



Trinity Multi Academy Trust

Policy:	Governor Visits Guidance
Date of review:	February 2018
Date of next review:	February 2021
Lead professional:	GRC Manager
Status:	Non-Statutory

Governors visits – a guide for Trinity MAT Governors

The senior leaders of academies in Trinity MAT understand the importance and valuable contribution Governors have in academy life.

Senior Leaders recognise and appreciate that, as volunteers, Governors need to ensure that any visits to an academy are purposeful and focussed. This is with the aim of building effective governance relationships.

The aim of Governance Visits

1. To support Governors to have a better understanding of the context in which leaders and staff in the academy work.
2. Visits will enable the governing body to recognise and celebrate the efforts and successes of students and staff and to identify further areas for development.
3. Visits will enable Governors to challenge leaders (and staff, where appropriate) on the policies and procedures in place in the academy, to ensure that staff are following policies and procedures.
4. The focus of a visit could be on one or more of the policies in place in the academy, on an element of the curriculum, or on a specific aspect of the academy improvement plan or SEF. There will also be a specific visits for Governors with named responsibilities (e.g. Safeguarding, SEN or Looked after Children).
5. Governors will provide a written report for their colleagues, to be presented at a Governors meeting to allow Governors to question any area of the report. A template for this written report is on pages 3 and 4.
6. This report will be recorded in the minutes for that meeting. It will also be used in any School Improvement strategies or evidence in school improvement inspections (including Ofsted).
7. Governor visits are not about making judgments on the quality of teaching; that is the Principal's responsibility. Nor are they about checking on the progress of individual children or pursuing personal agendas.

Governors will:

1. Individual Governors or pairs of Governors will, with the guidance of the whole governing body, identify an aspect of the academy's work to focus on. The choice of focus will be informed by the terms of reference for each committee. These will identify clearly which aspects of the SEF and academy improvement plan each committee has responsibility for.
2. The aim will be for them to explore an aspect of the academy in some detail, increasing their confidence and knowledge and generating evidence to help the governing body to evaluate the academy's performance.
3. When organising and conducting a visit, Governors will be courteous and considerate, at all times respecting the professional roles of the Principal and staff. Working to the annual schedule agreed with the Principal and staff, they will confirm with the Principal the date, timing and focus of each visit at least one week in advance. This will include agreeing what will be observed and to whom it would be useful to talk. They will discuss the proposed agenda with the staff involved. They will prepare by reading relevant documentation/guidance.
4. At the end of each visit, the Governor(s) will discuss what they have observed with the staff involved and clarify any points they are uncertain about. They will jointly agree key points to report to the governing body. Before leaving the academy the Governor(s) will aim to discuss their observations with the Principal, if that has been agreed, and agree how and when they will report to the governing body.
5. Questions will be invited from Governors, while being sensitive to issues of confidentiality. See the National Audit Office guidance *Improving Academy Performance: A guide for academy Governors on Governor net*. While staff should take every care to anonymise any information or examples of work, it may be possible for Governors to identify individuals in discussions of progress and attainment of

children in vulnerable or underperforming groups. Governors will be fully mindful of, and committed to, absolute confidentiality in such circumstances.

The Principal will:

1. The Principal, with the support of the governing body, will organise a schedule of visits throughout the year. The aim will be to achieve a minimum of one visit per governor per year. Visits may be conducted in pairs. The Principal will guide the governing body on the areas of the curriculum, policies and academy improvement plan priorities and targets to be covered.
2. Ensure that teachers and support staff will at all times be courteous and considerate to the Governors, recognising the contribution made by the governing body to the academy. They will make practical suggestions on the focus for Governors' visits so as to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This will include specifying the evidence that could be shared with Governors. Whenever practical they will invite their link/curriculum governors to relevant staff meetings and training sessions.

How visits will be conducted

1. Visits will be pre-arranged and planned. A Senior Leader or the Principal's PA will provide a schedule for the day. This will show names, roles and time of meeting. Car parking and refreshments will be arranged for the visit.
2. Governors will observe policies and plans being implemented on a day-to-day basis, and their findings should help the whole governing body and its committees to make well-informed judgments about the progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the academy improvement plan.

Monitoring and evaluation

1. Governors' visits will be an agenda item at committee and governing body meetings. At the final meeting of each academic year the chair will report the number of visits conducted and the areas of focus. This report and minutes of meetings when reports of visits were discussed will enable the governing body to judge the extent to which the information gathered informed the governing body's understanding of the academy's performance. This will also generate data for the SEF.
2. Staff Governors will feedback from colleagues. They will be asked to identify what worked well and what if anything needs to be reconsidered. They will also be asked to describe the extent to which their colleagues' understanding of the governing body's role has been enhanced.

Date of last review: February 2018

Document owner: Chief Operating Officer

Governor visit - Findings form

Name of Academy:		
Governor name:	Date:	Time:
Focus area of visit:	Lead member of staff/ contact for visit:	
Brief outline of purpose/key focus of visit:		
Links to trust IP/academy IP:		
Preparation/background to visit: E.g. Documentation consulted; informal discussions		
Staff seen during the visit: E.g. Names; Role; Areas of responsibility; reason for selection		
Information about the visit/activities undertaken: E.g. How many lessons observed, meetings arranged throughout the visit (either staff or students), evidence of paperwork/ reports prepared by the organisation to equip the Governor with relevant evidence etc. etc.		
<i>Insert brief information about the format of the day, the evidence observed and any contextual information, including about why the visit has been arranged.</i>		
Strengths:		
<i>Insert brief information about the strengths (in context of the focus of the visit). Use bullet points if appropriate.</i>		
Suggested areas for improvement:		
<i>Insert brief information about the areas for improvement (in context of the focus of the visit). Use bullet points if appropriate. The visit is not about making a judgment, but providing information on areas that may need improvement.</i>		

Summary of key findings:
<i>Use bullet points if appropriate.</i>
Areas for consideration/clarification by the LGB:
<i>Use bullet points if appropriate.</i>
Actions for the LGB:
<i>Use bullet points if appropriate.</i>
Any other comments:
Date report discussed with the Principal:
Date report/ensuing actions discussed with the LGB:

This completed form should be sent to the Principal and Clerk to Governors.