



Deanshanger Primary School Governors' Visit Policy

Context

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress; it is also a valuable opportunity to understand where the school is, the challenges faced and the progress being made. Being in school also allows staff and children to have a better understanding of the role of governors and how we are all committed to team work and school improvement.

The Governors visiting programme is an integral part of the school's yearly monitoring calendar.

Regularity of visits

It is recognised that school life is ever changing and there will be times where additional visits are required or a planned visit should be postponed due to 'other' pulls on SLT and staff e.g., a visit from the local authority and therefore duplicating the learning walk information and increasing observation time for staff. With this in mind, and recognising that there may need to be change, the following guidelines have been agreed by the HT, SLT and full governing body -

- Lead Governor monitoring visits and Learning Walks will take place to monitor an area of the SIP in accordance with a pre-planned timetable – this is reviewed and set annually.
- Each Governor is encouraged to make at least one visit a year during school time and governors will often monitor an area of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) in pairs in accordance with the agreed timetable but wherever possible, two Lead Governors visits will be planned during the academic year. These should be previously planned and agreed with the HT and subject coordinator of Staff/Lead Governor for individual subjects. At least one of the visits should be made during school time if possible.
- There will be two Learning Walks a year during school time. These will be proposed by HT and agreed by Chair of Governors in conjunction with the full governing body.
- In addition to the above visits, the Chair of Governors should have regular 'catch ups' with the HT. These should be fortnightly wherever possible whether in person, phone or via email but this may vary according to school needs.

School priorities and focus areas of the SIP should be considered in addition to safeguarding and personnel issues.

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.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be adhered to regarding visits. Comments should be limited to the HT, SLT or subject lead with who the visit was arranged, but not with other staff or with parents. Individual children or staff members (other than the member of staff involved with the visit) should not be identified in school visit reports.

Before making a visit -

- Contact the Headteacher and agree a date, time and focus for the visit. The visit may have been previously discussed at a governors' meeting with a clear purpose identified.
- Arrange a mutually convenient time, avoiding sensitive times such as SATs, assessment times or 'other' external visits.
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit
- Draw up a timetable for the visit, where applicable, with the subject lead or Head teacher or subject-coordinator and ensure that all staff are aware of the visit and the expectations on them.

On the day of the visit -

- Arrive on time and clarify the timetable and objectives.
- Act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher.
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher.
- Be flexible if something urgent crops up which means the arranged tasks cannot take place – always keep in mind that the education of the students is of overriding importance.
- Always ask for explanations of anything not understood at an appropriate time when it will not interrupt pupils' learning (this may be in conversation with the class teacher after the lesson or with the head teacher at the end of the visit).
- Do not check on the progress of individual children, including your own unless it is a specific focus of the learning walk.
- Do not walk around the school unaccompanied or put yourself in situations where you are likely to be unaccompanied with pupils.

After the visit the Governor will -

- Meet with the Head teacher, where possible, to give a verbal report, and to raise any issues that may have arisen.
- Complete the Governor Visit Proforma, reporting on the focus. The completed form should be sent to the Head teacher and subject lead and then, after any possible alterations, the form will be circulated to the governing body via Governor Hub. Wherever possible, this should be within two weeks.
- Governors should report on the meeting without giving opinions and where possible individuals should not be able to be identified. Next steps, where applicable, should be agreed at the meeting and discussed with the HT and subject lead rather than coming solely from the lead governor.
- The Governor Visit will be minuted at the relevant Sub Committee and or FGB meeting(s).

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

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. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed then governor visits will be a positive experience for all involved, and will result in effective monitoring by the Governing Body and ultimately support school improvement.