



The
Maltby Learning Trust

Governor Visit Policy

Date Last Reviewed: October 2015
Reviewed by: CEO
Approved by: MLT Board
Next Review Due: October 2017

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Academy and its curriculum. Ofsted inspection assumes that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the Academy. This depends on governors assessing performance data in the context of an understanding of what happens in the classroom, as well as the Academy as a whole.

This policy will provide a framework for governors to make focused visits to the Academy so that they can build an effective working relationship with the staff and have a better understanding of the context in which they work. Governors will be able to observe policies and plans being implemented on a day-to-day basis, and their findings should help the whole governing body and its committees make well-informed judgements about the progress being made. The process will help the governing body to recognise and celebrate the efforts and successes of children and staff and to identify further areas for development.

Governor visits include:

- Annual visits by link governors. These may or may not include time in a classroom.
- Committee visits to learn about particular aspects of the Academy and/or the curriculum. Again, these may include time in classrooms.
- Ad hoc meetings with staff to discuss particular issues

Other ways of getting to know the Academy can include:

- Attending assemblies.
- Attending parents' meetings and open evenings
- Talking to children informally whenever opportunities arise
- Attending staff meetings and INSET days.
- Helping with careers activities
- Helping with learning support
- Attending extra-curricular concerts, drama productions, exhibitions and sporting events

PURPOSE OF VISITS

The purpose of a visit will be to explore an aspect of the Academy in some detail, increasing their knowledge base and generating evidence to help them evaluate the Academy's performance.

When organising and conducting a visit, governors will be courteous and considerate at all times respecting the professional roles of the Principal and staff, they will confirm with the Principal the date, timing and focus of each visit. Governors will prepare by reading relevant documentation/guidance.

To be effective, it is helpful if each visit is focused on a particular aspect of Academy life. For example:

- To learn about the general daily working and organisation of the Academy

- To learn more about specific departments in terms of curriculum, staffing and other resources, performance and current issues and establish specific governor links
- To look at provision and outcomes for particular groups eg SEN or Disadvantaged
- To assist with key meetings e.g. attendance panel
- To learn about an aspect of wellbeing and pastoral care
- To gain knowledge about particular activities such as assembly, lunchtime, behaviour management or after school sports or other extra-curricular activities
- To meet children and staff in their working environment or engage with parents.
- To informally survey school buildings and grounds and understand how they are used and monitor any health and safety issues
- To see how ICT is used in the Academy to support learning
- To become known within the Academy setting

BENEFITS

Both Governors and staff should benefit from well-organised visits in the following ways:

Governors will have opportunities:

- To see the Academy in operation
- To get to know the issues concerning the staff and the children
- To gain a better understanding of departments or phases of learning
- To show support and recognise and celebrate success in all its forms
- To develop better relationships with staff and get to meet children in their working environment
- To start to recognise different teaching styles and methods employed in the classroom
- To understand better the environment in which teachers teach and children learn
- To see policies in action
- To learn how governors can best provide support where it is needed and as a result
 - be able to make more informed policy decisions
 - be more sympathetic and understanding about problems and concerns
 - be better ambassadors for the Academy in the community

Teachers and middle and senior leaders will have opportunities:

- To inform governors about the realities of the classroom, their departments, phases and Academy life
- To develop a better understanding of the governors' roles and responsibilities
- To reflect on practice and performance through discussion with governors
- To be able to highlight the need for particular resources

WHAT VISITS ARE NOT

Governors' visits are not a form of formal inspection of the Academy or classroom in any way. Governors are not to make judgements about the professional expertise of teachers or any other Academy staff as this is covered by the performance management process and statutory inspections. Nor are visits an opportunity for staff to bypass the normal channels of internal communication.

Therefore governors should not:

- Make judgements about the quality of teaching
- Check on the progress of their own children or others known to them
- Pursue personal agendas
- Monopolise teachers' or leaders' time
- Become involved in matters that should be referred by the individual to their line manager

PLANNING VISITS

Visits can be agreed by Committees linked to specific issues or items in the Academy Development Plan at any point. These can be either on an individual or group basis and should be recorded in the minutes of the Committee. It is hoped that over time, all Governors will take part in formal school visits.

Opportunities for informal visits are publicised and shared with governors as they arise. It is hoped that all governors will take these opportunities to share in the life of the Academy and meet staff, parents and children.

Governors should notify the Academy before undertaking formal or informal visits.

MONITORING OF VISITS

In order to be able to share information with other governors and ensure an evidence trail for inspection purposes, governors are expected to complete a 'Governor Visit to School' form (appendix 1) which covers the key findings and highlights any outstanding questions or issues. Completed forms should be handed in to the Clerk to Governors.

In the case of more informal visits, governors may use their discretion as to whether a report is appropriate. However, the respect and courtesy outlined in the attached guidelines should apply to all visits.

EVALUATION OF VISITS

Evaluation of visits can be done in a number of ways.

1. Individual governors or committees involved in specific visits should evaluate if the visit achieved its objectives and was time well spent and adjust future visits accordingly

2. As a governing body, the overall value of visits should be reviewed at the start of the academic year and changes made to the plans for the new year. The full governing body should ask these key questions:
 - Are our visits helping us achieve our priorities?
 - Have there been any unexpected benefits?
 - Are there any repeated concerns/issues that need to be addressed?
 - How can we make the policy and practice even better?
3. Governor visits should be reflected in the Academy self-evaluation process as evidence of governor involvement and a contributor to their informed evaluation of the Academy.

APPENDIX 1

Governor Visit Form

Name:		Date:	
Position Held: (E.g Safeguarding link Governor/SRF Chair)		Staff seen during visit:	
Reason for visit (routine monitoring/specific focus)			
Links with Academy Development Plan:			
Preparation Prior to Visit: (E.g. Reading of policy, discussion with key staff)			
Information Gathered During Visit: (E.g. What you saw, what you learned, further clarification, how long the visit lasted)			
Any key issues for the Governing Body resulting from the visit? (E.g. Allocation of resources, impact on risk register etc)			
Further Actions (E.g. Further training required, future agenda item)			
Signature:		Date:	

