, there should be regular visits by the link governors for health and safety, special educational needs/disabilities, safeguarding and others as agreed between a Committee and the Head Teacher.

Annual programme of visits

A programme of governor visits should be planned and spread evenly across the school year in consultation with the Head Teacher and the respective Committee.

The Head Teacher should make sure that no individual staff member is overburdened by these visits, ensuring that the number of visits is appropriate, reasonable and agreed in advance.

Purposes of governor visits

Visits may take place in a formal or informal capacity. It is vital that everyone is clear about the capacity in which they are visiting and not to confuse the role. There may be occasions when governors visit the school, but they are not acting in their formal governor role. Examples include:

- ❖ To provide support at a school event
- ❖ To help in a class
- ❖ To speak to a teacher in relation to their own child
- ❖ Attend a school function or educational visit.

This policy applies to visits where a governor is acting in their formal governor role. The overriding purpose of a formal governor visit is to gather evidence. Where visits by governors are undertaken, the outcomes should be used for whole school evaluation purposes but must not be used to make judgements about the competence of individual staff members. For example, it should never be reported that “it was a good lesson” or that a specific person “succeeded or failed to do this or that”.

'Monitoring visits' are where individual governors go into the school to do the following:

- ❖ see how specific aspects of the school work in practice; and/or
- ❖ to check progress is being made towards the School's Improvement Plan; and / or
- ❖ to check progress is being made towards the school's strategic objectives; and / or
- ❖ complete specific checks which are agreed in advance with the Head Teacher.

Visits allow governors to ask, and witness, whether the things people say are happening are actually happening. They might involve a 'learning walk', where governors are taken around the school to chat to staff and pupils, or a sit-down meeting with a relevant staff member.

They are not for governors to make an inspection of the school, judge individual staff members or interfere with the day-to-day running of the school.

While notes may be taken about the specific agreed focus (see Appendix), there should be no written notes about an individual member of staff or pupil. The written record of the visit should:

- ❖ share generalised observations and outcomes around the agreed focus; and /or
- ❖ report on the agreed checks.

Should any governor have any specific concern regarding safeguarding during a visit, then this should be addressed immediately to the Head Teacher or acted upon in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy which shall override this Policy if applicable.

Monitoring and review of school's governor visit programme

The school's governor visit programme should be monitored and reviewed annually by the Committee to which they are reporting the visit. Governors should review:

- ❖ Whether the visits are achieving the potential benefits they anticipated
- ❖ Whether there have been any unexpected benefits
- ❖ The ways in which the practice can be further improved

Preparing for a governor visit (for all visits)

Governors should:

- ❖ Check this policy.
- ❖ Read The Key for Governors online How-to guide for Governor school visits and Questions to ask.
- ❖ Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and general data protection regulations.

General protocols for governor visit

During the visit governors should:

- ❖ Remember they are making the visit on behalf of the governing body.
- ❖ Be punctual.
- ❖ Always wear a governor's badge.
- ❖ Be friendly but professional
- ❖ Dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils.
- ❖ Keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible.
- ❖ Be courteous and friendly.
- ❖ Not lose sight of the purpose of your visit.
- ❖ Listen to staff and pupils.
- ❖ Comply with any specific protocols for their visit (see appendices).

After the visit governors should:

- ❖ Discuss what they have observed with the member of staff who hosted the visit.
- ❖ Clarify any issue they are unclear about.
- ❖ Thank the staff member for supporting them in their role as a governor.
- ❖ Be open, honest and positive.
- ❖ Complete Governor Visit Report as soon as possible while it is still fresh in the mind (a template attached in the appendices is to be used where appropriate).
- ❖ Submit their draft report to the Head Teacher and any staff involved for their comment.

- ❖ Incorporate in the visit report any comments which the Head Teacher wishes to attach in an addendum to the report.
- ❖ Reflect on how and whether the visit has helped the governing body fulfil its duties.
- ❖ Submit their report to the Clerk to the Governors to be sent out with the agenda for the appropriate Committee meeting.
- ❖ Provide verbal feedback of the visit at the next Committee meeting.

Appendices

Additional details for governor curriculum visits

What governor curriculum visits are ...

- ❖ To recognise and celebrate success.
- ❖ To develop relationships with the staff.
- ❖ To get to know the children.
- ❖ To recognise different teaching styles.
- ❖ To understand the environment in which teachers teach.
- ❖ To inform decision making.
- ❖ To ensure governors understand the reality of the curriculum.
- ❖ To monitor policies in action i.e. See for yourself whether the school is implementing the policies and actions in the School Improvement Plan and learn how these policies and actions work in practice.
- ❖ To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them.
- ❖ To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities.
- ❖ To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion.
- ❖ To demonstrate to staff that accountability is robust in your school.
- ❖ To see evidence that the school's vision and values are at the centre of the school community.

Preparing for a governor visit (curriculum or Subject Lead)

In addition to general visit preparations, governors should:

- ❖ Notify the Head Teacher and the Curriculum Chair before scheduling a visit, even if the Head Teacher will not be involved in the visit.
- ❖ Clarify the purpose of the visit with the Head Teacher.
- ❖ Discuss an agenda with the Head Teacher and subject lead well in advance.
- ❖ Make sure that the date and time chosen is suitable.
- ❖ Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time.
- ❖ Ask how they would like governors to participate during the visit.
- ❖ Agree a recording method for the visit. Photographs are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the Head Teacher for a specific purpose.
- ❖ Be clear beforehand exactly what you are looking for.
- ❖ Prepare any specific questions and submit to staff in advance so everyone can feel properly prepared.

Specific Protocols for Governor curriculum visits

In addition to general visit protocols, governors should:

- ❖ Decide with the teacher how they will be introduced to the class and what their role in the curriculum will be.
- ❖ Get involved with the children, but check with teachers before speaking to pupils
- ❖ Remember it is a visit not an inspection.
- ❖ Observe discretely.
- ❖ Avoid distracting the teacher during the lesson from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest.

Additional Details for Governor Health and Safety Visits

The objectives of governor H&S visits

- ❖ To complete a range of checks agreed between the Head Teacher and the Finance and Staffing Committee.
- ❖ To ensure governors understand the reality of Health & Safety in the school.
- ❖ To monitor policies in action i.e. See for yourself whether the school is implementing the policies and learn how these policies and actions work in practice.
- ❖ To develop relationships with the staff.
- ❖ To inform decision making.
- ❖ To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them.
- ❖ To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities.
- ❖ To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion.
- ❖ To demonstrate to staff that accountability is robust in your school.
- ❖ To see evidence that the school's vision and values are at the centre of the school community.

Preparing for a governor visit (Health and Safety)

In addition to general visit preparations, governors should:

- ❖ Notify the Head Teacher and the school's H&S lead before scheduling a visit, even if the Head Teacher will not be involved in the visit.
- ❖ Confirm an agenda with the Head Teacher and H&S lead well in advance.
- ❖ Make sure that the date and time chosen is suitable.
- ❖ Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time.
- ❖ Prepare any specific questions and submit to staff in advance so everyone can feel properly prepared.

Specific Protocols for Governor Health and Safety visits

In addition to general visit protocols, governors should:

- ❖ Avoid interrupting lessons where possible and where it is necessary keep this to a minimum.
- ❖ Only use Photographs when specifically agreed with the Head Teacher for a specific and necessary purpose.



General Governor Visit Report

Name of Governor:	Date of visit:
Reason for visit:	Classes/staff visited:
Summary of activities e.g. talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch etc.:	
Report on any checks completed:	
What have I learned as a result of my visit:	Positive comments about the visit:
Aspects I would like clarified/questions I have:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any Safeguarding issues seen on visit? Please write a brief description and make the Headteacher and Safeguarding Governor aware.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any H&S issues seen on visit? Please write a brief description and make the Headteacher and H&S Governor aware.
Any other comments:	
Signed _____ (Governor)	Signed _____ (Visit Host/ Head Teacher)



Curriculum Governor Visit Report

Name of Governor:	Date of visit:
Focus of visit (linked to SIP):	Classes/staff visited:
Summary of activities e.g. talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch etc.:	
What have I learned as a result of my visit:	Positive comments about the visit:
Aspects I would like clarified/questions I have:	
Ideas for future visits (linked to SIP):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Any Safeguarding issues seen on visit? Please write a brief description and make the Headteacher and Safeguarding Governor aware.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Any H&S issues seen on visit? Please write a brief description and make the Headteacher and H&S Governor aware.	
Any other comments:	
Signed _____ (Governor)	Signed _____ (Headteacher)



Health & Safety Link Governor Visit

Name of Governor: Visit Host:	Date of visit:
Visit # (from H&S Annual Governor Monitoring Plan):	Items from the annual plan not covered / additional items:
Summary of Discussion Topics:	
Summary of Procedure Audit and Policy Discussion	
Summary of Other Checks:	
Any concerns identified during the visit:	Positive comments about the visit:
Aspects I would like clarified/questions I have:	
Key learnings from the visit:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Any Safeguarding issues seen on visit? Please write a brief description and make the Headteacher and Safeguarding Governor aware.	
Any other comments:	
Signed _____ (Governor)	Signed _____ (Visit Host)