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# Governor Visits Policy

# Thakeham Primary School

Date approved by Full Governing Body: 28.09.20

Review Date: September 2021

Signed

Headteacher: *S. Norton*

Chair of Governors: *Judith James*

## **Context**

One of the key roles and responsibilities for 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 Governors' visiting programme is an integral part of the school's yearly monitoring calendar.

Regular Governor visits involve focussing on an aspect of the School Strategic Development Plan or one of the Governing Body's duties. Each Governor is encouraged to make at least two such visits a year during school time in accordance with the agreed timetable (see appendix 1).

Governors have a strategic role which should not involve the nominated Governors attending meetings with individual parents or taking part in discussions concerning individual pupils. The Governing body or nominated Governors should not become involved in the school's day to day activities.

"Many boards find that visiting their school(s), particularly during the day, is a helpful way to find out more about the school, its staff and students. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, the board can see for themselves whether the school is implementing their policies and improvement plans and how they are working in practice. Visits also provide an opportunity to talk with pupils, staff and parents to gather their views; though are unlikely to be sufficient for these purposes." (Governance Handbook 2019).

In practical terms the nominated Governors should try to:

- Undertake school visits and attend meetings as outlined in this policy
- Know the school's relevant policy and procedures (contributing to these where appropriate)
- Understand how funding is allocated to schools for the relevant area
- Attend relevant training for Governors

Whilst Governors are linked to key areas of the SSDP or Governing Body duties, the whole Governing body "are legally responsible for the conduct of the school. Individual Governors are generally protected from personal liability. Providing they act honestly, reasonably and in good faith, any liability will fall on the board even if it exceeds its powers, rather than on individual members" (DfE Governance Handbook March 2019).

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Governors' Code of Conduct, which sets out the ethos of professionalism within which they should act: ensuring integrity, objectivity and honesty at all times and operating in the best interests of the school.

## **Visits enable Governors to:**

- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements.
- Ensure that resources are being used to support the school's vision and priorities as set out in the School Strategic Development Plan, evaluate their impact and discuss further requirements with staff.
- 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.
- Gain first-hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking.
- Work in partnership with the staff.

**Before making a visit Governors will:**

- Agree a date, time and focus for the visit with the Headteacher (usually in line with the SSDP) and support the formulation of the Governors' Visit Schedule.
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit.
- Plan which classes/activities will be visited.
- Draw up a timetable for the visit with the Headteacher and/or Curriculum Leader.
- Headteacher and/or the Curriculum Leader 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 Headteacher/Curriculum Leader.
- 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.

**It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time and judgements should not be made arbitrarily. 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.

**After the visit the Governor will:**

- Remember to thank the teachers and children.
- Meet with the Headteacher /Curriculum Leader to give a verbal report and to raise any issues that arose.

- Complete the Governor Visit Report, concentrating on the focus. The completed form should be emailed to the Curriculum Leader **within 5 days in word format** and then, after any agreed alterations, the form will be circulated to the Headteacher and Clerk to the Governing Body who will store it on the GVO and place it in any relevant meeting packs.
- Governors must report without giving opinions and (where practicable) it should not be possible to identify individuals from the report. 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 continued school improvement.

### **Covid-19 Protocols**

The Governors and Headteacher will follow the latest DfE guidance in planning and undertaking visits and meetings and follow all school Covid-19 protocols and risk assessments.

**APPENDIX 1 ALLOCATION OF GOVERNORS TO SSDP AREAS/SPECIFIC ROLES 20-21**

<b>SSDP PRIORITY AREA</b>	<b>LINKED CURRICULUM AREA/KEY ASPECTS</b>	<b>LINKED GOVERNOR</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curiosity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design &amp; Technology</li> <li>History &amp; Geography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul Skelding &amp; Tom Gray</li> <li>Gilly Hall &amp; Paul Skelding</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perseverance (and Curiosity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying &amp; Addressing Gaps in Learning: English</li> <li>Identifying &amp; Addressing Gaps in Learning Maths</li> <li>Physical Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Judith James &amp; Kate Nolan</li> <li>Cheryl Stockwell &amp; Judy Tuck</li> <li>Cheryl Stockwell &amp; Tom Gray</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care/Co-operation/Honesty/Respect:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PSHE, Wellbeing &amp; Behaviour</li> <li>Equalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gina Webb &amp; Kate Nolan</li> <li>Gina Webb &amp; Judy Tuck</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment</li> <li>EYFS curriculum &amp; assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governors linked to Eng/Maths and focus curriculum areas</li> <li>Gilly Hall &amp; Judith James</li> </ul>
<b>ROLE</b>	<b>NOMINATED GOVERNOR</b>	<b>KEY RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
Safeguarding (& E-Safety)	Judith James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure an appropriate policy is in place and implemented effectively in association with other policies</li> <li>Monitor the Safeguarding policy and SCR</li> <li>Work with the Headteacher and other appropriate staff to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities</li> <li>Ensure support and opportunity for training is available</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a safeguarding audit</li> </ul>
SEN& D/CLA (Part of Inclusion Governor Role)	Gina Webb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Headteacher and the InCo in ensuring the provisions of the Code of Practice and relevant policies are implemented</li> <li>• Monitor the implementation of the Inclusion SSDP</li> <li>• Promote the educational achievements of Children Looked After</li> </ul>
Health & Safety	Paul Skelding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the school health and safety representative to ensure the school has a health and safety policy in place and implemented effectively</li> <li>• Attend PDP meetings</li> <li>• Undertake an annual health and safety audit and (termly) health and safety visits/walk rounds</li> <li>• Work with the health and safety representative to ensure action points raised by any audits are implemented</li> </ul>
Link Governor	Gilly Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To maintain a record of governor training and use this alongside the governor skills audit to help identify group and individual training needs</li> <li>• To keep governing bodies up to date on developments within the local authority and encourage governors to attend the governor training on offer</li> </ul>