



Cornerstone Church of England (VA) Primary School



*Building our Community
with Love, Forgiveness and Hope*

GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

Reviewed by	Strategic Planning Committee	Authorised by	Full Governing Body
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Rationale

Governors have a general responsibility for the effective management of the school, acting within the framework set by national legislation and the policies of the Local Authority (LA). Governors do not have an automatic right to enter school whenever they wish, but they need to be able to visit in order to develop their understanding of the school to enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities for the conduct of the school.

To this end, the effective governor finds out about the school, keeps up-to-date with educational developments, attends meetings and builds up sound relationships. Visiting the school is an important means of achieving this and visits to Cornerstone Primary School will enable governors to:

- be better informed when discussing and making decisions
- develop professional relationships and trust with staff
- have a better understanding of the context of the schools work
- use knowledge gained to feed into the School Development/Improvement Plan and the SEF, thereby supporting the Headteacher in setting the strategic priorities for the school

It is expected that each governor commits to at least two days per academic year outside of general school visits (ie sports day, harvest festival etc), to monitor both the school's statutory obligations and progress with the School Development/Improvement Plan. The Headteacher and Governing Body should plan monitoring visits in advance to ensure minimal disruption to day to day school life and each visit should have a clear purpose and structure. Any visits outside of the annual 'Governor Monitoring Visits Plan' should be arranged through the Headteacher.

At the end of each term, the Chair of Governors will summarise the monitoring that has taken place and advise of the impact of the monitoring, any changes to policy/procedures and other areas for further governor discussion in agreement with the Headteacher.

This document continues with guidance and procedures to be followed.

If you have any further questions please contact Sandy Matheson, Chair of Governors.

Governor Monitoring Cycle



Overview of Governor Visits

The Governing Body will agree an annual plan of monitoring visits for the full academic year. This plan will ensure that:

- Considerable focus is given to key issues in the School Development/Improvement Plan and pupil progress (the role of the cohort Governors)
- Governors can feel confident that they are meeting their statutory responsibilities
- All Governors are involved and feel a level of personal responsibility for supporting whole school improvement
- The visit has a clear purpose and structure so that understanding and good relationships between governors and staff are promoted
- Any methods of data gathering are made explicit
- Contact members of staff are highlighted
- The frequency of visits does not contribute too heavily to staff or governor workload.

Definition of Informal and Monitoring Visits

Informal Visits

These may include:

- attending an assembly or other performance or event
- hearing readers in a classroom/library or supporting the teacher with lessons
- attending Open Evenings
- supporting school trips

Monitoring Visits

These may include:

- planned visits which are identified in the annual Governor Monitoring Visits Plan
- being attached to a curriculum/subject area or year group
- attending parents' evenings as a governor
- staff appointments
- formal meetings with members of staff, including the headteacher and leadership team
- disciplinary/appeal meetings involving students and parents

Guidance for Informal and Monitoring Visits

General Guidance

In carrying out your responsibilities, tact and diplomacy will be initial key requirements for a visit. As you become more acquainted with the teachers and the school/subject matter areas you will then be able to place a greater emphasis on your role as 'critical friend'.

Please remember that in these types of visit, you **should not** make professional observations. You must not evaluate the work of teachers and your submitted governor monitoring form must be non-judgmental. It should simply inform what you were asked to investigate/provide feedback/collect evidence for.

Before the visit

- The governor should ensure that they are clear about the purpose of their visit (as outlined in the Governor Monitoring Plan), the desired outcome and the method of any data collection if this is appropriate.
- Ideally, the visit date should be booked during the half term that precedes the term when the monitoring visit needs to take place, for example Autumn 2 for visits in the Spring term.
- The school will then facilitate contact between the governor and the nominated member of staff to discuss monitoring activities, set an agenda for the visit and

send any documentation which makes the visit to school more time efficient for all. This will usually be by email, copying in all those involved.

- If you are a parent governor you should follow the procedures unless you are visiting the school as a parent.

During the visit

- Report to reception to sign in
- Introduce yourself to relevant staff or await collection from reception if this procedure has already been agreed
- Refrain from commenting to staff, pupils or parents about professional matters, eg quality of teaching, pupil behaviour
- Look, listen and observe
- Use positive body language, eg smile
- Take an interest in your surroundings
- Talk to staff, pupils, parents as appropriate

After the visit

- If this was a monitoring visit, complete the governor monitoring form which relates directly to the purpose of your visit. When writing the report you may like to consider what you observed, what impressed you, how you were able to increase your understanding and whether any issues were shared with you.
- Email/Send the governor monitoring form to the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher within one week of the visit.

GOVERNOR MONITORING FORM

Name of Governor:

Date of Visit:

Purpose of Visit

SDP Target

Statutory

Cohort Monitoring

What monitoring activities did you undertake?

To what extent has progress been made against key success criteria or what evidence have you seen which shows statutory requirements been met?

Questions to be answered by school

School response and implications for school improvement

Any other comments

Sample Questions for a Cohort Governor Visit

- Where are the children as a whole?
- Who is not on track, if not why not and what strategies are in place to get them on track?
- What is the progress of girl's compared to boys in each area? Is there a common theme, or a particular subject area where it is out of step, what are the school doing about this?
- What is the progress of the SEN children in the year group? Are they on track, what are we doing if not?
- What is the progress of the Pupil Premium children in the year group? Are they on track, what are we doing if not?
- What is the progress of the more able children? How are we making the work more challenging for them?
- Is anyone stuck at a level, what are we doing about it?
- What impact has guided reading had? Is it as expected, if not why not?
- What do the children think about guided reading?
- What is the usage of reading diaries by the children in the year group? Are parents/carers engaged in the use of reading diaries - what impact has this had?
- What other events have had an impact on progress/learning this year?

Sample Questions for a School Improvement Priority Visit

- What progress is being made with School Development/Improvement Plan priority?
- Are you on track with the key success criteria?
- Are there any barriers to achieving this priority?
- Have the key strategies been implemented?
- Has any school monitoring taken place?
- Has anything changed/does it need to change relating to this priority?
- Are there sufficient finances/resources in place for you to achieve this priority?

CORNERSTONE GOVERNOR MONITORING FORM: WORK SAMPLING

Class:	Subject:	Date:	Actions
Class:	Subject:	Date:	Actions:
<p>1. Is the Learning Aim evident for each piece of work / lesson? (Highlighted Green / Pink by teacher? Green and Pink self-assessment dots by pupils?)</p>			
<p>2. Is there Success Criteria evident as appropriate (i.e. for main learning tasks) (Highlighted Green / Pink by teacher? Green and Pink self-assessment dots by pupils?)</p>			
<p>3. Is there consistent use of the Feedback policy (Great Green, Think Pink / Next Step comment and Thinking and Improvement Time)? (S: supported, I: Independent, D: Discussed)</p>			
<p>4. Is there evidence that this Feedback has had an impact on the pupils understanding / work?</p>			
<p>5. Is there sufficient and regular amounts of work?</p>			
<p>6. Is there evidence of pupils being motivated and inspired by their learning?</p>			
<p>7. Is there evidence of high expectations of spelling, handwriting and general presentation?</p>			

Feedback Policy (September 2015)

Rationale

Feedback is an **essential part** of the **cycle** of planning, teaching and learning, and assessment.

Responding to pupils work through constructive comments acknowledges achievements and effort, promotes positive attitudes and behaviour and leads to an **improvement in standards**.

Feedback should be focused on **sharing specific next steps for improvement**, and **time should be given** for pupils to **respond to this feedback** and **make improvements**.

Teachers use their **professional judgment** in a constructive way when **working with learners** to support them making progress.

We show our **love** for the pupils in the time and care we put into feedback, **forgiveness** in our accepting that mistakes are part of learning and the **hope** we have that every child can achieve amazing things.

Aims

To assist and activate learning.

To provide constructive, specific, learning focused feedback.

To raise pupil attainment and standards.

To allow children to reflect on their performance and to discuss and /or set new targets together with the teacher.

To address misconceptions in children's learning and to inform future planning.

To ensure a dialogue about learning / progress, between teacher and child.

To encourage, motivate, support and promote positive attitudes.

To recognise achievement and progress towards the learning objective.

To show children that their work is valued.

Practice

Every learning experience will have a **Learning Aim** (LA) or a **Learning Question** (LQ) which will be shared with the children (though not always at the beginning of a session).

Every learning experience will have **Success Criteria** which will be discussed with or generated with the children.

Children will reflect on how they feel they achieved / progressed in a lesson by colouring a small **green / orange / red dot** next to the LA, LQ or SC.

Staff highlight green a LA, LQ or elements of SC to show that Aim, Question or Criteria has been met. The children need to be reminded that this means "well done!" Staff do not need to write a comment about this as well.

The following code letters (circled) are to be used: **I** for independent work or **S** for supported.

"Great Green" underlining / highlighting elements that show LA / Success Criteria being met.

"Think Pink" underlining / highlighting specific elements that could be improved. This can be explained next to a next step symbol, unless a LA, LQ or elements of SC have already been highlighted pink.

Any **Next Step comments** (*linked to Pink Think*) should be brief bullet points. A **challenge** (*e.g. specific question*) / future target should be shared if LA and Success Criteria has been fully met. Children should **initial** them to indicate they have read them.

Children must have Thinking and Improvement time to improve their work based on next step comments, Think Pinks or Challenge Question.