

HELLESDON HIGH SCHOOL

Governors' Monitoring Policy

Policy Reference	BA5
Inception date	June 2009
Review frequency	3 yearly
Last Review date	February 2006
Next Review date	June 2012

Context

For Governing Bodies to exercise their strategic role, as well as their function of accountability, an essential skill is for them to be able to monitor. The expectations as to what monitoring actually involves and what areas will be monitored, need to be clearly understood by Governors and Staff.

Monitoring is an ongoing process of gathering information, according to identified criteria, in order to assist the Governing body in its tasks of:

- providing a sense of direction to the School
- supporting the School as a critical friend
- holding the School to account for the standards and quality of education it achieves

It is important to note that most Governor Monitoring will involve the receipt of information, statistical and otherwise, together with the recognition that most monitoring in School will be undertaken by the Headteacher and professional Staff. The Governors' role does not include monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This is the Headteacher's role. School visits are important for many reasons but form only one part of the Governors' wider monitoring role. The key function of Governors is therefore to monitor the monitoring that already goes on in School. They need to be sure that they are in receipt of the monitoring data to enable them to fulfil their role, together with the ability to interpret it. This will enable Governors to fulfil their `critical friend` role by asking relevant questions about standards in the School, and linking these with the target setting process. Governors will receive monitoring information from a variety of sources, including:

- reports and presentations from the Headteacher and other Staff information from the School Improvement Partner (SIP) and Ofsted.
- performance data e.g. RAISEonline, Sixth Form PANDA (Performance Assessment National Data Analysis) etc., School Improvement and Development Plan
- the School's Self Review
- first hand contact with Staff, Students, Parents/Carers and the Community through social events and school visits

School Self Review

Governing Bodies need to monitor progress but they are not necessarily responsible for collecting the monitoring data themselves. For this, they should make appropriate arrangements with the Headteacher. As part of this monitoring process, Governors should be fully involved in the Norfolk School Self Review process. Working strategically, they should use any monitoring evidence to review and evaluate progress against targets with a system to help check that monitoring is taking place and that they are receiving appropriate monitoring data. The aim is to bolster the School's capacity to generate its own improvement, with the Headteacher and Governors taking the initiative, drawing on help and advice from the Local Authority as appropriate.

School Visits

The main reasons for Governors to make visits are:

- to learn about the School
- to enable the Governing Body to fulfil its accountability role
- to show those employed in the School that they are interested
- to respond to an invitation from a member of Staff.

Another reason for a visit would be for a new Governor to familiarise his or herself with the School. An example of a first visit to the School will probably consist of a tour of the premises, introductions to Staff, brief glimpses into classrooms and a chat with the Headteacher.

What is a Visit?

Visits are likely to have a focus relating to the role of the Governing Body. These visits can include one or more of the following:

- a meeting with the Headteacher
- a meeting with a member of Staff with a particular responsibility, e.g. Deputy Headteacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Head of Department, Curriculum Leader for Science
- conversations with other members of Staff and with Students
- experience of a lesson
- participation in classroom activities
- reading of documentation
- taking part in a School visit, e.g. a day's outing or a residential trip

For example, a new Governor, asked to make a visit focusing on Special Educational Needs, can:

- read the School's policy on Special Educational Needs

- have a discussion with the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)
- ask how the SEN policy works in practice
- ask to see examples of relevant documentation
- ask whether, in the opinion of the teacher, the policy is being implemented as intended across the School
- invite the SENCO to share his/her thoughts about current and future SEN issues in the School
- speak to the Headteacher to get his/her perspective on SEN in the School

Such a visit is likely to give any Governor sufficient information to report to the Governing Body on whether the School's SEN policy is being implemented and working well.

Protocol for Governors' Visits

- The total number of visits per term should be agreed in advance with the Headteacher.
- The date, timing and purpose of each visit will be arranged with the Headteacher and/or other Staff involved.
- Apart from introductory visits for new Governors, all visits should have a clear focus linked to an aspect of the School Improvement Plan, a School Policy or a Curriculum Subject.
- If a Governor is going to spend time in a classroom, this should be discussed with the class teacher, so both are clear how long the Governor is coming for, what they are going to look at and what they are going to do.
- Governors should understand that their visits are not inspections. They should not act like inspectors or report back to the Governing Body on the quality of the teaching they see or the standards of students' work.
- The Headteacher should provide members of the Governing Body with the relevant background information, e.g. Staff names, responsibilities and timetables.
- Governors must recognise that any visit to the classroom can be stressful and can disrupt normal classroom working. Therefore the number of visits should be limited.
- Governors must respect the normal conventions of confidentiality, in particular issues surrounding named Staff or students.
- After visits, Governors should discuss their impressions, and any concerns they may have, with the Headteacher

Reporting back

When Governors visit the School, they do so on behalf of the whole Governing Body. It is therefore important that all the Governors share information gathered and conclusions reached. This requires some form of reporting back.

Whether written or oral, a report should:

- be mainly factual
- not include personal judgements in areas such as the quality of teaching
- if appropriate, include a judgement about whether Governors' Policies are being implemented, or whether Governors' targets, as set out in the SIP, are being achieved.

If a Governor does not feel confident about making judgements, then the report can be based on the answers and judgements the Governor receives from teachers and the Headteacher.

If a written report is to be given to the Governing Body, it is sensible to show it to the Headteacher beforehand, to make sure that it does not contain inaccuracies or matters that could appropriately be dealt with by the Headteacher.

A record of Governors' visits should be kept in the Minutes of Full Governing Body Meetings, or of committees delegated to deal with visits.

Signed: _____

Date: _____