

Trustee / Governor School Visits Policy & Procedure

Hampton Academies Trust



Policy last reviewed:	September 2022
Next review due:	September 2025
Member of staff responsible:	Miss Emily Culpin
Ratified by:	Trust Board

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

HAT Trustees and Local Governors have responsibility for the direction, policies and standards of each school. The Members, Trustees and LGB are accountable for the trusts conduct and performance. Visiting the school is an excellent way to observe how it operates on a day-to-day basis. All Trustee/ Governor Visits should be focussed and relate to the priorities in the School Improvement Plan. Trustees/ Governors should report back their findings, thus helping Members, Trustees and the LGB to make better informed judgements about the progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the School Improvement Plan and informing strategic decision making.

The Head of School, who has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school, will guide the Trustees and Governors on the areas of the curriculum, school based policies and the School Improvement Plan. The policy and protocol for school visits is formulated in consultation with the staff.

ANNUAL PROGRAMME OF VISITS

The Local Governing Body will organise a programme of visits with the help of the Head of School and Clerk. These should be spread throughout the year, with the aim to achieve a minimum of one visit per term. In addition, new governors will make a general introductory visit of the school as part of their induction programme.

PURPOSE OF VISITS

The focus of a visit could be on any policy in place in the school, e.g., Teaching and Learning, Assessment or School Development Plan. It could also focus on particular areas, such as the management of the school's resources, Behaviour, the condition of the buildings, Safeguarding or a particular area of focus.

MONITORING VISITS

Monitoring visits are where individual governors go into the school to:

- See how a specific aspect of the school works in practice
- Check progress is being made towards the school's strategic objectives

As a Trustee/ Governor, you'll be assigned to a particular area of the school. You might be formally appointed as a 'link governor', but not always.

Broadly, there are 2 types of visit

- **Learning walks**, where you'll be taken around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for the school. During the walk, you might talk to a range of staff members and pupils
- **Meetings** with the relevant staff member, where you'll sit down and discuss the school's progress in the area of focus

What you should do on them:

Visits allow you to ask, and witness, whether the things people say are happening, are actually happening.

On visits, you should:

- Find out more about the school
- See for yourself whether the school is implementing the policies and actions in the school improvement plan
- Learn how these policies and actions work in practice
- Talk with pupils, staff and parents to gather their views
- Demonstrate to staff that accountability is robust in your school
- Make sure school staff are all working towards your board's vision for the school

Potential benefits:

To Governors:

- To recognise and celebrate success of pupils and staff
- To build effective relationships with the staff and a better understanding of the context in which they work
- To get to know the students
- To recognise different teaching styles
- To monitor policies in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

To Teachers:

- To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- To get to know Trustees and Governors
- To understand better the Governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- To highlight the need for particular resources

What a visit is not about:

- Making judgements on the quality of teaching or professional expertise of the teacher, this is the role of the Head of School and Executive Headteacher
- Checking on progress of individual children
- Pursuing personal interests and concerns
- Monopolising school/ teacher time

PROTOCOLS FOR VISITS

Trustees/ Governors should, with the guidance of the whole governing body and Head of School, identify an aspect of the school's work to focus upon. This will help to maximise the effectiveness of the governing body team.

When organising and conducting a visit, Trustees/ Governors will be courteous and considerate, respecting the professional roles of the Head of School and staff. Working to the annual schedule agreed with the Head of School and staff, they will confirm in advance with the Head of School and Clerk the date, timing and focus of each visit. This will include agreeing what will be observed, whom it would be useful to talk to and agreeing any protocols to be observed whilst in the school. If time permits, they will discuss the proposed agenda with any staff involved. They will prepare by reading relevant documentation/ guidance.

At the end of each visit, the Trustee/ Governor will discuss what they have observed with the teacher and clarify any points they are uncertain about. Comments should be limited to the focus of the visit. Trustees/ Governors visiting cannot make personal judgements or promises on behalf of the governing body. All written reports will be sent to the Clerk and Head of School before being circulated or discussed.

- Teachers and support staff will be courteous and considerate, recognising the contribution made by the governing body to the school.
- They will make practical suggestions on the focus for Trustees/ Governors' visits to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This will include specifying the evidence that could be shared with governors.

See annex (A) for the form to record and report on visits.

Questions will be invited from Trustees/ Governors whilst being sensitive to issues of confidentiality. See annex (B) for examples of questions which governors could ask). Although they are focused on Literacy, Numeracy and SEN, many of the questions are relevant to other areas.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT.

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at the termly or yearly meeting of the local Governing Body. At the final meeting of each academic year the Clerk will report the number of visits conducted and the areas of focus. The Governing Body will evaluate the extent to which visits have informed whole Governing Body understanding of the school's work. Staff governors will feedback from colleagues and describe the extent to which staff's understanding of the Governing Body's role has been enhanced.

The Governing Body can then consider:

- Are the visits achieving the potential benefits identified?
- What worked well?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make our practice even better?

and make changes to the policy and protocol that may be required.

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SIGNATURE

NAME

DATE

Annex A
Part 1: plan the visit

Name and role of Trustee/ 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>	
Relevant school improvement objective or priority <i>This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SDP) objectives or the school's overarching 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. Share these questions with the staff member you're visiting in advance, so they can prepare.</i>	
Reporting Deadline	
Intended Impact of Visit	

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 Head of School or Chair of Governors

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Annex B

Questions to ask staff:

How do you assess how well pupils are learning and making progress?
What support do you put in place to ensure the needs of different pupils are met?
What resources are available to your pupils to help them learn effectively?
How do you engage parents in their children's learning?
What continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities are available to you?
What's the quality of teaching of your subject like across the school and how do you know?
What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?
What's your vision for the subject and how are you putting this into practice?
How do you track standards and progress in the subject?
How do you support teachers to develop their subject knowledge and teaching practice?
Is your subject well-resourced? If not, what else do you need to support teaching and learning?

Questions to ask pupils:

How well do you understand the school's behaviour policy?
Do you understand the rewards for good behavior?
Tell me about what you are learning today?
What do you most like, and least like, about the subject?
How do you know what your targets are in this subject?
Does the work in this subject challenge you?
Do you receive feedback on your work?
Are you happy with progress for your GCSEs?
How are lessons helping?
Which subjects are you most/ least confident in?
What support have you received for areas that you are least confident in?
What support are you receiving for your revision?
Do you have the tools to deal with exam stress?
What have you learnt/are you hoping to learn from mock exams?
What support did you receive in choosing your GCSE subjects?
Are you aware of your options post-GCSE?
Do you know which subjects you need to take post-GCSE for a chosen career?