

# Hannah Ball School

## Governors' School Visits Policy



**Approved by:** Full Governing Body

**Date:** November 2020

**Next review due by:** Autumn 2022

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their school, and must monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in this respect. Through visiting our School, governors can get to know it better. The governing body is a corporate body and every governor will visit the School as a representative member of that body, not as an individual. An effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding, benefits the whole School community. This policy will provide an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out their School visits.

### Formal visits

In consultation with the headteacher, the governing body will plan visits to cover a wide range of school activity and each visit should have a clear focus. Visits will be linked to priorities in the School Development plan and as part of the Governors Strategic Plan. These visits will not always be confined to the classroom. Governors have limited time, and what they learn should also add to what the governing body as a whole knows about the school. Formal visits may last a whole or half day, but different approaches might be agreed to suit the purposes of the visit.

#### Focus of formal visits at Hannah Ball School

Each governor will be assigned to an area of the SDP which will probably relate to any specific roles they may hold and this will be the focus of their visit. This should happen once a term. Governors should meet in person/email /phone the professional lead of their area of the SDP prior to any visit to identify focus areas for monitoring impact and identify what may be seen in practice (this may include reading/reviewing any specific policies). If the professional lead has not been involved in the visit then a meeting should be held post visit for the governor and professional lead to agree actions. A governor visit report (see Appendix 1) will be completed and circulated to all governors to be discussed at the next governor meeting. The reports should be factual and not include any opinions. Any concerns or worries should be discussed with the headteacher.

### Informal visits

Governors who visit the School informally do so in a more personal capacity, much as a parent might do, but always with the knowledge and approval of the headteacher. Such visits add to individual governors' knowledge and understanding of the school and can strengthen relationships and foster trust and respect

between governors and staff and the wider School Community. Governors should always reply to special invitations and make an effort to attend. An encouraging 'thank you' letter following the event will be welcomed by the staff and pupils.

Informal visits can take many forms, e.g. attending school assemblies, open days and events; accompanying school trips; helping in class or running a stall at the school fair. Attending a parents/carers consultation event or Open Day is a particularly valuable opportunity for governors to seek opinions and to explain the work of the governing body.

Informal visits are a valuable complement to formal visits – not an alternative and can be reported on verbally at GB meetings.

All visits should be recorded in the Governors' Visit/Log Book kept in the school reception area.

### **During any visit**

- Remember this is a visit, not an inspection. Governors are visiting to learn more about the School and to gather information to inform decision making by the governing body. **It is not the governors' role to judge the quality of the teaching.** Monitoring staff performance and the quality of teaching and learning is the job of the Headteacher.
- Remember that you are an invited guest.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, the School's values and Code of Conduct.
- Be punctual, sign in and wear a name badge.
- Try hard not to disrupt the normal working of the School by monopolising the teacher's time.
- Smile and listen. Try to relax and enjoy yourself.
- Try not to draw too much attention to yourself. Avoid overtly making notes as this can be disconcerting. Instead, write down your thoughts as soon afterwards as is practical.
- Remember that you are representing the governing body. Governors should be prepared to explain policies, but should avoid giving personal opinions which could be misinterpreted as the views of the governing body.
- Avoid making promises on behalf of the governing body.
- Speak to a member of the SLT before entering the staff room and if invited to join the staff think carefully about what you say and do. Be courteous, tactful, positive and interested. Avoid criticism e.g. Never make a comment on anything you have seen or heard.
- Observe previously agreed levels of confidentiality.
- Remember to thank the staff for supporting you in your role as governor
- Again if you have seen something that worries you, you should discuss this first with the headteacher.
- Send a note to thank the relevant staff. Be open and honest; recognise and celebrate achievement.
- Reflect upon your visit. Your views will inform the review of the policy and procedures
- Prior to publishing your report, please send a copy to the person you visited, with a copy to the headteacher.

## Appendix 1

<b>Hannah Ball School Governing Body Visit Report</b>		
Name of Governor:	Visiting:	Date:
Focus of visit (link with School Improvement/Development Plan or Governor Strategic Plan):		
Review of actions agreed from previous visit:		
Main outcomes of visit:		
<b>Agreed Action from the Visit</b>		
Actions for school:		
Actions for governors:		
Impact of visit:		
Date/Time of next visit :	Signature:	