

Duddon Saint Peter's School



GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY & GUIDELINES

This policy is to help governors and school staff to ensure that governor school visits are structured, productive and enjoyable for all concerned.

Aims

School visits by members of the governing body are a key component to being an effective school governor and have potential benefits to both governors and staff.

Benefits to governors

- To recognise and celebrate success
- To develop relationships with the staff
- To get to know the children
- To recognise different teaching styles
- To understand the environment in which staff work
- To see policies and schemes of work in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

Benefits to staff

- To help governors understand the reality of the classroom
- To get to know the governors
- To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- To have the opportunity to share expertise
- To highlight the need for particular resources

Guidelines

It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements should not be made arbitrarily. The visit is not about:-

- Inspection
- Making judgments about the professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on your own children
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

In order to undertake their role with objectivity, ideally, governors will not monitor classes containing their own children nor will they begin monitoring until they have received suitable training as part of their induction course.

Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school by staff. It is important that governors remember to respect the professionals and the children, support the Head teacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they

represent the full Governing Body. As such, all governors must adhere to the highest standards of confidentiality.

How is a visit organised?

• Initial visit to the school by a new governor

After the appointment of a new governor, the new governor will be asked to make arrangements to visit the school. Parents with children at the school should undertake this visit as they are undertaking a new role within the school and this visit would provide them with a broader perspective of the school.

It will not be necessary to write a report after this visit, but the governor should inform the governor responsible for training that the visit has taken place.

• Subsequent visits to the school

Plan the visit to ensure that you are clear about its purpose e.g.:

- To gain background information and get to know the school or class or year group
- To develop relationships with the staff
- To monitor a specific age group, subject area or activity
- To look at school premises to find out what resources are needed.
- To inform decision making
- To monitor how a particular policy or procedure is carried out
- To carry out Health and Safety reviews and monitor school practices.

Agree the plan with the Head teacher, member of staff and the governing body or governing body committee and arrange a convenient time to visit.

What to look for in the classroom?

Possible areas for focus could include:

How friendly and relaxed are the pupils?

How interested are the pupils in their work?

Do the pupils have an understanding of what they are doing?

How well behaved and courteous are the pupils?

In what ways does the school provide a varied and interesting environment?

How are the needs of all the pupils being met equally?

Do pupils work in a group or individually on a particular task?

Written feedback report

This report helps to focus on what was actually learnt about the school and to pass this information on to the governing body. This report will form part of the governors' monitoring role, therefore it should contain statements of fact on what was observed or what was not observed. It should contain information to assist decision-making and evaluation by the whole governing body e.g. when reviewing the impact of a particular policy. It may be appropriate to give some recommendations. Please remember that the Head teacher is responsible for ensuring the quality of teaching, so you do not make professional judgments when observing lessons. Reports should be informative, to the point and should not include any pupil names. The report should set out the objectives for the visit and indicate how well or otherwise they were met.

Level of commitment

In order to ensure a work-life balance for both staff and governors, the visits could aim to include a visit once per term, including accompanying a school visit outside the school, if possible.

Informal ways of getting to know the school

Governors are actively encouraged to participate in the life of the school and are always welcome to attend school services and assemblies, Christmas and Easter productions etc. the dates of which are published regularly in the school newsletter and sent out to all governors. These visits are not included as part of this policy.

Date: *December 2016*

Date of review *Autumn 2017*