



Marsh Baldon CE Primary School

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Governor School Visit Protocol

Introduction

The governing body has a duty to oversee the direction and policies of the school, to monitor its standards and be held to account for its conduct and performance. Visiting the school is the best way to learn how it functions, and to keep under review how it operates so that you can increase the governing body's first-hand knowledge, informing strategic decision making.

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose. Governors should arrange their visits with the Headteacher who has the responsibility of the day-to-day management of the school.

Potential benefits to governors:

- To improve governor knowledge of the ethos of the school
- To assess the effectiveness of the SDP
- To improve understanding of intent, implementation and impact of curriculum areas
- To monitor and understand achievements and goals for specific curriculum subjects
- To recognise and celebrate success
- To support and develop relationships with the staff and children
- To understand the environment in which adults and children work
- To be informed about a particular area of the school site
- To monitor policies in action and contribute effectively to the governing body's monitoring role
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

Potential benefits to teachers:

- To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- To get to know governors
- To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- To have an opportunity to share elements and features of the curriculum
- To highlight the need for particular resources

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What a visit is NOT about:

- A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise of the teacher, to comment on their teaching or classroom management
- Checking on progress of own children or that of any other
- Pursuing personal agenda

Annual programme of visits

A programme of visits should be planned and spread evenly across the school year in consultation with the Headteacher and/or member of staff responsible for the area being monitored/visited.

Ideally every area should be visited once a year in order to see and report back on developments.

Preparing for a visit

- Check the agreed policy for governors' visits
- Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the SDP? What are the relevant school policies? How does this determine the activities you are interested in?
- Discuss the format and agenda with the Headteacher and or subject lead, well in advance.
- Use the Governor Visit Report Forms – see Appendix A
- Send the proposed agenda to the staff involved. Ask how they want governors to integrate? It might be possible for you to see a copy of any documents beforehand. Discuss with the subject lead if any supporting information is available – Ofsted report, improvement plan, performance data.
- Be clear beforehand about what you are looking for. Try to prepare questions and submit to staff in advance.
- There are template evidence documents, available on GovernorHub, which can be used to guide a visit. There is a template for meeting with the Subject Lead and a template for a learning-walk visit.

During the visit

- Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the governing body. It is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on behalf of the governing body or the Headteacher
- Be punctual and keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible

If visit involves a lesson observations or meeting pupils

- Decide with the staff how you will be introduced and what your role in the classroom will be
- Get involved with the children
- Ask to speak with children, discreetly, in a lesson or after a lesson – These questions will help you gain an understanding of pupil attitudes toward the subject
- Tell me about what you are learning today
- Do you like (curriculum area being monitored)?
- Tell me what you most like doing in (curriculum area being monitored)
- What helps you with your learning in (curriculum area being monitored)?

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- Is there anything you don't like in (curriculum area being monitored)?
- What would make you like this (curriculum area being monitored) more?
- Remember it is a visit not an inspection
- Observe discreetly, interact when appropriate, don't interrupt
- Don't distract the staff during the lesson from their work but be prepared to talk and show interest
- Be courteous, friendly not critical
- Remember why you are there. Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit
- Listen to staff and pupils.

Things to look for when visiting a classroom

- Relationship between staff and pupils
- Relationships 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 are the pupils grouped?
- How different abilities are catered for
- Purpose/relevance of lessons
- Coherence of the curriculum/connection between subjects
- Children's work
- Displays and use of these
- Ethos — the atmosphere and Learning Values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space and working conditions
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources

Curriculum Subject Visits

If your visit involves monitoring a subject area you may be asked to participate in a Learning Walk. This should take around 30 minutes. During the Learning Walk you can expect the subject leader to speak with you about areas listed below. Please raise questions if you need clarification or more information. Ideally the Learning Walk should take place while the children are in lessons. Make use of the learning walk to understand what happens in school and lessons.

Possible questions for subject coordinators when monitoring a particular subject area

- How does the SDP reference the subject and do you feed into this?
- What is your vision for the subject?
- Do you have a set of minimum expectations?
- What were the OFSTED findings about the subject?

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- What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress in the subject?
- What differences (if any) are obvious between specific groups of pupils?
- What professional development has been actioned this year?
- 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 has the budget for this area been spent?
- Are there any additional resource needs?
- How do you help develop other staff's skills in teaching the subject?
- How do you know the subject promotes the ethos of the school?
- How does the teaching of this subject differ from that in other schools?

After your visit

- Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how?
- Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved.
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind.
- Reflect: How did that go? Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learned more about the school? Have I helped the governing body fulfil its duties?

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1. Subject monitoring form

Subject		Subject Lead	
Governor		Date	

Subject Monitoring	
1. In general terms explain your subject curriculum and how it works	
2. How do you check what the children know and what they can do?	
3. What are the strengths and areas of development for your subject?	
4. Leading on from the question above; how do you help develop teacher skills and confidence?	

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5. How do all the children access your subject?

[illegible]

Book review

1. Look at a sample of books and check for:
 - a. Consistent layout
 - b. Evidence of marking and feedback
 - c. Are the books dominated by 'work sheets'?

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2. Ask the subject lead for evidence of pupil progression

What can governors do to support the development of your subject?

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Notes

Subject Monitoring

Q1. Before the meeting, familiarise yourself with the subject curriculum as shown on the website. Does the Subject Lead's description match the website?

Q2. This question is lifted straight from the latest Ofsted report. There were concerns that there were not sufficient checks on what the children knew and could do in the Foundation Subjects.

Q3. The Subject Lead should tell you where the strengths and weaknesses lie in their subject in the various classes/Key Stages.

Q4. Record those steps taken to develop teacher skills.

Q5. Ofsted reported that MB had a challenging curriculum that was accessed by all children. Governors need to check that is still the case.

Remember Governors are not there to make judgements; merely to monitor and record their findings. If there are any shortfalls then they should be recorded. It is for the Headteacher to make judgements and for governors to support the Headteacher by monitoring what is going on.

Book Review

The Subject Lead should select books from a class that they do not teach. Governors are looking for a consistent approach in the written work not wonderful handwriting.

It is important that the Subject Lead can show you evidence of progression.

Final question is for governor feedback.

Completed forms should be shared with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. Completed forms will be uploaded onto GovernorHub as a record of monitoring.

TJ

September 2026

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3. Learning Walk form

Governor Monitoring – Learning Walk with Subject Lead

The form should be completed with the subject lead (see notes overleaf)

Questions/Activities	Notes/Observations
Curriculum	
Ask how the subject lead checks on a children's understanding and knowledge in the various classes?	
Ask how the subject lead checks that teachers are adapting their teaching to meet the needs of all children?	
Attitudes to learning	
Ask if the lesson was being well-managed with minimal disruption	
Ask how the children were being taught to study effectively, developing increasing resilience and independence	
Were there examples of the children working co-operatively and collaboratively?	
Were there examples of children communicating effectively through spoken language (oracy), articulating their ideas and engaging others through listening and speaking?	
Were there examples of children communicating through writing? (Check books if writing not taking place)	
Was reading being encouraged? (May not happen in lesson observed)	
Ask for examples, during the lesson, when staff were making reasonable adjustments and adaptations when considering children's needs and challenges?	
Ask for examples, during the lesson, of well-chosen, targeted intervention to support children's learning and behaviour?	
Any other observations/comments?	

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Questions to ask children	
What are you learning in this lesson?	
Are you learning anything new in this lesson?	
What do you like most/least about this subject?	
What do you do if you need help?	
Tell me about something you've found challenging in lessons recently	
Can you show me some feedback you've been given in your book?	

Learning walk with subject lead – notes

- The subject lead should share their action plan with you before your visit. Subject leads will also have a copy of the form and so will not what to expect.
- Use the questions below to gather evidence of subject monitoring. It might be easier to use a form per class if visiting more than one class. It might be that you prefer to make some very rough notes and then complete the form at the end of the session when you sit down with the subject lead.
- For Core subjects (English, Maths and Science), it should be possible to visit more than one class as these subjects are usually taught in the morning.
- For Foundation subjects, it may only be possible to visit one class. A book review should help see what is going on in the other classes
- In the section on Attitudes to Learning, ask the subject lead to give you examples; it is not for governors to make judgements.
- If possible, talk to some children and gather their views on the lesson.
- At the end of the walk, talk through the form with the subject lead; they might want to add some extra comments or observations. If possible, a review of the books could be used to fill in some of the gaps in the form. For example, if the class are not writing during the observed lesson, a look in their books should enable governors to record that writing is part of the curriculum.
- Finally email the form to Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

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