



Director and Governor Visits Policy

Reviewed July 2023
Next review due July 2025

Preston Primary Academy Trust Governor Visits Policy

This policy has been written with the underlying principles of a Church of England school, which applies to Preston C of E Primary School and North Cadbury C of E Primary School.

Purpose of Policy

The Board of Directors has responsibility for the direction, policies and standards of the Trust and is accountable for its conduct and performance. Local Governing Bodies have responsibility for the direction, some policies and standards of the individual schools and are accountable for their conduct and performance. Visiting is an excellent way for Directors and Governors to observe how the Trust and its schools operate on a day-to-day basis, but all visits should be focussed and relate to the priorities in either the Trust Development Plan (TDP) or the School Development Plan (SDP). Directors and Governors should report back their findings, thus helping the whole board and its committees to make better informed judgements about the progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the TDP/SDP and informing strategic decision making.

The CEO who has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Trust will guide Directors on the area of the TDP or aspect of the Trust's work to be covered. The Headteacher, who has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school, will guide the Local Governing Body on the areas of the curriculum, policies and SDP to be covered each term. The policy and protocol for school visits is formulated in consultation with the staff.

Purpose of visit

The focus of a visit could be on any policy in place in the school, e.g., teaching and learning, assessment, behaviour, collective worship. It could also focus on a particular area, such as the management of the school's resources, the condition of the buildings, safeguarding, a particular year group or class.

Potential benefits

to Directors and Governors:

- To understand/confirm the strengths and areas for development for schools
- To recognise and celebrate success of pupils and staff
- To build an effective relationship with the staff and a better understanding of the context in which they work
- To get to know the pupils
- To recognise different teaching styles
- To monitor policies in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

to teachers:

- To ensure Directors and Governors understand the processes and procedures of the classroom
- To get to know Directors and Governors
- To understand better the Directors' and Governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- To highlight the need for particular resources
- To demonstrate effective teaching and learning and behaviour strategies

What a visit is not about

- Making judgements on the quality of teaching or professional expertise of the teacher, this is the role of the Headteacher
- Checking on progress of individual children
- Pursuing personal interests and concerns
- Monopolising school/teacher time

Protocols for visits

Directors and Governors should, with the guidance of the Board of Directors or whole Local Governing Body (LGB) and Head teacher, identify an aspect of the school's priority within the TDP/SDP to focus upon. This will help to maximise the effectiveness of the Board/LGB.

When organising and conducting a visit Directors and Governors will be courteous and considerate, respecting the professional roles of the Headteacher and staff. Working to the annual schedule agreed with the CEO/Head and staff, they will confirm in advance with the Headteacher the date, timing and focus of each visit. This will include agreeing what will be observed, whom it would be useful to talk to and agreeing any protocols to be observed whilst in the school. If time permits, they will discuss the proposed agenda with any staff involved. They will prepare by reading relevant documentation/guidance.

At the end of each visit, the Director/Governor will discuss what they have observed with the CEO/Headteacher and clarify any points they are uncertain about. Comments should be limited to the focus of the visit. Directors and Governors visiting cannot make personal judgements or promises on behalf of the Governance Board. They will agree with the Headteacher how and when they will report to the Board of Directors/LGB on the visit.

See Appendix 1 for a checklist regarding Directors' /Governors' visits when visiting a school and Appendix 2 for the form to record and report on visits to the Board of Directors/LGB.

Teachers and support staff will be courteous and considerate, recognising the contribution made by the Board/ LGB to the Trust/school. They will make practical suggestions on the focus for Directors' /Governors' visits to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This will include specifying the evidence that could be shared with the Board of Directors/LGB.

Questions will be invited from Directors' /Governors' whilst being sensitive to issues of confidentiality.

Monitoring and evaluation of implementation and impact.

Governors/Directors visits will be an agenda item at the termly meeting of the Board.

The LGB/Board of Directors can then consider:

- Are the visits achieving the potential benefits identified?
- What worked well?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make our practice even better?

and make changes to the policy and protocol that may be required.

Formal School Visits - Good Practice

Appendix 1 sets out a checklist for questions to be asked in preparation, during and after the visit.

Reporting your visit - Appendix 2 is a form to report back to the LGB/Board of Directors

- Write a short summary 'as a lay governor/director' of what you learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. This will be easier if the visit had a focus.
- It would be polite to circulate a draft to the Head and any staff involved for them to check the accuracy and clarity. Be prepared to amend it. Aim to achieve a report that is agreed by those involved.
- Circulate this at the next appropriate LGB/Board of Directors meeting.

Appendix 1

Checklist for governor/trustee visits to school			
A = always S = sometimes N = never			
Before	A	S	N
Is there a policy for Directors'/Governors' visits which has been shared with staff?			
Is the purpose of the visit clear?			
Is it linked to the Trust or School Development Plan?			
Has the agenda been discussed with the Headteacher well in advance?			
Is there a prompt/checklist agreed by Directors'/Governors' and relevant members of staff to guide the visit?			
Have arrangements been agreed with any staff involved?			
Are Directors'/Governors' clear about the purpose of the visit?			
Has the Headteacher or relevant member of staff been asked about whether any supporting information is available such as performance data, lesson plan, action plan etc.?			
During	A	S	N
Are visits punctual?			
Is the agreed timetable followed, though flexible where necessary?			
Are members of staff clear about the purpose of the visit?			
Do Directors'/Governors' with prior agreement from the teachers get involved with the children i.e. asking about their understanding of the lesson, what they have learnt etc.?			
Is everyone clear that these visits are for information/learning and not for inspection?			
Is the visit disrupting the lesson?			
Are Directors'/Governors' showing interest?			
Are visits courteous, friendly and non-judgemental?			
Is the purpose of the visit kept in mind?			
After	A	S	N
Is what you have learnt discussed with the teachers?			
Are any unclear points discussed?			
Do governors and members of staff who are involved consider whether the purpose of the visit has been achieved?			
Is the feedback form/report completed as soon as possible after the visit while thoughts are still fresh?			
Are observations discussed with the Headteacher?			
Is the feedback form/report circulated to the Headteacher and staff involved? Can they add comments or amend as necessary?			
Is the feedback form/report shared with the rest of the Board of Directors/LGB?			

Appendix 2

Director/Governor Visit Monitoring Report	
Name of School visited:	
Date of visit:	
Name of Director or Governor who visited the school:	
Staff Members Name & Role you met with at school:	
TDP/SDP (School Development Plan) Priority	
Purpose of visit (i.e. which element of the SDP Priority are you finding outabout)	
Main points from your visit. Discussion at meetings, questions raised and actions to be taken:	
Actions for the Board of Directors/LGB to consider	
Headteacher/subject leader comments:	
Date form passed to Clerk:	
Date presented to a Board of Directors/LGB meeting:	