



POLICY FOR GOVERNOR VISITS TO ELMSLEIGH INFANT SCHOOL

OCTOBER 2018

Context

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery school. Undertaking visits which focus on an aspect of the School Improvement Plan or one of the Governors' statutory duties demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress.

Although their role is strategic, it is important that Governors have some understanding of the practicalities of the job. Meeting children, talking to staff and seeing lessons underway will help members of the Governing Body to understand some of the issues they are required to discuss and make decisions about with greater clarity.

Each Governor is encouraged to make at least visits into school if their area is a key focus on the School Improvement Plan in accordance with the agreed timetable.

Visits enable Governors to:

- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Get to know the staff and demonstrate their commitment to the school
- 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
- Evaluate resources and discuss with staff further requirements
- Gain first hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- Work in partnership with the staff

Visits from Governors enable school staff to:-

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

Before making a visit Governors will:

- Have planned a focus based on School Improvement or monitoring along with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher using Elmsleigh's cycle of monitoring;
- Contact the School Office and arrange a specific date and time for the visit
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit
- Plan which classes will be visited
- Draw up a timetable for the visit with the Deputy Headteacher or subject-coordinator
- Deputy Headteacher and/or the subject coordinator ensure that all staff are aware of the visit and the expectations on them.

On the day of the visit the Governor will remember to:

- Arrive on time and clarify the timetable with the Deputy Headteacher/subject coordinator
- Act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering
- Be calm and enjoy the visit

After the visit the Governor will:

- Remember to thank the teachers and children
- Meet with the Headteacher to give a verbal report, and to raise any issues that arose
- Complete the Governor Visit Proforma, reporting on the focus. The completed form should be given to the Headteacher and then, after any possible alterations, the form will be circulated to the governing body and staff
- Governors must report without giving opinions and where possible individuals should not be able to be identified.

It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time and shapes the picture of Elmsleigh, and judgements should not be made. **The visit is not about:**

- Inspection
- Making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on your own children
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school 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.

Conducting the visit

After planning your visit with the class teacher or subject coordinator you might have agreed to:

- take part in a lesson acting as classroom helper during your visit
- do a formal observation - taking no immediate role other than talking to the children about what they are doing
- work with a small group
- introduce yourself to your linked class and answer any of their questions
- meet with the class teacher or coordinator to discuss particular issues or set the context
- observe - focussing on an agreed area/issue that the class teacher would like some feedback on e.g. the involvement of a particular group of pupils.

Please remember that observations do not require judgement on the teacher. It might also be useful to 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?

Providing feedback

It is important that a time is agreed between yourself and the class teacher to discuss the lesson you have taken part in or observed. During this feedback you might refer to notes you have made. The structure might include:

1. Asking the teacher for any further clarification of the lesson or for their views on how it went.
2. Giving your own impressions on what you saw
3. Providing any positive comment.
4. Raising any issues that appeared to develop.
5. Any further questions you might have
6. A summary of the feedback you will be giving to the governing body.

At the end of the feedback both you and the teacher should be clear about what you will be sharing with the governing body- there should be no surprises!

The **Governors' visits to classrooms** pro forma should be completed as soon as possible after the visit and handed to the Clerk to Governors. It should reflect the discussion you have had with the teacher. The report should be copied to:

- The Headteacher
- The subject leader
- The teacher concerned
- The clerk to the governors

School Visits – an Aide Memoire

What is the purpose of the visit?

What has prompted my decision to visit?

Who has prompted my decision to visit?

Is the reason specific or general?

What are my/other people's expectations?

How can my visit benefit the children and the staff?

How shall I carry it out?

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?

Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?

What questions should I ask?

Who should I ask?

Did I achieve my aim?

To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?

Which of my questions did I answer?

To what extent did I fulfil my own/other people's expectations?

What difficulties did I meet and why?

Is there any follow-up?

Have I recorded my experiences?

Did I 'report back' to the head and staff?

Have I prepared a short report for the next governors' meeting?

How can I build on this for the next visit?



**ELMSLEIGH INFANT AND NURSERY
SCHOOL
General Governor Visit Report**

Name	
Date of Visit	
Focus of Visit	
Classes / Staff Visited	
Summary of activities, e.g. observing classes, talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch, etc.	
What I learned as a result of my visit	
Positive comments about the focus	
Aspects I would like clarified / questions I have	
Ideas for future visits	
Any other comments	

Signed _____
(Governor)

Signed _____
(Headteacher / Coordinator)



ELMSLEIGH INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL
Monitoring the School Improvement Plan
Governor Visit Report

Name:	Area of responsibility	Date:
Staff Visited:		
Objectives of visit: 1. 2. 3.		
Brief notes:		
Three positive comments: 1. 2. 3.		
Two questions: 1. 2.		

