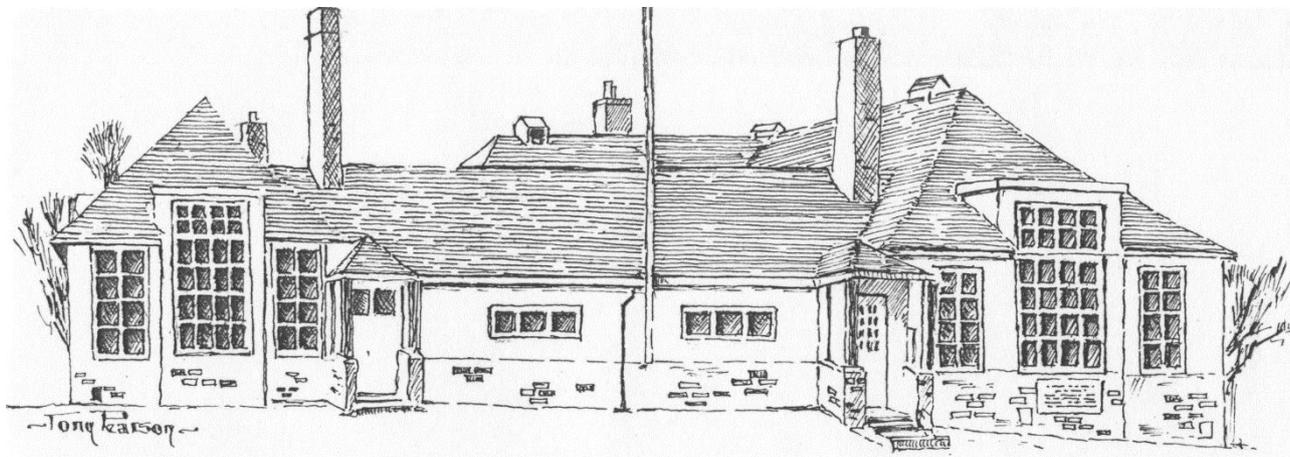


GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY BYFIELD SCHOOL



Approved by:	Full Governing Board	Date: October 2017
Last reviewed on:	October 2017	
Next review due by:	October 2020	
Signed (Chair of Governors):		
Signed (Headteacher):		

Aims of visits to school by governors:

- to inform the Governing Body of the working of the school:
- to enable the Governing Body to fulfil their statutory responsibilities:
- to foster a sense of partnership between all members of the school community.

Every Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum.

Governors are also held to account for their own school's performance.

The Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a Governor can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and pupils and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms.

If school and classroom visits are done well they will add immeasurably to Governors' understanding of their school, the staff and pupils.

This policy is to assist the process of consultation and communication in a constructive, considered and organised manner.

Organisation

Governors are linked to areas of the curriculum and/or aspects of school life and to the teacher who has specific responsibility in these areas. This will involve individual Governors visiting the school and classrooms and taking the opportunity to discuss issues with the Headteacher and relevant subject leaders.

An annual programme of visits is planned across the school year to enable Governors to deepen their knowledge and understanding of their linked area(s) of responsibility.

Visiting Classrooms/Staff Discussion:

If new to visiting classrooms listening to children talking about their work is one of the best ways of becoming informed about what is being learnt. The use of open questions that have no right or wrong

answers (e.g. “What can you tell me about this book?”) is to be preferred to closed questions that are right or wrong (e.g. “What does this word say?”).

Discussion with staff is a good way to actually find out what is happening in school and within areas of staff responsibility. However this needs to be agreed and scheduled outside teaching time, **which must never be disrupted by a governor visit.**

Procedures in the event of concern

- Where concerns exist, it is vital that they are discussed immediately with the Headteacher.
- This should be limited to the focus of the visit unless the concern is of a Health and Safety or Safeguarding nature.
- If you are not satisfied with the response and remain concerned, your next step should be to contact the Chair of Governors.

Conclusion

As governor, you are part of the team aiming to build a good reputation. It can be extremely damaging if anything seen or heard in school is discussed elsewhere.

Therefore, all Governors need to remember that what is seen, heard or found out is confidential and not for sharing with other Governors (until agreed) or with parents or other members of the school community, at any time.

A good reputation is very hard to gain and very easy to lose.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Governor visit protocols - 'Roles and Responsibilities of Visiting Governors at Byfield Primary School'.
- Appendix 2: Governor subject/aspect visit template and prompts – Byfield Primary School

Appendix 1: Roles and Responsibilities of Visiting Governors at Byfield Primary School

Key roles of all governors:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction for the work and improvement of the school
- Supporting, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governor monitoring is an essential aspect of the work of all governors in order for them to be able to fulfil their key roles effectively

Roles and responsibilities of visiting governors:

- Governors should aim to visit in line with the Governor Visit Cycle to ensure on-going support and challenge for the school.
- Each visit should be followed up with a brief visit report using the agreed templates (see appendices 2 and 3. This will provide Ofsted with valuable evidence of a consistent approach to governor visits and its impact on improving outcomes for children.
- The visit report will be agreed with the Headteacher and/or any leading teachers/class teachers who are subject to the visit.
- The agreed visit report will be completed electronically where possible and circulated to all the governors at least seven days prior to the next full governors' meeting or relevant committee meeting, at which a brief oral summary will be given.
- Governors will respect the confidentiality of all everyone within the school community and share nothing that has been observed beyond the members of staff involved and the Headteacher until such time as the final report has been agreed. At this time the confidential report will be distributed to governors, in line with the agreed code of practice.

Dos and Don'ts of Governor Visits:

	Always	Never
BEFORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree the date and time with the lead member of staff/class teacher and Headteacher no later than the week prior to the visit. ▪ Agree the key foci when agreeing the date and time of the visit. ▪ Discuss with the Head teacher what is to be visited in school the nature of the visit and involvement of other members of staff. ▪ Define and agree terms of confidentiality when agreeing the visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turn up without prior agreement. ▪ Carry out a visit without clear and agreed objectives. ▪ Breach confidentiality
DURING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared, organised and punctual. • Report to the school office and sign in. • Fulfil the agreed purpose of the visit • Observe school/class guidelines. • Jot down discussion points • Adhere to the agreed protocol and visit foci (unless specific safeguarding or health and safety issues arise that prevent this). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interrupt the teaching. ▪ Fail to turn up for a visit without informing the school as far in advance as possible. ▪ Sit in a corner making copious notes as if carrying out a school inspection. ▪ Make judgements on the quality of teaching.
AFTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the member(s) of staff and pupils. • Discuss the observation as soon as possible after the visit with the member(s) of staff involved. • Feedback appropriately to the Headteacher as soon as possible after the visit and ensure the report template completed and signed off. • Discuss Health and Safety and Safeguarding issues if necessary. • Complete the report template for the visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leave without thanking those involved ▪ Discuss observations with other members of staff, parents or individual Governors (except the Chair) unless given permission to do so by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. ▪ Identify individuals within the report.

Appendix 2: Governor subject/aspect visit template and prompts
- Byfield Primary School

Date:	Name:
<u>Reason for Visit Linked to School Development Plan key priority or Ofsted Key Issues.</u> E. g. KP 1.1.6 Improve the quality of provision for English	
<u>Key Question to answer:</u> <i>E.G. What good practice can we see in writing lessons? How could learning be improved?</i>	
<u>What I Observed:</u>	
<u>Strengths:</u>	
<u>Challenge/Areas for Improvement:</u> E.G. What impact has there been on data? How long until they are at age related? I noticed ____ how could this practice be improved?	
<u>Answer to key question – From Headteacher:</u>	

Governor visit prompts

Lesson observations:

- Is it clear what the children are learning?
- Do children appear to be engaged and motivated?
- Does there appear to be any difference in the engagement of boys or girls or any other pupil group?
- Is work differentiated for children of varying abilities to enable all groups including the most and least able?
- Do pupils appear to be making progress in the lesson?
- What are teaching assistants doing to help pupils learn during the lesson?
- Are the children using ICT in the lesson?
- Does the classroom environment encourage independent learning e.g. displays, learning walls?

Work scrutinies:

- Does the work reflect the teacher's planning and/or learning objectives?
- Is handwriting neat and does the work indicate the child taking pride in what they are doing?
- Is the work marked in line with the school policy?
- Is there evidence of pupils self-assessing? (e.g. marking ladders, peer marking, assessment for learning)
- Is there evidence of the children having had time to reflect and respond to marking?
- Is there evidence of progress over time when early work is compared to more recent work?

Pupil conferencing:

- Can children tell you what they have been learning?
- Can children tell you the next steps in their learning?
- Can children tell you their targets and what they are doing to achieve them?
- Do children enjoy the lessons?
- Do children have a good attitude to learning?
- Can children articulate clearly how their teacher helps them to improve their work?

Please see below for some examples of prompts to support link governor visits:

- What has been done in this area since our last meeting?
- Is the work planned on schedule? If not what has been the block and how can it be removed?
- Are you fully aware of what the Headteacher expects from you?
- How is the school benefitting from the work you are doing?
- How does your work impact upon the needs of all learners?
- Are there training implications? For you/other staff?
- Are there cost implications for the work you are doing?
- Do you have a budget for the work you are undertaking?
- Have you had non-contact time? Is it sufficient? How has it been used?
- Who checks to see if your work is progressing appropriately? When? How?
- What evidence is there around the school of the impact of the work that you are doing?
- What else, if anything, do you require to get the work done?