

## **The Pochin School - A Guide to Governor Visits**

This guide was revised in the summer 2016 and approved by the Governing Body on 19 May 2016.

### **Why Visit?**

Visiting the school is an important aspect of governors' work. To be really effective and fully involved governors must get to know the school. This means visiting the school to meet and talk to children and staff, to get a feel for how things work. In this way governors will:

- Learn more about their roles and give meaning to work undertaken in governing body and committee meetings
- Build relationships with children and staff by getting to know them and the challenges they face
- Be better equipped to carry out their important monitoring and evaluation role

It is important to develop a culture in school that encourages and supports governor visits. It must be recognised therefore that visits are potentially stressful for staff and governors. Recognising tensions, being explicit about purpose and building trusting and professional relationships are the key to ensuring that visits are a valuable experience for all concerned.

Governors need to know what is happening in the school.

- How successful are the governors' policies
- Are targets for improvements being met?
- What are the key issues facing staff?
- What are the problems and how can staff be supported?

### **Procedure for Governor Visits**

#### ***Planning***

Visits should be agreed by the relevant committees and be linked to key priorities in development or action plans but should also take account of the needs of new governors and any new initiatives.

#### ***Before***

- Discuss an agenda with the Headteacher well in advance.
- Ask for any relevant papers that you could read before the visit.
- Be positive, friendly and encouraging.

#### ***During***

- Make sure that you arrive on time.
- On arrival remember to follow the school's security procedures.
- Make sure the Head knows that you are on site.
- Remember that you are not inspecting the school.
- Remember that the school is a workplace for lots of people.
- Remember that you are there to learn.
- Remember that you as an individual have no authority
- Stick to the purpose of your visit.
- Avoid getting drawn in to any discussion on personal or general staff grievances.
- Look relaxed, get involved and blend in.
- Observe discretely and remember that note taking is disconcerting for everyone.
- Talk to staff and pupils, show interest and enthusiasm.
- When appropriate ask questions, be courteous not critical.
- Keep an open mind, be flexible and go with the flow.
- Look for opportunities to give praise.

#### ***After***

- Thank staff for hosting your visit.
- Discuss what was observed with the member of staff.
- Allow staff to explain and check out understandings.
- Ask for explanations on anything about which you are unsure.
- Be positive, friendly and encouraging.
- Make your notes as soon as possible whilst observations are still fresh in your mind.
- Discuss your observations with the Headteacher.
- Reflect on what you have seen and how this connects to the schools priorities.

#### ***Reporting Back to the Governing Body***

- Complete the governor visit pro-forma and send a copy of the draft to the Headteacher for comments.
- Be prepared to amend your report in the light of comments.
- Ensure that the Clerk to the Governors receives an agreed copy of the report in good time for distribution.

**Governor Visits Report Pro-forma**

Visit made by:	On:
Purpose of visit:	
Observations made:	
Issues addressed:	
Follow up action:	
Signed	Date