

# FORMAL GOVERNOR VISITS 2008



## Context

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Governors wish to ensure that our students get the best possible education. It is essential therefore that they build up a good knowledge of the content and effectiveness of the education being provided at Ratton.

“Individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish. However, they need to be able to visit from time to time in order to develop their understanding of the school to enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school.”

A Guide to the Law for School Governors 2007

Visits to Ratton by governors during the time that the school is in operation gives them important insights that they can gain in no other way. If governors are to carry out their role they need to have an understanding of the way schools work and a feel for the dynamics of our school. There is no better way of gaining this information than by visiting the school at work. However, although school visits are important for many reasons they form only one part of the governors’ wider role.

The main reasons for governors to make formal visits are to monitor school improvement and support, and hold to account “Curriculum Areas Causing Concern”. However, visits also help governors:

- to learn about our school
- to enable the governing body to fulfil its accountability role
- to show those employed in the school that they are interested

“Governors are very supportive. They have a good knowledge of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and are actively involved in helping the school to improve.”

OfSTED 2007

Status	Non Statutory
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## Purpose

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Visits should be undertaken as part of a strategic programme to:

- improve governor knowledge of the school, its staff, needs, priorities, strengths, and weaknesses
- monitor and assess the priorities as outlined in the development plan
- assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties

Before visiting the school the governor(s) should:

- inform the school of the visit and seek approval of the arrangements
- ensure that they are familiar with health and safety procedures, including what to do in the event of a fire

After visiting the school the governor(s) should:

- complete a visit report outlining the objectives and results of the visit
- report back to the committee or governing body as appropriate
- provide constructive feedback as appropriate

It is important that governors remember that the purpose of these visits is neither to assess the quality of teaching provision nor to pursue issues that relate to the day to day management of the school, other than as agreed with the Headteacher.

Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors, Staff, Students, and Parents</li> </ul>
Relationship to other policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Relationship to standard operating procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the Role of Governors: Operating Procedures</li> <li>• Protocol for formal Governor visits</li> <li>• Governor Visit form</li> </ul>

Role	Responsibility
Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish this policy</li> <li>• Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy</li> <li>• Follow the protocol for governor visits</li> </ul>
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure structures are in place to support the effective implementation of this policy by facilitating governor visits</li> <li>• Consult on this policy</li> </ul>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and engage with governor visits</li> <li>• Follow the protocol for governor visits</li> </ul>

### Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation

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Date established by Governing body:	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2008
Date for full implementation:	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2008
Date of review:	March 2010

## ANNEXES

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### PROTOCOL FOR FORMAL GOVERNOR VISITS

The following gives guidance on the protocols surrounding formal visits by governors.

#### For Governing Bodies

- Ensure that the policy on governors' visits, and a system for reporting back, have been agreed with staff
- Recognise that school visits are primarily for governors to gain firsthand knowledge of the school at work
- Ensure that each visit has an explicit purpose and focus, which have been agreed by all concerned
- Ensure that there are agreed timescales for governors' visits, usually giving at least seven days clear notice
- Recognise that any visit can be stressful and disrupt normal classroom working, and that therefore the number of visits should be limited
- Respect the normal conventions of governor confidentiality, in particular issues surrounding named staff or students

#### For Individual Governors

- Negotiate a mutually convenient time with the relevant member of staff for the visit and discussion afterwards, recognising that staff and governors' time is valuable
- Ensure that any visit has an explicit purpose and focus, which have been agreed with all concerned
- Avoid stressful periods such as during, or just before, an Ofsted inspection, or an examination period
- Always wear a name badge
- Avoid making promises to staff on behalf of the governing body
- Respect the normal conventions of governor confidentiality, in particular issues surrounding named staff or students

#### For Staff

- Always feel able to suggest an alternative time if the visit is not convenient
- Ensure that each visit has an explicit purpose and focus, which have been agreed by all concerned
- Prepare for the visit of a governor
- Be aware that a visit can be stressful for staff and governors alike
- Inform the governor if you wish them to be involved in a lesson, and what it would be helpful for them to do
- Raise any concerns over the visit with your line manager
- Avoid discussing unrelated issues during the visit

	<b>Governor Visit Report</b>	
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<b>Report written by (Governor):</b>	
<b>Date of visit:</b>	

<b>Report circulated to:</b>
Headteacher - for checking before distribution to all Governors
Additional recipients (please specify)

<b><u>Purpose of Visit</u></b>

<b>Key activities undertaken (please indicate)</b>			
Meetings and discussions		Tour of school	
Scrutiny of documentation		Lesson Observation	
Other			

<b>Who was involved (please indicate)</b>			
Headteacher		Students	
Member(s) of Leadership Team (please specify)			
Middle Leader (please specify)			
Others (please specify)			

<b>1. Follow up from previous visit</b>
Include impact of any agreed actions

<b>2. Summary of visit</b>
What was discussed?

<b>3. Agreed Actions</b>		
Actions	By whom	By when

**4. Support Required**

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**5. Additional Comments**

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*If you would like to comment on any aspect of the visit or report, please contact the Headteacher*