



**Holmer Green Junior School**

*We inspire, we enable, we achieve. Together.*

# **HOLMER GREEN JUNIOR SCHOOL**

## **Governor Visit Policy**

### **JANUARY 2026**

Written	Adopted by Governors	Review date	Responsibility
JANUARY 2026	JANUARY 2026	JANUARY 2028	Chair of Governors

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## Model policy for governors' visits

### The purpose of this policy

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.

### The organisation of the governor visits at HGJS

#### Visit programme

The programme of visits will be organised as follows. **<Discussion of the following prompts by governors, in consultation with the headteacher and staff, will provide the text for this section of the policy. >**

- *How many visits and how often would it be reasonable for visits to take place? Consideration should be given to the views of the headteacher and staff about the total number of visits that could take place without disrupting the work of the school. How long will visits typically last? What 'experiences' will governors have on a typical visit?*
- *How frequently would each governor visit? Do governors want to agree a minimum commitment? If there are barriers preventing some governors from visiting, how can these be overcome?*
- *Do governors want to link with classes, departments or with subject leaders? Will that mean that some staff are not linked to a governor? Does that matter?*
- *How will new governors be included in the visit programme? Can more experienced governors visit alongside new governors to advise their colleagues?*

#### Content of visits

- *Should a programme of visits be drawn up? How far in advance would this be planned?*
- *What will be the focus of formal visits?*
- *Do governors want to agree a list of suggested questions (See Appendix 5)?*
- *How will governors seek the views of the pupils?*
- *How will the visits monitor School Improvement or Development Plan elements?*
- *Are there circumstances where it would be sensible to agree an approach in advance e.g. what will governors do if they see something that concerns them?*
- *Will there be an agreed protocol about parent governors visiting their child's class?*
- *How will the need for confidentiality be communicated? e.g. if a governor has looked at work samples*

## Staff involvement

- *Will the policy include a section written by staff e.g. a description of what governors are likely to see in school?*
- *Would additional information to assist staff in understanding why governors visit and how they can assist in raising the awareness of governors be helpful?*
- *Would some guidelines for approaching the governor visit be helpful? (see Appendix 4)*

## Reporting

- *How will feedback take place on the day?*
- *How will the visit be reported to other governors? Do governors want to use a standard format for all governor reports?*
- *Who will circulate reports to governors and the clerk to the governing body, once they have been finalised? Would it be helpful if someone co-ordinated this?*
- *Where will reports be published?*

## Procedure for carrying out visits at HGJS

Our governor visits will be organised as follows: **<Discussion of the following model code of practice by governors, in consultation with staff, will provide the text for this section of the policy. >**

## Before the visit

- *Agree a mutually convenient time to visit with the Headteacher/class teacher or head of department. Avoid stressful or busy periods in the School calendar*
- *Clarify the purpose of the visit (see suggestions in Appendix 3) and agree this with the Headteacher and relevant staff. Agree together how best to approach the identified focus to make effective use of everyone's time.*
- *Agree how you will be introduced to the children and young people and the extent to which you will be involved in any activity or lesson*
- *Agree a convenient time to discuss your lesson observation with the class or subject teacher. This will also be your opportunity to clarify any issues you are unclear about.*
- *Prepare for your visit by reading any relevant documents*
- *Ensure that you are aware of the core principles underlying the governor visits at your School and abide by them.*

## During the 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 policies and procedures.
- 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.
- Think carefully about what you say and do. Remember that a visit by a governor can be stressful for staff. Be courteous, tactful, positive and interested. Avoid criticism e.g. Never make a comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.
- 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.
- Only go into the staffroom if you are invited to do so.
- Observe previously agreed levels of confidentiality.
- Remember to thank the staff for supporting you in your role as governor

## After the visit

- If you have seen something that worries you, you would normally discuss this first with the teacher.
- Discuss your visit with the Headteacher and agree a draft of any written report with the Headteacher, and with staff, as appropriate. Be prepared to take the comments of others on board before you circulate your report to governors and the clerk.
- 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.

## Reporting on your visit

Following a visit, governors will share their impressions with the governing body **<describe the agreed format for governor reports>**. Give staff the opportunity to comment on the governor visit. Copies of approved and finalised written reports should be given to the Headteacher and Chairman and subsequently made available to governors **<and Parents/Carers>**. Reports will be kept **<explain where>**.

## Evaluating the visit

Following a visit, governors may reflect on the following questions:

- How did the visit go?
- Were you clear about your objectives?
- What, if anything would you do differently next time?
- Are there further areas you would like to explore?
- How has the visit helped you, the School and/or the governing body? E.g. in collecting monitoring evidence, in greater understanding of a particular aspect.

## Monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at *<termly governing body/committee meetings>*. This policy will be reviewed *<decide how often and when>* by *<decide who will review the policy and how any revisions will be recorded>*. The views of the staff will be sought. The governing body will consider if governor visits are contributing to the information that the governing body has about progress towards meeting priorities and targets identified in the School Development Plan.

## Suggestions for the focus of a governor visit

One or more of the following will provide a focus for a visit, with the agreement of the relevant staff:

- The implementation and impact of a key policy
- Progress in an aspect of the School Improvement Plan
- Progress on areas identified during an Ofsted or SIAS inspection
- Provision for identified groups e.g. BME pupils, Travellers
- Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Provision for Gifted and Talented pupils
- How the ECM outcomes are promoted
- Particular subjects, key stages or classes, Cross-curricular areas e.g. Literacy and Numeracy & ICT
- The use made of the buildings, the site or Resources e.g. Interactive Whiteboards
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Health & safety
- Extended Services including Extra-Curricular activities
- INSET days or training sessions, staff or departmental meetings, as appropriate
- Pupil participation e.g. attend a school council meeting
- Impact of the religious character (in Church Schools)
- Deployment of staff,
- The impact on the school of any key changes e.g. impact of increased staffing in Support roles
- Educational Visits – provision and impact
- Collective Worship

In addition to any special focus to a visit, governors may learn more about some of the following areas:

- The variety of teaching and learning styles
- Availability, deployment and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils — are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?
- Relationships
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- How the pupils are grouped
- How different abilities are catered for with differentiated tasks
- Examples of children and young people's work, written and oral
- Displays in open areas and classrooms e.g. learning walls, reflection of community in images round the school.
- Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space and working conditions
- Classroom facilities: lighting, layout, storage, furniture and décor
- Facilities for outdoor play and learning outside the classroom.
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources and associated storage

## **Governor visits - suggestions for staff**

Visits to the School are valuable in enabling governors to carry out their monitoring and evaluating role, and their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the School. Governors will not be making judgements about the quality of teaching and learning, as most are not trained to do so. Visits are an excellent way for governors to understand how teaching and learning takes place in the School and to deepen their knowledge of the School and the curriculum. Individual governors do not have the automatic right to enter the School whenever they wish - they are the School's invited guests.

The most effective visits will be well planned.

- The date of a visit should be mutually agreed, and have an explicit focus and purpose agreed in advance by all concerned
- Agree a convenient time to talk to the governor about what they have seen and to answer any questions that they may have. You have an important part to play in raising the governors' awareness of what happens in our School and why.
- Feel free to say that it is not convenient for a governor to come into your classroom at a particular time
- Do raise any concerns about the visits with your line manager or the Headteacher
- Prepare your class for the visit of a governor and agree how you will introduce them
- Be aware that a visit can be stressful for governors and staff alike
- Inform the governor if you wish them to be involved in the lesson, and what it would be helpful for them to do
- Don't leave a governor alone with the class, even if they are willing for you to do so

## **Possible questions for subject-linked governors**

The full governing body retains the responsibility for raising standards. A nominated governor who takes a special interest in a curriculum area or areas can help to ensure that this issue remains high profile on the governing body's agenda. The following questions will help you as you find out about teaching and learning across the school. Use them as a guide in a meeting or on school visits – it is not intended you work systematically through the list.

Discuss with your headteacher how best to use these questions to help you gradually build up a picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Your role, in partnership with the headteacher, is to provide a link between your governing body, its committees and the staff of your school.

### **Achievements and attitudes**

*For the core subjects:*

What are the broad trends in the school's achievement in English and maths

- compared to similar schools?
- in relation to the national rates of increase?
- in relation to the national picture in terms of gender?

How do children's results in English/maths/science compare?

How do they compare with other subjects?

*For all subjects*

Where have we improved? Do we know why?

Are there differences between the achievement of different groups, and if so, why?

What aspects of the subject do pupils find easy and which hard?

Are there significant differences in the performance of:

- girls and boys?
- looked after children?
- child carers?
- pupils with special educational needs?
- gifted & talented pupils?
- pupils with English as an additional language?
- the majority and any other minority ethnic groups, such as travellers?

In meetings with the subject co-ordinator can you tell how much progress pupils are making? For e.g. you could look at:

- Key Stage test results and teacher assessments
- the work of a range of pupils – average, below average and above average
- other evidence

## **Special Needs**

How are pupils with SEN integrated into lessons?

How have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) been adapted to support children in their lessons?

## **Management of the subject**

How is the role of the co-ordinator developing?

Does the School Improvement Plan address the identified needs?

What is the allocation of funding to the subject for this financial year?

How has it or will it be spent?

Is there a need for additional resources for any aspect of the work?

What further training to teachers and support staff need?

How much additional support does each class have?

How is the support used and what impact does it have?

(Literacy only) Does the school offer a range of reading books catering for all abilities, cultural backgrounds and tastes, especially boys? Are pupils using the library? What links does the school have with the local library?

How does the school use all its resources (ICT, books, materials and displays) to promote reading and writing or Numeracy?

## **Communication**

How are parents kept informed about pupils' progress?

What steps are being taken to encourage parents to support their children's learning?

How are governors kept informed about standards and the progress of pupils?

How do governors celebrate the schools achievements and successes?

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