

Moor Nook Community Primary School



Governor Visits Policy

September 2024

The Governing Body is the 'accountable body' at Moor Nook – accountable to parents, pupils, the local authority and Central Government through Ofsted. It is responsible for everything from Health and Safety and Child Protection to the school budget, teaching and learning and pupil progress. Because the Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum, Governors need to know what progress is being made towards targets set out in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Visiting the classroom can help to support this process.

It is important to Ofsted that the Governing Body makes an impact on school improvement and outcomes for pupils. Visiting school to see it in operation and being aware of standards and progress are important aspects of this crucial role, although Governors must be aware that they do not have a right of entry to the school. In line with recommended good practice, Governors must not arrange to visit their own child's class (or that of any other relative) Any Governors who are also volunteer helpers in school need to be clear about which role they are undertaking when in the school.

Purpose of school visits

Governors are not qualified to assess standards but they need to visit lessons in order to:

- appreciate and understand the work of the staff (teachers and support staff) and how the pupils are learning
- be aware of the response of pupils to their work and check that the pupils are aware of what they are learning
- to get to know more about the school
- be aware of resource issues
- be able to ask appropriate questions (see appendix 3) and seek clarification about what they see
- understand as fully as possible the meaning of the results of monitoring reported to them

Governors are not inspectors and are not present in a lesson to make judgements about the professional expertise of the teachers. That remains a task for the Head and/or other education professionals.

Governors must therefore not:

- make judgements about the quality of teaching
- report on the progress of individual children
- pursue personal agendas
- monopolise teachers' time
- arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be adhered to regarding classroom visits. Observations and comments should be shared with the teacher concerned, and with the Headteacher, but not with other staff or with parents.

Governors must ask for explanations of anything not understood and not make assumptions.

Reports to the Governing Body will not identify individuals in a critical manner.

Governors' commitment

Individual Governors will, of course, have differing amounts of time to commit to classroom visits. It is important, however, that all Governors make visits at some time. Each Governor must make every effort to make a class visit at least once a year but no more than once a term.

Visits Protocol

(see appendix 1 for checklist)

Agreement should be reached about visits for the year and match priorities identified by school and/or to match needs of individual governors. Each school visit will take place as a result of the Governing Body or the individual Governor having asked themselves (and answered) the following questions:

What is the purpose of the visit?

- What/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/activities/age groups of the school am I interested in?
- Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?
- 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 were answered?
- 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 members of staff involved?
- Have I prepared a short report for the next Governors' meeting?
- How can I build on this for the next visit?

During the visit

On arrival, sign in at the office and the Headteacher will be notified in order to welcome you to school and check you have everything you need. As most visits are to classrooms, you will then be shown to the classroom where you are observing. This does not have to be at the start of a lesson although this may be best in order to cause least disruption to the teacher and pupils.

Review

The outcomes of the visits will be reviewed every year to consider the questions:

- Are our visits proving useful?
- Have the intended benefits been achieved?
- Are there any unexpected benefits?
- Have there been any negative aspects?

Governors must complete a Governor Visit Report (appendix 2) for every visit they undertake.

The policy will be discussed and agreed with staff and the Governing Body. New Governors will be made aware of the policy as part of their induction.

This Governor Visits Policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every three years.

School Visits Quick Checklist

	Always	Never
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrange details of visit • agree purpose of visit • discuss the context of the lesson to be observed • agree role within the lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • turn up unannounced
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep to the role agreed • keep questions for the classteacher until after the visit is over • bear in mind the need for confidentiality • stick to the times and purpose agreed • be sensitive to the mood in the classroom and the expectations of the children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assume a different role • walk in with a clipboard • distract the pupils from their task(s)
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thank the teacher and the pupils • discuss the visit with the teacher at their convenience, and the Headteacher • feedback to the Governing Body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leave without acknowledgement • break rules of confidentiality



Name:	Date/time:
Focus of visit	Classes/staff visited
Summary of activities/sources of evidence e.g. talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch etc.	
What have I learned as a result of my visit?	Positive comments about the visit
Aspects I would like clarified/questions that I have:	
Ideas for future visits:	
Any other comments:	
Signed _____ (Governor)	Signed _____ (Headteacher)

Questions Governors might ask of school leaders and teachers

In relation to performance of pupils:

- What does data tell us about how well pupils are doing?
- What are the latest results in national assessments in Years 2 and 6?
- What is the trend in attainment at the end of Y2 and Y6 for the last three years?
- How well are pupils with special needs doing, do they make progress that is as good as others in the school or is it better or worse and why?
- How are we using pupil premium and what impact is this having on the achievement of this group compared to others in the school and nationally?
- Which year groups, subjects and groups of pupils get the best and worst results and why, and how does this relate to the quality of teaching across the school?
- What is your strategy for improving the areas of weakest performance as well as standards for all children, including the most and least able, those with special educational needs, those receiving free school meals, boys and girls, those of a particular ethnicity, and any who are currently underachieving?

In relation to teaching

- Have you got the right staff and resources?
- What are the areas of success in English and mathematics and what needs to be improved?
- How is the behaviour policy being implemented and is it working as it should?

In relation to well-being of pupils

- Is this a happy school with a positive learning culture?
 - What is our track record on attendance, behaviour and bullying?
 - Are safeguarding procedures securely in place?
-

Questions Governors might ask of pupils

- What do you like learning about?
- How would you describe your teachers?
- What do you think could be done differently to help you learn better?
- What do you think about behaviour / how do you think it could improve?
- Do you feel safe/ are there any places in the school where you do not feel safe?
- Do you have enough opportunity to visit places of interest, see visitors to the school, learn musical instruments, do projects in art, make things or do experiments in science?
- What opportunity do you have to take responsibility, do important jobs around school or have a say in how the school should be run?