



## **Hawkswood Group**

Executive Headteacher: Catherine Davies

# **HAWKSWOOD GROUP**

## **Governors Visits Procedures**

### **Context**

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the Hawkswood Group schools. Undertaking visits which focus on an aspect of the Hawkswood Development Plan or one of the Governors' statutory duties demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. Each Governor is encouraged to make at least one visit a year during school time and governors will often monitor an area of the School Development Plan in pairs (with a member of the school's SLT) in accordance with the agreed timetable.

The Governing Body at Hawkswood Group has a responsibility to keep in touch with what is happening in the classroom. Although their role is strategic, it is important that they have some understanding of the practicalities of the job. Meeting children, talking to staff and seeing lessons underway will help members of the Governing Body to understand some of the issues they are required to discuss and make decisions about with greater clarity.

### **Visits enable Governors to:**

- See the school/s at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Get to know the staff and demonstrate their commitment to the school
- Give active support to the staff and the activities of the school
- Be aware of the effect of change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- Evaluate resources and discuss with staff further requirements
- Gain first hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- Work in partnership with the staff and provide support for the Executive Headteacher or Headteacher

### **Before making a visit Governors will:**

- Contact the Executive Headteacher and agree a date, time and focus for the visit
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit
- Plan which classes will be visited
- Draw up a timetable for the visit with the Headteacher
- Headteacher ensure that all staff are aware of the visit and the expectations on them.

### **On the day of the visit the Governor will remember to:**

- Arrive on time and clarify the timetable with the Headteacher
- Act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering
- Be respectful and unobtrusive to the working environment and enjoy the visit
- Feedback on any safeguarding practice or health and safety observations

### **After the visit the Governor will:**

- Remember to thank the teachers and children
- Meet with the Executive Headteacher to give a verbal report, and to raise any issues that arose
- Complete the Governor Visit Proforma, reporting on the focus. The completed form should be given to the Executive Headteacher and then, after any possible alterations, the form will be circulated to the governing body and staff

- Governors must report without giving opinions and where possible individuals should not be able to be identified.

It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements should not be made arbitrarily. **The visit is not about:**

- Inspection
- Making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on your own children
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school by staff. It is important that Governors remember to respect the professionals and the children, support the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed then Governor Visits will be a productive and positive experience for all involved, and will result in effective monitoring by the Governing Body, which will contribute to school improvement.

### **School Visits – an Aide Memoire**

Please remember that members of staff are busy and first priority must be the children. There may be times when arrangements have to be changed or alterations made. Please be sensitive to the circumstances and flexible in your expectations. No two days are ever the same. Keep an open mind about what you see. Education and classrooms have changed a great deal since you were at school and practice is very different. Don't expect to see the formal type of lesson you might remember from your own childhood. By all means ask questions (preferably at the end of the lesson) but be sensitive to the extra demands of differentiation and inclusion that teachers now face.

### **What is the purpose of the visit?**

What has prompted my decision to visit?

Who has prompted my decision to visit?

Is the reason specific or general?

What are my/other people's expectations?

How can my visit benefit the school?

### **How shall I carry it out?**

What particular areas of the school am I interested in?

What particular activities am I interested in?

What particular age-group(s) am I interested in?

Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?

What questions should I ask?

Who should I ask?

### **Did I achieve my aim?**

To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?

Which of my questions did I answer?

To what extent did I fulfil my own/other people's expectations?

What difficulties did I meet and why?

### **Is there any follow-up?**

Have I recorded my experiences?

Did I 'report back' to the head and staff?

Have I prepared a short report for the next governors' meeting?

How can I build on this for the next visit?

Have I fed back immediately on any safeguarding or health and safety good practice or development suggestions?

**Appendix 1**

**Hawkswood Group Governor Visit Report 2018-19**

Name	
Date of Visit	
Focus of Visit/ linked to Hawkswood Development Plan	
Classes / Staff Visited	
Summary of activities, e.g. observing classes, talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch, etc.	
What I learned as a result of my visit	
Positive comments about the focus	
Aspects I would like clarified / questions I have	
Ideas for future visits or follow-up	
Any other comments	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(Governor)

(Headteacher / Exec Headteacher)

### Evaluation by School

Headteacher/ Executive Headteacher:	
Date:	
Impact of the governor visit and how it links to Hawkswood Development Plan/needs?	
Any follow-up actions as a consequence of the visit? (Feedback received on safeguarding practice and health and safety?)	
Personal Feedback to governor on visit	

Date presented to Management Committee following the visit:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair of Governors)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Exec Headteacher)