



## Alderman Pounder Infant and Nursery School

### Governor Handbook 2016-17

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#### REVISION HISTORY

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1.0	Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Handbook finalised (Martin Heathfield)
2.0	Summer 2016	Summer 2017	Updates to reflect GB changes, revised content, and new meeting dates (Martin Heathfield)

## Welcome

Hello,

This handbook is an introduction to the governing body of Alderman Pounder Infant and Nursery School.

Within this handbook you will find the essential 'need to knows' about what it is to be a governor, how we work as a team, and what you can get out of the role.

I strongly believe we have a governing body that is dedicated, committed and knowledgeable. We are also highly ambitious for the pupils of this school and for ourselves. We will base our decisions on a thorough understanding of the school's performance, and of staff and pupils' skills and abilities.

Whether you are a new governor or an existing governor this handbook is for you. Please take some time to read it and feel free to contact me or any of the governing body if you want to know more.

Martin Heathfield  
Chair of Governors

## Introduction to the Governing Body

Our governing body draws on the full range of skills and knowledge of its membership. This ensures different perspectives are considered when we make our decisions.

It also means we have at our disposal experience of social work, teaching, marketing, business improvement techniques, health and safety assessment, and contract management, to name just a few.

Our governors have come to us for a variety of reasons:

*"I want to know more about how schools work and how children learn"*

*"How could I refuse the head teacher's request?"*

*"I'm keen to apply a business perspective to the work of a governing body"*

*"I'm thinking of going back into teaching"*

We will support you to develop your role as governor through a proactive, individually-tailored [training](#) and development programme.

The '[governors' handbook for governors in maintained schools, academies and free schools](#)' sets out clearly the essential information that all governors need about their duties and responsibilities.

In addition, the '[statutory policies for schools](#)' page outlines the policies and other documents school governing bodies are legally required to hold.

Our handbook will not duplicate what is detailed within these documents, but it will provide some basic information, guidance and assistance to new governors.

The Governing Body Code of Conduct can be found at [Annex D](#). This sets out what behaviours are expected from school governors and the commitment required.

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## The basics

Governing bodies need to focus on three **core strategic functions**:

- 1) Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- 2) Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- 3) Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Ofsted inspectors will judge the effectiveness of governance in school against these functions.

Here at Alderman Pounder this means we work closely with the Head Teacher to ensure a whole school vision and a strategy for achieving this through the school improvement plan. We have high expectations throughout school for behaviour, progress of pupils and the conduct of adults working in the school.

We also hold the Head Teacher to account by **asking challenging questions** to ensure we know school performance is improving. These questions could be along the lines of, for example:

- ✓ Which groups of pupils are the highest and lowest performing and why? How is progress being monitored?
- ✓ How are standards being raised for all children including those with special educational needs, those receiving free school meals, those from a service background?
- ✓ What are the figures on attendance, behaviour, safeguarding? How are any current issues being addressed?

We need to check data ourselves and not be totally reliant on what we are told. Data analysis is an important part of governance.

Governors are responsible for ensuring that Alderman Pounder's money is well spent. We therefore need to be asking further questions such as:

- ✓ Are we allocating our resources in line with the strategic priorities?
- ✓ How can we get better value for money from our budget?
- ✓ Are we making full use of our assets and efficient use of all our financial resources?

We do all this with the background knowledge that we treat all our families and children with respect and care regardless of their backgrounds, religions and faiths. Our vision is of an inclusive school where all feel valued and no one view is paramount.

At Alderman Pounder we also value confidentiality. We will agree how and when to share the issues we discuss in our meetings with the wider school community.

## Structure

Our governing body was reconstituted according to the *School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012* in November 2014.

There are 14 members of our governing team. All governors contribute to the huge amount of work required of the governing body through specifically delegated committees. These committees meet each term and report back to the Full Governing Body for ratification of its decisions.

Alderman Pounder has four committees.

**Resources** deal with all matters relating to the finance and staffing of the school, and is concerned with all aspects of:

- health and safety
- buildings maintenance
- security

**Curriculum and Pupils** covers all issues relating to standards, including:

- Foundation Stage & Key Stage 1 targets
- School Improvement Plan
- School Evaluation Form

**Achievement and Attainment** looks specifically at pupil performance through assessing:

- performance data produced by the school

**Pay and Appraisals** considers how teaching staff are assessed and paid:

- consistency of assessments
- Head Teacher's performance
- performance related pay

## Governors and the Curriculum

A sub-group of governors will look across the entire breadth of subjects taught under the curriculum, and consider how well it reflects the following perspectives:

- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Parents/carers and the community

This Curriculum Monitoring Group will determine how often it needs to visit the school (individually or as a group) in order to monitor and evaluate how the curriculum is being taught against the identified priorities above.

They will meet members of the teaching staff responsible for teaching the curriculum and work with them to ensure high standards of educational achievement. This will include an annual report on results and performance.

The expectations for 2016/17 are:

Commented [m1]: Or termly?

Commented [m2]: Below is my view; this needs to be discussed and agreed by the group, with input from Julie.

### Autumn Term

Agree and draft a Terms of Reference and outline annual cycle of visits, monitoring, evaluation and reporting with the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team.

### Spring Term

Arrange and carry out appropriate school visits to meet teaching staff and assess how lessons address the identified priority areas.

Prepare and present report to subject leaders and governors at subject presentation evening.

### Summer Term

Arrange and carry out appropriate school visits to meet teaching staff and assess how lessons address the identified priority areas.

The table below shows the main roles and responsibilities of our governors:

## Alderman Pounder Governing Body - roles and responsibilities

Name	Governor type	Main position	Term ends	Committee membership	Additional role(s)
Julie Shelton	Head Teacher	Head Teacher	N/A	Curriculum & Pupils, Resources, Achievement and Attainment, Pay and Appraisal	Assessment EYFS Pupil Premium Health and Safety
Sue Ingram	Co-opted	Deputy Head Teacher	31 December 2018	Curriculum & Pupils, Resources, Achievement and Attainment	Chair: Achievement and Attainment committee
Martin Heathfield	Co-opted	Chair of Governors	31 December 2018	Curriculum & Pupils, Resources, Achievement and Attainment, Pay and Appraisal	Assessment HT Performance Management
Clare Goodyear	Co-opted	Vice-chair of governors	31 December 2018	Curriculum & Pupils, Resources, Achievement and Attainment	SENCO Safeguarding EYFS Complaints
Debs Ginger	Parent	Attendance lead	1 December 2019	Curriculum & Pupils	Parent link, Curriculum Monitoring Group
James Mitchell	Co-opted	Health and Safety lead	1 December 2019	Resources, Curriculum & Pupils	
Roy Serevena	Co-opted	Training co-ordinator	1 December 2019	Resources, Curriculum & Pupils	N/A
Janet Kennedy	Co-opted	Curriculum lead	23 June 2019	Resources, Achievement and Attainment, Pay and Appraisal	Complaints, Curriculum Monitoring Group
Jo Hume	Co-opted	Business Manager	31 December 2018	Resources	Financial
Julie Boaden	Parent	Chair: Resources committee	23 July 2017	Resources	N/A
Oriane Shubert	Parent	Curriculum governor	15 May 2017	Curriculum & Pupils	Curriculum Monitoring Group
Michelle Taylor	Co-opted	Chair: C&P committee	31 December 2018	Curriculum & Pupils, Achievement and Attainment	Pupil Premium lead HT Performance Management
Natalie Collins	Staff	Staff representative	8 October 2017	Curriculum & Pupils	Curriculum Monitoring Group
Vacancy	Authority				

## What to expect

As mentioned previously being a governor has a number of key functions.

We are part of the leadership team of the school and as such we are judged by Ofsted.

When there is an inspection there are five main judgements and an overall one. One of the judgements is leadership and we play a large part in this judgement – a school's rating can be affected by how well governors are involved in the school and how effective they are.

At Alderman Pounder we aim to be an outstanding governing body and therefore we need to be prepared to meet with the Ofsted inspection team and to share our knowledge, skills and enthusiasm for the school.

There is therefore a high level of commitment required by any potential governor. This is both in time and enthusiasm, and a desire to share any knowledge and skills already possessed.

In terms of time commitment there will be an expectation of attending 3 meetings *per term* (more if you can do so):

- 1 full governors meeting
- 1 committee meeting
- 1 subject or aspect meeting (or a second committee meeting)

You will need to prepare for these meetings by reading policies and documents and analysing data. This information will be made available to you in advance.

Any additional time that can be given directly to school, with the children, is greatly appreciated.

With regard to skills and knowledge, use what you have to bring more expertise to the governing body and school on a day-to-day basis.

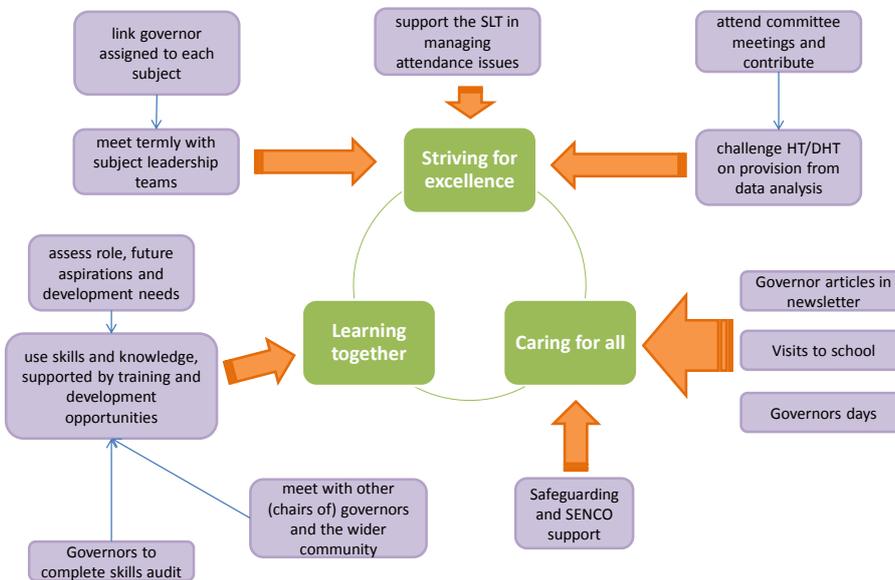
Being enthusiastic about children's learning, development and welfare is also paramount to being a governor. Therefore this is another level of commitment to the school and its wider community.

## Governors and the school vision

As you will have read being a governor includes a focus on the school vision, and working closely with the Head Teacher (and others) so that vision is achieved.

We do this in many ways, as set out below:

### How governors contribute to the school vision

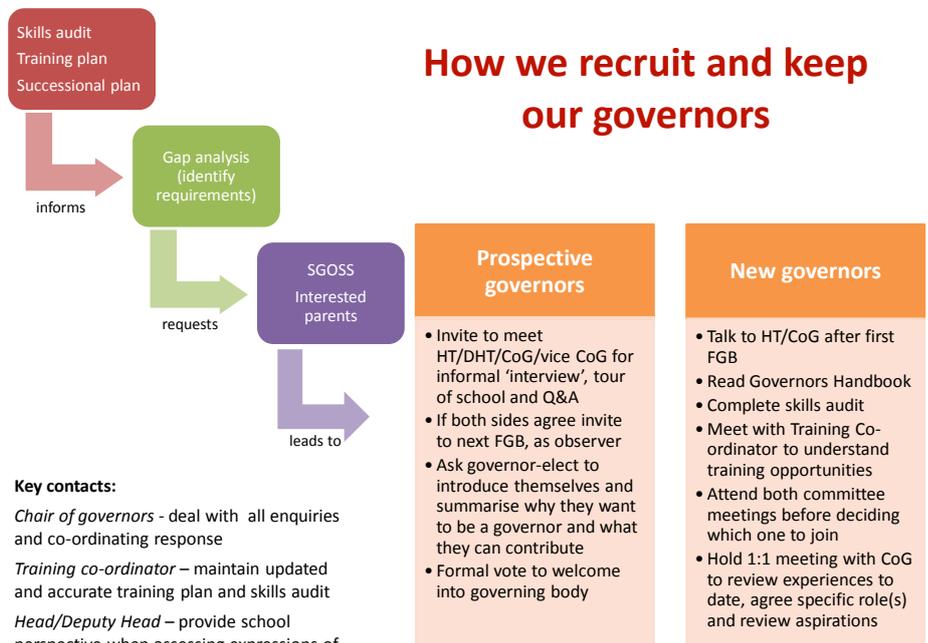


By being governors we all contribute to this through several of the activities shown.

## Recruitment and Retention

At Alderman Pounder we value the skills and experience of our governing body. We also look for specific skills, knowledge and experience that we may not currently have.

The diagram below illustrates our strategy for appointing and retaining governors:



## Training

Governor training is important. It develops effective teamwork and increases governors' knowledge and understanding of their role.

In the light of this, all governors need to attend the Local Authority's induction course for new governors and participate in a programme of training and development planned annually by the governing body.

The diagram below summarises our 'virtuous circle' that ensures a strong training support for all our governors:

### Governor training at Alderman Pounder



Every governor will be encouraged to work with the training co-ordinator to develop their personal training plan. These individual and personalised training plans will be living documents, to be updated and refined.

Governor training will include the following:

- knowledge-based learning – so governors can develop and maintain their knowledge of school governance and wider governmental expectations
- skills-based learning – training in skills such as chairing effectively, challenging appropriately, and interpreting data
- experiential learning – where governors need to have a thorough understanding of the school environment, in order to be able to challenge and give positive feedback appropriately

In order to meet these needs, a combination of the following teaching and training methods will be used:

- Local Authority training
- Cross-fertilisation of skills and expertise within the governing body to provide coaching and mentoring, as well as offering ad hoc in-house training as required where the specific skills, knowledge and area of expertise exist
- Opportunities for governors to develop their knowledge of the school through subject leadership roles, observations, and 'Governor Days'
- On-line training: the school subscribes to the GEL package

### **Support and mentoring**

When you join our governing body you will be paired with one of our longer standing governors to act as your guide and buddy through the first few meetings you attend. They will explain the way that the meetings run, and any jargon you don't understand.

Your buddy will also give you a good overall view of your new role as governor and give you someone to ask all those '*I don't want to seem silly but.....*' questions that can sometimes be hard to ask at a meeting.

Your views are important to the governing body and the school, we want to make you feel welcome and included, and hope that you enjoy your time with us.

## Annex A: meetings calendar (2016)

### **Autumn 2016**

Curriculum and Pupils: Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October @ 6.00pm

Resources: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October @ 6.00pm

Achievement and Attainment: Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov @ 1.30pm

Full Governing Body: Wednesday 16 November @ 6.00pm

### **Spring 2017**

Curriculum and Pupils: Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March @ 6.00pm

Resources: Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February @ 6.00pm

Full Governing Body: Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March @ 6.00pm

Achievement and Attainment: Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March @ 1.30pm

### **Summer 2017**

Curriculum and Pupils: Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May @ 6.00pm

Resources: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May @ 6.00pm

Full Governing Body: Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June @ 6.00pm

Achievement and Attainment: Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June @ 1.30pm

Pay and Appraisal: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July @ 7.45am

### **Other key dates**

Write **School Improvement Plan** (SIP): Autumn term (Sept-Oct)

Update **Self-Evaluation Form** (SEF): Spring term (Feb-Mar)

Develop **Pupil Premium**: Summer term (May)

## **Annex B: Governors Code of Conduct**

### **Code of Conduct for Alderman Pounder Infant and Nursery School Governing Body**

The Code of Conduct sets out the common understanding of broad principles by which the Alderman Pounder Infants and Nursery School Governing Body and individual governors will operate, in order to effectively carry out its work within the school and community.

#### **Core Strategic Role of the Governing Body/Board**

- 1 Establishing the strategic direction by:
  - Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school
  - Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
  - Meeting statutory duties
- 2 Ensuring accountability by:
  - Appointing the headteacher
  - Monitoring progress towards targets
  - Performance managing the headteacher
  - Engaging with stakeholders
  - Contributing to school self-evaluation
- 3 Ensuring financial probity by:
  - Setting the budget
  - Monitoring spending against the budget
  - Ensuring value for money is obtained
  - Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

#### **The following information about each governor/associate member will be published on the school's website:**

- Name
- Category of governor
- Which body appoints them
- Term of office
- The names of any committees the governor serves on
- Details of any positions of responsibility such as chair or vice-chair of the governing body or a committee.

**The Governing Body accepts the following principles and procedures:**

*Role & Responsibilities*

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the headteacher.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher.

*Commitment*

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.

- We accept that in the interests of open government, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.

#### *Relationships*

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

#### *Confidentiality*

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

#### *Conflicts of interest*

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board.

#### *Breach of this code of conduct*

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

#### The Seven Principles of Public Life

**Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

**Integrity** - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

**Objectivity** - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

**Accountability** - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

**Openness** - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

**Honesty** - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership** - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

#### **Undertaking**

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart. I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values

and ethos. I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Body, the Head teacher or staff.

I understand that I must declare business interests and this information will be published on the school's website along with my name, details of my term of office and responsibilities as a governor. Failure to reveal this information may be judged as bringing the Governing Body into disrepute and could lead to my role as a governor being suspended.

Signed .....

Printed name .....

Date .....

Adopted by the governing body of Alderman Pounder Infants and Nursery School on [date]

## Annex C: visits to school

### Aims

Through our programme of individual governor visits we aim to:

- improve governors' knowledge of the ethos of the school and their awareness of the work within the curriculum
- assist the whole governing body to fulfil its statutory role with regard to monitoring and evaluation
- improve governor understanding of the needs of the school and the priorities for the school development plan
- monitor and evaluate the current school development plan especially in relation to curricular issues
- improve governor links with staff, pupils and parents
- help governors to be better able to support the school community
- report the need for resources

### Range of visits

- we hope that, if possible, all governors will visit at least once a year during the working day
- all new governors are offered an introductory visit soon after their appointment as part of their induction programme
- governors are welcome to visit the school informally (but with prior notice if the visit happens during the school day)
- specific invitations are sent for some occasions
- visits to talk with the Head Teacher or subject leaders can also be made by appointment
- governors receive copies of parents' newsletters which contain notice of events and they are most welcome to attend any of these
- most often, governors will make monitoring visits as part of their monitoring and evaluation role

### Monitoring visits

Possible points of focus could include:

- aspects of the school/subject development plan
- the responsibilities of the governing body with regard to specific issues e.g. Special Educational Needs, Health and Safety, Performance Management, Safeguarding
- link governor roles
- particular emphasis on a year group, or on one major aspect of the curriculum; the Curriculum & Pupils committee may discuss the focus of these visits and bring suggestions to the whole governing body
- information-gathering for a project being undertaken

*Ideas for points of discussion are given at Appendix 3.*

Governor visits are NOT about making judgements about quality of teaching and operational management, checking the progress of their own children, pursuing personal agendas, monopolising teachers' time, arriving with inflexible preconceived ideas, or interrupting, giving ideas or suggestions during teaching time.

### Protocol

- governors should at all times be aware of the confidentiality of what they see or hear
- in the unlikely event of governors observing something which gives them serious cause for concern, they should take the matter up as soon as possible with the Head Teacher
- governors should remember that a word of thanks and encouragement at the end of the lesson will help staff feel more confident about the visit and the role of governors

### Format for visits

- arrange a visit by letter, telephone or e-mail with either the Head Teacher or the appropriate subject leader
- agree the aim of the visit and arrangements for it in advance, ensuring that the Head Teacher is aware of the details of the visit
- report to Reception on arrival and obtain a governor's badge

### The visit

- most visits take place in the classroom and staff will have been consulted about the date and purpose of the visit, this will have enabled them to prepare any information related to the focus of the visit and to set up a programme for the governor

*An 'aide-mémoire' to focus questions and thoughts is given at Appendix 2.*

### Reporting back

The Governor Curriculum Visit form should be completed following the visit. One copy of this should be given to the Head Teacher and another to the Chair of the appropriate committee. If they wish, governors may give verbal feedback to the committee.

Governors should not identify individual teachers and should avoid making judgements.

The appropriate committee will report the main conclusions to the governing body.

*A Governor Curriculum Visit form is provided at Appendix 1.*

*Appendix 1: governor curriculum visits*

**ALDERMAN POUNDER INFANT SCHOOL**

**GOVERNOR CURRICULUM VISIT**

Name of Governor:	Date of Visit:
Linked Subject:	
Subject Leaders:	
Area Observed:	
Age Group/Class Observed:	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Follow-up Visit Planned:</b>	

Please hand your completed report to the Head Teacher. A copy will be sent to all the governors as part of the papers for the next full Governing Body meeting.

Thank you for finding the time to make your visit.

## ***Appendix 2: school visits aide-memoire***

### 1) What is the purpose of the visit?

- What has prompted my decision to visit?
- To what aspect(s) of the school development plan does my visit relate?
- What background information might I need?

### 2) How shall I carry out my visit?

- 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 groups am I interested in?
- What questions should I ask?
- Who should I ask?

### 3) Did I achieve my aim?

- To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?
- For which of my questions did I find answers?
- Do I need further information?

### 4) Is there any follow-up?

- Have I thanked the teacher and/or the curriculum leaders?
- Have I filled in a report form and sent a copy to the Head Teacher and Chair of the appropriate committee?
- How can I build on this for my next visit?

### ***Appendix 3: ideas for discussion***

#### Possible points for discussion

- General organisational, curricular and assessment issues and developments
- Whole school priorities and key stage priorities
- Progress towards targets
- Resources and needs
- Staff development and training (and needs)
- Extra-curricular activities
- Special needs students

#### Visits to lessons might lead to discussions about general issues

- How students with Special Needs are catered for
- Differentiation: how the teaching meets the needs of the less able whilst still providing appropriate challenge for the most able
- Progression: how knowledge and experience are built up over time
- How different learning styles are catered for
- How Assessment for Learning is being addressed
- Equal opportunities: how the teaching ensures that all students, regardless of gender, ethnic origin or ability, have appropriate access to the curriculum
- Homework: the role that homework plays
- Target-setting: how students are kept informed of what they need to do to achieve their targets and encouraged to be independent learners