

Springbank Academy



Our whole school vision is:

Springbank Primary is a place where all of our children and staff will have the opportunity to excel. Everyone will be safe, happy and cared for. Our curriculum and values will inspire everyone in the school family to be motivated and curious learners and offer core skills, knowledge and enrichment to enable all to gain the foundations for a quality future and a love for life-long learning.

In all we do we remember our school motto:

Caring - Happy - Healthy - Sporty - Scientific

School Values

Sportsmanship - Tolerance - Appreciation - Respect - Friendship - Integrity - Sensitivity - Helpfulness

Governor Visits Policy and Guidelines

April 2023



Policy Lead: Adam Lumley

Springbank Primary School is committed to equal opportunities for all. It is our aim that every policy is written to have a positive impact on every child/all children irrespective of race; religion; gender; sexual orientation or age.

Springbank = success for all

There is a key that unlocks every child's learning, our job is to find that key.

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Every staff member and governor must take the responsibility and accountability to ensure the procedures within this policy are delivered and implemented as per Springbank School Policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Introduction

Governors are required to monitor and evaluate the progress that the school is making towards the priorities and targets set out in the School Improvement Plan. Much of this monitoring is done through the Headteacher and other members of staff who report to the governing body and its committees. However, it is also good practice for governors to visit the school during the school day to see at first hand the impact of their policies and plans on the school's performance. A carefully planned visit by a governor can generate evidence that will inform decision-making by the whole governing body or its committees.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for governors to make focused visits to schools so that they can build an effective working relationship with the staff and have a better understanding of the context in which they work. Governors will observe policies and plans being implemented on a day-to-day basis, and their findings should help the whole governing body and its committees make well-informed judgments about the progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the school improvement plan. This process will enable the governing body to recognise and celebrate the efforts and successes of pupils and staff and to identify further areas for development. Visits are *not* about making judgments on the quality of teaching; that is the headteacher's responsibility. Nor are they about checking on the progress of individual children or pursuing personal agendas.

Who was consulted?

Staff and pupils contributed to this policy and they will be consulted at least annually on its impact.

Relationship to other policies

The focus of a visit could be on one or more of many of the policies in place in the school, especially assessment, health and safety, collective worship, pupil discipline, race equality, and teaching and learning.

Role and responsibilities of headteacher, other staff, governors

The governing body will, with the help of the headteacher and staff, organise a schedule of visits throughout the year. The aim will be to achieve a minimum of one visit per governor per year. Visits may at times be conducted in pairs. The headteacher will guide the governing body on the areas of the curriculum, policies and school improvement plan priorities and targets to be covered each term.

Monitoring and evaluation

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at the termly meeting of the governing body. By reviewing the minutes of meetings when reports of visits were discussed, the governing body will judge the extent to which the information gathered informed the whole governing body's understanding of the progress made towards meeting priorities and targets.

Aims

Through our programme of individual governor visits we aim to:

- improve governors' knowledge of the ethos of the school and their awareness of the quality of education.
- assist the whole governing body to fulfil its statutory role with regard to monitoring and evaluation.
- improve governor understanding of the needs of the school and the priorities for the school development plan.
- monitor and evaluate the current school improvement plan especially in relation to curricular issues.
- improve governor links with staff, pupils and parents.
- help governors to be better able to support the school community.
- report the needs for resources.

Range of visits

- All governors will visit at least once a year during the working day.
- All new governors are offered an introductory visit soon after their appointment as part of their induction programme.
- Governors are welcome to visit the school informally (but with prior notice if the visit happens during the school day).
- Specific invitations are sent for some occasions.
- Visits to talk with the head or curriculum coordinator can also be made by appointment.
- Governors receive copies of parents' newsletters and the annual planner which contain notice of events and they are most welcome to attend any of these.
- Most often, governors will make monitoring visits as part of their monitoring and evaluation role.

Monitoring visits

Possible points of focus could include:

- aspects of the school/subject improvement plan
- the responsibilities of the governing body with regard to specific issues e.g. Special Educational Needs, Health and Safety, Performance Management, Safeguarding Children
- link governor roles
- particular emphasis on a negotiated year group, or on one major aspect of the curriculum. The strategic committee may discuss the focus of these visits and bring suggestions to the whole governing body.
- information-gathering for a project currently being undertaken

Ideas for points of discussion are given in Appendix C.

What governor visits are NOT about

- making judgements about quality of teaching and operational management
- checking the progress of own children

- pursuing personal agendas
- monopolising teachers' time
- arriving with inflexible preconceived ideas
- interrupting, giving ideas or suggestions during teaching time.

Protocol

Governors should at all times be aware of the confidentiality of what they see or hear.

In the unlikely event of governors observing something which gives them serious cause for concern, they should take the matter up as soon as possible with the head of the curriculum area or the headteacher. Dialog outside of school giving details of a monitoring visit should never happen.

Governors should remember that a word of thanks and encouragement at the end of the lesson will help staff feel more confident about the visit and the role of governors.

Format for visits

1. Arrange a visit by, telephone or e-mail with the Headteacher and the appropriate curriculum leader.
2. Agree the aim of the visit and arrangements for it in advance. Ensure that the headteacher is aware of the details of the visit.
3. Report to Reception on arrival, sign into the governors' visits book and obtain a visitors' badge.

The visit

Most visits take place in the classroom and staff will have been consulted about the date and purpose of the visit. This will have enabled them to prepare any information related to the focus of the visit and to set up a programme for the governor. When talking to leaders please contact the events manager to pre-arrange a room.

Appendix B provides an 'aide- mémoire' to focus questions and thoughts.

Reporting back

- *Appendix A* is a simple form which governors should fill in as soon as possible after their visit as a record.
- One copy of this should be given to the headteacher and another to the chair of the appropriate committee. This will then be checked for errors and then emailed to the clerk of governors and all members of the Governing Board.
- If they wish, governors may give oral feedback to the committee and this will be monitored.
- Governors should not identify individual teachers and should avoid making judgements.
- The appropriate committee will report back the main conclusions to the Governing Body.



Record form for a Governor's school visit

Name:	Date:
Purpose of visit (Previously agreed by the governing body with the Head Teacher) Child protection	
Links with the School Improvement Plan (How does the visit relate to the School Improvement Plan?)	
Observations and comments by the governor (e.g. what you saw; what you learned; what you would like clarified; length of visit)	
Any key issues arising for the governing body (e.g. the way resources are allocated; the way the school communicates; progress in implementing a key policy)	

Governors' Code of Practice when making a school visit

We firmly believe that visits by governors should always:

- Have a clear purpose and focus which is shared with the teacher concerned prior to the visit.
- Follow a briefing session by the teacher or Head Teacher.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Provide feedback to the teacher via the Head Teacher
- Be at a time and for a period of time which has been negotiated with the teacher and the Head Teacher.
- Involve a maximum of one governor at a time in a classroom.
- Be followed by a report to the Strategic Development Committee and/or full governing body.

It has been decided that a planned programme of governors' visits to our school will include:

- Meetings with the Head Teacher and Class Teacher to determine the focus of the visit. This will provide opportunities for any questions to be asked and answered and for lesson objectives to be discussed.
- A termly timetable to be created by the Head Teacher for governors' visits.
- Feedback to governors at the termly full governors' meeting.

Appendix B

SCHOOL VISITS- AN 'AIDE MEMOIRE'

1) What is the purpose of the visit?

- What has prompted my decision to visit?
- To what aspect(s) of the school development plan does my visit relate?
- What background information might I need?

2) How shall I carry out my visit?

- Who do I need to contact in advance?
- What particular areas of the school am I interested in?
- What particular activities am I interested in?
- What particular age groups am I interested in?
- What questions should I ask?
- Who should I ask?

3) Did I achieve my aim?

- To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?
- For which of my questions did I find answers?
- Do I need further information?

4) Is there any follow up?

- Have I thanked the teacher and/or the curriculum leader?
- Have I filled in a report form and sent a copy to the headteacher and chair of the appropriate committee?
- How can I build on this for my next visit?

Appendix C

Possible Points for Discussion

- General organisational, curricular and assessment issues and developments
- Whole school priorities in School Improvement Plan
- Progress towards targets
- Expenditure and Income
- Resources and needs
- Staff development and training (and needs)
- Extra-curricular activities
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Visits to lessons might lead to discussions about general issues.

- How are pupils with Special Educational Needs catered for?
- How does the teaching meet the needs of those working towards the expected standard whilst still providing appropriate challenge for those that have gained a greater depth of understanding?
- Progression: how are knowledge and experience built up over time?
- Equal opportunities: how does the teaching ensure that all students, regardless of gender, ethnic origin or ability, have appropriate access to the curriculum?
- Homework: what role does homework play?
- Target-setting: how are students kept informed of what they need to do to achieve their targets and encouraged to be independent learners?

Appendix D

Useful Internet Sites

- <http://www.governornet.co.uk/>
- <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/>
- <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>