

Viking Academy Trust



Governor Monitoring Policy

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Signed:



Chair of Trust

Viking Academy Trust

Schools in the Viking Academy Trust (VAT)

Chilton Primary School

Ramsgate Free School

Upton Junior School

This Governor Monitoring Policy is specific to Upton Junior School.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this handbook is to provide both Governors and Staff with the information necessary to make the working relationship between them as positive and worthwhile as possible. Governors are usually linked to one or more areas of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and an important part of their role is to liaise with appropriate members of staff who are responsible for leading developments in the school in a particular area.

Governors are critical friends, providing support and challenge, they form a view, they do not make professional judgements and act on them directly. As such they share their satisfactions, questions and concerns with the Head, who follows them up and reports back.

The aim of contact between Upton Staff and Governors is:

- ❖ To work together to secure the best development of the area of focus from SIP for the sake of pupils' attainment and progress.
- ❖ To help governors get to know the school's strengths and areas for development.
- ❖ To help governors form a view about how the focus areas of school are fairing, and how well they are led and managed.
- ❖ To help governors match the budget to the needs of school determined in SIP.
- ❖ To help staff to achieve recognition of the role they undertake within the school and make the governors aware of what is needed.
- ❖ To help staff reflect on their role.

Governor Pairs feedback to the appropriate governing body sub- committee, which then reports back to the full governing body. The sub-committees are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of governor monitoring within the school. Governor monitoring is a permanent fixture on the agenda of the sub-committee meetings. This handbook and the procedures contained within it are therefore reviewed during these committee meetings. The full governing body reviews this handbook and the procedures contained within it annually.

2. Outline of Responsibilities of Governor Monitoring

This table summarises in a nutshell how the work of governors may focus their visits - depending on focus detailed in SIP

| Staff | Governors activity |
|--------------|---------------------------|
|--------------|---------------------------|

| | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Plan and oversee the delivery of core subjects in the curriculum. Write documentation. ❖ Take periodic checks on assessment data to establish any trends (e.g. teachers' assessment; test and examination result; PANDA data; 'tracking' of individual pupils; value-added indices). ❖ Have a policy and planned programme for monitoring and evaluating T & L, or specific subject (eg Phonics / Guided Reading) depending on focus on SIP. ❖ Sum up the monitoring and evaluation findings in a written and/or oral report (annually, or, for some subjects, on a longer cycle) which comments on | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Know how the planning is done and some key aspects of teaching and learning methods. Read, understand and approve documentation. ❖ Know how, when and why this happens. Some governors understand some details of the process (e.g. know how to read PANDA information), and discuss key outcomes with the co-ordinator. ❖ Approve the policy, understand the process and may occasionally visit classrooms to help this understanding and discuss findings with co-ordinators. Report on/discuss their involvement with the Head, raising issues if necessary. Reporting to Governing Body. May meet periodically with co-ordinator to discuss informally. Form a view about how the subject is fairing. ❖ Hears / reads the report, raises issues with Head and whole Governing Body; makes suggestions and |
|--|--|

3. The Procedure for Governor Monitoring Visits

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors need to know what progress is being made towards targets set out in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Visiting the classroom can help to support this process.

For governors to know the strengths and weaknesses of the school it is important that governors are able to assess performance data in the context of an understanding of what happens in the classroom.

Most governors are not qualified to assess standards (and even those who are, by virtue of professional experience, should not do so) but they need to visit lessons in order to:

- ❖ Show interest in and appreciate the work of the staff (teachers and support staff) and pupils;
- ❖ Be aware of the nature of the work in lessons and response of pupils;
- ❖ Be aware of resource issues;
- ❖ Be able to ask appropriate questions and hold sensible discussions with the professionals;
- ❖ Understand as fully as possible the meaning of the results of monitoring reported to them.

Monitoring visits by governors should focus on the priorities in the SIP so that governors' work is aligned with the school's priorities. A set of monitoring questions, agreed beforehand with the school, should prove a useful aid to the focus of the visit. For example, classroom visits and meetings with staff should allow governors to:

- ❖ Look at priorities set out on SIP are being met
- ❖ The impact the developments are having on short and long term level
- ❖ Discuss progress and developments with pupils and staff
- ❖ See what pupils are doing and how they are responding to the work.

Questions that a Governor may ask staff are provided in sections 4, 5 and 6 of this handbook.

N.B Governors are not inspectors and are not present in a lesson to make judgements about the professional expertise of the teachers. That remains a task for the Head and / or other education professionals. It would be

inappropriate, therefore, for governors to:

1. Make judgements about the quality of teaching;
2. Report on the progress of individual children;
3. Pursue personal agendas;
4. Monopolise teachers' time;
5. Arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be adhered to regarding classroom visits. Observations and comments should be shared with the teacher concerned, and with the Headteacher, but not with other staff or with parents. Reports to the Governing Body should not identify individuals in a critical manner; this is not the role of a governor.

Minimum Commitment

It is recognised that the amount of time that a governor can commit to an exercise such as school visit will depend on his / her work commitments. It is important, however, that Governor Pairs visit the school twice during an academic year and an additional visit in the role as Link Governors.

Ground Rules

| | Always | Never |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Before a visit | Arrange details of visit with staff (via Head of School) at least a fortnight in advance. Agree level of confidentiality. Agree purpose of visit discuss the context of the | Turn up unannounced. |
| During a visit | Observe any class guidelines / rules. Fulfil agreed purpose. | Walk in with a clipboard. Interrupt |
| After a visit | Thank the teacher and pupils. Discuss the experience with the teacher. Follow up by giving the visit record to the Head of School who will pass on a copy to subject co-ordinator and any in a central file held by the Headteacher). Inform committee chair that visit has taken place and focus of visit. | Leave without a word. |

Governor Pair Expectations:

- Governor Pair organisation see charts below
- Governor's to read and follow guidelines set out in our 'Governor Visits Policy'
- Governor Pair's to formally visit school 3 x a year (see timetable below)
- Following each Governor Pair visit the 'Governor Pair Visit Template' should be completed and sent to Clerk of Governor's in order for it to become part of Full Governing Body Meeting. Additional notes can be attached if appropriate.

| Governor Pair (GP) Stages of Visit: | | |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| Stage 1 | Initial conversation: | <p>Governor Pair to email / telephone MDA/DW to arrange date and time of visit.</p> <p>During this conversation the objectives and actions that are stated in the School Improvement Plan will be chosen to be the focus of the visit.</p> |
| Stage 2 | Visit: | <p>Governor Pair's will come into school; be greeted by a member of Leadership Team and then introduced to appropriate staff in order for GP to carry out visit.</p> |
| Stage 3 | Write up (GP Report): | <p>Following GP visit the 'Governor Pair Visit template' will need to be completed. This is to be done electronically and emailed to the Clerk of the Governors and a copy to DA/DW.</p> <p>The Governor Pair report must be sent to Clerk as soon as possible following visit in order to ensure Clerk can distribute report prior to LAB.</p> |

Feedback

The Governor Pairs should feedback to the appropriate committee. This will be reported back to the full governing body in the committee's reports.

Subsequent visits may be based on the next steps identified in the visit.

Governors should access the central file periodically to keep informed of overall visits.

Review

As mentioned in Section 1 of this handbook, these procedures are reviewed during sub-committee meetings and the full governing body should review these guidelines each academic year. As part of the review we would need to ask:

- ❖ Are our visits proving useful?
- ❖ Have there been benefits, particularly unexpected benefits, from our visits?

4. General Question for meetings between Governors and Staff (curriculum focus)

The following questions should give some starting points and the general idea about what governors are trying to find out from discussions with staff - if curriculum focus:

- How do you know how well your subject is doing?
- How do you monitor and evaluate the subject?
- Can you show me how the plans are set out.....?
- And how they relate to the National Curriculum (agreed Syllabus for RE)?
- How do class teachers assess pupils' work in the subject?
- How do you know that one teacher's judgement about levels is the same as another's?
- What records do you keep of how pupils are doing?
- (For core subjects) How do you make use of the National Test results?
- Can you show me how your subject co-ordinators file is set out.....?
- What is your particular focus, as co-ordinator, this term / year?
- How do you decide what should be on the subject development plan for the following year?
- How much is your subject's specific budget this year and how do you intend to use it?
- When are you due to report to the curriculum committee?

5. General Questions for Classroom Visits

The following is some guidance on the sorts of questions and discussions with pupils that might help governors get the best value from their time in classes:

The best times to talk with children are in the portions of lessons when they are working in table groups. This will usually be on work arranged in age / ability groups and based on the whole class work the teacher has just covered.

Typically, the teacher will be with one group, the teaching assistant with another, and the rest of the tables will be working on their own. Join one of these other tables. Start with 'what are you learning today?' to check whether children understand that learning is the key focus and can explain what they will be learning and how they will know if they have learnt it.

The following questions should give some starting points and the general idea about what you are trying to find out. Don't feel you need to ask them all! For questions relating to specific subjects please refer to 'Specific questions for Classroom visits'.

- What have you been learning about in ***** this term? What did you find out about? What does (.....) mean?
- What's the best / most interesting topic you've looked at this year?
- What do you like about *****?
- Show me the best piece of work you've done in this subject this year. Explain to me about it.
- How are you going to put that information down in your book?
- What new work have you learnt in ***** recently?
- Why do we need to learn *****?
- How can you check your answer?
- Tell me what you did in your last lesson in this subject? What did you find out?
- How are you going to write that down?
- How are you going to set your work out?
- Why do we need to know about?
- What is the hardest problem you've tackled in ***** this term? What made it so hard?
- Can you show me anything you have done in ***** earlier this year?
- Have you done any visits away from school to do with *****? Tell me about them.
- What do you remember most about the ***** you have done so far this year?
- What ***** have you learnt recently?

- Why is it good to do *****?
- What do you like best about *****?

6. Subject Specific Questions for Classroom Visits

What follows are questions specific to subjects

Some General Points

The best times to talk with children are in the portions of lessons when they are working in table groups. This will usually be on work arranged in age / ability groups and based on the whole class work the teacher has just covered. Typically, the teacher will be with one group, support staff (TA or HLTA) with another, and the rest of the tables will be working on their own. Join one of these other tables. Start with 'What are we learning today?' to check whether children understand what they are learning and can explain it.

Some subject examples of things to talk

about: English / Literacy:

Lower school (Years 3 & 4)

- Who are the main characters in the story? What are they like? What happens at the start of the story? What happens next? Do you think that was a clever thing to do? Why (not)?
- Do you think this is a good story? What makes it good?
- Invite pupils to read to you.
- Are you sure about all your spellings? Are there any words you think you might need to check in the dictionary? What does (...) mean? Can you think of another word that would do?

Upper school (Years 5 & 6)

- What's the best poetry you've read this year? What do you like about poetry? What can a poem do that a story cannot?
- Show me the best story you've written so far this year. Explain to me how you put it together, and where you got your ideas from.
- How do you learn spellings?
- What writing have you done recently, other than stories? How do you do that kind of writing?

Maths / Numeracy:

Lower school

- Can you explain to me how you did that sum? Is there another way you could have done it?
- How did you check the sum? Can you explain to me how that pattern works? What makes it a pattern? How are you going to put that information down in your book?

Upper school

- What new work have you learnt in maths recently? Why do we need to learn that kind of maths?
- How will you tackle that problem? Is there any other way you could do it?
- How can you check your answer?
- What investigations have you been doing in maths? Talk me through that, step by step.

Science:

Lower school

- What do you think will happen? Tell me what you did in your experiment? What did you find out? Why do you think the (e.g. spoon) got hotter than the (wooden stick)? Why did it change direction, do you think? What will the (ducklings) be like this month?
- What makes (...) like (...) and what make them different? How are you going to write that down? How are you going to set your work out? Are you going to do a drawing as well? What labels will you put on it?

Upper school

- Why do we need to set that experiment up like that?
- How will you be recording the information you collect?
- What do you think will happen when? Why do you say that?
- Why do we need to know about?
- Why does this (plant) do well in that kind of environment?

Design and

Technology: Lower school

- Why did you choose that tool for the job? Are you pleased with your (...)? What makes it good?
- Does it do what it is supposed to do? If you were starting that again, would you do anything differently? How could you make it better? Why did you make that out of (...)?

Upper school

- What is the hardest design problem you have tackled this term? What made it so hard?
- If we say something is well designed, what do you mean? If you were starting that again, would you do anything differently? How could you make it better?

ICT:

Lower school

- Do you know how to make that bigger on the screen? Can you make that change colour?
Explain the turtle to me ... what does it do? Can you show me anything you have done with the computer earlier this year?

Upper school

- What new programs or operations have you learnt how to do on the computer this term? Can you think of any examples where you have used computers to make your work easier or better in subjects?

History:

Lower

school

- What have you been learning about in history this term? What did you find out about
.....? Would you have liked to have lived then? What would be good about it; what would be not so good? How did people (travel around) in those days? How do we know?

Upper school

- What resources did you use for your work on the Romans / Vikings / the Victorians ... this term? What interested you most about life in those times? What did you learn about the lives of people who lived then? Would that have been a good time to be alive? Why (not)?

Geography:

Lower school

- What places have you been looking at in Geography? Are they like Sutton Courtenay? - What kinds of things are the same, and what are different?
- You've been doing some work on floods ... why do floods happen? What sorts of places get flooded?
- Have you done any map work recently? What maps have you made? How do you make a map? Why do we need maps?

Upper school

- Which localities have you been looking at recently? What is special about them?
- What is the most interesting place you have studied? How has it changed over the years?
- Have you done any field work visit in geography?

Art and Design:

Lower school

- Have you got any of your art work you can show me? How did you get the idea to draw and paint that? Have you used any other materials for art, other than paints and pencils? Why is (charcoal) good for a drawing like that? What have you learnt about art recently? Have you seen any pictures by well known artists? Do you have a favourite? Who did you like ... Tell me something about their work?

Upper school

- What media have you been working with this term? How do you evaluate a piece of artwork you have done?

Music:

Lower school

- What instruments have you been playing in music? Have you composed any music? How do you do that? Do you ever do any dancing when you do music? Do you do any singing? What do we have to try to do when we sing together?

Upper school

- What do you remember most about the music you have done so far this year? What music techniques have you learnt recently?

PE:

Lower school

- Why is it good to do PE? Have you learnt to play any new games this term? What do you like best about PE? Do you play any team games?

Upper school

- What new skills have you developed this term? How did you learn them?

RE:

Lower school

- Have you been learning about people who have a special place of worship? Can you tell me about them? Some religions have special festivals; do you know about any of those?

Upper school

- Which religions have you been learning about? Which ones interested you most? Why do you think we need to learn about different religions in school?

7. Governors Monitoring of Non-Curriculum Aspects of School Life

- The environment - what is the school like to work in? Is this a good place to work and play? What are the good points? Is the school clean, tidy and safe? Is it attractive? What can be improved? How much of the budget should be put to improvements?
- The relationships and climate. Does the ethos of the school live up to the aims and objectives that governors have for the school? Examples of where they think it does, and where they think it doesn't.
- Behaviour. Does this match what our policy says? When children behave well, are they recognised, encouraged and rewarded? When they misbehave, or disrespect other children or adults, are they clear about how they can make amends and how they should behave? Are those pupils who misbehave dealt fairly? Are children clear about what is expected of them? Do they know the school's expectations and routines?

Governors can gather evidence on planned visits to lessons, assemblies, the play areas and grounds and the dinner hall.

Where governors visit with a particular focus (e.g. one of the above) they should follow the agreed protocols and record their findings (see section 3).

8. The Role of Monitoring Visits in Preparation for Ofsted

Monitoring visits and a good working relationship between staff will aid the process on an inspection. Inspections will report on:

1. What sort of school this is - whom does it serve? This is meant to tell readers of report about the context in which the school works.
2. What pupils know and can do as a result of the school's work; what they have achieved.
3. Pupils' attitudes to school and their personal development.
4. How well pupils are taught and cared for in school; the opportunities they have to learn and to experience. The quality of the partnership with parents.
5. How well the school is led and managed. This section on leadership and management includes how well the governing body fulfils its role.
6. How good the school is at evaluating its own strengths and weaknesses, and planning to improve.

Inspection reports do not only criticise and find shortcomings; they also list what the school does well, and praise strengths, especially when those have been achieved with great effort, or against the odds. Governors can provide inspectors with some of the evidence they need to make these statements. The report will always include judgements about what the school should do in order to improve further.

What governors can do when an Ofsted inspection is due?

Think about the evidence you have gained about any or all of the above. You might like to jot down some bullet points on a card. Pick the aspects you know best. Try to note some examples of:

- What is good and the reasons why it is good?
- Any plans the governors have to improve things further

STRENGTHS

NEXT STEPS

In particular, think about things that have changed, with governors' involvement, especially since the last inspection.

Know the SIP's priorities ... how plans have been achieved, what is planned for

this year, how we decided what to include, and what are our next steps for improvement - especially where your sub-committee(s) is / are involved.

Your first-hand knowledge can come from:

- Your discussion with parents (e.g. as a parent governor) and, where possible, pupils.

- Your **monitoring visits** to classes and around the school to see how children react to what they are taught and how they are cared for, and what kind of ethos prevails.
- Your **discussion with teachers and Senior Leadership Team**.
- Your view (and the evidence you have for it) about the qualities of the Head and senior staff.
- Your own work in full governor and sub-committee meetings - look back over agendas and minutes. Focus on areas that have directly affected the quality of children's education.

Second-hand knowledge can come from:

- Listening and discussion at meetings or presentations by staff e.g. SLT, AST, Year Leaders.
- The Headteacher's reports and your questions on them.
- The progress with the School Improvement Plan.
- Your reading of the papers that come to governors e.g., on the attainment and progress pupils make in national tests and teacher assessments, and how these compare with the national picture and with schools similar to ours. Do pupils perform better than, as well as, or less well than we should reasonably expect? What are the reasons for this?

In giving these examples you can show how you perform your main tasks, namely:

- **Giving a sense of direction to the school and establishing its values.**
- **Supporting the school as a critical friend.**
- **Holding the school to account for what it achieves.**

You show these through your skills, your commitments, and your knowledge of the school. No single governor will know everything about the school; collectively, you will know a great deal.

APPENDIX 1 Monitoring Visit Record Sheet

| Governor Monitoring Visit Template | |
|---|---|
| Governor(s): | |
| Governor Pair 'Area': | |
| Date of Governor Pair Visit: | |
| School Improvement Plan Focus: please circle | Standards / Pastoral / Environment / Wider Community / School H |
| Key Person from Leadership Team to liaise with: please circle | Headteacher / Assistant Head / School Business Manager / Year Leader |
| Other staff members to liaise with: | |
| Objective focus (taken from SIP): | |
| Actions to look at during visit (taken from SIP): | |
| Key Points from Discussion: | |
| Next Steps: Considerations & next steps (for school & / or Governor Pair / Link Gov) | |
| Ofsted implications / FIMSIS: | |
| Any additional information: | |

APPENDIX 2: Governor Pair and Area of Focus

Governor Pairs (not including staff governors) to visit the school and monitor school improvement in line with our School Improvement Plan (SIP)

| 'Governor Pairs' And The Area Of Focus | | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------|--|
| SIP Area | Focus | Governor Pair | SEF(old - will need new SEF focus points) |
| Inclusion | SEN & Vulnerable Groups | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▢ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships • The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination • The effectiveness of care, guidance and support |
| Teaching & Learning | Curriculum & Planning | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▢ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships |
| Achievement | Attainment & Progress | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▢ Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning <p>Taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils' attainment The quality of pupils' learning and their progress The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress |

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- The quality of teaching Taking into account:
- The use of assessment to support learning

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|---|
| Environment | Health & Safety, Premises | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money |
| Behaviour & Pupil Safety | Social, Moral, Cultural & Spiritual aspects of learning Safeguarding | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development • The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures • Pupils' behaviour • The extent to which pupils feel safe • The effectiveness of care, guidance and support |
| Personnel | All people: pupils, staff, parents, wider community | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money • The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers |
| Leadership & Management | Governing Body Headteacher Senior Leadership Team Middle Leadership Team Subject Leaders Leaders of Learning (Teachers) | Strategy Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning • The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the |