

# Little Paxton Primary School



## Policy: EFFECTIVE MONITORING VISITS BY GOVERNORS

Last reviewed & Approved: October 2015

Next review due: Autumn 2018

### **Purpose:**

To enable the Governing Body to work in partnership with senior leaders and school staff to challenge and support the drive for continued improvement through governors' visits to school.

### **Background:**

*"Individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish. But they need to be able to visit from time to time in order to develop their understanding of the school to enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school. Governors should arrange their visits with the Headteacher, who has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school. It is often useful to draw up a policy on governor visits to cover things such as giving notice, constructive feedback and handling concerns. The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should have a clear purpose. Visits by governors can be useful and informative. They do not replace professional inspection or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the Headteacher"* (taken from 'The Governors Guide to the Law').

In order to be effective, governors need to know their school and how it works. Visiting the school during the school day is just one way governors can gain information.

Governors who are regular visitors to school and have unsupervised access to children will need to have a DBS check (formerly CRB). The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all volunteers working in the school and having contact with children have had the appropriate checks.

### **Potential Benefits of Effective Governor Visits to:**

<b>Governors</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Establishing a collaborative approach that recognises the professional expertise, role and responsibility of school staff	Engaging collaboratively with the work of the Governing Body recognising the role of governors in securing continued improvement
Establishing an overview and understanding of the progress being made against the priorities identified by the Governing Body and the school and gaining a detailed understanding of priorities in the Termly Operational Plan(TOP)	Engaging in partnership with governors in evaluating progress against priorities in the TOP; providing clear analysis as part of responsibilities identified in the TOP
Understanding the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of actions in place, including the use of performance management, to bring about improvement	To work as a team with governors through classroom visits and professional dialogue which deepen understanding of how effectively the school is meeting children's learning needs and improving progress
Observing policies and initiatives in practice	To demonstrate expected practice and engage in professional dialogue about the implementation of policy and its impact

Listening to the views of children through focused discussion and observation	To share pupils' perceptions of school and their progress in learning in line with monitoring identified in the operational plan
Reviewing how resources, including the use of the Pupil Premium and other funding, are used to support children's learning and effect improvement	To demonstrate the use of resources and contribute to analysis of their impact through professional dialogue and review

### **Monitoring Visits**

Visits will be planned in advance and will be designed to monitor aspects of the school priorities as identified in the Termly Operational Plan or any other appropriate focus as identified by the Governing Body.

A "visit" may be by one or more governors and may consist of one or more discrete visits to the school on several dates as agreed by the Governing Body.

### **Focus of Visits**

The focus of visits will generally be on progress made on a selected action from the agreed priority identified in the Termly Operational Plan (TOP), although the Governing Body may choose other foci for visits if it deems this to be appropriate.

This may involve:

- Seeing teaching and learning in practice
- Discussions and interviews with staff and pupils against identified priorities
- Seeing examples of work scrutiny and impact

### **What governor visits are not about**

The crucial point to note here is that governors' visits to classrooms are not a form of inspection in terms of making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher. That remains a task for the Headteacher and/or other education professionals. Governors' visits are not about:

- Making judgements about the quality of teaching
- Pursuing personal agendas
- Monopolising teachers' time
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

### **Ground Rules:**

Governors and staff should be aware of these ground rules. This will make visits more useful and productive:

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Before</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree purpose of visit</li> <li>• Arrange details of visit with Headteacher in advance</li> <li>• Ensure staff are fully briefed as to the purpose, time and expectation of the visit</li> <li>• Agree level of confidentiality</li> <li>• Discuss the context of any lesson to be observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn up unannounced</li> </ul>
<b>During</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe any class guidelines / rules</li> <li>• Fulfil agreed purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk in with a clip board</li> <li>• Interrupt the teacher</li> <li>• Judge the quality of teaching</li> </ul>
<b>After</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank the teacher and the pupils</li> <li>• Debrief with the Headteacher or other identified member of staff</li> <li>• Respect the confidential nature of some of what may have been seen or heard</li> <li>• Ask the Headteacher (and/or other staff as appropriate) to read and comment on a draft of any written visit report prior to distribution to governors</li> <li>• Report back to the Governing Body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave without a word</li> </ul>

### **Being Prepared:**

If you identify any concerns whilst preparing for the visit, these should be shared with the Headteacher for the visit prior to starting. Any concerns arising during the visit, raise them with the Headteacher as soon as possible.

### **Feedback**

All visits to school undertaken to monitor a priority identified by the Governing Body, will be reported back to the GB. Governors may use the report proforma in Appendix 1. Where ever possible this should be to the next meeting immediately following completion of the visit.

### **What should the feedback cover?**

- Progress against the agreed priority in the TOP
- What is working well
- What requires further development or amendment
- It there are there any issues for the GB to address

### **Minimum Commitment**

The Governing Body aims to make 6 formal monitoring visits over the course of each year; each governor should aim to visit the school at least once each year.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Curriculum & Standards Committee

19/10/15 The policy was reviewed and approved by Personnel Committee in the interests of timing and ensuring the policy was updated prior to a Governor Visit. The policy remains under the review of C&S Committee.

**Little Paxton Primary School  
Report on Monitoring Visit by a Governor**

Date	
School Priority	
Action from TOP to be monitored	
Present	
Summary of Visit	
Progress and Impact seen or cited by staff and children	
Feedback to GB	Date of Meeting