

**Guide to visiting your local primary school**

Depending upon how schools might feel about welcoming visitors, we would love you to explore with your local school whether it might be possible for you to visit. Preferably, we would ask that this could be by the end of February 2023. See if it is possible to go for an hour’s observation (so a whole class lesson) in your local primary school. This booklet gives you guidance on how to set up your visit and how you might make the most of this visit.

**Purpose of the visit**

It is 2-fold:

* To have a glimpse of how the children in your local community spend their working week, gaining an appreciation of something of what they have to negotiate in school
* To observe an experienced teacher at work so you can reflect on the way they work with children

**How to approach the school**

* Ring the school, introduce yourself and explain that you are doing a course related to children (You can always [direct them to the website](https://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/events-training/training/youth-ministry-training.php), or contact the Course Facilitator Charlotte.Nobbs@peterborough-diocese.org.uk) and have been recommended to observe some good children’s practice in a primary school.
* The school will probably direct you to a head teacher or deputy head to organise this.
* Please be patient and understanding that the school is doing you a favour and are under pressure with their usual workload. It may take a week or so for this to be set up.
* If everything is agreed, explain you have this booklet to guide your observation (be ready to show it if asked). Ask if there is anything you need to do before the visit or during the visit to be supportive of the teacher and children.

**What happens on arrival and in the class?**

* Most schools will have a system of signing in and probably an ID lanyard. Make sure you allow time for this and abide by their requirements.
* Once in the classroom, ask the teacher where they would like you to observe from. Generally, it helps if you sit behind the children when the teacher is giving instructions, so that the children are not distracted by your presence.
* Having familiarised yourself with the Observation Guidance (see below) **before** you arrive in the school, note down anything that interests you as you will not remember everything afterwards
* You might find it helpful to ‘track’ one particular child during the session, as well as watch the whole class dynamic with the teacher, their peers and the task in hand.

**What happens afterwards?**

* A box of chocolates and a thank you card for the teacher will always be appreciated!
* 24 hours afterwards reflect on your visit: What surprised you about your observation? What will you want to remember? What will you change in your practice when working with children as a result of this observation?
* Be ready to discuss these reflections with a couple of other students at the session on Tuesday 4th April.

**Observation Guidance (Not to be handed in – this is to help you with your thinking)**

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| **Basic Information** | |
| Age if children? |  |
| How many children in the group? |  |
| Who is leading the teaching? |  |
| If there are other adults in the room, what are their roles? |  |
| **Physical Setting** | |
| Impression of the classroom? |  |
| How do children sit? |  |
| What images can the children see down at their level? |  |
| **Lesson session and format** | |
| How do the children know what should be achieved? |  |
| How is the session introduced? |  |
| How is the content delivered?  (e.g. Teaching talking to whole group? Demonstration? Teacher talking to small group? Children working by themselves/small groups/in pairs?) |  |
| How are children kept on task? |  |
| How do children make the learning their own?  (e.g. Recording by writing/drawing? Talking to an adult/their peers? Practical making/doing? Physical movement?) |  |
| How does the session conclude? |  |
| **Behaviour Management** | |
| What do you notice about the management of the classroom?  (eg Rules, routines, procedures, expectations?) |  |
| How does the teacher reinforce appropriate behaviour? |  |
| How does the teacher redirect inappropriate behaviour? |  |
| What strikes you about the teacher-pupil relationships? |  |

If you require any assistance with this observation, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Or

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**Finally, consider these 3 questions 24 hours after the visit:**

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| 1.What surprised you about your observation? |  |
| 2.What will you remember |  |
| 3.What will you change when working with children as a result of this observation? |  |
| 4.Be ready to discuss these 3 reflections with a couple of other students on Tuesday 4th April |  |