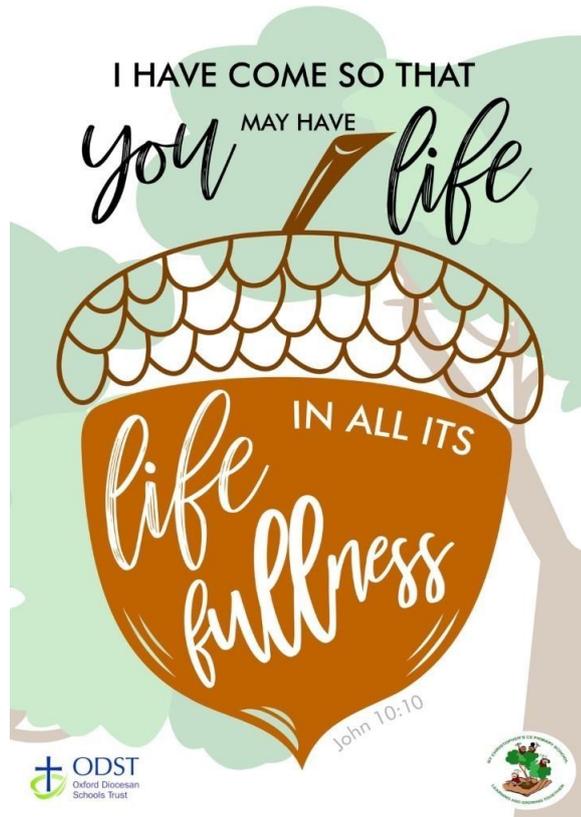


St Christopher's Primary School Cowley



Date of Ratified	Signed By/Position	Signature
March 2021	Executive HeadTeacher Katie Screaton	
	Head of School Susie Davies	
	Chair of Governors Jean Holderness	



Introduction

While not a statutory requirement, the DfE recommends that the governing body draws up a policy on governor visits to the academy. This policy should take the following into account:

1. Governors do not have any rights of access to the academy.
2. Visits should be undertaken as part of a strategic programme to:
 - a. improve governor knowledge of the academy, its staff, needs, priorities, strengths and weaknesses
 - b. monitor and assess the priorities as outlined in the improvement plan
 - c. assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties.
3. Before visiting the academy the governor(s) should:
 - a. Be directed or have the LGBs permission to undertake a visit
 - b. inform the academy of the visit and seek approval of the arrangements
 - c. ensure that they are familiar with health and safety procedures including what to do in the event of a fire.
4. After visiting the academy the governor(s) should:
 - a. complete a visit report outlining the objectives and results of the visit
 - b. report back to the committee or governing body as appropriate
 - c. provide constructive feedback as appropriate.

It is important that governors remember the purpose of governor visits is not to assess the quality of teaching provision or to pursue issues that relate to the day-to-day management of the academy other than as agreed with the Principal or SMT.

Purpose of Visits

It is important for Governors to continually increase their knowledge of how the school works, to improve their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and to support, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school.

A visit to the school is undertaken on behalf of the local governing body (LGB) at the direction of the LGB with the expectation that this will provide information which will add to Governors' evidence of how the school is performing. This should be in addition to measures already available to them such as Headteacher reports, external monitoring reports from the Trust, SATs results and Ofsted data contained in RaiseOnline and the data dashboard.

The role of visiting governors is that of critical friends and NOT to make judgments. The objective must always be to add to the Governing Body knowledge base about all aspects of school life.

The focus of any visit will be agreed in advance so that all involved understand the objectives of the particular visit and in this way are able to make the most of the time available. Well planned visits allow both staff and Governors to understand their roles, to consider any questions they may wish to ask each other, issues to explore, but with minimal disruption to school life.

Visits should be made with the School Development Plan in mind so that current priorities can be monitored and discussed

Types of School Visits

- Informal e.g. attending a parents' information evening, going on an out of school class visit, attending school worship
- Formal e.g. class visit, meeting with the subject/phase leader
- Specific Responsibilities e.g. SEN, Health and Safety
- Induction Programme for New Governors

Recording Visits

Feedback from any visit is essential if the visit is to have any benefit. It is a way for the Governing Body to monitor progress and observe aspects of school life thus helping inform decisions in future.

Governors should always produce a report in the form of a written record; this should follow a standard form (see appendix). Any report will not be considered by the governing body before it has been shared with the Principal and any members of staff included in the visit

Feedback should be given to the staff on any visits made to further develop the relationship between Governors and the school. For individual visits this may be that the staff member receives a copy of the record made by the visiting Governor. For whole Governing Body visits, a report by the Chair will be presented to the Headteacher who will then be able to provide feedback to the staff.

The report should be circulated with papers in advance of the meeting at which the agenda provides space for the governing body to receive and discuss the report. This will then be recorded in the minutes of that meeting and become a public document.

It is important for Governors to realise that GOVERNORS DO NOT HAVE AN AUTOMATIC RIGHT TO VISIT THE SCHOOL; it is always with the invitation, agreement and the permission of the Principal.

Protocols

Before

- Agree the purpose and timetable of the visit
- Arrange with the Principal / Vice Principal a suitable time. The Principal / Vice Principal will arrange activities relevant to the purpose of the visit.
- Familiarise yourself with any relevant policies, schemes of work or curriculum action plan
- Understand that there has to be confidentiality
- Discuss the context of the lessons/activities to be observed

During

- When possible walk about and talk to the children – can they explain what they are supposed to be doing?
- Observe how the children are engaged in their learning and be aware of the relationships and general behaviour within classrooms¹
- Adhere to the timetable of activities agreed with the school leadership team before your visit

After

- Thank the teachers
- Discuss what you saw with the subject coordinator/class teacher.
- Discuss what you observed with the Principal / Vice Principal

Feedback

- Governors should complete a Governor Visit report (appendix 1) after their visit which should be passed onto the Headteacher.

Never

- **Turn up unannounced**
- **Breach confidentiality**
- **Interrupt the lesson giving ideas or asking questions during teaching time**
- **arriving with inflexible or pre-conceived ideas**

¹ See appendices 2 & 3

- **pursue a personal agenda**
- **replace the responsibility of the head teacher/ senior leaders**
- **Leave without a word**
- **Criticise (NB. it is fine to ask questions)**



SCC Governors Visit Record

Name of Governor:	Date:
Focus/Reason for the Visit:	
Classes/staff visited:	
Summary of activities e.g. observing pupils, talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, sharing lunch etc.	
School Improvement Plan Priority Link:	
<p>Summary of Visit (Positive comments about the focus):</p> <p>Operational:</p> <p>Strategic:</p>	
<p>Items to Follow up:</p> <p>1.</p>	
Suggestions for further visits:	

Appendix 2 – Classroom Visits – What to Look For

Aims:

- To know and understand the level of enjoyment pupils have for a subject
- Understand what pupils like best/least in the academy
- Know the things pupils are learning about in a subject area
- Know what steps are being taken to improve standards
- Know how well strategic policies approved by governors are working
- To report main findings back to the full governing body

Observations to make when visiting a classroom

- Relationship between all staff in the classroom and pupils
- Relationship between pupils
- Availability and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils – are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- How pupils are grouped
- How different abilities are catered for
- Pupil's work
- Displays
- Ethos – the atmosphere and values that are evident (are expectations high, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space and working conditions
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources
- Health and safety regulations practiced i.e. fire exits kept clear

Appendix 3 – Classroom Visit Questions

Typical Questions to ask pupils

- Tell me about what you are learning today
- Do you like (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Tell me what you most like doing in (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Is there anything you don't like in (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Do you know how you can improve/what your next target is in (select curriculum area being monitored)

Typical Questions to ask curriculum leaders

- What is your vision for the subject? Do you have a set of minimum expectations?
- What were the last Ofsted findings about the subject?
- What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress across the academy in this subject?
- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?
- What resources does the academy have for the subject and how are these organised? Are there any additional resource needs?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching this subject?

In the classroom

Question	Possible Features of Answer	Notes of Answer
Help me to understand how you plan your lessons: how do you get from the National Curriculum to deciding what Imran or Kirsty will be doing in (subject area) today?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Curriculum ▪ Key stage plan ▪ Scheme of work ▪ Year/termly/weekly/daily plans 	
How do you judge how well pupils are learning and making progress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questioning in lessons ▪ Marking ▪ Assessments including tests ▪ Target setting & achievement ▪ Levels of progress 	
What learning resources are available to your pupils and how do they learn effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ICT – access to computers ▪ Use of library ▪ Books ▪ Subject specific equipment 	
How do you cope with the needs of different pupils?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boys vs. girls ▪ Most able/SEN ▪ EAL ▪ Badly behaved ▪ Disabled 	
How do you decide to seat pupils and arrange the classroom. Does it ever vary and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability Groups ▪ Boy-girl patterns ▪ Different for different activities 	
How do you encourage parents to be involved in their children’s learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular contact ▪ Reports ▪ Parents evenings ▪ Letters ▪ Diaries 	

Communication

- How are parents kept informed of progress?
- How do you gather parents views?
- What steps are taken to encourage parents to support their children in reading/writing at home?