

Danbury Park Community Primary School



Governor Visits to School Policy

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Be wise, be happy, belong



Danbury Park Community Primary School

School Visits by Members of the Governing Body Policy

1. Role of Governors

- 1.1. The governing body has a general responsibility to ensure that the school promotes the highest standards of educational achievement possible with the resources at its disposal.
- 1.2. It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that there are policies and procedures in place to allow the school to operate smoothly and effectively. Governors act to monitor, support, listen to and communicate with staff, parents and other legitimate, interested parties. Their strategic role involves setting suitable aims, agreeing policies, priorities, plans and targets and monitoring and evaluating results.
- 1.3. It is the responsibility of the headteacher to manage the school on a day-to-day basis and governors are not expected to involve themselves with the minutia of the running of the school.
- 1.4. The headteacher is responsible for the quality of teaching and learning and governors do not undertake formal visits to observe and judge lessons in this respect. However, the headteacher does provide governors with:
 - Details of systems used to monitor the quality of teaching;
 - The professional support available to teachers to help them teach more effectively;
 - The expected impact of this support and time scales;
 - The headteacher's overall judgment on the quality of teaching in the school.

2. Visits to School

- 2.1. An effective governor is one that knows his/her school well. A good understanding of the school's organisation, future plans, areas of achievement and causes for concern are essential if an informed contribution to the strategic running of the school is to be made. The pace of change within school is often frenetic and regular contact, both formally and informally, is necessary if governors are to keep abreast of current educational issues and initiatives and build effective working relationships with staff, pupils and parents.
- 2.2. It is hoped that governors will be able to visit the school on many occasions. Visits fall into two distinct categories: formal and informal.
- 2.3. Informal visits include attending general school events such as assemblies, open afternoons, sports days and plays as well as helping in their link class with specific activities such as reading and model making.
- 2.4. This policy is concerned with formal visits in which governors act as representatives of the governing body with a specific monitoring role and defined objective.
- 2.5. Those governors with specific responsibilities for areas such as Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as well as curriculum subjects that are



priorities within the school improvement plan may need to visit the school each term whilst other governors may only need to make one formal visit each year.

2.6. Visits to school can take many forms and may include:

- Meeting a teacher, deputy headteacher, key stage leader, subject leader or headteacher;
- Meeting a member of the support staff;
- Visiting a classroom;
- Meeting with pupils;
- Looking around the school building and premises;
- Analysing information available to governors.

3. Timetable of Visits

3.1. Each September a timetable of governor visits covering the academic year is drawn up by the chair of governors and the headteacher in consultation with the chairpersons of the various committees.

3.2. In addition to the regular statutory visits as listed above, committees decide upon aspects of the school that require monitoring giving school improvement projects and new initiatives the highest priority. Each committee nominates a governor to oversee each initiative and project.

3.3. The timetable includes:

- The name of the committee initiating the visit;
- The month of the visit and where possible proposed dates;
- Name of governor visiting;
- Members of staff involved in the visit.

3.4. The timetable for the year then stands. Any changes to the timetable resulting from urgent matters or changes of priorities which arise through committee meetings will be dealt with by the headteacher and chair of governors.

4. Arranging the Visit

4.1. The specific date, time and duration of the visit is arranged by the headteacher, who will liaise with the relevant members of staff.

4.2. The purpose of the meeting is clearly discussed and defined by the headteacher with the governor and member of staff prior to the visit. The objectives to be achieved are agreed in writing and distributed prior to the visit.

4.3. For a classroom visit the teacher may suggest the most appropriate role of the governor in the visit e.g. observing, working with a small group or individual pupil. The quality of teaching is not assessed by a governor.

5. Before the visit

5.1. The more information the governor has prior to the visit, the more productive the visit will be. This means that the governor arrives in a position of knowledge, has a greater awareness of



what should be happening in school in the aspect being monitored and consequently is more aware of whether or not these are in place and this makes the time spent in school more valuable and focused.

5.2. Governors should:

- Ensure that they read and are familiar with related documentation. Much of this is made available to the governing body at meetings e.g. policies, National Curriculum test results, performance management procedures and financial procedures;
- Request additional documentation or specific information in advance;
- Send the member of staff involved in the visit a list of questions, answers to which they wish to receive;
- Have a clear plan of what they wish to see;
- Ask for any relevant background information, policies etc. before they visit so to familiarise themselves;

6. During the Visit

6.1. Governors should arrive promptly, switch off any mobile phones and abide by the school's Courtesy Code.

6.2. Whenever possible at the beginning of the visit the headteacher will be available to answer any last minute questions or deal with any unforeseen changes to arrangements.

6.3. The governor will be welcomed by the member of staff, taken to the relevant classroom or work space and made welcome.

6.4. Points to note:

- During teaching sessions the teacher will be concentrating on teaching the class and on the children.
- It may have been many years since governors were in the classroom situation. Some teaching practices may well appear 'strange'. It is important for governors to keep an 'open mind' and ask staff for clarification at a mutually convenient moment should such situations arise.

6.5. Governors should take every opportunity to celebrate the successes of both staff and pupils. This does wonders for morale and helps build positive relationships.

6.6. Time is given time by the headteacher at the end of the visit to review and discuss aspects of the visit with the member of staff and then to share their findings with the headteacher.

6.7. Governors should remember to thank all with whom they come into contact with during their visit. 'Thank You' notes are a tangible reminder of the visit and help to make it memorable for all.

7. After the Visit

7.1. The governor should complete a written summary of the visit using the format in Appendix 1. This should be e-mailed directly to the headteacher.



- 7.2. When writing the visit note governors should bear in mind the following protocols:
- Anything that could be viewed as potentially embarrassing to the member of staff must not be included in the summary but should be raised with the headteacher.
 - Anything that the governor sees which raises serious concerns should not be included in the summary but shared with the headteacher and chair of governors.
- 7.3. The headteacher shares the visit report with the relevant member of staff and invites them to add their comments. The headteacher adds her comments and makes provision for future action.
- 7.4. The headteacher liaises with the chair of the appropriate committee and the clerk to the governing body for the report to be circulated to governors and to be included on the agenda of the next relevant committee meeting.
- 7.5. All information gained from the visit is treated as confidential and forms part of the school's monitoring evidence.

8. Whistle- Blowing

- 8.1. The governors of Danbury Park Community Primary School are committed to tackling all forms of malpractice, fraud etc. and treat these issues seriously. The governors recognise that some concerns may be extremely sensitive and have therefore developed a system which allows for the confidential raising of concerns within the school environment.
- 8.2. Please read the school's Whistleblowing Policy for more details.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 9.1. The chairs of each committee in consultation with the headteacher monitor and evaluate the success of governor visits annually and report to the full governing body.



Danbury Park Community Primary School Governor monitoring visit report

Name:

Date of visit:

Class visited / Person/s met:

Time spent:

Focus of visit:

Source of evidence

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom visit | <input type="checkbox"/> Lunchtime visit/observation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assembly | <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at staff meeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looking at children's work | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking to pupils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion with Headteacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion with subject leader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion with other staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looking at displays | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

Summary of Monitoring Visit

Governor's signature



Teacher's Comments

Teacher's signature

Headteacher's Comments

Headteacher's signature

Points to take forward