



# Inspire Education Trust

Together we achieve, individually we grow

## Director & Governor Visits Policy – Trust

---

**Policy Date:** September 2024

**Review Date:** September 2027

## Document History

Version	Status		Date	Author	Summary Changes
V1			November	K Grainger	New Policy
V2			May 23	M Gore	Addition of Appdx 3
V3			Jun 24	K Grainger	Point 2.10 amended to request termly visits
V4			Sept 24	L Whitehouse	2.2 clarification of when visits need to be communicated 2.11 – Governor cadency visits clarified 2.12 Director visits clarified

## Contents

1. Aims .....	4
2. Visiting Protocols .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.4
Appendix 1 Director/Governor Monitoring Visit .....	6
Appendix 2 Pupil Voice .....	9
Appendix 3 Further guidance for Directors.....	13

## 1. Aims

The Trust's schools welcome director and governor visits. Director/governor visits are a way in which directors/governors can find out more about specific aspects of the school's provision, experience the school's ethos in action, check that statutory requirements are being fulfilled, find out about stakeholder's views and see new developments at first hand.

Visits better enable directors/governors to support the Trust school community. Records of director/governor visits can be very helpful in recording progress towards agreed Trust/ School Development Plan objectives and may also assist in identifying potential future objectives.

The Trust's governor code of conduct includes an expectation that individual directors/governors will visit the Trust school once a term (other than for governing body meetings).

## 2. Visiting Protocols

In order to ensure Directors/Governors visits are productive there are a number of protocols which must be adhered to:

- 2.1 Visits must be made by appointment. Contact should be made with the Office Manager, to make an appointment for a visit, allowing at least a week, in order that the relevant staff can be notified. Directors/governors are encouraged to plan their visit in advance of contacting the school using Part 1 of the Director/Governor Visits Proforma.
- 2.2 Once appointments are made for formal visits, Directors/governors must notify the Trust Governance Professional of the visit date/time.
- 2.3 The purpose of the visit and the detail of the visit must be agreed with the Headteacher.
- 2.4 Visits must be linked to a school development priority or an area of responsibility (e.g. safeguarding, SEND, PP) or to observe/participate in a school event.
- 2.5 On arrival, the Directors/Governors will sign in.
- 2.6 Directors/Governors must ensure they wear their Director/Governor badge at all times.
- 2.7 Directors/Governors should use Part 2 of the Director/Governor Visit Proforma to record responses to questions and other observations. The record of the visit should be shared and agreed with the member of staff who hosted the visit. A copy of the completed proforma should then be emailed to the headteacher, as a courtesy, before the completed form is uploaded by the director/governor to the Governor Monitoring folder on Governor Hub. Uploaded visits forms will be reported on at a meeting of the Trust Board/Local Governing Committee.
- 2.8 All new Directors/Governors will be offered an introductory visit soon after their appointment to the Trust Board/Governing Body as part of their introductory programme.
- 2.9 Specific invitations will be sent to all Directors/Governors to attend special occasions.

- 2.10 Directors/Governors will receive copies of the School's newsletter which contains notices of events which the Directors/Governors are welcome to attend.
- 2.11 All Governors should endeavour to visit their school at least once a term during the working day.
- 2.12 Directors should endeavour to visit a school at least once a term during the working day.

**Directors/Governor visits should NOT be used to:**

- make judgements about the quality of teaching and operation management
- check the progress of governors' own children
- pursue personal agendas
- monopolise teachers' time
- interrupt learning.

**Classroom visits**

Some visits may take place in the classroom with staff being consulted about the date and purpose of the visit beforehand. This might include:

- Supporting a group of pupils on a set task
- Informal observations of pupils at work
- Opportunities to speak with pupils on their work in progress
- Opportunities for observing displays of work in the classroom
- Opportunities for pupils to talk about their learning
- Learning walks – e.g. looking at reflection areas or art work.
- 

Directors/Governors should be aware of the confidentiality of what they see and hear. Directors/Governors should be discreet so as not to disrupt the lesson in progress: see Appendix 2 for further guidance about talking to pupils.

**Suggested Activities for Directors/Governor Visits**

- Attend Collective Worship (if applicable)
- Talk with pupils: see Appendix 2 for further details re pupil voice
- Walk around Trust/School – look at displays
- Have a school lunch – meet Midday Supervisors
- Attend any Trust/School events, e.g. Christmas Fayre, Carol Service, Drama, Diwali celebrations, Chinese New Year celebrations, etc.
- Attend extra-curricular clubs.
- Join a year group on a school visit.
- Meet parents at open days or parents' meetings.
- Meeting the head boy/girl who will give you a guided tour of the school.
- Meet with the Headteacher.
- Attend a School Council Meeting.
- Sample new ICT hardware with the ICT Manager/pupils.
- Attend a staff training day (or part day).
- Observe staff putting the monitoring plan/schedule into practice.

This policy should be reviewed and updated every 3 years.

## Appendix 1

### Director/Governor Monitoring Visit

Formal visits are where you discuss the progress of the Trust in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask. When you have completed both parts and agreed the record of the visit with the staff involved, please email a copy to the headteacher, as a courtesy, before uploading a copy to the school's Governor Monitoring Folder on Governor Hub. Be prepared to talk about your visit at the next governors' meeting.

---

Part I: Plan the visit	
<b>Name and role of governor(s)</b>	
<b>Name and role of staff member(s)</b>	
<b>Date and time of visit</b>	
<b>Agreed focus</b> <i>Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that haven't been agreed with the member of staff.</i>	
<b>Relevant Trust development plan objective</b>	
<b>Questions to ask</b> <i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SDP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit. Share these questions with the staff member you're visiting in advance, so they can prepare. Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who' and 'where'</i>	

## Part 2: In the meeting

### What is the School doing within this area of focus?

*Tips:*

- *Don't be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with*
- *Remember you're not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them – you remain an observer*
- *When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers and pupils*

### How do you know the school's actions are having an impact?

*Remember:*

- *Include specific evidence that demonstrates the positive impact the school is having in this area*
- *Where a positive impact hasn't been made yet, note down why that is and what steps are being taken to make progress*
- *Add any further evidence you'd like to see to help you make a better assessment of the impact*

### What successes stood out and why?

**Questions and clarifications to follow up with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors**



## Appendix 2

### PUPIL VOICE

#### Listen to 'pupil voice' on your visits

Director/Governor school visits are an important part of your function as a director/governor. They give you an opportunity to shine a light on the 'pupil voice', to interact with the pupils in school, and to find out about their school experiences directly.

Use the questions below to help you ask the right questions during your visit to your school.

#### Questions to ask during learning walks

Talking to children at their desks can be a lot of fun and give you a snapshot of what's happening in that moment. However:

- Pick your moment (don't talk to a pupil if the teacher is talking to the whole class or to a group of which your pupil is a member)
- Keep it short and sweet so as not to create a distraction
- Keep it focused on the current lesson - the children are in the middle of their learning
- Be discrete, you don't want to disrupt other pupils, who'll naturally be curious about what you are asking about

Do ask pupils:

- What are you learning in this lesson?
- What do you like most/least about this subject?
- Can you show me some feedback from your teacher in your book?
- Do you feel that you are being challenged (in a good way) in your lesson?
- What do you do if you need help?

Don't ask for their:

- Views on a teacher
- Personal information

#### Pupil Voice Panels

When you arrange a visit to the school you may want to include a pupil voice panel as part of your visit. If you want to do this, you should indicate this on Part 1 of the visits form and submit it to the Office Manager at least a week ahead of the date on which you would like to visit.

Pupil voice panels may, or can be more focused on a specific group of pupils (e.g. Pupil Premium, SEND) or could be more general.

Prior to the pupil voice panel:

- Be clear on the focus of the panel and plan out your questions on the form. Remember to submit it at least a week ahead of your visit. It's important that questions are agreed with

the school in advance. You might like to use some of the questions below as a starting point.

- Ask the member of staff organising the visit to choose the right group for you, for example:
  - If accessibility is a concern or a target for improvement, make sure you're meeting with the pupils who are affected by accessibility issues
  - Pupils who won't be too shy to express themselves
  - Agree the record of the discussion with the member of staff who chaperoned it and send a copy of the report of your visit to the Headteacher before uploading it to the Governor Monitoring folder on Governor Hub. Remember not to use any pupil names in your write up.

### The Pupil Voice Panel

Do:

- Explain who you are.
- Tell pupils what the focus of your questions is and why you're interested in their input.
- Let them know that you will be reporting to the Governing Body, but not mentioning them by name
- Remind them that the normal safeguarding rules apply and that if they share something that causes you to feel a concern for their or another pupil's safety or well-being, you will have to report it to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ask them not to name staff or other pupils
- Ask them to listen to each other without interrupting
- Give everyone an opportunity to contribute.

### Questions to ask pupil panels:

The questions below are not exhaustive, nor are they meant to be used as a checklist. Think carefully about what you're trying to find out and only ask those questions that'll get you the answers you need. Adapt the questions to the age of the pupils you're speaking to and the context of the group. Keep in mind that you're not looking for any specific answers, you're out there to get a sense of how pupils experience the school. Most pupil voice groups last for a maximum of 30 minutes. The time goes very quickly so ask your key questions first. You probably will not have time for more than five or six.

### Accessibility

- Do you have any trouble getting around the school buildings?
- Is there anything about the grounds or social areas that makes things difficult for you?
- Where do you keep your personal items during the day? Are you able to get to your things easily?
- Is there anything your friends can do easily that you have difficulty engaging with?
- If a pupil appears to be having a difficulty with accessibility, ask: can you think of something that might help you with this?

### Teaching and learning

- What's your favourite subject?

- Are your lessons interesting and fun? Can you give me some examples? Remember to ask pupils to name the subject not the teacher.
- Is there anything about lesson time or any particular lessons that you like or don't like? Remember to ask pupils to name the subject not the teacher.
- Do your teachers mark your work regularly? What do you do with the feedback you get from your teachers?
- What do you do if you find something hard to do?
- Can you think of anything that used to be really hard but is much easier now? Why is it easier now?
- Do your teachers set you targets? Are you encouraged to set yourself targets?

### Behaviour

- How would you describe the behaviour of the pupils in this school?
- Can you explain to me what happens if a pupil does not behave well?
- Do you think that the school's leaders manage behaviour effectively? Why? Why not?

### Safeguarding

- How safe do you feel in school on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 = low and 10= high). If the pupils give a low score, ask what could be done to make them feel safer)
- Are there any places in the school where you feel unsafe?
- Is bullying a problem in this school?
- How well is bullying dealt with in the school? (Remember that pupils may not know exactly how bullying incidents have been dealt with as such matters are confidential)
- How well does the school deal with child on child abuse? (You might need to explain that this covers everything from bullying to physical assault and covers things like sexual harassment, nudes etc)
- How do pupils treat others who might be different because of their race, gender, religion etc.?
- How do other pupils and the school staff help to make this school a safe place?
- What does the school do to help you stay safe online?

### Pastoral Care

- Do the adults in your school listen to you?
- Do you know who to go to in school if you're worried or anxious about something?

### The School Day

- How do you get to school and back home again?
- Do you feel safe when travelling to and from school? Why? Why not?
- Where do you go to relax in school?
- What's your favourite thing to do at breaktimes/lunchtimes?
- What do you like/dislike about assembly?
- Do you have enough to eat during the school day? Do you have a school dinner or bring your lunch to school? How does the school help you to make healthy food choices? Are school dinners good? What's your favourite school dinner?
- Tell me about your most memorable school trip? What did you like about it? Did it help you to learn a new skill or bring something extra to what you had been learning about in school?

### *Years 10 - 13*

- *What influenced your choice of subjects?*
- *How do you know you are making progress?*
- *Which subjects are you most/least confident in and why?*
- *How do your teachers and other staff support you in your learning / revision / preparation for examinations?*
- *What strategies do you use for your revision?*
- *What strategies do you use to deal with exam pressure?*
- *What have you learned/are you hoping to learn from mock exams?*
- *Is there any more you think your teachers or other staff can do to support you further?*

### *Retention of pupils into the Sixth Form (for Year 9, 10 or 11 pupils)*

- *Do you know which subjects you intend to take in the Sixth Form? What has informed this decision?*
- *What do you know about the Blue Coat Sixth Form?*
- *What leadership opportunities do you think you will be able to experience in the Sixth Form?*
- *What extra-curricular opportunities will you be able to enjoy in the Sixth Form?*
- *Are you looking at other sixth forms – if so, why?*

## Appendix 3

### Inspire Education Trust Guidance for Directors -School Visits

It has been suggested that Directors would appreciate some guidance on the sort of questions that Directors could ask when visiting the Trust's schools and in particular questions to help us monitor the quality of education offered to our children and young people.

It is important to recognise that Directors are not (in the main) education professionals. Directors are not expected to be experts but are there to check whether what the school is saying is reflected in practice. Your visit is not an inspection and while your visit should be challenging, it should wherever possible be supportive. It is also an opportunity to check that the reports to Directors reflect what is happening in the schools and that the support the Trust gives is effective and adds value.

Key to effectively monitoring quality of education is to look at the curriculum on offer. This is an important focus for Ofsted; but more importantly Directors must be sure that all the children and young people in our schools are receiving a broad and knowledge rich curriculum, which is properly sequenced, well taught and carefully monitored to be sure what children are remembering and how they build on what they are learning.

#### **Before visiting the school**

In preparing to visit a school, it would be helpful to look at the Curriculum Policy of the school on its website, which should set out clearly for staff, parents and carers, and of course Governors and Directors:

- The vision and values which underpin the curriculum.
- Impact of the curriculum :-
  - Current data outcomes/snap shots
  - Surveys
  - External/internal reviews
- What the school is seeking to achieve and how success will be assessed
- The principles that inform teaching and learning
- How the curriculum is organised and implemented to ensure breadth of knowledge and the way skills are developed
- The extent to which the curriculum is delivered to all children and young people or adapted for children with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Context of the school – community etc

#### **Conversation with the Headteacher**

As part of your conversation with the Head, possible questions could be:

Is the curriculum model developed by the Trust useful?

How has it been adapted for your school?

How do you think the values of the school have influenced the curriculum?

How has the curriculum changed and developed in the last year or two?

How is what is taught sequenced, for example in science or history?

How do you assess what the children have learnt and remembered at each stage?

Do you have the right skills and knowledge in the staff to deliver the curriculum effectively?

What training is available to fill any identified gaps in skills or knowledge?  
How is the curriculum structured to make sure all the subjects are covered while not losing focus on reading or mathematics? Is there enough time?  
How is the curriculum differentiated for children with special needs or disabilities?  
How do you measure the success of the curriculum?  
What is going well in the school?  
What are the areas for development? What are the priorities for the school? What are the barriers to progress? Are there action plans in place?  
Is the Trust supporting the school? Adding value?  
Is there more that the Trust could do?  
How is the wellbeing of you (Head) and your staff? How do you know?

### **Looking in Classrooms**

In looking around the school:

Are the displays in hallways and classrooms, and the extent to which they support children's learning, relevant and clear? Are they relevant to the curriculum?  
Are the children generally engaged and interested to talk about their work? Do they understand what the work is, and what they are learning?  
If the teacher is a subject leader, how have they structured the curriculum in their particular area?  
Are there any barriers to learning in the subject area? Resources? Time?

### **After your visit**

Headteachers and staff will always value feedback, either orally and/or in writing which gives an opportunity to comment on good practice seen, and to reflect back challenges the school may be facing.

A short report, to Directors is evidence to Ofsted that the Directors are fulfilling their role but more importantly gives important feedback to the Board and the Executive Team. It should be shared with as a draft with the Head before forwarding it to the board.

Reviewed by:

Kay Grainger

November 2022  
September 2024

Next Review Date:

September 2027

Approved by Directors:

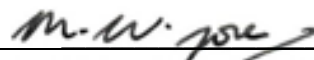
11 September 2024

Signed:



---

Lois Whitehouse  
Chief Executive Officer



---

Mark Gore  
Chair of Trust Board