

INSPIRE

INCLUDE

INTEGRITY

EXCEED



Director/Governor Visit Policy

Status	Statutory
Version	5
Responsible Directors' Board	Full Board of Directors
Responsible Persons	Head of Governance and Policy
Date Policy Reviewed	August 2024
Next Review Date	September 2025
Academy to implement without Amendment, using appendix when required	



Exceed Learning Partnership
 • EVERY CHILD • EVERY CHANCE • EVERY DAY •

Summary of Changes from Previous Version

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Updates
V1	November 2020	B Nixon/J Tuke	New Policy
V2	September 2021	A Hibbitt	Update made to Annex B - Record for a governor's school visit to reflect Governor and Director
V3	September 2022	A Hibbitt	Review Completed, no changes
V4	September 2024	HOGPC	Review Completed, no changes
V5	August 2024	HOGP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer to new template and reformat • Academy Improvement Plan renamed to Academy Development Plan • Removed reference to Headteacher and updated to Principal/Head of School • Updated section relating to annual governor visit plan to indicate the plan is a requirement rather than just being 'helpful' to have. • Updated Governor Visit template to include section to document observations relating to Academy Leadership.

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1. Introduction

The Trust Board and the Local Governing Boards of Exceed Learning Partnership have three main roles. These are strategic direction, critical friend and accountability. Visiting the academy/school in session helps to develop and understand the roles and is the best way to learn how the academy functions so that you can increase the governing board's first-hand knowledge and inform strategic decision making.

Through visits Directors/Governors will have the opportunity to observe policies and plans being implemented, which will help make well-informed judgements about progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the Academy Development Plan. The number and frequency of visits will vary.

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the Academy Development Plan and cover a wide range of activities. Each visit should be agreed in advance and have a clear purpose. Directors/governors should arrange these visits with the Principal/Head of School who has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the academy.

2. Potential Benefits

To Directors/Governors:

- Recognise and celebrate success
- Develop relationships with staff
- Get to know the children
- Recognise different teaching styles
- Understand the environment in which teachers teach
- Monitor policies in action
- Find out what resources are needed and prioritise them
- Deepen understanding and increase confidence and knowledge
- Inform decision making

To Teachers:

- Ensure directors/governors understand the reality of the classroom
- Get to know directors/governors
- Understand better their director/governor roles and responsibilities
- Have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- Highlight the need for particular resources

Governor visits are not:

- A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise of the teacher
- An opportunity to check on the progress of own children
- An opportunity to pursue a personal agenda
- The chance to monopolise academy/teacher time

3. Roles and Responsibilities of Directors/Governors, Principal and other Staff

The governing board should, with the help of the Principal/Head of School and staff, organise an annual schedule of school visits throughout the year. The Principal/Head of School will guide the governing board on the areas of the curriculum, policies and Academy Development Plan priorities and targets to be covered each term.

Individual director/governors or pairs of directors/governors will, with the guidance of the whole governing board, identify an aspect of the school's work to focus on in order to deepen their understanding.

4. Guidelines

Preparing for a visit

- Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the Academy Development Plan? What are the relevant Trust Policies? How does this determine the activities I am interested in?
- Discuss an agenda with the Principal/Head of School well in advance. Make sure that the date chosen is mutually agreed and convenient.
- Use the school visits pro forma – see Appendix B
- The Principal/Head of School will share the agenda with staff involved. Will directors/governors visit a class, undertake a learning walk. Will it be helpful to see relevant documents beforehand?

During the Visit

- Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the governing board.
- Directors/governors do not make judgements or promises - it is a visit not an inspection.
- Be punctual, courteous and considerate at all times, respecting the professional roles of the Principal/Head teacher and staff.
- If visiting a class, agree with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the class will be and what involvement you will have with children.
- Observe discretely - don't distract the teacher during the lesson but be prepared to talk and show interest.
- Interact, don't interrupt - listen to staff and pupils.

Teachers and support staff will at all times be courteous and considerate, recognising the contribution made by the governing board to the academy.

They may make practical suggestions on the focus for director/governor visits to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This could include specifying the evidence that could be

shared with directors/governors. See Appendix A for a list of things which directors/governors could examine/explore. Whenever practical they will invite their link/curriculum directors/governors to relevant staff meetings and training sessions. Questions will be invited from directors/governors, while being sensitive to issues of confidentiality. See annex B for examples of questions which could be asked. Although these focus on literacy, numeracy and SEND, many of the questions can easily be adapted to other areas of the curriculum.

After the visit

- Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about.
- Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved
- Thank the teacher for supporting you in your role as a governor. Be open, honest & positive.
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind and share the report with the Principal/Head teacher for agreement that it is a true reflection of the visit.
- Reflect on the visit, for example: how did that go? Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learnt more about the academy? Have I gained more confidence in my role as director/governor?

Reporting your visit

- All director/governor visits should be recorded and shared. This helps demonstrate the involvement directors/governors have in the life of the school and how they support their own learning.
- Write a short summary of what you learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. This will be easier if the visit had a focus. See Appendix B for a report format.
- You must circulate a draft to the Principal/Head teacher and staff involved for them to check the accuracy and clarity. Be prepared to amend it. Aim to achieve a report that is agreed by all those involved.
- Have the report added to the next available agenda of the Governing Board and be prepared to answer questions from other directors/governors.

Visit Focus

Although not an exhaustive list visits may focus on:

- Particular subjects, key stages or classes
- Academy leadership
- The use made of the building or the site
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Special educational needs
- Literacy and numeracy

- The use of ICT equipment
- The impact on the academy of any changes e.g. reduced classes in key stage
- Impact of specific targets identified in the Academy Improvement Plan
- Impact of Staff Professional Learning

Policy Agreed November 2020 and reviewed August 2024

Signed CEO: *B.A. Nixon*

Signed: Chair of Directors: *J. Blundell*

Policy to be reviewed in September 2025

Appendix A: Monitoring and Questions

Governor Monitoring can take several forms:

- Meeting with subject leaders/head of year/house/support staff
- Snapshot of a lesson
- Discussions with pupils
- Walk around the academy

Aims:

- To know and understand the level of enjoyment pupils have for a subject
- Understand what pupils like best/least in the school
- Know the standards of achievement in a subject area
- Know what steps are being taken to improve standards
- Know how well strategic policies approved by directors/governors are working
- To report main findings back to the full governing board

Observations to make when visiting a classroom

- Relationship between all staff in the classroom and pupils
- Relationship between pupils
- Variety of teaching styles
- Availability and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils – are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- How pupils are grouped? How different abilities are catered for?
- Children's work & Displays
- Ethos – the atmosphere and values that are evident (are expectations high, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space, quality and quantity of equipment and resources
- Health and safety regulations practiced i.e. fire exits kept clear

Questions

To ask pupils:

- Tell me about what you are learning today
- Do you like (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Tell me what you most like doing in (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Is there anything you don't like in (select curriculum area being monitored)

To ask subject leaders/co-ordinators:

- What is your vision for the subject?
- What were the Ofsted findings about the subject?
- What are the strengths of the subject and areas for development? How do you know?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress across the school in this subject?
- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?

- What resources does the school have for the subject and how are these organised?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching this subject?

In the classroom

Question	Possible features of answer	Notes of answer
Help me to understand how you plan your lessons: how do you get from the National Curriculum to deciding what pupils will be doing in Science today?	National Curriculum Key stage plan Scheme of Work Year/termly/weekly/daily plans Individual plans	
How do you judge how well pupils are learning and making progress?	Questioning in lessons Marking Assessments Target-setting and achieving Value-added data	
What learning resources are available to your pupils and how do they learn effectively?	ICT – access to equipment Use of library Use of basics like pens and pencils. Good labelling Borrowed resources	
How do you cope with the needs of different pupils?	Boys/girls Most able/ SEN D English as an additional Lang Behavioural Disabled	
How do you decide to seat children and arrange the classroom? Does it ever vary and why?	Ability groups Mixed or single age groups Boy-girl patterns Different for different activities	
How do you encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning?	Regular contact Reports Parent evenings Letters Diaries	

Communication

- How are parents kept informed of progress?
- How do you gather parent's views? Has action been taken on their views?
- What steps are taken to encourage parents to support their children in reading/writing at home?

Appendix B: Record of Governor School Visit

Academy:	Date:	Name/Area of Responsibility:
Reason for Visit:		
Area of session focus:		
Discussions / Outcomes:		
Safeguarding Discussions/Outcomes:		
Wellbeing Discussions:		
Academy Leadership Observations:		
Next Steps / Further Action required:		
Evaluation of Visit:		
Signed (Academy Principal/Head of School):	Signed (Governor):	