Governor School Visits Policy

'Let Your Light Shine'

Approved by:	Tom Woolman	**Date:**	7th October
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School Vision

We are a small school, with big ideas, adopting a creative approach to ensure that every child is supported in order to flourish and thrive; to see and develop their true potential.

Our vision and ethos of the school is based on the sermon of the mount, Matthew 5:14- 16; "You are the light that gives light to the world. In the same way, let your light shine before others, live so that they may see your good works."

We are children of the community and guided by Faith.

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1. Aims

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow when making visits to the school. Governors do not have an automatic right to enter Berkley School. When they do so, they are invited guests.

This policy sets out the procedure which all governors are expected to follow when visiting Berkley School and how they are report back on their visit.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all governors understand their role and purpose so school visits are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved.

2. Guidance and scope

This policy takes account of best practice and guidance from the Maintained School Governance Guide https://www.gov.uk/guidance/governance-in-maintained-schools

2.1 Governors are observers

Boards must know their schools in order to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors will:

- Observe whether the school is properly implementing school policies, and actions from the school improvement plan (SIP/SDP)
- Observe how those procedures are working in practice
- Have the opportunity to gather the views of pupils and staff

2.2 Governors are not inspectors

Governors:

- Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom
- Will not manage the school or interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school

When spending time in a classroom, governors will ensure the class teacher is aware of the focus of the visit – see section 4.

3. Visits programme

Governors will carry out regular school visits in order to meet the board's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness.

There are 2 types of visits:

- **Formal monitoring visits**, where governors discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member
- **Learning walks**, where governors will go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area and are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils

Governors will carry out school visits according to the timetable which is found within the current Berkley School Governor Handbook.

3.1 Governors for health and safety, special educational needs, and safeguarding

These governors will attend:

- A termly 1:1 monitoring visits with corresponding staff leads
- Ad hoc meetings as required or requested on issues specific to their areas of responsibility

3.2 Subject lead governors

Subject lead governors will attend:

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- Monitoring visits with the subject lead as per the timetable
- Learning walks as per the timetable

3.3 All governors

All governors will:

- Carry out at least one learning walk, monitoring visit or site visit each term (min 3 times a year)
- Attend at least one school assembly or special church celebration in the year
- Consider mental wellbeing of staff and pupils during any visits and report any concerns ASAP

4. Before a visit

Governors will:

- Notify the headteacher and the chair before scheduling a visit, even if the headteacher will not be involved in the visit. They should be made aware just as a matter of courtesy
- Schedule an appointment with relevant members of staff in order to avoid friction and ensure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient. Generally, governor visits are more productive when conducted during a school day
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time
- Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance with the chair, the headteacher and/or relevant member of staff ahead of the visit
- Send questions in advance to the staff member so everyone can feel properly prepared
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures

5. During a visit

Governors should know how to conduct themselves appropriately during visits in order to minimise disruption for staff and pupils and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent.

Governors will:

- Be on time and if possible, meet/contact the headteacher ahead of the visit
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the headteacher for a specific purpose
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them
- When spending time in a classroom, governors will ensure the class teacher is aware of the focus of the visit – see section 4.
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils
- Pass on any concerns the staff raise with the relevant people
- Be friendly but professional and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner than would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the chair of governors or headteacher after the visit

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6. After a visit

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable using the form attached as Appendix A (monitoring visit) or Appendix B (learning walk). In completing the report, governors will ensure to:

- Use neutral language at all times
- Remain observational, and describe only what they see
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit, and its strategic role

Once complete, governors will submit their reports to the following people, in the following order:

- A more experienced governor for feedback - if they've been in place for less than 1 year.
- The headteacher who can then make the report available to the relevant staff
- The chair of the governing board and clerk to governors, as agreed
- If required, a brief summary at the next FGB meeting

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Appendix 1: Template report for a monitoring visit

Formal monitoring visits are where you discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask:

Berkley School Monitoring Report

'Let Your Light Shine'

Part 1: plan the walk	
Name and role of governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Christian Values *Whilst on the visit highlight if you see evidence of the following Christian Values being demonstrated.*	Friendship Hope Creativity Service Courage Forgiveness Generosity Wisdom Respect Thankfulness Compassion
Intent, Implementation & Impact	**Intent** - ask the subject lead for the curriculum plan (for the whole school/class). Discuss the plan including its aims for the pupils, any challenges that may affect its success **Implementation** - does the lesson and/or books demonstrate the Intent; what evidence can you see; is the curriculum on track; what challenges have been faced **Impact** – what evidence is there of the Impact of the curriculum plan ie. Assessment; knowledge retention with pupils; evidence in class floor books and pupil's books Consider disadvantaged children (Pupil Premium and/or SEN pupils) and their learning and progress Consider Gifted & Talented children – are they being challenged
Agreed focus *Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that have not been agreed with the member of staff.*	
Relevant school objective or priority *This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SIP or SDP) objectives or the school's*	

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overarching vision.	
Questions to ask *Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SIP/SDP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit.* *Share these questions with the staff member you are visiting in advance, so they can prepare.*	

Part 2: on the walk
General notes from discussions with staff / How do you know the school's actions are having an impact? *Tips:* • *Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who', 'where' and 'can you show me…'* • *Do not be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with* • *Remember you are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them* • *When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers*
General notes from discussions with pupils *Remember:* • *Do not ask them for pupils' views on a specific teacher* • *Do not record pupils' names*

What successes stood out and why?
Behaviour – (if applicable) Good/challenging/lanyard scheme etc
Wellbeing/mental health – check in with staff
Staff training/CPD – have they been supported in the subject area/general development

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the headteacher or chair of governors

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Appendix 2: Template report for a learning walk

Learning walks are where you will go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area. You are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils. Use this as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Berkley School Learning Walk Report

'Let Your Light Shine'

Part 1: plan the walk			
Name and role of governor(s)			
Name and role of staff member(s)			
Date and time of visit			
Christian Values *Whilst on the visit highlight if you see evidence of the following Christian Values being demonstrated.*	Friendship Courage Respect Service	Hope Forgiveness Thankfulness Wisdom	Creativity Generosity Compassion
Agreed focus *Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that have not been agreed with the member of staff.*			
Relevant school objective or priority *This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SIP or SDP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.*			
Questions to ask *Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SIP/SDP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit.* *Share these questions with the staff member you are visiting*			

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in advance, so they can prepare.	

Part 2: on the walk
General notes from discussions with staff *Tips:* • *Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who', 'where' and 'can you show me…'* • *Do not be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with* • *Remember you are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them* • *When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers*

General notes from discussions with pupils *Remember:* • *Do not ask them for pupils' views on a specific teacher* • *Do not record pupils' names*

General notes on the school environment and overall atmosphere *Note:* • *Whether the governors' vision of the school is replicated on the ground* • *Any issues with the school site you see e.g. broken equipment or lack of resources* • *Consider mental wellbeing (staff & pupils) and raise any concerns with HT or COG*

What successes stood out on the learning walk and why?

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Questions and clarifications to follow up with the headteacher or chair of governors

Appendix 3: Questions to consider when planning your visit

Questions to consider before visit:

What aspect of the school development plan does my visit relate to, see strategic plan

What is the learning Walk focus?

How am I going to record my information?

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?

What questions should I ask?

What to consider during my Visit:

What are the children's attitudes to learning?

Level of engagement and motivation with the Learning and focus area

Effectiveness of what is being taught and its impact on children's learning

How the pupils move around school

Pupils relationships with adults and other pupils

The level of interest and active involvement that pupils show in their work

The way pupils 'effort' is valued

The level of care and cooperation between pupils and their respect for their surroundings

The overall atmosphere of the school – whether it's warm, clean comfortable, welcoming and proud of displaying pupils' achievements

Are there clear behaviour rules and a good understanding of them.

Evidence that shows changes have taken place

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