



Brompton Community Primary School Governors School Visits



Background

The Governing Body is the 'accountable body' in a school - accountable to parents, pupils, the local authority and Central Government through Ofsted. It is responsible for everything from Health and Safety and Child Protection to the school budget, Teaching and Learning and pupil progress. Because governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum, governors need to know what progress is being made towards targets set out in the school development plan (SDP). Visiting the classroom can help to support this process. The Governing Body has appointed link governors to act as the liaison between the governing body and Key Priorities of the SDP. The role of a link governor is as a source of support to the school and a source of information for the governing body. An integral part of the link governor role is to visit the school and view lessons/events to learn about the general running of the school. A governor should aim to make a visit to the school at least once a year.

Ofsted inspection assumes that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This depends on governors assessing performance data presented to them by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). It is also important to Ofsted that the governing body makes an impact on school improvement and visiting school to see it is in operation, and to be aware of standards and progress are important aspects of the crucial role.

It is important that visits are conducted in an appropriate way and the purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for visits with the following objectives:

- Appreciate and understand the work of the staff and how the pupils are learning
- Be aware of the response of pupils to their work and check that the pupils are aware of what they are learning
- Be aware of resource issues
- Be able to ask appropriate questions and hold discussions with the professionals
- Understand as fully as possible the meaning of the results of monitoring reported to them.
- To ensure that visits are conducted properly;
- To contribute to school improvement;

Governors are not inspectors and are not present in a lesson to make judgements about the professional expertise of the teachers. It would be inappropriate therefore for governors to:

- Make judgements about the quality of teaching
- Report on the progress of individual children
- Pursue personal agendas
- Monopolise teacher's time
- Arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas.

Format of visits

- a) The Governing Body, acting in consultation with the headteacher, will approve governor visits to take place throughout the school year. The number of visits will be based on the school development plan and its Key Priorities.
- b) Each visit will have a clear focus, linked to a particular Key Priority/ subject/curriculum area;
- c) It is the responsibility of the visiting governor to arrange the date and time of their visit with the headteacher at least two school weeks in advance and agree the purpose of the visit;
- d) At least one school week in advance, the headteacher will notify all appropriate staff of the date, time and purpose of the visit and arrange for any relevant information to be available for the visit;
- e) Governors visiting the school to observe lessons shall be present at the beginning of the lesson to:
 - Enable the governor to be introduced to pupils and explain the purpose of the visit;
 - Avoid disruption to lessons.

Aspects for consideration during the visit

- ✓ General ethos and atmosphere of the area/s visited;
- ✓ Health and Safety/Safeguarding (where appropriate)
- ✓ Pupil/Student behaviour and attitudes;
- ✓ Pupil/Student engagement in lessons;
- ✓ Relationships observed

Responsibilities of visiting Governors and Staff

- a) Visiting Governors and staff will be courteous and considerate at all times and respect the role that each has to fulfil;
- b) Governors will express their gratitude, and any immediate positive feedback to staff (and pupils) and provide verbal feedback to the headteacher at the conclusion of each visit;
- c) The Headteacher will provide feedback to appropriate staff as soon as possible after each visit;
- d) Governors will record their visits and observations (non-judgementally) in a written report for consideration at the next meeting of the governing body after sharing these with the headteacher.
(See sample report form below)
- e) All parties will agree any appropriate follow-up action;

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be adhered to regarding classroom visits. Observations and comments should be shared with the teacher concerned, and with the headteacher, but not with other staff or with parents. The approach of the governor should be to ask for explanations of anything not understood, not to make assumptions. Reports to the Governing Body should not identify individuals in a critical manner; this is not the role of the governor.

School Visits - an Aide Memoire:

What is the purpose of the visit?

What/who prompted me to visit school?

Is the reason specific or general?

What are my/other people's expectations?

How can my visit benefit the teacher?

How shall I carry it out?

What areas/activities am I interested in?

What age groups am I interested in?

Are there any questions that can be answered by observations?

What questions should I ask?

Who should I ask?

Did I achieve my aim?

Did I address the reason for my visit?

What difficulties did I meet and why?

Is there any follow up?

Have I recorded my experiences?

Did I report back to the Head and staff?

Have I prepared a short report for the next governors meeting?

How can I build on this for the next visit?

	Always	Never
Before	Arrange details of visit. Agree purpose of visit. Discuss content to be observed. Agree role within the lesson.	Turn up unannounced.
During	Keep to the role agreed Keep questions for the class teacher until after the visit is over Remember confidentiality Stick to times/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. Distract the pupils from their task.
After	Thank the teacher/pupils Discuss the visit at the teacher's convenience. Feedback to the Governing body.	Leave without acknowledgement Break rules of confidentiality.



Brompton Community Primary School

Governors Visit Report Form

Name of Governor:	Key Priority Area:	Date of visit:
Line of Enquiry:		
Class visited:	Class Teacher:	
Objectives/Focus of visit:		
Safeguarding:		
Summary of Activities (e.g. talking to staff/pupils, looking at resources):		
What have I learned?	Aspects I would like clarified/Questions I would like to raise:	
Positive comments about my visit and ideas for future visits:		
Signature of visiting governor:		
Date:		