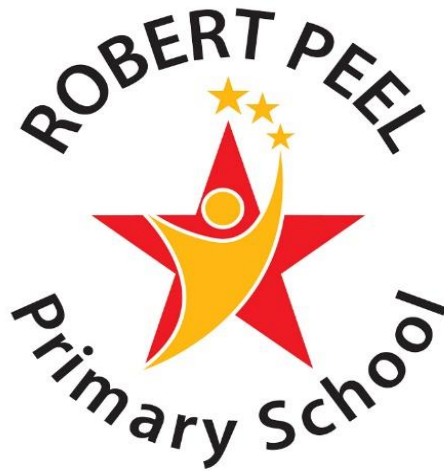


# Robert Peel Primary School

## Governor Visit Policy



Date policy last reviewed: September 2022

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Introduction**

- Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school by staff.
- The key role and responsibility of the Governing Body is to hold the school to account through evaluation of the progress and performance of the school.
- Undertaking visits into school is a proactive way of demonstrating the Governors' commitment to the strategic development of the school.
- Visits to school will enable Governors to meet children, talk to staff (teaching and non-teaching staff), see lessons and other school activities underway and hear the views of parents. Through these engagements with stakeholders, the Governing Body is able to increase its understanding of some of the issues they are required to discuss and make decisions about.
- Each visit should be agreed in advance and have a clear objective.

There are many aspects of school life that will benefit from a visit by a governor.

- The purpose of a visit may have been determined at a committee or full governing body meeting.
- Not all visits will involve meetings with teachers and children, e.g. Finance Governor meeting with Office Staff.
- A Link Governor has a responsibility for a specific aspect of life within the school, which include— Subject Areas, Finance, Safeguarding, Premises, SEND, GDPR and Pupil Premium.
- When Subject Link Governors visit school, their focus will be on aspects of the work going on in different year groups across the school and will almost certainly involve meeting with teachers and visiting classrooms to see the children in their learning environment.
- Other link Governors will focus their visits on the aspects of school life for which they have a particular responsibility e.g. safeguarding visit.
- All Governors are expected to take on a link governor role.

## **Benefits of Visits**

Visits enable Governors to:

- Recognise and celebrate success within the school
- See the school at work – “see the reality not just the data”
- Witness at first hand the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements within the school
- Learn about different aspects of school life
- Bring active support to the staff and the activities of the school
- See successful teaching & learning practises underway in the classroom
- Learn about the barriers to teaching and learning and the intervention strategies employed by the school
- Gain awareness of the impact on the school of Governing Body decisions
- Evaluate resources and discuss resource requirements with staff
- Learn how funding is allocated to the school and review the impact of the funding
- Gain first-hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- See policies in action
- Assist the Governing Body in evaluate the progress made in relation to the SIP
- Enrich discussions at Committee and GB meetings and inform decision making
- Provide feedback to other Governors and the SLT

## Frequency of Visits

The Governors visiting programme is an integral part of the school's yearly monitoring calendar. Guidelines state that a Governor should attend the school during school time at least once a year. However, Robert Peel Governors are encouraged to make approximately one visit a term during school time and are welcome to visit more so long as the purpose of the visit is supportive to the school (e.g. governors listening to reading, helping on a school trip etc).

It is important that Governor Visits do not take up too much of school staff's working time. Similarly it is recognised that not all Governors are able to take very much time out of their working day to visit the school. As such the following guides to the frequency and length of visits is meant to be just that – a guide.

## Link Governor Suggested Visits

<b>Term</b>	<b>Length (approx.)</b>	<b>Type of Visit</b>
Autumn (near the start of term)	20-30 minutes	Meet with teachers to "set the scene" for the year. i.e. introductions, teachers plans for the year, agree programme of visits, areas of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) that will be a focus of the visits
Autumn	A morning or afternoon	Curriculum learning visit where governors have an opportunity to understand how children in the school learn through active engagement with the children during a lesson. These visits will focus on a particular purpose, already agreed with the teachers, e.g. to see children using a particular resource, engaging in small group working, participating in a particular learning strategy – this monitoring is to be directly linked to an aspect of the School Improvement Plan.
Autumn	20-30 minutes	Meet with teachers and Support Staff as a follow up to the classroom visits to enable governors to ask follow up questions based on their experience in the classroom, and to ask any other questions relevant to the visit's focus.
Spring	A morning or afternoon	Curriculum Learning visit (as above)
Spring	20-30 minutes	Meet with Teachers & Support Staff (as above)
Summer	A morning or afternoon	Curriculum Learning visit (as above)
Summer	20-30 minutes	Meet with Teachers & Support Staff (as above) to include a closing summary of what benefits the year's visits have brought to governor and staff.

**Other Link Governors, e.g. SEND Governor, Safeguarding Governor, Finance Governor, Premises, GDPR and PPG Governor conduct a termly meeting under the following structure**

Term	Length	Type of Visit
Autumn/Spring/Summer	Up to 1 hour once or twice per term	Meeting with members of staff with responsibility for the “speciality” subject, frequency will depend on the particular needs of the subject (Head Teacher to advise)

**Guidelines for Visits**

Governors visit the school to enhance their understanding of the schools work and to help fulfil their responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating the school. The purpose of each visit by Governors to the school will reflect the priorities in the School Improvement Plan and the specific interests and responsibilities of Governors. Commentaries from visits will be kept together for reference purposes in the Heads’ office and not kept privately by members of the Governing Body.

	Always	Please Never
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree purpose of visit.</li> <li>• Agree how much time (a timetable is a good idea).</li> <li>• Agree when you will discuss the visit with the member of staff.</li> <li>• Consider practicalities (dress, parking, time of arrival, who to report to, signing in procedure, how to make notes, breaks and lunch)</li> <li>• Find out how each teacher wants you to contribute (or not) e.g. Do you join in the lesson?</li> <li>• Share your pro-forma and checklist with the teacher and explain how you will use it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn up unannounced or late.</li> <li>• Fail to sign in.</li> <li>• Insist on a visit if a member of staff states that it is inconvenient.</li> </ul>
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree how you will introduce yourself to staff and pupils with the teacher (but be concise).</li> <li>• Agree with the teacher how s/he wants to use you in the classroom e.g. helping a child who has difficulty etc.</li> <li>• Agree when/how you will ask questions to increase understanding.</li> <li>• Remain focused on the purpose of the visit.</li> <li>• Respect teachers rights to take a break.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk in with a clipboard.</li> <li>• Arrive with preconceived ideas.</li> <li>• Interrupt the teacher.</li> <li>• Make professional judgements about staff expertise (Governors are not inspectors).</li> <li>• Pursue your own personal agenda/focus on the progress of your own child or others known to you.</li> <li>• Monopolise the children’s or the staffs time.</li> </ul>

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Please Never</b>
<b>After</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank the teacher and pupils.</li> <li>• Discuss visit with the teacher and share any insights.</li> <li>• Write a thank you note to the teacher and pupils.</li> <li>• Draft a commentary (using the pro-forma)</li> <li>• Share the report with the Headteacher and teacher.</li> <li>• Prepare to provide a verbal report at the</li> <li>• Governing Body should this be necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass on your commentary without discussing it with the teacher.</li> <li>• Leave without a word.</li> <li>• Raise issues with others before discussing with the teacher involved.</li> </ul>

### **Governor Visits Checklist**

This will be dependent on the purpose of the visit but the following could be considered:

#### **Relationships**

- Is there a pleasant and purposeful learning atmosphere?
- Are the children engaged and motivated?
- Is there an atmosphere of mutual respect where self-esteem is promoted?
- Are all learners valued?
- Are effective Learning Behaviour strategies implemented?

#### **Learning**

- Is the lesson interactive with the children as active rather than passive learners? (examples include the use of questioning from teacher and pupils, talk partners, role play, interactive games etc.)
- Is there a range of activities- provision for different groups?
- Are there sufficient and appropriate resources?
- Are Support Staff used effectively?
- Does classroom organisation promote independence? (examples include organising their own equipment)

#### **Learning Environment**

- Is the classroom organised to that all children can be involved in the lesson? (e.g. Can all see the Interactive Whiteboard, teacher etc?)
- Is equipment easily accessible for the children?
- Is the noise level appropriate to the activity?
- Are the displays attractive and useful for the learner? (Ask "Do they move the learning forward?") N.B. Wall displays are to promote learning and celebrate work produced. This is done in the corridors, class books shared spaces.
- You may wish to consider health and safety and the state of cleanliness/decoration.

## **School Improvement Targets**

The following may be observable:

- Target groups working with the teacher or other adult
- Use of Assessment for Learning, e.g. self and peer assessment
- Assessments (teacher may be observing learning to inform assessment)
- Use of lesson chunking with clear learning objectives/success criteria
- Provision - support and challenge
- Talk partners and spoken language is promoted
- Learning Behaviours are promoted and the language used
- Children active in lessons with high quality outcomes in books

## **During the Visit**

- Governors will at all times report to reception upon arrival and follow the procedure for visitors in order to provide a good example for other visitors.
- If visiting a classroom, the Governor will arrive at the time planned to avoid disrupting the learning and follow the agreed purpose of the visit.
- Governors must be aware that some teachers may feel nervous or stressful about having a visitor in the classroom.
- At the end of the visit Governors will thank everyone concerned, including the children.
- Governors should be aware of their behaviour and avoid any implication that they are inspecting, such as by using a clipboard.

## **Following the Visit**

After visiting the school the Governor(s) will:

- Give some time and thought to reflection
- Consider what went well and what did not go so well with respect to their involvement in the visit
- Consider what they would do differently in a future visit
- Using the form, at the end of policy, to draft a brief description commentating on what was seen in the session relative to the agreed purpose- and agree the contents of this with the staff involved, prior to passing onto the Head, who may in turn decide to share any information with SLT
- Monitor outcomes shared with Governors
- Following completion of the agreed monitoring programme the Governor will report back to the Governing Body or committee as appropriate

## **Roles and Responsibilities – Staff**

The Staff at Robert Peel:

- Welcome visits from governors and appreciate their support.

- Once the staff have received a communication outlining the focus of the visit (including details of any specific questions), then in advance of the visit staff will:
  - Collect any additional information they require for the visit
  - Qualify with the governor any questions they may be unsure about
  - Seek confirmation or elaboration of answers from colleagues

On the day of the visit, staff will:

- Use the visit to provide the governor with an accurate picture of school life
- Communicate with governors clearly and concisely so that minimal follow up communication is necessary
- Provide clarification for any 'educational terms' that may be used
- Involve governors in lessons and provide opportunities to work and talk with pupils
- Stick to the agreed visit focus – there should be no surprise topics, from either side, on the day

## **Roles and Responsibilities – The Governors**

### **Planning the Visit**

- Visits will be undertaken only as part of a strategic programme organised by the Governing Body or one of its committees and with approval of the Head. Frequency of visits will depend on the complexity of the areas of responsibility allocated to them and the availability of appropriate staff and timetabling.
- Governors with responsibilities for subject areas should email the Subject Leader to schedule a visit, outlining purpose etc.
- The Head will be kept informed of, and agree, the subsequent details of the planned visit. At least one weeks' notice of a visit will be provided to teachers.
- If the visit is to involve any member of staff, then that member of staff will be fully involved in the planning through the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The Governor(s) making the visit will make themselves fully acquainted with Health and Safety and safeguarding procedures, including fire safety, prior to the visit.

### **Measuring the Success of this Policy**

The success of this policy will be measured by the extent to which:

- Governors become involved in visits to school
- Governors make more informed decisions
- Staff value the Governors' involvement in their school
- Governors feel more involved in the school
- Governors can demonstrate an enhanced understanding of the schools strengths and weaknesses, needs and priorities.

## Commentary on Governor Visit

Governor:	Date:
Class/Yeargroup	Visiting:
Purpose of Visit:	Link to SIP:
Observations & Comments	
Outcomes & Impact	
Actions or Questions Arising	
Signed	

## Effective Teaching & Learning

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Moderator:</b>	
<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Class:</b>	
<b>Learning Environment &amp; Behaviours</b>		
Are children happy and respectful relationships are evident?	yes	no
Is the classroom tidy and well organised?	yes	no
Is there a variety of displays – information and celebration? (English, Maths, G Rules, Vision)	yes	no
Are resources well set up to enable children to be independent?	yes	no
Are staff alert to the social, emotional, and learning needs of individuals?	yes	no
Are pupils engaged, working hard, applying themselves, concentrating and being productive?	yes	no
<b>Promotion of Spoken Language &amp; Questioning</b>		
Can pupils describe what they are <b>LEARNING</b> as opposed to what they are <i>doing</i> ? Describing strategies and processes.	yes	no
Is there evidence that the children's vocabulary is being extended? Especially in relation to subject specific vocabulary.	yes	no
Do staff use 'no hands up' and thinking time given?	yes	no
Is language and standard English modelled by staff?		
Is there a variety of open and closed questions being used?	yes	no
Do children have opportunities to collaborate and talk/share their ideas with others in the lesson?	yes	no
• Individually	yes	no
• With partners	yes	no
• In groups	yes	no
<b>Teaching Strategies</b>		
Are pupils applying previous skills and knowledge and making links?	yes	no
Is content modelled using clear, precise language?	yes	no
Are misconceptions anticipated and used as a teaching opportunity?	yes	no
Is there a balance of teacher talk and children working?	yes	no
Are children confident to explain/share learning?	yes	no
Is scaffolding used to build learning?	yes	no
Is chunking used with guided practice/ independent practice?	yes	no
Are visualisers/teacher book used?	yes	no
Are mistakes accepted as part of learning?	yes	no
Is feedback given by all staff?	yes	no
Are good examples of outcomes and learning used?	yes	no
<b>Provision</b>		
Are there differences in the learning and provision of different groups or individuals? Are different strategies and resources utilised?	yes	no
Are adults being used effectively to support the provision in the classroom? Not standing on the periphery but fully involved in the learning. Positioning of children in the classroom.	yes	no
Is there aspiration for all children?	yes	no
<b>Any Actions arising from Drop In</b>		

# Provision/Intervention Learning Walk

<b>Date: Week Beg:</b>
<b>Persons Involved:</b>
<b>Class:</b>
<b>Staff/Members of Staff:</b>
<b>Class Provision Map</b>
<b>I Saw:</b>
<b>I Heard:</b>
<b>I Noticed:</b>
<b>I Wondered:</b>

**Good provision/interventions observed:**

**Possible questions to move provision/interventions forward:**