



Chalk Hill Governance VISITS: PROTOCOL/POLICY

Policy

Key Principles of Governance at SENDAT including the Board and Local Academy Board (LAB)

We act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of Chalk Hill.

We work as members of a team at all times and we are loyal to collective decisions made by the LAB.

We recognise that all representatives have the same rights and responsibilities unless particular responsibilities are conferred on them by the full LAB.

We understand that no representative can act alone except in exceptional circumstances prescribed in the regulations - the power of the LAB rests in it acting as a single body.

We recognise that the Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of the policy, day-to-day management of the school and the implementation of the curriculum.

We agree to abide by our code of conduct.

The LAB is responsible for the:

Strategic View – Values, Mission, Vision

Critical Friend - Monitoring and evaluating school improvement and pupil progress

Ensure Accountability – High Standards, value for money, agreed aims and objectives.

Visiting Chalk Hill is the best way to learn how it functions, and to keep under review how it operates so that you can increase the LAB's first hand knowledge, informing strategic decision making. Through visits representatives will have the opportunity to observe policies and plans being implemented on a day-to-day basis, and their findings should help the whole governing body and its committees make well-informed judgements about progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the school improvement plan. It may not though be possible for every governor to be available during the day – this will depend on personal and work commitments. However, all representatives should do some visits; the frequency and type of visit will vary according to availability and role.

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Improvement Plan and cover a wide range of schoolwork. Each visit should be agreed and have a clear purpose. Representatives should arrange these visits with the head teacher who has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of Chalk Hill.

Potential benefits to representatives

- Recognise and celebrate success
- Develop relationships with staff

- Get to know the students
- Recognise different teaching styles
- Understand the environment in which teachers teach
- Monitor policies in action
- Find out what resources are needed and prioritise them
- Deepen understanding and increase confidence and knowledge
- Inform decision making

Potential benefits to teachers

- Ensure representatives understand the reality of the classroom
- Get to know representatives
- Understand better the representatives' roles and responsibilities
- Have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- Highlight the need for particular resources

What a visit is not

- 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/Headteacher time

Roles and responsibilities of representatives, head teacher and other staff

The LAB will, with the help of the head teacher and staff, organise an annual schedule of school visits throughout the year. The aim will be to achieve a minimum of one visit per manager per term. Visits may be conducted in pairs. The head teacher will guide the LAB on the areas of the curriculum; policies and school improvement plan priorities and targets to be covered each term. Individual representatives or pairs of representatives will, with the guidance of the whole LAB, identify an aspect of the school's work to focus on in order to deepen their understanding.

Monitoring and review of representatives' school visit policy

- This policy should be monitored and reviewed biannually.
- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits we identified?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make our practice even better?

Protocol

- Check the agreed policy for representatives' visits
- Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the School Improvement Plan? What are the relevant school policies? How does this determine the activities I am interested in?

- Discuss an agenda with the head teacher, and or member of the leadership team well in advance. Make sure that the date chosen is suitable.
- Use the school visits pro forma
- It might be possible for you to see a copy of any documents beforehand. Discuss with the Headteacher if any supporting information is available e.g., Ofsted report, improvement plan, performance data.
- Be clear beforehand exactly what you are looking for. Try to prepare questions in advance.

During the Visit

- Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the LAB; it is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on behalf of the LAB.
- Be punctual, courteous and considerate at all times, respecting the professional roles of the head teacher and staff.
- Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the class will be
- Get involved with the children
- Remember it is a visit **not** an inspection
- Observe discretely
- Don't distract the teacher during the lesson but be prepared to talk and show interest
- Interact, don't interrupt
- Listen to staff and pupils

Teachers and support staff will at all times be courteous and considerate, recognising the contribution made by the LAB to the school.

They will make practical suggestions on the focus for representatives' 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 representatives. See **Appendix A** for a list of things which representatives could examine/explore, this is not exhaustive. Whenever practical they will invite representatives to relevant staff meetings and training sessions. Questions will be invited from representatives, while being sensitive to issues of confidentiality. See **Appendix B** for examples of questions which could be asked to support your understanding. Although these focus on literacy, numeracy and SEND, many of the questions can easily be adapted to other areas of the curriculum.

After the visit

- If you get the opportunity discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how?
- Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved

- Thank the teacher for supporting you in your role as a manager. Be open, honest, and positive.
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind and share the report with the Head Teacher for agreement that it is a true reflection of the visit.
- Reflect: how did that go? Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learnt more about the school? Have I gained more confidence in helping the governing body fulfil its duties?

Reporting your visit

- Write a short summary 'as a lay person' of what you learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. This will be easier if the visit had a focus. Please use our visit report format, Appendix C, copies are held in the visits folder .
- You must share your report with the head teacher and/or staff involved for them to check the accuracy and clarity. Be prepared to amend it. Aim to achieve a report that is agreed by all those involved.
- Circulate this at the next appropriate meeting.
- Please put a fully completed copy in the Representatives' Visit Folder kept in the Headteacher's office.

Visit Focus

Although not an exhaustive list visits may focus on:-

- Particular subjects, key stages or classes
- The use made of the building or the site
- The condition and maintenance of the premises
- Special educational needs
- Literacy and numeracy
- The use of ICT equipment
- The impact on the school of any changes, e.g. new students joining classes
- Impact of specific targets identified in the School Improvement Plan
- Impact of Staff Development Training

Informal Visits

Visits may also take place in an informal capacity **but not without prior arrangement with the Headteacher**. It is vital that everyone is clear about the capacity in which they are visiting and not to confuse the role. These might include:

- Chair making a regular visit to the head teacher
- Volunteering at school events/trips/in the class
- Obtaining information from the office relating to meetings

Date policy review June 2019

Date of next review June 2021



Appendix A

Monitoring

Manager Monitoring can take several forms

- Pupil interviews
- Meeting with teachers/support staff
- Snapshot of a lesson
- Walk around the school

Aims:

- To know and understand the level of enjoyment pupils have about their learning
- Understand what pupils like best/least in the school
- Know the standards of achievement in a subject area
- Know what steps are being taken to improve standards
- Know how well strategic policies approved by representatives are working
- To report main findings back to the full governing body

Observations to make when visiting a classroom

- Relationship between all staff in the classroom and pupils
- Relationship 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 pupils are grouped
- How different abilities are catered for
- Children's work
- Displays
- Ethos – the atmosphere and values that are evident (are expectations high, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space and working conditions
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources
- Health and safety regulations practiced i.e. fire exits kept clear

Appendix B Ideas of questions to help your understanding

To Ask Pupils

- 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)
- Do you know how you can improve/what your next target is?

Questions To ask Teachers/Headteacher

- What is your vision for the subjects you teach?
- Were there any Ofsted findings about your subjects?
- What are the strengths of the subjects you teach? How do you know?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress across the school?
- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subjects you teach?
- What resources does the school have for your subjects and how are these organised? Are there any additional resource needs?
- How do you help develop others' skills in your subjects subject?
- Achievements and attitudes
- What are the trends in the school's achievement in English/Maths.
- In relation to the national rates of increase?
- Where have we improved? Do we know why?
- How do our achievements in English/maths compare with other subjects?
- What aspects of the subjects do pupils find easy and which hard?
- Are there significant differences in reading and writing?
- Are there differences between the achievement of different classes, and if so, do you know why?

To understand about pupil progress is being made you could look at

- Pupil progress data from schools baseline
- The work of a range of pupils – expected, below expected and above expected

Other evidence, Special Needs

- How are pupils with special educational needs integrated into the daily literacy/maths lessons?

Management of the curriculum

- Does the school improvement plan match the identified needs?
- How has the budget for resources been allocated?
- Is there a need for additional resources for any aspect of the curriculum?
- How much additional adult support does each class have? How do you decide how to deploy additional support?
- Are there are a range of reading books are available that cater for all abilities, cultural backgrounds and tastes?
- How does the school use all its resources (books, materials and displays, as well as electronic media) to promote basic skills?

In the classroom

Question to help understanding

Possible features of answer

How do you plan your lessons: how do you get from the National Curriculum to deciding what a pupil will be doing in Science today?

National Curriculum
Scheme of Work
Year/termly/weekly/daily plans
Individual plans

How do you judge how well pupils are learning and making progress?

Questioning in lessons
Marking
Assessments, including tests
Target-setting and achieving
Value added data

What learning resources are available to your pupils and how do they learn effectively?

ICT – access to computers
Classroom library
Use of basics like pens and pencils.
Good labelling
Borrowed resource

How do you cope with the needs of different pupils?

Disabled
Most able/ SEN
English as an Additional Language
Disruptive behaviour

How do you decide to seat the pupils and arrange the classroom? Does it ever vary and why?

By ability
Patterns
Different for different activities

How do you encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning?

Regular contact
Reports
Letters
Diaries

Communication

- How are parents kept informed of progress?
- How do you gathers parents views?



- What steps are taken to encourage adults to support the pupils in reading/writing at home and care time for the boarders?

Appendix C

Chalk Hill Representatives' visits monitoring and evaluation record

Date, time, length of visit	
Name of Manager*	
Responsibility area*	
Staff member(s) involved*	
Purpose of visit* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	
Ofsted Action Plan Link*	School Improvement Plan Link*
Planned activities* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	
Outcome of visit	
Issues for the Management Committee	
Chalk Hill Staff Member/Headteacher comments	
Follow-up actions / suggested focus for future visits	

Signed Manager

Signed Headteacher

* to be completed before visit

