



# Governor Visits

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## 1. Aims and Objectives

The IDEAL Alliance acknowledges the importance of governors visiting school and nursery schools as a vital tool in ensuring that the governing body can evaluate the impact of their plans and policies on the day-to-day operation of the school, raise their awareness of life in the classroom and nurseries and develop positive relationships between teachers, support staff and governors, fostering a sense of partnership.

Governors are not inspectors and are visiting to gain knowledge or to monitor the development of items on the School and nurseries' Development or Improvement Plan. Governors are asked to record their visit as evidence for any subsequent Ofsted inspections.

## 2. 3 steps to a visit

1. Before a visit agree with the Headteacher the focus of the visit.
2. Arrange a time to visit with class teacher – informing him/her of the focus of the visit. It is helpful to meet the teacher prior to entering the lesson.
3. Ask if there is any information that should be read prior to the visit.

The visit may be focused on an action from the School Improvement Plan or be a general visit to learn about your specific curriculum or year group link.

## 3. What can governors observe on a visit?

### *External appearance*

- Are the school grounds tidy, attractive and well maintained?
- What is the general state of external decoration?
- Is the school entrance welcoming?
- Are there adequate signs directing you to the reception?

### *The school in general*

- Is the reception area well maintained?
- Is there an adequate visitor signing-in procedure?
- Are there lots of examples of children's work displayed?
- What is the overall atmosphere?

- What sort of a general welcome did you receive?
- What is the general state of the internal decoration?
- Are there any obvious examples of community links?
- Where applicable, what is the general standard of pupil dress and behaviour in school?
- How effective are communications, within and outside of school and nurseries e.g. with parents, governors, community and interest groups?
- How is success and behaviour measured and rewarded?

#### *The classroom*

- Are the pupils busy and active within the rooms?
- Are the pupils/children interested in their topic?
- How is the classroom resourced?
- Are there any areas where resources could be improved with extra finance?
- Were you welcomed into the classroom?
- Is plenty of the pupils'/childrens' work displayed?
- What is the standard of the displayed work?
- What is communication like in the classroom/nursery rooms?

#### *On the visit day*

- Arrive on time and ensure you have signed in using the blue 'Governor Visit Book'.
- Please take informal notes if it will help you prepare feedback for other governors.
- When visiting classrooms always be mindful to be supportive to teaching staff and pupils.
- Please be aware that teachers are working during your visit, and lengthy discussions are not possible when teaching. Arrangements can be made to discuss the visit afterwards, which staff welcome and appreciate.
- After the visit thank the member of staff, and the children.
- Prepare your feedback.
- General observations will be shared at each of the committee meetings and will remain a standing agenda item for each term.
- Governors can share their feedback via a Google Form (shared via the clerk)

#### *Procedures in the event of concern*

Where concerns exist, it is vital that they are discussed immediately with the Head of schools. If you are not satisfied with the response and remain concerned, your next step should be to talk to the Chair of Governors.

#### *And finally....*

- Enjoy your visits to school
- Encourage other governors to visit
- Remember that as well as being a duty and a pleasure it is a privilege to go into a school
- You may observe children's work, health or they may innocently reveal things about their home life – it must remain confidential
- A good reputation is very hard to gain and very easy to lose. As a governor, you are part of the team aiming to build this good reputation. It can be extremely damaging if concerns are expressed to the community.