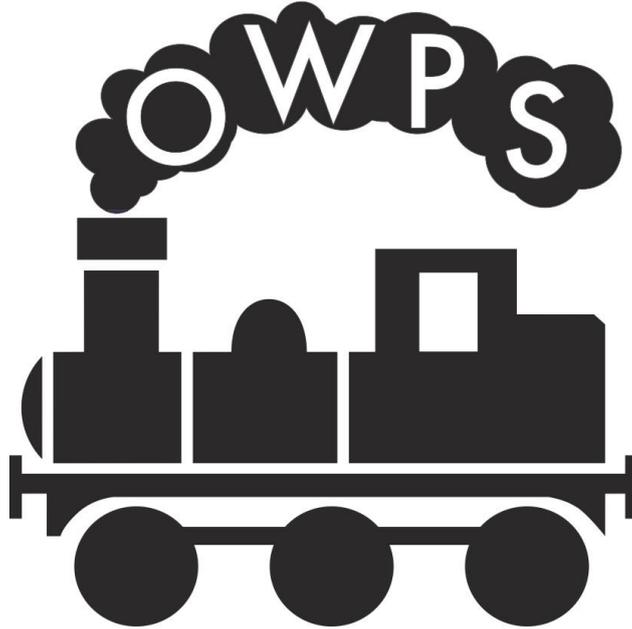


Orton Wistow Primary School



Governor Visits Policy

Status	Recommended
GB Monitor	FGB
Staff Lead	HT
Senior Lead	HT
Version	Proposed
Publication Date	SPR/2019
Next Review	SPR/2021

Date Agreed:	
Headteacher:	
Chair of Governors:	

Introduction

The governing body has a duty to oversee the direction and policies of the school, to monitor its standards and be held to account for its conduct and performance. Visiting the school is the best way to learn how it functions, and to keep under review how it operates so that you can increase the governing body's first-hand knowledge, informing strategic decision making.

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Development and Improvement Plan (DPSI).

The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose. Governors should arrange their visits with the Headteacher who has the responsibility of the day-to-day management of the school.

Purposes of Visit

Potential benefits to governors:

- To recognise and celebrate success
- To develop relationships with the staff
- To get to know the children
- To recognise different teaching styles
- To understand the environment in which teachers teach
- To monitor policies in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them to teachers:
- To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- To get to know other governors
- To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- To highlight the need for particular resources

What a visit is not about

- A form of inspection to make judgments about professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on progress of own children
- Pursuing personal agenda
- Monopolising school/teacher time

Protocols or Ground Rules for Visits

Governors should at all times:

- Observe protocol and be sensitive to the surroundings
- Consider what should happen and what should not
- Ensure that visits are no longer than 1 hour

Things to consider when feeding back after the visit:

- Governors should feed back to the Headteacher in the first instance and then also to the member of Staff in writing.
- A written report for the Governing Body must be available for the next full meeting
- Positive comments, Areas of concern, Questions and Suggestions should all be reported
- Where possible all Governors should use the agreed proforma which is available from the Headteacher

Annual Programme of Visits

A programme of visits should be planned and spread evenly across the school year in consultation with the Headteacher and member of staff responsible for the area being monitored/visited.

Monitoring and Review of this Policy

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually when the following questions will be asked:

- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits we identified?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make our practice even better?

Preparing for a visit

- Check the agreed policy for governors' visits
- Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the DPSI? What are the relevant school Policies? How does this determine the activities I am interested in?
- Discuss an agenda with the Headteacher and or Subject Leader well in advance. Make sure that the date chosen is suitable.
- Use the proforma (Appendix B)
- Send the proposed agenda to the staff involved. Ask how they want governors to integrate into the learning walk? It might be possible for you to see a copy of any documents beforehand. Discuss with the coordinator if any supporting information is available – Ofsted report, improvement plan, performance data.
- Be clear beforehand exactly what you are looking for. Try to prepare questions and submit to staff in advance.

During the Visit

- Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the governing body, it is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on behalf of the governing body.
- Be punctual.
- Keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible.
- Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the classroom will be.
- Get involved with the children
- Remember it is a visit not an inspection.
- Observe discretely.
- Don't distract the teacher during the lesson from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest.
- Be courteous, friendly not critical.
- Interact, don't interrupt.
- Remember why you are there. Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit.
- Listen to staff and pupils.

After

- Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how?
- Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved.
- Thank the teacher for supporting you in your role as a governor. Be open, honest and positive.
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind.
- Submit your report to the Headteacher for approval
- Reflect: How did that go? Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learned more about the school? Have I helped the governing body fulfill its duties?

Reporting your visit

- Write a short summary 'as a lay governor' of what you learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. This will be easier if the visit had a focus.
- You must circulate a draft to the Headteacher and any staff involved for them to check the accuracy and clarity. Be prepared to amend it. Aim to achieve a report that is agreed by those involved.

- Circulate this at the next appropriate committee/governing body meeting.

Visit Focus'

Although not an exhaustive list, visits may focus on:-

- Particular subjects, key stages or classes
- The use made of the buildings or the site
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Special educational needs
- Literacy and numeracy
- The use of ICT equipment
- The impact on the school of any changes e.g. increased classes in a key stage
- Relative numbers of questions and responses to the teacher from boys to girls

Informal Visits

Visits may also take place in an informal capacity. It is vital that everyone is clear about the capacity in which they are visiting and not to confuse the role.

- The chair making a regular visit to see the Headteacher
- To lend a helping hand with a school event
- To get information from the office relating to a committee meeting
- To help in a class
- To speak to a teacher in relation to your own child
- Attend a school function or educational visit

Dissemination, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Appendix A

GOVERNOR MONITORING

Governor monitoring can take several forms:

- Pupil interviews
- Meeting with subject leader
- Snapshot of a lesson
- Walk around the school

AIMS:

- To know and understand the level of enjoyment pupils have for the subject
- To understand what pupils like best/least in the subject
- To know the standards achieved in the subject
- To know what steps are being taken to improve the subject area
- To report main findings back to the full Governing Body.

We would like to invite governors who are visiting subject leaders to participate in a **Learning Walk**. This should take up to 30 minutes.

During the Learning Walk you can expect the subject leader to speak with you about areas listed below.

Please raise questions if you need clarification or more information. Ideally the Learning Walk should take place while the children are in class.

PUPIL INTERVIEWS: (suggested questions to ask a small group of children when walking around the classrooms)

These questions will help you gain an understanding of pupil attitudes toward the subject.

- Tell me about what you are learning today.
- Do you like (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Tell me what you most like doing in (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Is there anything you don't like in (select curriculum area being monitored)

KEY QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION WITH SUBJECT LEADER

- What is your vision for the subject?
- Do you have a set of minimum expectations?
- What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?

- How do you keep a track of standards and progress in the subject?
- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?
- What resources does the school have for the subject and how are these organised?
- Are there any additional resource needs?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching the subject?

Governor Visit Record Sheet

Appendix B

Orton Wistow Primary School
Governor Visit Report



Good Governance Reminder:

- Agree date of visit with Head Teacher/SMT/staff member
- Minimise disruption to the school
- Give key personnel time to prepare for meeting

Governor Name:		Date:	
Purpose of visit:			
Committee for reporting:			
Ofsted action / School Development plan / reference(s):			
Structure/timetable of visit:			
Key personnel to meet:			
Position	Name		✓
Key questions/ opportunities for improvement:			
Governor's observations/evaluation:			
Student feedback / views (if any)			
Any key points arising for Governing Body review:			
Signed by Governor:			
Date:			
Signed by Head Teacher:			
Date			

Things to Observe When Visiting A Classroom

Appendix C

Relationship between staff and pupils

Relationships between pupils

Variety of teaching styles

Availability and role of support staff

Behaviour and attitude of pupils — are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?

Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils

How the pupils are grouped

How different abilities are catered for

Children's work

Displays

Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)

Use of space and working conditions

Quality and quantity of equipment and resources

Questions for Governors to Ask

Appendix D

Literacy and Numeracy

The Full Governing Body retains the responsibility for raising standards of literacy and numeracy. A nominated governor who takes a special interest in literacy or numeracy can help to ensure that these issues remain on the governing body's agenda. The following questions will help you in your role as literacy/numeracy governor, as you find out about the teaching of literacy/numeracy across the school. Use them as a guide in a meeting or on school visits — it is **not** intended you work systematically through the list.

Achievements and Attitudes

What are the broad trends in the school's achievement in English/math's?

- Compared to similar schools?
- In relation to the national rates of increase?
- In relation to the national picture in terms of gender?

Where have we improved? Do we know why?

Are there differences between the achievement of different year groups, and if so, why?

How do our results in English/math's compare with those in other subjects?

What aspects of the subject do pupils find easy and which hard?

Are there significant differences in reading and writing between?

- Girls and boys
- Pupils with special educational needs

- Very able pupils
- Pupils with English as an additional language and the others
- The majority and any other minority groups, such as travellers?

In meetings with the Literacy/Numeracy Leader can you tell how much progress pupils are making? For example, you could look at:

- Key Stage 1 and 2 test results
- The work of a range of pupils — average, below average and above average

Other Evidence

Special Needs

- How are pupils with special educational needs integrated into the daily literacy/math's lessons?
- How have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) been adapted to support children in their daily literacy/numeracy lessons?

Management of the subject

- How is the role of the Literacy/Numeracy Leader developing?
- Does the school improvement plan match the identified needs?
- How has the budget for this area been spent?
- Is there a need for additional resources for any aspect of the work?
- How much additional adult support does each class have?

Literacy only:

- Does the school offer a range of reading books catering for all abilities, cultural backgrounds and tastes, especially boys? Are pupils using the library? What links does the school have with the local library?
- How does the school use all its resources (books, materials and displays, as well as electronic media) to promote reading and writing/numeracy?

Communication

- How are parents kept informed of progress?
- What steps are being taken to encourage parents to support their children in reading and writing at home?