



# HUNDON AND THURLOW PRIMARY FEDERATION

## **Governor Visit Policy**

**Revised and Updated: Spring Term 2019**

**Next Review: Spring Term 2021**

## Context

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the schools in the Federation. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the schools by helping to hold the schools to account and evaluate their progress. The Governors' visits are integral to the School Development and Improvement Plan (SDIP) and the monitoring contained therein. This is further developed on a termly basis as part of the Federation's termly Monitoring Schedule.

At the Steering Group meeting held on 25.04.19 the following was agreed regarding Governor Visits:

There will be a monitoring schedule which will focus on the priorities in the School Development and Improvement Plan (SDIP) and will identify the Governor Lead with the School Leader for each priority.

Governors with responsibility for specific curriculum areas or for monitoring the statutory responsibilities of school management relating to, for example, premises, health and safety, finance, (including grants such as Pupil Premium and PE & Sport,) personnel, safeguarding or performance management will be directed by the relevant committee and liaise with the Headteacher.

The Governor Lead and the School Leader will meet each term (during the School Leader's allocated time where possible,) so that they inform the termly reporting cycle.

At the beginning of each term, during the first committee meetings held the committee will agree the focus for the term ahead for the Governor Leads with an expectation that Governor Leads will undertake three visits per year, one in each term as a guide and each being approximately an hour and a half in length. The focus for the visits will be shared with School Leaders by the Headteacher and the Governor Leads by the Committee Chairs.

When making contact with School Leaders the Governor Leads (who will be responsible for making initial contact,) will note the School Leaders allocated time for leadership activities as well as consider the events planned within the Federation Calendar and Monitoring Schedule when agreeing a mutually convenient time to meet.

Across the year the Governor Leads and School Leaders will be responsible for monitoring in both schools. The Governor Leads will ensure their three visits within the cycle will include both schools to inform their understanding of school performance, identity and school-specific issues.

The Governor Leads will complete their Governor Visit Report within two weeks of their visit and send to the relevant School Leader and the Headteacher. The Headteacher and the Subject Leaders will ensure reports are reviewed (and comments provided, if necessary,) within two weeks of receipt as a maximum. The Governor Leads will be responsible for bringing back their visit reports to the next committee meeting following liaison on reports with the School / Subject Leader and Headteacher. Reports will then be passed to the relevant administrator for committee papers and, once agreed, filed on Governor Hub.

A suggested framework for the annual cycle:

- Autumn Term, will include a discussion with the School Leader on how they will ensure impact and may incorporate a joint Learning Walk;
- Spring Term, participate in timetabled monitoring activities which may include a planning scrutiny / pupil work scrutiny with a specific focus and/or discuss evidence of impact from learning observations undertaken by the School Leader, pupil perceptions and pupil performance information.
- Summer Term, participate in timetabled evaluative monitoring activities which may include a pupil perception survey and/or a Learning Walk.

## **Visits enable Governors to:**

Gain an informed view of the progress and performance of the school in relation to our strategic aims and the priorities of the School Development and Improvement Plan (SDIP) and,

- See the schools at work to develop a greater understanding of how well the school meets pupils' needs
- To better understand the environments in which teachers and staff work
- Observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements, recognising and celebrating success
- Increase their first-hand knowledge of the schools to inform strategic decisions and policy making
- Establish and develop effective relationships with the Federation staff and work collaboratively with them
- To demonstrate the Governing Body's contribution to the Federation's self-evaluation process
- To develop the roles of Governors linked to their responsibilities as well as demonstrate the Governing Body's commitment to the schools
- To see policies and learning approaches in practice
- Give active support to the staff and the activities of the schools
- Be aware of the effect of change and different approaches to teaching and learning on all members of the schools' communities
- Understand the resources in use, evaluate these in discussion with staff as well as further requirements
- Show support and encouragement to staff and pupils through working in partnership.

## **Before making a visit**

Governors will:

- Clarify the expectations regarding the conduct of the visit including the identification of key questions to be explored
- Plan which staff and classes will be visited if appropriate to the identified monitoring
- Draw up a timetable and/or agenda for the visit with the school leader
- Ask the school leader to inform staff and pupils of the visit.

## **On the day of the visit**

Governor will remember to:

- Arrive on time, sign in and clarify the timetable/agenda with the school leader
- When in class, act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting and listening
- Be aware of school policies and governors' responsibilities in relation to policies, particularly those relating to safeguarding
- Be calm, friendly and enjoy the visit.

## **After the visit**

Governor will:

- Remember to thank the teachers and children wherever possible.
- Take time to review the visit with the School / Subject Leader.

- If a visit has been carried out jointly with a member of staff, participate in a shared debrief, agreeing the main points to be reported.
- Either complete a Governor Visit Report, reporting on the agreed focus, or record the outcome of the visit in the appropriate format, for example, Local Authority proforma for safeguarding. The completed report should be given to the School Leader and Headteacher for checking within 14 days wherever possible, before being uploaded to the Governor Hub.
- Respect confidentiality arising from any aspect of the visit.
- Raise any concerns verbally with the Headteacher prior to writing their report.

### School / Subject Leaders

- Always feel able to suggest an alternative date / time if the visit is not convenient.
- Ensure that each visit has an explicit purpose and focus, which have been agreed by all concerned.
- Prepare your class / classes for the visit of a governor.
- Welcome the governor when they arrive and introduce them in each class as appropriate.
- Have seats ready for the governor and tell them where it is.
- Be aware that a visit can be stressful for staff and governors alike.
- Inform the governor if you wish them to be involved in the lesson, and what it would be helpful for them to do.
- Don't leave your governor alone with the class, even if they are willing to do so.
- Raise any concerns over the visit with your line manager or Headteacher.
- Remember governors are there to support and enquire and be an advocate for our schools so share positives!

### Protocol

Governors must report without making judgements and individuals, particularly pupils must not be identified.

Remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements should not be made arbitrarily.

The visit is not about:

- Inspection
- Making judgements about teaching / the professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on your own children
- Pursuing a personal agenda / seek to take advantage of their position
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

Governors are an important part of the Federation team and are welcomed into the schools by staff.

It is important that Governors remember to respect the professionals and the children, support the Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed then Governor Visits will be an enjoyable experience for all involved, and will result in effective monitoring by the Governing Body, which will contribute to school improvement.

**Signed:**

Headteacher.....Date.....

Chair of Governors.....Date.....



# HUNDON AND THURLOW PRIMARY FEDERATION



## GOVERNOR'S VISIT REPORT

Please send a draft to the member of staff for checking and upload to the governors' website following your visit.

<b>Governor:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Leader:</b>	<b>School:</b>

<b>1. FOCUS OF VISIT,</b> <b>including link to SDIP</b> <i>(include the planned monitoring activity/ies i.e. learning walk, book look, pupil perceptions)</i>	
<b>2. QUESTIONS</b> (What exactly do you want to find out?)	1. 2. 3. 4.
<b>3. SUMMARY</b> Key points from observations /discussions linked to questions above	
<b>4. PROGRESS / IMPACT</b> Progress in relation to SDIP. How does the visit evidence improvement?	
<b>5. ACTION POINTS</b> What are the next steps? How will this monitoring be followed up?	
<b>Received and discussed with Headteacher:</b>	<b>Received by the Governing Body:</b>
<b>Follow-up comments</b>	

DOs and DON'Ts for Visit Reports

Do	Don't
<p>Prepare the report in draft as soon after the visit as possible and certainly within two weeks. (Governors visiting as a pair will need to get together to discuss observations and conclusions.)</p>	<p>Be lengthy. A single A4 sheet is often sufficient.</p>
<p>Type the report wherever possible. This eases comprehension and circulation.</p>	<p>Write like an inspector (even if you are one), and don't make written observations about the quality of teaching and learning. If you have concerns, raise them with the member of staff concerned or the Headteacher.</p>
<p>Enable the draft to be considered by the Headteacher and staff involved in your visit. This will enable mistakes or misunderstandings to be clarified. (A visit can only be a snapshot of the school or a class at a particular time.)</p>	<p>Name pupils or comment on individual pupil behaviour. Check with the Headteacher if you are unsure about naming individual staff members.</p>
<p>Following review email a copy of the report to the relevant administrator for distribution to the committee.</p>	<p>Hand round the report at the meeting; governors will have had no opportunity to read it and give it proper attention.</p>
<p>Come to the committee meeting prepared to make a short verbal introduction to the report and answer any questions other governors may have.</p>	<p>Go through your report in full detail, or read it out verbatim. This lengthens meetings unnecessarily.</p>
<p>Think to yourself: what can I do to make my next visit even more effective?</p>	