



Ranelagh Primary School

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Governor Visits Policy

Reviewed on: 9th December 2024

Next Review due: Autumn 2026

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. A.', written over a horizontal line.

Chair of Governors

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Hopper', written over a horizontal line.

Headteacher

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their schools and must monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. Through visiting our School, the governors can get to know it better. There must be an effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding and trust, which benefits the whole School community. This policy will provide an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out School visits.

A Governing Body has a duty to oversee the direction and policies of the school, to monitor its standards and to be held accountable for its conduct and performance.

Visits are a vital part of the strategic programme to help the Governing body fulfil its statutory duties and improve Governor knowledge of the school, its staff, needs, priorities, strengths and weaknesses. Visits help to monitor and assess the priorities as outlined in the school development plan and the progress being made towards these goals. Visits enable Governors to monitor and evaluate plans, budgets, standards of education and achievement and hold school leaders accountable for performance.

Governor visits will be in accordance with a programme of monitoring allowing the Governing body to oversee performance in all areas of the school alongside individual areas of responsibility. Each Governor will make at least one monitoring visit focusing on a specific area of the school development plan per year.

Visits Procedure

Visits will be arranged directly with the member of staff involved in accordance with the agreed monitoring schedule. The headteacher should be informed that the visit is taking place, the focus of the visit and the link to the School Development Plan. Governors should never visit unannounced. They should prepare for their visit by reviewing the action points in the school development plan and discussing with the member of staff involved what the focus of the visit is going to be and how the Governor will interact with staff and pupils during the visit.

Governors will sign in at reception and wear their identity badges throughout their visit. They will wait to be invited into the classroom and introduced to pupils. Governors will be courteous, interested and positive throughout their visit. If notes are being taken during the visit Governors will inform staff in advance. School safeguarding policies and confidentiality will be adhered to during all visits.

At the conclusion of the visit Governors will sign out and inform staff they have left the building.

Governor monitoring forms (Appendix B) should be completed as soon as possible following the visit; a copy should be placed in the visits folder. The report is to be presented at the next FGB meeting and the findings and next steps discussed. If there are any questions or concerns regarding the visit, these should be discussed with the Headteacher as soon as possible.

Helpful questions to consider

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

A week before a classroom visit there are some questions you should clarify with the Headteacher or teacher:

- When I come into the classroom, where would you like me to sit?
- What should I do if a pupil asks for help?
- Would you like me to be involved in the lesson?
- Do you mind me asking pertinent questions if I'm not sure about detail when helping pupils?
- What should I do if I see a pupil behaving inappropriately?
- What should I do if the teacher has problems controlling the class?

THE FOCUS OF THE VISIT

Remember a visit can be either to see the school generally in operation or a specific classroom visit. Visits can focus on the following:

The School in Operation

- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- The use made of buildings and premises
- Security on site
- Break and lunch times
- The monitoring of Health and Safety
- The use and condition of resources, for example furniture and subject equipment
- Office procedures, for example budget monitoring
- To see a class or teacher led assembly (to see how well information is provided)
- Pupil behaviour around the school

The Classroom Visit

- Observation of particular curriculum areas
- The implementation of the curriculum
- Gain an understanding of the process of assessment and tracking pupil cohorts and their attainment
- Assessing a group of pupils working together on a task
- The impact of learning on educational visits
- The impact of class sizes
- The deployment of support staff
- To see a class or teacher led assembly (to consider SMSC)
- Pupil Voice
- Behaviour for Learning
- Work Scrutiny

School Development Focus (SDF)

These visits will be based around the following questions:

- how well leaders, managers and pursue excellence, modelling professional standards in all of their work?
- What is the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation?
- How does the school use performance management and effectiveness of strategies for improving teaching, including the extent to which the school takes account of the 'Teachers' Standards'?
- how well leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum raises outcomes for children?
- how well leaders and managers demonstrate the capacity to bring about further improvement?
- what is the impact of middle leadership and what is the extent to which schools are adequately developing their middle leadership / succession planning and the development of future leaders in the school?
- what is the impact of governance?
- how effectively does school promote the confidence and engagement of parents, including by encouraging the use of Parent View?
- what is the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements to ensure that there is safe recruitment and that all pupils are safe?

Learning Walks

The Governing Body oversees the strategic operation of the school so it is important that its members have a clear understanding of how the school works and how children are learning. To do this, it is suggested that governors undertake Learning Walks. These should be planned beforehand, be part of an annual schedule and be integral to the monitoring and evaluation calendar. Confidentiality should be emphasised and maintained at all times, during the planning, the implementation and in any follow-up discussions.

The purposes of Learning Walks are to;

- Increase Governors' knowledge and understanding of the school through seeing at first-hand how it operates.
- Experience the impact of plans and policies
- Demonstrate to the school community that Governors are taking their roles and responsibilities seriously
- Establish and develop good working relationships
- Be able to contribute effectively to the school's self-evaluation
- Show support and encouragement and be able to celebrate successes and achievements
- See evidence of work matching the individual needs of pupils
- Be able to see that resources and the learning environment are adapted to meets the needs as appropriate.
- There are different types of Learning Walks which should be tailored to the priorities of the school.

Specific subject focus

- A specific priority or strand within the School Development / Improvement Plan
- How children learn maths; how children learn in literacy; how well a particular programme is working or how children use ICT to learn etc
- Displays, resources and equipment used in that subject area
- Staff's contribution to that subject area

Specific aspect

- How Health and Safety is carried out and how policies are adhered to
- How the school ensures that it complies with all the requirements regarding Statutory Assessments (SATs, Teacher Assessment, returning papers)
- Behaviour
- Pupil Premium and its impact
- Inclusion and Disadvantaged Pupils
- Use of support staff to support children's learning
- Lunchtimes and break times
- Breakfast Club or after school activities
- How the school develops children's thinking skills

Following Learning Walks it is vital that there is feedback to key staff and that a record of the visit is completed and share with the Governing Body. Please see appendix C for a proforma for learning walks..



APPENDIX B - Governor's school monitoring visit

Formal monitoring visits are where you discuss 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.

Part 1: plan the visit

Name and role of governor(s)

Name and role of staff member(s)

Date and time of visit

Agreed focus

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.

Relevant school objective or priority

This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SIP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.

Questions to ask

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're visiting in advance, so they can prepare.

Part 2: in the meeting

What is the school doing within this area of focus?

Tips:

Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who' and 'where'

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 – you remain an observer

When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers and pupils

How do you know the school's actions are having an impact?

Remember:

Include specific evidence that demonstrates the positive impact the school is having in this area

Where a positive impact hasn't been made yet, note down why that is and what steps are being taken to make progress

Add any further evidence you'd like to see to help you make a better assessment of the impact

What successes stood out and why?

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the headteacher or chair of governors



APPENDIX C - Governor's learning walk

Learning walks are where you'll go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area. You're 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

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.

Relevant school objective or priority

This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SIP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.

Questions to ask

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're visiting in advance, so they can prepare.

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 pupils' views on a specific teacher

Don't 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

What successes stood out on the learning walk and why?

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Questions and clarifications to follow up with the headteacher or chair of governors