



Governor Visits to School Policy

Policy Control	
Responsible Person:	Jo Hinde
Responsible Governor Team:	Teaching & Learning
Approved by Governors:	September 2016
Date due for review:	September 2018

Our school policies are written with the objective of continuously improving the school in our aim of realising the school's vision:

Goudhurst & Kilndown Church of England Primary School will provide a happy, caring and stimulating environment rooted in Christian values in which every child will flourish. We will realise the potential of every child and instil a lifelong love of learning. Our approach to teaching and learning will be inclusive, supportive and innovative and will embrace new education initiatives and leading technology. We will ensure that our children are aware of the world in which they live, understand the need to play an active role within the local and wider community and appreciate the importance of living a sustainable way of life. In partnership with parents and carers, we will help our children to build high self-esteem, independence and resilience and to develop the life skills they need for their future in an ever-changing world.

Our School Values

Goudhurst and Kilndown Church of England Primary School values

Community • Friendship • Joy • Love • Peace • Trust

and all our stakeholders are encouraged to *reflect* upon their learning and their actions

Context

One of the key roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress.

The Governing Body has approved Terms of Reference for Monitoring by Individuals or by pairs/groups of Governors, which anticipate that at least three monitoring visits will take place each year. In some cases (ie SEND, Safeguarding), more frequent monitoring may be appropriate. A programme of monitoring visits will be approved annually by the Governing Body and will take account of the priorities set out in the approved School Improvement Plan.

A visit does not necessarily have to take place during the time when pupils are in school and could be carried out by meeting the headteacher/lead professional before the start of, or at the end of the school day.

Visiting the School

Benefits of visiting the School:

Visits enable Governors to:

- See the school at work and observe attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Meet and chat with the children
- Get to know the staff (put faces to names) and demonstrate their commitment to the school and to working in partnership with staff
- Give active support to the staff and the activities of the school
- Be aware of the effect of change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- Monitor progress and inform their evaluation of the school
- Find out what resources are being used, evaluate resources and discuss further requirements with staff
- Gain first hand information from seeing policies and schemes of work in action, which can assist with policy making and decision taking
- Gain a more informed understanding of classroom life and practice.

They also can be positive for staff, by giving them:

- The opportunity to find out more about the role of the Governor;
- The chance to illustrate the theory and policy in practice;
- The opportunity to draw attention to any issues or questions they wish to raise.
- Opportunity to reflect upon practice through discussion.

Arranging a visit to the School:

Before making a visit, Governors should:

- Contact the Headteacher and agree a date, time and focus for the visit
- Clarify the expectations for the visit (these should be shared with any staff who will be involved in the visit by the Headteacher)
- Agree which staff will be involved in the visit and, if appropriate which classes will be visited
- If appropriate, discuss the context of the lesson/activity to be observed and agree their role within it.
- Agree a timetable for the visit
- Never turn up unannounced!

Carrying out the visit: Ground Rules

On any visit to the School, Governors should:

- Arrive on time, sign in at Reception and wear an identification badge.
- Meet with the Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher/subject leader to confirm the timetable for and scope of the visit
- Act as an observer and only participate in a class or activity at the invitation of the teacher
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering
- Keep an open mind about what you see
- Be sensitive to the circumstances and flexible in their expectations. No two days are ever the same and there may be times when arrangements have to be changed or alterations made.
- Remember that members of staff are very busy people whose first priority must be the children
- By all means ask questions (preferably at the end of the lesson/activity) but be sensitive to the extra demands of differentiation and inclusion that teachers now face.
- Maintain confidentiality
- Enjoy the visit!
- Remember that the aim of the visit is NOT to:
 - 'Inspect' the School or staff
 - Make judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher - that remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and other education professionals.
 - Check on Governors' own children (it might be wise for Governors to avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present.)
 - Pursue a personal agenda
 - Arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

Additional points for observing a lesson or activity:

Governors should:

- As part of the planning process, agree what their role will be. For example
 - Acting as a classroom helper during their visit
 - Talking to the children about what they are doing
 - Working with a small group,
- Discuss particular issues or set the context with the class teacher or subject leader before the lesson or activity starts
- Clarify some 'what-ifs' beforehand - for example:
 - "What if I see children misbehaving when the teacher doesn't?"
 - "What if a pupil asks me how to do something?"
 - "What if I have a suggestion to make?"
- Introduce themselves when they go into the classroom and answer any questions
- Do not interrupt the teacher or distract the pupils from their task
- Be sensitive to the mood in the classroom and the expectations of the children.

Formal Visits

- Where three formal monitoring visits have been timetabled during the year, the purpose of each visit should be:
 - First Visit: 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 success
 - Second visit: To monitor the progress of school activities towards the target

- Third visit: To evaluate the extent of success at the end of the set timescale
- Governors visiting more frequently (ie SEND or Safeguarding Governors) may work to a different timetable, but should still agree the purpose and scope of each visit with the Headteacher/lead professional at the beginning of each year.
- 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.

Informal Visits:

In addition to formal monitoring visits, Governors might like to visit to meet the staff or the children, to find out about an aspect of the school in which they have a particular interest, or to get to know more about the school generally. This may include:

- Visits to class or school assemblies
- Attending events or activities

Observing the ‘ethos’ of the School

Whilst in the school, during a ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ visit, Governors should observe the ‘ethos’ of the School, including the learning environment and children’s behaviour and attitude towards each other - for example:

- Is the School friendly and welcoming to visitors?
- Is the environment attractive and clean and free of litter?
- 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?

After the visit

Governors should:

- Not leave the site without acknowledgement/signing out
- Remember to thank the teachers and children if they have been observing a lesson or activity, or any other staff who have been involved in their visit
- Acknowledge openly to the staff what a valuable gesture they have made in welcoming them into their workplace, and comment on favourable impressions
- Meet with the Headteacher/lead professional to give a verbal report and raise any issues that arose
- Consider the value of the visit – for example
 - Were the objectives of the visit realistic and appropriate? Were they achieved?
 - Did Governors read the right material and talk to the right people when preparing for the visit?
 - Was there anything, which Governors would like to have seen or have explained, or whether they would like to see something introduced or improved?

- If checklists were used, were they checklists useful/adequate?
 - Are there any suggested improvements to the process?
- Complete a written report on the visit: This should be done whether the visit has been an informal or formal one. The report should be sent to the Headteacher and Chair within two weeks of the visit and 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 should not be named.

Policy Review

The policy should be reviewed every two years.

The key questions to consider as part of the review should be:

- Has every Governor/Monitoring Group/Pair played their part in monitoring?
- Have Monitoring visits achieved the potential benefits identified in this policy?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make policy and practice even better?

Governor Monitoring Report Form

Governor Name(s)	Date of Monitoring:
Purpose of visit including areas of school visited and members of staff met during the visit:	
Links with the School Improvement Plan (How does this visit relate to a priority in the SIP)	
Key questions to be asked and evidenced during the visit (to be discussed and agreed prior to the visit)	
Observations and comments by the governor – consider the hard data you may need to gather (e.g. what you saw; what you learned; what you would like clarified; how long the visit lasted)	
Any key issues arising – for the attention of the governing body (e.g. the way resources are allocated; the way the school communicates; progress in implementing a key policy)	

Any key issues arising for the attention of the school leadership team			
(e.g. the way resources are allocated; the way the school communicates; progress in implementing a key policy)			
Signed: Governor(s)		Date	
Feedback from the Headteacher on the outcome of this monitoring visit:			
Outcome of monitoring to be reviewed by the following Governor Teams: (Please indicate)			
Teaching & Learning	Resources	Strategy	FGB
Action following committee meetings or FGB:			
(Record any action agreed by the governing body with regard to this visit)			

Appendix 2

Checklists for Monitoring Visits

Health and Safety Visits

External Areas:	
Walk the perimeter of the building looking at the roofs and elevations from ground level. Examine footpaths, paved areas and fences.	
Items to be inspected	What to look for
External Walls	Missing or obviously displaced bricks or other elements. Cracks in brickwork Bulging or leaning walls Rotting timber supports or cladding boards. Damaged cladding tiles or roof sheets
Roofs	Slipped or missing tiles, slates or roof sheets Cracked or leaning chimneys Damaged or leaking roof lights or guttering Gutters or down pipes not blocked or leaking Excessive sagging of flat roofs with poor water run-off and/or leaks TV and other aerials firmly fixed
Fire Hydrants	Hydrants on or near the site are accessible
Paths etc	Paving slabs which rock or project above or below adjacent paving to an extent likely to cause a tripping hazard. Potholes in pedestrian tarpaved areas, roadways or car parks. Slippery surfaces. Areas covered with water affecting access or use
Steps	Loose, crumbling or badly worn steps Damaged, loose or missing handrails
Drains etc	Broken, raised or sunken drains or inspection covers Blocked drains causing pollution or external

	Surface water
Fences and Walls	Loose wire or wire projecting, particularly at eye or foot level and adjacent paving Fences or walls leaning over footpaths Cracked or bulging walls Missing or displaced bricks
Gates	Difficult to open/close or secure
Mobile Classrooms	Structure sitting evenly or moving on support Loose or damaged steps or handrails (including emergency exit steps) Steps moss covered or otherwise slippery.
Lighting	Site lights all working
Internal Areas:	
Room by room and include areas such as lobbies and corridors etc. Where the building has a second storey, work floor by floor. Windows and doors should be inspected as well as the floor. Visually check electrical fittings including switches and socket outlets.	
Items to be inspected	What to look for
Fire Precautions	Bells, etc. all audible everywhere Call points not obstructed Fire notices up to date and accessible
Fire Fighting Equipment	Sufficient and suitable General conditions Regularly maintained
Telephones	Access to at all times for emergencies
Wash Basins and Baths	Cracked or unclean Adequate supply of hot and cold or warm water Outlets are not blocked
WCs	Cracked pans or seats Unclean pans or seats Cistern firmly blocked

Urinals	<p>Outlets not blocked</p> <p>Unclean, including surrounding floor</p> <p>Flushing mechanism works properly</p> <p>Cistern firmly fixed</p> <p>Extraction fans working</p>
Drinking Fountains	<p>Clean</p> <p>Working properly</p>
Pipework	Corrosion or leaks
Hot Water	Excessively hot
Soap, Towels, Toilet Paper	Readily available
Electrical Equipment	<p>Leads properly fixed into appliance and plug</p> <p>(Coloured conductors should not be visible)</p> <p>No frayed or knotted cables or cables with temporary joints</p> <p>Items inspected (and if appropriate, tested) at least annually by someone competent to do so</p> <p>No exposed conductors on mains equipment</p> <p>Fuse board kept closed</p>
Boiler Rooms	<p>Leaks</p> <p>Damaged heat insulation on equipment pipework</p>
Furniture	<p>Damaged</p> <p>Sharp corners</p> <p>Unstable</p>
First Aid	Boxes are accessible, clean and properly stocked
Tidiness	<p>All areas clean and tidy</p> <p>A place for everything and everything in its place</p> <p>Fire exits not obstructed</p>
Overcrowding	Are any areas overcrowded?
Food	No food left to rot in bins
Rubbish	Accumulation of dirt and rubbish removed at least daily from floors

	Rubbish sacks stored tidily and protected from animals and vandalism
Spill/Leaks	Spills or leaks, especially oil or other slippery materials, properly dealt with
Visitors	Clear notices for visitors showing where they are expected to report

Checklists for Monitoring Visits

Classroom Visits

The list below is a suggestion of what to look out for during a visit to observe a lesson or other classroom activity, but is not prescriptive.

<i>Interacting with each other and adults</i>
Do the children listen to instructions and to each other?
How do the children address adults – polite conversations?
Do the children talk to each other about their work where it is appropriate?
How do the children talk to each other?
Do the children reason with each other in problem solving situations in order to offer solutions?
<i>Learning behaviours</i>
Do the children settle quickly to their work?
Can the children follow oral/written instructions?
Can the children accept guidance?
Are the children allowed to make mistakes and do they learn from their corrected errors?
Can the children cope with distraction?
Are there opportunities for problem solving?
Do the children show initiative in tackling their work?
Do the children continue to work well by themselves without teacher direction?
Do the children want to discover answers for themselves?
Are the children involved in their task?
Do the children show a flexible response in solving problems appropriate to their age and ability?
<i>Confidence</i>
Do the children present explanations clearly and concisely?
Do the children know how to get help when they need it? Do they know when they do not need help?

Do the children appear confident in their own abilities?
Do the children know what is expected of them?
Do the children participate in any group work or discussions?
<i>Workbooks and presentation</i>
Is the children's written work neat and well presented?
Are the children able to present their work satisfactorily, diagrammatically or written?
Is the writing suitable for their age and is there evidence of progression within the class/each child's work?
<i>Equipment and Resources</i>
Do the children know where to get equipment?
Is the equipment readily available?
Is there equipment provided if the children need/wish to solve a problem practically?