



WOODTHORPE INFANT SCHOOL

Governor Visits Policy

Updated September 2025

Signed: E Bowler (Head Teacher)

Signed: C Shepherd (Chair of Governors)

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, evaluation and challenge.
- Improve governor understanding of the needs of the school and the priorities of the school development plan.
- Monitor and evaluate the current School Improvement plan especially in relation to curricular issues and standards.
- Improve links with staff, pupils and parents.
- Help governors to be better able to support the school community.

Range of visits:

- We hope that, if possible, all governors will visit at least once a term 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 this visit happens during the school day).
- Specific invitations are sent for some occasions, such as Christmas plays or performances.
- Visits to talk to the Head Teacher or Curriculum coordinator can also be made by appointment.
- Copies of parents' newsletters will be put on Governor Hub, 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 through their curricular link governor role and other wider issues such as safeguarding and Health and Safety.

Monitoring visits:

Possible points of focus could include:

- Aspects of the progress of the school/subject development plan they are linked to.
- The responsibilities of the Governing Body with regard to specific issues e.g. Special Educational needs, Health and Safety, Performance Management, Safeguarding Children.
- As determined by the Curriculum and Pupils committee, visits focusing on one group of pupils or a major aspect of the curriculum.

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 quality of teaching and operational management. 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.
- Checking the progress of their own children. It might be wise for governors to avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present.
- Pursuing personal agendas.
- Monopolising teachers' time.

- Arriving with inflexible preconceived ideas.
- Interrupting e.g. by giving ideas or suggestions during teaching time.

Please remember that members of staff are busy and their first priority must be the children. 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. By all means ask questions (preferably at the end of the lesson) but be sensitive to the extra demands of differentiation and inclusion that teachers now face.

Protocol:

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 and the children, support the Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body.

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

In the unlikely event of governors observing something which gives serious cause for concern, they should take the matter up as soon as possible with the Head Teacher.

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

Format for visits:

1. Arrange a visit by email or in person with either the Head Teacher or the appropriate member of staff.
2. Agree the aim of the visit and arrangements for it in advance. Ensure that the Head Teacher is aware of the details of the visit.
3. Decide whether the visit needs to take place in person or virtually (governors should try to visit school at least once per year).
4. Report to Reception on arrival and sign in.

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 a checklist to focus questions and thoughts)

Providing feedback:

It is important that a time is agreed between yourself and the class teacher to discuss what you have observed and discussed. Ideally, this would take place at the end of the visit.

During this feedback you might refer to notes you have made. The structure might include:

1. Asking the teacher for any further clarification of the lesson.
2. Providing any positive comment.
3. Any further questions you might have.
4. Check progress of SIP action (if applicable) against intended outcome.
5. A summary of the feedback you will be giving to the governing body.

At the end of the feedback both you and the teacher should be clear about what you will be sharing with the governing body – there should be no surprises.

Reporting back:

- Appendix A is a simple Visit Record which governors should fill in as soon as possible after their visit (or during the visit) as a record while their visit is fresh in their mind.
- One copy to be sent to the Head Teacher for distribution.
- If follow up is needed with the appropriate governing committee or full governing body, ensure that an item relating to the visit is added to the relevant agenda.
- Visits as standard agenda item on both committee agendas. Agree follow up actions at the meeting.
- Governors should not identify individual teachers and should avoid making judgements.



Appendix A: Governing Body of Woodthorpe Infant School Record of Governor Visits

Name:	Date:	
Focus of Visit:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Priority 1:	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority 2:	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority 3:
<input type="checkbox"/> Quality of Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour & Attitudes	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Development
<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership & Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding	<input type="checkbox"/> Health & Safety
<input type="checkbox"/> EYFS	<input type="checkbox"/> Overall Effectiveness	
What did you see? (e.g. lesson drop in, meeting with subject leader, attended a school event - concert, sports day etc.)		
Who did you talk to? (e.g. children, staff, head, parents etc.)		
What impressed you? (e.g. achievement of children, level of parental engagement, learning environment, use of resources, the interest of the children)		
Key questions arising? (e.g. any points requiring clarification, concerns to be raised, development opportunities for the school, things you would like to have seen, exciting new ideas)		
Who did you share the observations of this visit with? (Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Committee, Full Governing Body)		
Follow-up actions (if applicable)		
Signed:		

Appendix B: School Visits – an Aide Memoire

What is the purpose of the visit?

What has prompted my decision to visit?

To what aspects of the school development plan does my visit relate?

Is this visit part of my monitoring and evaluation role as a governor?

What background information might I need?

Share objectives for the visit in advance with the teacher?

How shall I carry it out?

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-group(s) am I interested in?

Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?

What questions should I ask?

Who should I ask?

Did I achieve my aim?

To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?

Which of my questions did I answer?

Do I need further information?

Is there any follow-up?

Have I thanked the teacher/and or curriculum leader?

Have I recorded my experiences?

Have I filled in a visit report form and sent a copy to the Head Teacher?

How can I build on this for the next visit?

For more area-specific questions, please refer to the documents available on OneDrive.

Appendix C: Possible points for discussion

- General organisational, curricular and assessment issues and developments.
- Whole school priorities and curricular priorities.
- Progress towards targets.
- Resources and needs.
- Special needs children.

Visits to lessons might lead to discussion about general issues

- How are the children with special needs catered for?
- Differentiation: how does the teaching meet the needs for the less able whilst still providing appropriate challenge for the most able?
- Progression: how are the knowledge and experience built up over time?
- Breadth of learning: How do we expand learning opportunities for our high achievers/what challenge strategies do we employ to further embed learning?
- How are different learning styles catered for?
- Target setting and feedback: How are students kept informed of what they need to do to achieve their targets and how are they encouraged to be independent learners?

**Appendix D:
Ground Rules for visits**

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