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Hello!



Strike up the band – our music special has arrived! It's lovely to be able to shine a light on this often overlooked and underfunded subject. In this issue, Sally-Anne Brown and Vic Holmes explain how enthusiasm, good planning and the right resources can outweigh your lack of music knowledge (p56). Meanwhile, Ben Connor puts to rest any fears you might have about working with tuned or untuned instruments

in the classroom (p62). Dr Liz Stafford was pleasantly surprised by Ofsted's most recent recommendations for primary music, and outlines how you can apply them to your curriculum (p58).

Our regular Teach Reading & Writing section has lots of literacy advice and bookish talk as ever. In February's WAGOLL (p50) Liz Flanagan shows how to describe events from a character's perspective – don't miss the fabulous online resource pack that accompanies the feature. Jo Cummins demystifies whole-school reading (p36) and Rachael Sligo relates the story of how her school transformed their library into a vibrant community space (p40).

Speaking of local communities, Anne-Marie Bolton urges you to harness yours when it comes to greening your school (p34); you may be surprised how much you can achieve with a little help.

This month's lesson plans include last-minute leap year activity ideas (p72), a local look at WW2 (p76) and a timely exploration of the interconnection between democracy and a free press (p78). And if fractions fill you with dread, take a look at our maths medium-term plan. This six-week strategy, complete with worksheets, will help you teach the tricky topic clearly and confidently (p22).

Finally, I'm sure you'll have seen the launch of BookTrust's new campaign, spearheaded by all 12 Waterstones Children's Laureates, calling on more investment in reading for the under-sevens. On page 15, BookTrust's director of children's books outlines what you can do to help low-income families at your school read together.

Lydia

Lydia Grove, editor
X @TeachPrimaryLG

*Don't miss our next
issue, available from
12th April*

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KELLY ALLEN
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We're all ears!

We want to make sure our magazine is a brilliant resource for teachers and are always striving to improve. We love hearing from real teachers about what they liked and what they would change. Got feedback about this issue? Contact us via the details in the yellow box below – we'd love to hear from you!

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We want to hear from you!

Get in touch with your rants, comments, photos and ideas.



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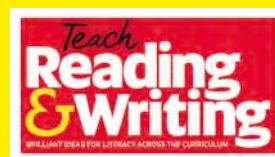


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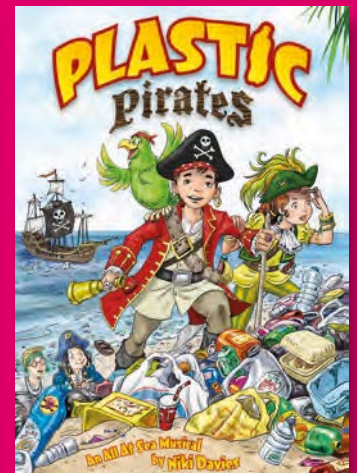
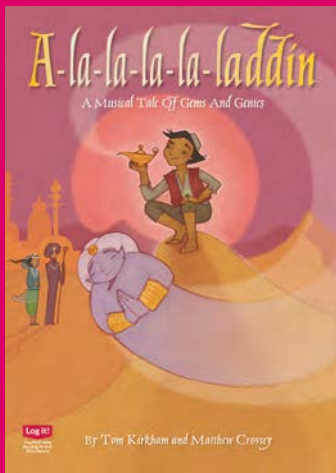
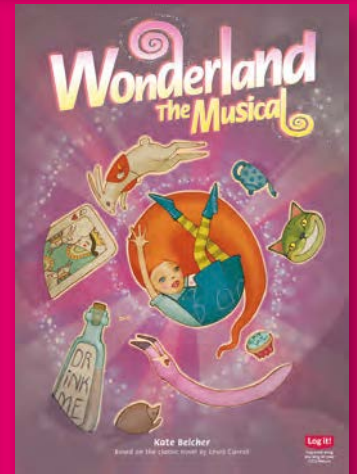
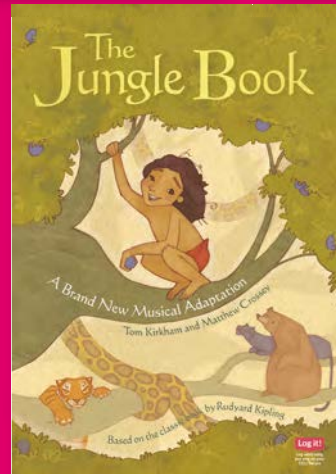
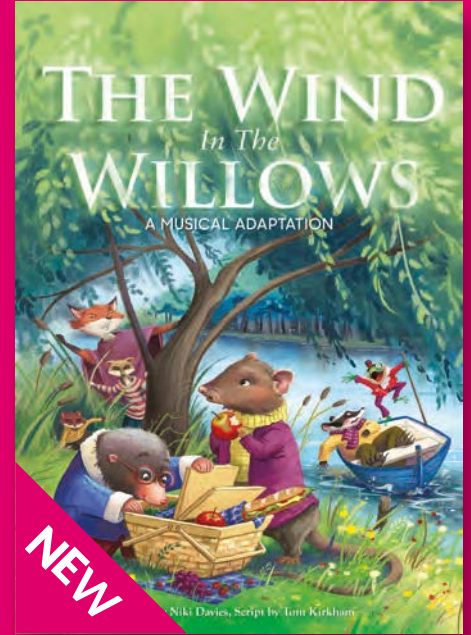
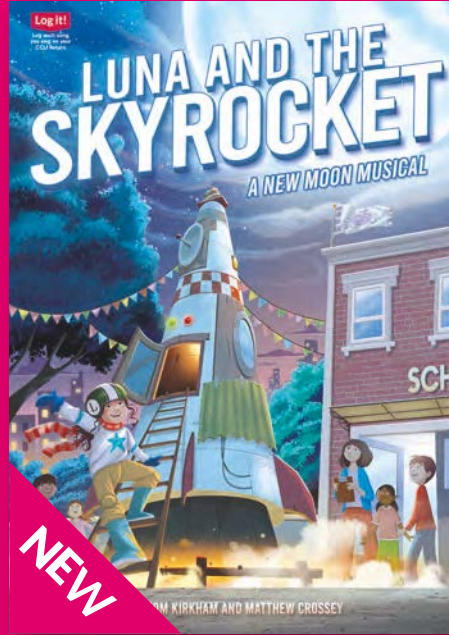
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Do something funny for money

Friday 15th March heralds a new round of hilarity with Red Nose Day. This year there are three different, and very silly, 'character' noses to collect. And as always, there are all sorts of ways you can get involved and raise money – from dance-a-thons and sponsored joke-telling to quizzes and quirky cake sales. Even Blue Peter will be turning red for the day, and the presenters are challenging schools to do the same.

With £1.5 billion raised for Comic Relief since its inception, Red Nose Day this year will also be honouring the amazing fundraisers who make it happen, with the launch of the Nosey Awards. There will be five awards up for grabs, including two just for schools and young people. You can find out more about the Noseys at tinyurl.com/tp-Noseys

Register on the Comic Relief website now to access a fundraising pack and lots of other handy resources: tinyurl.com/tp-RND24

3 INSTANT LESSONS... (You're welcome)



WBD LIVE LESSON

Streaming at 11am GMT on World Book Day, and featuring guest authors, this free programme from BBC Teach will emphasise the joy of reading for seven to 11-year-olds and include a range of interactive curriculum-linked activities. Sign up at tinyurl.com/5n8rm8kf



DRAMA GAMES

These free drama lesson ideas full of immersive and inclusive activities have proved very popular on our website! They include some great suggestions for SEND-friendly approaches. Find out how to get your class upping their acting skills at tinyurl.com/tp-DramaGames



SCIENCE SHENANIGANS

Join Mwaksy Mudenda and zoologist Yussef Rafik as they race against time to escape a top-secret lab during this British Science Week 2024 Live Lesson. Help them solve a series of invertebrate-themed tasks to crack the code and break free. Take part at tinyurl.com/bdf9t8z9

→→→ TODAY'S **TOP** **RESOURCES**



Handwriting practice sheets

Do your learners need to practise forming letters correctly? Are you looking for ways to ensure they develop fully legible handwriting? This resource pack provides simple and attractive pre-cursive and print handwriting worksheets; a set for each letter of the alphabet, using a pre-cursive font. Take a look at bit.ly/PlazoomPreCursive



The pick of the poets

The CLiPPA, CLPE Poetry Award, is underway. The award highlights the best new poetry for children, with recent winners including Michael Rosen, Valerie Bloom and current Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho.

CLPE's CLiPPA Shadowing Scheme brings the poets and poetry on the shortlist into classrooms. Teachers are invited to choose a shortlisted collection and share it with pupils using dedicated teaching sequences produced by CLPE, plus videos from the poets. Children choose a favourite poem to work into a performance, which can then be recorded and sent to a CLPE judging panel. The winning schools will perform live at the award ceremony at the National Theatre in London.

Teach Primary will bring you all the CLiPPA news, plus exclusive content and offers as we join with CLPE to shine a spotlight on children's poetry. You can register for the Shadowing Scheme at tinyurl.com/tp-Shadowing24

Music for everyone

Did you know the London Symphony Orchestra has a whole host of free online resources tailored to a range of age groups, and perfect for using in the classroom? Your class can experience interactive concerts tailored specifically for KS1 or KS2 and based on much-loved book characters. Children can also immerse themselves in music with the LSO Play app.

You can even bring Lewis Carroll's famous stories to life with The Alice Sound, an online educational resource. It includes brand-new music from composer Paul Rissmann, plus resources and activities from Professor Kiera Vaclavik, and the opportunity to create your own music!

Find out more at tinyurl.com/tp-LSOschoools



47%

of Trusts currently have an in-year revenue deficit

* bishopfleming.co.uk/insights/academies-benchmark-report-2024

Look ahead | Book ahead

VAISAKHI ASSEMBLY

A new video, narrated by a young member of the Sikh community, explains how this festival is celebrated around the world.

tinyurl.com/TP-Vaisakhi24



EASTER IDEAS

Looking for some new Easter activities for 2024? Take a look at Teachwire for inspiration and free resources. teachwire.net/search/easter



Q & A



Gemma Hunt

The BAFTA-nominated CBeebies star discusses faith and family

1. What was primary school like for you?

I have such fond memories of primary school. I went to a very small village school of 60 children, and I can recall sitting in assembly and being able to name every person in the school. I loved taking part in Sports Day, and was proudly the only girl on the school football team; albeit for just one match. No-one passed me the ball, but I loved my black and purple football boots.

2. What inspired you to write your new book, *See! Let's Be Me!*

I was unable to find good Biblical stories that showed mixed-race families like my own, so I wrote some. *See! Let's Be Me!* focuses on the big emotions children experience, like feeling jealous and getting cross. Hopefully by seeing other children go through these feelings and emotions, readers will be able to relate in some way and learn from the characters' positive experiences of dealing with the emotion.

3. How does your Christian faith inform your work?

My Christian faith is my crutch, supporting me through highs and lows. I love being a part of a local, national and international church family, as I always have a community wherever my work takes me. It's not something I often choose to talk about openly, but I'm always happy to share my faith stories. This book is a wonderful way to do that in a format that readers of any faith or no faith can access.

See! Let's be me! by Gemma Hunt, illustrated by Charlotte Cooke, is out now. (£9.99, SPK)



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8 WAYS to embed MFL in your classroom

Teaching modern languages doesn't need to be limited to a thirty-minute slot each week

1 | HELLO, GOODBYE

As the children arrive in the morning, or come back into the classroom after lunch, greet each of them in a foreign language and ask them to copy you. This doesn't have to be the language they're learning in school; it's helpful for them to hear a range of languages, even if it's only a single word. Once they're all in class, can anyone tell you which language you used? If there are children who speak another language at home, ask them to deliver the greeting at the door. At the end of the day, say goodbye in the language.

2 | REGISTER GAMES

When you do the register, ask the children to give you a word or phrase they remember from their last language lesson, trying not to repeat what the previous child said. They can either say the word or write it on a whiteboard.

3 | MFL (MOVEMENT, FUN, LANGUAGE)

Get your pupils doing PE in the foreign language. To do a basic warm-up activity, give them instructions in the foreign language. For example, in Spanish say *camina* walk; *saltad* jump; *baila* dance; *más rápido* faster; *más lento* slower; *parad* stop. Get the children running around in a circle until you blow the whistle. When they've stopped, call out a number in the language. The children then form groups containing that number.

4 | NUMBER PRACTICE

Hand out a set of loop cards to the class. Arrange them so that on the left-hand side there is a sum, and on the right an answer. The first child reads out the sum on the left in the foreign language, e.g. *un plus deux*, and is answered by the child who has the correct answer on their domino: *trois*. This child then reads out their sum, and the game continues until the chain comes back to the first child.

Play 'Think of a number' (*Je pense à...*): pupils take turns to guess a number you've secretly written down. You respond with either *oui* or *non*, then *moins* (less) or *plus* (more). The child who guesses correctly then takes on the role of choosing a new secret number.



DR AMANDA BARTON

is a freelance writer and educational consultant who has taught MFL in primary and secondary schools. She is co-author of *Teaching Primary French* and *Teaching Primary Spanish* (Bloomsbury).

5 | FAMILIAR WORDS

In history, make links with the Norman invasion by looking at words the English language borrows from French such as *bouquet*, *café*, *chauffeur*, *chic*, *cul de sac*, *fiancé*, *omelette*, *restaurant*. Looking at language imported from Spanish is also a good literacy activity: *la barbacoa* (barbecue), *la cafetería* (cafeteria), *el chocolate* (hot chocolate), *el huracán* (hurricane), *el mosquito* (mosquito), *la patata* (potato), *la tortilla* (omelette). Practise saying the words out loud to help pupils avoid anglicised pronunciation. Can the children find further examples of 'borrowed' words from other languages?

6 | COUNTDOWN

Signal to the class that you want their attention by counting down from ten in the language(s) they're learning in school, asking them to join in with you.

7 | LANGUAGES EVERYWHERE

Create a multilingual environment in your classroom by getting your pupils to create posters showing the foreign language words for classroom objects such as 'door' and 'desk'. Train their listening and reading skills by saying the name of an object and pointing to an item on one of the posters. If the object you're pointing to matches the word you said, the pupils point to it too. If you're pointing to the wrong object, the children point at the correct one.

8 | WHAT COMES NEXT?

Revise sequences of words, such as days of the week, months, letters of the alphabet, numbers, or clock times with a quick catch the ball quiz. As you say *Montag*, throw a sponge ball to a child, who should then give you the next day of the week: *Dienstag*. They throw the ball to another child, who continues the sequence, and so on. Reverse the sequence to make it harder.



Looking at Earth Day from a new angle

A simpler, more local approach to teaching environmental issues can have a bigger impact than you might think

[X @ThomasAMBernard](#)

[X @QuestFriendz](#)

[questfriendz.com](#)

The climate crisis and sustainability are not new concepts, but it still feels as if we're only taking baby steps towards solutions and change. The curriculum and the school day continue on pretty much the same as they have for years, usually with only minor suggestions of teaching this crucial subject.

Could it be that events such as Earth Day have been around for so long we've lost the spark for environmental action? Is it that we try each year to make it exciting and have run out of steam? Or are teachers so overwhelmed with curriculum demands that Earth Day feels like something extra to consider and resource? Often then, teachers will head online to find the easiest, quickest, or most 'exciting' activity to tick the box, which, unfortunately, sometimes relies on plastic-based resources, creating extra waste.

Should we always look for new and exciting ways to do things though? What if we step back and think about what is on our doorstep? Because often, that's where sustainability begins: our community is an exciting and meaningful place to take action.

So, instead of chasing the new, let's reconsider some tried-and-tested teaching successes.

Follow children's interests

Those who teach in the Early Years sector will be fully aware of following children's lines of enquiry and using their interests as a starting point for planning. However, as soon as children leave

the foundation stage, almost everything they learn comes from their teachers, driven by what is required to meet curriculum objectives.

As a teacher you can spark an idea and create interest, but taking a step back and listening to your class is a powerful tool. What questions are they asking? What is it they truly want to know? And what are their ideas on how to get there? Of course, this will need action and shaping from you, for example visiting a local farm or farm shop, or visiting a local recycling centre, but the engagement and outcomes will be far more meaningful and likely to stay with the children longer.

Consider the outcome

Standalone lessons are fine, but what do your pupils really get from them when there is no process or tangible outcome and emotion attached to their actions?

I've never not seen children excited about growing their own food and being able to pick and eat it. Knowing it's something *they* have done evokes pride and satisfaction. Community projects like tree planting and beach cleaning can have the same results, where children can feel truly proud and know they have made a first-hand

difference. Maybe your pupils could work together to design and build a water butt for their school, or community, thinking carefully about why it's needed. Or they could collaborate to add more flowers to their community or school, learning about the benefits of various plants, what habitat they might bring. Can they find ways to reduce the amount of plastic they use when gardening? Perhaps your school could organise a 'no plastics' week, too, where children who bring in lunch or snacks are encouraged to use recycled or reused containers.

Use stories

One of the most significant ways to teach children is, and always has been, to use age-appropriate quality texts. Sharing books such as *Dear Earth*, by Isabel Otter, will undoubtedly lead to a wealth of ideas, interests, and avenues to pursue.

Although these three ideas are not new, they can create excitement. Why reinvent the wheel when the truest opportunities for change – and the ones that will make the most difference – are often the simplest? Classroom-based learning has its place for our children and some subjects, but being a part of the world, the community, and the solution is much more exciting. So as Earth Day approaches this year, consider what it really means: is it another chance to tick a box, or should it be the catalyst for prolonged change and a shift in mindset? **TP**

Dr Thomas Bernard is co-founder of children's publishing company QuestFriendz and co-author of the SuperQuesters series. SuperQuesters: The Case of the Angry Sea covers environmental themes including recycling and water pollution and is publishing 14 March 2024.

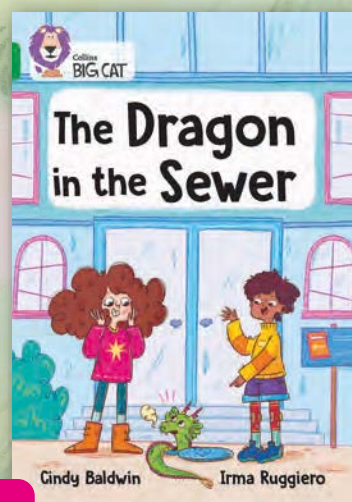
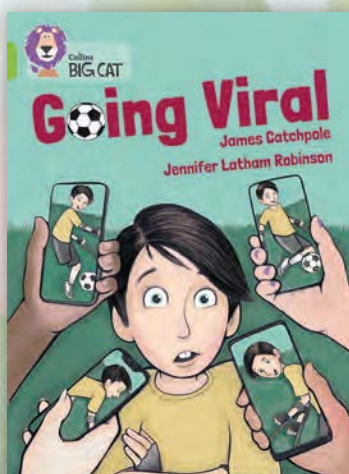
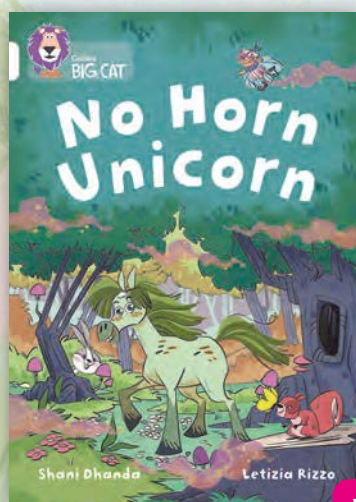




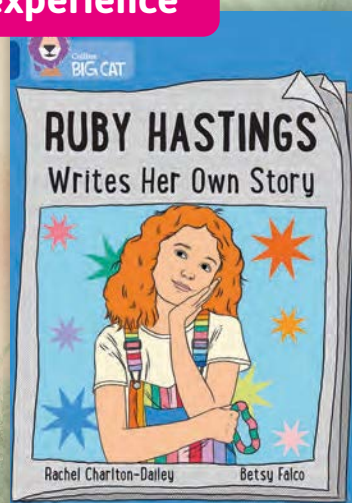
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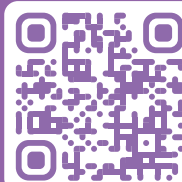
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We need to get more families reading together

Supported by all 12 Waterstones Children's Laureates, a new campaign from BookTrust aims to tackle inequality through shared stories



We need to close the reading gap. In particular, the reading *enjoyment* gap. Until we do, we will never address one of the major inequalities at the heart of our society.

Children who are read to experience significant benefits. Being read to supports bonding and stimulates brain development and language acquisition, both in and beyond the Early Years.

Reading enjoyment comes from sharing stories with trusted adults. From the unique interplay that arises through the shared points of interest and back-and-forth interactions. As children grow, being given the freedom to choose books that reflect their lives and interests becomes key.

Families understand reading is important, but still struggle to make it a part of their day. While 95 per cent of families with children under seven know it's important to read with their child, only 42 per cent of children have a bedtime story. 53 per cent of parents and carers of primary-aged children say reading is not a big part of family life.

At the start of this year, BookTrust launched a major new campaign – *Reading Together, Changing Children's Lives* – calling for a commitment from Government to long-term investment in books and reading for children (tinyurl.com/tp-ChangingLives).

Throughout 2024, we'll be working hard to make sure children's reading is a key part of our national debate. As our president Michael Morpurgo stated when launching the campaign, "It is not right that children from poorer backgrounds are deprived of a life that is rich in reading."

Teachers are important role models in developing children's attitudes towards reading – 57 per cent of low-income families report that teachers influence how much their children enjoy reading. Our work, informed by decades of experience, provides key insights into how teachers can create positive reading behaviours in children as they develop through primary school:

- Make time in the school day to read to your pupils. Reading aloud in group settings provides many of the same interactions as a

one-to-one experience for children: the reader shows enthusiasm, and adapts their pace, emphasis and rhythm in response to the group, makes eye contact and engages in back-and-forth commentary.

- Effective family engagement is vital. Around a quarter of parents (26 per cent) with children under seven years old find reading with their child challenging. It is therefore important to recognise the barriers that will exist for many. Modelling story sharing, being clear that there is no right or wrong way, and encouraging families simply to get started will make a big difference. Visit the BookTrust Primary School hub (tinyurl.com/tp-BTCampaigns) for a short film you can share with families to help them start reading.
- Many parents are not confident choosing books for their child and struggle to access reading materials. 23 per cent of low-income children aged four to seven years get books for shared reading from school, so offering a high-quality range of books for families to choose from together is important.
- Representation matters. Seeing their lives represented in books engages children in reading. Promote inclusive books that represent characters from wide-ranging backgrounds and perspectives. For recommendations, sign up to the monthly BookTrust newsletter or visit our Bookfinder (tinyurl.com/tp-Bookfinder) tool.
- Remove barriers for children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage by providing access to books and resources for their home environment. Programmes like BookTrust's Letter Box Club have been designed with these children in mind – 68 per cent of LetterBox Club children tell us they are reading more on their own as a result of their monthly book parcels.

As we continue to campaign to change children's lives through being read to and reading for pleasure, we will champion the role teachers play in delivering these vital experiences and push for greater support, resources and recognition for this work. Sign up for our newsletter (tinyurl.com/tp-BTNewsletter) to find out how you can get involved. **TP**

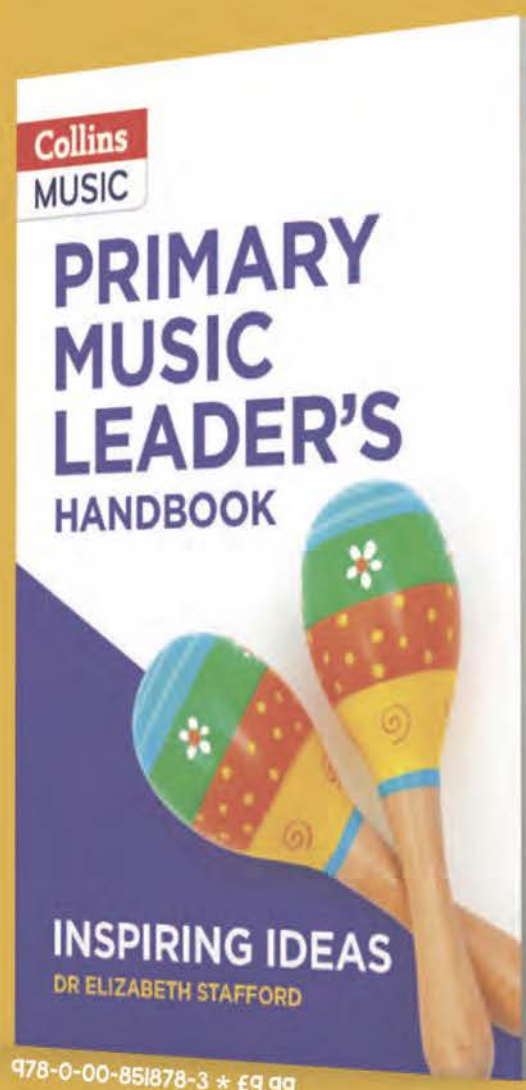
Lizzie Catford is BookTrust's director of children's books.



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**Dr Ally Daubney, Honorary Senior Lecturer (Education) at the
University of Sussex**

Each issue we ask a contributor to pen a note they would love to send

A letter to...

Education policymakers

Building cultural capital is a question of priorities, says **Kelly Allen** – and we're in danger of getting it very wrong indeed...



Ask most adults to share a story about a childhood school trip, and you'll likely hear a fond – and often amusing –

memory that is inextricably linked to the cultural setting in which it was made. Unless action is taken, it seems likely that today's children will be at risk of missing out on these vital experiences and the important benefits they bring.

Alarming research from the Sutton Trust shows that school trips and outings have been halved since 2022, with already disadvantaged areas facing even deeper cuts, of up to 68 per cent. For many children, school trips may be their only opportunity to visit a theatre or museum; these cuts are depriving them of experiences that have been shown to raise aspirations and accelerate social mobility through building cultural capital.

In addition, out-of-classroom learning provides an opportunity for children to connect with their local community. It can awaken their entitlement to use publicly funded cultural buildings. Exposure to culture, of all kinds, offers children a deeper understanding of the world and the people around them, which they will carry throughout their lives. This is of particular importance for the generations who have lived two of their formative years with heavy restriction on social interaction during the pandemic, the long-term impact of which we are only just beginning to see.

The benefits of investing in school trips go beyond the individual. Research from the Cultural Learning Alliance indicates that children involved in cultural activities are

more likely to become healthy and productive citizens and also more likely, amongst other things, to volunteer and vote.

It can be extremely difficult for schools, with dwindling budgets and resources, to prioritise trips, but cultural visits are about so much more than fun and rewards (although they can provide this, too). Providing access to cultural spaces is a key driver in levelling class inequalities and inspiring young people to aim higher.

Quite simply, by offering these essential developmental opportunities today, we can improve the potential of those who will inherit our society tomorrow.

Young people need to be equipped with versatile skillsets to address the global challenges currently unfolding, and which they will inherit, such as climate change and the role of AI in society. They will need creative and imaginative solutions, grounded in compassion for fellow humans. While academic attainment will always be important, core skills such as communication, empathy, teamwork and critical thinking are in growing demand

“Providing access to cultural spaces is a key driver in levelling class inequalities”

across the workforce, and will allow young people to be agile and resilient as global issues accelerate. Cultural education can hold the key to this – but only if all young people have access to varied and high-quality cultural experiences.

At Curious Minds, we are starting to meet teachers who have never taken students out on a school trip: at one time that would have been unthinkable. Whilst there are many brilliant schools continuing to offer their students a rich cultural education, they are increasingly having to swim against the tide to do so.

Changing the current trajectory of decline hinges on support from both educators and those with influence over education policy. Yes, we need teachers and leaders to prioritise school trips and cultural experiences within their school, but we must first look to policymakers, both locally and nationally, to support initiatives that enable them to do so.

Policymakers need to prioritise culture within public education policy and expenditure, to secure the role of cultural trips and experiences in shaping and inspiring young people. I urge you, therefore, to look at the wider picture of education, and consider the long-term impacts on our community, economy and mental health of allowing the current decline to continue. I also hope you will remember your own experiences of culture in your schooldays, and recognise the links between them and who and where you are today.

From, Kelly



Kelly Allen is deputy CEO at arts in education charity, Curious Minds.



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UNDERCOVER TEACHER

Attendance certificates aren't worth the paper they're written on

It's time we stop handing out rewards for something that for so many children is simply unattainable

It's not a new phenomenon – schools have been handing out rewards for 100 per cent attendance for years. But it's an initiative that has always ground my gears, and always will. You may think I'm being over the top; it's only a certificate after all. To a child though, that piece of paper, and the associated status gained from receiving it, can mean the absolute world. I'm speaking out here as both a teacher and a parent.

Don't get me wrong, I know attendance is of paramount importance in schools. Children need to be in school. Every moment matters and many pupils aren't present as often as they should be. Action needs to be taken to work towards solving this issue, but I really don't think attendance rewards and certificates are the answer.

As with everything, there is a large group of children for whom this approach is exciting; it works for them, they achieve and meet the success criteria – they attend school every day. These are, in the main, healthy children with supportive home lives. They are the majority, which means there is a minority living a different experience. Those with medical needs or less favourable family support networks do not get to be a part of this celebration. They are set up to fail. They'll never get a chance to hold the elusive attendance certificate and it will be through no fault of their own. How is this equitable for all?

Imagine it's the end of the week or term, you're a child in Year 2 sitting in assembly, watching your peers walk to the front of the hall to collect their certificates. Being celebrated for attending school every day. Everyone claps and the recipients smile proudly, lapping up the praise before going off to enjoy their treat of squash and biscuits. You know that will never be you because you didn't win the health lottery. How would you feel?

Or maybe you're in Year 5. Your class hasn't won the attendance of the week award as, thanks to you, they didn't reach 100 per cent attendance for the day, week, term or year, because your mum didn't want to

bring you in. You let them all down again. They have no chance of ever winning the jellybeans, extra playtime or hot chocolate. What could the repercussions of this be to your relationships with your peers at school?

Whatever the reason for pupil absence, in many cases it is totally out of a child's hands. They may miss school for medical reasons. There's not a lot they can do about that, apart from attend appointments, receive treatment, rest and recuperate; none of which can be carried out in school. Or maybe home circumstances

mean they cannot get themselves to school: an issue that needs dealing with through the relevant channels. Neither of these scenarios is the child's fault, and it's not fair they miss out on a reward, and consequently feel a failure. They will never be able to achieve attendance success.

You also have the illness-spreading issue. Pupils have this 100 per cent attendance thing drilled into them so much that they want to go to school even when they are poorly. Not only are they not giving their bodies the chance to recover, but they are also spreading their germs – potentially to peers and school staff of a more vulnerable disposition. This is not good. If you're unwell, you need to be at home.

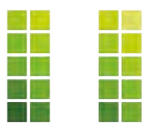
Attendance certificate culture can breed so many unhealthy negative emotions within children. Anxiety, disappointment, low self-esteem, anger and fear can all stem from this intention to celebrate. My child had an ongoing medical condition requiring regular check-ups. He was never going

to be at school every day, no matter how hard he tried. The number of times we discussed (usually at bedtime when the worries rear their ugly heads) his upset and disappointment at not getting his attendance certificate was too many. He was sad, and questioned over and over why his circumstances deemed him unworthy of reward. He was in school every day that he possibly could be. The words "It's not fair" may have left his mouth a few times; and although I'm not usually a fan of this phrase, in this instance, I wholeheartedly agree. **TP**



“Whatever the reason for pupil absence, in many cases it is totally out of a child's hands”

The writer is a teacher in England.



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Q&A

“We need to rethink exam preparation”

Lose yourself in the outdoors and ignite your capacity to learn, says Dr John Allan



30 SECOND BRIEFING

For over 40 years, Kingswood has been harnessing and perfecting the power of outdoor adventure education. Across 11 UK locations, our highly trained instructors deliver curriculum-linked residential experiences designed to encourage confidence, resilience and life skills, meaning the impact lasts well beyond the end of the trip and into their personal and academic lives.

How has the student experience changed?

More than ever before, an enormous amount of information is at the fingertips of school children who are expected to filter and process attention-grabbing material to become successful in assessment situations. Many young learners need to become competent not only in how to retain information but also in how they self-regulate their behaviours to properly understand it and then use it in exams. Learners in revision mode prior to taking their SATs need to prepare well to optimise their performance.

What is the challenge we face?

Although we understand the significant importance of this period in a young person's life, exam preparation should not involve constant cramming in uniform settings without any complimentary, purposeful stimulation. The human brain will switch off when exposed to long, lacklustre, and overly controlled activities. It will also struggle to take in information from multiple sources at the same time. Despite popular assertions, the human brain cannot multi-task effectively.

What's the solution?

Varied events in short, deliberately spaced cycles – which are responsive to enquiring minds and use relevant, meaningful stimuli to ignite emotions, such as laughter,



incredulity, and even mild apprehension – often generate much more meaningful learning.

How does OAE come into play?

Outdoor activities in natural spaces are known to deliver these sorts of experiences, generating a range of beneficial psychological, social, and physical skills which underpin our health and well-being. Nature exposure and the freedom to play is recognised as integral to young people's learning particularly on tasks requiring focus, working memory and collaborations with others – all transferable skill sets that aid revision.

More importantly, immersion within nature-based activities enable young people to become



ABOUT JOHN:
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0800 655 6564

refreshed, focus their attention and regulate emotions which take a pounding during exam preparatory periods. So, although we may believe that incessant screen staring or note take-taking with background music is enabling effective understanding and retention of information, it is in fact counterproductive to good learning.

Can students afford the break from study time?

Absolutely. Don't be misled into thinking that time away from revision is wasteful and will negatively affect their abilities to acquire desired or predicted grades. Neuroscience tells us that the most impactful forms of learning are those which intersperse organised chunks of learning with interruptions for inspiring experiences with others or quiet time. This process allows new material to be absorbed as new brain cells are created and neural pathways strengthened. Exposure to the outdoors is built upon these principles and will heighten their chances of success.

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MEDIUM TERM PLAN

**KS2
MATHS**

FEARLESS FRACTIONS

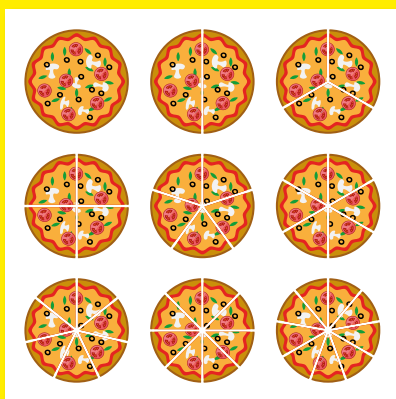
LAURA DI PASQUALE



Why did the fraction cross the road? To meet his other half! Making fractions fun and engaging is essential in helping pupils to develop a concrete understanding, be able to make and solve errors, and grasp the concept of the relationship between whole numbers, fractions and decimals. The downloadable resources that accompany this plan will support pupils in understanding equivalent fractions, using methods to calculate decimal fraction equivalents, and adding and subtracting fractions with the same denominator. Important vocabulary is highlighted alongside questions that will enable higher order thinking skills, and ideas for resources or math manipulatives are linked where necessary.

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eighths are equivalent to one half.

Once pupils have a firm understanding of comparing fractions (knowing that one sixth is smaller than one fifth) they can begin to order fractions on a number line. They can build up where each fraction is represented by using known facts (e.g. that two quarters are equivalent to one half – see **slides 9–10**).

Finally, it is important that pupils understand why different fractions are equivalent. Use **slide 11** to explain that multiplying by $\frac{2}{2}$ or $\frac{4}{4}$ is the same as multiplying by one. Pupils can use concrete materials to prove that $\frac{3}{3}$ or $\frac{8}{8}$ is equivalent to one whole.



Assessment

Can pupils find different ways to make $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$? Can pupils order fractions on a number line, including $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{4}{8}$, $\frac{5}{10}$, $\frac{6}{8}$? Can pupils mix fractions to make one whole, e.g. $\frac{5}{10} + \frac{1}{2}$?



WEEK 1

Learning objective

- To find equivalent fractions and ordering fractions on a number line.

This week, pupils will revise their understanding of equivalent fractions and use various strategies to help them to solve equations. Use the higher order thinking questions (**slide 6**) to work out where pupils are with their learning. At this stage they should have a basic knowledge of simple equivalent fractions and understand that when you split something up into fractions, each part should be equal, i.e. there is no such thing as ‘the bigger half’. It’s important that pupils understand there

are different ways to make one half, and the concept of one whole (**slide 7**). You can use the fraction matching task activity for assessment (**slide 8**).

Use fraction tiles (virtual or physical – see **slide 4**) that pupils can manipulate to find equivalent fractions. Pupils should be allowed time to explore families of fractions (where the denominators are multiples of each other) and different ways to make one whole. Pupils should begin by exploring halves, quarters and eighths, before moving onto fifths and tenths. They will also be able to investigate equivalences between thirds and sixths, using twelfths as a good extension task. Some pupils will start to discover that they can add fractions together to make an equivalence: one quarter + two



WEEK 2

Learning objective

- To simplify fractions.

This week will begin with ensuring that pupils understand the different parts of a fraction, and how this knowledge can be used to simplify fractions. Use **slide 13** to ensure a thorough understanding of the role of the numerator and denominator. Pupils will then need to understand that a proper fraction occurs when the numerator (top number) is smaller than the denominator (bottom number), and that this will always be less than one whole. An improper fraction is when the numerator is equal to or larger than the

denominator, which will always be equal to or greater than one whole (slide 14).

Simplifying fractions requires the pupils to identify which whole numbers divide equally into both the numerator and denominator with no remainders. For example, when simplifying $\frac{5}{10}$, the largest whole number that divides equally into both numbers is 5. Dividing 5 (numerator) and 10 (denominator) by 5 will give you $\frac{1}{2}$. The easiest way to find which whole number divides equally into both without any remainders is to focus on the factors of both the numerator and the denominator (slide 15). Once you have made a list of the factors for both numbers you then need to identify common factors. The largest common factor is the one you can then use to simplify the fraction to its most simplified form – some pupils might only be able to divide using smaller common factors, which they can keep doing until they cannot simplify the fraction anymore. Being able to simplify fractions pictorially can help pupils to visualise each step of the process (slide 16).

Pupils can try some of the games (see links on slide 17) to help develop speed at being able to simplify fractions in a fun way. Two worksheets are also provided (slides 18–19).



Assessment

Do pupils understand the difference between proper and improper fractions? Can pupils write down the factors of numbers to 20 and find common factors between two numbers? Can the children simplify fractions up to twentieths using the common factor or pictorial method?



WEEK 3 Learning objective

- Add and subtract fractions with the same denominator.

Begin making sure pupils are familiar with counting in halves and quarters. This can be done with a counting stick (slides 21–22). Use pictures to illustrate the fraction parts, to enable pupils to make the connection that two halves = one whole and so on. When reading fractional notation say “three halves, four halves” not “three over two, four over two”, etc. Use the questions in the slides to develop knowledge of being able to count forwards and backwards in different fractions, and the



understanding of how many fractions are required to make different whole numbers; for example, you need eight quarters to make two, or eight halves to make four.

Pupils should then use physical resources to develop an understanding of what it means to add and subtract fractions, initially from one whole. You could use Cuisenaire rods or Numicon (slides 23–24), or virtual math manipulatives that pupils can use to develop a deeper understanding of the concept. Pupils can then continue to use the concrete resources to support their understanding of being able to add fractions together that have the same denominator (slide 25). Using a number line is also helpful for pupils who no longer require concrete resources (slide 26). This will also help to develop the concept that you can add fractions together and the answer can be more than one whole. You can use the worksheets on slides 27 and 28 for assessment.

As the children become more familiar with this concept, they can move away from using concrete or pictorial representations. Being able to apply these concepts to word problems is important for real-life learning (slides 29–31).



Assessment

Can pupils use concrete resources to add and subtract fractions with the same denominator? Using prior learning, can pupils simplify fractions to create the same denominator to solve equations (e.g. $\frac{4}{12} + \frac{1}{3} = \frac{2}{3}$)? Can pupils apply

their knowledge of adding and subtracting fractions to word problems?



WEEK 4 Learning objective

- To calculate fractions of a quantity.

Ask pupils to make a list of times they might come across fractions in real-life situations. For example, ‘half-price sale’, ‘use $\frac{1}{4}$ kg of flour’, ‘buy two get the third free’, etc. Pupils should still be encouraged to use concrete materials. Using pictorial explanations will enable the children to visualise how the quantity is being broken down, and helps with understanding where remainders come from.

Pupils can then practise calculating fractions of a quantity using grouping (slides 33–34). This can be a great visual technique to support the children with their understanding, and they can use concrete materials to physically share out the resources into the different groups, ensuring that each group has an equal amount. Pupils need to understand that the denominator is the total number of groups that you need. The numerator is the number of groups that you need to focus on.

The next method you can focus on is using division and multiplication (see poster on slide 36). Pupils will need to remember to divide by the denominator (they both start with ‘d’) and multiply by the numerator (the number on the top). For example, if you want to find

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$\frac{3}{10}$ of 40, you need to divide 40 by 10 (which is 4) and multiply your answer by 3 ($4 \times 3 = 12$). You can use division and multiplication cards to support pupils who are not confident in knowing their tables mentally.

Although many pupils will still only feel confident calculating fractions of a quantity with concrete materials, many will be able to move onto more abstract methods, such as using the bar model approach. This can also help with developing a more concrete understanding of remainders. Pupils can then use calculators to solve fractions of much larger numbers if they can explain how they found the answer. This will also help them to develop skills in being able to cross check their answers, which saves teachers' time (see slides 37–40 for teaching support and worksheet).



Assessment

Can pupils use concrete materials to share a quantity equally into groups and then select the correct number of groups to focus on (numerator)? Can they use their knowledge of division and multiplication to calculate the fraction of an amount? Can pupils use a bar model to show how to share a quantity into equal parts? Do they understand what a remainder is and how this is linked to fractions?



WEEK 5 Learning objective

- To recognise and write decimal equivalents.

Making the connection between fractions and decimals can prove challenging for many children, but explaining that a decimal is just a way of writing a number that is not a whole number can help. Decimals are used to write numbers that are 'in between', for example, 8.2 is between 8 and 9, so 8.2 is bigger than 8 but smaller than 9. Decimals are used in everyday life, particularly when a more accurate number is required than a whole number, for example, £2.50 rather than £2 or £3. Pupils can think of situations where they would need accurate numbers, such as in measuring, weighing and money.

To begin, introduce the children to the idea that decimals are another way to describe a fraction (slide 42). To prove this, you can use concrete

materials to introduce tenths.

You can use equivalent fraction tiles or base ten materials to show pupils that one tenth ($\frac{1}{10}$) is the same as one tenth (0.1). When introducing decimals, say the fraction and the decimal in the same way to reinforce equivalence ("zero point one" can be very abstract and confusing). Pupils need a lot of exposure to concrete materials to understand that 10 tenths = one whole; $10 \times 0.1 = 1$; $10 \times \frac{1}{10} = 1$; and 10 hundredths are equivalent to one tenth (slides 43 and 44).

The children can then continue to explore concrete materials to work out the decimal equivalents for different fractions using this knowledge. Continue to build up pupils' knowledge until they can order fractions and decimals on a number line. Investigate multiples of tenths and their simplified fraction and decimal (slide 45).



Assessment

Do the children have a clear understanding of what one tenth and one hundredth are in relation to one whole? Can they use concrete materials to make different decimals (use a chart for support)? Can pupils use their knowledge of tenths (0.1) to create decimals of other fractions?



WEEK 6 Learning objective

- Learning objective: To compare decimals up to two decimal places.

The final week involves putting all our knowledge to the test and assessing if pupils have a solid understanding of what is meant by a fraction and a decimal, and are able to compare them. Comparing decimal numbers often leads to mistakes due to misconceptions. The

children should therefore continue to have or use pictorial representations of decimals for comparison (slides 47–49).

To find which decimal number is the largest, pupils will need to write the numbers with the decimal point lined up – using square-paper makes this easier, ensuring that each number goes in one box. Pupils need to start from the left-hand side, then compare the digits in each place value until they find a difference. Decimals can be ordered from largest to smallest or smallest to largest. Have pupils consider the following decimals and how they might put them into order: 4.2, 0.42, 4.35, 4.01, 0.04. Comparing decimals is applicable to real-world situations and in science and mathematics, for example, when comparing prices (£23.75 or £23.01), weights (1.23kg or 1.05kg) and in reading times (10.1seconds versus 10.07 seconds). Complete the worksheet to show understanding of ordering decimals on a number line (slide 50).



Assessment

Can pupils line up decimals to correctly show an understanding of place value? Are pupils able to write tenths and hundredths as decimals? Can they order decimals on a number line? Can pupils apply their knowledge of ordering decimals to real-life situations, such as results from a 100m final? **TP**



Laura Di Pasquale is a primary teacher, Apple learning coach and micro:bit champion based in Glasgow.

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@mrs_di_pasquale_teacher

Adventures in LANGUAGE

Cross-curricular collaboration with a partner school overseas is a powerful way to unlock progress in MFL, as **Marc Bowen** discovered...

It has long been accepted that cross-curricular planning of teaching and learning is an effective way to resolve the competing demands of multiple curriculum areas and limited time. However, languages sometimes remain confined to their own curriculum silo, awaiting innovative pedagogical approaches to set them free. This is where translanguageing comes to the rescue—a powerful approach that can shatter these barriers and result in rich, authentic learning experiences.

The theory

Translanguageing is a pedagogical practice that weaves the use of two languages into the fabric of a single activity. Learners receive information in one language and then engage with that information using another. In the case of my Year 5 learners, this approach was employed to nurture their Spanish language skills, while fostering a deeper understanding of cross-cultural connections.

Lighting the language spark

The first step in our translanguageing journey was a conventional three-week unit of English work based on the book *Better Than New* by Broder and Buckley. This fantasy tale set in Argentina is presented bilingually in English and Spanish. After working through the book



as a class, the children wrote individual stories inspired by the text.

Bridging continents

The next leg of our linguistic adventure involved connecting with a class in Argentina through the British Council's school partnering portal. This partnership provided a real-world context and an authentic audience for the learners.

We decided to work on a story exchange project. This would help the Argentinian learners to develop their English, and my class to work on their Spanish. We agreed that our *Better Than New* stories, with their environmental focus, would be ideal for the purpose, as we were aware that similar coastal pollution issues

affect both our countries.

We set up a Padlet (padlet.com) through which our two classes could initially get to know one another, and then work together on the story project, in a safe and managed manner.

Having established a bond with our Argentinian friends, my learners then revised their stories electronically using the online tool Book Creator (bookcreator.com), incorporating short Spanish phrases to mirror the bilingual presentation of the original text.

Book Creator was instrumental in giving the children's work a polished, book-like finish with interactive elements: adding an engaging dimension to their learning, as well as a huge sense of pride in their completed publication.

Expert advice

As I'm not a fluent Spanish speaker I knew that external language mentoring would be extremely useful while working on the story exchange, so I contacted one of our local universities to see if they might be able to help us out.

The result was astounding. We received a full-day visit from a third-year language undergraduate, who worked with each of the children in the class to ensure the grammatical accuracy of

their Spanish inclusions, as well as helping to teach them more about Spanish vocabulary and sentence structure. At the end of this experience, the children were confident in the Spanish they had included, and extremely proud of what they had achieved.

Interestingly, this was the most motivated I'd seen many of my pupils in relation to language learning. I think it had a lot to do with having a defined 'real world' audience of Argentinian friends who the children really wanted to impress, as well as a fluent language role model to support them with the task.

Beyond language

The journey didn't end with language skills; it extended into collaborative exploration of subjects like history and geography. The children, now armed with enhanced Spanish proficiency, collaborated with their Argentinian counterparts to study the migration of Welsh settlers to Argentina during the 1800s. This interdisciplinary approach fostered a deeper understanding of both language and culture. **TP**



Marc Bowen is a Deputy Head and primary teacher in South Wales. You

can contact him at marc.bowen@raglan.schoolsedu.org.uk.

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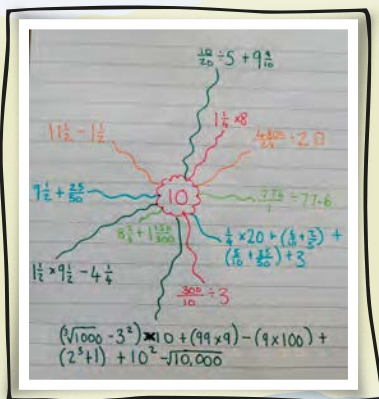


Teach First

SARAH FARRELL




children, I would suggest keeping the target number being a one- or two-digit number.



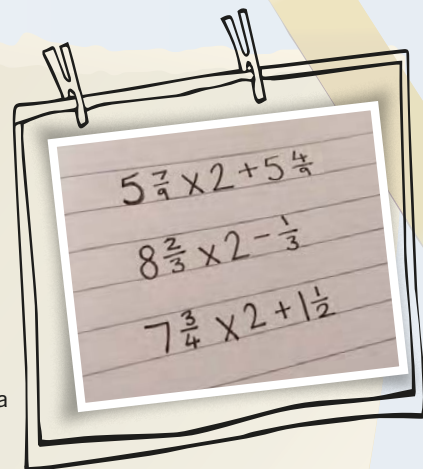
between them, demonstrating that they have the same value.



Model how to put these together into a calculation that uses a range of representations, so that children are then able to practise their understanding of concepts such as square numbers regularly.



Sarah Farrell is an assistant headteacher and author of Times Tables Ninja (KS2 and KS1 versions).





Visit:

bsa.sc/BSW24-AP-TP

Free primary resources to celebrate #BSW24

British Science Week 2024 is coming up very soon on 8-17 March, and this year is extra special – it's the Week's 30th anniversary!

To celebrate, the British Science Association (who run British Science Week) have released **four completely free activity packs**, including a pack designed specifically for primary school pupils.

The activities in the packs are all themed around 'Time', a broad topic that covers lots of fascinating areas of science - from thinking about how we tell time, how animals and nature evolve, how our understanding of science has changed over the years, and what the world might look like in the future!

So, what's inside?

You'll find lots of low-resource activities that let pupils approach science in all sorts of fun ways. 'Metamorphosis mayhem', created in partnership with the WWF, is a game in which children explore the lifecycle of frogs. It has just one time on the kit list: a big open space!"

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


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To find out more about the Cambridge Wellbeing Check, visit cem.org/wellbeing or contact Lucy Baker (lucy.baker@cambridge.org, 0191 925 0083).



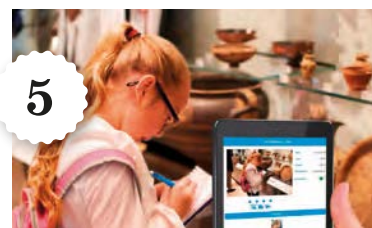
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Full STEAM ahead

An enduring love of science and the arts is within reach of all your pupils, say **Gordon West** and **Amira Mitchell-Karam**

Bringing the arts cohesively into the STEM curriculum, also known as focusing on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths), is an educational model that builds the creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills students will need in the 21st century workforce. STEAM is exciting, because it teaches the transferable skills that will be required for jobs in the future, some of which haven't even been invented yet.

Our challenge, then, as teachers, is to find interdisciplinary points that will engage pupils, and inspire them to get excited about the full range of these subjects from a young age; removing the artificial divide between 'scientists' and 'artists'. At our schools, we do this in a variety of ways.

Harnessing the great outdoors

Implementing specialist weeks or terms can ensure a thematic approach in the way educators deliver the primary school curriculum. Our group of schools has a long-standing commitment to promoting environmental sustainability; this will therefore be the overarching learning theme of our STEAM Integrated Learning Week at Dame Bradbury's Junior School. For our youngest pupils, this emphasis on sustainability has seen them being tasked with planting and labelling wildflower seeds and vegetables in the school garden, with biodiversity in mind.

School gardens offer children the opportunity to practise their design and woodwork skills through

practical explorations with materials, for example, when creating bug hotels or compost heaps. The latter offer an opportunity to learn all about worms, decomposition and how compost forms. In outdoor spaces, older children can explore STEAM more creatively, by engaging their artistic skills to create willow domes and then using maths to work out the circumference of each structure.

By encouraging children across the school to learn from and engage in shared outdoor areas, these spaces become more significant to all the pupils, helping them to understand the science behind natural processes, as well as being inspired by the beauty in nature.

Art and design

Guided projects can help to challenge young children's perception of art and design and enable them to express themselves while experimenting and practising problem solving. For example, at Dame Bradbury's Junior School, as part of the National Gallery's Take One Picture school programme, we host an annual creative exhibition at the local Bridge End Gardens in Saffron Walden, to showcase pupils' multi-disciplinary responses to a famous painting.

By offering a range of materials to work with, these design-led initiatives encourage children to get creative and experiment with all sorts of different media,



including digital animations and pottery, poetry, drama and even soundscapes.

Art doesn't just encompass visual art – it includes music, too. If your school has a peripatetic music teacher, why not invite them to come and give a demonstration of different instruments, such as the trumpet or violin, to help pupils understand the science of sound?

Girls' Olympiad

Sadly, in the UK, it is still the case that fewer girls than boys choose to study science subjects, particularly physics, at KS5 and beyond.





Entering local science tournaments is an engaging way to foster a love of science at an early stage. Both of our Junior Schools are lucky to be able to send pupils to our local STEM Olympiad for Year 5 girls in Suffolk. The tournament consists of mathematics, science and engineering challenges, in which teams of girls are tasked to work together to tackle interesting problems, with the chance to win awards in each category as



“Children have an innate sense of curiosity and often learn best when they are able to relate their learning to what they see every day”



well as the overall award.

Not only does the tournament challenge pupils to use their teamwork, scientific and problem-solving skills, it also encourages girls' enthusiasm for science subjects. In addition, it enables more female pupils to be recognised for their scientific skills, encouraging representation and recognition for girls in STEM subjects from a young age.

Bringing STEAM to life

Children have an innate sense of curiosity and often learn best when they are able to relate their learning to what they see every day. At our schools, we encourage the children to follow their own lines of enquiry to learn more about the science behind everyday processes.

For example, our pupils recently honed their engineering skills while investigating how insulating materials can keep our drinks warm. The children designed and made their own 'keep cups' with sleeves, before being able to enjoy a hot chocolate in their finished work.

We have found that one of the most exciting ways for pupils to further develop these kinds of independent thinking and investigative skills is by hosting our own annual STEM competition for pupils across both of our schools. Teams carry out their own independent research projects, with prizes offered to those who show the most impressive teamwork, the ability to communicate most clearly what they did and discovered, and the firmest grasp of the scientific method.

Championing both male and female role models in STEAM careers means that all pupils can understand what it means to have a successful career in science, art and maths. Drawing on the experience of local scientists or artists from the wider school community can help to demonstrate how science and the arts are essential not only for doctors or engineers, but for other careers, too.

Exposing children to STEAM activities from a young age is a brilliant way to emphasise the importance of problem-solving and independent thinking. Learning about science experiments may be important, but knowing how to use this knowledge effectively is what will enable pupils to thrive. **TP**

STEAM IN SCIENCE WEEK

This year's theme is 'time'...

- Visit your local museum to look at historic exhibits, artefacts and scientific objects to draw together the links between science, history and time.
- Investigate the science that takes place at this time of year – what is happening as nature changes and evolves?
- Go back in time: research and learn about the extinction of the dinosaurs, or inventions in the industrial revolution.
- Learn how to make time-measuring devices such as sundials. Explore how sundials and clocks were decorated in the past and try recreating some of the designs.
- Get pupils to think about science experiments from a different angle. How can we focus on the time aspect of a chemical reaction, for example?
- Explore historical monuments in your local area and ask pupils to discuss how they may have evolved over time.
- Organise a live demonstration: local science centres and museums often have education specialists who will do school visits.
- Invite a parent, colleague or local expert or science figure to come and speak to pupils about their science-related job or hobby.



Gordon West is head of science 5–11 at

Stephen Perse Cambridge Junior School.



Amira Mitchell-Karam is head of STEAM at

Dame Bradbury's Junior School, Saffron Walden.

Saffron Walden.

All hands ON DECK

Community involvement is vital for green development in schools, says **Anne-Marie Bolton**

As school leaders know too well, budgets are being stretched thin as the cost-of-living crisis continues to impact the sector. The aftermath of the pandemic is also still having an effect on pupils' emotional and social development and learning. Against this challenging backdrop, we must strive to ensure we provide an enriching learning

environment where pupils feel safe and happy. If anything, now more than ever, we want to ensure schools are safe havens for our pupils to enjoy.

Creating school grounds that foster our pupils' keen imaginations, help them engage with learning, and improve their sense of wellbeing, is so important. That is why, at Lessness Heath Primary School, and The Primary First Trust more widely, we have looked to community organisations to help us develop our outdoor spaces and transform them into natural havens that will do exactly that. Our top priority has been to cultivate new spaces that boost pupils' mood, enhance their lived experiences and diversify their learning opportunities.

The value of community

Schools are a vital part of a community, and a community is a vital part of

a school. There is a symbiotic relationship between the two that benefits from being nurtured by both parties. Fostering positive relationships outside of the school gates goes beyond cutting costs. These relationships can bring value through the sharing of knowledge, new experiences and different perspectives, which is vital to developing pupils' understanding of the world around them and equally enriches the lives of those in our community.

Our community project started as a connection between one of our governors and a local gardener, Neil Moakes, who became our garden project lead to bring to life a redesigned green space. New relationships grew from this one as Neil got to work, contacting various community gardening groups including the Bexley Allotment community, the Men in Sheds, and the West Kent Masonic Community.

Building our new garden

These community volunteers worked together, donating their time and expertise over the summer holidays to develop our science garden. This included a revamp of our green space with new flower beds and plants, a re-built space for our pupils to sit together in the garden, and a 'bug hotel', which attracts wildlife to the garden and facilitates various habitats developing.

Beyond building our new garden, these groups are now looking to begin imparting their gardening wisdom to our pupils through assemblies where they can discuss their experiences, demonstrate gardening techniques, and foster a love of the natural world.



Growth and learning

At Lessness Heath, we already knew from our successful Early Years setting that when pupils have access to outdoor environments they learn best. Now we have a fantastic new and improved outdoor space in our primary school, we are seeing the benefits to pupils' learning and wellbeing already.

Having a state-of-the-art outdoor space allows teachers to implement an experiential curriculum. For example, it supports pupils' learning of science: they can see firsthand the lifecycle of a plant and the ecosystems that support natural habitats. Children enjoy learning outside; they find it fun, and can absorb and discover the natural world through their experiences of it. Pupils actively enjoying and engaging with their learning is vital to their ability to retain and develop their knowledge and understanding. It's also essential for their wellbeing, which, in turn, helps their learning further.

Agency and empowerment

Another school in our trust, Springhead Park Primary School, has also utilised community links and opportunities to develop its green space. The school received a financial donation to renovate the school grounds from Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, as the school was part of

wildlife. Pupils themselves planted the trees that will become the forest school, and a pond with pond life donated by the local garden centre was created. An orchard has also been planted, and a rewilded area has bloomed with a variety of plants and flowers.

This was a community-focused project, harnessing the power of local companies and placing pupils and their ideas at the heart of

“Schools are a vital part of a community, and a community is a vital part of a school”

the Ebbsfleet development. School leaders decided that pupils had to be at the heart of the decision-making process over how to best use this money to renovate their school grounds.

Following consultation, and the School Council meeting with architects, a plan was put in place between the architects and the contractors to enact the pupils' desire to create a space that would attract

decision-making.

Not only has this helped to create a beautiful green space on the school grounds, but it has empowered pupils at Springhead Park to design the world they want to see. This project gave them the agency to make decisions about how to shape the space, allowing them to take collective responsibility and ownership of the area, and build a sense of community. **TP**

MAKING IT WORK

Maintain links and connections within your local community outside of the school gates

Facilitate networking for staff and governors, and reach out to organisations within your locality; you may be surprised how often they'll be happy to help.

Choose your time wisely

The school holidays are always the best time to get infrastructure projects completed, producing minimal disruption for pupils. As this is the case, it is important to engage with community groups about potential projects months in advance, to be able to confirm the work and get all necessary preparations completed in time. The beginning of the spring term is the ideal time to begin thinking about projects for the summer holidays.

Be realistic about what you can achieve, and don't bite off more than you can chew

If you are working with local volunteers and organisations, work out the scope of the project together, so that both parties are clear about what to expect and what to deliver.



Ann-Marie Bolton is headteacher of Lessness Heath Primary in Kent.



All together **NOW**

Not sure whether to make the switch to whole-class reading? Just use these strategies and you'll reap lots of literacy rewards, says **Jo Cummins**

There has been a lot of debate amongst educators as to the best approach to use when trying to teach children the skills they need to become effective 'meaning makers' of what they have read, as well as fluent and efficient decoders.

During my time as literacy lead, I was given the task of moving our approach to teaching reading comprehension away from more traditional 'carousel'-style guided reading sessions, where pupils were working on different activities, towards a more cohesive, whole-class reading approach, where all pupils were working on the same text (see Table 1).

Why, you may ask, did we do this?

The text

One of the things I like most about whole-class reading is being able to use a single substantial text across the week. This allows for greater interrogation of the material and means that we can get through chapters or whole texts a lot more quickly than we would otherwise be able to. It also means that I can introduce children to texts that may be deemed too challenging for them to access due to their ability to decode, rather than their ability to comprehend (the two are often very different).

Text selection is, of course, key. For whole-class reading to have maximum impact, the texts or extracts that are chosen for study need

to be carefully considered. There are many factors that could come into play here, but those you will need to consider include: genre, theme, diversity of characters and settings, contemporary versus classic texts, the range of authors and illustrators, the mix of fiction, poetry, graphic novels, and information books.

The texts you choose might be linked to the school's reading spine or be entirely separate. The complexity and level of challenge should increase across the academic year.

Pre-reading

For some texts, it may be beneficial to do a few pre-reading activities to enrich the children's reading experience through increased subject knowledge or curiosity. Pre-reading activities are also

especially useful for helping to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding, so that pupils are approaching a text from a more level playing field.

Useful activities include: looking at the cover or illustrations to make predictions about key themes; sharing pupils' own experiences linked to the themes, settings or characters identified from the cover; making predictions about the text based on the title.

Reading

The first time that the children hear the text, it should be read aloud by the teacher. In the role of 'expert' they model fluency and intonation. The children should all be following along with their own copies. During this initial reading, the teacher should use skilful questioning to explore some of the more challenging vocabulary, encouraging



Guided reading	Whole-class reading
Attainment-grouped tasks	Whole-class tasks
Differentiated texts	Same high-quality text for all
Limited direct teaching by the 'expert'	Daily direct teaching by the 'expert'
Tasks focused on written assessment	High-quality speaking and listening skills developed

Table 1.

children to use the context of the sentence and other similar words to develop their understanding.

On subsequent days, pupils can read the text aloud at the start of each session. There are several ways you might like to organise this:

- *Choral reading* – the children read the passage aloud with the teacher.

This limits public exposure for less confident readers.

- *Echo reading* – the pupils repeat back a line that the teacher has just read, mimicking the teacher's pacing and intonation.
- *Paired reading* – pairs of children alternate reading lines or paragraphs aloud to each other (or an adult).

Initial responses

After the children have heard the text for the first time, it can be interesting to record their initial thoughts and responses; going back later and looking at how these

thoughts may have developed following further investigation and reflection.

I like to use the Tell Me grid from Aiden Chambers to support children with organising their ideas to begin with.

Re-read the extract and encourage pupils to mark it as you go. Model how to underline unfamiliar vocabulary, any phrases the children particularly like, and any questions they have about the text as they read.

Use question stems to interrogate the text.

Further tasks

During the main part of the sessions, pupils will typically work on the same tasks individually, in pairs, or in small groups, before coming back and sharing with the class. Additional support can be offered using carefully planned talk partners or through the deployment of adults. Children who need more specific interventions should of course receive these in addition to whole-class reading.

When selecting your tasks, think about specific skills that your pupils need to develop and ensure a spread across the various strands of the reading curriculum. You can encourage children to engage with the text by asking them to: sequence key events; sort statements into true or false; look

for synonyms or antonyms; draw inferences based on clues in the text; use information from a text to add labels to a scientific diagram; create a glossary.

Creative responses

To encourage pupils to engage with a text on a more imaginative level, you can ask them to use information from the text to write newspaper reports, diary entries or letters. They could also use descriptive language from a text to draw a labelled picture of a character or setting, or create story maps to help sequence events.

Ask the class to make wanted posters or write police reports about the deeds of the 'villains' in a story. Or they can identify key events in a story and use them to create a comic strip or graphic novel version.

You can also use drama techniques such as freeze-framing, hot-seating, or 'conscience alley' to explore key moments from a text.

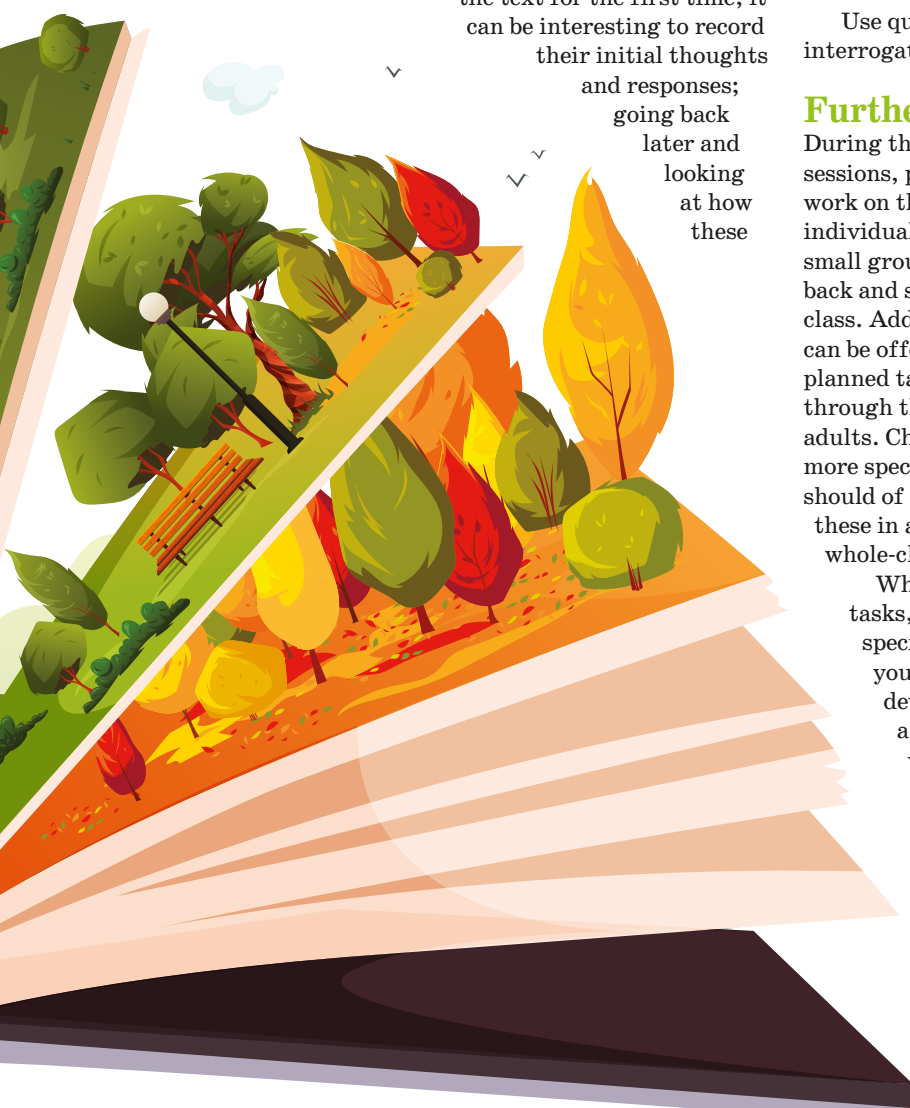
I hope this piece has given you the inspiration needed to trial whole-class reading, or, if this is already something you do, provided some new activities to try with your pupils. Either way, I think that the benefits of whole-class reading, using rich texts, really do speak for themselves. **TP**



Jo Cummins is an advisory teacher for a specialist provision,

an experienced English lead, and a children's book blogger. She has been part of the judging panel for several children's book awards and has delivered workshops at conferences across the country.

 @BookSuperhero2

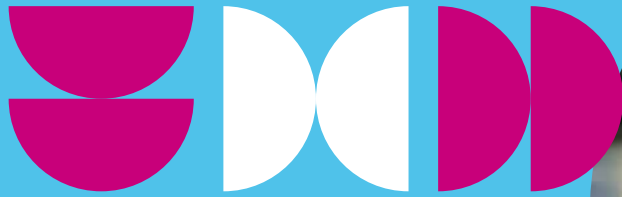


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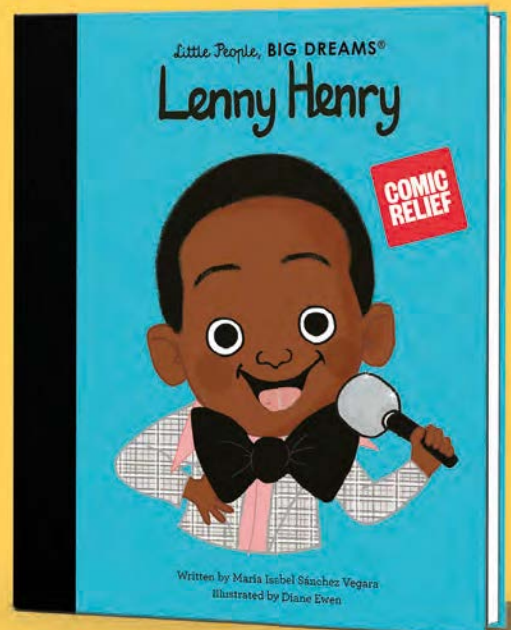
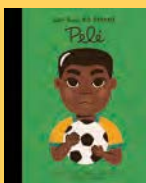
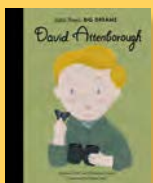
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- / Visit far-flung worlds in the 3D Planetarium
- / Kick off new topics in STEM workshops for all key stages



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WHY I LOVE...

ABOUT US:

NAME:

Maria Chase

SCHOOLS:

Groveswood Primary School

JOB ROLES:

Deputy Headteacher



Talking About: EMPOWERING PRIMARY EDUCATION: JUNIPER'S CPD FOR HOLISTIC SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Comprehensive CPD In the evolving educational landscape, primary school leaders in England recognise the need for a comprehensive approach to staff development—one that meets statutory requirements and promotes a culture of safety, well-being, and progressive learning. Juniper Education's CPD offering is the linchpin in this developmental journey.

Deputy Headteacher, Maria Chase, Groveswood Primary School attests to the transformative impact of Juniper's CPD programmes. "Juniper's CPD over the past decade has significantly contributed to my professional growth. As the DSL, the training has been invaluable, keeping me updated with the latest information and offering practical strategies to support children and their families."

High-quality resources Juniper's CPD offering is a suite of expert-led programs designed to empower primary school staff across various roles. "Juniper's courses have enhanced every aspect of my role—be it as an assessment leader, English leader, or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)," Maria adds. "The resources and support have been practical and easily applicable in my day-to-day role."

For just £599, primary schools can access targeted training in safeguarding, well-being, and learning. Juniper Education's safeguarding program, lauded for its quality and relevancy, ensures all staff, from Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) to governors, are well-trained and abreast of the latest regulations and guidance.

Versatile and economical The well-being module covers physical, mental, and emotional health, empowering staff to lead learning effectively. The learning

Maria Chase of Groveswood Primary School celebrates an extensive career both in education and Local Authorities. Her partnership with Juniper spans over a decade.



Contact:

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module, also priced at £599, focuses on developing staff skills and processes, key to informed assessment and learning. Schools are able to purchase all three programs for a bundled price of £1,499, presenting an economical solution for comprehensive staff development.

Over 3,300 delegates annually endorse Juniper's CPD for its versatility in addressing diverse school needs. "The support from the subject assessment leader team has helped me support other schools and become an Essex moderator," Maria shares, highlighting the far-reaching benefits of the training.

Expert-led Juniper Education's commitment to educational excellence is evident in their approach to CPD. Their programs are crafted by education experts to build upon each other, ensuring continuity and depth of knowledge that contributes to a culture of excellence within a school.

To witness firsthand the strategic advantage of Juniper's CPD offering and how it can revolutionise your school's approach to education, primary school leaders are invited to book a free consultation with our dedicated team. Let Juniper Education guide you towards a holistic development pathway, ensuring your staff are not only meeting but exceeding the expectations of today's educational demands.

WILL IT WORK FOR YOU?

- Our CPD meets statutory requirements and promotes a culture of safety, wellbeing, and progressive learning.
- The courses focus on developing staff skills and processes, key to informed assessment and learning.
- The CPD ensures continuity and depth of knowledge, creating a culture of excellence in schools.
- An economical solution for CPD covering safety, well-being, and learning to achieve successful pupil outcomes.

The place **TO BE**

Rachel Sligo explains how a new ‘Story Centre’ at Pegswood Primary is transforming attitudes to reading across the whole school community

During the pandemic, our school library became a dead space; unused, full of out-of-date books and in need of bringing in line with our pupils’ current interests and experiences.

As a teacher with a love of literacy and reading, I knew there must be something we could do to create a better space. Somewhere children would not only feel comfortable engaging with books, but where those who weren’t confident with reading wouldn’t feel out of place.

With support from the whole school and our wider community, including the North of Tyne Combined Authority, who helped fund this project, our Story Centre is now so much more than a library.

Transformation

When looking at the space, it was clear it would be hard to get children and parents into the library. As a result of Covid-19, we were seeing less parental engagement, and many students simply didn’t have the confidence to pick up a book on their own. In our local area, we have brilliant libraries, but even with access to these, only 19 per cent of our KS2 students visit libraries outside of school. So, to turn the library into a warm and inviting space, we completely remodelled the room.

We began by exploring the options available to help fund the project. As a participant in the National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for Leading Literacy (provided by the Three Rivers Teaching School Hub), I was able to

apply to the North of Tyne Combined Authority for support.

We were delighted when our application was accepted. We received £5,000 to support disadvantaged pupils and those disproportionately affected by the pandemic, which helped us with the costs greatly.

To ensure we didn’t disrupt the school, we worked over May half-term and the summer holidays, and we recruited help from friends and family to keep costs down. Come September, the new space had been created, our idea had come to fruition, and our old school library was now the Story Centre.

“Children who are less confident with reading can still feel comfortable here”

What is the Story Centre?

We’ve just come to the end of an incredible first term with the Story Centre fully up and running, and the activities and its impact so far have been wonderful.

It’s a comfortable space where students can be loud if they want to

We have tried to make it feel very different from a traditional library: providing a hub to engage families with every aspect of storytelling, not just reading.

The area is filled with visual displays. There are seating areas and cushions





loud learning can co-exist was very important to us.

It's packed with relevant stories, and provides access to real authors

We made it a priority that the books and stories we offer are diverse and reflect our students, so that they can see themselves in the books they read. However, it was equally as important to us that we engage with authors and writers themselves.

A recent Pegswood School student survey showed that only 16 per cent of KS2 children in our school could name five children's authors. We wanted to address this by inviting a wide range of writers into the Story Centre, giving our children the opportunity to interact with creators from different backgrounds and walks of life. So far, students have had the chance to engage with authors such as S.F. Said, Hannah Gold and Jennie Pearson, either through events or speaking over Zoom. When children meet the writers of stories they love, their interest and engagement go through the roof.

And we don't just limit these events to our students.

We encourage parents and carers to come along too, so they can see firsthand how much joy reading and storytelling can bring.

As part of our commitment to keep new books coming into the Story Centre, in 2022 we encouraged parents to gift teachers books on our reading list, rather than buy presents for staff. The idea went down so well, we did it again in 2023.

It's a hub for the community

We want the Story Centre to also be a meeting place for the whole community, and that is becoming a reality. For example, we hosted a workshop in partnership with a local business, where members of the community built autumn wreaths. Not only did this provide a chance to show off our Story Centre and act as a community hub, but with the workshop being ticketed (and proceeds donated to the school), it was also a way to raise money and continue bringing in new books and resources.

Looking to the future

With our Story Centre, I wanted to make sure that we

GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD

- 1** Be loud and clear about your vision – enthusiasm is infectious.
- 2** Take some of the pressure off your colleagues by becoming an expert in children's books.
- 3** Make sure the library has something for everyone to enjoy, even if that isn't reading.
- 4** Find like-minded people in the community or online, so you can ask advice and share ideas.
- 5** Read! If you get lost in books that are being written and illustrated by incredible children's authors, that will filter down to the pupils.
- 6** Be creative about fundraising and funding. Competitions, raffles, sponsored reads, weekend workshops and grants have made it possible for us to book various author visits and events.

were creating a space that was enjoyable for all; that didn't feel like a chore, or create more work for teachers, but instead provided a wonderful space for our students and their families to visit.

We've achieved so much in our first term, I can't wait to see the long-term impact of this space and what we go on to do with it next, not just for our students, but for our whole community. **TP**



Rachael Sligo is an English lead teacher at Pegswood Primary

School. To find out more about literacy and initiatives in this area, please visit tinyurl.com/tp-NoT

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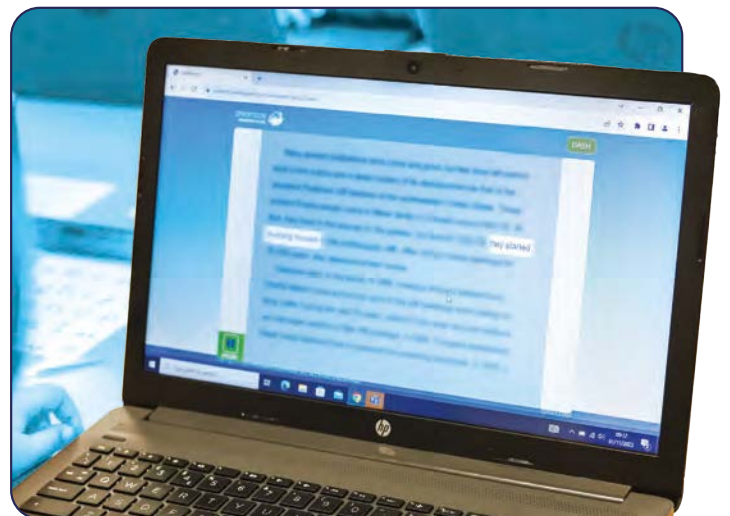
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Verity Lee,
Assistant Headteacher at Sunnyside Spencer Academy



WHY I LOVE...

Heather March, Director of Teaching and Learning at Aim High Academy Trust, discusses the easy-to-evidence reading progress facilitated by Reading Plus, and how this prepares pupils for the Reading SATs.

ABOUT US:

NAME:

Heather March,
Director of
Teaching and
Learning, Aim High Academy Trust



Talking About: HOW READING PLUS PREPARES OUR STUDENTS FOR SATS

“ Measurable results with Reading Plus

Reading Plus's comprehensive reporting data is very useful, allowing us to easily identify how our pupils are doing – quickly.

Our children have increased their reading speed by an average of 32 words per minute in just two terms. Also, on average, our Year 5s have made 1.8 levels of progress in less than one term.

I use these reports to illustrate our progress made and the areas we want to prioritise to governors.

Not only are we now seeing an impact on fluency and overall comprehension, but we can also see how this has enhanced our reading-for-pleasure culture.

“ Ready for SATs

Reading Plus is an extremely effective teaching tool for fluency and reading comprehension – we can clearly see the impact this will have in accessing the end-of-year KS2 tests.

For the children using the programme in Year 5, we now have 14 per cent achieving Greater Depth scores in our standardised end-of-year assessments. This is also backed up by teacher assessment judgements. In this year group, we had only two children (5 per cent) working at Greater Depth in Reading when they initially started the programme.

“ How we use Reading Plus

Reading Plus merged seamlessly with our established Reading Curriculum.

We use the programme three times a week. This helps teachers save a lot of time

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as no planning is required – the usability of the site is a huge bonus.

Furthermore, Reading Plus reports not only identify struggling pupils but also group those struggling with the same comprehension subskills and links to Teaching Tools for remediation. Teachers also use these reports to target individuals and inform class guided reading lessons.

Our children enjoy Reading Plus. Engagement is excellent, and the children are motivated.

“ Before Reading Plus

Before Reading Plus, engagement was varied. For our lower-attaining pupils, progress was also low.

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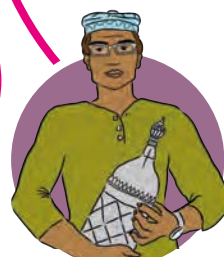
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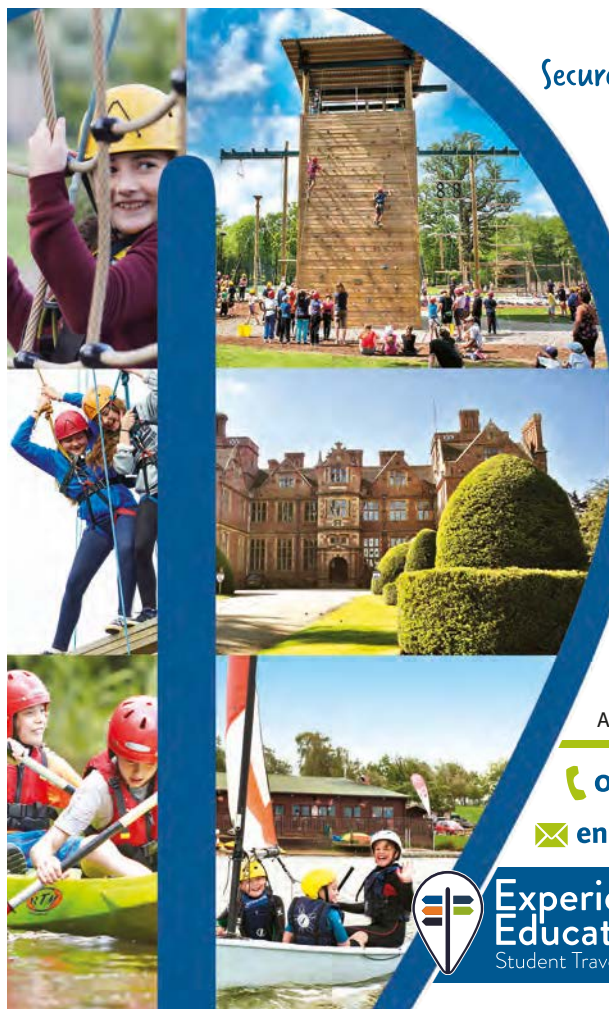
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Bloomsbury Publishing Plc,
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Coraline

It may be two decades old, but Neil Gaiman's fantasy horror still intrigues and inspires young readers

KAREN HART

Part modern-day fairytale, part *Alice in Wonderland* and part spine-chilling adventure, *Coraline* explodes with imaginative imagery. Never afraid to push the boundaries of the absurd to the brink, *Coraline* is a gift for teachers looking to explore creative writing with their children.

The story begins with Coraline having just moved into a somewhat mysterious old house. It's the school holidays and as an only child of busy

parents, Coraline feels bored and neglected. She explores the house and garden, meeting the eccentric tenants who share the house with her family along the way. Then, one afternoon, Coraline discovers the mysterious, bricked-up door in the drawing room is inexplicably leading to a parallel house, with an 'other mother and father'. Now the wild adventure really begins.

Neil Gaiman allows his readers to use their imaginations in building

their own versions of his characters by keeping physical descriptions mostly minimal – an interesting area to explore with a class. The 'door into another world' idea can be linked to *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Wizard of Oz*, which are all great stimuli for descriptive writing activities.

Coraline also contains many interesting big themes to talk about, such as: being brave – even when you feel afraid; the deception of appearances;





and the importance of being true to yourself. A great book, truly original and packed with creepy excitement from the off, it carries its readers on a wave of suspense to the very last page.

Talking about the book

- Coraline is the main character in this book. Explain that the principal character in a literary work is known as the protagonist; encourage the use of this term when talking about Coraline, to extend children's use of literary vocabulary.
- Words used to describe this book include: creepy, sinister, spellbinding, captivating and disturbing. Ask children to find the meaning of each of these words using an online thesaurus, giving an alternative word they think could

be used in its place, for example, disturbing – unsettling.

- Houses, cottages, castles, etc. are often used in stories to lend a particular atmosphere. In *Coraline*, the old, mysterious house provides a sense of spookiness. Ask children to think about a very different type of home, such as a cosy cottage. This time the atmosphere they want to create is warm and welcoming – how could they describe this? As a class, talk about words and phrases that could be used here, trying to think about all the senses, then write these on the board so pupils can make notes in their workbooks. Ideas for getting started could be: cosy, snugly, a warm fire, comfy cushions, the smell of warm toast, the sound of a cat purring. Pupils can go on to write a short description of a cosy home. A sample first sentence could be: 'Mrs Winterby had lived in our road all my life. Her little cottage was...'

- There are similarities between the story of *Coraline* and the fairytale of *Hansel and Gretel*. Do pupils know this story? Can they see any similarities?

Activities

How do you picture Coraline?

Explain to the class that, as readers, we can build images of the characters in books using our imaginations, with very little information on physical

appearance needed from the author. In *Coraline* we are given scant information on the protagonist's appearance. We only find out that Coraline is small for her age (eleven years old), and has a love of brightly coloured clothes.

As a class, talk about pupils' thoughts on Coraline's appearance. Some of the children may have seen the film version of the book, which could influence their thinking here; remind them of the importance of coming up with their own ideas.

Write some ideas on the board for the children to refer to, before asking them to draw in their workbooks a picture of Coraline as they envisage

her, along with a brief description of her appearance. Drawing the image before writing a description can make the process easier for pupils, as they then have

“Packed with creepy excitement, it carries its readers on a wave of suspense to the very last page”

a picture to refer to.

Pupils can go on to extend this activity with the characters of Miss Spink and Miss Forcible. We are given a few more clues here, as we are told in chapter one, 'They were both old and round,' and in chapter two, 'Miss Spink was bundled up in pullovers and cardigans, so seemed more small and circular than ever. She looked like a large fluffy egg. She wore thick glasses that made her eyes seem huge.' Using this information, ask pupils to draw and describe these characters as before.

Take it further → → →

CREATE A SIDEKICK FOR CORALINE

Do the children know what is meant by the term 'sidekick'? One definition could be, 'a person, maybe a friend, who is generally thought to be less important and under the control or supervision of someone else'.

Sidekicks are not necessarily bossed about though; think about Batman and Robin, or Groot in the *Guardian of the Galaxy* films. Can the children come up with any more examples?

In the film of the book, Coraline has a sidekick named Wybourne 'Wybie' Lovat;

a slightly anxious, eleven-year-old boy who is a neighbour of Coraline, and becomes her friend. Can pupils create their own sidekick for Coraline? They can draw their character and write a short description of their personality, including why they think the sidekick would make a good friend for Coraline. Maybe they like exploring, or are good at solving puzzles, or perhaps they try to be brave even when they're scared.

DESIGN A FILM POSTER

Using A3 paper, if available, ask children to design a poster to advertise a film of *Coraline*. Pupils should think about the atmosphere of

the film rather than concentrating too much on the plot, as film posters are careful not to give too much away – just enough to get people interested.

Ask the children to think about the important characters, events and objects included in the book. These could include the stone with a hole through it, the black cat, Miss Spink and Miss Forcible, Mr Bobo and his mice, the key, the snow globe and, of course, Coraline herself.

Can pupils think of anything else that might be good to include in their film poster? Discuss what might make people inquisitive to find out more.

An internet search for 'images of Coraline' brings up some great pictures of

What's behind the secret door?

The magical doorway or portal into a mysterious world idea can be found in several well-known stories. Can pupils think of any books, films, or TV shows where they have seen this idea used? Some ideas could be: the doorway to the vanishing cabinet in the *Harry Potter* series; the wardrobe in the Narnia books; the door to the chocolate room in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*; the door to the magical garden in *Alice in Wonderland*; the door to the magical garden in *The Secret Garden*. Ask pupils to write a short description of a mysterious door that leads to a magical world. Ask for volunteers to read their work to the class.



Coraline posters for children to use as inspiration. Encourage them to include a tagline to advertise the film. The original movie poster included the line 'An adventure too weird for words'.

Some other examples to inspire children – can they guess which film they belong to?

- It ain't ogre... till it's ogre (*Shrek*)
- It's scumdidlyumptious! (*Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*)
- An adventure 65 million years in the making (*Jurassic Park*)
- He cooks. He cleans. He kicks some butt. (*Home Alone*)

If you have the space, use pupils' posters as a wall display.

Being brave

In chapter five, Coraline tells the cat about the time her father deliberately attracted a swarm of wasps to give Coraline time to escape. Her father told her that it wasn't really brave, because it was the only thing he could do, and so he didn't feel scared. However, when he went back to retrieve his fallen glasses later that day, knowing the wasps were still there, he did feel scared. He said this was brave, because he was scared but did it anyway.

- Do the children agree with this definition of bravery?
- Do the children think Coraline told the cat this story to make herself feel brave before going to look for her parents?

As a class, talk about creating a short story on the theme of being brave. Some ideas here could be:

- You are at the park with your best friend. There is no one else around and a big dog runs into the park without an owner. The dog is barking and chasing your friend, who is terrified of dogs. Maybe you throw a stick to distract the dog, hoping it will run after it? Or perhaps you grab your friend quickly and bundle them out of the park, shutting the gate behind you?
- Or, you could use a fantasy scenario, where you and your best friend are being chased by an angry troll. Maybe you could distract the troll by outwitting him, e.g. telling him there's a giant coming this way whose favourite meal is troll on toast, to try and scare him away. Or perhaps the troll likes games, like the Other Mother in *Coraline*, and you could challenge the troll to a

Loved this? Try these...

- ❖ *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman
- ❖ *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* by Neil Gaiman
- ❖ *The Witches* by Roald Dahl
- ❖ *All The Lovely Bad Ones* by Mary Downing Hahn
- ❖ *Uncle Montague's Tales of Terror* by Chris Priestly

task – if you win, you go free! Ask children to write their own short story on the theme of being brave. A model first line could be: 'I was shaking with fear, my knees were knocking and my teeth were chattering, but I had to protect my friend from...'

Talk about the ending

Do children think the ending worked well? As a class, can you come up with another ending that follows on from the moment Coraline makes it back to her real house? Maybe the Other Mother uses magic to make herself small enough to climb through the keyhole and back into Coraline's house? **TP**



Karen Hart is an independent drama teacher, author and freelance writer.

f Karen.Journalist

WRITE A BOOK REVIEW

Start this exercise by looking at some real book reviews (there are lots of good ones on Amazon). Working as a class, talk about the structure of book reviews – how they will sometimes start with an interesting quote from the book, or the story's overall message, to grab the attention of the reader. A review for *Coraline* could start with 'Feel afraid – and do it anyway', or, 'Sometimes it's best to leave closed doors shut'. Can children come up with some good opening lines for their book reviews? Go on to give some pointers on how to structure reviews, e.g.

- Start with a couple of sentences explaining the story.

- Say what you particularly liked and disliked about the story. Include your thoughts about your favourite character. Did the story hold your interest throughout? What was your favourite part of the story and why?
- Tell readers whether you liked the ending of the book. Were you left feeling that the story had been brought to a satisfying conclusion? Explain why.
- Would you like to read more books by Neil Gaiman?

Also, read children the brief description from the back cover of the book (explain that this is referred to as 'the blurb') as a guide to get them started.

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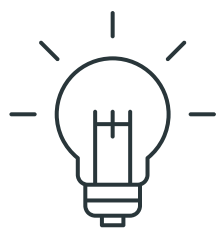
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The more they go, the more they'll grow. PGL is transforming outdoor education to deliver exactly what your pupils need, at the age they need it. With each programme aligned with the curriculum for that year group, the R.E.A.C.H. framework offers so much more for each child. No matter how pupils learn, where they're from or where they're going, PGL trips deliver a deliberate break from their school routine. Your pupils are forefront of mind, so as the world develops and evolves, so will our programmes. R.E.A.C.H. came to life through feedback from teachers, so let's spark those important breakthroughs in young people.

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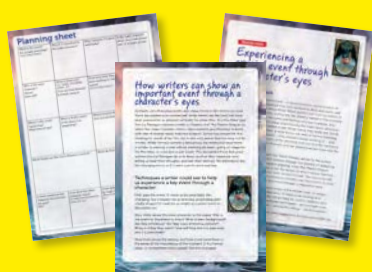
The Pirate's Dragon by Liz Flanagan

Peer inside the mind of the author, and help pupils understand how to show important events through a character's eyes



Text © Liz Flanagan. The Pirate's Dragon (£8.99, UCLan Publishing) is out now.

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RESOURCES AT



Download your **FREE**, exclusive teaching pack to help you explore both this extract and the rest of the book with your class.

[tinyurl.com/
tp-PiratesDragon](https://tinyurl.com/tp-PiratesDragon)

The *Pirate's Dragon* tells the story of two children who seem like opposites in almost every way. Serina is the daughter of the rulers of Arcosi. She's just bonded with a fragile baby dragon, when pirates raid her island and steal the eggs – and her hatchling! She doesn't hesitate: she leaps on the pirate's dragon and gets carried away to a strange new island where they do things very differently. Meanwhile, Raff Sparrowhawk is waiting anxiously on Skull Island for his mother, the pirate queen, to return with the eggs. Why should the people of Arcosi have all the dragons, especially after what they did?

I wanted to explore how two people can go from being enemies to being friends. Having two voices, with opposite points of view, made the story a challenge and a joy to write.

Serina is a confident, privileged person who must learn to survive on Skull Island, keeping her identity hidden. But beneath all her good fortune, she's actually lonely and isolated. As she and Raff care for their baby dragons, Serina makes her first true friend. The children begin to trust and respect each other. This helps them both to question their side of the story, and Raff finds the courage to challenge his strong mother for the first time. But Serina is keeping secrets from Raff – and they all come to light in very dramatic

ways! Will he still trust her when he finally learns the truth?

Throughout the story there are strongly contrasting views. This is the first time I've written with two narrators, and switching between voices became my new favourite technique, judging exactly when to flick between perspectives for maximum tension.

It's a dramatic adventure, with a cast of dragon-riders and pirates, but at the heart of the story is a question that's been on my mind lately: how do we talk to people we disagree with and find a way of seeing through their eyes? How do we listen to each other, and how do we find common ground? Raff and Serina have to work together to defeat a shared threat, in spite of all their differences. **TP**

5 TIPS for showing important events through a character's eyes

GET TO KNOW YOUR CHARACTER

Before I write about them, I need to get to know my character, to learn how they think and feel. I make notes and sketches to prepare. I like to use Pinterest to find a visual image to inspire me and help me bring each character into focus.

WHAT'S THEIR STORY?

You don't need to know every detail, but it helps me to have a rough idea of my character's backstory. What do they want?

What's brought them here?

USE ALL THE SENSES

Everyone has different sensory input – what is it like for your character? Do they notice sights or smells or sounds? Adding these details will bring them alive on the page.

GO DEEP

We all feel different inside from how we look on the outside. How can you show your character's inner self and how vulnerable

they feel? This helps your character seem real and encourages the reader to care.

MAGPIE IT!

Can you borrow a feeling or a trait that you've had yourself, or you've noticed in someone else? Don't borrow a whole person, but act like a magpie and swoop on shiny ideas here and there. The character you make will be totally imaginary – but seem real. No one else will guess which bits you have borrowed.

Extract from

Chapter 2,
pages 14–15

The Pirate's Dragon

This scene sets up Serina's world before it turns upside down. Her focused nervousness gave me a good excuse to show all these details of the setting she is about to leave.

This long sentence with its repeated 'surrounded' is aiming to use rhythm to create that sense of concentric circles. Poor Serina - she's about to learn that this isn't true at all! It's normal to see ourselves as the centre of the world, but this story has two sides...

I love to use physical sensations to hint at emotional state. Layering thoughts, feelings, observation and dialogue helps the reader see the world through your character's eyes – it's the closest thing to mind-reading.

This is the only moment of direct speech here, and it runs straight on, back into her thoughts, to keep with that interiority and seeing the world through her eyes. I wanted to show that Serina is kind and thoughtful, even at moments of high tension. She doesn't have any proper friends at this point – but it's not her fault.

And suddenly, it was time: everything sprang into crisp clear focus. Serina had never felt so awake, spotting every tiny detail that stood between her and those eggs. She was second in line, placed in age order, as the Potentials walked slowly down the steps into the open space that waited for them. Identical in their white robes, they sat down in a circle on the scrubbed cobbles, facing the covered eggs. All around them lay silver bowls containing springwater and shredded roast chicken: all ready to nourish the new baby dragons that were about to hatch.

It was as if the eggs lay in the centre of the world, thought Serina: right in the middle of the marketplace, surrounded by Potentials, surrounded by guards, surrounded by all the dragons of Arcosi, surrounded by tiered rows and rows of onlookers.

Serina let out a long, shaky breath, and made her face friendly and neutral. As the daughter of a duke and duchess, she was used to ceremonial occasions. From years of practice, she knew she could sit calmly for hours, without fidgeting. But inside, her stomach felt tight: with nerves, excitement or hunger, she had no idea.

None of the other ten children would meet her gaze as they settled into place, all except Hala, whose mother was friends with Milla. Serina and Hala had played together when they were smaller, and now Hala gave her a little nervous grin.

Serina smiled back and whispered, 'Good luck!' then bit her lip in case that was seen as favouring someone – she'd been warned about doing that.

I wanted to create a sense of how important this sacred ceremony is to the people of Arcosi. I layered visual details to convey that impression – from the white robes to the silver bowls and the ordered circle. The pirate raid will soon shatter all this careful preparation.

Here we get to see beneath Serina's mask – she might be used to hiding her feelings, but the shaky breath shows the reader the truth.

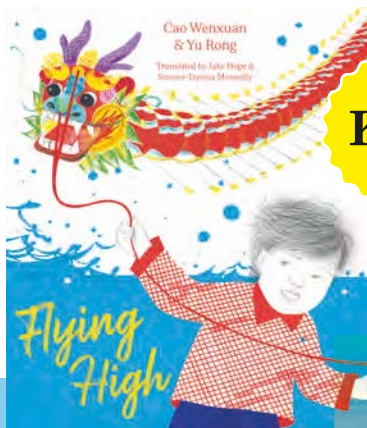
In spite of all her privilege, Serina is lonely and isolated – this will be one of the opposites about her life here on Arcosi compared to the life she is about to discover on Skull Island.

x-x

Book CLUB



We review five new titles that your class will love



KS1



KS1/2



KS1/2

Flying High

by Cao Wenxuan, illus. Yu Rong, trans. Jake Hope and Simone-Davina Monnelly
(£8.99, UCLan Publishing)

It's tough being left out, but trying too hard to fit in can bring more problems – and learning to value your differences may be the hardest thing of all.

Gently and affirmatively, this striking picturebook explores these issues through the eyes of a child who yearns to play with the bigger kids.

Rejection inevitably ensues, but with the help of an imaginary bird, the child begins a healing journey of discovery out in the natural world.

They discover small can be good; *different* can be good.

With grandma's support they try again, and are soon flying a brand-new kite alongside the other children's.

Beautifully illustrated with paper collages and expressive line drawings, *Flying High* will prompt reflection and discussion among your pupils.

Full instructions on how to build a Chinese kite are included in the book.

How to Build a Home

by George Clarke, illus. Robert Sae-Heng
(£9.99, Red Shed)

How do we build our houses? Who works on them, and what will they look like in the future?

This stylish non-fiction book by architect and TV presenter George Clarke invites children to be curious about the built environment. Packed with well-chosen information and illustrated in a way that encourages close observation, it presents a creative mix of facts, ideas and possibilities.

Topics include materials, the environment and new technologies, and there's a refreshing emphasis on real-world jobs. Mechanical and structural engineers are introduced, alongside plumbers, plasterers and quantity surveyors, and children are challenged to get involved now, by dreaming and designing.

How to Build a Home will surprise and delight readers of all ages, but is particularly good for Years 2 to 4.

Do You Remember?

by Sydney Smith
(£12.99, Walker Books)

A boy and his mum are sharing precious memories in bed. Each story warms them briefly in their cheerless room, but the shadows are still gathering. Have they lost too much to hope? Or will this night be the beginning of a wonderful new memory?

Double-page portraits and evocative, light-filled vignettes pack a strong emotional punch in this poetic and stunningly-illustrated picturebook.

Different audiences will read the images and subtext in different ways, but the central narrative is clear for those willing to listen, observe and piece the clues together.

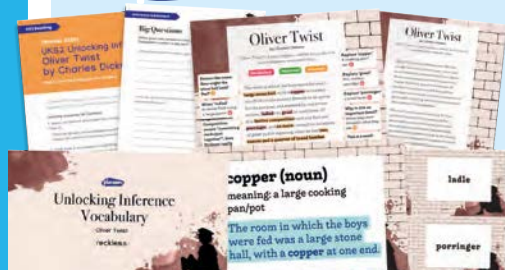
Children will want to decide what's going on, and relate it to their own experiences. This lovely book makes a rich starting point for personal reflection, discussion and creative responses from Year 1 right through Key Stage 2.

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The Observologist

A Handbook for Blowing Very Small Steadily Expeditions



Giselle Clarkson
GEO PRESS

KS2

The Observologist

by Giselle Clarkson

(£16.99, Gecko Press)

Are you, or could you be, an observologist? This engaging hardback wants readers to look closely at the smaller wonders of the natural world and encourages them with quirky asides and visual details just waiting to be spotted on every spread.

An introductory chapter on method and organisation equips children for fieldwork, and subsequent chapters explore a range of everyday habitats: *A Damp Corner* or *Behind the Curtains*, for example, both of which are full of possibilities.

Packed with intriguing drawings, this cheerful book respects its audience and provides plenty of practical information in a kindly and informal way. It will please keen naturalists and bookworms across a wide age range, but less enthusiastic readers and those who know little about the natural world will also be charmed.



KS2

New Kid on Deck

by Justin Somper, illus. Teo Skaffa

(£7.99, UCLan Publishing)

In the far-distant future, sea levels have risen and a golden age of piracy has dawned. The top families in the Pirate Federation send their children to Pirate Academy, where they learn everything from ocean science to swordplay. The Federation's authority is being challenged, though, and when a rebel group kidnaps two students, the rest of Barracuda Class find themselves fighting for real to save their friends. But the League of True Pirates doesn't follow the rules, and who knows how many traitors have infiltrated the school?

Black and white line illustrations evoke a swashbuckling pirate world in this imaginative and action-packed novel with a warm heart. It will appeal to independent readers in Years 4 to 6, and would make an absorbing whole-class read-aloud.

Meet the author

WE SET SAIL WITH PIRATE ENTHUSIAST JUSTIN SOMPER



What was primary school like for you?

I was blissfully happy. My school, The Ryde, opened in 1972 and I guess I started there

in 1974, so it was really new. Classes were small. I have lifelong friends from that class – my pal Suzanne recently came out to Australia with her husband to visit us and we were able to celebrate 52 years of friendship!

We had a wonderful head teacher in Hywel Watkins and some truly inspiring teachers, including Claire Tilby (Year 4) and Sue Cranston (Year 6). I was strongly encouraged to write throughout my time there. Along with support from my parents, this really got me started. I've been back to the school a few times to deliver author events and it was just lovely being back – everything smelled just the same, in a good way!

When did you write your very first pirate story?

My default answer to this used to be 'the early 2000s, when I started my *VAMPIRATES* series'. But just recently I was sorting through some old English books from my days at The Ryde and, to my great surprise, I found a story about a pirate ship. I must have written it when I was seven or eight. I had totally forgotten about it, so it was a slightly spooky but pleasing discovery!

How would you like teachers to use the *Pirate Academy* books in the classroom?

I'd love them to invite children to create their own Pirate Academy – starting with deciding what lessons they would put on the timetable and which legendary pirate captains would be teaching them. They could also create backstories for members of the class, including who their pirate parents are and what the family's ship is called.

I hope teachers might also be interested in exploring some of the emotional storylines: the ways the young protagonists deal with fear and anxiety, and pull together as a team.

Pirate Academy is out now.

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Music SPECIAL

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**Don't miss the SEND special
in our next issue!
Available from 12 April.**

Amateur HOUR?

You don't need to be a musician to run a good music lesson. All it takes is enthusiasm, planning and the right resources, say **Sally-Anne Brown** and **Vic Holmes**

We are regularly invited into schools to help teachers who lack confidence teaching music. What we always point out is that you don't necessarily need to be a musician to teach music. You just need to have an understanding of the importance of music in the classroom, resources you feel confident working with and enthusiasm. But that can seem easier said than done.

Music is not often given much priority in teacher training; understandably, perhaps, with so much to cover in the primary curriculum. But this can mean that non-specialist teachers enter the profession with little or no music teaching knowledge, strategies or even resources. For those who may not have had a very positive experience of music themselves during their own school years, it can leave them feeling less than confident in their teaching.

This lack of confidence non-specialist teachers may have in teaching music was also uncovered during the Department for Education's recent review on music education, highlighting that there is a need for change.

So, what can we do to make music work in schools?

Know what your class can do

Understanding how children learn music at different ages will help make a lesson a success.

So, first, let them play! Allow young children to explore instruments and sound-makers themselves. With art, we allow our pupils time to paint and draw, and we acknowledge their efforts, but the same is not always true of music.

Good quality, age-appropriate instruments are the ideal if your school has access to the funding. But you can also offer a wide variety of sound-makers that your class can, and will, explore themselves, e.g. plastic mixing bowls, pans, wooden spoons, sponges, wire oven shelves. Use anything that has the potential for sound-making – the children will surprise you! Give them some time and space, then you can really observe what is going on.

Next, move on to more structured activities.

Singing should be at the heart of music lessons in lower primary. When singing with young children, choose songs with small pitch ranges. When modelling the songs, sing them slowly and at a higher pitch than you would normally, to match the children's vocal ability. You can find plenty of free, appropriate resources on the National Youth Choir of Scotland website (nycos.co.uk).

Being able to feel and find the pulse of a piece of music and **keep a beat** is essential. Disco music can be helpful in this regard, as it has a regular beat. Let the children 'find' the beat, clapping along to it, then ask them to show other moves they can do on the beat.

Give children the opportunity to **listen** to a wide variety of music, including styles from different cultures. Visit mamalisa.com for great music from all around the world.

Don't be afraid to **repeat**, repeat and repeat. Go over songs again and again until they are well established. You can then extend the

activities by singing faster and slower, higher and lower, louder and softer.

Finally, make sure you **record** the children's music to show progress.

Making some noise

Music, by its very nature, involves sound, but it doesn't have to be 'out of control'. If you are organising a music play time in your class, you could use quieter instruments or resources. Tell classrooms nearby that you are having a music session and how long it will last. If the play is getting too loud, you can

"Non-specialist teachers enter the profession with little or no music teaching knowledge"

have a signal for the children to stop and listen, such as tapping a tambourine or a short whistle. For louder instruments, why not go outside?

Managing behaviour

Planning your lesson carefully will reduce the risk of behaviour issues.

Choose **appropriate repertoire and resources**. Consider the purpose of each activity, so you are clear what you are using and why.

Allow for **flexibility in planning** so you can adapt and change plans to meet the

needs of the children during the lesson. If an activity isn't working, change it.

During both led and free-play activities, **observe** how the children engage and interact throughout.

Getting extra support

There are many brilliant free resources available online to help sprinkle a bit of musical magic in the classroom.

We've worked with the BBC Teach team on its Musical Storyland resources. By the end of the spring term, there will be 10 short musical

stories showcasing musicians of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. The music for these films has been written specifically for young children.

There are great melodies, repeated songs and chants, as well as plenty of opportunity for musical engagement. The learning resources have been designed so that everyone starts on a foundation level. This allows teachers to assess how quickly children progress, and to move on only when they are ready to do so. The lesson plans are relevant for all nations across the UK.

Musical Storyland also introduces children to an array of musical instruments. The viola, horn, double bass and oboe have all been described as 'endangered instruments' by the Royal Northern College of Music. Introducing children to these instruments will not only help to increase their awareness, but may even lead to a child deciding to learn one in the future. **TP**

HOW TO BUILD A MUSICAL SCHOOL

1 Incorporate singing and music into every aspect of school life. Sing a song when children line up for lunch or when they put their coats on. Use recorded music at different points in the day. Ask families what they listen to at home and curate a 'school playlist'.

2 Acknowledge, encourage and support children's musical play, as you would art.

3 Explore the free resources available online, such as BBC Musical Storyland, BBC Bring the Noise and BBC Ten Pieces – use them as jumping-off points.

4 Embrace apps. Children are often better than adults with their use of technology, and there are more and more free music apps, such as Chrome Music Lab or Patatap that they can experiment with when composing and improvising their own music.

5 Connect with your local Music Hub. The National Plan for Music Education (2022) set out that Music Hubs should support schools to ensure that all children have the opportunity to engage in music making – singing, playing an instrument and creating music together. They are there to work with you and the children in your school.



Sally-Anne Brown and Vic Holmes are directors of Note Weavers CIC. The BBC Teach Musical Storyland films and resources can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/teach



Singing from the same **HYMN SHEET**

Find out how your school can best adopt Ofsted's latest music recommendations

DR LIZ STAFFORD

It's the last week of the Easter term and my penultimate day of teaching, possibly forever. Due to a house move involving dramatic distances, I've given notice on my part-time role as a music teacher in a local primary school and I'm looking forward to a fun-packed practical session with my class as my last hurrah.

Then we get the call. The head and a significant number of our teaching staff

unscheduled 'pop-in') music lesson in school.

No-one enjoys an Ofsted inspection, so all power to the 50 schools (25 of them primary) who volunteered to have inspectors visit them for the purposes of generating content for the Ofsted Music Subject Report, which was published in September 2023. And thank goodness they did volunteer, because the result is a useful, practical, and realistic document for music advocacy and improvement.

generally do better than secondaries. However, it also noted that the teaching of composing was a weak area across both primary and secondary provision.

Ofsted articulates in this report that the schools with the strongest music provision organise their timetable on a weekly basis, ensuring that these weekly lessons are long enough to adequately cover the curriculum. Another aspect inspectors praised in the most effective schools was the use of practice time and feedback, which

gives children the chance to improve their work, rather than just moving on to the next activity regardless. The inspectors noted that the most successful schools were the ones whose curriculums were not full of short, chopping-and-changing topics, but instead focused on incremental learning of core skills through repetition of practical activities and content.

On the flip side, the inspectors found that many schools used content

“Schools with the strongest provision organise their timetable on a weekly basis”

are up a mountain a hundred miles away on our Year 6 residential. To us, it seems obvious that we will be able to defer, but as the hours tick away it becomes clear that this is not an option. Then the inspection team starts talking subjects, and music is mentioned... are they absolutely joking? On my last day?!

Fortunately, I was saved by the fact that as a contractor, not an employee, I only taught the music – our official music subject lead was up that mountain with the head. Negotiations were had, art took the bullet instead, and my pupils and I got to enjoy my last, fun-filled (although slightly tense in case of an

The overall findings

The major news to note is that this report paints a comparatively rosy picture of music in primary schools – at last! There is so much negativity about primary music on social media, and it often feels like primary schools are being unfairly blamed for all of secondaries' woes.

The aspect of the music curriculum that Ofsted praised most in the primary schools it visited was singing provision, which it acknowledged that primaries



coverage as a shorthand for skills progression, focusing on completion of the curriculum in the time available as their main measure of success.

Teachers were also sometimes unable to offer the required feedback and modelling due to their own level of musical confidence and skill. Often the SLT had a good understanding of their staff's areas for development, but there was no plan in place to address these, and so the issue was likely to perpetuate. None of this is particularly surprising, of course, given that the majority of primary school teachers are not music specialists; and neither is

there an easy fix for this in the short, or even perhaps long term.

However, Ofsted has had a crack at some suggestions which might help.

The top-level recommendations

Ofsted recommends that schools take into consideration 'precise end points in performance, composition and listening work' when designing their curriculum. The aim here is to ensure pupils can progress step by step towards these goals, and that curriculums incrementally build 'pupils' knowledge of the technical and constructive aspects of music'. They also – of course – recommend that schools set aside enough time to actually deliver this curriculum successfully.

In schools where music is led by a non-specialist, this process of designing a curriculum from scratch might be daunting. Ofsted clearly recognises this because one of the other recommendations is to seek expert support when designing the curriculum, and that specific support for subject leaders

should be provided to ensure the curriculum 'deliberately and incrementally teaches all pupils to become more musical.'

If that sort of support sounds like it might be out of your budget, the report is favourable about the use of schemes in primary schools when done in the correct way. So a good alternative could be to buy in an expert-created scheme. This might also help with Ofsted's next recommendation: to implement the use of ongoing feedback and teacher demonstration to improve the technical and expressive quality of pupils' musical responses. Ofsted noted that the use of schemes with 'accompanying instructional videos' was a helpful element in giving staff the confidence to model and feedback to children on how to improve their work.


Additional responsibilities


Outside of the curriculum, Ofsted recommends that schools should make sure that they offer extra-curricular instrumental and vocal lessons. This is also an expectation of the National Plan for Music Education (2022). In reality, with budgets in crisis, many schools will struggle to meet this recommendation.


The network of local music hubs (though in flux at the moment, with a vastly reduced number of new hub lead organisations to be announced in April 2024) should be your first port of call to help you in establishing a cost-effective extra-curricular programme.

Back on the last day of that Easter term, I couldn't have thought of anything worse than having to talk to Ofsted about music. Having seen this most recent report, though, I think schools can take comfort in a clear set of

IN BRIEF

 Timetable music for an hour each week and ensure that it actually gets taught. Both Ofsted and the DfE keep nudging us in this direction, so we should probably all take note.

 Take a focused approach. For Ofsted, less is more. So cut down on the number of different instruments being taught, and approaches being taken, in favour of a consistent approach to the development of musical skill on a long-term basis.

 Take steps to upskill your staff. Whether it's through a scheme with in-built CPD, a series of INSETs, or some kind of training programme, show them that you understand your areas for development as a school and have acted accordingly.

 Review your composing and improvising provision. This is the area of the curriculum that Ofsted was most concerned about in this report, so it's likely inspectors will want to look closely at it during a deep dive.

guidelines that indicate precisely what the inspectorate is looking for.

So although none of us wants them to come to our schools, if they do, we'll be ready – armed with this report. **TP**



Dr Liz Stafford is director of education consultancy company **Music**

Educational Solutions®, editor of Primary Music Magazine, author of The Primary Music Leader's Handbook (Harper Collins), and music specialist for Kapow Primary.

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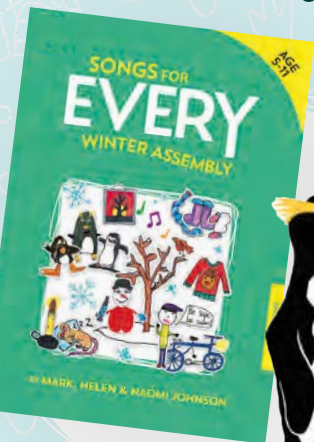


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Bring on THE NOISE!

Worried that handing your children instruments might unleash chaos? Be not afraid, says **Ben Connor**

The national curriculum states that KS1 pupils should be taught to play tuned and untuned instruments musically, while in KS2, children should ‘play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression’.

These days, however, music is often taught through online schemes of work or portals that rely heavily on listening, responding to music, and singing.

There are many reasons why instruments are not used in the classroom, including a lack of teacher confidence or physical resources, and issues with planning or schemes of work. However, with a few simple ideas and some clear routines, you can still introduce instruments to your class effectively.

Tuned or untuned

To start with, it’s important both you and the pupils understand what the difference is between tuned and untuned instruments.

Simply put, a tuned instrument, when played, can produce a melody or tune. It has keys, finger holes or strings that allow the musician to perform

a melody, no matter how simple. Examples within an orchestra include any instrument from the string, woodwind or brass sections, and some parts of the percussion section (xylophone, marimba, glockenspiel). Examples in a primary classroom would be recorders, ukuleles, glockenspiels and chime bars.

An untuned instrument can be used to create a beat or rhythm, but not a melody. It’s often played through hitting with sticks,

“You can achieve a lot by implementing a few simple ideas and developing clear routines for the use of instruments”

beaters, or hands and fingers. Examples within an orchestra would be the majority of the percussion section (timpani, bass drum, drum kit). Examples in a primary classroom include wood blocks, claves, cymbals and tambourines.

Unless children are composing, lessons should be taught using either tuned or untuned instruments. Using both at the same time can be confusing. Untuned

instruments are best used when teaching about beat and rhythm, whereas tuned instruments are used to teach about pitch and melody.

Lesson ideas

When using any instruments, classroom management is key. See the ‘Quick tips...’ panel for ideas on how to structure the start of an instrument lesson. Once you have established how the creation of sound will be controlled by the teacher, it’s time to start using the instruments.

Untuned instruments

When introducing instruments to your class it helps to break what makes a piece of music down into some of its component parts, and explore each of them one by one.

The **beat** is the steady pulse of a piece of music; I describe it to the children as the heartbeat. Music can be written with different beats to create a different feel to the music. Most music is built around a four-beat pulse. Challenge the pupils to quietly play their instrument on the beats of the pulse. Count the pulse aloud yourself to support and emphasise the first beat of every set. Once





children have grasped the four-beat pulse (4/4), play them pieces of music which represent alternative pulses. For example:

- Two-beat pulse (2/2): *Help* by The Beatles, or *Jingle Bells*
- Three-beat pulse (3/4): any waltz (I often play clips of Viennese waltz dances from *Strictly Come Dancing*)
- Six-beat pulse (6/8): *House of the Rising Sun* by The Animals, *We are the Champions* by Queen

Tempo is how slow or fast a piece of music is. To explore what this means in practice, have children copy a simple beat pattern and change the tempo.

Play the beat slow, stop, then play it fast. Experiment with hand signals to change the tempo from fast to slow and vice versa.

Rhythm is a mixture of long and short notes which create a recognisable pattern.

Once understanding of beat and pulse has been established, move on to rhythm and duration.

Get your pupils to play/hit their instruments once and listen carefully. How long before the instrument stops making noise? Can we make the sound last longer or stop sooner? How?

Once you've discussed these questions, ask the children to individually experiment with mixing long and short sounds to create a simple beat and rhythm.

Next, play 'Don't Clap This One Back' (see tinyurl.com/tp-TeachingMusic) but have the children play/hit instead of clapping.

You can also try a 'call and response' game, where one child is in charge and plays a short rhythm that the others have to copy. Rotate the lead role around the class.

Tuned instruments

Beat, pulse, tempo, rhythm and duration can all be taught/repeated using tuned instruments.

The most effective instrument to use is the glockenspiel. These are relatively cheap, can be shared one between two children and are simple to play. Use your glockenspiels to recap some of the earlier activities before moving on to learning about pitch.

Pitch is how high or low a note is. It is related to the frequency of a sound: the higher the frequency, the higher the pitch. Simply put, the larger an instrument or key/bar of an instrument, the slower it will vibrate and the lower the pitch will be.

When introducing pitch, I always use a large xylophone. Play the keys from top to bottom/bottom to top, so that children can visualise that the lower notes make lower sounds.

Play a game of Low/Middle/High. Ask the children to close their eyes while you play a note on the xylophone; can they hear whether it is low/middle/high on the keys?

If you have a range of pitched instruments (hand bells, chime bars, etc), hand them out to a small group of pupils. Ask the children to play their instruments one at a time. Can they sort themselves into pitch order? **TP**



Ben Connor is a deputy headteacher at a primary school in Bury, Greater

Manchester. He is a trained music specialist and has been teaching for 13 years in various schools.

@bbcteaching

QUICK TIPS FOR classroom management

1 Seven seconds of sound
When you first give out instruments, pupils will want to make a noise. From experience, they will do it whether you want them to or not. It's also important that children do get a chance to freely explore the sounds an instrument makes. So give the instruments out, put your fingers in your ears and tell the children they have seven seconds to make as much noise as they want. This gets it out of their system, ready for purposeful sound in the rest of the lesson.

2 Crowd control
Once the initial seven seconds of madness are over, you now need to establish hand signals for when you want pupils to stop playing. Develop a clear routine, linked to existing classroom practices. For example, say, "When I hold my hand up, put all the instruments [or beaters] carefully down on the tables". Practise this routine to lay out your expectations and be clear about what happens if children don't respond promptly enough.

3 Purposeful noise
Finally, explain the role of the conductor in a choir or orchestra: their role is to set the tempo and introduce the instruments at the correct time. Split the class into groups. Have them 'ready', with beaters poised to play or instruments ready. They can only play when you 'conduct'. Point to each group in turn and have them play either one beat, or a simple rhythm. This gets the children used to playing at the right time.



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The beat of THE DRUM

Consider music therapy as a tool to combat anxiety and build confidence, suggest **Lucy Collings Pettit** and **Adele Bird**

As concerns about the mental wellbeing of school-aged children in the UK continue to rise, schools are increasingly turning to music therapy as a way to encourage self-expression and build self-confidence. This powerful and enjoyable intervention can also help support pupils to reduce and better manage anxiety, making it easier for them to cope in the school context and, ultimately, enabling them to learn and succeed.

How it works

We know children can sometimes struggle to articulate their thoughts and feelings, especially if they have early trauma backgrounds. In such cases, music offers an accessible way for children to communicate and express their feelings effectively, without words.

Music therapy sessions are also very engaging and give children new opportunities to express and process their experiences, thoughts and emotions creatively, within the safety of an attuned and containing therapeutic relationship.

Child psychologist Bruce Perry suggests that patterned, repetitive rhythmic activity supports regulatory processes, eliciting a sensation of safety and helping children to move from highly anxious to calmer states. Therapeutic group drumming, a model often used within Chroma's music therapy offer in partnership schools, can be especially



motivational for children, not least as they tend to find it hard to resist playing along!

Drumming in a group context with peers can build conflict resolution skills through teamwork. It encourages positive social interactions, often with playfulness at the centre, through greater verbal and non-verbal communication. Drumming in this way can help reduce anxiety, and provide opportunities to explore and create a cohesive network of positive connections for children in school, promoting mental wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

Therapy in action

Chroma recently began delivering therapeutic music group sessions at Marland School in North Devon to support pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.

Using djembe drums, the sessions incorporate a variety of structured activities that focus on establishing group beats and collaboration. These include passing individual rhythms, maintaining a group pulse, and increasing

and decreasing the volume and tempo of play — all to instil a sense of belonging, coherence and value in the group.

As the djembe drums are played using hands, rather than sticks or beaters, the offer is highly accessible, which is especially beneficial for children who have low self-worth or a fear of failure.

Children work proactively during these sessions, agreeing guidelines to determine how they want to complete the exercises together. While we suggest activities, pupils can bring their own ideas. And, to create a sense of empowerment, at planned end points the children have opportunities to showcase their group and individual progress, promoting their ownership of, and pride in, the work.

Teaching staff are encouraged actively to participate, too, as it provides them with a valuable opportunity to observe the children in a different context, and connect positively with them outside of a formal classroom environment.

The group sessions develop cohesion through familiarisation, and gradually reduce pupils' anxiety through increased attendance, participation and engagement levels. They also provide opportunities to experience and develop regulation through those processes. Activities led by trained music therapists safely expose children to aroused states for short durations before moving back to a calmer state. This alternation between settled and aroused states can help their bodies to move out of fight and flight states more naturally.

Expressing oneself can be a struggle for adults, so it's easy to imagine the difficulties young children may face in self-expression, particularly when early trauma has occurred at the pre-verbal stage. Incorporating therapeutic drumming sessions into their school life will not only provide pupils with a safe space to effectively express themselves in a fun, creative way, but will also help them to grow emotionally and socially. **TP**



Lucy Collings Pettit and Adele Bird are music therapists at Chroma.



Chroma is the UK's only national provider of the creative arts therapies.

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Instrumental lessons feature in the music scheme



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Kapow Primary's music curriculum includes progressive instrumental lessons for Key Stage 2. It features original and diverse music and provides a solid foundation for learning a musical instrument. Integrated CPD supports non-specialist music teachers to improve their skills and confidence.

1 ALIGNS WITH MUSIC CURRICULUM RECOMMENDATIONS

Both the Model Music Curriculum (MMC) (2021) and the National Plan for Music (2022) recommend that children in Key Stage 2 should learn an instrument. Kapow Primary's instrumental scheme comprises 30 progressive lessons that align with the guidance in both these documents as well as meeting national curriculum requirements. Designed for specialist and non-specialist music teachers alike, the scheme is included with the Kapow Primary Music subscription that covers primary-age children from EYFS to upper Key Stage 2.

2 DIVERSE GENRES OF WORLDWIDE MUSIC

The Kapow Primary Music instrumental scheme covers six units, each highlighting music from a different part of the world. This exposes pupils to diverse musical styles, from South Africa to the Caribbean, Indonesia, North America, India and South America. By reflecting on different continents and cultures, pupils can explore the history and key features of different musical genres from around the world. Additionally, each unit has its own bespoke musical composition, including sheet music, performance, and backing tracks.

3 COST-EFFECTIVE

Instrumental lessons are included for free for all schools



subscribing to the Kapow Primary Music scheme. There's no need for external music teachers, so schools can choose when and in which class to conduct the lessons. The scheme utilises tuned percussion instruments, such as xylophones and glockenspiels, that are easily found in most schools or can be borrowed from a school music service or another local school. Teachers interested in trying the instrumental scheme can access a free trial without any obligation to purchase.

Kapow
Primary

Find out more:
[kapowprimary.com/
instrumental
scheme](https://kapowprimary.com/instrumental-scheme)

4 INTEGRATED TEACHER CPD

Supporting CPD videos are built into the lesson plans, and there is a separate series of bite-sized videos to support teacher knowledge of staff notation. This empowers teachers who don't read music to be able to teach music with confidence. The integrated CPD videos provide visual reference, are relevant at the point of need and can be watched and rewatched. Although tailored towards non-specialist music teachers, they also serve as a helpful refresher for those with prior music experience.

5 ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES

Kapow Primary's instrumental lessons can enrich a school's music curriculum in several ways. Learning to play an instrument cultivates musical appreciation and supports the development of children's composition skills. These lessons create performance opportunities, enhancing confidence and building connections with parents and the community. Using tuned percussion instruments is advantageous for young children, as, unlike some other instruments, pupils can play them relatively easily with confidence. The lessons include suggestions for adaptive teaching, ensuring accessibility for children of all abilities.

KEY POINTS

Introduces Year 3 and Year 4 children to the history and culture of diverse musical styles from around the world using specially commissioned music.

Teacher videos provide integrated CPD and include a series on staff notation – helping non-specialist music teachers to upskill and develop confidence.

Planning documents demonstrate how the scheme aligns with the Model Music Curriculum and, the National Plan for Music and how it fulfils national curriculum requirements.

Sign up for a Kapow Primary free trial and you can explore not only the instrumental lessons, but also the whole music scheme and more.

What a wonderful WORLD!

Adele Darlington blends the beauty of art with the joy of music in this upbeat activity inspired by Louis Armstrong's masterpiece

I see trees of green, red roses too. I see them bloom, for me and for you.' What happens when you give children a paintbrush and plenty of paint, and then play Louis Armstrong's *What a Wonderful World* to them? Well my class were inspired by the rhythm as well as the words, and loved letting their hands 'dance' over manuscript paper with the brushes. Here's how you can recreate the magical experience we had.

Meeting the music

In these activities you'll introduce your class to this poetic jazz classic, and the deep, gravelly voice of Armstrong, while celebrating the beauty of the natural world. Make sure you give pupils time to listen, feel and, ultimately, dance with paint as they respond to music in visual form by decorating their 'canvases' with

thoughts and feelings.

Begin by watching the official music video to the song (tinyurl.com/TPwonderful). Its unique, bright animation style is sure to mesmerise pupils, capturing their attention and imaginations immediately. Let them watch and observe during a first showing. Then play the video a second time, encouraging them to watch closely and really notice what they see and hear.

Discuss the theme of the song as a group. What did the artist sing about? What did pupils see that contributes to a wonderful world? In pairs, ask the children to try and remember as many of the 'wonderful' things they saw as they can. Who can remember the most?

Music and lyrics

Following on from the screening of the music video, ask pupils to get comfy, close their eyes and listen closely to

"Give pupils time to listen, feel and dance with paint"

the song again, but without any visual stimulation this time. Encourage them to focus on the lyrics. How do the words make

them feel? Does the song and its melody evoke a happy or a more solemn feeling within the children?

In groups, discuss the emotions felt during this listen and invite pupils to volunteer their individual feelings. Why do they think they felt a certain way? Then, give each group a handout of the lyrics (or display them on a whiteboard) and ask them to consider which is their favourite line. Can they

explain why? Are they drawn to the blue sky, the white clouds, friends shaking hands or another line entirely?

It's also nice to think about adding new lines to the song here. If pupils could add more natural wonders to Armstrong's wonderful world, what would they be? Maybe the sound of singing birds, the blue waves of the ocean, snow on a mountain top or the bright, warm sunshine will feature in their conversations.

Feel the rhythm

It's now time to get moving to the music. Focus on the rhythm and the beat of the song rather than the lyrics this time. Depending on the age of the children, invite them to sit at tables, on a carpet area or even stand. Sway to the music and tap, clap or click fingers to the beat. Do model this for pupils, as some may find it tricky to recognise the steady pulse





that is consistent throughout the music.

Select 'leaders' to choose actions (such as tapping shoulders, pointing fingers or bending knees) to carry out on the beat for the rest of the class to copy. Then, clear some space in the classroom and give the children the opportunity to move freely to the music, in any way the tune inspires them to.

A brush with a legend

The final part of this sequence gives pupils the chance to dance to the music again, but this time with a twist. Using paintbrushes and paint, the dancing takes place on the

page rather than the stage!

Manuscript paper (with staves printed on, commonly used for writing music) makes an authentic canvas for music themed artwork. Ask the children to cover the paper – usually adorned with a musical score – with colourful paint marks instead. Provide palettes with a variety of colours of paint in, alongside a selection of different sized brushes and mark-making tools (such as sticks, sponges, toothbrushes, corks).

Pupils shouldn't be expected to create a 'picture' in the traditional sense, where an object or scene is depicted; instead, they will produce a pattern or


collection of marks in response to the music.


Play the track and let the class move their brushes/tools in any way they like, choosing their marks and colours in the moment. There's no need for them to plan, prep or rehearse. Dots, dashes, swirls, waves, lines may all appear on the paper.


Some pupils may stick to using one colour, others may like to use more; some may show order and pattern, others may be random and chaotic. You'll need to play the song several times to give pupils the chance to complete their compositions.


Throughout the activity, keep reminding the pupils,

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

 Inspired by the theme of the song, task pupils with creating their own 'wonderful world' artwork using a medium of their choice. Their responses to the theme should be personal and could be a real or abstract representation of a wonderful world.

 Provide pupils with a selection of instruments and encourage them to compose an original 'wonderful world' piece of music. What do the sounds in their composition represent?

 Take your class on a walk around the school or local area spotting elements of a 'wonderful world'. Take in the surroundings, breathe in the fresh air and appreciate the world all around using the senses.

 As a class, learn the lyrics to the song, and sing together to an audience of fellow pupils, teachers or wider school community. You'll be sure to make everyone smile!

and yourself, that there is no one correct way to create this artwork. Each response will be individual, independent, unique and – using the word from the song itself – wonderful! **TP**



Adele Darlington is an experienced teacher, art lead and primary art consultant. She is also the author of the Bloomsbury title 100 ideas for Primary Teachers: Art.



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WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- What a leap year is
- Why the leap year was created
- How many days there are in each month
- Counting forwards and backwards in fours
- How to organise a party

KS1 LESSON PLAN

Jump to it! Let's learn about leap years



Help children to discover the facts and fiction around 2024's extra day, with this intriguing lesson plan from **Judith Harries**

 @judeharries

Take a leap into the leap year and enjoy the fact that 'an extra day means extra play' with these fun cross-curricular activities for the classroom and playground.

Find out about 'leaplings' and learn the rhyme that helps you remember the days in each month. Try some number games too, using the four times table, and measure the lengths of leaps to see who can jump the furthest.

You can even hold a party on or around the 29th and pack it with as much leap day-themed fun as possible. And why not make some food for everyone to tuck into while they celebrate?



START HERE

Introduce the term 'leap year'. Begin by asking the class if anyone knows what it means.

Can anyone guess? Recite the months of the year with the children, and ask if they know which month it is

today. Show the children a calendar and ask them to point out different months on it. What is different about this February compared to the other months in the year? Can they tell you how many days there are in February?

Explain that this year there will be an extra day, or leap day. Invite children to think about how they would like to celebrate the extra day. What would they like to do? How could they make it into a special day?



MAIN LESSON

1 | WORDS AND RHYMES

People who have their birthday on leap day are called 'leaplings'. There are over four million leaplings in the world. Are there any in your school or community? When it's not a leap year, leaplings can choose to celebrate their birthdays on 29th February or 1st March.

One of the most well-known traditions of a leap year is that women are 'allowed' to propose to men, unlike the usual convention.

Can the children invent some new (and perhaps rather more modern) ideas for things that are allowed on 29th February only? Make a list of their suggestions and organise a class vote to choose the favourite.

Use this traditional rhyme to help children learn the number of days in each month. Practise saying it with the children until they can remember it by heart.
*Thirty days have September,
April, June, and November,
All the rest have thirty-one,
Excepting February alone,
And that has twenty-eight days clear,
And twenty-nine in each leap year.*

2 | MISSING NUMBERS

Start by talking about the fact that this year, 2024, is a leap year because it can be divided by four. Try counting in fours, forwards and backwards, chant the four times table, and ask the children to make groups of four.

Do some leap year counting. Provide number lines for children to complete



missing multiples of four, forwards and backwards. For example: four, eight, blank, 16, 20, blank, 28, blank. Invite children to write a new one for a partner to complete.

Play this leapfrog number game using lily pad shapes and plastic frogs. Provide children with a lily pad-shaped template and ask them to cut out some lily pads from green paper or draw them with green felt pens. Add a number from the four times table to each pad. Can they make a frog jump from pad to pad in the right order?

Make it harder by writing number sentences on the pads using different operations that end with four or a multiple of four, e.g. $5 + 3 = ?$, $17 - 5 = ?$, $2 \times 2 = ?$, or $20 \div 4 = ?$.

Cut out giant lily pads from green paper and write a different number from the

four times table onto each of them. Place on the floor, out of order, and ask children to leap from pad to pad in order. Add some music and play 'musical lily pads' in the style of musical chairs, removing a pad for each round. Add some other pads with numbers that are not in the four times table to catch children out. If they land on a pad with an odd number, they are out!

Organise a leap year 'leaping challenge'. Stick some coloured tape on the floor and invite children to take turns to jump as far as they can after taking off from the tape. Measure each jump and see who can leap the furthest. Record the results in a table.

Talk about the bigger picture. Ask the children how many days there are in each year. Explain that the earth takes $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days to move

around the sun so, to stay synchronised with the seasons, the year needs an extra day every four years, giving us 366 days in a leap year. This idea was introduced by Julius Caesar, a Roman Emperor, in 45AD. If we didn't follow this pattern, the calendar would be unsynchronised with the seasons and eventually you'd end up with, for example, June being midwinter in the northern hemisphere.

3 | PARTY ON

On or around 29th February, organise a leap year party with your class. You can tell them that 'an extra day means extra play'!

Do some party planning with the children. Talk about the different things that will need organising for the party – invitations, decorations, food, games, etc.

Make some leap year bunting to decorate the party 'venue'. Which relevant words, numbers and pictures would the children choose to write on the bunting? Use leap, leaplings, February, 2024, 366, 29, $28 + 1$, and pictures of clocks and other timepieces. Create a banner to hang up saying 'Happy Leap Day 2024'.

For the party food, start with four different toppings for rice crackers. Make some green frogs from green apples and grapes. Bake some leapfrog chocolate cupcakes and add green icing and chocolate button eyes. Make some green jelly and add frog sweets or jumping beans for children to find inside.

Show the children how to leapfrog by jumping over an obstacle or another person bent over. Let them jump over each other (taking care that smaller children are not hurt). Can the children leap like other animals that jump, e.g. kangaroos, fleas, grasshoppers and hares? Try some of the other 'froggy' games suggested earlier.

Judith Harries is an experienced early years and primary school teacher. She specialises in teaching music and drama and creates educational content for a variety of publications.

EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Make a leap year timebox with the children. Ask them to design their own sticker featuring the 29/02/24 date using handwriting or a selection of printed fonts. Decorate a shoebox by sticking the dates all over it.
- How old will the children be when the next leap year comes? Invite them to write a message or letter to themselves in four years' time. Put all the letters in the leap year box and bury it, or hide it somewhere safe.
- Which other events are celebrated in February? In 2024, Lunar New Year fell on the 10th, while Pancake Day was on 13th February. St Valentine's Day takes place on 14th February every year. Can the children find any historical events that took place in February?

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What is a leap year?
- Do you know any 'leaplings'?
- Which animals can leap or jump?
- When is the next leap year going to be?

Top of the class

Resources and activities to bring fresh inspiration into your classroom

Fairy vs Wizard: A Stink Adventure

Fairy vs Wizard is the second book in the laugh-out-loud, cartoon-filled adventure series for 7+ readers, featuring the world's funniest fairy, Stink. It's by the bestselling author of *The Land of Roar*.

In this new book, Stink tries to help Danny with his lead role in the school play, makes a Malteser adventure playground in the science cupboard and accidentally unleashes a giant all-powerful wizard into the world!

The Stink series is perfect for children who love cartoons and fun-filled stories that tickle their funny bones. Readers can easily dip in and out of the story as it's

1



written in the accessible diary-style format. It ticks the right boxes for all children and will grip even the most reluctant reader.
<https://amzn.to/4brM76H>

2



Judaism CPD

Join the Jewish Museum London online for Inclusive Judaism Teachers' CPD: Passover 14 March 2024, 4-5.45pm.

Tickets are £10.

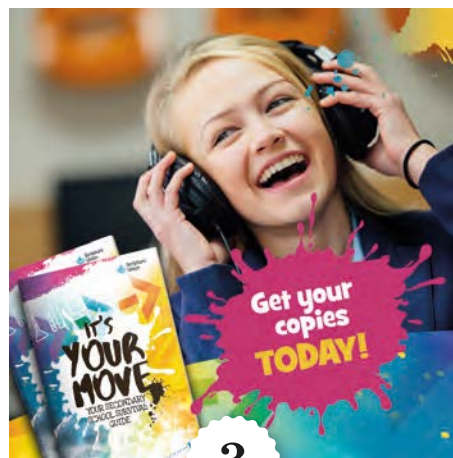
This CPD for primary teachers explores how best to teach an authentic and inclusive Judaism in classrooms, with a special focus on the festival of Passover.

Explore Judaism as a worldview and discover top tips on using our Inclusive Judaism Image Library (on our website) as a free classroom resource.

This session aims to provide knowledge, tools and resources you need to be confident in teaching this topic in your classrooms.

To book please

visit tinyurl.com/tp-JudaismCPD



3

It's Your Move

Making the move to secondary school is a huge step for children – navigating a brand-new environment and encountering countless older children can feel really scary!

It's Your Move is a handy survival guide for Year 6 pupils, helping them step into their new school with confidence.

This great little guide is packed with tips, real-life stories from children who have recently made the move, along with guidance from teachers and Bible-based reflections. BONUS RESOURCES: Find a host of FREE classroom workshop and assembly materials at su.org.uk/IYM to help you make the most of *It's Your Move* in the classroom!

4



How do you talk to children about climate change?

After a period of closure due to fire, Bristol's science centre, We The Curious, will be reopening its doors to curious minds this summer. As part of the reopening programme, schools can book newly developed workshops, designed to sensitively explore the causes and impacts of climate change.

Extensively researched and piloted during the closure thanks to funding from the National Grid, the Key Stage 2 workshop takes the form of a fun, collaborative game based around a fictional island. Pupils work together to make choices and see the impact of the resulting carbon score on a model of the island. For more: education@wethecurious.org

5



Take your class on safari

Plan a stress-free visit, explored at your own pace or enjoy a tailor-made curriculum inspired day your students will go WILD for!

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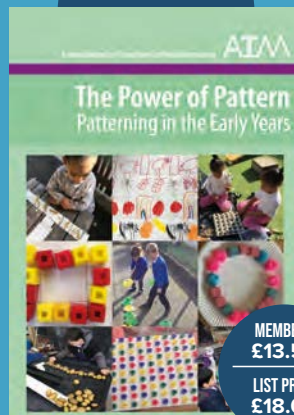
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by Alison Borthwick,
Sue Gifford, Helen Thouless

A fascinating book that tells the story of a project which follows a group of teachers and their classes of three to five years olds as they explore different types of pattern. The authors have developed a collection of activities which engaged children in creative thinking and mathematical reasoning in a range of enjoyable contexts. Included in the book are learning trajectories, suggestions for practical activities, an example of a pattern lesson and much more. A strong theme is the inclusive nature of patterning and the way it can be inter-woven.



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History



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Why York was a target for air raids in World War II
- What the Baedeker raids were
- How school logbooks can help us learn about history
- The consequences of the bombing on the local area

Local history: The impact of WW2 air raids



School logbooks provide fascinating first-hand accounts of everyday life during wartime, explains **Rachel Bruce**

 @rachelthebruce1

From 1870 until the 1950s, headteachers were required to maintain logbooks of all the things – inspections and visitors, outbreaks of illness, absences – that happened in their school each day. The records they kept give us a unique insight into how our schools can link into national and global events.

This lesson is a fantastic opportunity for pupils to carry out their own research into the impact of air raids on York and the area around the city.

You can download all the source materials for this lesson at tinyurl.com/tp-Logbook



START HERE

This lesson looks at the impact of the destructive air raids carried out by the Luftwaffe (the German Air Force) in the spring of 1942. In our school, it formed part of a wider local history study into the impact of World War II.

Introduce the topic by asking the children why they think York would have been a target for German air raids. Discuss how it was an important part of the railway network, which was vital to transport goods and people around the country. Explain that the city also had cultural and historic buildings, and therefore became part of Germany's plan to destroy public morale by bombing historic cities, through the Baedeker raids.



MAIN LESSON

1 | INTRODUCING THE LOGBOOK

Ask the children to think about how we can find out about what happened during the air raids and what the impact was. What sources could we use?

It can be difficult for children to think about a world before the internet, so explain that we can examine radio and newspaper reports, photographs of damage, local walks, and maps.

Introduce the school logbook (tinyurl.com/tp-Logbook) and think about how it could help us to find out what was going on in the local community.

Even though logbooks were kept by headteachers as a school record, events

outside will have impacted on the school community, so logbooks can give us a valuable insight into a school's place in local, national and global events.

The handwriting can be difficult to read, so share the transcript alongside the photograph of the log entry.

2 | DIGGING DEEPER

Ask the children what they notice about each logbook entry. What is it telling us about what was happening in the school and the wider area on that day?

The red entries tell us about times that the school opened late or was cancelled as there had been air raid warnings or 'night alerts' overnight. How do the children think they would feel coming to school after being woken in the night?



“This task helps children to understand that one action can have a number of consequences”

What happens when the alert goes off during the day? (The children are taken to the shelters.) We have fire drills in school now – how would it feel to have to do it for real and go out to shelters?

Some of the entries are written in black. They tell us that some of the pupils were doing exams. Do the children think that exams should have gone ahead?

3 | THE BAEDEKER RAID

The second logbook entry is taken from the end of April 1942. We know that this was when the main so-called Baedeker raid occurred. The raids were named after the German guidebook to British historic cities, and were undertaken in retaliation for the British bombing of the city of Lübeck.

For this part of the lesson,

the children are going to think about cause and consequence: it’s important to point out to them that consequences can be positive as well as negative.

The logbook tells us that on the 29th April 1942 the school was closed after a severe aerial bombardment.

In groups, task the children with identifying three consequences of the bombing from the records available to them. They should be able to discover the following:

- The school was closed so that it could be used as an Emergency Feeding and Rest Centre.
- When it was repaired and reopened, the school operated a double shift system, with the pupils from St Barnabas attending in the morning

and those from Poppleton Road school using the building in the afternoon.

- Many children were absent from school due to extensive damage to property in the area.

What do the children think an Emergency Feeding and Rest Centre was, and why was it needed? Why wasn’t it needed for long? Was this a long-term consequence or a short-term one?

What do pupils think happened to Poppleton Road school? Why might it have been bombed? (It was very close to the East Coast mainline railway and also the sugar beet works, which were strategically important as Britain couldn’t get imports of sugar cane at this time.)

How do the children think the pupils from both schools felt about sharing a building? Why do they think the junior children went back to school before the infants?

Why would children be absent from school if property had been damaged? Where might they have gone?

This task helps children to understand that one action – the air raid – can have a number of consequences, and that these can last for varying amounts of time.

Some consequences, such as using the school as an Emergency Feeding and Rest Centre, were short lived. On the other hand, the damage to local houses took much longer to be repaired, and there are still gaps in terraces today where houses were never rebuilt.

Rachel Bruce is a primary school teacher in York who is passionate about local history and reading. She is an Historical Association teacher fellow and subject leader.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

- Look at photographs of your own local area from a significant historical period.
- Use maps and the internet to find out more information.
- Go on a local walk – what evidence is there, for example in buildings, of the impact of events from the past? Walks are a fantastic way of hooking the children’s interest and encouraging them to ask and answer questions about an area they are familiar with.
- Old photographs and maps help to present things from a different point of view. For example, seeing pictures of the destruction caused by air raids can have more impact than reading about it in a logbook, and maps can give a better idea of the scale.
- Pupils can record what they learn from each type of evidence, e.g. photographs can show that buildings had their windows and roofs broken.
- You may also be able to access the logbooks from this time for your own school, and adapt the lesson accordingly. If they are not stored at school, they may have been deposited in a local archive.

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- How could we use a school logbook as part of a local history unit or as part of a wider theme of changes through time?
- How does the information from the logbook fit with other sources of information available to us?
- What does the logbook tell us about local, national or global events, such as celebrations or newsworthy happenings?



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- How democracies work
 - The three branches of government and what they do
- Why we need a free press to hold government to account
- What reporting bias is, and how to spot it

Power to the people?



How do democracies work? Why do we need a free and enquiring press? Get some help exploring these big questions with this thought-provoking lesson plan from **Matthew Lane**

[X](#) @MrMILane

www.theteachinglane.co.uk

Keeping the world fair and truthful is a topic children get excited about, and so is learning about how the world works. Yet how do children know what is truthful? How do they know the difference between a fact and an opinion? With a general election due in 2024, and the role of the press and social media under the microscope, now is a great time to start educating our future voters about the structure of their government and how the press holds it to account. Don't worry if this sounds a lot to know about – everything you and your pupils will need is in the lesson download ([tinyurl/tp-FreePress](https://tinyurl.com/tp-FreePress)).



START HERE

Ask students, "What rules do we follow at school and home?".

Discuss how some people make rules and others ensure they are followed.

Explain that countries also have rules.

Briefly explain how democracies function, covering the three branches of government and what they do (executive, legislature, and judiciary). As an imperfect analogy, you could relate this to lunchtime rules: the headteacher proposes them; teachers shape them for their classes; MSAs apply the rules. Discuss the role that elections play in democracies and how free and fair elections should work. For brevity, we are not discussing monarchies and presidencies.



MAIN LESSON

Throughout this lesson you'll need to refer to the examples and explanations given in the accompanying slideshow ([tinyurl/tp-FreePress](https://tinyurl.com/tp-FreePress)).

1 | TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND BIAS

Introduce the idea of transparency and how truth and accountability are needed to keep democracies functioning. Discuss the need for truth, transparency and accountability in the classroom.

Introduce the concept of the free press and explain its importance in a democracy. Frame how a working free press helps to inform people, holds the government accountable, and protects

freedom of speech.

Examine the role of media outlets as 'watchdogs' that are there to keep an eye on elected leaders and ensure they are doing what was promised in elections.

This is where you can discuss recent examples of where the press has uncovered misconduct, such as Partygate or the mass sackings at P&O Ferries.

Now explain that the free press does not always provide us with neutral or unbiased reporting. Talk about how different news outlets may have different perspectives or slants on the same issue.

Without explanation of their possible political bias, allow time for children to read the news articles from the BBC, Independent and Daily Mail on the banning of plastic straws.

Ask children to explain



“Don’t worry if this sounds a lot to know about – everything you and your pupils will need is in the lesson download”

organisations and governments? At one end of the spectrum are those who believe in a strong national identity and that governments should focus on domestic issues, while at the other end are those who believe in international cooperation and that governments should work together to address global challenges.

The children may find this puzzling, but that is the point. Politics is more nuanced than a simple left/right divide. Make it clear that there is not necessarily a right or wrong point of view on many issues, and that people should try to disagree agreeably and find a middle ground in their debates.

3| HOW BIASED IS OUR FREE PRESS?

Give pupils some articles on free school meals to read, taken from a range of news sources. Are they able to identify the political leanings of organisations such as the BBC, Guardian and the Daily Mail? What evidence can they draw from the texts?

Conclude the lesson with looking at times when political bias in reporting has led to elected officials not being held to account. Partygate is a given as an example due to this being a recent story, but you could use one of your own choosing.

End the lesson by discussing with the children why they think the UK would benefit from a free and enquiring press in the run-up to the next General Election.

*Matthew Lane is a teacher from Norfolk. His new book **Wayfinder, on how to lead curriculum change, is out now.***

any bias they have identified and why they think it is biased (slide 26).

2| LEFT, RIGHT AND CENTRE

Take a pause to discuss the political spectrum. Work through the slides, beginning with the simple left/right explanations.

Continue on to explore the axes of economics, social issues, and individual and national identity:

- **Economics:** how much government involvement should there be in the economy? At one end of the political spectrum are those who believe in a strong social safety net and government regulation of the economy, while at the other end are those who believe in a free-market economy and minimal government interference.
- **Social issues:** how much freedom should there be in a society? At one end of the spectrum are those who believe in individual liberty and limited government intervention in people’s lives, while at the other end are those who believe in more social control and government regulation of personal behaviour.
- **Individual identity:** the emphasis here should be on individual identity and group differences. At one end of the spectrum are those who believe that everyone should be treated the same, while at the other end are those who believe that people’s identities are important, and that society should recognise and respect these differences.
- **National identity:** how much power should be given to international

EXTENDING THE LESSON

- Show children manifestos for political parties. Can they judge the political leanings of the parties?
- Give children news articles from a website and ask them to judge the general bias of the reporting.
- Research and write about an example of the press holding the government to account. This could involve researching an historical scandal, a current event, or a local issue.
- Give children a range of social issues to ponder, then ask them to think about their own worldview based on the political spectrums covered in the lesson.

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What is a ‘free’ press?
- Why is a free press important in a fully functional democracy?
- What is political bias? Why should you care about bias?

MUSIC

Inspiring Ideas – Primary Music Leader's Handbook

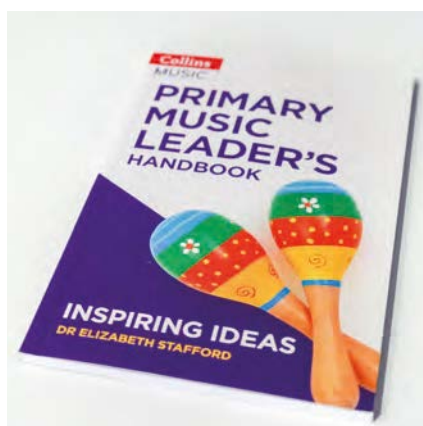
A comprehensive guide to all aspects of primary music leadership



AT A GLANCE

- Written by an internationally recognised expert in music education.
- Concise yet all-encompassing.
- Suitable for music novices, enthusiasts and virtuosos.
- Covers everything from curriculum development to copyright concerns.
- Like having a friendly subject specialist sitting on your shelf.

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



Every subject taught in primary schools is important. Honestly.

So, picture the scene. You've been invited into the head teacher's office. You've been schmoozed a bit, which is obviously making you nervous. And then you're hit with it: you have been volunteered to be the next subject leader for... music! And you accepted. (Could you really have refused?)

A thousand questions bounce around your brain. The trouble is, an urgent issue has just cropped up so none of them can be answered. Is it too cynical to think that the head would probably have struggled to answer them anyway?

Music is the Cinderella of primary subjects: loved and regarded as virtuous by everyone, but afforded next to nothing in terms of time and financial resources – the ugly sisters of Maths and English have taken them all.

Before you sink sobbing to your knees in the chaotic music cupboard, let me introduce you to your fairy godmother: *Inspiring Ideas – Primary Music Leader's Handbook* from Collins Music. Written by music education expert, Dr Elizabeth Stafford, this little gem is everything a subject leader's guide should be: knowledgeable, helpful and to the point.

What struck me straight away was that it immediately acknowledged the challenges of the role – the likely lack of funding and profile – which instantly creates a bond of trust. However, it doesn't wallow in these problems, and gets straight

down to the task of guiding you through the role in a positive, accessible way.

Not surprisingly, the book begins with an introduction to the basics. Somehow, though, it manages to be pitched at a level that is informative without being patronising, no matter whether you are a nervous novice or accomplished musician.

One of the things I really admired was the no-nonsense approach to the writing and the

layout. Before I opened it, my mind reflexively barrelled through some of the questions that would have exploded in my mind had I been offered the role. I was therefore both impressed and reassured, just from a quick glance down the index, that my concerns were going to be addressed.

As I followed each page reference, I found myself relaxing as I absorbed the advice and had

my eyes opened to ideas I might never have considered under my own steam. And I speak as someone who considers myself to be reasonably musical. The information was conveyed in a detailed yet concise way that was easy to navigate. It was simply and logically organised. It was also mercifully free of evangelising or soft-soaping. I could see myself happily referring back to it time and again.

Blessed with this handbook, you would have every chance of rising to your new responsibilities. What's more, when Prince Charming of Ofsted arrives for his deep dive, you can be confident that it's not just your footwear that will shine.

"I really admired the no-nonsense approach to the writing"

teach
PRIMARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Detailed, informative and inspirational
- ✓ Cleverly pitched
- ✓ Honest and realistic
- ✓ Packed with useful tips
- ✓ A model subject leader's guide

UPGRADE IF...

... you want a comprehensive guide to music subject leadership that will support you all the way, no matter what your initial level of expertise.

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ENGLISH

Collins Big Cat: Books featuring characters with physical disabilities



Carefully levelled story books that explore a range of conditions

AT A GLANCE

- Sensitively written and illustrated by creators with firsthand experience.
- Covers a range of reading levels.
- Created in conjunction with relevant charities and support organisations.
- Includes useful teaching tips.

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



If done well, story books can change perceptions more powerfully than any amount of lecturing, especially for children. At the same time, they can introduce ideas that may be outside most people's experiences, yet still make them seem a positive part of life's rich diversity. After all, when you have a world of imagination at your fingertips, you can control the narrative.

In the wrong hands, that power might appear a little sinister. When it is a trusted name in educational publishing, though, it should be a force for good. That's certainly the sense I get from these new books from Collins featuring characters with physical disabilities.

These titles are new additions to their Big Cat series. For the uninitiated, Big Cat is a whole-school programme to support primary reading from phonics to fluency. All told, it features over 1,800 books organised into carefully levelled bands according to reading ability. Furthermore, Collins is very keen to ensure that their stories reflect their diverse readership and offer broad visibility and representation.

This niche sub-series of books offers a natural extension of that ethos with a range of charming, simple stories in which one of the main characters has some form of physical disability. *Ruby Hastings Writes Her Own Story* is about a girl

with dyspraxia who dreams of becoming a journalist. *Going Viral* features an amputee with stunning footballing skills. In *The Dragon in the Sewer*, Ava uses the techniques she has learned to control her asthma to help a young dragon; *No Horn Unicorn* helps youngsters appreciate how being different does not make you less valued or any less of a friend.

To my shame, I confess that I was not familiar with Turner Syndrome, so *Monster Ranch: Paws of Doom* was very illuminating. Perhaps tellingly, it immediately motivated me to educate myself about the condition. I am, however, acutely aware of how some youngsters need to include uncomfortable procedures such as injections as a routine part of their lives so I was impressed by how sensitively this was weaved into the plot.

And really, isn't that one of the main points of these books? They are a wonderful way of shining a light on some conditions, illustrating how they can affect people's lives without being the only noteworthy thing about them.

I can see them sparking all sorts of discussions within the safe space of a classroom, which can only be a good thing.

Above all, these titles achieve all this within the context of helping children achieve reading fluency and develop a love of books. Now that's what I call a happy ending.

"I can see them sparking all sorts of discussions within the safe space of a classroom"

teach
PRIMARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Enjoyable, well-pitched stories
- ✓ Part of an established reading scheme
- ✓ Admirably representative
- ✓ Subtly inclusive and inspirational
- ✓ A positive addition to any school library

UPGRADE IF...

... you want to broaden the representation and diversity of your school reading scheme while promoting a love of reading.

Find out more about each book at collins.co.uk/BigCatNew

Q & A

We take the famous Proust questionnaire and pose eight of its questions to a fellow educator. Take a peek into the deepest depths of a teacher's soul...

1 What is your idea of perfect happiness in your job?

Planning and resourcing exciting learning experiences that myself and my class can enjoy together. Enabling children to take small steps that build to clear progress, allowing them to grow and succeed.

2 What is your greatest fear at work?

Not being prepared! As well as being planned and prepped, I aim to be in school at least an hour before the children start to arrive. That way, I have plenty of time to deal with any last-minute developments whilst remaining calm.

3 What is your current state of mind?

My current state of mind is positive, proud and ambitious. During our recent inspection, we were able to demonstrate that we are performing as a 'Good' school. This is the result of a lot of hard work and dedication by our whole team. We are now in a position where we can build on this success and strive to provide even better opportunities for our children.

4 What do you consider the most overrated teacher virtue?

Working at the expense of a life of your own won't help you to help your children, colleagues or anybody else. There are a number of teacher virtues that can be effective depending on

their implementation, but the key to good teaching is relationships and consistency.

5 On what occasion do you lie to your class?

A tall tale or a little embroidery can help add humour and inspire thoughts or ideas that can make a learning experience more enjoyable and in turn, more memorable! I share a surname with one of my favourite story characters, Mildred Hubble in *The Worst Witch*, and my birthday is at Halloween, so I lead my class to believe that I am part witch. The spellbook on my desk helps too! I've hooked lots of children into reading Jill Murphy books with this little white lie.

6 Which words or phrases do you most overuse with your class?

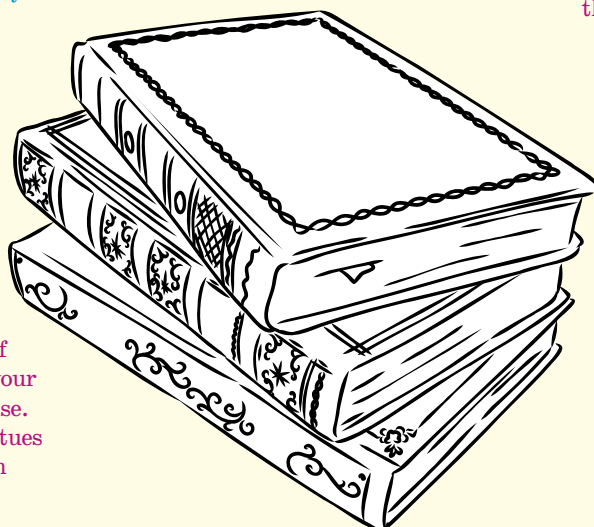
"Thank you" to the children who listen, do as asked and demonstrate our school values. It is my utmost reward and encourages others to follow suit.

7 What do you consider your greatest teaching achievement?

I am proud to be in my 24th year of teaching. It feels quite an achievement. I hope that I continue to achieve by listening, learning and growing as a teacher so that I can continue to improve my practice and provide the best possible support to the children and families of our school community.

8 What is your most treasured teaching possession?

Books, books and more books. I love to share stories, extracts, poetry and non-fiction texts with children; for enjoyment, practise, performance, inspiration, and of course for knowledge. Nothing quite has the same power. My favourite picture book is *Some Dogs Do* by Jez Alborough. It's an uplifting tale for anyone who has ever believed that miracles really do happen. The key message for children is to believe in themselves and that if they do, they are capable of anything. TP



NAME: Catherine Hubball
ROLE: Year 2 teacher and KS1 Lead at Ditton Primary School, Widnes, part of Warrington Primary Academy Trust.
EXTRA INFO: I've written my own story for young children and would love to publish it one day.

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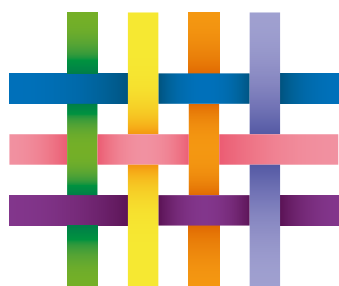
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