



Benington Primary School

GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

Written	Reviewed	Next Review Date	Author	Adopted by Governors	Sub-Policies
Jan 2006	Dec 2019	Dec 2021	Barbara Swann		None

CONTENTS

1. Rationale
2. What Visits Are Not About
3. Protocols
4. Commitment
5. Review

RATIONALE

The governing body recognizes the importance of governors visiting the school in school time in order to familiarise themselves with the running of the school.

For Governors

- To recognise/celebrate success and to develop relationships with staff.
- To get to know the children.
- To recognise different teaching styles, and to be more informed about how the school operates.
- To understand the environment in which the teachers teach.
- To see schemes of work and policies in action.
- To inform decision-making.

For Teachers

- To get to know the governors and ensure the governors understand the reality of the classroom.
- To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities.
- To have the opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion, and to be able to highlight the need for particular resources.

WHAT VISITS ARE NOT ABOUT

- Making judgements about the quality of teaching.
- Checking progress of individual pupils.
- Pursuing personal agendas
- Monopolising teaching time
- Arriving with inflexible and pre-conceived ideas



PROTOCOLS

	ALWAYS	NEVER
BEFORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange visits in advance in consultation with the Head and relevant teacher/coordinator. • Agree purpose of visit. • Ensure protocol for governor visits has been read and understood. • Discuss the context of the lesson to be observed. • Discuss how you will feedback on the visit and to whom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive unexpectedly. • Be late and interrupt a lesson.
DURING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record all visits in governor visiting book (kept outside office). • Observe class rules/guidelines. • Fulfil agreed purpose. • Complete Appendix 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criticise staff or pupils • Interrupt the teacher
AFTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank teacher and pupils. • Discuss observations with teacher and head teacher. • Prepare a written report to present at the next Governing Body Meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss observations with people other than those agreed. • Pass comment on individual pupils. • Leave without a word.

COMMITMENT

- The governing body recognises that not all governors are able to commit to regular visits.
- Individuals not able to observe lessons may be able to attend other events, e.g. sports afternoons, plays, concerts, harvest assemblies, sharing assemblies, fairs, FOB events etc.
- Any visits, even for an hour can help governors understand the school better.
- More formal visits need to be reasonably distributed throughout the year and also across the subjects/classes/ teachers, and the chair and head teacher should be responsible for planning the programme of visits.
- The key question to be addressed is always "Are we doing what we said we'd do?"

REVIEW

- This policy should be reviewed formally by the Governing Body at the first meeting of each academic year.
- As part of the review, staff will offer views on governor visits through the head teacher.
- The key questions to be reviews will be:
 - Are our visits achieving the potential benefits we identified?
 - Have there been any unexpected benefits?
 - How can we make the policy and practice even better?
- When implementing this policy, the governing body will have regard to best value principles.



Appendix 1

A Suggested Protocol for Governor Visits To Lessons

Before any visit takes place:

The Head will:

- Outline the protocol and the intentions/reasons for the visit, putting it into a whole school and management context, reassuring staff that the visits are not linked to performance management.
- Tell teachers that all feedback will be given to them prior to discussion at any Governing Body Meeting.
- Provide guidance on the scope of questions to be asked. These will be available to teachers and governors. (see appendix 2)

A Suggested Protocol for Governors Visiting Classrooms

The Governor will:

- Introduce and acquaint himself or herself with the class teacher prior to the visit, if they haven't already - preferably a few days in advance.
- Negotiate the length of the visit with the teacher and head teacher.
- Read the lesson plan prior to the lesson.
- Arrive at the time stated, ideally going into the lesson with the teacher.
- Remain sensitive to the needs of the teacher and the children at all times, politely limiting conversation during the lesson to necessary fact finding and information gathering.
- Not interrupt the flow of a lesson or undermine the teachers' authority in the classroom.
- Thank the children and members of staff after the visit.
- Try to find a few minutes directly after the lesson to say thank you and share perceptions, if appropriate.

Prior to the lesson the teacher will:

- Provide the governor with details about the profile of the class e.g. age range, numbers, support staff, but no details of individual children.
- Tell the children they will be welcoming a visitor into the classroom and something about the visitor.
- Have their overall plans available and provide a copy for the visiting Governors before the visit.
- Ensure the governor knows where to sit in the classroom and is made to feel welcome as a visitor.
- Know that a brief written summary of the visit will be provided to Governors and head teacher and that the teacher will be provided with a copy of this within one week of the visit for comment and to ensure there are no inaccuracies prior to distribution to the Governing Body.



Appendix 2

Types of Questions Governors may like to consider asking the Teacher

- How long have you been teaching this age group ?
- What do you like about teaching this age group ?
- How do you manage all of this planning ?
- Has the school helped by providing for you any professional development ? How has it helped you ? Would you like other forms of professional development ?
- Do you think the S.I.P/ supports your teaching and childrens' learning ?

For governors (Handy hints) :

- Did you see the plan for the lesson ?
- Was the structure of the lesson clear to you ?
 - Introduction ?
 - Development ?
 - Conclusion/plenary (including tidying up and preparation for the next lesson) ?
- Did the children use resources independently ?
- Did the displays around the room help you put the lesson into context ?
- Did the children speak with confidence, enthusiasm and knowledge about the subject ?

Types of Questions Governors may like to consider asking children (phrased in positive language) :

- Tell me about what you are doing ?
- What do you like / dislike about this subject ?
- Has it always been your favourite subject ? (If not...) What has happened to make you change you mind ?
- How often do you do this sort of work ? Would you like to do it more often ?
- How do you know when you have done something that you are pleased with ?
- How does your teacher let you know when you have done well ?



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Appendix 3

Visit Plan & Record

Name:	Area (responsibility):	Date:
Staff Visited:		
Objectives of visit: 1. 2. 3.		
Brief Notes:		
Three positive comments : 1. 2. 3.		
Two questions : 1. 2.		



Benington Primary School

Appendix 4

Benington Primary School – Policy for Governors' Visits

School Visits – An Aide Memoire
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/school?
How shall I carry it out?
What particular area 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 questions that can be answered by my observations? What questions should I ask? Who 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 involved? Have I prepared a short report for the next governors' meeting? How can I build on this for the next visit?