



Long Lawford Primary School

Love, Learn, Persevere and Succeed

Governor Visits Policy

Approved by:	Head teacher	Claire Stringer
	Chair of Governors	Faye Padfield
Adopted by Governors	September 2019	
Last reviewed on:	September 2023	
Next review due by:	September 2024	

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Through this policy, Long Lawford Primary School aims to embed effective procedures concerning governor monitoring visits. Each governor is expected to make at least one visit during the academic year, demonstrating the governing board's role in the strategic management of the school by helping to evaluate and improve practice.

Governor visits inform understanding of the school's practices and procedures, allow opportunities to speak to pupils and teachers, enable the identification of resource needs, and allow governors to see the School Improvement Plan (SIP) in action.

For staff, governor visits allow staff the chance to find out more about governors, provide an opportunity to draw attention to issues or questions they wish to raise, and provide an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss current practice.

Governors must:

- Respect school staff and pupils.
- Support the headteacher.
- Acknowledge that they represent the full governing board.

By following the agreed principles and procedures, governor visits will be pleasant, purposeful, and will significantly contribute towards school improvement.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- DfE (2014) 'The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- LLPS Monitoring Cycle
- Governor Visit Proforma

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors will be responsible for:

- Meeting their target of one visit per academic year.
- Understanding the needs of staff members through discussions with at least one staff member per academic year.
- Reporting their observations to the full governing board during a full governing board meeting.
- Familiarising themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Facilitating governor visits.
- Discussing completed visits with governors, prior to a report being made to the full governing board.

All governors (except the nominated staff governor) are linked to specific subjects or areas of the school's provision. These links are as follows:

Subject / area of school provision	Name of governor
Safeguarding	Faye Padfield
Behaviour and Inclusion incl. SEND	Srividya Venkatas
Health and Safety	Margaret Patrick
Attendance	Paul Wilkinson
EYFS	Nikki Duke
Finance	Molly Nherera
Governing Board Development and Training	Faye Padfield
Curriculum	Margaret Patrick
Pupil Premium	Margaret Patrick

The 'Governance handbook' recommends that each governing board, as a minimum, appoints a link governor for safeguarding and SEND.

ANNUAL SCHEDULE

The annual schedule of visits is as follows:

Term	Visiting governors
Autumn half-term 1	
Autumn half-term 2	
Spring half-term 1	
Spring half-term 2	
Summer half-term 1	
Summer half-term 2	

EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR

PREPARING FOR A VISIT

Governors will never visit the school unannounced – they will be expected to arrange visits at least one week prior to the date of the proposed visit with the headteacher. Governors will remain flexible and understand that the school must make pupils' education the priority, and that this may sometimes lead to the rearranging of visits.

Before a visit, governors will:

- Agree a clear, purposeful focus for the visit.
- Consider how the area of focus will be identified and observed during the visit.
- Discuss the context of the activities to be observed.
- Agree their role within the activities.
- Refer to their *Governing Board Monitoring Plan* to ensure the visit's focus is strategic and in line with the school's priorities for improvement.
- Read the documentation relevant to the focus of the visit, e.g., the school's Behaviour Policy, and prepare relevant questions, where appropriate.

DURING A VISIT

During a visit, governors will:

- Always adhere to their agreed role.
- Make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school.
- Where visiting activities involve lesson observations, not ask questions, interrupt the teacher, or distract pupils during the lesson.
- Spend time in a classroom only when they have provided a clear reason for doing so.
- Adhere to confidentiality agreements.
- Adhere to the agreed times and purpose.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the pupils and the wider school community.
- Avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present.

During a visit, governors will not:

- Make judgements concerning teaching or other areas of school provision in any official capacity.
- Pursue personal agendas during visits.
- Check on individual children or monopolise the time of staff.

AFTER A VISIT

After a visit, governors will:

- Thank the staff, and pupils where appropriate, involved in the visiting activities.
- Discuss the visit with the staff involved in the visiting activity at their convenience.
- Provide feedback regarding the visit to the full governing board.

After a visit, governors will not:

- Break confidentiality agreements.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

A time will be agreed between the governor and staff, at the staff members convenience, to discuss what was observed during the visit.

During the discussion, governors will adhere to the following framework:

- Ask staff for their views on what happened during the visit.
- Present governors' observations.
- Provide positive feedback.
- Raise any issues.
- Ask further questions.
- Thank staff for the opportunity.

By the end of the discussion, both the governor and staff members will be clear as to what information will be shared with the headteacher and Full Governing Board.

The Governor Visit Proforma will be completed as soon as possible after the visit. The headteacher and governors will discuss the observations prior to the distribution of the proforma. A copy of the completed proforma will be provided to:

- *The headteacher*
- *The subject leader/Champion*
- *The relevant staff members*
- *The clerk to governors/uploaded to Governor Hub*

A copy of the report will be circulated to all governors at the next appropriate committee or Full Governing Board meeting.

The governing board will ensure all board members can discuss and ask questions regarding the final report and the visit undertaken.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher and the chair of the governing board.

When reviewing the success of the policy, the headteacher and chair of the governing board will take the following into consideration:

- Has every governor conducted at least one visit during the academic year?
- Has every governor made links with their allocated subject or area of provision?
- Has every governor met with the staff members they are linked to?
- Are visits achieving the desired outcomes?
- What worked well?
- What did not work well?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can practice be improved?

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all governors, staff members and relevant stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date of this policy is September 2024.

APPENDIX 1 - GOVERNOR LEARNING WALK REPORT: MONITORING THE CURRICULUM

Name of governor/s undertaking the learning walk	
Area of the curriculum being monitored	
Key stage/year group/cohort of pupils	
Date of learning walk	
Accompanying staff	

What is the purpose of the learning walk?
<p><i>Outline the purpose of the learning walk, e.g., to gain a better understanding of the curriculum provided to pupils in a particular key stage or year group.</i></p>
Why is this area being monitored?
<p><i>Outline why this area is being monitored, e.g., the board wants to ensure the school's curriculum intent and policy is being consistently applied in a specific key stage or year group to ensure all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.</i></p>
What other evidence or information will be considered in relation to this learning walk?
<p><i>Outline any other evidence that will be looked at to support the learning walk, such as policies, surveys, and data.</i></p>
How does the learning walk link to the School/Learning Improvement Plan (S/LIP)?
<p><i>Outline how the learning walk links to the SIP, e.g., there might be an improvement priority relating to learning of a particular year group or key stage.</i></p>

How does the learning walk link to the governing board's monitoring priorities?

Outline how the learning walk links to any of the board's monitoring priorities.

Agreed questions to ask during the learning walk

Comments and observations

*List all the questions that will be asked during the learning walk. Some **general examples** have been provided; **however**, the questions you need to ask will depend on the area of the curriculum that is being monitored. You can add or remove rows as required.*

Does the school have a *Curriculum Policy*?

Does the school have a curriculum intent?

How do school leaders ensure the curriculum is broad and balanced?

How does the curriculum improve and enhance pupils' learning experiences?

How do school leaders ensure the curriculum is accessible to all pupils?

How does the school ensure/provide children with the necessary cultural capital in order to prepare them for future success?

Additional observations

Record any further observations made during the learning walk that are relevant to the focus of the visit.

Further questions to ask

Record any further questions that need to be asked and addressed that have arisen from the learning walk.

Appendix 2

What if..... (questions that may arise)

What if I see children misbehaving when the teacher doesn't?

It depends how serious the misbehaviour is and how frequently it happens. The occasional incident should probably be overlooked, but if the teacher is consistently failing to notice misbehaviour, it is something which should be taken up after the lesson.

You could ask the teacher if they noticed a particular incident, for example, and what they would have done about it had it been noticed, or whether they chose to ignore it?

If you still have major concerns you may need to talk to the headteacher or member of the SLT about it, in confidence. The headteacher should find a way of following it up without suggesting in any way that you have reported a concern.

What if a pupil asks me how to do something?

It depends on what it is. If it is something the teacher has already explained in the lesson, you can reinforce the teacher's message by explaining it again to the pupil. Otherwise, unless it is a trivial thing, you should ask the teacher on the pupil's behalf or encourage them to ask the teacher directly. You might also be able to ask a teaching assistant, if one is present.

What if the teacher has problems controlling the class?

It depends on the level of poor control. Maintaining perfect class control at all times is not easy, especially in practical activities, so some leeway should be given. Also, a certain level of noise might just be a sign of enthusiastic participation in an activity.

Usually if a teacher is really struggling, the headteacher would know about it anyway and not encourage a Governor to visit in the first place. There will be some kind of support available for the teacher, possibly from a more senior colleague; but if control is obviously seriously lacking, then the headteacher needs to be told.

Appendix 3

Summary Visit protocol sheet (Code of Conduct)

	Always	Never
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the purpose of the visit with Headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team. This includes considering which actions of the School Development Plan to review or the context of lessons being visited. • Be clear beforehand exactly what you are observing. Try to prepare questions for staff in advance. Arrange and plan the details of the visit with the Headteacher/relevant member of staff, drawing up a schedule for the visit - When? Where? With whom? Duration? Time for feedback? • Discuss with the Headteacher if any supporting information is available. E.g., Ofsted report, improvement plan, scheme of work etc. • Try to visit at different times of the day. • Agree the level of confidentiality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn up unannounced for a focused / formal visit. • Expect to go into a classroom without prior arrangement or a recommended minimum notice of one week. • Visit during a SATs week without the visit being authorised by the Headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team.
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared, organised and punctual. • Report to the school office and sign in. • Fulfil the agreed purpose of the visit. • Observe school / class guidelines. • Jot down discussion points to consider later at the feedback session. • Remember why you are there. Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit. • Listen to staff and pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monopolise staff time. • Interrupt teaching or talk to the teacher while he / she is teaching. • Behave like an Inspector! • Walk in with a clipboard and take copious notes. • Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the governing body. It is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on their behalf.
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the member(s) of staff and pupils. • Discuss what you have observed with the teacher or staff lead as soon as possible after the visit. Use the opportunity to clarify any issues you are unclear about. • Feedback appropriately to the Headteacher / relevant SLT member. (Refer to the purpose of the visit, considering together whether it has been achieved.) • Discuss Health and Safety issues if relevant. • Complete the Visit Form and give a copy to the Headteacher, (unless a group feedback sheet has been completed during the feedback session.) • Prepare your own portfolio to include the records of your visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave without a word of thanks. • Leave the school without giving some feedback. • Discuss observations with other members of staff, parents or individual Governors, (except the Chair) unless given permission to do so.

Appendix 4

Questions for Governors to ask the Headteacher/leadership team in their support and challenge role

A vital part of the role of school governors is providing effective support and challenge for their headteachers and senior leaders. In order to assist governors in that role, this document has been produced to suggest areas of discussion and investigation for governing Body Meetings.

This list is by no means exhaustive but does direct Governors towards the key areas of School life.

The use of 'we' in all of these questions is deliberate to emphasise that the governors are an integral part of the school.

Below are starter questions that would require follow up questions dependent on the answers provided to ensure accountability e.g.

- What do we know?
- How do we know?
- How do we monitor this?
- What effect has this had?
- What plans do we have in place to improve this?
- When will we review these?
- Who is responsible for this?

Standards

- How are pupil numbers reflected as percentages – what is the actual number of pupils being considered?
- How good are standards in the school? How do we know?
- Are our pupils performing as expected, better or below expectations?
- Are these results an improvement on last year?
- Is there anything we should know about the cohort of pupils which could affect the results?
- How is achievement analysed and evaluated? What impact does this have on standards?
- Is there a trend appearing for certain subjects or year groups, if so what strategies can we put in place to improve results in that area?
- What are our best performing areas of learning /subjects in the Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2?
- What subjects/areas are a cause for concern the Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2?
- What does the 'value added' element look like?
- How do we compare with schools with similar Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement? What are our benchmark quartiles for each indicator?
- How well do our boys perform compared to our girls? How well do our boys perform compared to boys in other similar schools?
- How well do our FSM /SEN /EAL pupils perform compared to pupils in other similar schools?
- How well do these groups perform over time?
- How can we show we are consistently "adding value" both within year groups and across phases?
- What is the impact of the various interventions used in the school? Do they give value for money?

Pupil Premium

- How effectively is Pupil Premium money being spent?
- How well do Pupil premium children achieve compared to non-Pupil Premium and Pupil premium children nationally?
- How effective is the monitoring and review of Pupil premium spend?
- Is the School's Pupil premium Policy and spend on the school website?

Wellbeing

- How well does the school promote pupils' wellbeing?
- How well does the school promote staff wellbeing?
- What is the impact on current wellbeing strategies?
- Do all staff know what the wellbeing agenda for the school is?

Attendance

- What are the overall absence levels for the school?
- Has anything happened during the term to affect the attendance figures, e.g., bad weather conditions, high incidence of illnesses?
- What were the attendance figures for the last two years?
- How does our attendance compare to modelled expectations over the last 3 years?
- Have we improved, stayed the same or worsened? Is there a pattern/trend to the figures?
- How does our attendance compare with similar schools for the same period?
- Have we analysed the attendance of different groups of pupils? How do these compare?
- Who are our persistent absentees? What improvements have we made with these pupils?
- What strategies do we use to improve or ensure good attendance?
- If we disregard the worst 5 or so attendees what would the figures look like?

Behaviour

- How well do our pupils behave?
- How do our exclusion rates compare with other schools?
- What is the trend for fixed term exclusions over the last three years? Have we analysed the exclusions of different groups of pupils? How do these compare? What strategies do we use to improve or continue this positive / negative trend?
- How effective are our pupil voice strategies? What input do they have in what they learn?

Learning Experiences

- What are the good features of the curriculum?
- What are the shortcomings in the curriculum?
- Does the curriculum meet the needs of all our pupils? Are there any barriers in terms of equality or access to the curriculum?
- How do we develop progression in learners' literacy, especially reading, writing, and numeracy skills across all subjects? How well do we develop our pupils' ICT skills? How well are these skills taught and reinforced across the curriculum?
- How well do we plan to develop pupils' wider skills – thinking, problem solving, working with others, improving their own learning and performance?

Learning Environment

- How effectively do we promote an inclusive ethos, racial tolerance, equal opportunities and diversity? Have all staff received appropriate equality training? How do we record and monitor issues or complaints that arise?
- What are the current priorities for the accommodation and resources? Do our pupils agree? What plans do we have in place to meet these?

SEND

- Are all statutory documents in place?
- Is appropriate SEND information available on the school website?
- Is the SEND information report up to date and available?
- Are there appropriate resources available for all SEND children across School?
- How do you know that all SEND children are making at least expected progress?
- Which SEND groups make the best/worst progress? Why?
- What interventions are in place to support children? How do you know they are effective?

Partnership working

- What strategic partnerships do we have?
- How do we work with all these partners to plan, manage and quality assure provision?
- What impact do these partnerships have on pupils' standards and wellbeing?
- Can we develop stronger relationships with partnership schools?
- How well does the school engage with other schools to raise standards?

Teaching

- How good is the teaching in the school? How do we know? What do we do to ensure good or improve teaching?
- What are our pupils' perceptions of the school?
- As a result, how well do our pupils make progress in their lessons? Are there any classes / year groups / subjects that are a cause for concern? How do we monitor and support these?
- How do we set targets for pupils and measure their progress? How effective is this?
- What are expectations of teachers in respect to assessment, recording and reporting?
- What training does all the staff receive to develop teaching and learning strategies, including specific support to improve literacy and numeracy?
- How consistent is Assessment for Learning (AfL) across the school? Do learners get good feedback and act on it successfully?
- How do we know that our end of year assessments are accurate?
- What are the perceptions of teachers? Are we managing staff absence/capability issues? How do we know if other staff in the classroom are impacting on standards?

Leadership

- What is our vision for the school?
- How do our aims, strategic objectives and plans meet the needs of our pupils? How are they monitored?
- How well do you communicate these expectations to all the staff in the school?

- How well is the school, and teams within the school managed? How effectively is the work of these teams monitored?
- How effectively do you challenge, but also support staff through performance management to achieve their best?
- What is the impact of this?
- What are the arrangements for succession planning and talent spotting?
- How is leadership contributing to the development of the next generation of school leaders?
- Are there any issues of underperformance? How have you addressed these issues? What strategies are in place to challenge and support these members of staff?
- What are our local and national priorities? How effective are we in meeting these?

Improving quality

- What are the school's strengths and weaknesses?
- How well do we evaluate and review all aspects of school life? How often do we observe lessons?
- How often do we scrutinise pupils' work and teachers' assessment of the work?
- Does the SLT work together and with others to ensure judgments are standardised?
- How effectively do we take on the views of pupils? How effectively do we take on the views of parents? How effectively do we take on the views of external stakeholders?
- How often and how effectively do we review the work of departments/year groups?
- As a result, what are the school's priorities for improvement? Do these arise from self-evaluation?
- How well is progress against priorities monitored and evaluated? What improvements has this led to?
- How well have we planned to ensure these improvements? What actions, resources and time are required to achieve these? How do we / will we monitor these?