



St George's Primary School

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PROTOCOL FOR GOVERNORS' VISITS

STANDARD'S COMMITTEE, LINK GOVERNOR
AND CURRICULUM LINK GOVERNOR VISITS

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Ratified by governors on

Introduction

Governing Bodies have a statutory duty to promote high standards of educational achievement at their school and they must monitor the school performance to that end. Governors can not do this unless they know the school well. One way in which Governors can acquire up to date knowledge is to make periodic and planned visits to the school, in addition to attending governor's meetings and school functions.

There are two types of "Governor Visit" the formal and informal. The informal visits may involve Governors offering to help run a stall at a major fundraising event, attending the Christmas Carol Concert or taking part in a school trip. All these are valuable at earning the good will of the staff, as well as helping to establish good working relationships with the staff and pupils. However they should not be regarded as an alternative to the formal visit.

The cycle of formal visits should be identified through the work of the full Governing Body or committee meetings. They will usually relate to the priorities identified on the School Development Plan or the core functions of the Governing body committees. The formal visit may last an hour, a half day or even a full day, in which individual Governors act as the representative at the Governing Body, with the expectation that they will subsequently report back. Some formal visits may be allocated to specific Governors with designated responsibilities, for example Special Educational Needs, Inclusion, English, Maths or other curriculum areas.

Some formal visits may include more than one governor eg Learning Walks, premises reviews etc.

All governor visits must be planned and agreed with the head teacher or relevant senior member of staff. The process must be clear for governors and staff involved.

The Rationale for Governors Visiting School

- To enable Governors to fulfil their statutory duties and responsibilities
- To enable Governors to be better informed at Governors' Meetings and to be able to make an informed contribution to the strategic work of the school
- To gain a better understanding of particular areas of school provision
- To understand more about the deployment of school resources
- To be better informed about the implementation of the school's policies
- To get to know staff better. Effective and transparent working relationships between governors and staff are central to school improvement at St George's.
- To talk to the staff and pupils about their experiences in school
- To listen to the voice of the child
- To be able to demonstrate that the Governing Body of the school take their responsibilities seriously

It is worth remembering that *"Governors are not there as inspectors or to pass judgements on the work of individual teachers and much will depend upon the sensitivity of the governors to the feelings of the teaching staff about being observed."* (A Guide for Governors)

Preparing the Visit

Governors, who are planning on making a visit to school, whether it is formal or informal, need to have made prior arrangements with the Headteacher or relevant senior member of staff.

They need to be clear about the purpose of the visit and what they will be focussing on. The length of the visit will be agreed before hand, and any additional information that may be useful will have been circulated before hand.

It is important that everyone involved in the visit is prepared for it, and that all teachers are aware of the purpose. The Head teacher or another senior member of staff will approach the teachers concerned before the visit takes place.

Follow Up to the Visit

At the end of their time in school the head teacher or relevant member of the senior team will try to meet with Governors to discuss the visit.

All formal visits should be reported back to the full Governing Body. When reporting back it is important to remember that Governor visit should relate to their responsibilities as governors. It is the Head Teacher's job to manage the school, in accordance with the aims and objectives and policies approved by the Governing Body. To judge the quality of teaching and learning in the school requires specialist skill. Governors are not in a position to make those judgments based on short occasional visits. When Governors use visits to gain information to help in them in their role, they do so as observers and not as inspectors.

A report should be written. In some cases there may be an established document for this such as Health and Safety audits. A **brief** written report serves better than an oral report in that it helps to clarify the issues for discussion or suggestions for further action. However as a written report, like other papers from the Governing Body, it is open to public inspection, **it will avoid naming individuals.**

It should not be tabled at the meeting but given to the Clerk in time for distribution with the agenda. The report should also be discussed/shared with the Head teacher and the Chair of Governors or Chair of the Committee in advance of the meeting.

Governors' and Lesson Observations

Although not all the visits by Governors will involve lesson observations, a great deal of time will be spent in classrooms. As well as watching the teaching and learning that takes place, there will also be the opportunity to look at children's learning through books or online work. Governors may also wish to move around and talk to the pupils about their work, as well as the look at the classroom environment i.e. displays, resources, books labelled equipment etc. At the end of the lesson, time may be arranged for the Governor and teacher to talk about the lesson and address any questions.

Governors need to be sensitive to the needs of the class during lesson observations and avoid disrupting the flow of the lesson.

When carrying out lesson observations it is important that all Governors are aware that there are children with special needs in every classroom and teachers use a variety of appropriate strategies for dealing with the behaviour.

Managing the Effectiveness of Governor Visits

All Governors are accountable to the Governing Body for the formal visit that the individual has made on their behalf. The visit will always contribute to the relationship between the Governing Body and the staff. Reflecting on a visit can make subsequent visits for effective. Governors should always ask themselves:

- Were the objectives for the visit clear?
- Were they realised and if not why not?
- What if anything could have been done to make the visit more useful?
- Did you require any additional information to enable you to place the visit in context?

All Governors are welcome to visit the school, in the belief that they will help to keep the Governing Body better informed about the work of the staff, pupils, and parents. It is our intention that this policy should support the development of a good working relationship with the Governing Body and the staff, so that we all work together on planning how best to support the aims and objectives of the school.

Class/Unit Link Governor Visit Purpose

Through the work of our governing Body's Standards' Committee governors have been allocated to specific units of the school. This is to strengthen the understanding of the school's strategic aims and promote cohesion and accountability

Where possible the Unit link Governor may visit the children in school for the following activities:

- Data review
- Meeting with unit lead
- Pupil voice interview
- Learning Walk
- Meeting with staff

Etc.

Protocol for Visiting Governors

Before the Visit

Governors will each identify a particular area of responsibility or interest which will be the focus of their visits, for example:

- A Strategic School Development Plan priority
- Safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs
- Curriculum areas including Literacy and Numeracy
- Premises and Health and Safety

Governors will always make prior arrangements for the visit, with both the Headteacher and the teachers/staff involved.

Aims of the Visit

The main aims of the visit will be:

- To gain a deeper understanding of the school in order to inform the GB decision making process
- To gain a deeper understanding of the responsibilities of a governor
- To get to know the staff and develop a supportive relationship
- To get to know the school and to get to know the children
- To focus on their particular area of responsibility or on an agreed aspect of the strategic school development plan
- To monitor the performance of the school and triangulate the information provided in reports from the senior leadership team, Ofsted, external consultants
- To observe the impact of school improvement strategies

During the Visit

- Governors will respect confidentiality at all times but will also have due regard for safeguarding policy and procedures
- Governors will remember that they are not visiting the school in an inspectoral role
- Governors will comply with and observe any school rules and/or routines

After the visit

- Governors will thank the relevant school staff
- Governors will discuss their school visit with the Headteacher
- Governors will respect rules of confidentiality at all times
- Governors will complete the relevant Proforma for their visit
- Governors will circulate and present the report to other members of the Governing Body at their next full meeting

**Appendix 1
Cycle of Governor Visits**

GOVERNOR VISITS TO SCHOOL 2017/2018
Please enter Diary Dates for your visits to school

GOVERNOR	YEAR GROUP/ Unit	Date	Purpose of Visit				
			SUBJECT FOCUS	PUPIL VOICE	Standards' Committee	Premises Issues	Specialist Role

CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOL AND GOVERNORS FOR BEFORE AND AFTER VISIT

School	Governor
What is the purpose of the visit?	Has an appointment been made with Head teacher or relevant senior member of staff to discuss visit?
What is governor is expecting to see?	Do I know the purpose of the visit?
Is the visit linked to an area of the School Development Plan/	How will I provide feedback to staff member, headteacher, governors?
Has a timetable been drawn up for the visit? (if required)	How will I build on this visit for next visit?
Do appropriate members know of the time and purpose of the visit?	How did I address any difficulties I met, and how can I learn from this for future visits?
Has a set of questions been drawn up to support governors in fulfilling their monitoring role?	Do the questions relate to my monitoring?

**Primary School Governor
Record of Visits Proforma**

Name of governor	
Date and time of visit	
Purpose of the visit e.g. Link with Subject Leader, Specialist Role, Class Governor Visit.	
Involving:	
Link with the school development plan	

<p>What did you see? What did you learn? What would you like clarified? How long did the visit last?</p>
<p>What are the standards like in this subject/aspect and how do you know?</p>
<p>Resource Implications: TIME, MONEY, TRAINING, RESOURCES</p>

The following actions were agreed/discussed:

Implications for the Governing Body

USEFUL NOTES TO AID COMPLETION OF VISIT RECORD

DO:	DON'T
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP ONE</p> <p>Prepare the report in draft as soon after the visit as possible.</p>	<p>Be lengthy – no more than 1 side of A4 Maximum</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP TWO</p> <p>Have the report typed if possible.</p>	<p>Do not be over familiar or make written observations about the quality of teaching and learning. If there are any concerns, raise them with the Headteacher verbally.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP THREE</p> <p>Discuss the draft with the head teacher or relevant senior member of staff to ensure any mistakes or misunderstandings can be clarified.</p>	<p>Name staff or pupils.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP FOUR</p> <p>Share the record with the member of staff.</p>	<p>Hand around the report at the meeting; governors will have had no opportunity to read it and give it proper attention.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP FIVE</p> <p>Send a copy of the report to the clerk to governors for distribution at next meeting. Clerk's e-mail address is:</p>	<p>Go through your report in detail or read it verbatim. This lengthens meetings unnecessarily.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP SIX</p> <p>Come to the meeting prepared to give a short verbal introduction and answer any questions.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP SEVEN</p> <p>Think to yourself: what can I do to make future meetings more effective?</p>	

Curriculum Link Governor and Subject Leader Visits
Suggested Questions**To ask pupils**

- Tell me about what you are learning today
- Do you like (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Tell me what you most like doing in (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Is there anything you don't like in (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Do you know how you can improve/what your next target is in (select curriculum area being monitored)

To ask subject leaders

- What is your vision for the subject? Do you have a set of minimum expectations?
- What were the Ofsted findings about the subject? (This question is mainly for English, maths, science and ICT. Other subject may have been the focus of a curriculum inspection)
- What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress across the school in this subject?
- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?
- What resources does the school have for the subject and how are these organised? Are there any additional resource needs?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching this subject?

Questions about teaching English/Maths**Achievements and attitudes**

- What are the broad trends in the school's achievement in English/Maths?
 - Compared with similar schools?
 - In relation to the national rates of increase?
 - In relation to the national picture in terms of gender?
- Where have we improved? Do we know why?
- Are there differences between the achievement of different year groups, and if so, why?
- How do our results in English/math's compare with other subjects?
- What aspects of the subject do pupils find easy and which hard?
- Are there significant differences in reading and writing between:
 - Girls and boys
 - Pupils with special educational needs

- Very able pupils
- Pupils with English as an additional language and the others
- The majority and any other minority groups, such as travellers?
- In meetings to understand how much pupil progress is being made you could **look** at
 - The Early Years – how is achievement measured
 - Key Stage 1 and 2 test results
 - Pupil progress data across each year
 - The work of a range of pupils – average, below average and above average
 - Other evidence, Special Needs
 - Pupils on FSM
- How are pupils with special educational needs integrated into the daily English/math's lessons
- Management of the subject?
- How is the role of the English/math's subject leader developing – can you see evidence of impact?

Does the school improvement plan match the identified needs?

- How has the budget for this area been spent?
- Is there a need for additional resources for any aspect of the work?
- How much additional adult support does each class have? How do you decide how to deploy additional support?
- (English only) What type and how do you ensure there are a range of reading books are available that cater for all abilities, cultural backgrounds and tastes, especially boys?
- How well do pupils use the library? What links does the school have with the local library?
- How does the school use all its resources (books, materials and displays, as well as electronic media) to promote reading and writing/maths?



**St George's
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Learning Walk Question ideas

Aid Memoir for Governors –

**This can be used as individual sections for a key
priority**

Questions and Ideas for a Learning Walk

Focus	Example	Observation	Next Steps
Learning Environment	Are: Targets displayed? Key learning Objectives evident? Success criteria on display? Aid memoirs for learning in place? Labels used to encourage independence? Working walls in use and are children adding to them? Learning walls in place? Clear areas for learning demarcated? Different subjects displayed? Room set out for easy access? Children able to access good quality learning resources? Is the room light and well ventilated?		
Classroom environment	Is the classroom tidy? Is the classroom an attractive place to learn? Does the classroom have interactive displays which encourage the children to learn? Are book shelves tidy with books in the right places? Is the equipment tidy/does it have a designated place? Are displays well-presented with no torn/ ripped paper/edges? Do children tidy up well and leave the classroom as they would wish to find it? Are children's books/papers kept in a well-placed and tidy space? Is equipment well cared for – not broken or beyond its useful life?		
Who is doing the talking?	Do all pupils get the opportunity to get actively involved?		
Is there opportunity for interaction?	Can the pupils work together in pairs, groups? Do they know how to work together?		

Questions and Ideas for a Learning Walk

Focus	Example	Observation	Next Steps
Is the setting appropriate for that style of lesson?	Are pupils sitting in groups, Working in pairs. Can they all see what is going on?		
Are all pupils on task?	Are they engaged and actively involved in the task? Can they work independently without constantly asking their teacher for help?		
Do the pupils know what they are learning as opposed to what they are doing?	Can they say what they are learning and why?		
Is there differentiation?	Can all pupils access the lesson at their level?		
Questioning	Does the teacher use questions that challenge all pupils? What kinds of questions are being used? Are they open ended? Is any time given for reflection?		
Modelling and Demonstrating	Do the pupils know what the aim of the lesson is - the final picture? Does the teacher demonstrate how to get there in clear easy steps?		
Problem-solving	Are the pupils given opportunities that challenge their thinking? Can they work together to develop solutions?		
Planning	Does the lesson follow the planning? Are layered targets evident in the teaching? Does the teacher audit previous learning? Is there a plenary – a time at the end of the lesson to		

Questions and Ideas for a Learning Walk

Focus	Example	Observation	Next Steps
	share the outcomes and what has been achieved?		
Support Staff	How are they deployed? Do they only work with SEN children?		
Assessment	Who is working with the target group and what are they focusing on? Are the children on task? Are the pupils involved in their own assessments? Do children know what they have to do next to reach the next level?		
Marking	Are the children's books marked? Are they marked using the school policy? Are children responding to the teachers marking? Do the children understand the marking policy and how it can help them improve their learning?		
ICT	Are the children and the teacher making effective use of ICT?		
Progress	Can the children demonstrate that they know more by the end of the lesson than they did at the beginning?		
Enjoyment	Do the children enjoy the lesson? Is the teacher/TA enjoying the lesson?		
Behaviour	Are the children well behaved? Is any inappropriate Behaviour dealt with quickly and positively?		
Any other aspects worth noting?			