



LOUGHBOROUGH
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Loughborough Primary School & Children's Centre

Governor Visits & Protocol Policy 2020- 2021

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Introduction

It is often difficult for busy Governors to find time to be in school while it is in session, but it is essential that they are able to do this. National surveys show that most headteachers and staff are encouraged by governors visiting, provided the governors come to learn and help rather than to inspect.

Aims of Governors' visits to the school

Visits to see the school in action provide Governors with an opportunity to:

- understand better the work being done by pupils and all staff
- enable pupils and staff to get to know Governors
- demonstrate their interest in the school and to encourage the Headteacher and staff in their work
- have a wider understanding when making decisions affecting the school
- be better informed advocates, able to speak up for the schools from personal knowledge
- share their skills and expertise as appropriate
- more efficiently carry out their responsibility for monitoring the quality of education being provided for the pupils in the school. However, this *does not* involve making judgements of individual teachers and their work.

Principles

- Each Governor should visit the school as a member of that body, not as an individual.
- Governors visit the school as guests not as officials; they will come to learn, and help, not to inspect.
- An effective partnership between Governors and staff, must be based on mutual understanding that benefits the whole school community.
- The Governing Body is responsible for the general oversight of the school; they are not concerned with the day-to-day management of the school, which is the responsibility of the Headteacher.
- Visits to the schools should support self-evaluation activities in line with School Improvement Plan, and support national/local initiatives such as literacy, numeracy, ICT and SEND.
- Governors must recognise the confidentiality of what they see and hear during a visit.

Code of Practice for Visiting

Focus of visit

One or more of the following will provide a focus for a visit, with the agreement of the relevant personnel:

- links with school self-evaluation, school development or action plan
- following a line of enquiry from a Governor
- extra-curricular activities
- joining assembly or worship
- Loughborough Primary policies and practices in a particular area
- looking at the use of information technology in the schools
- looking at provision for special needs; looking at the premises, health and safety and learning environment
- the organisation of classes and teaching groups
- lunch-time arrangements, including sharing a meal with pupils or staff
- pastoral care and safety of pupils and staff
- links with parents and the local community
- sharing skills and expertise with pupils

Before a visit

In advance of the visit, the Governor should discuss with the Headteacher or designated person the management of the visit:

- focus for the visit including the preparation needed and background information
- convenient dates, time and duration of visit
- the possibility of being shown around by a pupil (a current Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Check will be required)
- acceptable behaviour when visiting a class where teaching is in progress, and agreeing Governors' interaction with pupils during a lesson
- including opportunities for discussion with the Headteacher/designated person immediately before and after the visit
- links with the self-evaluation process, school development or action plan
- appropriate behaviour in the context of pupil and adult relationships
- suggestions of ways to put questions to pupil and staff
- how staff and pupils will be informed of the visit, including the introduction of the Governor to the staff directly involved
- when and how impressions of the visit will be shared with staff and the Headteacher

During a visit

It is necessary for Governors to emphasise that they are coming to learn and understand, with no hint of inspection.

Observation

In addition to any special focus to a visit, other areas may be observed, such as:

- facilities for staff
- pupil movement on site
- displays in open areas and classrooms
- relationships between pupil/pupil, able pupil and less able pupil; pupil/staff; staff/staff
- storage and accessibility of resources, books, equipment and pictures
- classroom facilities: lighting, layout, storage, furniture and décor
- storage and cloakroom facilities for pupils

Notes

If any notes are made during the visit these should be made unobtrusively. These notes should inform the final writing of any report. The report should be produced jointly with any staff who have supported the visit.

Different classes

If visits are being made to several different classes, it is good practice if approximately the same amount of time is spent with each class. It is important that Governors keep to their time schedule.

Impressions

Before completing a visit, a Governor will have been encouraged by some of the things seen and experienced – these will be shared with pupils, staff and the Headteacher. Be sure to thank staff and pupils for their time.

After a visit

- Share impressions of visits with the Headteacher and particular staff and agree a draft of any written report
- Share impressions with the school and/or its bodies by using written reports (see Model Report template below)
- Copies of written reports should be given to the Headteacher and Chair of the governing body or its bodies and then subsequently made available to Governors. Such reports should ideally be kept in a log-book of Governors' visits.
- Give staff the opportunity to comment on the Governor visit.

Evaluating the visit

- ✓ Were objectives clear?
- ✓ Were they realised? If not, why not?
- ✓ Was preparation adequate?
- ✓ What, if anything would be done differently next time?
- ✓ When will be the next visit to the school?

Visiting tips

Do ...

- ✓ always check in and out with the Headteacher or a senior member of staff and wear a name badge
- ✓ remember Governors have a strategic overview and are not responsible for managing the school

- ✓ listen carefully, concentrate and show interest
- ✓ begin and end your visit in a positive way, finding some things to genuinely praise
- ✓ be punctual, polite and sensitive
- ✓ do your homework before you visit and be gentle but persistent with any questions you wish to ask
- ✓ invite pupils and staff to ask you questions
- ✓ avoid times when staff are particularly busy, for example, the first and last weeks of term, SATs, Ofsted visits
- ✓ always reply to special invitations to attend and make an effort to be there - this does much to encourage pupils and staff
- ✓ earn the respect and confidence of staff by not talking about your visit except to the Headteacher and when reporting to fellow Governors (this is very important)
- ✓ leave pupils and staff hoping you will come again soon!
- ✓ Smile!

Don't ...

- drop in unannounced
- destroy confidence, it is a fragile commodity
- talk too much - you have come to learn
- remain silent, this can send negative messages
- get involved in discussion of personal staffing matters
- sit at the back of the class making notes
- always expect immediate answers
- behave like an inspector
- say 'when I was at school we didn't do it that way!'

Advice for a programme of visits

A variety of good arrangements have been developed by academies and schools to help Governors have a focus for their visits, these include:

- **Focus on a section of the school development plan**
- **Focus on the implementation of a policy**
- **Governor of the month.** One or two Governors are on duty for a month taking part in any activity where the governing body needs to be represented, for example, a special assembly, welcoming a visitor, attending a parents' evening. A rota for duty Governors is agreed at the beginning of the school year.
- **New Governors** could be linked with an experienced Governor, who acts as a mentor for initial visits. These are an important part of an induction programme.
- Governors could take part, by invitation, in teachers' in-service training (INSET) days and occasionally attend staff meetings.
- The Ofsted school inspection handbook para 141 lists the following as key areas for Governor responsibility. It is common that most visits will link to one of the following key areas;

Completed Visit Forms must go to relevant Headteacher first please

Chair of Governors:

Signed:

Review date: September 2021

A	Governors' vision and ambition
	Create a culture of high expectations, aspirations and scholastic excellence
	Promote equality and foster understanding
B	Challenge re motivated, respected and effective teaching staff
	Use of performance management
	Commitment to own development
C	Engagement with parents, carers, stakeholders and agencies
	Fulfilment of core statutory functions
	Keep pupils safe from dangers including radicalisation
D	Challenge re progress of groups of pupils
	Challenge re teaching, learning and assessment
E	Challenge re pupil premium
	Challenge re Year 7 catch-up funding
	Challenge re primary PE and sport funding

Governor Visit Form

Name:

School:

Date of visit:

Focus of visit:

Classes/staff visited:

Summary of activities e.g. talking to staff and students, documents reviewed etc:

What have I learned as a result of my visit?

Positive comments about the visit:

Actions:

Ideas for future visits:

Any other comments:

Please send this form to the Headteacher first:

Governor completing visit:	Chair of Governors:

Audience	All Staff, Governors, Parents
Date for renewal/updates/review	Annually
Named person responsible for monitoring	Governors & Headteacher
Ratified by Governors	16 th September 2020