

Classroom Visits: A Guide for Governors

MUGGINTON CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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HT	
CoG	
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Mugginton CofE Primary School

Classroom Visits by Governors

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Mugginton CofE Primary School

Classroom Visits by Governors

This policy has been written in line with the Christian ethos of our school.

1. Introduction

Classroom visits by Governors, if not carefully planned and agreed, can lead to mutual suspicion and awkwardness between Governors and teachers. Done well, they can add immeasurably to Governors' understanding of their school, its teachers and its pupils.

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. They need to know what progress is being made towards targets set out in the school's improvement plan. Visiting the classroom can help to support this process.

Most Governors are not qualified to make judgements about the quality of teaching. However, visiting the classroom will help Governors:

- appreciate the work of the staff (both teachers and support staff) and pupils,
- be aware of the nature of the work in lessons and the response of the pupils,
- be aware of the resource issues,
- be able to ask appropriate questions and hold sensible discussions with the professionals and
- understand as fully as possible the meaning of the results of monitoring reported to them.

The introduction of the framework for Numeracy & Literacy and the 2014 National Curriculum in primary schools with the related obligation on the Governing Body to nominate a Literacy and a Numeracy Governor has reinforced the need for Governors to have a good knowledge of the range of classroom activities.

Ofsted inspectors assume that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This depends on Governors assessing the performance data in the context of an understanding of what happens in the classroom.

This guide is designed to give Governors who are about to undertake classroom visits a brief overview of the process and an indication of best practice.

2. Benefits

There are many reasons why classroom visits are beneficial. For Governors these include:

- To recognise and celebrate success
- To develop relationships with the staff
- To get to know the children
- To act as a "researcher" for the teacher
- To understand the environment in which teachers teach
- To see the policies and schemes of work in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them
- To promote understanding of roles of teachers and Governors
- To enable the governing body to fulfil its accountability role

And for teachers:

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

3. What it's not about

Governors' visits to classrooms are not a form of inspection in terms of making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher.

That remains a task for the Headteacher and/or other education professionals.

It would be inappropriate for Governor to:

- Make judgements about the quality of teaching
- Check on the progress on individual children
- Pursue personal agendas
- Monopolise the teacher's time
- Arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

The Visit

4. Before a Visit

Planning is vital in order to ensure an effective and successful visit. It is important to:

- Arrange the details of the visit with both the Headteacher and the teacher whose classroom is being visited
- Agree the level of confidentiality
- Agree the purpose of the visit
- Discuss the context of the lesson to be observed
- Agree ground rules to be observed while in the classroom
- Avoid busy/stressful periods such as during or just before examinations
- Never turn up unannounced!

An "aide memoire" is included as Appendix 1 to assist with the pre-visit process.

5. During a Visit

To ensure the visit goes smoothly:

Always:

- Observe any class guidelines/rules
- Fulfil agreed purpose

Avoid:

- Walking in with a clipboard and taking notes
- Interrupting the teacher
- Attempting to take on a teaching role
- Making promises to the teacher/pupils on behalf of the Governing Body
- Discussing irrelevant issues with the teachers/pupils during the lesson

6. After a Visit

Following the completion of the visit:

- Thank the teacher and the pupils (never just walk out)
- Discuss the experience with the teacher as soon as is reasonably possible
- Have a brief meeting with the Headteacher (if possible) to give them a brief overview of the visit
- Prepare a report for presentation at the next Governors meeting

An "Aide Memoire" is included as Appendix 1 to assist with the post-visit process.

A proforma "Record of Governors' Classroom Visit" is included as Appendix 2.

Mugginton CofE Primary School
Classroom Visits by Governors
Appendix 1: Aide Memoire for Governor Visits

What is the purpose of the visit?

What has prompted my decision to visit?

What aspect of the school development plan does my visit relate to? How can my visit benefit the school?

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?

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?

What difficulties did I meet and why?

Is there any follow-up?

Have I recorded my experiences?

Did I "report back"?

Have I prepared a short report for the next Governors' meeting?

How can I build on this for the next visit?

Mugginton CofE Primary School Classroom Visits by Governors

Appendix 2: Record of Governors' Classroom Visit

Name of Governor		Date of Visit	
Area of Responsibility		Time of Visit	
Teacher(s) visited		Year Group(s) visited	

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?

Governor Observations and Comments

e.g. What did you see? What did you learn? What would you like clarified?

Any key issues arising for the Governing Body

e.g. the way resources are allocated, the way the school communicates, progress in implementing key policies

Action following Governing Body meeting

Record any action agreed by the Governing Body with regards to this visit

Signed

Date