



## Croft Church of England Primary School

### Policy for Governor Visits to the School and Classroom

#### **‘Achievement for Everyone’**

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## Rationale

The governing body is the 'accountable body' in a school – accountable to parents, pupils, the local authority and Central Government through Ofsted. It is responsible for everything from Health and Safety and Child Protection to the school budget, Teaching and Learning and pupil progress. Because 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 targets set out in the School Development Plan (SDP). Visiting the classroom can help to support this process.

Ofsted inspection assumes that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This depends on governors assessing performance data presented to them by the Head Teacher and School Improvement Partner in the context of an understanding of what happens in the classroom.

It is also important to Ofsted that the Governing Body makes an impact on school improvement and visiting school to see it in operation, and to be aware of standards and progress are important aspects of this crucial role.

Governors are not qualified to assess standards but they need to visit in order to:

- Consider outcomes and evidence of impact of actions/ strategies;
- Consider the general ethos and atmosphere of the school;
- Consider the attractiveness or otherwise of areas visited and the quality of the learning environment;
- Appreciate and understand the work of the staff (teachers and support staff) and how the pupils are learning;
- Be aware of the response of pupils to their work and check that the pupils are aware of what they are learning;
- Be aware of resource issues;
- Be able to ask appropriate questions and hold sensible discussions with the professionals;
- Understand as fully as possible the meaning of the results of monitoring reported to them;
- See pupil behaviour and attitudes towards learning;
- Observe pupil engagement in lessons;
- Observe Health& Safety/ safeguarding arrangements;

**N.B.** Governors are not inspectors and are not present in a lesson to make judgements about the professional expertise of the teachers. That remains a task for the head and/or other education professionals. It would be inappropriate, therefore, for governors to:

- Make judgements about the quality of teaching;
- Report on the progress of individual children;
- Pursue personal agendas;
- Monopolise teachers' time;
- Arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas.

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be adhered to regarding classroom visits. Observations and comments should be shared with the teacher concerned, and with the headteacher, but not with other staff or with parents. And the approach of a governor should be to ask for explanations of anything not understood, not to make assumptions.

Reports to the Governing Body should not identify individuals in a critical manner: this is not the role of a governor.

## Minimum commitment

Individual governors have differing amounts of time to commit to an exercise such as classroom visits. It is important, however, that all governors should try to make visits at some time, beyond that initial general visit to the school when one is newly appointed to the governing body. A governor should aim to make a class visit or speak to relevant staff *at least* once a term.

## Roles and Remit of Link Governors

A link governor is a governor appointed by the governing body to act as a link or liaison between the governing body and a specific subject, curriculum area, area of the School Development Plan or aspect of the work of the school. The

development of a good working relationship based on mutual trust with all staff is essential if the link governor is to be effective in this role.

**Link governors must understand that their role is as a source of support to the school and a source of information for the governing body.**

### **Monitoring Plan**

The governing body will work with the Head Teacher to develop a monitoring plan which will link to the School Development Plan.

The remit of link governors will be:

- To meet with the Head Teacher and agree the overall programme of work to be undertaken
- To meet with the subject leader to consider performance and progress issues
- Where possible attend staff training sessions devoted to that aspect of the curriculum/area
- Use visits to view lessons in the subject area and report back as agreed
- To understand the allocation of resources to the area
- To help support and promote the involvement of parents in their child's learning in that area
- To attend appropriate governor training
- To advocate to the governing body on behalf of the curriculum/area

### **SEN Link Governor**

To provide a link between the governing body and SENCo

- To develop an understanding of SEN needs and provision in the school
- To understand the responsibilities of the governing body in relation to the SEN Code of Practice
- To be familiar with the SEN policy
- To ensure the SEN policy is reviewed on a regular basis
- To meet with the SENCo on a half termly basis to discuss the SEN needs and provision in the school
- To report to the full GB at least twice a year on relevant issues relating to SEN
- To attend governor training on SEN
- In accordance with this policy visit the school and view appropriate lessons reporting back according to the policy
- To advocate to the governing body on SEN provision in the school.

### **Safeguarding Link Governor**

To be the designated safeguarding Governor

- To be conversant with the Child Protection and safeguarding policies of the school
- To be conversant with section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and with North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures and guidance to contribute to the formulation and review of Child Protection policies
- To ensure that an annual report on Child Protection is submitted to and considered by the governing body
- To undertake governor Child Protection training
- To monitor the promotion of child protection through the delivery of the national curriculum in school
- To monitor child protection arrangements/ safeguarding within the school and ensure that reports are submitted to the governing body with recommendations to remedy any weaknesses/deficiencies
- To advocate on behalf of the governing body on behalf of child protection

### **Ground rules**

It is useful to follow some basic rules in planning visits.

### **School Visits – an Aide-Memoire**

#### **What is the purpose of the visit?**

What has prompted my decision to visit?

Who has prompted my decision to visit?

Is the reason specific or general?  
 What are my/other people's expectations?  
 How can my visit benefit the teacher?

**How shall I carry it out?**

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?  
 Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?  
 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?  
 To what extent did I fulfil my own/other people's expectations?  
 What difficulties did I meet and why?

**Is there any follow-up?**

Have I recorded my experiences?  
 Did I 'report back' to the head and staff?  
 Have I prepared a short report for the next governors' meeting?  
 How can I build on this for the next visit?

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Before</b>	Arrange details of visit with the Head Teacher Agree purpose of visit Discuss the context of the lesson to be observed. Agree role within the lesson	Turn up unannounced
<b>During</b>	Keep to the role agreed Keep questions for the class teacher until after the visit is over Please remember confidentiality Stick to the times and purpose agreed Be sensitive to the mood in the classroom and the expectations of the children.	Assume a different role Walk in with a clipboard Distract the pupils from their task
<b>After</b>	Thank the teacher and the pupils -Discuss the visit with the teacher and Head Teacher at their convenience -Feedback to the governing body	Leave without acknowledgement Break rules of confidentiality

**Review**

*The guidelines should be reviewed by the Governing Body each academic year. We would need to ask:*

- *Are our visits proving useful?*
- *Have there been impact/benefits, particularly unexpected benefits, from our visits?*



## Governor Visit Report

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Focus of visit</b>	<b>Classes/staff visited</b>
<b>Summary of activities e.g. talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch etc.</b>	
<b>Safeguarding – any issues?</b>	
<b>What have I learned as a result of my visit?</b>	<b>Positive comments about the visit</b>
<b>Aspects I would like clarified/questions that I have:</b>	
<b>Ideas for future visits:</b>	
<b>Any other comments/ Impact of visit:</b>	
Signed _____ Signed _____ (Governor)	