Director/Governor Visit Policy

Status	Statutory
Version	6
Responsible Directors' Board	Full Board of Directors
Responsible Persons	Head of Governance and Policy
Date Policy Reviewed	July 2025
Next Review Date	September 2026
Academy to implement without Amendment, using appendix when required	

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

INSPIRE

INCLUDE

INTEGRITY

EXCEED

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	• 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.
V6	July 2025	HOGP	• Updated Appendix with link to Monitoring forms on Governance Hub and copies of templates • Added Review Section - The Head of Governance and Policy will review the frequency, breadth, and quality of director/governor visits annually to ensure alignment with Trust strategic objectives. Findings will be shared with the Audit and Risk Committee.

Contents

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 Executive Principal/Principal/Head of School who has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the academy.

This policy is to be used as part of Governor and Director Induction and throughout the academic year by all Governors and Directors.

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 of School 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 of School 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?

- All observations and reports must be treated as confidential and handled in line with the Trust's Data Protection and GDPR Policy

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 of School 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.

- Templates for recording these visits are listed within the Appendices of this Policy.

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
- Health and Safety
- Triangulation through parent voice where appropriate, especially for pupils receiving Pupil Premium and those with SEND.

Review

The Head of Governance and Policy will review the frequency, breadth, and quality of director/governor visits annually to ensure alignment with Trust strategic objectives. Findings will be shared with the Audit and Risk Committee.

Policy Agreed November 2020 and reviewed July 2025

Signed CEO: B.A. Nixon

Signed: Chair of Directors: Pat Hogan

Policy to be reviewed in September 2026

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

Governor Monitoring form templates are available via Governance Hub

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:

Health and Safety/Compliance:

Leadership Observations:

Next Steps / Further Action required:

Evaluation of Visit:

Signed (Academy Principal/Head of School):	Signed (Governor):

Appendix C – Safeguarding Governor Monitoring Form

Academy:	Date:	Name/Area of Responsibility: Safeguarding

Reason for Visit:
- Provide strategic oversight of safeguarding processes in the academy
- Ensure accountability of the academy leadership in delivering effective safeguarding practice
- Provide supervision and coaching for safeguarding leaders

Area of session focus:
- Compliance

Discussions / Outcomes:
Context- to be pre-populated by the DSL

Number of CP cases (individual children)	Number of CIN cases (individual children)	Early Help Cases where the academy is lead	Early Help Cases where the academy is not the lead	Number of MASH referrals during review window	Number of FGM cases	Number of Prevent referrals	Number of HSB referrals / incidents

Agenda (suggested 2 hours)
- Discussion with the DSL - questions below can support the dialogue
- Consider pupil voice surveys
- Check the overall compliance of the Single Central Record

Further potential activities
- Discussion with DSL pupils feelings about school safety
- Site walk - review the safety of the setting
- Meet with Personal Development Leader to review the safeguarding curriculum
- Discussion with staff working directly with vulnerable pupils- to include well-being and training

Discussion questions	Yes/No/To an extent
Policy and compliance	
Is the Academy Safeguarding Policy up to date and compliant with KCSIE?	
How is the Academy Safeguarding Policy shared with staff and parents?	
When was the Single Central Record (SCR) last audited - were there any gaps?	
How are safeguarding updates or changes to legislation cascaded to staff?	
Training	
Have all staff completed statutory safeguarding training? When? View Evidence.	
What arrangements are in place to assure that visitors or contractors are safe to be working with children?	

Do staff know how to report concerns, including low-level concerns?	
What additional training have staff received (e.g Prevent / FGM / online safety)?	
How are new staff and volunteers inducted in safeguarding procedures?	
Culture and Pupil Voice	
How do we know that children feel safe in school?	
How is safeguarding taught throughout the curriculum?	
Which pupil groups are most vulnerable - how are they supported?	
What was the outcome of the latest pupil voice survey? What actions have been taken?	
Leadership	
Who is the DSL? What is the structure of deputies?	
How is safeguarding discussed at leadership meetings?	
What is the mechanism for supervising the DSL?	
What support has been received from the Trust (e.g. Assurance cycle visits)	
Contextual needs	
What are the contextual safeguarding needs of the academy? How are these being met?	
What systems are in place to manage online safety?	
How are leaders assured that referrals to MASH are followed up effectively?	

Comments arising from discussions and activities:

Next Steps / Further Action required:

Evaluation of Visit:

Signed (Academy DSL)

Signed (Academy Principal/Head of School):	**Signed (Governor):**

Appendix D – SEND Governor Monitoring Form

Academy:	Date:	Name/Area of Responsibility: Inclusion - SEND

Reason for Visit:
- Ensuring high quality outcomes for pupils with SEND To champion the school's support for pupils with SEND, including good practice in pupil engagement

Area of session focus:
- SEND

Discussions / Outcomes:

Context- to be pre-populated by the SENDCO

Percentage of SEND support	Percentage of EHCP	Breakdown is of pupils with SEND by category of need

Agenda (suggested 2 hours)
- Discussion with the SENDCO - questions below can support the dialogue
- Consider parent and pupil voice samples including surveys
- Review an EHCP and discuss how funding is allocated and spent
- Documentation review (see section below)

Further potential activities
- Discussion with SEND pupils- feelings about school including sense of belonging and safety
- Learning walk
- Visit to SEND provision (essential if academy has bespoke provision)
- Discussion with staff working directly with SEND pupils - to include wellbeing and training

Discussion questions	Yes/No/To an extent
Does the academy promote an inclusive culture?	
Is there effective communication and engagement between the academy and parents of pupils with SEN and disabilities?	
Are parents involved in the SEN and disability policy review?	
Is pupil voice considered in decisions about support for those with SEN and disabilities at both individual and school level?	
Are staff well-trained related to SEN and disabilities?	
Does the school have robust systems for identifying pupils with SEND?	
Is there a clear graduated approach for responding to pupil needs?	
Are pupils supported in reaching adulthood (if applicable, can link to careers curriculum).	

SENDCO ● Is the SENDCO qualified? ● Do they have sufficient administrative support and time to their fulfil responsibilities?	
Documentation ● Is the SEND information report up to date and online? ● Is there equality information? ● Are equality objectives updated? ● Is there an accessibility plan (setting out how the school plans to increase access for disabled pupils to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information)	
Are pupils with SEND achieving well compared to national comparatives?	
Do pupils with SEND and disability have good attendance compared to other pupils and national comparisons?	
Do pupils with SEND participate in: ● after school clubs ● breakfast club provision ● trips/residentials ● sporting activities	

Comments arising from discussions and activities:

While the primary focus of the monitoring visit is not Safeguarding, Wellbeing, Health & Safety/Compliance or Leadership these areas remain important and should be taken into account during all Academy visits. Please include any observations that may require the Board's attention.

Safeguarding:

Wellbeing:

Health & Safety/Compliance:

Next Steps / Further Action required:

Evaluation of Visit:

Signed (Academy SENDCO)

Signed (Academy Principal/Head of School):	**Signed (Governor):**

Appendix E – Pupil Premium Governor Monitoring Form

Academy:	Date:	Name/Area of Responsibility: Inclusion - pupil premium

Reason for Visit:
- Monitor and review the impact of how Pupil Premium funding is used within the academy and contribute to the strategy for its use.
- Review academy data relating to the performance of disadvantaged pupils, gaps in attainment and progress.
- Support leaders in evaluating and sustaining the impact of their strategies.

Area of session focus:
- Pupil Premium

Discussions / Outcomes:
Context- to be pre-populated by the pupil premium lead

Whole school PP (number and %)	

Agenda (suggested 1.5 hours)
- Discussion with pupil premium lead
- Review of pupil premium strategy including evaluation of the previous year
- Review of pupil premium attendance data
- Review of data related to pupil premium take-up in wider experiences such as trips, after school clubs and sporting events
- Review of leaders analysis of interventions and impact

Further potential activities
- Discussion with pupil premium pupils - feelings about school including sense of belonging and safety
- Learning walk
- Watching interventions
- Discussion about provision for the first 20%

Discussion questions	Yes/No/To an extent
Is the pupil premium strategy up to date and on the academy website?	
Are leaders clear about the challenges their disadvantage pupils face? (This should be contained in their pupil premium strategy. Ensure you are satisfied that leaders *know* these are the barriers.)	
Are barriers addressed through: high-quality teaching, targeted academic support and wider strategies such as attendance initiatives?	
Is funding spent in line with conditions of the grant (here)	
Are leaders clear about the intended outcomes they are aiming for by the end of the current strategy plan?	

In deciding how to spend the funding, do leaders consider research such as the EEF toolkit?	
Have leaders effectively evaluated outcomes from the previous year? Do they know which initiatives created the biggest impact?	
Do pupil premium children achieve well compared to non-pupil premium children in the academy? (Consider all data: EYFS, phonics, end of year outcomes and attainment at the end of year 6)	
Do pupil premium children achieve well compared to pupil premium children nationally?	
Do leaders know which year groups and which pupils need more support to achieve?	
Are support staff well-trained to support quality first teaching?	
Do leaders have a clear rationale for interventions and do they know the impact?	
How well is the school using Pupil Premium funding to support pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning and a thirst for knowledge across all learning contexts?	
Where support is focused on wider issues in pupils' and their families' lives and / or to widen opportunity, is there evidence that this support is improving engagement and contributing to closing performance gaps?	
Do pupil premium children have good attendance compared to other pupils and national comparisons?	
Do pupils with pupil premium participate in: ● after school clubs ● breakfast club provision ● trips/residentials ● sporting activities	

Comments arising from discussions and activities:

While the primary focus of the monitoring visit is not Safeguarding, Wellbeing, Health & Safety/Compliance or Leadership these areas remain important and should be taken into account during all Academy visits. Please include any observations that may require the Board's attention.

Safeguarding:

Wellbeing:

Health & Safety/Compliance:

Next Steps / Further Action required:
Evaluation of Visit:
Signed (Academy Pupil Premium lead)

Signed (Academy Principal/Head of School):	**Signed (Governor):**