

# Thorpe Willoughby Primary School



## Governor's Visiting Classroom Policy



## Rationale

Governors are critical friends, providing support and challenge . They have a duty to oversee the direction and policies of the School, to monitor its standards and be held to account for its conduct and performance.

Visiting the School is the best way to learn how it functions, and to keep under review how it operates so that you can increase the Governing Body's first-hand knowledge, informing strategic decision making. Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Development Plan (SDP). Visits should be planned to cover the full extent of the school day and to cover a wide range of school work and activities; each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose. Governors should arrange their visits with the Head Teacher.

The aim of contact between Thorpe Willoughby staff and governors is:

- ✚ To recognise and celebrate success
- ✚ To develop relationships with the staff
- ✚ To get to know the children
- ✚ To recognise different teaching styles
- ✚ To understand the environment in which teachers teach
- ✚ To monitor policies in action
- ✚ To inform decision making
- ✚ To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

Potential benefits to teachers:

- ✚ To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- ✚ To get to know 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 about the professional expertise of teachers
- ✚ Checking on the progress of your own children
- ✚ Pursuing a personal agenda
- ✚ Monopolising teacher time

## Out line of Governors' responsibility

Staff	Governor activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Plan and oversee the curriculum. Write documentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Know how the planning is done and some key aspects of the schools' Teaching and Learning Policy. Read, understand and approve the documentation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Check on assessment and progress data to establish any trends ( eg teacher assessment, test results, children's books, pupil premium children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Know how, when and why this happens. Some governors will use RAISE data to discuss outcomes with subject leaders.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Contribute to the school's monitoring schedule that evaluates teaching and learning for specific subjects or specific activities - eh phonics, guided reading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Approve the monitoring policy, understand the process and occasionally visit classrooms to help understand this and discuss findings with leaders. This will help form a view of the subject. Report on their involvement with the headteacher. Report to governing body to help their over all view of standards in the school.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Core subjects to update their position paper. All other subjects to update their subject audit which comments on standards, strengths, areas for development and make recommendations for future development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Completes records of visits on agreed format and e mails copies to headteacher. Copies to be forwarded to governors for consideration at the next FGB meeting.</li> </ul>

### The procedure for Governor Monitoring Visits

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors need to know what progress is being made towards the areas of focus in the SDP. Visiting the school can support this process.

For governors to know the strengths and weaknesses of the school it is important that governors are able to assess performance data in the context of an understanding of what happens in the classroom.

Visits by governors should focus on the priorities set out in the SIP so that the governor's work is aligned to the school's priorities.

### Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be adhered to regarding classroom visits. Observations should be shared with the teacher concerned and the head teacher but not with other staff or other parents.

	Always	Never!
Before a visit	Arrange details of visit with staff (in conjunction with the head teacher) in advance. Agree a purpose for the visit and discuss the context. Discuss with staff how they would like you to be involved. Obtain a copy of the proforma.	Turn up unannounced.
During the visit	Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the governing body, it is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on behalf of the Governing Body. Be punctual. Keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible. Remember it is a visit not an inspection. Observe discretely. Don't distract the teacher during the lesson from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest. Interact, don't interrupt. Be courteous and friendly, not critical. Remember why you are there. Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit. Listen to staff and pupils	Walk in with a clipboard. Interrupt the teacher. Arrive with pre conceived ideas.
	Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how? Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved. Thank the teacher and other staff for supporting you in your role as a Governor. Be open, honest and positive. Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind. Reflect: how did that go? Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learned more about the School? Have I helped the Governing Body fulfil its duties? Submit your report to the Head Teacher and to the Chair.	Leave without a word.

### General Questions for classroom visits

The following is guidance on the sorts of questions and discussions with children that may help governors get the best value from their time in classes.

The best time to talk to children is in the portion of the lesson when they are working at their tables or at an activity. The work will often be in ability groups based on the whole class work the teacher has covered. The teacher and TA may be working with a group, too. Some groups will be working independently. It may be an idea to join these tables.

The following questions give you some starting points. Do not ask all of them!!

Some examples of things to talk about:

What are you learning about?

Have you done any other work about this?

Show me your best piece of work.

Why are you proud of it?

What do you need to do to get better/ how do you know if you are getting better?

How does your teacher's marking help you?

Why do you use a green pen?

What do you do if you get stuck?

### Non curriculum aspects:

The environment- can you see learning walls? Walls that celebrate children's work? Evidence that we are a Rights Respecting School. Displays that reflect our work on British values?

Behaviour - do the children behave well? Are they recognised and encouraged? Do they show good learning behaviour - working well together and supporting each other? Are children clear about what is expected of them?

### Key questions for subject/learning link governor discussion with subject leader

What are you hoping to achieve this year in your subject?

What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?

How does your subject reflect the core subjects ( cross curricular links.)

How do you keep a track of standards and progress in the subject?

What resources does the school have for the subject and how are these organised?

Are there any additional resource needs?

How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching the subject?

How are parents kept informed of progress?

#### How to provide formal feed-back after the visit

Following a visit, Governors should provide feed-back, using the form provided, to the Head Teacher in the first instance and then also to the member(s) of staff involved in the visit. The form should be submitted to the clerk for the next meeting.

#### Monitoring and review of this policy

This policy should be monitored and reviewed annually.

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

Date February 16

Review February 17