

Resource 20: Classroom visits: guidance for governors

If you're visiting the school, always remember to:

- Report to reception and say clearly why you are there.
- Arrive early enough to see the relevant head of department or equivalent to confirm the arrangements. Check that the teacher you are visiting knows you are coming.
- See the teacher you are going to observe. Check again they know you are coming, and why.
- Ask the teacher to give you a rundown of what will be happening in the lesson. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Ask when they would like you to arrive in class, as often the teacher would like to settle the class before you arrive. Agree whether you're going to stay to the end.
- Ask where they want you to sit in class, and whether you can circulate to see the children's work.
- Ask the teacher whether and how they will introduce you to the class.
- When you go into the classroom:
 - if the teacher stops and introduces you, smile at the children and say hello, but don't make a speech
 - go to your place, sit quietly and listen, make notes if you want
 - children near you may want to talk to you. They're just being friendly, but if the teacher's speaking, don't converse with the children, but indicate with a gesture and a smile that they should be listening to the teacher
 - if you go round looking at children's work, ask questions and listen – praise them, never criticise, store up questions for later
 - when you leave the room say a quick thank-you
- Have a debriefing with the teacher, asking for their views of how it went. Ask questions, but don't criticise.
- Make lots of notes.
- Write up your visit, and meet with the headteacher to discuss your write-up and get their comments. Then present it to the clerk to the governors for the next meeting.