

Visit guidance

Secondary–primary bridging visits – guidance for secondary teachers

In conjunction with your local Key Stage 3 ICT consultant, arrange to visit an upper Key Stage 2 class to observe teaching and learning in an ICT activity lesson. Your consultant will advise you on the procedures for this.

You will need to use the LEA protocol to make your own personal arrangements for the day and to make decisions, in partnership with the teacher at the primary school you will be visiting. He or she should also be well-briefed so that discussions are well-focused. Once arrangements for the visit have been made, you will need to use this guidance to prepare yourself for the observations you will make during your visit.

On the day, use the sections on *what to look for* and *questions to ask* to help you focus on particular key elements of primary ICT. The notes you make should not be judgemental; they will be descriptive in nature. When observing activities in action, it is helpful to jot something down every five minutes or so. Primary age pupils will want you to join in and help them. You will learn a lot from talking to them and listening to their conversations with each other. However, it is still important to take time to make a note of what you have seen them doing or heard them saying to each other and the teacher in charge. Share any notes you make with the primary teacher you have been visiting.

After the visit, write up your observation notes. Use the headings:

- ‘What I looked for and found out’
- ‘What I asked and found out’

or similar. You may wish to share these with your department.

You may want to bring your observation notes to the course, *Year 7: transfer and progression in ICT*, if you carry out a visit before the day.

If possible, invite your primary colleague to make a reciprocal visit to a Year 7 lesson.

Secondary–primary bridging visits

Key objectives

To facilitate better continuity and progression from primary to secondary school in ICT through:

- an appreciation of the day-to-day quality of ICT learning in primary schools;
- an understanding of the teaching methodologies used;
- an appreciation of the wide range of needs of the learners in a primary class, and how the teacher deals with this.

Principles

Overriding principle: although it is always possible to be critical of what another teacher does, it is essential that visitors do not make adverse criticisms. Instead, look for the best, and look to learn.

- Trust within the partnership is of paramount importance.
- Secondary colleagues are privileged visitors whose role is to understand how ICT is taught and how pupils receive the curriculum.
- Nothing suggestive of inspection or performance management processes must take place.
- Primary colleagues should feel empowered to contribute their expertise, not apologetic that they are not subject specialists.

What to look for when observing a primary ICT activity

Visitors may want to identify two or three of these areas of interest or focus during a visit to a primary classroom.

- What teaching and learning styles are used, for example, group work, practical activities, demonstrations?
- Why are these chosen?
- How are children of different abilities catered for?
What is the range of needs of the learners in a class?
- How do the activities engage the pupils? For example, how are they encouraged to share their ideas and to think about ICT capability?
- How is the work made relevant to the pupils? For example, is the work set within an everyday context, or in a context of particular interest to the pupils?
- Is the work enjoyable for the pupils?
- What type of questions does the teacher use during whole-class sessions and group work?
- How does the primary teacher assess pupils' learning at each stage in the session – at the beginning, in the middle and at the end?

Suggested questions you could ask the pupils during the observation session

It is important to talk to the pupils about their views on ICT and what they have done in their ICT work. The questions you ask will depend upon the sessions observed. You will need to modify your questions to fit in with each pupil response. These are examples of initial questions only.

- What are you doing in this activity?
- What do you like about these types of activity?
- Tell me about an ICT activity that you have enjoyed. (Then ask why they enjoyed it.)
- Can you show me some other work you have done in ICT?

You may want to ask some ICT-specific questions, such as:

- What work have you done about spreadsheet models?

Suggested questions you could ask the primary teacher after the session

These will depend upon the sessions observed, so examples only are given:

- Can I look at some of the pupils' folders to give me an idea of some of the other work they've done?
- Can I look at some of the work on ICT which the pupils may have done in Year 5 or 6 (*or even Year 4 if you are talking to the teacher of a Year 5 class*)?
- How do you assess the pupils' work?
- How do you develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy through ICT?
- How many of the class I observed are on the Special Educational Needs register?