

Make the most of your school experience

Things to do before your visit:

- Use the CESET resource pack to support your visit
- Read the school's behavior and safeguarding policies on their website
- Make a list of questions you would like to ask
- Let the school know if you have any special requirements

Things to remember on your first day:

- To bring your photo ID
- To dress professionally by covering tattoos, removing piercings and wearing business dress
- You may need to be accompanied at all times
- Sign in and out of reception and telephone the school if you can't attend
- Keep your phone away and out of sight throughout your visit

Other useful activities:

- Speak to a current trainee teacher about their experience
- Get a feel for the ethos of the school

Observing lessons

Observing others is an important part of training to be a teacher. Often an experienced teacher can make teaching look easy and it can be hard to work out what makes a lesson successful. Observing a variety of teachers with a particular focus can help de-construct the different elements of what makes a good lesson.

Things to remember:

- Remember that you are there to learn and you are only seeing a snapshot of a teacher's work with a particular class.
- Being observed can put unwanted extra pressure on the teacher so remember to be courteous and respectful when observing others
- Use the target lesson observation sheets in your pack
- Make the most of your visit by engaging in lessons and with learners in class

When talking to teachers about the lesson:

- Show genuine interest
- Observe don't evaluate
- Your questions should prompt discussion rather than judgement, for example "Have I got this right... I'm wondering if...? I'm sensing that..."

Observation form: Behaviour for learning

How did the teacher organise and manage students' entry into the classroom? Had routines previously been established? What effect did this have on the learning environment?
How was the room organised? (Seating plan, table arrangement, resources on desks, display boards. ...)
Management of transitions – Starters/activities/group work
Use of verbal and non-verbal interventions – Movement around the room/language/context
Use of praise – Positive reinforcement/reward schemes
Use of sanctions – What system was in place? Were they fair and consistent?
Structure of lesson – Time management/supporting resources
Relationships – Respect/fairness/ responsibility/clear explanations/classroom presence
Additional Reflections

Observing behaviour management strategies:

A good starting point is to do some preliminary reading and research. Read the school's behaviour policy. Make sure you are familiar with pastoral and pupil support systems and SEND issues.

Behaviour management is a wide area and difficult to make generalisations. A lot of potential behavioural problems can be prevented by consideration of these four areas:

1. Were the lesson objectives clear?
2. Were appropriate organisational strategies employed?
3. Was the lesson tightly planned with a range of tasks suited to the ability of the group and individuals within it?
4. Were SEND issues planned for?

To look for in addition to the above:

Whilst observing make a note of praise and sanctions.
What use was made of voice? (Think about volume and pace). Was the teacher enthusiastic?
Eye contact? Remember some pupils with SEND struggle to make eye contact, so consider teacher's body and shoulder position.
Non-verbal communication? Silence?
Movement around the class? Body language?
What was done to keep all pupils on task?
How were pupils seated? Were any of them moved? Could they have been if needed?

What use was made of humour? What use was made of praise or 'bribery'? Could you see instances of negotiation between teacher and pupil(s)?

Did you see any instances when the teacher diffused a situation? How was this done? Did the teacher have to tell someone off? How was this done?

Did you see an instance when the teacher allowed a pupil not to 'lose face'? Why might this be important? Did you see an instance when the teacher had a quiet word with someone about a behavioural issue? How was this done?

Was there a serious behavioural issue? How had it arisen? What action was taken? How was it followed up later? What impact did this have on the rest of the class?

What was the 'mood' of the teacher and was this the same throughout the lesson?

Observation form: Organisational strategies

Things to record	Comments and reflections
How did the teacher get the pupils into the room?	
How were the pupils seated?	
How did the teacher know the pupils' names?	
What happened in the first 10 minutes of the lesson?	
Was there a register taken? How and when?	
How did the teacher deal with pupils who hadn't got exercise books, planners, writing equipment etc?	
How were books/equipment/etc handed out?	
How did the pupils address the teacher?	
How did the pupils attract the teacher's attention or answer questions?	

When did the teacher give out the homework task?	
How did the teacher give out the homework task?	
Was the homework task clear to pupils?	
What happened in the last 10 minutes of the lesson?	
When and how did the pupils pack their things away?	
How were the pupils dismissed from the lesson?	