

Ysgol Gynradd **Llanidloes** Primary School

Protocol for Governor Visits to School



The governing body has a duty to oversee the direction and policies of the school, to monitor its standards and be held to account for its conduct and performance. Visiting the school is the best way to learn how it functions, and to keep under review how it operates so that you can increase the governing body's first-hand knowledge, informing strategic decision making.

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Improvement Plan, and link into the schools monitoring and evaluation. The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose. Governors should arrange their visits with the headteacher who has the responsibility of the day-to-day management of the school.

Purposes and Aims of visit

Potential benefits to governors:

- To recognise and celebrate success
- To develop relationships with the staff
- To get to know the children and know/understand the level of enjoyment pupils have for the subject
- To understand what pupils like best/least in the subject
- To recognise different teaching styles
- To understand the environment in which teachers teach
- To monitor policies in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them to teachers
- To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- To know the standards achieved in the subject
- To know what steps are being taken to improve the subject area
- To report main findings back to the full governing body

Potential benefits to teachers:

- To get to know governors
- To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- To highlight the need for particular resources

What a visit is not about

- A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on progress of own children
- Pursuing personal agenda
- Monopolising school/teacher time

Guidance

Governor monitoring can take several forms:

- Pupil interviews
- Meeting with subject co-ordinator
- Lesson observation
- Learning walk (walk around the school)

Members of staff will be delighted to meet a link governor who is showing a genuine interest in their work and that of their pupils.

If the agreed protocols are followed, then governor visits will be an enjoyable experience for all involved, and will result in effective monitoring by the governing body, which will contribute to school improvement.

- All visits should be arranged in advance between the link governor, class teacher and headteacher. Ideally, this should be done at a pre-visit meeting as this will allow the governor and teacher to discuss what the class will be doing during the visit and any particular activities on which the governor might like to focus e.g. group work, differentiation. Staff will understandably want to prepare for the visit, for example, by arranging for samples of pupils' work to be available.
- On the day of the visit, the governor should report to the headteacher.
- The governor should endeavour to arrive at the class at a time least likely to cause disruption.
- The teacher should introduce the governor to the class.
- Throughout the visit, the governor should intrude as little as possible on the work of the class. However, pupils, particularly younger ones, often like and respond to attention by a governor, and there is no doubt that a governor will gain a greater knowledge of their school and what it does by talking to pupils. Consequently, at an appropriate time and with the teacher's permission the governor might speak to individual or groups of pupils about their work – please see appendix B for suggested questions.
- Governors should be aware that some topics lend themselves to group or paired work and that some activities involve pupils moving around the room. Inevitably, at such times, noise levels will be higher than usual.
- At the end of the lesson or when they are leaving, the governor should thank the teacher and the class for their visit.

- If link governors have a concern arising from the visit, they should take care that the matter is handled sensitively and raise the issue with the headteacher rather than comment directly to staff members.
- Some visits may not involve time in the classroom. Governors should comment in general terms regarding the lesson. Professional judgements about quality of teaching should be avoided. Any issues regarding the quality of teaching should be raised with the headteacher.

After the visit

- As soon as possible, and ideally on the same day, the governor and class teacher should discuss the visit to clarify any questions.
- A short written report should be completed on the day of the visit – a form for feedback is available. When completing the report please ensure the teacher whose class was observed is involved in producing it to prevent any errors or misconceptions being made. Written reports should be circulated to governors before a governing body meeting, thereby allowing them time to consider the report and reflect on any points they may wish to discuss. As has already been pointed out the report need not be very long and should be written with the class teacher.
- Individual pupil names should not appear on the report.
- The report of the visit should be presented to the curriculum committee by the link governor.

Appendix A

**Ysgol Gynradd Llanidloes
Link Governor Visit Report**

Name of governor

Date of visit Start time Finish time

Purpose of visit				
Evidence base (tick all applicable)				
Staff discussion	Pupil discussion	Lesson observation	Book scrutiny	General observation
Commentary				
Proposed action plan				
Any other comments				
General observations (please rate the following on a scale of 1 – 5; 1 being poor, 5 being excellent) Welcome: Pupil behaviour: Appearance of school:				

Signed (governor)

Signed (headteacher / teacher)

Appendix B

What to observe /ask when visiting school

Relationship between staff and pupils
Relationships between pupils
Variety of teaching styles
Availability and role of support staff
Behaviour and attitude of pupils — are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?
Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
How the pupils are grouped
How different abilities are catered for
Children's work
Displays
Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
Use of space and working conditions
Quality and quantity of equipment and resources
When monitoring a subject area for reporting to the curriculum committee, please bear in mind that the following areas should all be considered on a cross-curricular basis:

The Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF); Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Personal and Social Education (PSE); Additional Learning Needs (ALN); Development of Skills; Cwricwlwm Cymreig and Bilingualism.

Pupil Interviews

Suggested questions to ask a small group of children when walking around the classrooms.

These questions will help you gain an understanding of pupil attitudes toward the subject.

- Tell me about what you are learning today.
- Do you like (select curriculum area being monitored)?
- Tell me what you most like doing in (select curriculum area being monitored).
- Is there anything you don't like in (select curriculum area being monitored)?

Key questions for subject/learning link governor discussion with subject leader

- What is your vision for the subject?
- Do you have a set of minimum expectations?
- What were the Estyn findings about the subject?
- What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress in the subject?

- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?
- What resources does the school have for the subject and how are these organised?
- Are there any additional resource needs?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching the subject?