

Ibstock Junior School

Governor Monitoring Visits Policy

Policy Name:	Governor Monitoring Visits Policy
Status:	Recommended
Designated Committee:	Standards Committee
Date Approved by Governing Body:	June 2015
Date of Next Review:	June 2017

1. Introduction

The governing body of <insert school name> has a strategic role and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school. To contribute to the governing body's monitoring role governors will conduct formal school visits following the guidelines laid out in this policy.

2. Aim

This policy aims to provide a framework for governor visits, which will allow governors to fulfil their role without disrupting the work of the school and in a manner that will support both staff and learners.

Through our programme of visits we aim to:

- To *contribute* to the governing body's monitoring role
- To develop governors' understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the priorities for development.
- To see evidence of the progress being made in the school, and evaluate this within the governing body.
- To build and enhance positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents
- To support the school's work.

3. Visits

All governors will be expected to visit the school at least once per academic year.

A schedule of visits will be agreed annually by the governing body and in consultation with the headteacher. Focuses and individuals will be identified. The date and timing of specific visits will be arranged by the governor concerned, in consultation with the headteacher and other staff involved

Visits will have a clear pre-agreed focus linked to a curriculum subject, a school policy, an aspect of the School Development Plan, the induction of a new governor or some other specific area of the management of the school. The headteacher will guide the governing body on the areas of the curriculum; policies and school improvement plan priorities and targets to be covered each term.

All new governors are offered an introductory visit to get to know the school and staff as part of their induction programme.

Governors are welcome to informally visit the school (with prior notice to the headteacher) during the school day, taking into account the needs of all concerned and the appropriate timing of visits.

Visits to talk to the headteacher or curriculum co-ordinator can also be made by appointment.

Specific invitations are sent for some occasions.

3. Guidelines for planning and conducting a monitoring visit to school

Prior to the visit

Governors conducting a visit should be clear on the purpose of their visit and try to prepare questions for staff in advance. The headteacher will be able to guide governors on this.

They should discuss with the headteacher the agenda well in advance and should confirm that the date chosen is suitable for the purpose identified. Governors will, under normal circumstances, visit the school by appointment with the headteacher or other member of staff as agreed.

Governors will gather and read in advance any relevant information. The headteacher will advise governors about any sources of supporting information that is available.

Governors should use the 'Pro-forma for planning a governors monitoring visit' (appendix 1) to assist with planning the visit and to guide governors' visits.

It will be the Governor's responsibility to contact the link teacher for a pre-visit discussion. This is a useful opportunity to establish how they want governors to integrate into the lesson.

During the visit

Governors will arrive on time and observe the school policy for visitors.

Governor will stay focussed on the purpose of the visit and will keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible.

The teacher will welcome the governor and introduce them to the class

Governors will observe, make notes discreetly and get involved with the children if the teacher has agreed that this would be appropriate.

Governors will not distract the teacher from his/her work, questions to the staff concerned should not interfere with teaching but be noted until an appropriate time for discussion.

After the visit

At the end of each visit, the governor(s) will discuss what they have observed with the teacher and headteacher and clarify any points they are uncertain about. The focus of the visit should be central to the observation or the dialogue. They will consider with the teacher whether they achieved the purpose of the visit.

Governors will write up a report and circulate a draft to the head and any staff involved with the aim of achieving a report that is agreed by those involved. A written report should not name individuals and, like others for the governing body, will usually to be open for public inspection after the governing body has considered it. The report could follow the example in Appendix 2 or another format agreed by the Headteacher and Chair of governors.

Once the report is agreed the governor will arrange for it to be circulated to the governing body prior to the next meeting for inclusion as an agenda item.

Governor Development Service

Feedback on the visit should also be presented to the relevant committee/working party as appropriate.

Governors will evaluate the effectiveness of the visit by considering the following questions:

- Were the objectives of the visit fulfilled?
- Was everyone involved properly prepared?
- Did you see what you wanted to see?
- What would you do differently next time?
- Were there areas you would like to know more about?
- What effect has the visit had on you, the school and the governing body?

4. Who was consulted

All staff contributed to this policy and will be consulted at least annually on its impact.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at the termly meeting of the governing body. At the final meeting of each academic year the link governor will report the number of visits conducted and the areas of focus.

This policy will be monitored through feedback from governors and staff reported to the governing body or a committee.

A review of the governing body's policy will be conducted on an annual basis.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Pro-forma for planning a governors monitoring visit

Appendix 2 - Governor Monitoring Visits Report Pro-forma

Appendix 3 – Rationale for policy

Appendix 1 - Pro-forma for planning a governors monitoring visit

<p>WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What has prompted my decision to visit?• What aspect of the school development plan does my visit relate to?• How can my visit benefit the school?	
<p>HOW SHALL I CARRY IT OUT?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who do I need to contact in advance?• What particular areas of the school am I interested in?• What particular activities am I interested in?• What particular age-group(s) am I interested in?• What questions should I ask?• Who should I ask?	
<p>DID I ACHIEVE MY AIM?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?• Which of my questions did I answer?• What difficulties did I meet and why?	
<p>IS THERE ANY FOLLOW-UP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have I recorded my experiences?• Did I "report back"?• Have I prepared a short report for the next governors' meeting?• How can I build on this for the next visit?	

Appendix 2 - Monitoring Visit Report

Name	
Date of Visit	
Focus of Visit	
Purpose of Visit	
Links with School Improvement	
Classes/staff visited	
Summary of activities e.g. observing classes, talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch etc.	

Description of activity e.g Discussion with literacy co-ordinator	
Questions Asked	Comments:

Discussion with pupils or visit a lesson	
It might also be possible/ relevant for the governor to visit a lesson/s to watch some of the initiatives in action.	Comments

Comments and Recommendations
Points requiring further discussion at full governors:

Signed _____
(Governor)

Signed _____
(Headteacher / Co-ordinator)

Appendix 3

Governor Monitoring Visits Policy

This guidance is intended to help governing bodies draw up their own policy for school visits. It is recommended that in producing a policy, there is consultation with the governing body, headteacher and staff.

When preparing a policy for visits, your governing body will need to discuss and include details about the following:

- **Clear agreed aims**
 - The focus of visits, for example linked to the School Development Plan, curriculum areas, committee structures, ECM, years groups or the induction of a new governor.
- **Clear channels of communication**
 - Visiting protocols that are agreed by all staff and governors
 - Focus and purpose of each visit is established and understood by those involved.
 - Level of interaction for classroom visits is understood
 - Constructive questions are asked
 - Draft report is shared with staff members and the headteacher before circulation
- **Careful Planning**
 - The total number of visits, to be agreed in advance with the headteacher
 - The involvement of staff
 - How governors will report back to the governing body – whether to the whole governing body, or to a specific committee
 - Whether the reporting back will be oral or written
 - Guidance on the appropriate content of a report
- **Empathy**
 - Visits may cause anxiety or tension to pupils and governors, and that pupil's behaviour may also differ from usual.
 - A visit gives only a glimpse or snapshot of what goes on. Concerns should be checked with other evidence.
 - Teachers, support staff and governors should be courteous and considerate and should recognise the professional roles and contributions made by each other.

Attached is a model policy for visits that governing bodies may wish to adopt, or adapt to suit the circumstances of their school