

At Hackforth and Hornby CE Primary School, we seek to provide a happy, caring and supportive environment, in which pupils are valued equally and are given opportunities to develop their full potential.

Hackforth and Hornby CE Primary School Governor Visits to Schools Policy

1. BACKGROUND

The Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors are also held to account for their own school performance. Ofsted assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will assess that assumption during a school inspection.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a Governor can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and pupils and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms. If school and classroom visits are done well they will add to Governors' understanding of their school, its staff and its pupils.

To support and develop this, the Governing Body has appointed link governors to report to the governing body in a specific curriculum area or aspect of the work of the school. Link Governor Visits will be undertaken as part of a strategic programme to assist the Governing Body in fulfilling its statutory duties, its role in monitoring and evaluation and to improve its understanding of the school to ensure informed decision making.

A schedule of Link Governor Visits (an average of two visits per term) will be agreed at Governing Body Meetings (agenda item). Dates of visits will be recorded in the minutes and staff will be informed of the schedule at staff meetings.

Governors are invited to attend two key school events, e.g. production, services and sports day, reporting back to Governor Committees and the Governing Body, using the (electronic) report form. Governors may also be invited to accompany and report on school trips.

A Governors' Visits Report Form supports the visit and provides a formal record for Ofsted of the Governors' structured involvement in the work and life of the school. It will not, however, form part of any other evidence base, e.g. a member of staff's Performance Management.

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2. AIMS OF THE POLICY

The policy aims to ensure:

- That Governors are fully conversant with their duties in relation to School Visits;
- That teachers fully understand the purpose of Governor Visits;
- That all involved understand how these visits fit into the statutory and strategic purpose of the Governing Body;
- That all involved fully understand what a Governor will and will not do;
- That all involved know what will happen following a Governor visit and how information will be used;
- That all involved will understand how the success of this policy will be measured.

School visits by members of the governing body are a key component to being an effective school governor and have potential benefits to both governors and staff.

Visits will support governors by:

- Providing information to support their link role.
- Recognising and celebrate success in school.
- Developing relationships with the staff.
- Promoting an understanding of the daily environment in which teachers and support staff work.
- Allowing them to get to know pupils.
- Allowing them to see school policies, particularly The Teaching and Learning Policy, in action
- Helping them to support the school during discussions, particularly linked to the curriculum and the prioritisation of resources.

Visits will support the school community by:

- Introducing governors to the school and classrooms. Encouraging teachers and support staff to reflect on personal practice through discussion with governors.
- Helping all staff to meet and get to know all governors.
- Helping staff to understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities.
- Highlighting the need for particular resources.

3. PURPOSE OF GOVERNOR VISITS:

- To assist the Governing Body in fulfilling its statutory duties including monitoring and evaluation; this includes monitoring the implementation of the school Development Plan (SDP);
- To assist governors in fulfilling specific link governor roles.
- Assist the Governing Body in making informed decisions.

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Please note:

- Governors will not pursue any personal agendas or arrive with inflexible preconceived ideas.
- Governors will not make any judgements about pupil's work, behaviour, any teacher's classroom practice or issues relating to the day to day running of the school. These are the responsibility of the Headteacher, who is, of course, prepared to discuss any concerns.

4. FORMAT OF VISITS

The Governing Body will approve a schedule of visits. The number of visits will be based on an average of two (or as appropriate) visits per term. This schedule will be confirmed at each meeting (agenda item).

The headteacher will ensure that all staff will receive a copy of the visit schedule.

Each visit will have a clear focus, usually linked to the governor's link responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of the visiting governor to confirm the date and time of their visit (at least one full week in advance), preferably by e-mail to admin@hackforthhornby.n-yorks.sch.uk and confirm the purpose of the visit. The Headteacher will then confirm details with staff.

To avoid disruption to lessons, whenever possible, governors are asked to be present at the beginning of lesson sessions to enable him/her to be introduced to pupils. Pupils will be asked to talk to the governor about their classroom and work.

Governors are asked to make themselves fully acquainted with Health and Safety procedures, including fire safety, prior to the visit.

5. DURING THE VISIT

On arrival, governors are asked to report to the office, signing the visitors' book on arrival.

If visiting a classroom, the Governor will arrive at the time planned to avoid disrupting the learning and follow the agreed purpose of the visit.

Whilst Governors are welcome in the classroom, they should be aware that some staff may feel nervous or stressful about the presence of a visitor in the classroom.

Governors are encouraged to talk to staff and pupils; however, they should be aware of their behaviour and avoid any implication that they are inspecting, such as by using a clipboard.

At the end of the visit, Governors are asked to thank everyone concerned, including pupils.

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6. FOLLOWING THE VISIT

After visiting school the Governor(s) are asked to:

- Give some time and thought to reflection;
- Using the agreed form, report on what was seen in the session relative to the agreed purpose and discuss findings with the Headteacher. The form should be sent electronically to school.
- Share outcomes with governors at the next Governing Body Meeting or Improvement Committee Meeting, as appropriate.

The Headteacher will provide feedback to appropriate staff as soon as possible after each visit.

If necessary, all parties will agree any appropriate follow-up action.

Governors and staff are asked to respect confidentiality arising from any aspect of the visit.

7. WEBSITE

In addition to visits, governors are asked to visit the school website, at least monthly, and check content against statutory requirements. The website will be an agenda item at full governing body and Improvement Committee meetings.

8. MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF THE POLICY

The success of this policy will be measured by the following:

The extent to which:

- Governors become involved in visits to schools in school;
- Governors make more informed decisions;
- Staff and pupils know governors better and feel comfortable with their involvement in school;
- Governors feel more involved in each school;
- Governors have an informed and confident understanding of the school's strengths, needs and priorities.

Date:

Review Date: February 2018

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Visits – A Summary

Appendix 2: Governor Visits Checklist

Appendix 3: Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) Guidelines

Appendix 4: Governor Visit Report

At Hackforth and Hornby CE Primary School, we seek to provide a happy, caring and supportive environment, in which pupils are valued equally and are given opportunities to develop their full potential.

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Visits – A Summary

Governors visit school to enhance their understanding of the school’s work and to help fulfill their responsibilities when monitoring and evaluating the school.

Visit Reports will be kept together for reference purposes in the Headteacher’s office; they will be minuted in full at Governing Body Meetings.

	PLEASE	PLEASE AVOID
BEFORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the purpose of your visit • Confirm the time. • Agree when you will discuss the visit with the headteacher. • Consider practicalities (dress: you may be observing PE or art. Do you wish to join pupils for lunch? If so, please inform the office by 9am). • Confirm your arrival with the headteacher and the appropriate member of staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning up unannounced or late • Failing to sign in • Insisting on a visit if a member of staff states that it is inconvenient. <i>You will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity.</i>
DURING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree how you will introduce yourself to staff and pupils with the teacher. • Agree with the teacher if/how she/he wants to use you in the classroom e.g. helping a child who has difficulty etc; listening to readers • Talk to pupils about the lesson and their books. • Consider pupils’ behaviour for learning (focus and confidence). • Remain focused on the agreed purpose of the visit. • Look at wall displays. • Consider any SMSC impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking in with a clipboard. • Arriving with preconceived ideas. • Interrupting the teacher. • Making professional judgements about staff expertise (Governors are not inspectors). • Pursuing your own personal agenda/focus on the progress of your own child or others known to you.
AFTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the teacher and pupils. • Discuss visit with the headteacher. • Complete the Visit Report. • Forward the report to the Headteacher. • Prepare to provide a verbal report for the next meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forwarding your report without discussing your visit with the teacher. • Raising issues with others before discussing any observations with the Headteacher.

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Appendix 2: Governor Visits Checklist

This will be dependent on the purpose of the visit but the following could be considered:-

Relationships

- Is there a pleasant and purposeful learning atmosphere?
- Are the children engaged and motivated?
- Is there an atmosphere of mutual respect where self-esteem is promoted?
- Are all learners valued?
- Are effective behaviour strategies implemented, e.g. Go for Gold (FS/KS1), house points, stickers? Do pupils value/understand these strategies?

Learning

- Is the lesson interactive? Are pupils active rather than passive learners? Can pupils (dependent on age), articulate the value of activities and the impact on their learning
- Is there a range of activities – differentiated for different abilities/ages?
- Are there sufficient and appropriate resources?
- Are Teaching Assistants and other adults used effectively?
- Does classroom organisation promote independence? Are pupils correcting work and organising their own resources, including resources to support their learning; these may include word mats, spelling dictionaries and rulers.

Learning Environment

- Is the classroom organised so that all children can be involved in the lesson? (e.g. Can all see the Interactive Whiteboard, teacher etc?).
- Is equipment easily accessible for the children?
- Is the noise level appropriate to the activity?
- Are displays attractive and useful for the learner? Wall displays should promote learning; as well as celebrating work and pupil achievement.
- You may wish to consider health and safety and the state of cleanliness/decoration.

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Appendix 3: Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) Development.

These guidelines to the SMSC aspect of the curriculum may be helpful.

Please consider. Are pupils:

- reflective about beliefs, values and more profound aspects of human experience, using their imagination and creativity, and developing curiosity in their learning?
- developing and applying an understanding of right and wrong in their school life and life outside school?
- taking part in a range of activities requiring social skills?
- developing an awareness of and respect for diversity in relation to, for example, gender, race, religion and belief, culture, sexual orientation and disability?
- gaining a well-informed understanding of the options and challenges facing them as they move through the school and on to the next stage of their education and training?
- developing an appreciation of theatre, music, art and literature?
- developing the skills and attitudes to enable them to participate fully and positively in democratic modern Britain?
- responding positively to a range of artistic, sporting and other cultural opportunities?

- developing an understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life?

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Appendix 4: Governor Visit Report

Areas for Whole School Development 16/17

Key Priority 1: Continuing to refine the quality of lesson observations.

Key Priority 2: Curriculum challenge for all pupils to meet the increased expectations for all year groups. This will include a focus on mental maths recall, including times tables and number facts, spelling and phonics.

Key Priority 3: Pilot revised Governing Body Meeting format. Further develop the role of governors to ensure that they provide challenge and support to the school.

Governor:	Date:
Link Area:	
Staff/Class Visited:	
Purpose of Visit: (previously agreed with the Governing Body and Headteacher)	
Governor Observations:	
Impact on SDP Key Issues:	
Further Actions, as discussed with Headteacher:	
Governor's Signature:	Date:
Copies to:	