



Spa Education Trust

Trustee & Governor School Visits Policy

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1. Aims

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors / trustees to follow when making visits to the school. Governors / trustees are invited guests and are welcome to arrange visits.

This policy sets out the procedure which all governors / trustees are expected to follow when visiting provisions across the trust and how they are expected to report back on that visit to the governing board.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all governors / trustees understand their role and purpose so school visits are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved.

2. Guidance and scope

This policy takes account of best practice and guidance from the Governance Handbook (section 3.4.2).

2.1 Governors / trustees are observers

Boards must know their schools in order to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors / trustees will:

- Observe whether the school is properly implementing school policies, and actions from the school improvement plan
- Observe how those procedures are working in practice
- Have the opportunity to gather the views of pupils and staff

2.2 Governors / trustees are not inspectors

Governors / trustees:

- Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom
- Will not manage the school or interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school. For those governors / trustees who wish to spend time in a classroom, they will make it clear about their purpose in doing so

3. Visits programme

Governors / trustees will carry out regular school visits in order to meet the board's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness.

There are 2 types of visits:

- **Formal monitoring visits**, where governors / trustees discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member
- **Learning walks**, where governors / trustees will go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area and are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils

Governors / trustees will carry out school visits according to the following schedule:

Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Subject lead learning walk	Subject lead learning walk	Subject lead learning walk
Monitoring visit: safeguarding	Monitoring visit: safeguarding	Monitoring visit: safeguarding
Monitoring visit: SDP SEF	Monitoring visit: SDP SEF	Monitoring visit: SDP SEF
School event	School event	School event

3.1 Governors / trustees for health and safety, special educational needs, and safeguarding

These governors / trustees will attend:

- A termly 1:1 monitoring visit with corresponding staff leads
- Ad hoc meetings as required or requested on issues specific to their areas of responsibility

3.2 Subject lead governors / trustees

Subject lead governors / trustees will attend:

- A monitoring visit with the subject lead in September/February/May
- A learning walk in October/March/June
- A monitoring visit related a focus of the SDP / SEF

3.3 All governors / trustees

All governors / trustees will:

- Carry out at least 1 learning walk each year
- Attend at least 1 school event in the year

4. Before a visit

Governors / trustees will:

- Arrange visits directly with the Head of School
- The Head of School will inform the Executive Headteacher and coordinate the relevant staff availability. Generally, governor visits are more productive when conducted during a school day
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time
- Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance with the head of school ahead of the visit
- Send questions in advance to the staff member so everyone can feel properly prepared

- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures

5. During a visit

Governors / trustees will be supported by a member of staff at all times during their visits to minimise disruption for staff and pupils and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent.

Governors / trustees will:

- Be on time and meet with the head of school on arrival
- Be provided with a visitor's badge
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the head of school
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them
- Ensure all parties are clear about why a governor wishes to spend time in the classroom, if they wish to do so
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils
- Pass on any concerns the staff raise with the relevant people
- Be friendly but professional and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils

Governors / trustees will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner than would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors / trustees should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the chair of governors / trustees or headteacher after the visit

6. After a visit

Governors / trustees will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable [using the form attached as Appendix A (monitoring visit) or Appendix B (learning walk)], as appropriate. In completing the report, governors / trustees will ensure to:

- Use neutral language at all times
- Remain observational, and describe only what they see
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit, and its strategic role

Once complete, governors / trustees will submit their reports to:

- The head of school
- The chair of the local governing body or the relevant committee, as agreed

Trustee / Governor Visits Policy Approved by the Board of Trustees on 20th March 2023.

Signed by Chair of Trustees

Signed by Executive Headteacher

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 20th March 2023
To be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1: Template report for a monitoring visit

Formal monitoring visits are where you discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.



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Governor / Trustee monitoring visit

Formal monitoring visits are where you discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Part 1: plan the visit	
Name and role of governor / trustee	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Agreed focus <i>Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that haven't been agreed with the member of staff.</i>	
Relevant school objective or priority <i>This might be taken from the school development plan / SEF / previous head's reports / related to the school vision.</i>	
Questions to ask <i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SDP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit.</i> <i>Share these questions with the staff member you're visiting in advance, so they can prepare.</i>	

Part 2: in the meeting

What is the school doing within this area of focus?

Tips:

- *Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who' and 'where'*
- *Don't be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with*
- *Remember you're not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them – you remain an observer*
- *When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers and pupils*

How do you know the school's actions are having an impact?

Remember:

- *Include specific evidence that demonstrates the positive impact the school is having in this area*
- *Where a positive impact hasn't been made yet, note down why that is and what steps are being taken to make progress*
- *Add any further evidence you'd like to see to help you make a better assessment of the impact*

What successes stood out and why?

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the headteacher or chair of governors

Appendix 2: Template report for a learning walk



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Governor / Trustee learning walk

Learning walks are where you'll go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area. You're likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils. Use this as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask

Part 1: plan the walk	
Name and role of governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Agreed focus <i>Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that haven't been agreed with the member of staff.</i>	E.g. To see the implementation of the new strategy to improve the attainment of Key Stage (KS) 2 boys.

Relevant school objective or priority <i>This might be taken from the school development plan (SDP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.</i>	Percentage of pupils achieving 'greater depth' in writing improves at KS2.
Questions to ask <i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SDP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit.</i> <i>Share these questions with the staff member you're visiting in advance, so they can prepare.</i>	Ask staff: what do you do if you think a student needs further support? Ask pupils: if you need help with something, what do you do?

Part 2: on the walk

General notes from discussions with staff

Tips:

- Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who', 'where' and 'can you show me ...'
- Don't be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with
- Remember you're not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them
- When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers

General notes from discussions with pupils

Remember:

- Don't ask pupils for their views on a specific teacher
- Don't record pupils' names

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General notes on the school environment and overall atmosphere

Note:

- *Whether the governors' vision of the school is replicated on the ground*
- *Any issues with the school site you see, e.g. broken equipment or lack of resources*

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What successes stood out on the learning walk and why?

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Questions and clarifications to follow up with the headteacher or chair of governors

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