

**Wootton St Peter's CE Primary School, Wootton Village.
Boars Hill, Oxford, OX1 5HP**



Policy name Governor Visits: roles and responsibilities

Date of ratification

Signature (Chair of Governors)

Committee responsible Teaching and Learning Committee

Review date 09/2017

Publication – Website

Governor visits: role and responsibilities

Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to ensure the Governors have a good understanding of the school and the way it operates and helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress.

The Governors visiting programme is an integral part of the school's yearly monitoring calendar. All Governors are encouraged to make at least one visit a year during school time and Link Governors are required to make at least one visit per year. Information about the roles and responsibilities of Link Governors can be found at Annex A. The proforma included at Annex B should be completed after each visit.

Visits enable Governors to:-

- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Get to know the staff and demonstrate their commitment to the school
- Give active support to the staff and the activities of the school
- Be aware of the effect of change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- Evaluate resources and discuss with staff further requirements
- Gain first-hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- Work in partnership with the staff

Before making a visit Governors will:-

- Contact the Headteacher (or in the case of Link Governor the Link Teacher, copying in the Headteacher), and agree a date and time for the visit.
- Clarify the expectations for the visit for both Governor and Teacher/Headteacher; this should include the focus for the visit (e.g Link Governor visit, focus on specific area of the SDP etc)
- Plan which classes/sessions will be visited; where possible visits should include both classroom based and non-classroom based activities to ensure a holistic approach to a school visit (e.g the inclusion of assemblies/collective worship activities, democratic circle, lunch/break time etc)
- Agree a timetable for the visit with the Headteacher and/or Link Teacher
- The Headteacher and/or link teacher will ensure that all staff are aware of the visit and the expectations on them.

On the day of the visit the Governor will remember to:-

- Arrive on time and clarify the timetable with the Headteacher/Link Teacher
- Act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering
- Respect the learning environment of the children and the contribution they may make to the experience of the visit
- Be calm and enjoy the visit

After the visit the Governor will:-

- Remember to thank the teachers and children
- Meet with the Headteacher to give a verbal report, and to raise any issues that arose
- Complete the Governor Visit Proforma within 7 calendar days. The completed form should be given to the Headteacher and then, after any possible alterations, the form will be circulated to the governing body and staff
- Governors must report without giving opinions and where possible individuals (particularly children) should not be able to be identified. 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 judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher

- Checking on your own children
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

In summary:-

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 Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed then Governor Visits should be a useful and enjoyable experience for all involved, and result in effective monitoring by the Governing Body, which will contribute to school improvement.

Annex A

Link Governors: Roles and responsibilities

What are Link Governors?

The Governors of Wootton St Peter's have, for a number of years, had a system of linking governors to subject areas. With recent changes to the school curriculum and the way Ofsted requirements have developed this system is no longer fit for purpose. The Governors have therefore decided to move to a system of linking Governors to class groups. This new approach will be implemented from the start of the 2016/17 Academic Year.

Who are the Link Governors?

The link Governors for 2016/2017 are:

Class	Year groups	Teaching Staff	Teaching Assistants	Link Governor
1	Foundation & Year 1	Miss Harris	Joe Adele	Emily Eastham
2	Year 1 & 2	Mrs Godfrey Mrs Ridley (Friday am)	Mandy Mrs Woods	Claire Farrar
3	Year 3 & 4	Mrs Heyden	Mrs Hunter Mrs Scott	Chloe Wilson
4	Year 5 & 6	Miss Le Breton	Mrs McNeil Ms Mills	Sarah Cook

What is the role of a Link Governor?

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. All Governors have this responsibility not just the link Governors. We do however, recognise that familiarity and building good working relationships with the school team are key to gaining effective insight. We hope that having Governors linked with individual classes will enable Governors and teaching staff to build good working relationships with effective two way communication which will help the Governing Body to fulfil its responsibilities without placing undue burden on the teaching staff.

Link Governors will be expected to visit their class at least once per year and no more than once per term; this should be organised in advance in conjunction with the lead class teacher and the Headteacher. Link Governors should refer to the 'Governor Visits: Roles and Responsibilities' document for guidance on undertaking school visits and the proforma at Annex B for recording visit information. Link Governors should also make contact with the class teacher in-between visits (this does not have to be a meeting but could be a simple email exchange to enquire how things are progressing and whether there are any changes or issues the Governors might be interested in or should be aware of).

It should be noted that Link Governors are not there to 'inspect' teaching, indeed they are not qualified to do so. They do however need to develop a good understanding of the teaching and activities that happen in the school so they can monitor progress and performance but also to ensure any strategic decisions they make are both appropriate and effective in relation to the needs of the school, the staff and the children.

How will Link Governors be allocated?

- The Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee will identify the Link Governors before the start of each academic year.
- Any Governor may volunteer to be a link Governor; Governors can be selected from the whole Governing Body and not just the Teaching and Learning Committee, although Link Governors will be expected to feedback through the Teaching and Learning Committee,
- Where possible Governors should not be linked to classes which include their own children.
- If the Headteacher has any concerns about the proposed allocations this should be discussed with the Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee before the allocations are confirmed.

- It is anticipated that link Governors should rotate classes at least every 2 years to help broaden their perspective of the school and to enable the staff to liaise with different GB members.

What is the role of the teaching staff in relation to Link Governors?

Teaching staff are not expected to have to undertake lots of extra work in order to liaise with their Link Governor. The focus is very much on sharing what they already do to inform their link Governor's understanding. It should, however, be a two way process and teaching staff are invited to make comments, suggestions and ideas for improvements on both the new Link Governor system and also on the effectiveness of the Governing Body. Just as Governors are supposed to be a 'critical friend' to the Headteacher and school we hope, through this process, teaching staff might feel able to offer constructive advice to the Governors. They can of course already do this through their Headteacher and staff representative but they are most welcome to offer thoughts and ideas to their Link Governor as well.

We hope teaching staff will feel able to provide the following to their Link Governor:

- A copy of their termly teaching plan at the start of each term (by email)
- To allow their link Governor to visit up to 3 times per year in order to observe a classroom session and also spend a short time chatting about key issues
- To develop a good working relationship with their link governor with effective two-way communication
- Feedback on the effectiveness of the link governor system and suggest ideas for improvement

How will the role be evaluated?

As this is a new innovation for 2016/17 we propose to conduct detailed review at the end of year with a view to identifying how effective the system has been and whether is it doing what it is designed to do. In order to do this feedback will be sought from link Governors, Teaching Staff and the Headteacher at the start of the final term. Feedback will be discussed at the final Teaching and Learning Committee of the term with a view to making recommendations to the Final FGB meeting of the year.

Annex B

Wootton St Peter's School Governor Visit Report

Name	
Times and date of visit	
Type of visit (delete as applicable)	Link Governor visit / Governor visit / Combined Visit
Focus of visit (please attach a copy of the planned timetable)	
Classes/Sessions/Staff Visited	
Summary of activities <i>e.g. observing classes, talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch etc.</i>	
What have I learned as a result of my visit?	
Positive comments about the focus of the visit	
Aspects I would like clarified/questions I have	

Any comments relating to areas of the School Development Plan (*ideally any areas for consideration should be identified in advance of the visit as part of the focus*)

Issues for Governing Body

Ideas for future visits

Any other comments

Headteacher/Link Teacher Comments (optional)

Signed Governor

Date

Signed Headteacher/Link Teacher

Date