



GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY **Ratified by Governors** **Review October 2019**

The Governing body has a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Visiting the school is one of the ways that this can be achieved.

Ofsted inspectors expect that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of their school. This knowledge will be obtained in a number of ways including; Headteacher reports, published data and, perhaps most importantly, through establishing relationships with staff and experiencing what happens in the classroom and in the school as a whole.

Individual Governors will be linked to one of the School Improvement Teams (SIT). Currently there are four teams, with responsibility for monitoring the overall effectiveness of the school in relation to one of:

- Achievement of children at the school
- Quality of teaching at the school
- The behaviour and safety of children at the school
- Quality of leadership in and management of, the school

Each SIT will have a Lead governor who will visit the school at least twice per term. Other governors are encouraged to participate in these visits. It is anticipated that the main focus of each visit will be a specific focus linked to the delivery of the school improvement plan. However this should not preclude visits linked more specifically to key curriculum areas such as Numeracy, Literacy, Science, SEN and ICT.

This policy aims to provide a framework for these visits which will allow the governor to fulfil their role without disrupting the work of the school and in a manner that will support both staff and pupils.

It is important to remember that it is not the governors' role to make professional judgements about teachers. All visits must be planned in advance and a suitable time agreed with the Headteacher and any staff you may wish to visit. Members of staff are always free to say that it is not convenient for a governor to come in at any particular time.

See: -

Appendix 1 – Guidance to Governors for school visits

Appendix 2 – The role of Governors and the School Improvement Teams

Appendix 3 – What questions should Governors be asking

Appendix 4 – Governor Visit Report

Appendix 5 - – Governor Visit Aide Memoir

Appendix 1

GUIDANCE TO GOVERNORS FOR SCHOOL VISITS

In the class room take your lead from the teacher; join in or help out if requested to do so but do not try to monopolise the teacher's time. If you have lots of questions, ask them when the lesson is over. If you need any clarification speak to the teacher at the end of the lesson. Remember to make a note of any concerns that the teacher may have as this is also an opportunity to facilitate two-way communication and build mutually beneficial relationships between Governors and Staff.

If you are a parent or staff governor do not use these visits to raise individual issues that should properly be resolved by the Headteacher.

During the visit:

- Be attentive
- Observe confidentiality
- Observe the school policy for visitors and wear a 'visitors' badge available when signing in at Reception
- Ensure that your visit remains within the boundary of what was agreed with the headteacher and members of staff
- Do not make judgements on the quality of teaching they see: we are not Inspectors
- If governors have any concerns as a result of their visit, they must always raise them with the headteacher without delay.

When the visit is over remember to thank the teacher for their time and speak to the Headteacher if possible before you leave the building.

Feedback from a visit should be shared with the Headteacher and member of staff. A report of your visit will be presented at the next governing body meeting. Reports should be balanced and should be mindful that Governor's are not qualified to comment on the quality of teaching.

Where follow-up action may be necessary it will be the responsibility of the Headteacher and the member of staff to ensure that this action is taken and to report back as necessary.

Appendix 2 THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS & THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAMS

OFSTED have provided clear guidance¹ on the role of Governors in school performance. Visits will help Governors:

Understand our school in terms of:

Pupil attainment and progress
Pupil behaviour, attendance and safety
Teaching quality and staff development
School Performance data

Set our school's strategic direction

Develop the school vision, values and ethos
Work with the senior team to set priorities for school improvement
Agree improvement targets and strategies
Agree allocation of resources
Agree how to monitor and review progress

Performance manage our school leaders

Support the leadership team
Hold school leaders to account for progress
Ensure financial probity and efficiency
Understand Parent and pupil voice

Check we are fit for purpose

Are Governors performing a useful function?
Are our ways of working having an impact?
Do Governors have the necessary skills?

In summary the SITs have 3 key roles

1. The Strategic role; understanding priorities, the school improvement plan and whether resources are being used effectively
2. Critical Friend: Develop a relationship with Senior staff, question the priorities – are they agreed across the school, push for improvement. Are the policy and/or any improvement strategies being implemented? Is implementation of policy or strategy on schedule? Are there any significant problems? Praise, encourage
3. Accountability: Explaining the schools' strategy to parents. Listening to parents' views and concerns. Reporting to the governing body on progress.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270398/Governors-Handbook-January-2014.pdf

Appendix 3 What questions should Governors be asking?

The achievement of children at the school

Lead Governor:.....

Inspectors will want to know:	Questions governors could ask	Information needed to monitor School improvement plan
how well are the children progressing relative to their starting points	Are overall results concealing poor progress? Are our children fulfilling their earlier promise or could they achieve more?	School and national data showing progress over time
If the gaps are narrowing between the performance of different groups of children in the school and compared to all children nationally. How effectively is Pupil Premium being used?	Are the most able children stretched and challenged sufficiently? Are the most disadvantaged children left behind and/or disengaged from their education?	Raise on Line data comparing Herrick with national data Progress of children over the past 3 years Progress of children receiving Pupil premium compared to other children - Feedback
how well current children learn, the quality of their work in a range of subjects and the progress they have made since joining the school	Are school targets analysed carefully to ensure that high expectations and challenging targets are set for all groups of children? Does the school analyse and respond to data about rates of progress for subjects and groups of children? Has the school identified which children or groups of children are most at risk of underperforming? How does the school ensure that underperformance in any area of the school's work is identified quickly? What sort of additional support is offered to children or groups that are at risk of underperforming? How does the school monitor the effectiveness of additional support provided? How are parents/carers involved?	"Headline" datasheet with key targets quantified In year reports on progress at subject level In year reports of the progress of at risk children What processes does the school use to identify underperformance School "additional support plan" In year reports of the progress of at risk children identifying successful strategies Parent/carer feedback
how well disabled children & those who have special educational needs have achieved since joining the school	Are children with learning difficulties or disabilities or SEN left behind and/or disengaged from their education?	In year reports of the progress of these children compared with school averages
the extent to which children develop a range of skills well, inc. communication, reading & writing & mathematical skills & how well they apply these across the curriculum	Are our children fulfilling their potential in literacy and mathematics? Are these skills actively developed in all subject areas?	Test scores in mathematics and literacy Cross curriculum mapping
standards attained by children by the time they leave, incl. reading, writing & maths	How do Herrick results compare with national averages? Are children able to make a successful transition to secondary school Is pupil performance affected by poor attendance?	Raise on Line data comparing Herrick with national data Feedback from local secondary schools Attendance data and trends

The quality of teaching in the school

Lead Governor:.....

Inspectors will want to know:	Questions governors could ask	Information needed
how well teaching enables children to develop skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics	How good is teaching at the school?	Outcomes of classroom observations identifying strengths and areas for development
the extent to which well judged and effective teaching strategies successfully engage children in their learning	What is the proportion of lessons which have been judged to be good or better?	LA/Ofsted grades for the quality of teaching
the extent to which teachers secure high quality learning by setting challenging tasks that are matched to children's specific learning needs	Do you we have any teaching at the school which is inadequate?	Outcomes of work checks the school has completed
how well children understand how to improve their learning as a result of frequent, detailed and accurate feedback from teachers following assessment of their learning	How are we learning from the best practice in other schools?	A report from the teacher with responsibility for teaching and learning
the extent to which teachers' questioning and use of discussion promote learning	What do we need to do to further improve teaching at the school	A report from the teacher with responsibility for staff development in teaching and learning
the extent to which the pace and depth of learning are maximised as a result of teachers' monitoring of learning during lessons and any consequent actions in response to children' feedback	How are teachers addressing Ofsted expectations with regards to communication, language and literacy skills particularly at Early Years FS?	An outline of the NQT induction programme
the extent to which teachers enthuse, engage and motivate children to learn and foster their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning	How are we supporting our less effective teachers?	
how well teachers use their expertise, including their subject knowledge, to develop children' knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of subjects and areas of learning	How are we sharing the best classroom practice in our school to the benefit of all of our teachers?	
the extent to which teachers enable children to develop the skills to learn for themselves, where appropriate, including setting appropriate homework to develop their understanding	How are we developing teaching through our CPD programme?	
Whether the quality of teaching and other support provided for children with a range of aptitudes and needs, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, improves their learning.	How are we developing our NQTs and our TAs?	

The quality of leadership and management of the school

Lead Governor

Inspectors will want to know whether leaders and managers:	Questions governors could ask	Information needed
demonstrate an ambitious vision for the school and have high expectations for what every pupil and teacher can achieve and set high standards for quality and performance	Is the Head ambitious for the school and does he/she have high expectation of staff and children? Is there a clear vision for the school, shared by staff, children, parents and governors?	School development and/or improvement plan Evidence of school aims and objectives being discussed
Improve teaching and learning including the management of children's behaviour	How good are our results? How good are behaviour and the quality of teaching? How effective is the school's programme of staff development. Is there a strong focus on the quality of teaching?	Performance at KS1 and 2 compared with national data Internal lesson observation data LA and OfSTED reports and data
provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all children, enables all children to achieve their full educational potential and make progress in their learning, and that promotes their good behaviour and safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Does the curriculum meet the needs, aptitudes and interests of our children? Does it prepare children for life? Does it support children' progression at KS2?	Performance at KS2 compared with national data Progression data
evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and use their findings to promote improvement	How accurate is the school's view of itself? Are areas of weaknesses / areas of underperformance being tackled?	School self evaluation and improvement plans
improve the school and develop its capacity for sustaining improvement by developing leadership capacity and high professional standards among all staff	Are the skills of leadership being developed at all levels? How effective are we as a governing body? Are we operating as critical friends?	CPD relating to leadership development Governing body training Evidence of succession planning
engage with parents and carers in supporting children' s achievement, behaviour and safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	How effective is communication with parents?	Parental feedback
ensure that all children are safe.	Are safeguarding procedures fully in place? Are safe practices and a culture of safety promoted throughout the school	The single central record

The behaviour and safety of children at the school

Lead Governor

Inspectors will want to know:	Questions governors could ask	Information needed
About children’s attitudes to learning and conduct in lessons and around the school	How well do children behave in lessons? How well do children behave around the school particularly at break and lunch times?	Outcomes of lesson observations Outcomes of learning walks Data on exclusions
About children’s behaviour towards, and respect for, other young people and adults. Is there freedom from bullying and harassment that may include cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability	Is bullying a cause for concern and how are incidents of bullying addressed? Do children have a positive attitude towards staff and other children? Are safeguarding procedures fully in place?	Ofsted grade for behaviour and safety Student voice - What children say about the school Recording of racist and other incidents.
how well teachers manage the behaviour and expectations of children to ensure that all children have an equal and fair chance to thrive and learn in an atmosphere of respect and dignity	How are children informed about the school’s expectations? How are children supported in meeting expectations? Do staff consistently apply the school’s anti-bullying, equality and diversity policies?	Parental feedback Outcomes of lesson observations “Pupil voice” - What children say about the school
Children’s ability to assess and manage risk appropriately and to keep themselves safe	How are children supported in assessing risk? What strategies does the school use to ensure children are safe in school?	Data relating to accidents
children’s attendance and punctuality at school and in lessons	How good are attendance and punctuality?	Attendance and punctuality data for Herrick compared with national data
how well the school ensures the systematic and consistent management of behaviour.	Do ALL staff consistently apply the school’s policies on behaviour?	Parental feedback Exclusion data showing comparisons with LA and other schools

Appendix 4



Governor Focus Visit Report

Governor:

Date of Visit

PURPOSE OF VISIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning Walk (Link to Herrick Learning & Teaching descriptors)• Review of School Improvement Plan
SUMMARY: Key points from Learning Walk	•
PROGRESS: Progress made by staff/children in relation to School Development	•
ACTION POINTS: (Challenge)	•

If necessary, please use the reverse of this form for further comments

Appendix 5

SCHOOL VISITS – A GENERAL 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?
HOW SHALL I CARRY IT OUT?
What particular areas 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 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 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? Have I prepared a short report for the next governors' meeting? How can I build on this for the next visit?