



Thackley Primary School

# Governor Visit Policy

Date policy ratified: 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher                      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of governors                      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Statement of intent

Through this policy, Thackley Primary School aims to embed effective procedures concerning governor monitoring visits. Each governor is expected to make at least one visit during the academic year but we recommend three visits. This demonstrates the governing board's role in the strategic management of the school by helping to evaluate and improve practice.

Governor visits inform understanding of the school's practices and procedures, allow opportunities to speak to pupils and teachers, enable the identification of resource needs, and allow governors to see the SDP in action.

For staff, governor visits allow staff the chance to find out more about governors, provide an opportunity to draw attention to issues or questions they wish to raise, and provide an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss current practice.

Governors must:

- Respect school staff and pupils.
- Support the headteacher.
- Acknowledge that they represent the full governing board.

By following the agreed principles and procedures, governor visits will be pleasant, purposeful, and will significantly contribute towards school improvement.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- DfE (2014) 'The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following:

- Governors Annual Planner
- Governor Visit Report Proforma (See Appendix)

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

Governors will be responsible for:

- Meeting their target of at least one visit per academic year.
- Understanding the needs of staff members through discussions with at least one staff member per academic year.
- Reporting their observations to the governors during a full governing board meeting or a Committee Meeting.
- Familiarising themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Devising an annual plan for visits
- Facilitating governor visits.
- Discussing completed visits with governors, prior to a report being made to the full governing board.

A number of governors are linked to particular areas of the school's provision or to the School Development Plan. These links change annually and are detailed in the Governors Annual Planner document.

## 3. Expected behaviour

### Preparing for a visit

Governors will never visit the school unannounced – they will be expected to arrange visits at least one week prior to the date of the proposed visit with the headteacher. Governors will remain flexible and understand that the school must make pupils' education the priority, and that this may sometimes lead to the rearranging of visits.

Before a visit, governors will:

- Agree a clear, purposeful focus for the visit.
- Consider how the area of focus will be identified and observed during the visit.
- Discuss the context of the activities to be observed.
- Agree their role within the activities.
- Refer to the School Improvement Plan to ensure the visit's focus is strategic and in line with the school's priorities for improvement.

- Read the documentation relevant to the focus of the visit, e.g. the school's Behaviour Policy, and prepare relevant questions, where appropriate.

### **During a visit**

During a visit, governors will:

- Adhere to their agreed role at all times.
- Make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school.
- Where visiting activities involve lesson observations, not ask questions, interrupt the teacher or distract pupils during the lesson.
- Spend time in a classroom only when they have provided a clear reason for doing so.
- Adhere to confidentiality agreements.
- Adhere to the agreed times and purpose.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the pupils and the wider school community.
- Avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present.

During a visit, governors will not:

- Make judgements concerning teaching or other areas of school provision in any official capacity.
- Pursue personal agendas during visits.
- Check on individual children or monopolise the time of staff.

### **After a visit**

After a visit, governors will:

- Thank the staff, and pupils where appropriate, involved in the visiting activities.
- Discuss the visit with the staff involved in the visiting activity at their convenience.
- Provide feedback regarding the visit to the full governing board.

After a visit, governors will not:

- Break confidentiality agreements.

## **4. Providing feedback**

A time will be agreed between the governor and staff, at the staff members convenience, to discuss what was observed during the visit.

During the discussion, governors will adhere to the following framework:

- Ask staff for their views on what happened during the visit
- Present governors' observations
- Provide positive feedback
- Raise any issues
- Ask further questions

By the end of the discussion, both the governor and staff members will be clear as to what information will be shared with the headteacher and full governing board.

The Governor Visit Report Proforma will be completed as soon as possible after the visit.

The headteacher and governors will discuss the observations prior to the distribution of the proforma. A copy of the completed proforma will be provided to:

- The headteacher
- The relevant staff members
- The clerk to governors

A copy of the report will be circulated to all governors at the next appropriate committee or governing board meeting.

The governing board will ensure all board members have the opportunity to discuss and ask questions regarding the final report and the visit undertaken.

## **5. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed every four years by the headteacher and the chair of the governing board.

When reviewing the success of the policy, the headteacher and chair of the governing board will take the following into consideration:

- Has every governor conducted at least one visit during the academic year?
- Has every governor made links with their allocated subject or area of provision?
- Has every governor met with the staff members they are linked to?
- Are visits achieving the desired outcomes?
- What worked well?
- What did not work well?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can practice be improved?

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all governors, staff members and relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date of this policy is April 2027

## Governor Visit to School Report

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name of Governor:  |  |
| Date of visit:   |  |
| Planned focus of visit:  |  |
| Staff involved:  |  |
| Does the visit relate to the Governing Body's monitoring of the School Improvement Plan?<br>If so, which area? |  |

### Purpose of the Governor visit & key questions to ask

(e.g. to see a new initiative in practice, conduct a safeguarding walk with the site manager)

### Describe what you saw/did during your visit?

(e.g. what were the children doing whilst taking part in a new initiative, reviewed specific safeguarding procedures, ensure school is safe and secure)

### How has the visit strengthened governance?

(e.g. better awareness of an initiative that governors have agreed to fund, seen information presented by staff in practice, strengthened ability to ask questions to senior leaders)

### Outcomes of the visit or next steps to be taken

(e.g. what are your overall thoughts? Do you need anymore information?)

|                         |  |            |  |
|-------------------------|--|------------|--|
| Name of Governor        |  | Signature: |  |
| Name of member of staff |  | Signature: |  |

Please complete the form after your visit and then share a copy of the report with the Headteacher, staff member and Clerk so it can be discussed at the next meeting.