



Thorner's Church of England VA Primary School

Governors' Visits

Context

Governors need to know their school, if accountability is going to be robust and their vision for the school is to be achieved. Many governors find that visiting, particularly during the day, is a helpful way to find out more about the school. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors can see whether the school is implementing the policies and improvement plans they have signed off and how they are working in practice. Visits also provide an opportunity to talk with pupils, staff and parents to gather their views.

Governors are not inspectors and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching or extent of learning. They are also not school managers and should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school. Both are the role of the headteacher. If governors wish to spend time within a classroom, they need to be very clear why they are doing so.

Governors' Handbook (January 2015)

Purpose of the Visit

Visits are undertaken to:

- improve Governing Body knowledge of the School and the people that work in it;
- assist the Governing Body in monitoring the implementation of the School Improvement Plan;
- assist a Governor to fulfil a specialist governor role such as Inclusion;
- assist the Governing Body in fulfilling its statutory duties;
- assist the Governing Body in making informed decisions.

Governors should not pursue any personal agendas or arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas.

Governors are not to make any judgements regarding pupil's work, behaviour, any teacher's classroom practice or issues relating to the day to day running of the School. That is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

Planning the Visit

Visits should be undertaken only as part of a strategic programme formally organised by the Governing Body or one of its Committees and with approval of the Headteacher.

The Headteacher should be kept informed of, and agree, the subsequent details of the planned visit.

If the visit is to involve any member of staff, then that member of staff must be fully involved in the planning through the appropriate member of the Leadership Group.

The governor(s) making the visit should make themselves fully acquainted with health and safety procedures, including fire safety, prior to making the visit.

During the Visit

Governors will at all times report to reception upon arrival and follow the procedure for visitors in order to provide a good example for other visitors.

If visiting a classroom, the Governor must arrive at the time planned to avoid disrupting the learning process, and follow the agreed purpose of the visit. Governors must be aware that some teachers may feel nervous or stressful about having a visitor in the classroom. At the end of the visit thank everyone concerned including the children.

Governors should be aware of their behaviour and avoid any implication that they are inspecting such as by using a clipboard.

Following the Visit

After visiting the school the governor(s) should:

- give some time and thought to reflection;
- write a note of thanks to all staff visited;
- complete a visit report outlining the purpose and results of the visit (the visit report will be shared with all appropriate staff involved);
- raise any concerns sensitively with the Headteacher;
- consider what went well and what did not go so well with respect to your involvement in the visit;
- consider what you would do differently in a future visit.

Following Completion of the Agreed Monitoring Programme

The governor should report back to the Governing Body or Committee as appropriate.

In accordance with the Equality Duty we seek to ensure that all pupils achieve their best, according to their capabilities and regardless of their special needs, disability, gender, race, culture, social, economic, ethnic, religious background and denominational diversity.

Thorner's CE VA Primary School recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount and takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in its care.

Revised by Headteacher and Staff: October 2016
Date adopted by Governing Body: November 2016
Date to be reviewed: November 2019

Notes for Governor Report

Name	Date
Purpose of visit Previously agreed by the Governing Body with the Headteacher	
Links with the School Improvement Plan How does the visit relate to a priority in the School Improvement Plan?	
Comments on the focus of the visit	
Any key issues arising for the Governing Body in relation to the focus of the SIP	
Action following Governing Body meeting Record any action agreed by the governing body with regard to this visit	

Protocol for Visits

Governors visit their school to enhance their understanding of the school's work and to help fulfil their responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating the school.

We have an agreed schedule of governors' visits to the school, reflecting the priorities in the school improvement plan and the specific interests and responsibilities of governors, and we keep a file of visit reports.

	ALWAYS	NEVER
BEFORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree purpose of visit. • Agree how much time (a timetable is a good idea). • Agree when you will discuss the visit with the headteacher. • Consider practicalities (dress, parking, time of arrival, who to report to, how to make notes, breaks and lunch). • Find out how each teacher wants you to contribute (or not!). 	Turn up unannounced.
DURING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself to staff and pupils. • Note and praise the positive. • Ask questions to increase understanding. • Remain focused on the purpose of the visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk in with a clipboard. • Arrive with pre-conceived ideas. • Interrupt the teacher. • Make professional judgements about staff expertise (we are not inspectors). • Pursue one's own personal agenda/ focus on the progress of one's own child. • Monopolise the children's or the staff's time.
AFTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank the teacher and pupils. • Discuss visit with the teacher. • Write a thank you note to teacher and pupils. • Compile a report (use framework if appropriate). • Raise any concerns sensitively with the headteacher. 	Leave without a word.