



LONGHILL

HIGH SCHOOL

Governors Visit Policy

Lead Author:	Sean Burke, Co-Chair of Governors
Changes:	Incorporated suggested questions for Governor Visits
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Longhill High School Policy and Guidance for Governors' School Visits

Visiting the school during school hours is an important part of a Governors role, enabling them to develop an understanding of the school beyond that which is gained from attending committee meetings.

Purpose of governor visits

- Governor visits are one of the means by which the Governing Board fulfils its monitoring role. They are an opportunity for governors to see the practical effects of the decisions made by the governing body. They also allow staff to have contact with governors and help to give them a well-rounded view of how the school works.
- Individual governors come from a variety of backgrounds. Some may have a professional teaching background, but during visits ALL governors should be observing as a well-informed lay person, not as a professionally qualified teacher.
- In order to gain a fuller picture of the school in action, the Governing Board should plan a range of different types of visit, in order to collectively meet as many staff and pupils as possible in different scenarios. Types of visit can include learning walks, health & safety/diversity walks, classroom visits, meeting a professional they are linked to (e.g. SEN governor meets SENCO), inset days, lunchtime organisation etc.

Planning Governor Visits

The Governing Board should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work, and each visit should have a clear purpose. School visits by governors can also help them to fulfil their role of 'critical friend' to the Headteacher. Observing the school day in action can be a form of information gathering to inform future policies or questions to be asked.

Visits do not replace professional inspection or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the Headteacher.

Governor visits might be for the purpose of:

- Gaining background information and getting to know the school, class or Year Group.
- Developing relationships with the staff.
- Monitoring a specific age group, subject area or activity.
- Looking at school premises to find out what resources are needed.
- Gathering information for decision making.
- Monitoring how a particular policy or procedure is carried out.
- Conducting Health and Safety Reviews and monitoring school practices.

Governors should consider the purpose of their visit and any links with the School Development Plan.

Carrying out a governor visit

Before a visit:

- Agree the purpose of the visit with the Governing Board or one of its Committees.
- Negotiate a mutually convenient time with the Headteacher or appropriate member of staff.
- Agree the level of participation you will have during the visit, especially visits to the classroom.
- Ensure you receive any relevant supporting information.

During a visit:

- Be on time.
- Don't lose sight of the purpose of the visit.
- Be courteous, friendly not critical.
- Listen and don't talk too much,
- Observe discreetly, take minimal notes only.
- Ask questions where appropriate, but do not disturb teachers or pupils.
- Get involved with activities if you are invited, but otherwise don't intervene.
- Never comment to the teacher concerned on the conducting of the lesson or on individual pupils.
- Thank staff and pupils at the end of the visit.

Some visits may be more informal or unplanned. However the Governor should always let the Headteacher know that they are in school. Governors should check their observations with the member of staff or the Headteacher after the visit, before providing some verbal feedback to the appropriate committee or FGB so that a record of the visit is recorded in the meeting minutes.

After the visit:

- Discuss your observations (including any concerns) with the Headteacher or other appropriate member of staff.
- Draft a short written report using the agreed proforma while the visit is still fresh in your mind. The proforma is attached.
- In your report never make judgements on teachers or individual pupils.
- Show your draft report to the Headteacher and member of staff visited so that they can check its accuracy and advise on any potential sensitivities.
- Arrange for the report to be circulated to other Governors via the appropriate committee.
- Reflect on how well the visit went so you can do better next time.
- If any issues remain unresolved, discuss them with the Chair of Governors.

Some possible areas for the focus of governor visits

Autumn Term

- Monitor and evaluate examination results.
- Evaluate appropriateness of priorities on School Improvement Plan
- Governors to join monitoring of departments on a rolling program.

Spring Term

- Monitor and evaluate progress towards targets in School Improvement Plan
- Continue to monitor and evaluate individual departments.
- Monitor and evaluate students views
- Monitor and evaluate staff views

Summer Term

- Governors join monitoring of underperforming departments.
- Monitor and evaluate parents view
- Monitor and evaluate progress towards targets in School Improvement Plan

Key Questions	Ideas For Further Questions / Prompts
<i>Questions to ask a subject co-ordinator/Head of Dept</i>	
<p>What is your analysis of the latest GCSE results for your department/faculty and how will this analysis be used for your action plan for this year?</p>	<p>How did the GCSE results in your faculty compare to the predictions?</p> <p>What was the Progress 8 score for your department/subject?</p> <p>What is the current predicted Progress 8 score for current year 11?</p> <p>How are you assessing the students in Year 11 to ensure that their progress is positive and the predications are accurate?</p> <p>How are you supporting the staff in your faculty to deal with the impact of the results and to encourage and support them?</p> <p>Are there any other trends in your subject/results that the team have noticed? If so, what are the actions from this?</p>
<p>How is the Department going to raise standards for all children, including the most and least able, those with special educational needs, those receiving free school meals and those who are more broadly disadvantaged, boys and girls, those of a particular ethnicity, and any who are currently underachieving?</p>	<p>Which year groups or classes get the best and worst results and why?</p> <p>How does this relate to the quality of teaching across the Department?</p> <p>What is the strategy for improving the areas of weakest performance?</p> <p>How is the curriculum plan in your Department designed to support learning in all year groups.</p> <p>What are the broad trends in the school's achievement from year to year / compared to other similar schools / in relation to the national picture etc?</p> <p>Are there significant differences between girls & boys / SEN / more able / EAL pupils / other minority groups?</p> <p>How are children responding to any new strategies? Are there different responses in different classes / year groups / girls & boys?</p> <p>Does the Department offer books for all abilities, cultural backgrounds etc?</p>
<p>Is the Department promoting high-quality provision across its curriculum?</p>	<p>Are teachers and support staff being used as effectively and efficiently as possible and in line with evidence and guidance?</p> <p>What training do the teaching staff and support staff receive?</p> <p>What is the allocation of funding for this subject? Will it be spent?</p>

	<p>What impact is the Pupil Premium having?</p> <p>Is there a need for additional resources for any aspect of the work?</p>
How are parents kept informed of progress and what steps are being taken to encourage their involvement?	
How is your role developing?	
<i>Questions to ask teachers</i>	
Which groups of pupils are the highest and lowest performing, and why?	Are you aware which pupils are identified as having extra support through the Pupil Premium funding? What extra support is this?
Do school leaders have credible plans for addressing underperformance or less than expected progress?	<p>How will we know that things are improving?</p> <p>Do you feel fully trained up to implement new strategies?</p> <p>How are children responding to any new strategies?</p> <p>What feedback have you had from parents about any new strategies?</p> <p>Do you have all the resources you need?</p>
How effectively does the organisation listen to the views of staff, and ensure work/life balance for their workforce, and how does the organisation review and streamline unnecessary workload whilst maintaining high standards?	
Do you feel you have been able to develop in your role this year?	Do you have opportunities to share best practice with colleagues and ask for advice?
<i>Questions to ask pupils</i>	
Tell me about your work.	<p>What are you proud of?</p> <p>What are you learning?</p> <p>Who helps you with your learning?</p> <p>Who can you ask?</p> <p>How do you know how to get better at your learning?</p>
What do you like about school?	<p>Do you enjoy learning?</p> <p>What would you do if you were worried about something?</p>
Do you think it's important to have rules? Why?	What happens if you follow the golden rules or don't follow them?



Governor Visit Form

Reminders:

- Agree date of visit with Heads PA/Staff Member
(to ensure the Staff Member /Headteacher is available)
- At the end of the visit, you should report to the Headteacher’s office
- Ensure you prepare for the meeting and advise the member of staff you are visiting if there is anything in particular you would like to focus on.

Part A - For completion by prior to visit

Governor Name:			
Date of Visit:		Time of Visit:	

Purpose of visit:

Key employees to meet with:	
Position/Faculty or Department:	Name:
Headteacher	Kate Williams

Key Questions / Areas for Governors to explore:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • •

Part B - For completion by after visit

Governors Observations / Evaluation:

(Once this section is complete, please send this report to the Staff Member/SLT Member and Heads PA / Clerk to the Governors)

School Response:

(To be completed by the staff member/SLT member and sent to the Heads PA for the Headteacher to review.)

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Any key issues arising for the Governing Board:

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Actions following Governing Board meeting:

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Governor Signature:		Date:	
Headteacher Signature:		Date:	

