

Juniper Hill School

Governor Visit Policy



Kindness Enjoyment Achievement












Reviewed January 2026

Introduction








The governing body has 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). 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 or member of the Leadership Team.





Potential benefits to governors:

-  To improve governor knowledge of the ethos of the school
-  To assess the effectiveness of the SDP
-  To improve understanding of intent, implementation and impact of curriculum areas
-  To monitor and understand achievements and goals for specific curriculum subjects
-  To recognise and celebrate success
-  To support and develop relationships with the staff and children
-  To understand the environment in which adults and children work
-  To be informed about a particular area of the school site
-  To monitor policies in action and contribute effectively to the governing body's monitoring role
-  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 have an opportunity to share elements and features of the curriculum
-  To highlight the need for particular resources
-  To celebrate the school's successes

What a visit is NOT about:

-  A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise of the teacher, to comment on their teaching or classroom management
-  Checking on progress of own children or that of any other
-  Pursuing personal agenda
-  Monopolising school/teacher time

Annual programme of visits

A programme of visits should be planned and spread evenly across the school year in consultation with the Headteacher and/or member of staff responsible for the area being monitored / visited

Ideally every area should be visited once a term in order to see and report back on developments

Preparing for a visit

- 🏠 Check the agreed policy for governors' visits
- 🏠 Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the SDP? What are the relevant school policies? How does this determine the activities you are interested in?
- 🏠 Discuss the format and agenda with the Headteacher / member of the Leadership team / member of staff responsible for the area being monitored / visited well in advance. Make sure the date chosen is suitable.
- 🏠 Try to keep to the date agreed. Teachers will have planned for your visit.
- 🏠 Use the Governor Visit Report Form – see Appendix A
- 🏠 Be clear beforehand about what you are looking for. Try to prepare questions and submit to staff in advance.

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 or the Headteacher
- 🏠 Be punctual and keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible

If visit involves a lesson observations or meeting pupils

- 🏠 Decide with the staff how you will be introduced and what your role in the classroom will be
- 🏠 Get involved with the children
- 🏠 Ask to speak with children, discreetly, in a lesson or after a lesson – These questions will help you gain an understanding of pupil attitudes toward the subject
 - Tell me about what you are learning today
 - Do you like (curriculum area being monitored)?
 - Tell me what you most like doing in (curriculum area being monitored)
 - What helps you with your learning in (curriculum area being monitored)?
 - Is there anything you don't like in (curriculum area being monitored)?
 - What would make you like this (curriculum area being monitored) more?
- 🏠 Remember it is a visit not an inspection
- 🏠 Observe discreetly, interact when appropriate
- 🏠 Be courteous, friendly not critical

- 🏠 Remember why you are there. Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit
- 🏠 Listen to staff and pupils.

Things to look for when visiting a classroom

- 🏠 Relationship between staff and pupils
- 🏠 Relationships between pupils
- 🏠 How the children are taught, 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 different abilities are catered for
- 🏠 Purpose/relevance of lessons
- 🏠 Coherence of the curriculum/connection between subjects
- 🏠 Children's work
- 🏠 Displays and use of these
- 🏠 Ethos — the atmosphere and learning values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- 🏠 Use of space and working conditions
- 🏠 Quality and quantity of equipment and resources

Curriculum Subject Visits

If your visit involves monitoring a subject area you may be asked to participate in a Learning Walk. This should take around 30 minutes. During the Learning Walk you can expect the subject leader to speak with you about areas listed below. Please raise questions if you need clarification or more information. Ideally the Learning Walk should take place while the children are in lessons. Make use of the learning walk to understand what happens in school and lessons.

Possible questions for subject coordinators when monitoring a particular subject area

How does the SDP reference the subject and do you feed into this?

What is your vision for the subject?

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

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

What differences (if any) are obvious between specific groups of pupils?

What professional development has been actioned this year?

What improvements have you made / planned for this year in the subject?






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

How has the budget for this area been spent?






Are there any additional resource needs?

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

After your visit










-  Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about.
-  Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved.
-  Thank the teacher 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?

Reporting your visit

-  Write a short summary of what you learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. Use Appendix A
-  Include evidence to be included in the school SEF (Self- Evaluation Form)
-  Be careful not to name children
-  You must circulate a draft to the Headteacher and any staff involved for them to check the accuracy and clarity. Be prepared to discuss and amend it. Aim to achieve a report that is agreed by those involved.
-  Save your report on Governor Hub

Visit Focus

Although not an exhaustive list visits may focus on:

-  Particular area of the curriculum
-  Particular key stages or classes
-  Behaviour management and school ethos
-  The use made of the buildings or the site
-  The condition and maintenance of the premises – Health and Safety
-  Special educational needs and disabilities
-  The use of resources
-  Safeguarding
-  Interaction of particular groups of children during lessons

Informal Visits

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 making a regular visit to see the Headteacher
- 🏠 To lend a helping hand with a school event
- 🏠 To get information from the office relating to a committee meeting
- 🏠 To help in a class
- 🏠 To speak to a teacher in relation to your own child
- 🏠 Attend a school function or educational visit



Juniper Hill School Governor Visit Form

Governor:		Area of responsibility:	
Date:		Agreed focus:	
School objective / area of SDP / SEF			
What the school is doing / evidence of impact.			
Cost / Budget implications (value for money)			
Evidence to include in the SEF Explain which section of the SEF			