

## **LARKMEAD SCHOOL**

### **GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

#### **Aims**

Through our programme of individual governor visits we aim to:-

- Improve governor knowledge of the ethos of the school and awareness of the work on the curriculum.
- Assist the whole governing body to fulfill its statutory role
- Improve governor understanding of the needs of the school and the priorities for the future school improvement plan.
- Monitor and evaluate the current school improvement plan especially in relation to curricular issues
- Improve governor links with staff, pupils and parents.
- Help governors to be better able to support the school community.
- Report the needs for resources.

#### **Timetable of visits**

- If possible all governors to visit at least once a year during the working day.
- All new governors are offered an introductory visit soon after their appointment to the governing body as part of their introductory programme.
- Governors are welcome to informally visit the school (with prior notice during the school day) taking into account the needs of all concerned and the appropriate timing of visits
- Specific invitations are sent for some occasions.
- Visits to talk with the head or curriculum coordinator can also be made by appointment.
- Governors receive copies of parents' newsletters which contain notice of events and are welcome to attend these.

#### **Information**

- It would be helpful to look at the Faculty Handbook and other background material including National Curriculum requirements.
- Other useful sources of information are the Times Educational Supplement and the 'Education Guardian' (published as a supplement on Tuesdays).
- There are many informative web sites and a sample list is provided in Appendix D.

#### **Focus of Monitoring Visit**

Visits could focus on aspects of the school/Faculty improvement plan, and on carrying out the work of the governing body e.g.; SEN, Health and safety, governor roles.

The visits could have particular emphasis on one year group, or on one major aspect of delivery of the curriculum. The Curriculum committee may discuss the focus of these visits and bring suggestions to the whole governing body.

Ideas for points of discussion are given in Appendix C.

## **What governor visits are NOT about**

- Making judgements about quality of teaching and operational management
- Checking the progress of own children
- Pursuing personal agendas
- Monopolising teachers' time
- Arriving with inflexible preconceived ideas
- Interrupting, giving ideas or suggestions during teaching time

Governors should at all times be aware of the **confidentiality** of what they see or hear.

In the unlikely event of a Governor observing something which gives them serious cause for concern, he/she should take the matter up with the Head of Faculty or Headteacher as soon as possible.

**Remember** the word of thanks and encouragement at the end of the lesson will help staff feel more confident about your role.

## **Format for visits**

1. Arrange a visit by letter, telephone or E-mail with the appropriate Head of Faculty and agree the aim of the visit and arrangements for it in advance. Ensure HT is aware of the details of the visit.

Report to Reception on arrival and obtain a Visitors' badge.

2. The visit - Most visits take place in the classroom and staff will have been consulted about the date and purpose of the visit. This will have enabled them to prepare any information related to the focus of the visit and to set up a programme for the governor.

Appendix B provides an 'Aide memoire' to focus thoughts.

## **Reporting Back**

- Governors should not identify individual teachers and should avoid making judgements.
- Appendix A is a simple form which Governors should fill in as soon as possible after their visit as a record and then store at Larkmead School.
- A copy of this should be given to the Faculty Head and another to the Chair of the Curriculum Committee. If they wish Governors may give oral feedback to the Curriculum Committee. If relevant the Curriculum Chair shall then report the main conclusions to the Governing Body.
- After a Governor 'School at Work' Day governors shall give feedback direct to the Governing body.

This policy to be reviewed every 3 years

March 2013

**APPENDIX A**

**GOVERNOR VISIT FORM**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Time Arrived:</b> <b>Time left:</b>	
<b>Reason for visit:</b>	
<b>Who did you see?</b>	
<b>What did you learn?</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	

## **APPENDIX B**

### **SCHOOL VISITS- AN 'AIDE MEMOIRE'**

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

- What has prompted my decision to visit?
- What aspect(s) of the school improvement plan does my visit relate to?
- What background information might I need?

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

- Who do I need to contact in advance?
- What particular areas of the school am I interested in?
- What particular activities am I interested in?
- What particular age groups am I interested in?
- 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 find answers to?
- Do I need further information?

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

- Have I thanked the Head of Faculty?
- Have I filled in a Governor Visit Form and sent a copy to the Head of Faculty and Curriculum Chair and stored a copy at Larkmead School?
- How can I build on this for my next visit?

## APPENDIX C

### **Points for Discussion between Governor and Faculty Head**

- General organizational, curricular and assessment issues and developments
- Whole school priorities and departmental priorities (as in plans)
- Progress towards targets
- Spending of departmental budget
- Resources and needs
- Staff development and training (and needs)
- Extra-curricular activities
- Special needs Students

### **Visits to lessons might lead to discussions about general issues such as :**

- How are students with Special Needs catered for?
- Differentiation: how does the teaching meet the needs of the less able whilst still providing appropriate challenge for the most able?
- Progression: how are knowledge and experience built up over time?
- How are different learning styles catered for?
- How is Assessment for Learning being addressed?
- Equal opportunities: how does the teaching ensure that all students regardless of gender, ethnic origin or ability have appropriate access to the curriculum?
- Homework: what role does homework play?
- Target setting: how are students kept informed of what they need to do to achieve their targets and encouraged to be independent learners?

## APPENDIX D

### Useful Internet Sites

- <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.governornet.co.uk/>
- <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performancetables/>
- <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/>
- <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.oxon.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicsite>
- <http://www.larkmead.oxon.sch.uk/>
- <http://www.tes.co.uk/>
- <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>
- <http://education.guardian.co.uk/>