

Governors' Visits to the School; Protocol and Reporting (2018)

To be reviewed Winter Term 2020



1. Rational and Aim

The governing body work extremely hard on behalf of the school. The committee structure is well understood. This alone is very valuable and contributes to the success of Robert Bloomfield Academy (RBA). We work in accordance with the vales of the school and the purpose is to support the work of the school in achieving its vision and aims. The governors hold a collective plethora of experience and knowledge- this should be utilised in the best way possible by the school.

It is vital that structures are in place which involve the Local Governing Body (LGB) in the work of the school. Governors should come to school to learn about RBA and celebrate its' successes- not to judge. Increased visibility and contact between RBA staff and the LGB will ensure a respectful and honest relationship between the groups. The LGB can all contribute to the fostering of this supportive understanding by involving themselves in school events, trips, visits and sharing enthusiasms and encouraging those staff and students involved.

In the Taylor Report, it states that it is highly desirable for all governors to see classes at work. RBA's LGB should participate in these visits in agreement with the Principal and the teacher concerned. Formal structures are in place to ensure the transparency of visits and observations.

Governors are expected to work with integrity and uphold the confidential nature of information which may come their way. A governor's role is to monitor the development of RBA and report back after discussion with the Principal.

2. Policy

As a working governor, it may be required for you to take time off from work in order to participate in meetings and visits to the school (unfortunately it doesn't have to be paid leave). The Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978, and the Employment Act 1982 require employers to permit employees who hold certain public positions (which include school governorships) reasonable time off to perform their duties. 'Reasonable' is not defined, but half-a dozen occasions a year is not likely to be considered unreasonable.

Teachers, like other professionals, must be accountable for their effectiveness to bodies representing users and should be subject to the oversight of governors.

Visiting

Protocol for visits

- Any visit a governor makes, especially their first, should be by invitation or mutual agreement with the Principal. The Principal may then invite you to 'drop in any time' thereafter.
- The school is the teacher's workplace; teachers have negotiated their working conditions, and are protected by their professional associations.
- For governors to play an effective role, they will have to acquire a working knowledge of the school and this will involve visits to the school.
- Unless invited by the Principal, or staff on the Principal's behalf, to particular events, governors should seek the agreement of the Principal before visiting and then notify reception of their arrival (to fulfil Health & Safety requirements, e.g. in the event of a fire).
- Governors and the Principal should give prior thought to the purpose, timing and the duration of any visit and inform staff accordingly.
- Please see Appendix 1 for recommendations that the report should include.

Purpose of visiting

- Observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements of the pupils.
- Understand the views and values of the staff and pupils.
- Evaluate the resources and the environment of the school.
- Gain first-hand information to assist policy making and decision taking
- Governors are known and demonstrate their commitment to the school.
- Observe the operation of policies.
- Give active support to the activities of the school.
- Be aware of changes and different approaches to teaching and learning.
- Demonstrate being a critical friend of the school.
- Holding the school to account, evaluating its progress
- Monitoring and Progress of Pupils

Code of Conduct

- Make sure any necessary preparation or research is done beforehand.
- Dress appropriately, sign in and wear a visitor's badge.
- During the visit, place emphasis on *learning not inspection*.
- Be supportive of the Principal in communications with staff.
- Remain confidential.
- Talk to staff and children but be careful not to interrupt teaching and learning.
- Remember that the daily schedule at school is demanding. Respect the fact that staff need their breaks and preparation time.
- Be approachable, diplomatic and friendly.
- Be prepared to ask questions and most importantly - listen.
- Avoid making judgements and comments about professional teaching matters.
- Remember to thank everyone.
- Prepare a written draft of your report and share with the Headteacher before submitting it to the Clerk.
- Share any concerns with the Headteacher in confidence.
- Where practical, refrain from taking written notes during a class.

Before the visit

A plan of visits will be agreed each year by the Governing Body. The purpose and scope of each visit will link to the School Development Plan.

The governor making the visit is responsible for arranging the date and agenda of the visit in consultation with the Principal. Before the visit the governor should:

- Understand the key issues from the last inspection.
- Study the content of the school's action plan
- Study the timetable so you are aware of the day's programme.

During the visit

- Each visit will start with a meeting with the Headteacher to ensure any last minute changes are discussed. Visiting governors should ask questions as part of their preparation for the visit- 'What am I likely to see today'?
- The visiting governor should keep to the agenda as staff will be expecting him/ her and may have organised activities for him/ her to see.
- On entering a classroom, the governor should introduce himself/ herself to the teacher at an appropriate time in the session.
- Before leaving the classroom, the governor should thank the teacher and acknowledge the children (provided this will not cause too much of a disruption).
- Ensure questions are open in their structure to staff and pupils.
- Issues arising from the visit should be discussed with the curriculum lead in the first instance. The Principal will ensure that time is available for a brief meeting with the visiting governor at the end of the visit.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be regularly monitored by the Senior Leadership Group and the Full Governing Body.

4. Implementation and Review

This policy will be circulated to all Governors, Academy staff and published on the Academy website for parent/carer information. The policy will be reviewed two yearly.

5. Author and Date

Author: Jess Andrews (Chair of Curriculum and Standards committee)

Approved by Curriculum and Standards Committee

Date: December 2018

Appendix 1

The link report

It is recommended that the report reflects on the main areas below.

Summary of key points discussed with the Principal / Subject Leader / link teacher?

What were your observations and perceptions during the day based on your initial conversation?

Key points for school, department and governor future development as discussed in the follow up meeting.

Any other issues based on evidence.