



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust
Through Christ, in Partnership

Governor Monitoring & Visits Guidance

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| Signed by Chair |  |
| Date Approved by Trust | October 2021 |
| Statutory Policy | No |
| Required on Website | No |
| Review Period | 3 Years |
| Next Review Date | October 2024 |
| Reviewed by | Director of Governance |

Introduction

Within a Multi Academy Trust the Board of Directors is the accountable body for the monitoring of standards, performance and outcomes in the schools within the Trust. By the appointing of Local Governing Committees (LGCs) the Directors have delegated this function to those responsible for governance at local level. In turn the LGC are accountable to the Trust Board for undertaking this key function.

One way in which the LGC fulfil this key function is through undertaking monitoring visits in school across key areas. Governor monitoring is, in its simplest form, an activity where Governors get to know their school well and are able to see first-hand how the school functions and performs. This activity deepens Governor knowledge. Governors who know their school well are able to make more informed, focused and strategic decisions and can gather first hand evidence on the impact of these decisions.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide clarity on the purpose of Governor monitoring visits and how these might be arranged and conducted to ensure a cohesive approach which is understood by staff and Governors.

This guidance applies to formal school visits made for the purpose of Governor monitoring and not to informal visits to the school that Governors may make in any other capacity such as a parent, a member of staff, the Chair making a regular visit to see the Headteacher, helping at a school event, volunteering in school or attending a school function or educational visit.

Consultation

This guidance was written by the Director of Governance in consultation with the Trust Board, the COO, the Governance team and Local Governors.

This guidance should be shared with staff in school.

Procedures and Practice

Formal Governor Monitoring - How Governors are Linked

Governors can be linked in a number of ways, but the focus of any formal monitoring visit should be linked to a priority in the School Improvement Plan as the Governors role is strategic and the plan is the schools and Governors strategic plan.

The LGC should produce an annual plan of visits, spread evenly across the year to cover the key issues as identified in the school improvement plan and any other key areas as determined by the LGC. There must be a Governor linked to Safeguarding but you may also look to link Governors to other key areas such as SEND, Pupil Premium, Catch Up Funding, Wellbeing, Health and Safety, this list is not exhaustive and is determined by the needs of individual schools.

There should be 2/3 visits per year as determined by the focus but no more than one a term of up to an hour maximum in length, unless otherwise pre-determined as necessarily longer.

Visits are arranged by the Governor with the Headteacher/subject lead. Ideally visits should fall in line with the school existing timetable of internal monitoring where possible to ensure a joined up approach and to reduce repetition.

It may be possible for visits to take place outside of the timings of the normal school day where appropriate and convenient for both the member of staff and the Governor.

Benefits of Monitoring

To Governors:

- To be able to raise direct questions
- To develop a greater understanding of areas/activities
- To gather information and provide oversight
- To clarify if something is happening (policy/procedure/action/improvement)
- To develop knowledge of strengths and areas for development
- To gain background information to support challenge
- To see improvements to celebrate
- To see the impact of previous LGC decisions
- To be ready for Ofsted
- To develop effective relationships with the staff
- To get to know pupils
- To recognise different teaching styles
- To understand the environment in which staff work
- To monitor policies in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

To staff:

- To demonstrate to Governors the reality of the school and classroom
- To highlight areas to celebrate and improvements
- To highlight challenges
- To get to know Governors
- To demonstrate their contribution and progress towards a school improvement plan key issue (where applicable)
- To better understand the Governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion

Protocol/Process for Visits

Before

- Identify objectives of the visit and link to school improvement plan
- Arrange a time and date with adequate notice & share the purpose of the visit with the member of staff
- Ask the member of staff how they want you to integrate into the visit if you need to be in class, clarify is there any specific do's or don't in that particular environment
- Ask the member of staff if it is possible to see any relevant supporting documents beforehand to aid with preparation

- Ensure you are familiar with any relevant/related school policy
- Prepare questions and submit to staff in advance if possible.

During

Governors make visit on behalf of the LGC. **It is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on behalf of the LGC.**

- Be punctual
- Keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible
- Only get involved with the pupils, if in a classroom, as directed by the member of staff
- Observe discretely
- Only take notes when appropriate to do so for the purpose of discussion points or to inform your feedback. Be clear with the member of staff the purpose of any note taking
- Do not distract staff during a lesson, interact, don't interrupt
- Be courteous, friendly but neutral and not critical
- Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit
- Listen to staff and pupils
- Adhere to all safeguarding practices
- Observe protocol and be sensitive to surroundings
- Discuss what you have observed with the member of staff
- Clarify any issue you are unclear about with the member of staff

After

- Thank the member of staff for their time and arrange a follow up visit if appropriate
- Discuss your visit including any concerns with the Headteacher immediately or soon after the visit
- Write a draft report using the attached proforma. Consider whether the purpose of has been achieved. Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have you learnt more about the school? What's the impact of the visit and what next?
- In the report be open, honest, positive and respectful, using professional language
- Submit your draft report to the Headteacher for approval
- Share the draft report, after consideration by the Headteacher, with the member of staff
- Share the approved report at the next appropriate LGC meeting
- The Board of Directors may request copies of report be submitted to demonstrate accountability in key areas.

Conduct, Protocol and Confidentiality

Governor visits to school are not a form of inspection. Governors must not make any judgments about the professional expertise of staff. That is the role of the Headteacher. Judgements should not be articulated verbally or in writing and it should be made clear to staff that this is not the Governors role.

Governors must adhere to the LGC Code of Conduct and the standards of presentation expected of all staff.

Governors should be mindful that whilst undertaking Governor duties they are a representative of the whole LGC through their words and actions.

Governor must be mindful of the workload on staff and adhere to agreed timings for visits, as must staff be with Governors.

Where relevant Governors should ask questions about teaching and learning with a focus on the progress of groups not individual pupils.

Governors should keep an open mind and not express personal opinions on controversial issues if pressed.

Governors have no automatic right of access to the school. Therefore, Governors should not turn up unannounced. All visits should be prearranged as a matter of courtesy and to ensure appropriate preparation can be undertaken.

Governors should never be put in a position where they would be unaccompanied or are likely to become unaccompanied with pupils.

Governor monitoring visits should not be used as an opportunity to check on the progress of a Governor's own child or pursue a personal agenda or issue.

Governor visits might involve sitting in on part/all of a lesson, meeting with a member of staff, observing an anonymised book scrutiny or anonymised pupil progress meeting alongside a member of staff, undertaking a guided learning walk with a clear focus around the school, examining documentation/data, reviewing anonymised logs, observing a subject deep dive.

Where Governors are to ask questions of pupils these should be agreed in advance.

Confidentiality must be adhered to regarding visits. Verbal feedback should be limited to the Headteacher/senior leader but not with other staff, parents, or pupils. Staff and pupils must be anonymised in any report.

Monitoring and Review

This Trust guidance will be reviewed every 3 years by the Director of Governance in conjunction with the COO and Governance Team.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Visits Report Proforma



Bishop Wilkinson
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Part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust
Company Registration Number 07890590

ADD School Name
ADD School Logo
Governor Monitoring Rolling Report 2021/22

Focus

School Improvement Plan Link/s

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| | |
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| Date | |
| Attendees | |

Summary of Activities

Impact of Visit

Staff Comments

Next Meeting Date –

Next Meeting Focus/Further Questions

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