



**Villa Real School**  
*together we achieve*

# Governing Body Monitoring Visits Policy 2023

Author: Governors

Reviewed: October 2023

Signed & Adopted by the Governing Body:

Chair of Governors

Date: 06.11.23

Date to be reviewed: October 2024

## **CONTEXT**

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the performance of Villa Real School. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the School by helping to hold the School to account and evaluate its progress. The Governors visiting programme is an integral part of the School's yearly monitoring calendar. Each Governor will make at least one visit per term during school time and Governors will monitor specific areas of the School Development Plan in pairs in accordance with the agreed protocol.

### **Visits enable Governors to:**

- Monitor developments in SDP
- See the School at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements of pupils and students – complete pupil voice
- Evaluate resources and discuss with staff further requirements
- Gain first-hand information to assist with strategic planning
- Hold leaders to account

### **After the visit the Governor will:**

- Meet with the Headteacher to give a verbal report as appropriate and to raise any issues that arose
- Complete the Governor Visit pro forma, reporting on the focus. The completed form should be given to the Headteacher and then, after any possible alterations, the recommendations will be circulated to the Full Governing Body at the next meeting
- Governors must report objectively regarding targeted areas. It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements should not be made arbitrarily

### **The visit is not about:**

- Inspection
- Making judgements about the professional expertise of the staff
- Checking on your own pupils or students
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

Governors are an important part of the School team and are welcomed into the School by staff. It is important that Governors remember to respect the professionals, the pupils and students, support the Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed, then Governor Visits will be effective in monitoring and contributing to school improvement.

## Appendix 1 - Villa Real School Governor Visit Report

Name	
Date of Visit	
Focus of Visit (Subject or Keystage)	
Classes/staff visited	
Summary of activities e.g. observing classes, talking to staff, pupils and students, looking at resources, had lunch etc.	
Comments:  What was discussed? How does the subject develop the pupil/student? What supporting materials does the subject have?	
Strengths	

Areas for development:  
Is there anything more the Teacher requires to develop the subject further?

Next steps / comments (for staff)  
What have you, as a Governor learned?

Recommendations (for Headteacher and Governors)  
Are the current objectives of SDP being implemented?

What/when is the next review planned with the Link Teacher?

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Headteacher

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Copy to staff member and Headteacher)  
Recommendations to be sent to Clerk of Governors

**Appendix 2 – Villa Real School Governor Visit Report – Monitoring the School Development Plan**

Focus Areas in SDP:	
Source of evidence and progress	Comment and Impact

Recommendations:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Headteacher

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendations to Full Governing Body and Clerk of Governors

## **GUIDELINES FOR GOVERNORS – ADVICE ON CONDUCTING CLASSROOM VISITS**

### **CONTENTS**

Rationale	7
Objectives	7
Roles and responsibilities	7
The benefits of visiting classrooms	8
What to avoid	8
Ground rules	9
Conducting the observations	9
Providing feedback	10
Policy review	10

## **RATIONALE**

The Governing Body at Villa Real School has a responsibility to monitor what is happening in the School. Although their role is strategic, it is important that they have some understanding of the practicalities of the job. Meeting pupils and students, talking to staff and seeing lessons underway will help members of the Governing Body to understand some of the issues they are required to discuss and make decisions about with greater clarity.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The Governing Body should aim to:

- Inform their decision-making by completing a learning walk (a themed walk on a particular subject) for their subject during the year
- Be aware of the action plan for their subject and have a lengthier discussion with the subject lead termly
- Read and keep up-to-date with school newsletters and other documents that are set out
- Keep up-to-date with their nominated key stage, introduce themselves and spend time discussing the School by completing pupil voice for key stage and subject

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

We link our Governors to key stage areas and important aspects of the SIP, e.g. Safeguarding.

We also believe it is important that Governors take a particular interest in a key stage and complete pupil voice.

It is the responsibility of each Governor to introduce themselves to the named staff member and make themselves available according to the demands of the timetable and school year.

## **THE BENEFITS OF VISITING CLASSROOMS**

Closer links between Governors and staff is essential.

### **For Governors these include:**

- Complete monitoring of action plans
- More informed understanding of classroom life and practice
- Opportunity to complete pupil voice
- Seeing policies and schemes of work in action
- Finding out what resources are being used and what are needed

### **For staff these include:**

- Opportunity to find out more about the role of the Governor
- Having chance to illustrate the theory and policy in practice
- Opportunity to draw attention to any issues or questions they wish to raise
- Opportunity to reflect upon practice through discussion

## **WHAT TO AVOID**

It is important for all parties to note that Governors' visits are not a form of inspection and do not involve Governors making a judgement about teaching in any official capacity. That remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and other education professionals.

Governors must avoid visiting classrooms where their own pupils or students are present. It can cause discomfort for everyone! They should also be aware of 'pursuing personal agendas' and make sure they fulfil the code of conduct as it is outlined here.

Please remember that members of staff are very busy people whose first priority must be the pupils and students. There may be times when arrangements have to be changed or alterations made. Please be sensitive to the circumstances and flexible in your expectations. No two days are ever the same.

Keep an open mind about what you see. Education and classrooms have changed a great deal since you were at school and practice is very different. Don't expect to see the formal type of lesson you might remember from your own childhood. By all means ask questions (preferably at the end of the lesson) but be sensitive to the extra demands of differentiation and inclusion that staff now face.



## **GROUND RULES**

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Before</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrange details of visit</li><li>• Agree purpose of visit</li><li>• Discuss the context of the lesson to be observed</li><li>• Agree role within the lesson</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Turn up unannounced</li></ul>
<b>During</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep to the role agreed</li><li>• Keep questions for the staff until after the visit is over</li><li>• Please remember confidentiality - Stick to the times and purpose agreed</li><li>• Be sensitive to the mood in the classroom and the expectations of the pupils and students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assume a different role</li><li>• Walk in with a clipboard</li><li>• Interrupt the staff</li><li>• Distract the pupils or students from their task</li></ul>
<b>After</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thank the staff and the pupils or students</li><li>• Discuss the visit with the staff at their convenience</li><li>• Feedback to the Governing Body</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leave without acknowledgement</li><li>• Break rules of confidentiality</li></ul>

## **CONDUCTING THE OBSERVATIONS**

After planning your visit with the staff or subject co-ordinator you might have agreed to:

- Do a formal observation, taking no immediate role other than talking to the pupils and students about what they are doing, their targets and their views
- Work with a small group
- Introduce yourself to your linked key stage and ask relevant questions
- Meet with the co-ordinator to discuss particular issues or set the context
- Observe – focussing on an agreed area/issue that the staff would like some feedback on e.g. The involvement of a particular group of pupils or students

Please remember that observations do not require judgement on the staff. It might also be useful to clarify some 'what ifs' beforehand. For example:

- What if I see pupils and students misbehaving when the staff member doesn't?
- What if a pupil or student asks me how to do something?
- What if I have a suggestion to make?

## **PROVIDING FEEDBACK**

It is important that a time is agreed between yourself and the staff to discuss the lesson, Work Scrutiny, Pupil Voice, Learning Walk, meeting or training you have observed. During this feedback you might refer to notes you have made. The structure might include:

1. Asking the staff for any further clarification of the lesson or for their views on how it went
2. Giving your own impressions on what you saw
3. Providing any positive comment
4. Raising any issues that appeared to develop
5. Any further questions you might have
6. A summary of the feedback you will be giving to the Governing Body and Headteacher

At the end of the feedback both you and the staff should be clear about what you will be sharing with the Governing Body ~ there should be no surprises!

The **Governor Visit pro forma (Appendix 1)** should be completed as soon as possible after the visit. It should reflect the discussion you have had with the staff member. A copy of the report needs to be given to the Headteacher who will circulate to the relevant people.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

The policy should be reviewed every two years. The key questions should be:

- Has every Governor visited at least once a term?
- Has each Governor made links with their allocated key stage?
- Has every Governor had a conversation with the subject leader they are linked to?
- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits identified in this policy?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make policy and practice even better?
- Is strategic monitoring effective in driving forward the School?