



# Tibberton CE First School and Hindlip CE First School

## Policy for Governor Visits



<b>Policy reviewed:</b>	Autumn 23
<b>Adopted by Governing Body:</b>	Autumn 23
<b>Policy to be reviewed:</b>	Autumn 2026

**Chair of Governors:** Mr A Clarke  
**Executive Headteacher:** Mr A. Gromski  
**Heads of School:** Mrs R. Jordan, Mr J. Uren

***'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.' Colossians 3:23***

**Rationale:** As Church of England Schools we are committed to serving with **Grace** and enabling every person to flourish and live out 'life in all its fullness'. We want our children to grow in wisdom; to cultivate a wide-ranging knowledge that will help broaden life chances; to develop the spiritual, intellectual and emotional resources they need to live a good life; and to develop the character to live well together in community. The role of the Governing Body is a vital element of this provision with three core functions as laid down in the Governance Handbook:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of the staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

The Governors of Tibberton and Hindlip Schools draw on a range of evidence in order to carry out these functions and one source of information is their own visits to their schools. Visiting their schools is the best way to learn how they function, and to keep under review how they operate on a day-to-day basis so that individual governors can increase the governing body's first-hand knowledge, informing strategic decision making.

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. Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Development Plan. Governors should arrange their visits with the Executive Headteacher or Head of Schools who have the responsibility of the day to day management of the schools. Visits should be of value to the governing board which is demonstrable to outside agencies e.g. Ofsted or the LA. It is not the role of those governing to form judgements about the performance of school staff during visits and individuals will make every effort to avoid this impression.

### **Purpose of Governor Visits:**

- Increase the governing body's first-hand knowledge about the schools and their daily operation; thus helping to inform ongoing and future strategic decision making.
- Keep under review the way in which the schools are operating and performing and what they are doing to manage areas requiring further development.
- Experience the impact and progress resulting from the implementation of the school development plan and school policies.
- Demonstrate to staff that the Governing Body takes its responsibilities very seriously.
- Establish and develop good professional working relationships with staff, especially those that are linked with an individual area of responsibility.
- Demonstrate that the Governing Body is contributing to the school's self-evaluation process.
- Show support and encouragement to staff and children.

### **What are Governor Visits not about?**

- A form of inspection in terms of making judgements about the professional expertise of members of staff, especially with regard to the quality of teaching.
- Checking on the progress of their own or known children.
- Monopolising staff time.
- Arriving with inflexible or pre-conceived ideas.
- Pursuing personal agendas or issues.
- Staff Appraisal.

### **Governor Protocol for Planning School Visits**

- A programme of visits is always most effective if it is planned and spread evenly across the school year in consultation with the Executive Headteacher and Heads of School;
- Governors, will undertake a minimum of one visit to the school per academic year but no more than once a term for any single area of responsibility.

- Dates of the termly 'Governor monitoring' visit to classrooms will be agreed with the Headteacher at the start of the year and shared with all relevant stakeholders.
- Any other visits, the visiting Governor(s) should contact the Chair and Headteacher to approve the first and to negotiate dates/times and to agree the focus of the visit.
- The head may also invite governors at various times of the year through an informal invitation for school visits.
- Visits will align with the priorities within the School Development Plan.
- Prior to the agreed visit, Governors should liaise with the Headteacher in relation to the agenda, plan and focus of the visit.
- When Governors either individually or in pairs, make visits to classrooms, they will always be accompanied by a middle leader or senior member of staff depending on the nature of the visit.
- When Governors who are also staff, carry out governor duties, it would be good practice for them to undertake it in pairs, with a non-staff governor taking the lead.
- Governors will undertake visits in line with their delegation of duties as laid out in the terms of reference.

For the Core Subjects of English and Maths the purpose of each visit should be:

1. To meet with the lead professional within the school to gain an understanding of the scope of the target and the activities the school is conducting to achieve successful outcomes.
2. To monitor the progress of school activities towards the School Development Plan.
3. To evaluate the extent of success at the end of the set timescale.

Governors should establish whether it would be useful to find out anything before their visit – this may include background reading on the topic of their visit.

Governors should make a list of any questions they may want to ask and send to the Headteacher beforehand. Although further questions may arise during the visit.

### **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, to avoid confusing roles. Such informal visits might include:

- The Chair of Governors making regular visits to see the Headteacher;
- To be involved with a school event;
- To get information from the office relating to a committee meeting;
- To help in class as a volunteer;
- To attend a school function or educational visit.

### **During the visit**

- Governors are making the visit on behalf of the Governing Body, it is not appropriate for you to make judgments or promises on behalf of the governing body;
- Arrive on time in relation to the timetable set and be prepared to be flexible;
- OFSTED are very clear that Governors are not expected to undertake lesson observations, unless the school has clear protocols for visits so their purposes are understood by school staff and governors alike, and are never expected to provide judgments that relate to the quality of teaching or learning. However, where the agreed purpose of the visit might be supported by lessons being visited, be very clear about which classes are to be seen and the particular reasons they are to be visited;
- Be mindful of distracting the teacher during the lesson from her/his work but be prepared to talk and show interest;
- Observe and if you need to record anything, do so discretely; make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind.
- Be courteous, friendly not critical; Listen to staff and pupils and involve yourself with the pupils if relevant.
- Those governing will comply with the school and governing board's codes of conduct and the standards of presentation expected of staff. They will be mindful that they are representing the whole governing board through their words and actions.
- Confidentiality should be adhered to regarding visits. Comments should be limited to the Headteacher or senior or middle leader with whom the visit was arranged but not with other staff or with parents.

### **After the visit**

- Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue about which you are unclear.
- 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.
- Meet with the Headteacher/lead professional to give a verbal report and raise any issues that arose.
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind.
- The report should be sent to the Headteacher and Chair within two weeks of the visit for approval. The Headteacher will discuss the report with the member of staff for an accuracy check and make any recommendations.
- Final report must be sent to the Clerk, for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting of the Governing Body.
- Governors must report without giving opinions and individuals/children should not be named.

## Appendix 1 - Governor Guidance

Planned Governor Activity might take several forms:

- Pupil Voice Conversations
- Meeting with subject/leader;
- Snapshots of a lesson;
- Walk around the school.

Pupil Interviews: (suggested questions to ask a small group of children)

- Tell me about what you are learning today.
- Do you like \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert curriculum area being seen*)?
- Show me some learning you are proud of.

Key questions for link governor discussion with a subject leader of a subject

- What is your vision for the subject?
- How do you communicate your expectations?
- What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
- How do you track 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 if money were no object?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching the subject

Whilst in the school, Governors could observe the 'ethos' of the School, including the learning environment and children's behaviour and attitude towards each other;

- Is the School friendly and welcoming to visitors?
- Is the environment attractive and clean?
- Do the children show a positive attitude: are they interested in the questions asked? Are they focussed or easily distracted?
- Are children presented with a variety of materials and resources to learn with?
- Are children thinking for themselves and not relying on the teacher?
- Is there evidence of children's work, displays and/or information within the classrooms and around the School?
- Do work and resources appear to be well organised and easily available?
- Are children encouraged to help each other where appropriate? Do they play well together and are they caring towards each other?

Summary of Protocol For Governor Visits		
	Always	Never
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Agree the purpose of the visit with Headteacher Identify which actions of the School Development Plan to review or the context of lessons being visited.</li> <li>○ Try to prepare questions for staff in advance. Arrange and plan the details of the visit with the Headteacher/relevant member of staff, drawing up a schedule for the visit - When? Where? With whom? Duration? Time for feedback?</li> <li>○ Discuss with the Headteacher if any supporting information is available. E.g. Ofsted report, improvement plan,</li> <li>○ Try to visit at different times of the day.</li> <li>○ Agree the level of confidentiality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Turn up unannounced for a focused / formal visit.</li> <li>○ Expect to go into a classroom without prior arrangement or a recommended minimum notice of one week.</li> <li>○</li> </ul>
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be prepared, organised and punctual.</li> <li>○ Report to the school office and sign in.</li> <li>○ Fulfil the agreed purpose of the visit.</li> <li>○ Observe school / class guidelines.</li> <li>○ Jot down discussion points to consider later at the feedback session.</li> <li>○ Remember why you are there. Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit.</li> <li>○ Listen and engage with staff and pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Monopolise staff time.</li> <li>○ Interrupt teaching or talk to the teacher while he / she is teaching.</li> <li>○ Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the governing body. It is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on their behalf.</li> </ul>
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Thank the member(s) of staff and pupils.</li> <li>○ Feedback with the teacher and HT as soon as possible after the visit. Use the opportunity to clarify any issues you are unclear about.</li> <li>○ Complete the Visit Form and give a copy to the Headteacher and teacher for accuracy.</li> <li>○ Send completed report to Clerk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Leave without a word of thanks.</li> <li>○ Leave the school without giving some feedback.</li> <li>○ Discuss observations with other members of staff, parents or individual Governors, (except the Chair) unless given permission to do so</li> </ul>

**Delegation of Responsibility to Individuals** - Any individual to whom responsibility has been delegated is expected to work within the following terms of reference. For a details of where functions cannot be delegated to an individual see item 1 in these notes of guidance.

**Terms of reference:**

- To liaise with the appropriate member(s) of staff.
- To visit the schools with the purpose of gathering information concerning their area of responsibility and to increase their knowledge of the schools.
- To regularly report to the governing body, the Curriculum Committee or the Steering Group, whichever the governing body deems most appropriate, on developments and progress within their area of responsibility.
- To raise the profile of the area of responsibility when related matters are considered by the governing body.
- To attend training as appropriate.

Terms of reference and delegation of roles agreed by the governing body on (date):	Sept. 23
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