

JOHN T. RICE INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL



Aim high and shine

Governor visits policy and guidelines

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years

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 work within the curriculum
- 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

- We hope that, if possible, all governors will visit at least once a year during the working day. We would welcome governors more if they are able.
- 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 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.
- The Chair of Governors and Head teacher will meet regularly (At least twice in a term) to discuss a range of topics either virtually via TEAMS or in person.

Monitoring visits

Possible points of focus could include:

- aspects of the school/subject development 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 one year group, or on one major aspect of the curriculum. The Curriculum 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 headteacher.

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 letter, telephone or e-mail with either the headteacher or 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 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.

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.
- If they wish, governors may give oral feedback to the committee.
- Governors should not identify individual teachers and should avoid making judgements.
- The appropriate committee will report back the main conclusions to the governing body.

GOVERNOR VISIT FORM

Name of Governor:

Area of responsibility:

Date:

Staff visited:

Objectives of visit:

Context of the session:

Observations:

Questions:

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 and departmental priorities (as in plans)
- Progress towards targets
- Spending of departmental budget
- Resources and needs
- Staff development and training (and needs)
- Extra-curricular activities
- Special needs students

Visits to lessons might lead to discussions about general issues.

- How are students with Special Needs catered for?
- Differentiation: how does the teaching meet the needs of the less able whilst still providing appropriate challenge for the most able?
- Progression: how are knowledge and experience built up over time?
- How are different learning styles catered for?
- How is Assessment for Learning being addressed?
- 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/>