



# Link Governor Handbook

Together we **Exceed**



## Contents

Your Role in Supporting Excellence Across Our Schools.....	2
About this Handbook .....	3
Why Do We Have Link Governors? .....	3
Purpose of Link Governor Visits .....	4
Planning a Link Governor Visit .....	5
Establishing Evidence of Your Visit .....	6
Link Governor: Curriculum & Teaching.....	7
Link Governor: Safeguarding.....	8
Link Governor: Inclusion.....	9
Link Governor: Attendance & Behaviour .....	10
Link Governor: Early Years Foundation Stage .....	11
Link Governor: Achievement .....	12
Link Governor: Personal Development and Wellbeing .....	13
Link Governor: Leadership and Governance .....	14
Link Governor: Health and Safety.....	15
Link Governor: Careers .....	16
Link Governor Summary.....	17
Governance Visit Report Template.....	18

## Your Role in Supporting Excellence Across Our Schools

As a valued Link Governor within the Exceed Academies Trust, you play a pivotal role in shaping the direction and success of our family of schools. Exceed Academies Trust is established with a clear purpose: to improve outcomes and life chances for all its learners. The Trust seeks to have a positive impact on the communities it serves, ensuring that every child receives a high quality education that prepares them to thrive in modern British society. By focusing on continuous improvement in education, the Trust aspires to make meaningful contributions both within its schools and more widely across the education sector.

Central to achieving these ambitions is the belief in strong, focused governance. Effective governance supports the Trust in realising its vision, providing the necessary oversight and leadership to drive success and improvement across all its schools.

Link Governors act as a vital bridge between the Local Advisory Board and specific aspects of school life, ensuring that our schools remain vibrant, outward-looking, and closely connected to their communities.

Your responsibilities as a Link Governor go beyond attendance at meetings; you bring a unique perspective and expertise to key areas such as safeguarding, curriculum and teaching, behaviour and attendance, achievement, inclusion, early years, leadership and governance and personal development. By engaging regularly with school leaders, staff, and pupils, you help celebrate achievements, identify areas for improvement, and champion the values and aspirations of the Trust.

Through your visits and involvement, you will gather evidence, triangulate information from a range of sources, including school improvement plans, self-evaluations, and monitoring reports and provide both support and constructive challenge to school leaders. This process enables continuous improvement, strengthens accountability, and supports our shared goal of raising standards across all our schools.

This handbook is designed to guide and support you as a Link Governor. It contains essential information about your role, and we encourage you to use this handbook alongside other key documents and school resources, ensuring you remain well-informed and confident in your governance responsibilities.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment. Together, we will continue to foster excellence, drive improvement, and make a lasting difference to the lives of children and families in our communities.

“The role of the Link Governor is an excellent opportunity to show that you support the school but at the same time are a critical friend of the school.”

## About this Handbook

This guidance for Link Governors has been produced to assist understanding of how to prepare for a visit to the school, how a Link Governor might approach this visit and what to do afterwards.

It is intended to assist Governors in how to get the best out of visiting the school and how they might use the experience to report back to the Local Advisory Board helping to deepen all governors' understanding of how the school operates.

This is not intended to be a definitive guide on how to discharge the duties of a Link Governor and it is not prescriptive. Nevertheless, we hope that this handbook is useful to those undertaking the role of Link Governor and also proves helpful to school staff involved in Governor visits so that they know what to expect and how to prepare to welcome Link Governors into school.

Having some consistency in how these visits are conducted helps ensure the Trust works as one entity, in the interests of all of its schools.

Exceed Academies Trust wants to have well informed Governors, with a good understanding of school aims and objectives, systems and strategies in place and areas for further development.

We hope that this guide will provide Governors with an insight into the process of visiting the school and benefit both Governors and staff by raising awareness of their respective roles in the success of the school.

The [Governor Visits Policy](#) and [Governor Visit Toolkit](#) are useful to refer to alongside this handbook.

## Why Do We Have Link Governors?

- They allow Governors to see first-hand the resources used in school, the fabric of the building etc, so that they can make informed decisions
- They constitute part of a strategy to monitor and regularly evaluate the progress of the School Improvement Plan
- They are a means to build up relationships, based on mutual trust and respect
- They provide OFSTED with concrete evidence about the involvement of the Governors in the school
- They contribute to inform the schools self-evaluation process.

Local Advisory Boards that have established effective link roles have an improved understanding of how the school works; its strengths and weaknesses and will improve their effectiveness in addressing school improvement issues.

Most visits, especially in the early days of building a relationship with the school, will be concerned with meeting the appropriate staff and finding out as much as you can about how the school is responding to your subject or area. Regular meetings should help keep you informed of all developments.

You will become familiar with the relevant curriculum areas, assessments, target setting and any strategies being used to assist in raising standards as appropriate. Once well established relationships have been developed, visits may involve seeing children at work.

## Purpose of Link Governor Visits

The role of the Link Governor is to provide a link between the Local Advisory Board and the school. It gives the Governor a chance to see the school in action, get to know the staff and children and to have an opportunity to show support. A Governor should raise any concerns as a result of their visit with the Headteacher without delay.

Those responsible for governance have a responsibility to monitor and evaluate the progress of their school. This is done in a variety of ways; one of which is through first hand observation.

For such visits to be positive and supportive they need to be planned in a way which enhances the Local Advisory Board's understanding of an aspect of the school's work. Reports following these visits will provide constructive feedback to the Local Advisory Board.

The intention is to equip Governors with the tools to understand and support school improvement. If every Governor got involved and reported back, the Local Advisory Board would have a very clear understanding of how the school is functioning.

### Visits should be useful and informative; they are an opportunity to:

- Observe the range of attitudes, behaviours and achievements of the pupils.
- Understand the views and values of the staff and pupils.
- Evaluate the resources and the environment of the school.
- Become known and demonstrate your commitment to the school.
- Observe the operation of policies.
- Give active support to the activities of the school.
- Become aware of changes and different approaches to teaching and learning.
- Demonstrate being a critical friend of the school.

### The visits should benefit those responsible for governance to:

- Recognise and celebrate success.
- Develop positive relationships with the staff.
- Get to know the pupils.
- Understand the teaching environment.
- Observe and understand on how resources are used.
- See how the staffing structure is supporting the raising of standards.

“If Governors are to monitor and evaluate the school's work they need to visit the school. When handled well these visits build up trust and respect between staff and the Local Advisory Board, and they allow Governors to monitor the school's working way that is far more supportive than if they just attend meetings. The visits to school by Governors work well when the focus of the visit is agreed in advance and understood by all involved.”

### Monitoring visits enable staff to:

- Get to know and build relationships with Governors.
- Feel valued.
- Appreciate and value the role and responsibilities of Governors.
- Ensure Governors understand the reality of the classroom and the school.
- Feel supported by the Local Advisory Board.
- Share an understanding of their specific area.

### Some useful reminders:

- Remember that you are representing the Local Advisory Board and must be discrete about matters affecting individual teachers or pupils.
- Remember that some pupils do not accept unfamiliar people entering their 'space' so seek advice from the staff before entering a class or speaking to an individual pupil.
- Remember you are not an Ofsted inspector; try to get involved without being obtrusive.
- Remember to respect the professionalism of the teacher and respect the pupils.
- Beware of giving opinions and following personal agendas.
- Ask questions: What, Why, How, Where.
- Plan your visit to cover a wide range of work and have a clear focus.

## Planning a Link Governor Visit

Ideally plan with the relevant member of staff the frequency of visits that will take place across the year. The target is at least one visit per year with a maximum of one per half term.

Schedule an appointment with the relevant member of staff. Individual Governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish, so it's essential to pre-arrange all visits to your school with the appropriate person.

Notify the Headteacher that you are visiting (including the time of arrival/departure), even if the Headteacher will not be involved in the visit. Make sure they're aware, as a matter of courtesy.

Learning walks are where you'll go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area. You're likely to talk to a range of employees and pupils.

If you have specific questions or things you want to look at on the visit, send these to the staff member in advance so you can both feel more prepared.

Aims of some Link Governor areas (sample questions for curriculum areas, safeguarding, special education needs and disabilities (SEND), attendance, pupil premium and early years can be found elsewhere in this handbook. **NOTE – (Not every question needs to be used at every visit).**

Be prepared by reading relevant literature before your visit (e.g. policies, school development plan and any relevant data) - these should help you understand what's expected.

“Governor visits can enhance the capacity of the Local Advisory Board to carry out its duties.”

### During the visit, Governors should remember:

- Not to make judgements or promises on behalf of the Local Advisory Board.
- To keep to the agreed planned visit and timetable, whilst appreciating that from time to time this may need to stay flexible.
- To decide and agree how you should be introduced to the pupils.
- Remember it is not an inspection, so understand how this visit may be perceived.
- Observe discretely so as not to impact the teaching.
- Stay courteous and friendly, not critical.
- Be interactive.
- Listen.
- Speak to the Headteacher, if available, before you leave.

**All Governors must adhere to the Trust’s Safeguarding Policies at all times.**

## Establishing Evidence of Your Visit

In order to evidence the outcome of your visit to the school, it is good practice that you make a record of your visit as soon as possible. An example template is included in this handbook.

Ensure that this is shared with the appropriate member of staff and the Headteacher before forwarding to the Governance Professional who will ensure that it is presented at the next Local Advisory Board meeting.

“Governor visits can evidence a robust process to provide clear channels of communication between school professionals and those responsible for governance with a focus on Learning and Teaching.”



**Local Advisory Boards may not hold all the Link Governor roles outlined below and in some cases the roles may be titled differently. However, the information provided is designed to be flexible and will support you in effectively fulfilling your link governance responsibilities, regardless of local variations.**

## Link Governor: Curriculum & Teaching

### Aims

The role of the Curriculum Link Governor is to keep the Local Advisory Board informed of standards achieved and the resource needs of the curriculum area in order to maintain and raise standards. The Link Governor should meet with the Subject Leads, on a regular basis, to become better informed and discuss the implementation of any agreed actions and progress towards targets. This will enable the Link Governor to become familiar with the relevant curriculum policies and how they are being implemented, find out about the resource and training needs required to improve standards and contribute to the monitoring of School Improvement Plan priorities and other plans.

### Sample questions:

- How is the curriculum planned for this subject?
- What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
- What improvements have you made/ planned for this year in the subject?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress in the subject?
- How do we use assessment information to target improvement?
- Is there an action plan I can share with the Local Advisory Board?
- What were the OFSTED findings about the subject?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching the subject?
- Have you got any work samples I can see from across the year groups to help me become more aware of progress and attainment?
- How is the role of the Subject Leader developed?
- What are the broad trends in the school's achievement in the subject area?
- How does this compare with similar schools/academies?
- How does this compare to the national data?
- Where have we improved? Do we know why?
- Where has progress or attainment declined? Why?
- What aspects of the subject do pupils find easy and which do they find hard?
- Do we have teaching materials/resources that are age-appropriate which can be used for pupils with different levels of ability? (books, materials, displays and electronic media)
- Do we use any external resources? (e.g. libraries or other providers)
- How do we cater for more able pupils?
- Are there any additional resource needs?
- Are you planning any extra-curricular events to support learning?
- How are parents kept informed of progress?
- What steps are being taken to encourage parents to support their children's learning at home?
- Are there any planned events for parents to attend?
- What issues are in the school's Self-Evaluation that apply particularly to this subject or Key Stage and what plans do we have to address them?
- How well do pupils know their individual targets?
- What areas of staff development are currently being addressed through Continuing Professional Development?

## Link Governor: Safeguarding

### Aims

The Link Governor for safeguarding should take leadership responsibility for the school's safeguarding arrangements, ensuring the Local Advisory Board is kept informed about how they are meeting their safeguarding responsibilities. The Link Governor should check the Single Central Record and meet the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy on a regular basis to get a better understanding of the whole school approach to safeguarding, including local contextual safeguarding factors.

### Sample questions:

- Is the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy on the school's website?
- What are the local contextual aspects of safeguarding?
- How can you identify the Designated Safeguarding Leads?
- What system does the school have in place in relation to the filtering and monitoring of safeguarding?
- How are parents/carers made aware of what the children are being asked to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access and clarity on who from school (if anyone) their child will be interacting with online?
- What systems are in place for children to confidently report concerns/allegations/ abuse? How do you know that these are understood and accessible to all children?
- What checks does the school have in place to safeguard pupils in alternative provisions?
- What checks does the school carry out to ensure third party users have appropriate insurance and safeguarding policies?
- Have all staff and governors returned an annual safeguarding declaration? How do you know?
- What is in place to quality assure that outstanding actions following the safeguarding self-assessment audit have been addressed?
- Is the school fully compliant with all aspects of the Safer Recruitment guidance?
- How do you know that the Single Central Record (SCR) is up to date, including any new appointments/leavers?
- What processes are in place to quality assure the checking of the SCR for compliance?
- How do you know that new staff, who have recently joined the school, have received safeguarding induction?
- Have all governors received safeguarding training appropriate to their role and how is this evidenced?



## Link Governor: Inclusion

### Aims

The Inclusion Link Governor is responsible for championing the needs of pupils with SEND, those eligible for Pupil Premium, pupils known to social care and those with other barriers to learning. They ensure that all learners have equal access to opportunities, high-quality teaching, and support to reach their potential. The Link Governor meets regularly with the SENDCO and monitors the effective use of funding, staff training, and school strategies to remove barriers, promote achievement, and foster inclusion for all disadvantaged and SEND pupils.

### Sample questions:

- What funding does the school receive for SEND and Pupil Premium, and how is it allocated?
- How many pupils are on the SEND register or eligible for Pupil Premium in each year group?
- How does the school track and compare the attainment, progress, attendance, and participation of SEND and disadvantaged pupils with their peers, locally and nationally?
- What targeted academic and well-being support is provided, and how are extra-curricular and educational opportunities made accessible to these pupils?
- How effective are current strategies in addressing barriers to learning and closing attainment gaps? What evidence exists of impact?
- What expertise does the school have in SEND and inclusion; are there areas for development?
- How are staff, including Early Career Teachers and support staff, trained and supported to meet the needs of SEND and disadvantaged pupils?
- What are the processes for reviewing and updating Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and the Pupil Premium Strategy, and are these available to parents and carers?
- How does the school communicate and support to parents of SEND and disadvantaged pupils?
- Is there a current accessibility plan and clear priorities relating to inclusion and Pupil Premium in the School Improvement Plan?
- How many children in need and looked after children are currently attending the school, and how are their particular needs identified and supported?
- What strategies are in place to address the specific barriers to learning faced by children in need and looked after children?
- How does the school monitor the progress and engagement of children in need and looked after children compared to their peers?
- What support is available for pupils who may face barriers to learning due to protected characteristics (such as disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation), and how does the school foster an inclusive environment for these pupils?
- How does the school ensure that staff are aware of and responsive to the needs of children who may face discrimination or disadvantage because of their protected characteristics?
- What steps are taken to promote equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination for all pupils, including children in need, looked after children, and those with protected characteristics?

“Engaging in school visits demonstrates the full commitment of all Governors, thereby helping them to undertake their dual role of challenge and support with interest and authority.”

## Link Governor: Attendance & Behaviour

### Aims

The Link Governor should meet the school's Attendance and Behaviour Leads on a regular basis to ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties regarding both attendance and behaviour. This includes regularly reviewing attendance and behaviour data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most. The role involves holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of both the Attendance Policy and the Behaviour Policy, ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance and behaviour management, and that effective practice is shared across the Trust.

### Sample questions:

#### Attendance:

- What is the school's current attendance rate, and how does it compare locally and nationally?
- How is attendance monitored daily and weekly, and who oversees tracking?
- What procedures address low or declining attendance, and how are interventions for individual pupils managed?
- How are families of persistently absent pupils engaged and supported?
- What percentage of pupils are persistently absent, and what support/interventions are in place?
- How does the school promote and reward good attendance and punctuality, and how are these monitored?
- What communication strategies inform parents and pupils about attendance, punctuality, and their importance?
- What are the main reasons for absence, and what strategies address them (e.g. unauthorised absence, illness, holidays)?
- What external agencies or Trust resources support families with attendance challenges?
- Are there specific targets for reducing absenteeism or lateness, and how is impact monitored?
- How are attendance trends and gaps between cohorts (e.g. boys/girls, SEND, FSM) tracked and addressed?
- How is it ensured that all staff view attendance as a shared responsibility?

#### Behaviour and Exclusions:

- Does the school have an effective, up-to-date behaviour policy, and is it applied consistently?
- How is poor behaviour recorded and monitored, and how are staff and parents kept informed?
- How does the school promote good behaviour and support staff with behaviour management?
- What interventions and support are in place for pupils with challenging behaviour or specific needs?
- Is there an effective anti-bullying policy, and how are incidents tracked and reported?
- What training is provided on behaviour, bullying, and social media risks?
- How many suspensions / exclusions have occurred, and what alternatives and reintegration support are offered?
- How effective is the school in reducing persistent poor behaviour, and are external services accessed as needed?

## Link Governor: Early Years Foundation Stage

### Aims

To meet regularly with the Early Years Lead to develop a comprehensive understanding of the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision, including its impact on children's outcomes and how funding, equipment and personnel resources are used. The Link Governor should ensure that EYFS provision is embedded within the whole school development plan and hold leaders accountable for both the quality of provision and the progress made by children in the EYFS.

### Sample questions:

- How does the EYFS curriculum address the needs of all children, including those with SEND, EAL, and other vulnerabilities, according to current statutory guidance?
- How do staff ensure learning is play-based, meaningful and actively engages all children?
- How do observations, assessments, and planning guide teaching and learning?
- Are examples of children's learning journeys available?
- How do you foster language growth through interaction and a language-rich environment?
- How do you encourage children's social-emotional growth and self-regulation?
- How do you support early literacy and math skills by sequencing activities to build on children's prior knowledge?
- How is the outdoor environment used and improved to support children's learning?
- How does the curriculum enable all children to succeed, regardless of background or needs?
- How does the curriculum align with the EYFS framework's aim to cut excess assessment and paperwork, enabling more practitioner-child interaction?
- How do you monitor children's progress, identify learning gaps, and address needs?
- How do you share children's progress and development with parents/carers?
- How is assessment data used for curriculum planning and resource allocation?
- How are assessment processes aligned to support transitions, such as starting Reception or moving to Year 1, under new guidance?
- How do you foster emotional wellbeing for children and staff?
- How is continuity ensured during children's transitions into and within the setting?
- How do you communicate with parents/carers to support children's wellbeing?
- How do you promote health, including active play, healthy eating, and personal care?
- How is provision managed to align with statutory requirements and uphold high standards?
- How is quality monitored and assured through self-evaluation, staff training, and feedback?
- How is ongoing improvement in EYFS ensured in response to new research and local needs?
- How can the Link Governor effectively support and advocate for young children's needs?
- What are the strengths and areas for improvement given the latest framework and local goals?
- What are the main priorities? How are they influenced by national guidance and local context?



## Link Governor: Achievement

### Aims

The role of the Achievement Link Governor involves monitoring and evaluating the progress and attainment of all pupil groups, while gaining a thorough understanding of the school's assessment, tracking, and reporting systems for achievement. It is essential to ensure that effective interventions and support are available for children who may be at risk of underachievement. Celebrating and promoting both academic and personal achievements is a key part of the remit, as is supporting staff in identifying and overcoming barriers to learning. Furthermore, the role is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, enabling every child to fulfil their potential.

### Sample questions:

- How do you track and measure individual pupil progress throughout the EYFS?
- What strategies are in place to support children who may be at risk of falling behind?
- How do you celebrate academic and personal achievements in your setting?
- How do you support all groups, including those with additional needs, to make progress?
- What recent trends in achievement have you identified, and how have you responded to them?
- How do you communicate a child's progress and achievements to parents or carers?
- How does staff professional development contribute to improving pupil achievement?
- How does this school's attainment compare to similar schools, national averages, and government floor targets?
- How does our school's context impact on the performance of our pupils?
- How well is the school performing in each subject?
- Which subjects are the highest and lowest performing? Why?
- Are pupils meeting expectations? What explains any gaps?
- How is progress and attainment data changing over time?
- What plans are in place for addressing any underperformance?
- Which cohorts are outperforming or underperforming? (Consider factors like disadvantage, ethnicity, gender.)
- How are we stretching our most-able pupils?
- What provision do we have in place for SEND pupils? How are we meeting their individual needs?
- How are Pupil Premium pupils performing compared with other pupils in the school?
- How is assessment used to inform planning?
- How are we using the information gathered from assessment to improve outcomes?
- How do we ensure that assessment is not overly burdensome on teachers?
- How are we communicating the outcome of assessments to parents and pupils?
- How are we ensuring that our assessment data is accurate? What measures is the school taking to moderate this? How is the Trust supporting and facilitating this?



## Link Governor: Personal Development and Wellbeing

### Aims

The role of the Personal Development and Wellbeing Link Governor is to ensure that every pupil develops the skills, resilience and character necessary to succeed in modern British society. It is essential to foster a positive school culture that promotes emotional wellbeing, celebrates diversity, and encourages pupils to make healthy choices. Link Governors should ensure that pupils are supported to develop respect for themselves and others, confidence, and a sense of responsibility, in line with the values and ethos of the school.

### Sample questions:

- How does the curriculum support pupils' personal development and wellbeing?
- What strategies are there to identify and support the risk of poor mental health or wellbeing?
- Is the school offering opportunities that reflect a wide range of different skills and interests?
- How do you ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have SEND, are able to participate fully in school life?
- Can you provide examples of how the school promotes British values and celebrates diversity?
- What opportunities are there to develop leadership skills or contribute to the school community?
- How is pupil voice captured and used to inform provision around personal development?
- What support is available for pupils experiencing challenges outside of school, and how are families involved?
- How does the school ensure that safeguarding and online safety are integrated into personal development provision?
- How are successes in personal development and wellbeing celebrated and communicated?
- Are there appropriate opportunities for pupils of all ages, abilities and backgrounds?
- Are there any barriers that are preventing certain groups from fully participating (e.g. financial constraints)? If so, what is the school doing to address this?
- What alternative options are provided for pupils who are unable to remain at school after hours?
- How does the school integrate careers education into the curriculum for all key stages?
- What is in place to ensure pupils receive impartial and current careers advice and guidance?
- How does the school monitor and evaluate the impact of its careers programme?
- What support is there to explore careers, including apprenticeships and vocational pathways?
- Are there targeted careers interventions for groups at risk of under-achievement?
- How are parents and carers involved in careers education and guidance?
- How does the school ensure that careers education reflects current labour market opportunities?
- Are there opportunities for pupils to engage in work experience?
- How is the effectiveness of careers education communicated to pupils, parents, and governors?
- What does the school do to address gaps or under-representation in careers-related activities?



## Link Governor: Leadership and Governance

### Aims

As the Link Governor for Leadership and Governance, your role involves monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's leadership and governance in accordance with Ofsted's inspection framework and the Trust's policies and documents. You are responsible for ensuring that the school's vision, ethos, and strategic direction are clearly communicated and embedded within the entire school community. This includes supporting and constructively challenging senior leaders in their decision-making processes to guarantee accountability and transparency. You also foster a culture of continuous improvement by regularly reviewing policies, practices, and outcomes associated with leadership and governance. Furthermore, you ensure that safeguarding, inclusivity, and the promotion of British values are at the heart of the school's leadership practices, and contribute to the robustness of the school's self-evaluation, confirming that leaders have an accurate understanding of both strengths and areas requiring development.

### Sample questions:

- How does the school's leadership ensure that the vision and values are understood and upheld by staff and pupils?
- Is the leadership structure fit for purpose?
- Are there any knowledge, skills or experience gaps in the leadership team? If so, what is being done to address these?
- Is there a clear plan of where the school needs to be in five years' time?
- What are the key areas for development on the school's current improvement/development plan?
- Is there a robust system in place for the headteacher's performance management?
- Are the headteacher's performance management targets aligned with school improvement priorities?
- Can you describe how strategic decisions are made and communicated across the school?
- How are leaders held accountable for pupil outcomes and the quality of education?
- What systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of leadership on teaching, learning, and pupil wellbeing?
- How does the school ensure effective succession planning and development of future leaders?
- What steps are taken to promote equality, diversity, and British values within the school's leadership practices?
- How do governors and senior leaders work together to ensure robust safeguarding arrangements?
- How is stakeholder feedback gathered and used to inform strategic decisions?
- How does the school's self-evaluation shape priorities and how are these tracked?
- What are the main challenges faced by the leadership team, and how are these being addressed?
- Is the governing body effective in challenging and supporting school leadership?
- Does the school hold any awards or quality marks? Is any benefit in applying for others?
- How are external skills and expertise utilised, to enhance what is offered internally?
- How is the school capturing, recording and evidencing the things that it does really well?
- Is the school outward looking? Is good practice actively sought from elsewhere?

“Link Governors can feel confident that they have an informed view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and be able to support with a focus on the school vision.”

## Link Governor: Health and Safety

### Aims

The Health and Safety Link Governor plays a vital role in ensuring robust systems are in place to safeguard pupils, staff, and visitors throughout the school site. Their responsibilities encompass monitoring and reviewing the school's compliance with statutory health and safety requirements, which includes overseeing regular risk assessments and maintenance schedules. Additionally, they support and challenge the headteacher and site manager to foster a culture of safety and well-being, ensure that all areas of the site including playgrounds, car parks, and external facilities are safe and well maintained, and provide the governing body with assurance that health and safety matters are prioritised and adequately resourced. The Link Governor also facilitates effective communication regarding health and safety issues among staff, pupils, parents, and governors.

### Sample questions:

- Are the buildings in a good state of repair?
- Who maintains the buildings? Is this an appropriate arrangement? Could the school work
- Is there a prioritised repairs schedule with adequate funding to stay on track?
- Are leaders aware of potential funding opportunities for building enhancements?
- Is the school aware of potential risks and are they managing these appropriately?
- Are there risk assessments in place to reduce risks as far as possible?
- Are there procedures in place regarding bomb threats, intruders and lockdowns?
- Are there regular emergency drills in place for evacuation and invacuation?
- Are all areas of the school being used to their full potential?
- How will projected pupil numbers impact on the use of the building over the coming years?
- How will future pupil numbers affect building usage?
- Has the school explored the possibility of generating income by hiring out their facilities?
- Is appropriate insurance in place?
- Are all the statutory health and safety requirements met?
- How are staff informed of health and safety updates, guidance and requirements?
- Who is responsible for health and safety and is their knowledge up to date?
- How regularly are health and safety inspections carried out and is this by a suitably
- qualified person/organisation?
- How are the outcomes of health and safety inspections reported to governors?
- Is the school's health and safety policy properly adhered to?
- Does the school meet appropriate food standards?
- Is there a process in place for risk assessing school trips?
- Is there a process in place for approving school trips (or otherwise)? Is this effective?
- Do all staff know how to deal with health and safety incidents?
- Are incident reporting procedures in place to record minor and major injuries? Are these reported to the Health and Safety Executive when required?
- What are the arrangements for storing medicines safely on site?
- Are there an adequate number of trained first-aiders and is their training up to date?

## Link Governor: Careers

### Aims

The Link Governor for careers is a statutory requirement for secondary schools and is highly recommended for Alternative Provision Academies. They provide strategic oversight of careers education and guidance, promote employer engagement, and ensure a consistent whole-school approach aligned with the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. They also act as the LAB's key contact for the staff member responsible for careers. Working with the SLT and designated leads, the Link Governor reviews the effectiveness of the school's careers provision and its impact on employability. They monitor provision through visits, meetings, surveys, and data analysis, reporting findings to the LAB to support appropriate challenge and oversight. They ensure the LAB remains informed of statutory duties and compliant with guidance.

### Sample Questions

- What careers support do we currently offer, and how do we know it is effective?
- How are we ensuring compliance with statutory guidance on careers education and guidance?
- How well are the Gatsby Benchmarks embedded across the school, and which benchmarks require further development?
- How do we provide pupils with information on a broad range of career options?
- What actions have been taken recently to develop careers education, work-related learning, or cultural capital (e.g., curriculum changes, new interventions, staff training)?
- How are employability skills taught and reinforced across year groups?
- How do we know that our careers guidance is having a positive impact on pupils' destinations and aspirations?
- How are you monitoring careers provision across the school? How often do you do this?
- What partnerships with employers, training providers, or further/higher education institutions are currently in place?
- Are there opportunities to expand employer engagement or introduce new work-related learning experiences?
- How is the success of work-related learning and employer engagement evaluated?
- How can governors support staff in securing meaningful employer links?
- What is the structure of the school's work-experience programme, and how do we ensure its quality and relevance?
- How are pupils prepared for, supported during, and evaluated after work-experience placements?
- Are all pupil groups (including SEND and disadvantaged pupils) accessing careers provision equally?
- How do we monitor whether certain groups are under-represented in enrichment, employer visits, or work-experience opportunities?



## Link Governor Summary

### Link Governor visits should:

- Have a clear purpose.
- Be arranged in advance and agreed.
- Be an opportunity to celebrate and recognise what the school does well.
- Give the governor an opportunity to monitor, observe, ask questions, record during the visit and report back to the Local Advisory Board.
- Help contribute towards building positive relationships between staff and governors.

The purpose of the visit should be understood by everyone in advance.

### These could include:

- Monitoring i.e. SEN, Parental Involvement, Attendance.
- Linked to School Development Plan.
- Linked to Ofsted recommendations.
- To support the school's work.
- To develop an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- To see policies in action.
- To give governors an enhanced sense of identity with their school and the people who work in it.

### Structure of visits:

- The purpose of the visit will be decided in advance and school staff informed.
- A mutually convenient time will be arranged and the length of visit will be agreed in advance.
- If appropriate, the Link Governor will receive any relevant supporting material.
- During the visit the Governor should feel free to ask questions, become involved in activities, listen, observe etc.
- Before leaving, the Link Governor will discuss observations with the Headteacher.
- The Link Governor should write a short summary report. An example of a Record of Visit is included in this handbook.
- This draft report should be shared with the Headteacher and then will be reported back either verbally or through copies of the written report at the next Local Advisory Board meeting.



## Governance Visit Report Template

🔗 You can get a copy of the [Governor Visit Report Template here](#) (word document download).

# Governor Visit Report

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**School Name**

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**Name of Governor**

**Date of Visit**

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### Focus of Visit

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding      | <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum             | <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SEND              | <input type="checkbox"/> Careers                | <input type="checkbox"/> General Monitoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil Premium     | <input type="checkbox"/> Filtering & Monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> School Improvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability         | Priority                                    |
- 

### Type of Visit

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting         | <input type="checkbox"/> Data Review               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Visit | <input type="checkbox"/> Assembly/Event Attendance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Walk   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other...                  |
- 

### Visit Context and Preparation

- **Purpose of the Visit:** (Why was this visit conducted? E.g., to see a new initiative in practice, conduct a safeguarding walk, etc.) (Were there specific questions you were seeking to answer?)
  - **Preparation:** (What took place before the visit? E.g., meeting with Headteacher, reviewing data, staff presentation, *review of relevant policies*)
- 

### Observations and Findings

- **Overview of the Visit / Summary of Activities:** (Description of what you saw and did - avoid judgments on teaching quality) (did you review any data/documentation/work samples e.g. SCR, workbooks, CIP/SDP)
- 

### Outcomes and Impact

- **Outcome(s) / Impact on Governance:** (What did you learn? How does it inform your role?)
- **Link to Continuous Improvement Plan (School Development Plan) (if applicable):**
- **Areas of Strength:** (What is working well?)
- ▲ • **Areas for Development:** (What could be improved?)