

*'...those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.'* Isaiah 40:31

connect | nurture | aspire | learn | excel | hope

INSERT SCHOOL/ACADEMY LOGO
HERE

Multi Academy Trust Policy

Principles for Incorporation by Academy/School

Local Governing Body Visits and Monitoring Policy

Date adopted by Trust Board:

Date of Review:

Date of next Review:

Date Adopted by Local Governing Body

Context

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Local Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the Academy/School. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the Academy/School to account and evaluate its progress. The Governors visiting programme is an integral part of the Academy/Schools yearly monitoring calendar. At the XXXXX meeting held on XXXXX it was agreed that there would be a governor visit each month which would focus on an aspect of the 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 Development Plan in pairs in accordance with the agreed timetable.

Background

Visiting the Academy/School is the best way to learn how it functions, and to keep under review how it operates so that you can increase the Local Governing Body 's firsthand knowledge, informing strategic decision making. Through visits, governors will have the opportunity to observe policies and plans being implemented on a day-to-day basis, and their findings should help the whole Local Governing Body and its committees make well-informed judgements about progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the school improvement plan. It may not though be possible for every governor to be available during the day – this will depend on personal and work commitments. However, all governors should do some form of visits; the frequency and type of visit will vary according to availability and role.

Before the visit

Visits relate to the priorities determined by the School Improvement Plan and cover a broad range of school work. Each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose.

Governors should arrange these visits with the Headteacher who has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school.

Potential benefits

To governors

- Recognise and celebrate success
- Develop relationships with staff
- Get to know the children
- Recognise different teaching styles
- Understand the environment in which teachers teach
- Monitor policies in action
- Find out what resources are needed and prioritise them
- Deepen understanding and increase confidence and knowledge
- Inform decision-making

To teachers

- Ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- Get to know governors
- Understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- Have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- Highlight the need for particular resources

What a visit is not

- A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on progress of own children
- Pursuing personal agenda
- Monopolising school/teacher time

Roles and responsibilities of governors head teacher and other staff

The Local Governing Body will, with the help of the Headteacher and staff, organise an annual schedule of school visits throughout the year. The aim will be to achieve a minimum of one visit per governor per year. Visits may be conducted in pairs. The head teacher will guide the Local Governing Body on the areas of the curriculum; policies and school improvement plan priorities and targets to be covered each term. Individual governor or pairs of governors will, with the guidance of the whole Governing Body, identify an aspect of the school's work to focus on in order deepen their understanding.

Before the Visit

- Check the agreed policy for governors' visits
- Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the School Improvement Plan? What are the relevant Policies? How does this determine the activities I am interested in?
- Discuss an agenda with the head teacher, and or subject leader well in advance. Make sure that the date chosen is suitable.
- Use the school visits pro forma
- Send the proposed agenda to the staff involved. Ask how they want governors to integrate into the lesson or learning walk? It might be possible for you to see a copy of any documents beforehand. Discuss with the leader if any supporting information is available such as the Ofsted report, improvement plan or trend performance data.
- Be clear beforehand exactly what you are looking for. Try to prepare questions and submit to staff in advance.

During the Visit

- Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the Governing Body, it is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on behalf of the Governing Body.
- Be punctual, courteous and considerate at all times, respecting the professional roles of the head teacher and staff.
- Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the class will be
- Get involved with the children
- Remember it is a visit, not an inspection
- Observe discretely
- Don't distract the teacher during the lesson but be prepared to talk and show interest
- Interact, don't interrupt
- Listen to staff and pupils

Teachers and support staff will, at all times, be courteous and considerate, recognising the contribution made by the Local Governing Body to the school.

They will make practical suggestions on the focus for governors' visits so as to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This will include specifying the evidence that

could be shared with governors. See Annex A for a list of things which governors could examine/explore. Whenever practical they will invite their link/curriculum governors to relevant staff meetings and training sessions.

Questions will be invited from Governors while being sensitive to issues of confidentiality.

After the visit

- Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how?
- Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved
- Thank the teacher for supporting you in your role as a governor. Be open, honest, positive.
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind and share the report with the Head Teacher or subject leader for agreement that it is a true reflection of the visit.
- Reflect: how did that go? Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learnt more about the school? Have I gained more confidence in helping the Local Governing Body fulfil its duties?

Reporting your visit

- Write a short summary 'as a lay governor' of what you learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. This will be easier if the visit had a focus. See Appendix for our report format.
- You must circulate a draft to the head teacher and staff involved for them to check the accuracy and clarity. Be prepared to amend it. Aim to achieve a report that is agreed by all those involved.
- Circulate this at the next appropriate meeting.

Visit Focus'

Visits should be arranged which focus on the Academy/School Plan priorities to inform on progress. Although not an exhaustive list, visits may focus on:-

- Particular subjects, key stages or classes
- The use made of the building or the site
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Special educational needs
- Literacy and numeracy
- The use of ICT equipment
- The impact on the Academy/School of any changes e.g. reduced classes in key stage
- Impact of specific targets identified in the Improvement Plans
- Impact of Staff Development Training

Informal Visits

Visits may also take place in an informal capacity. It is vital that everyone is clear about the capacity in which they are visiting and not to confuse the role.

- Chair making a regular visit to the head teacher
- Volunteering at Academy/School events/trips/in the class
- Obtaining information from the office relating to meetings
- As a parent to speak to a teacher in relation to your own child.

This policy should be monitored and reviewed annually.

Considerations when monitoring and reviewing this policy

- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits we identified?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make our practice even better? Preparing for a visit

Record form for a Governor visit

NAME	DATE
Purpose of visit <i>(Previously agreed by the Local Governing Body with the Headteacher)</i>	
Links with the school improvement plan <i>(How does the visit relate to a priority in the improvement plan?)</i>	
Links with Schools Distinctive Values	
Observations and comments by the Governor <i>(e.g. what you saw; what you learned; what you would like clarified; how long the visit lasted)</i>	
Any key issues arising for the Local Governing Body <i>(e.g. the way resources are allocated; the way the school communicates; progress in implementing a key policy)</i>	
Action following Local Governing Body meeting <i>(Record any action agreed by the Local Governing Body with regard to this visit)</i>	
Signed Governor: Signed Subject Lead/ Head:	

Academy/ School Visits – Basic Considerations

What is the purpose of the visit?

What has prompted my decision to visit?
Who has prompted my decision to visit?
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 particular areas of the school am I interested in?
What particular activities am I interested in?
What particular age-group(s) am I interested in?
Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?
What questions should I ask?
Whom should I ask?

Did I achieve my aim?

To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?
Which of my questions did I answer?
To what extent did I fulfil my own/other people's expectations?
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?