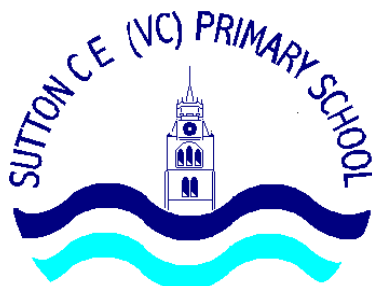


SUTTON CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL



GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

Version 2017:1

Approved by staff July 2017
Approved by Governors July 2017

To be reviewed annually

SUTTON CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

Introduction

“Individual governors do not have an automatic right to visit the school. But they do need to be able to visit from time to time in order to develop their understanding of how the school works to enable them to better fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school.”

(from ‘A Guide to the Law for School Governors’)

In order to be effective, governors need to know their school and how it works. Visiting the school during the school day is just one way governors can gain information. Other ways include reading policies, receiving information/data and of course receiving the Headteacher’s termly report to the Governing Body, which will include progress reports on the implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Governors should therefore be encouraged to visit the school.

The first step to a successful visit is for the Governing Body to establish a policy framework within which individual governors can plan their visits. It is important for individual governors to remember that when they visit the school, they act as representatives of the Governing Body, which has corporate responsibility for the overall management of the school.

Purposes of a Visit

1. Mainly to get to know more about Sutton CE (VC) Primary School, so that the Governing Body can carry out its responsibilities including the role it has in monitoring the progress of the SIP. First-hand impressions of what Sutton CE (VC) Primary School is like and what goes on there give governors a context and background for discussions at governors’ meetings – something of the feel of the school and the flavour of its work that they cannot otherwise obtain. Without such first-hand impressions, the picture of our school that governors carry in their minds is liable to be based on their own schooldays rather than current reality. What governors learn from visiting the school should add to what the Governing Body, as a whole knows about the school.
2. A subsidiary, but important purpose of visiting the school is to demonstrate to staff that governors’ responsibilities are taken seriously and that governors are interested in what staff do. Governors have extensive powers, which affect staff, and staff can reasonably expect governors to exercise these powers with a good understanding of their work and clear evidence of goodwill.
3. Some formal visits are undertaken as part of a specific assignment from the Governing Body to a particular governor. For example, governors who have been given specific responsibilities in relation to the premises, or to an area of the curriculum, or to Special Educational Needs may wish to inform themselves more fully by means of a visit.
4. We always need to remember that visits should relate to members’ responsibilities as governors and capacities as individuals, and should not go beyond either. It is a part of the Head’s responsibility to manage the school from day to day and to supervise staff, in accordance with the aims, objectives and policies approved by the Governing Body. Moreover, to judge the quality of teaching and learning in a school is a specialist skill, which non-specialists cannot exercise on the basis of a short, occasional visit. When using visits to gain information and impressions to help in the role of governor, governors do so as observers, not as inspectors.

A visit gives only a glimpse or snapshot of what goes on. We should not assume that what is learnt at one or even several visits gives a full and balanced picture. Conclusions may be entirely valid as far as they go and governors should not reject the evidence of their own eyes and ears; but both may need to be checked with others and revised in the light of further evidence.

Key Points to Observe When Making a Visit

- Confirm your visit before you arrive
- Gather and read in advance any relevant information
- Have a clear focus and share your focus with the staff concerned
- Be attentive
- Observe confidentiality
- Observe the school policy for visitors by registering at reception and wearing a visitor badge
- Establish with staff what is expected of you
- Talk and share your experience with the teacher and Headteacher
- Be prepared to give written/verbal feedback to the Governing Body
- When governors visit the school it is important that they do not make judgements on the quality of teaching they see. The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring teaching in the school
- Evaluate the visit yourself by asking the following questions:
 - Were the objectives of the visit fulfilled?
 - Was everyone involved properly prepared?
 - Did you see what you wanted to see?
 - What would you do differently next time?
 - Were there areas you would like to know more about?
 - What effect has the visit had on you, the school and the Governing Body?
- **If you have any concerns as a result of your visit, you should always raise them with the Headteacher without delay.**
- Governors should report back at the next meeting of the Governing Body, or to a specific committee. The content of the report should be discussed with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors first. A written report should not name individuals and, like others for the Governing Body, will usually be open for public inspection after the Governing Body has considered it.

Protocol for Governor Visits to Schools

Where possible, all governors including the teacher and staff governors, will make formal visits to Sutton CE (VC) Primary School on behalf of the Governing Body

- The total number of visits per year will be agreed in advance with the Headteacher and will usually be between 4 and 6 per year
- Visits will have a clear focus linked to a curriculum subject, a school policy, an aspect of the School Improvement Plan, the induction of a new governor or some other specific area of the management of the school
- Term programme of visits will be planned at the first meeting of the full Governing Body in each academic year for the year. Focuses and individuals will be identified. Then the date and timing of specific visits will be arranged by the governor concerned, in consultation with the Headteacher and other staff involved

- If a governor is going to spend time in a classroom this will be discussed with the class teacher so that both are clear how long the governor is coming for, what they are going to look at and what they are going to do
- Governors should understand that their visits do not replace professional inspections or the monitoring role of the Headteacher. Governors should not voice any judgements they may come to about the effectiveness of the teaching they see
- After visits, governors should discuss their impressions and any concerns they may have with the Headteacher and then report back to the next meeting of the governing body or of the committee. The written report should be shown to the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors before the meeting at which it is to be presented to governors

APPENDIX 1

GOVERNOR VISIT REPORT

Date:		Time and Duration:	
Name(s) of Governors:			
Focus:			
Purpose:			
Programme:			
Comments			

Did the visit fulfil its aims?

Details of any further action required.

Issues related to budget, resources or curriculum.

Questions, which could affect the standards in teaching and learning.

Safeguarding Question/Focus:

