



Tadley Primary School
learning for life

Governor visits policy

Head Teacher: Joanne Bruce-Carter

Chair of Governors: David Lovelock

Date: Autumn 2025

Review Date: Autumn 2028

Our Vision

At Tadley Community Primary School, we are passionate about equipping our children with the personal characteristics and educational outcomes for their successful futures. Our vision for each child is to develop an active curiosity of their world, discover their own interests and talents, and grow in their own confidence and love of learning. We do this by providing children with an irresistible invitation to learn through our knowledge-rich and diverse curriculum.

Our values

Our values of Pride, Kindness, Diversity and Community underpin everything we do at Tadley Community Primary School. Therefore, it is important to us that we celebrate our differences and we are a fully inclusive school – welcoming children and adults from all backgrounds, beliefs, cultures and circumstances. We want all our children to feel safe, loved and valued. That is why we passionately believe every child and adult in our school community is important and special to us and we always prioritise building strong relationships with everyone involved in our school.

Introduction

The Tadley Primary School Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors are also held to account for their own school's performance. Ofsted assumes that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and will test that assumption during a school inspection.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a governor can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and pupils and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms.

Purpose of visits

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Development Plan. The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose. Governors should arrange their visits with the headteacher who has the responsibility of the day-to-day management of the school.

Visits also allow governors to demonstrate the impact of the governing body's or school's activities in terms of the difference it is making, or is hoped to make, or has already made.

School visits by members of the governing body are a key component to being an effective school governor and have potential benefits to both governors and staff.

Benefits to staff

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

Benefits to governors

- To develop relationships with the staff
- To recognise and celebrate success
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them
- To inform decision making
- To understand the environment in which teachers and other staff work
- To see policies and schemes of work in action
- To recognise different teaching styles

Guidelines

In order to undertake their role with objectivity, governors will not monitor classes containing their own children or grandchildren nor will they begin monitoring until they have received suitable training as part of the local authority induction course.

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. As such, all governors must adhere to the highest standards of confidentiality.

A school visit is not about:

- Checking on your own or known children or grandchildren
- Making judgments about the professional expertise of the teacher
- Monopolising staff time
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas or pursuing a personal agenda.

Frequency of visits

The frequency of governor visits to the school will depend on the purpose of the visit and the link position.

As the governor linked to a class/year group it may be that visiting 2 – 3 times a year is appropriate to maintain relationships and monitor the progress of the year group. However, this will vary dependant on the experience of the governor, e.g. new governors may need to visit more frequently initially.

Visits will not necessarily be spaced evenly throughout the year. In any case, it would be expected that as the governor linked to a year group, they will endeavour to make contact at least twice per year in person.

Other visits carried out at the request of the Governing Body, e.g. to monitor aspects of the school operation, will be carried out on a frequency determined by them.

Preparing for the visit

- Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the School Development Plan? What are the relevant school Policies? How does this determine the activities I am interested in?
- Discuss an agenda with the headteacher well in advance. Make sure that the date and time chosen is suitable.
- Use the prompt sheet/checklist in Appendix 2, agreed by staff and governors, to guide governors' visits.
- Time permitting, discuss the proposed agenda with the staff involved. How do they want governors to integrate into the lesson? It might be possible for you to see a copy of the lesson plan beforehand.
- Be clear beforehand exactly what you are observing. Try to prepare questions for staff in advance. The headteacher may be able to guide you on this.
- Discuss with the headteacher if any supporting information is available – Ofsted report, improvement plan, performance data.

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 and keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible.
- Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the classroom will be.
- Get involved with the children if the teacher has agreed that this would be appropriate.
- Remember it is a visit not an inspection.
- Observe discretely. Remember that excessive note taking can be disconcerting and may make your visit look like an inspection.
- Don't distract the teacher during the lesson from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest.
- Be courteous, friendly not critical.
- Interact, don't interrupt. Listen to staff and pupils.
- Remember why you are there. Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit.

After the visit

The governor will give verbal feedback to the member(s) of staff visited and agree any actions to be taken.

The visit will be recorded in the feedback form in Appendix 1. Where a formal visit has taken place, this form may refer to another more detailed report if appropriate. To ensure accuracy of content, the form should be sent to the member(s) of staff visited for agreement before being submitted.

The feedback form will be sent to the member(s) of staff visited, the headteacher and the Clerk to the governors. The Clerk to the governors will circulate to all governors for review and will maintain a file of all governor visits to the school. The governor can give a verbal summary of the visit at the next Full Governors meeting.

Any expression of concern must be shared with the teacher or headteacher as soon as possible. Comments should be limited to the focus of the visit unless health and safety is being compromised, which should always be reported immediately.

Informal ways of getting to know the school

Visits may also take place in an informal capacity. It is vital that everyone is clear about the capacity in which they are visiting and not to confuse the role.

- The chair of governors making a regular visit to see the headteacher
- To lend a helping hand with a school event or trip
- To get information from the office relating to a committee meeting
- To speak to a teacher in relation to your own child
- Visit in relation to another position you hold such as local councillor

Governors are actively encouraged to participate in the life of the school and are always welcome to attend school functions such as Christmas productions etc. the dates of which are published regularly in the school newsletter and sent out to all governors. These visits are not included as part of this policy.

Monitoring and evaluation of this policy

When reviewing and evaluating this policy, please consider:

- Are we doing what we set out to do?
- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits identified in the policy?
- Have governors learned more about the school?
- Are we better-informed and enabled to make sensible decisions?
- Have we developed a further method of direct communication with staff?
- Do the staff feel affirmed and valued?
- Have governor visits helped the Governing Body fulfil its duties?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make the policy and practice even better?

Written By: SLT
Date: September 2025
Review Date: September 2028
Review Committee: Resources

Appendix 1: Governor visit feedback form

NAME	DATE
Focus of visit <i>(Previously agreed with the staff member(s) and headteacher)</i>	
Summary of activities <i>(e.g. monitoring impact, observing classes, talking to staff/pupils, looking at resources)</i>	
Links with the school development plan <i>(How does the visit relate to a priority in the school improvement plan?)</i>	
Observations and comments by the governor <i>(e.g. what you saw; what you learned; what you would like clarified; how long the visit lasted)</i>	
Any key issues arising for the governing body <i>(e.g. the way resources are allocated; the way the school communicates; progress in implementing a key policy)</i>	

Topics and ideas for the next visit
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Appendix 2: Governor visit prompt sheet/checklist

What to look for during the visit?

Possible areas for focus could include:

- How do the pupils react to the presence of the teacher, headteacher or yourself?
- How friendly and relaxed are the pupils?
- Do the pupils have an understanding of what they are doing?
- How well behaved and courteous are the pupils?
- In what ways does the school provide a varied and interesting environment?
- How are the needs of all the pupils being met equally?
- Do pupils work in a group or individually on a particular task?
- Are the same relative number of questions asked by girls and boys?
- Particular subjects, key stages or classes
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Special educational needs
- Literacy and numeracy
- Lunch and breaktimes
- The use and condition of resources e.g. furniture or ICT equipment
- Deployment of staff, e.g. caretaker, office staff, teaching assistants
- The impact on the school of any changes e.g. reduced classes in a key stage
- Variety of teaching styles
- Availability and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils — are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- How the pupils are grouped and how different abilities are catered for
- Children's work and wall displays
- Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space and working conditions
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Ways to show impact

Phrases to use which enable the governing body to demonstrate impact:

- It means that.....
- It has enabled xxx to xxx
- This has ensured that.....
- Comparisons to similar
- Statistics
- "The children said....."
- "The parents have told us....."
- "The staff have said....."
- "Local residents have said....."
- Relative success/progress against criteria and the difference it has made
- This has improved/resulted in/increased/decreased.....
- This has provided strong evidence to suggest/support.....