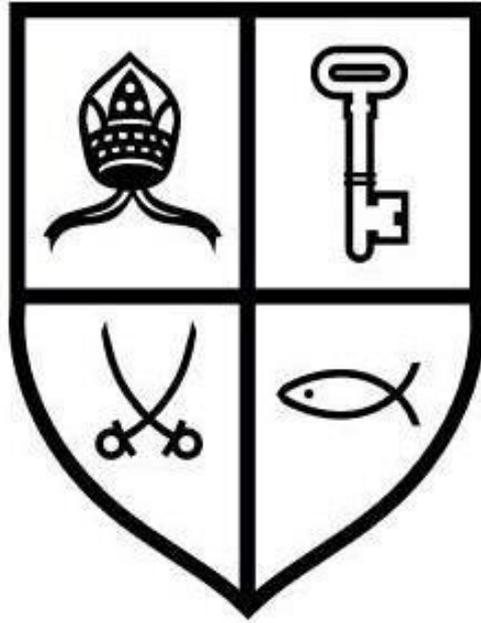
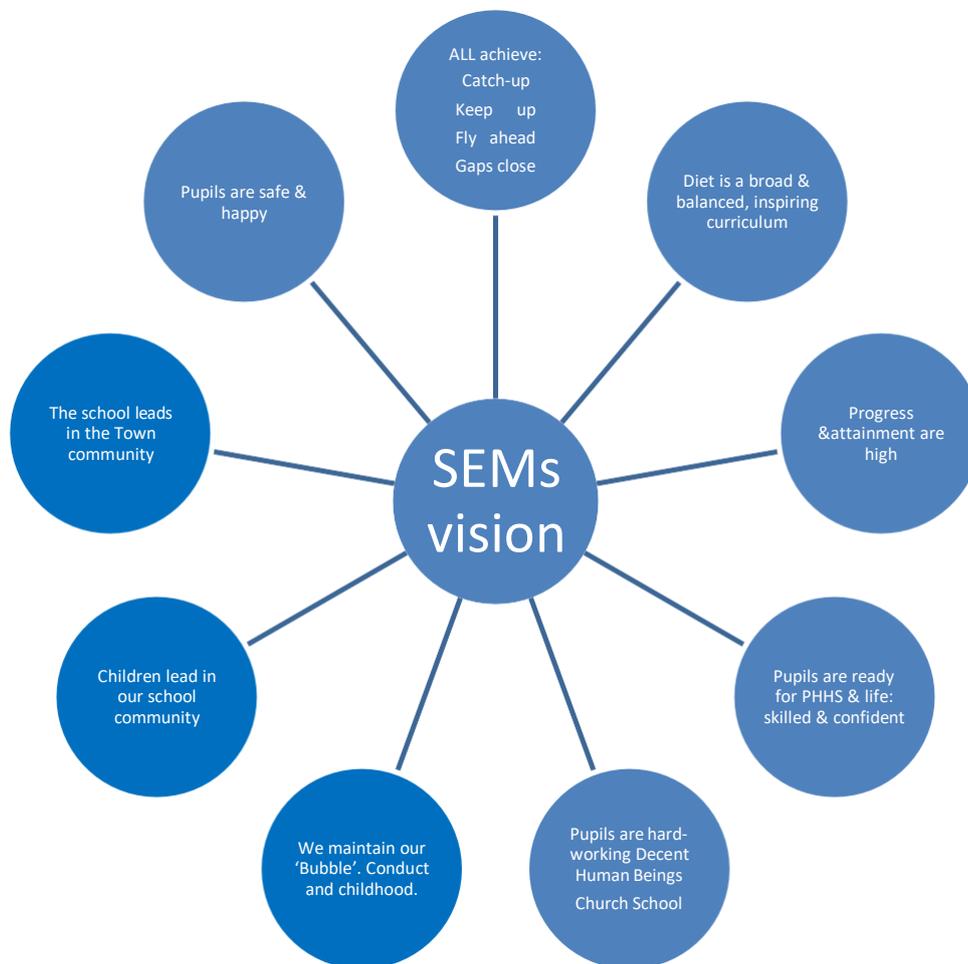


St. Egwin's CE Middle School



Governor Visits Policy

Signed by:	
Head Teacher	<i>ND Pull</i>
Chair of Governors	<i>[Signature]</i>
Date Adopted	01/04/2020
Date of Review	01/04/2021



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1. RATIONALE

Governors are the strategic leaders of the school working in close partnership with school leaders and are responsible for the effective management of the school, acting within the framework set by national legislation and the policies of the Local Authority (LA). Governors do not have an automatic right to enter school whenever they wish, but they need to be able to visit in order to develop their understanding of the school to enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities for the conduct of the school.

To this end, the effective governor finds out about the school, keeps up-to-date with educational developments, attends meetings and builds up sound relationships. Visiting the school is the most important means of achieving this and visits to St. Egwin's CE Middle School will enable governors to:

- be better informed when discussing and making decisions
- develop professional relationships and trust with staff
- to be known (as Governors) by other stakeholders and their role better understood
- have a better understanding of the context of the school's work
- use knowledge gained to feed into the School Improvement Plan and the SEF, thereby supporting the Headteacher in setting the strategic priorities for the school

Governors have 3 core strategic functions:

Our purpose is to 'conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school'.

- a) Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- b) Holding the executive leader to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff and**
- c) Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

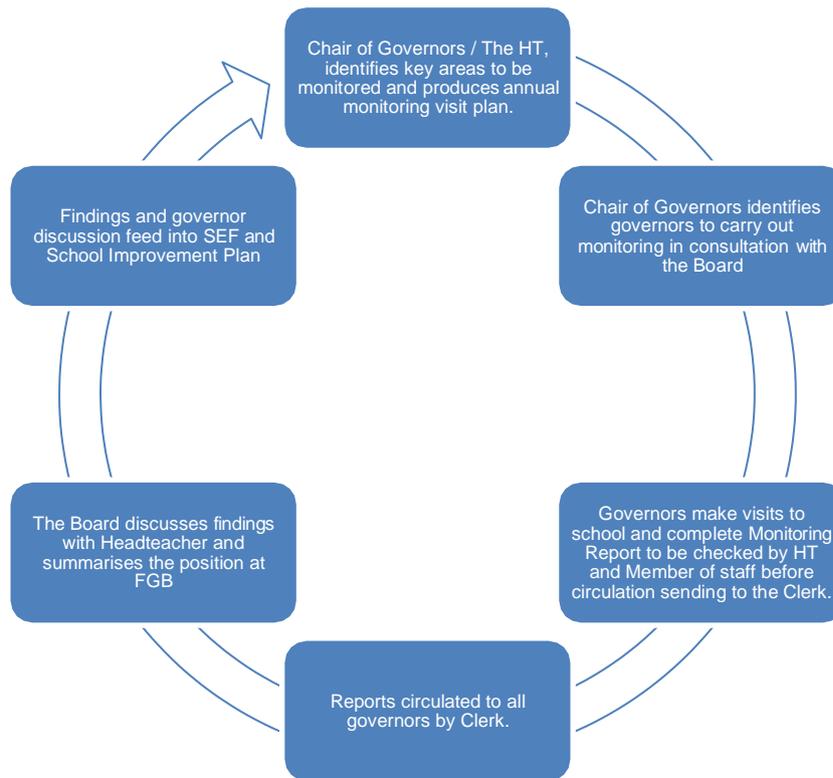
In order to hold the school to account effectively, Governors at St. Egwin's CE Middle School strategically plan visits to school to monitor priorities in the School Improvement Plan. It is expected Governors will visit the school both formally and informally (as described below) and use Governor Visits as a tool to get to know the school better and be able to hold it to account more effectively. Each governor commits time to undertake school visits in order to monitor both the school's statutory obligations and progress against the School Improvement Plan as well as visiting the school in a personal capacity.

The Governing Board plan, with the support of the Clerk and the Headteacher, an Annual Calendar of work for the Board which will record when visits will take place, by whom and the focus of the visit linked to the School Improvement Plan. It is vital that this calendar of activities reflects the annual work of the school and takes advantage of key milestones/dates to maximise the effectiveness of visit time. Therefore, all monitoring visits are strategically planned in advance to ensure minimal disruption to day to day school life and each visit should have a clear purpose and structure. It is accepted that in order to develop close working relationships between governors and staff, that staff should be willing to accommodate governors and, indeed, see it as usual professional development, too.

Any visits outside of the annual 'Governor Monitoring Visits Plan' should be arranged through the Headteacher.

At the end of each term, the Chair of Governors will summarise the monitoring that has taken place and advise on the **impact** of the monitoring, any changes to policy/procedures and other areas for further governor discussion in consultation with the Headteacher.

Governor Monitoring Cycle



2. OVERVIEW FOR GOVERNOR VISITS

The Governing Board will agree an annual plan of monitoring visits for the full academic year. This plan will ensure that:

- Considerable focus is given to key issues in the School Improvement Plan and pupil progress
- Governors can feel confident that they are meeting their statutory responsibilities
- All Governors are involved and feel a level of personal responsibility for supporting whole school improvement
- The visit has a clear purpose and structure so that understanding and professional relationships between governors and staff are promoted
- Any methods of data gathering are made explicit
- A line-of-enquiry is followed for each visit
- Contact members of staff are highlighted
- The frequency of visits does not contribute too heavily to staff or governor workload

3. DEFINITION OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF VISITS: INFORMAL AND MONITORING VISITS

INFORMAL VISITS

These visits are undertaken in a 'personal' capacity and are at the invitation of the school by the Headteacher. They may include:

- attending an assembly or other performance or event
- hearing readers in a classroom/library
- attending fundraising events
- attending Open Evenings/ Parent Evenings
- supporting school trips

FORMAL MONITORING VISITS

These visits are undertaken as part of the strategic function of the Board to monitor priorities in the School Improvement Plan. Therefore they have been sanctioned by the Governing Board. These may include:

planned visits which are identified in the annual Governor Monitoring Visits Plan

being identified as a link governor, attached to a curriculum/subject area, area of specialism e.g: Pupil Premium, Safeguarding etc or a year group (cohort)

attending parents' evenings as a governor

staff appointments with knowledge of safer recruitment

statutory responsibilities- attendance on panels as appropriate in line with the Terms of Reference eg: Pupil Discipline, Complaints

formal 1:1 meetings with a member of staff, the headteacher and leadership team;

learning walks with a member of staff; Classroom Visit with a member of staff; Group of Governors with HT

REMEMBER-

- ❖ Governors must **NOT** take part in (but can observe) activities such as work scrutiny, pupil progress meetings etc as these are operational activities undertaken by the school. Involvement in these activities can compromise the professional discussions staff will have about pupils.
- ❖ Governors must **NOT** discuss or ask questions about individual pupils or members of staff.
- ❖ Governors must **NOT** have access to individual pupil data.
- ❖ Governors **CAN** see 'anonymised' samples of pupils work, anonymised Performance Management statements, tracking data sheets identifying **groups** of pupils, as part of the professional discussion if appropriate.
- ❖ It is recommended that Governors visit classroom as part of a learning walk initially. Classroom Visits should be reserved for specific occasions and governors need to have a clear and focused understanding of why they are doing them. As a consequence they would be carried out with a senior leader or Headteacher and never on their own.

Visiting the school accompanied by a member of staff enables the Governor to maximise the opportunity of holding the school to account and get answers to their questions asked so that they get develop a more informed knowledge and understanding of the school.

4. GUIDANCE FOR FORMAL AND INFORMAL VISITS

General Guidance

In carrying out your responsibilities, tact and diplomacy will be initial key requirements for a visit. As Governors become more acquainted with the teachers and the school/subject matter priorities Governors should then be able to place a greater emphasis on your role as 'critical friend' to provide support and challenge.

REMEMBER: Governors are NOT Inspectors. Please remember that in these types of visit, you **should not** make professional observations. You must not evaluate the work of teachers and your submitted governor monitoring report must be non-judgmental. It should simply inform what you were asked to investigate i.e the line-of-enquiry/provide feedback/collect evidence for.

4.1 GUIDANCE AND PROTOCOLS FOR FORMAL MONITORING VISITS

Before the visit

- The governor should ensure that they are clear about the purpose of their visit (as outlined in the Governor Monitoring Plan), the desired outcome and the method of any data collection if this is appropriate.
- Governors must prepare for the visit in advance by reading any relevant documentation such as Policies, data, and gathering relevant information from the website etc.
- Ideally, the visit date should be booked during the half term that precedes the term when the monitoring visit needs to take place, for example Autumn 2 for visits in the Spring term.
- The school will then facilitate contact between the governor and the nominated member of staff to discuss monitoring activities, set an agenda for the visit and send any documentation which makes the visit to school more time efficient for all. This will usually be by email, copying in all those involved.

During the visit

- Report to reception to sign in following the schools safeguarding procedures
- Introduce yourself to relevant staff or await collection from reception if this procedure has already been agreed
- Refrain from commenting to staff, pupils or parents about professional matters, e.g. quality of teaching, pupil behaviour
- Look, listen and observe
- Use positive body language, e.g. smile
- Take an interest in your surroundings
- Talk to staff, pupils, parents as appropriate keeping in mind the purpose of the visit.

After the visit

- Complete the governor monitoring report which relates directly to the purpose of your visit. When writing the report, avoid making judgements. Write what you saw, what you found out and what governors need to consider next.
- Email/Send the governor monitoring report to the Headteacher to check for accuracy before forwarding to the Clerk to Governors for circulation at the next meeting. (The HT will share it with the member of staff involved in the visit out of courtesy).

4.2 GUIDANCE FOR INFORMAL VISITS

General Guidance

As mentioned earlier informal visits are undertaken in a 'personal' capacity and are at the invitation of the school by the Headteacher. This may be because you are a Parent and are invited to attend events or because you have volunteered to help out in some way. etc. They may include:

attending an assembly or other performance or event

hearing readers in a classroom/library

attending Open Evenings/ Parent Evenings

supporting school trips

As you are attending in a personal capacity, you are not expected to write a written report to the Board of Governors, as the Board did not sanction the visit. Instead it was an invite from the school.

As a Link Governor attached to a year group, you may be invited by the school to help with an activity in school or attend a performance. Again this as a volunteer, so there will not be a written report for the Board of Governors.

As a visitor to the school you must still sign in following the schools' safeguarding procedures.

APPENDICES

- 1. Governor Monitoring Report Proforma**
- 2. Sample of monitoring questions**
- 3. Learning Walk Advice**

Appendix1: Governor School Visit Record

(Link) Governor conducting visit	
Subject/Area of SDP	
<p>Purpose of Visit Previously agreed by the governing body with the Headteacher/ Prior Reading</p>	
<p>Links with the School Improvement Plan How does the visit relate to a priority in the SDP/ Line of enquiry</p>	
<p>Notes from the preparation for the visit</p>	
<p>Governor observations and comments Questions to answer / Areas to explore: What did I see? What did you learn? What would you like clarified? How long did the visit last?</p>	

**Strengths discussed with the school / Areas for Development discussed with the school/
Standards and progress discussed with the school**

Outcomes from the visit- Any key issues arising for the governing body

Eg: The way resources are allocated, the way the school communicates, progress in implementing a key policy

Next Steps

Action following the governing body meeting

Record any action agreed by the governing body with regard to this visit

Date of Visit.....

Class visited (if applicable)

Signed by Headteacher Date

Signed By Governor..... Date

Appendix 2: Sample Questions

2.1 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY VISITS

- What progress is being made with the priority in the School Improvement Plan?
- How do you know you are on track with the key success criteria?
- Are there any barriers to achieving this priority?
- Have the key strategies been implemented?
- Has any school monitoring taken place and what did you find out?
- Has anything changed / does it need to change relating to this priority?
- Are there sufficient finances / resources in place for you to achieve this priority?
- How do our results compare to National figures?

2.2 SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR A COHORT GOVERNOR VISIT

- How does the attainment and progress compare with the national picture?
- Which groups of pupils are not on track, if not why not and what strategies are in place to get them on track?
- What is the progress of girl's compared to boys in each area? Is there a common theme, or a particular subject area where it is out of step, what are the school doing about this?
- What is the progress of the SEND children in the year group? Are they on track, what are we doing if not?
- What is the progress of the Pupil Premium children in the year group? Are they on track, if not what strategies are being used to address this?
- What is the progress of the more able children? How are we making the work more challenging for them?
- What strategies are used to address this?
- What impact has guided reading had? Is it as expected, if not why not?
- What other events have had an impact on progress/learning this year?

2.3 STANDARD QUESTIONS

- How is our school currently performing?
- Are our children making better than expected rates of progress?
- How do standards in key stages or subjects compare with national standards?

- Have some key stages/subjects shown marked improvement this year? Why?
- How does the school's current performance compare with its previous performance? (over the last three years)
- Are some groups of pupils doing better than other? If so, why? (e.g. looked after children, gender, ethnicity, SEN)
- What are the attitudes of pupils towards their learning?

2.4 LEARNING AND TEACHING QUESTIONS

- How do teachers plan for their lessons?
- How do teachers ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged?
- How do teachers explain to pupils what they are going to teach?
- How do teachers keep track of progress?
- What do teachers do when they see pupils underachieving?
- To what extent do teachers seek the views of their pupils about learning?
- Does the school know what teaching styles work and why?
- Can these styles be applied in those parts of the school where results need to improve?
- What professional support do teachers get to help them teach more effectively?
- How do support staff contribute to teaching and learning?
- How do support staff support pupils to ensure they have equal access to opportunities to learn and develop?
- How do support staff support pupils to help them make their own decisions and take responsibility for their own actions?
- What professional support do support staff get to help to maintain and improve their contribution to raising pupil achievement?

2.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS

Does the governing body and the leadership team:

- Provide a clear vision and sense of common purpose among key stakeholders?
- Foster high aspirations?

- Maintain an explicit focus on pupil achievement?
- Plan strategically?
- Adopt a proactive stance to change?
- Demonstrate a commitment to equality and inclusion?
- Promote the personal development and well being of learners?
- Ensure that rigorous self-evaluation keeps the Self Evaluation current and informs plans?
- Make effective use of performance data?
- Ensure sound financial and resource management?
- Practise distributed leadership?

APPENDIX 3: ADVICE FROM UNIONS RE: 'LEARNING WALKS' AND DROP-INS

This governing body agrees that 'learning walks' (including other short visits to classes such as drop-ins) will only be carried out in accordance with the NGA classroom observation protocol, available at <https://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx>

'Learning walks' may take place in order to collect evidence about teaching and learning, evidence of progress and areas for school development. They are intended to be developmental and constructive rather than judgemental and are a whole-school improvement activity. There should, therefore, be no attempt to use this approach as part of capability procedures or for appraisal.

1. A programme of 'learning walks' should be agreed with teachers so that they know the date, time and focus of the learning walk and who will be conducting it, so that they can organise their classes accordingly.
2. The purpose or focus of a 'learning walk' should be explained to all relevant staff prior to its commencement. That purpose or focus will not relate to the performance of an individual.
3. 'Learning walks' will be conducted with minimum disruption to teachers and pupils.
4. 'Learning walks' will be undertaken in a supportive and professional manner.
5. A maximum of two colleagues will be involved in 'learning walks' at any time.
6. Pupils will not be asked for their views of an individual teacher during 'learning walks'.
9. Those teachers whose classes are visited will be given the opportunity to see any written records which have been made during the 'learning walk'.
10. There shall be no evaluation of an individual teacher during a 'learning walk'.

11. Regular reviews of the operation of 'learning walks' will be held with all staff.

12. Any teacher whose classroom is visited during a 'learning walk' will have the visit counted towards the overall maximum of three observations per year, each of up to an hour in length

13. Any concerns about the implementation of this protocol should be raised initially with management either by the individual teacher concerned or with the support of the school representative