

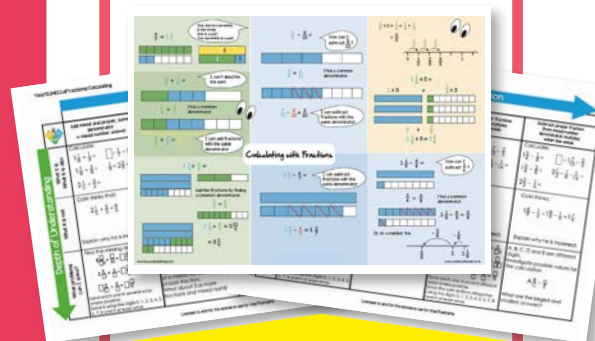
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# Hello!



**W**elcome to spring! At last, some sunny weather to lift the spirits and warm the heart. It's amazing how much a bit of brightness (and Vitamin D) can do for our mood, and this particular solar emergence is just in time for our health and wellbeing special!

In this issue, we delve into how to develop an LGBT+ inclusive anti-bullying policy for your school on page 61; why online tutoring might be the answer to your catch-up prayers on page 66; and share six ideas to shake up your PE lessons (whether you're a Sporty Spice or not) on page 58. We've also got a lovely article about the importance of libraries, and how stories can help children feel like they belong, from author Jen Carney on page 38.

For those of you feeling all too worn-out, take a look at Sara Alston's feature on page 32, where she examines the invaluable role of a TA, and explores how best you can deploy them in the classroom. We also have a regular time-saver on page 28, with six weeks of ready-made lessons for UKS2 fractions from Steve Lomax. If you're looking for some new ideas, or a different way to approach your teaching, check out Jonathan Lear's exploration of a creative curriculum and well-embedded topics on page 26, or pick up some tips from Ruth Baker-Leask on page 40, about how to choose which tier 2 words are the ones you should be teaching your pupils.

As always, we've got plenty of lesson plans, classroom hacks and opinion pieces from experts across the education sector, including a not-so-scary look at Shakespeare's *Macbeth* on page 76, an explanation from a former teacher on why he left the profession on page 17, and a step-by-step guide to investigating how word choice can affect narrative, by making your very own sticky-note mystery story on page 21.

Here's wishing you light and warmth for the weeks ahead...

With best wishes and until next time,

*Charley*

Charley Rogers, editor

@TeachPrimaryEd1

*Don't miss our  
next issue, on sale  
20th May*

## POWERED BY...



**DEBRA KIDD**

on why we should help children understand the world, rather than hiding them from it

*"Pupils need to feel they have some agency in the world – an element of power"*

p15



**SUE COWLEY**

discusses how you know you're in the right school, and how you can go about finding it

*"Key to a good choice is to pick a school that aligns with your values"*

p37

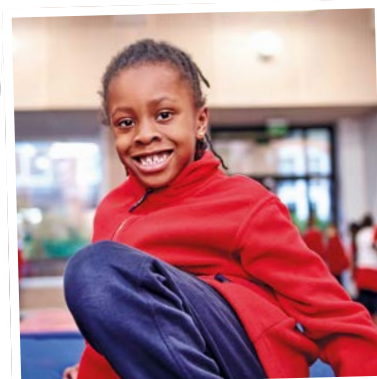


**DEBBIE NEWMAN**

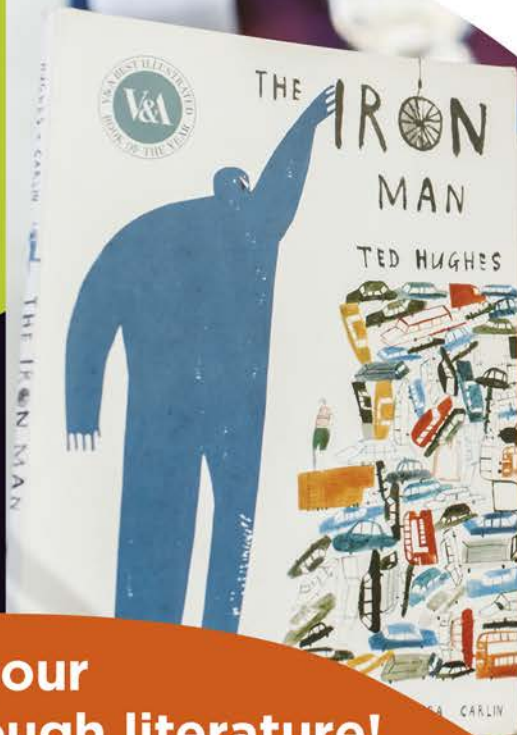
shares her approach to debates in the classroom, with this lesson on clear and confident arguments

*"Are computers better than books? Should the police have guns?"*

p72







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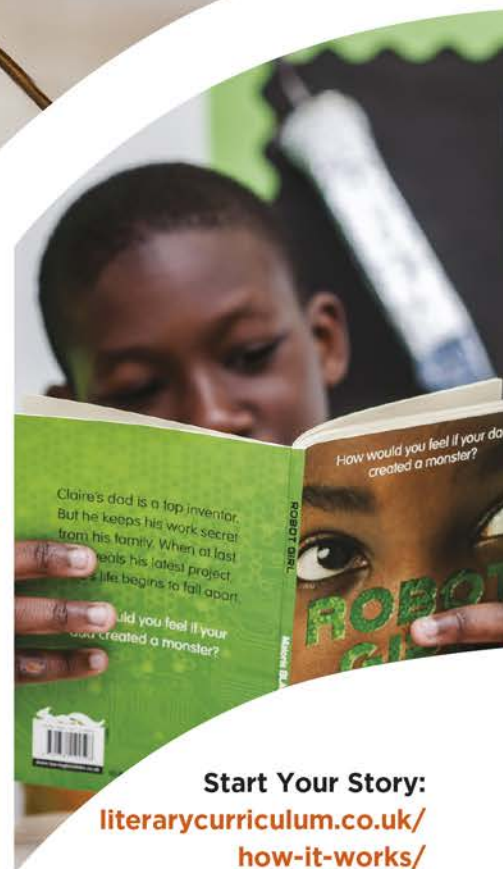
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An anti-bullying policy that includes LGBT+ pupils benefits everyone, says Francesca Cowper. Here's how to write one
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Can online tutoring be the answer to more confidence and better maths and English attainment?

## 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!

**teach  
PRIMARY**

## We want to hear from you!

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



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**EDITOR:**  
Charley Rogers,  
charley.rogers@  
theteachco.com

**GROUP EDITOR:**  
Joe Carter,  
joe.carter@  
theteachco.com,  
01206 505925

**HEAD OF COMMERCIAL  
SOLUTIONS:**  
Richard Stebbing,  
richard.stebbing@  
theteachco.com

**EDUCATION  
MANAGER:**  
Hayley Rackham,  
hayley.rackham@  
theteachco.com,

**PRODUCT MANAGER:**  
Samantha Law,  
samantha.law@  
theteachco.com,  
01206 505499

**DEPUTY PRODUCT  
MANAGER:**  
Katie Harvey-Jones,  
katie.jones@  
theteachco.com,  
01206 505477

**SENIOR ACCOUNT  
MANAGER:**  
Hannah Jones,  
hannah.jones@theteachco.  
com, 01206 505924

**ACCOUNT MANAGER**  
Demi Maynard,  
demi.maynard@  
theteachco.com,  
01206 505962

**ART EDITOR:**  
Richard Allen

**DESIGNERS:**  
Adam Barford, Luke Rogers,  
Lee Francis, Kevin Dennis  
& Steve Streeting

**PHOTOGRAPHY:**  
CliQQ Photography,  
cliqq.co.uk

**ACCOUNTS:**  
01206 505995

**DESIGN &  
REPROGRAPHICS:**  
Ace Pre-Press  
01206 508608

**SUBSCRIPTIONS  
DEPARTMENT:**  
Andrea Turner

**CUSTOMER SERVICES:**  
aceville@dcmedia.co.uk  
0800 904 7000

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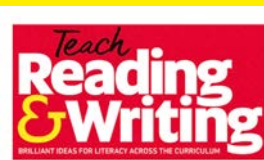
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Iris Smith, HLTA, Penshurst Primary School



# Breaktime

News | Interviews | Ideas | Resources | Research



## Support for vision impairment

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), VICTAR – University of Birmingham, the Professional Association for the Vision Impairment Education Workforce (VIEW) and Thomas Pocklington Trust have joined forces to launch The Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI).

CFVI has been developed to support children and young people with vision impairment aged from 0–25 to access an ‘appropriate and equitable’ education. The framework addresses 11 teaching areas and its main aim is to clarify and define the elements of specialist skill development, interventions and best practice support that are considered to be essential for children and young people with vision impairment.

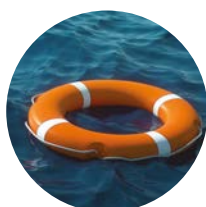
Find out more at [rnib.org.uk/cfvi](http://rnib.org.uk/cfvi)

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



### LITTLE TROOPERS

April is the Month of the Military Child, and charity Little Troopers has created a special pack for schools to use to celebrate. They can take part in a dandelion craft project, read the dandelion poem together, play games, and more. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-LittleTroopers](http://tinyurl.com/tp-LittleTroopers)



### HEADS UP

The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) is offering free downloadable resources for the summer term to help engage young people with essential water safety. The downloadable pack includes lesson plans and additional materials. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-WaterSafety](http://tinyurl.com/tp-WaterSafety)



### SUN SAFE

Sun safety is now statutory under the new PSHE curriculum for primary schools in England. Find free resources, from whole-school assemblies to displays and even a story book, and help your class stay safe this spring and summer. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-SunSafe](http://tinyurl.com/tp-SunSafe)

## →→→ TODAY'S **TOP** **RESOURCES**



### Build writing resilience

Are your pupils struggling to compose more than a sentence or two at a time? Encourage short, regular writing adventures from Y2–Y6, with Plazoom's Write Now! – a fantastic collection of 200 original and quirky prompts from the imagination of children's author Hayley Scott (*Meet the Twitches*); they'll inspire even your most reluctant scribblers! Find them now at [bit.ly/PlazoomWN](http://bit.ly/PlazoomWN)





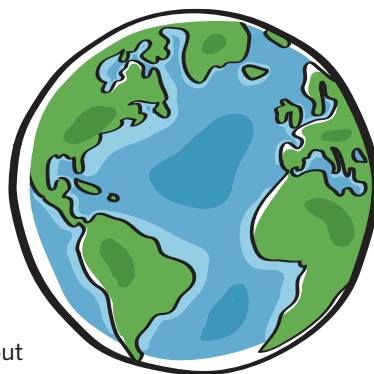
## Boost KS2 science

A new restoration initiative, The Wild Oysters Project, is aiming to educate over 12,000 students about the ocean through a programme of resources for children aged eight and over. The programme has been developed by conservationists and education specialists at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and Blue Marine Foundation (BLUE), and supports the national science curriculum. Available to download in a PDF or a presentation format, the resources give teachers the tools to highlight the significance of a healthy ocean to their students – helping them to understand that oceans are home to 90% of our planet's wildlife and why it's important they absorb one third of the carbon dioxide that we produce. Find out more at [tinyurl.com/tp-WildOyster](https://tinyurl.com/tp-WildOyster)



## Protect the planet

Immersive storytelling organisation Lyfta has launched a national art competition to inspire children to tackle the climate emergency. Aimed at primary, secondary and special schools across the country, pupils aged three to 18 are invited to explore a real human story featuring a beachcomber artist activist, Rob Arnold, based in Cornwall. Rob collects plastic waste and turns it into awareness-raising art. Children will get involved in creating their own artwork, and the winning entry will be awarded a fully funded trip to a local beach for their class. Find out more at [tinyurl.com/tp-PlanetArtComp](https://tinyurl.com/tp-PlanetArtComp)



# 60%

OF PRIMARY TEACHERS HAVE NO ACCESS TO NEW BOOKS, ACCORDING TO RESEARCH BY THE CLPE. IN ADDITION, 38% ARE PAYING OUT OF THEIR OWN POCKET TO BUY BOOKS FOR THEIR CLASSROOMS

## Look ahead | Book ahead

### EMPATHY DAY

Empathy Day takes place on 9 June 2022. Find a whole host of resources and activity ideas at [empathylab.uk](https://empathylab.uk)



### MATHS WEEK

Maths Week London runs from 27 June – 1 July, with a mission to ignite children's love of the subject. Visit [mathsweeklondon.org](https://mathsweeklondon.org)



# Q & A



## Leah Williamson

### Professional footballer

#### What was primary school like for you?

I loved it. I would go back in a heartbeat! I was lucky, too, my school was great – it was very sporty, which was obviously brilliant for me. But there were loads of opportunities for music, drama, and other creative aspects as well – I didn't go into that field, but it really helped me develop as a child. I'm very appreciative.

#### How has the increasing popularity of women's football impacted education?

I was really lucky as although we didn't have a girls' football team, I had teachers who went out of their way to make sure I could play on the boys' team. At the time, that was brilliant, but recently I sat in front of a class of 25–30 kids, and there's just as much engagement in football from the girls as from the boys. I hope that as we move forward, there will be more and more opportunities for everyone.

#### How would you like to see the resources used in schools?

The main thing is we want to normalise football for everyone, and help girls understand that they're just as valid as footballers, as their male counterparts. But it's also really important for boys to have these female role models, so they view the world as one in which it's normal for females to take part in the same activities as them. On top of that, getting together for football creates brilliant memories, so I hope this will give children a summer to remember.

**Leah Williamson is a footballer who currently plays for Arsenal and the England national team. Bring the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 to life in your classroom with free resources for KS2. Find out more at [figc-fis.eu](https://figc-fis.eu)**



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Winner

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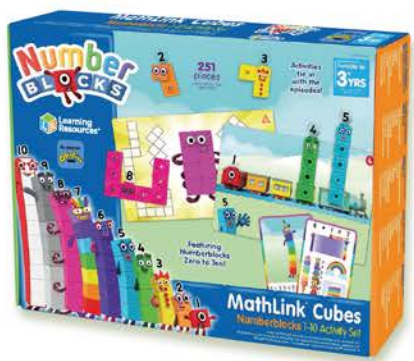


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# 7 NEWS STORIES

*you might have missed*

## ACCESS TO NATURE

A survey of over 2,000 UK adults has found that 73 per cent of Britons believe that access to nature at school would improve young people's quality of life. Seventy-nine per cent agree that no matter their socio-economic background, children and young people should have equal access to regular nature experiences. The results come as the Nature Premium campaign calls for government to provide funding to guarantee that all children will have access to nature while in education. Bridget Knight, headteacher at Eardisley CE Primary School, said: "The fact that mental health for adults and children improves in nature is well documented. It is also well known that increasingly as a society we are remote from and disengaged from nature. So a big refocus and spotlight on nature-led learning is a good thing." Read more at [tinyurl.com/tp-Nature](https://tinyurl.com/tp-Nature)

## CONFIDENCE IS KEY

In a speech at the Association of School and College Leaders Annual Conference on 14 March, Ofsted's chief inspector Amanda Spielman announced that "confidence is going to be key" for school leaders as decisions are made about "how best to bridge the gaps in pupils' learning". Spielman addressed the need to tackle persistent absence in schools, stating that some children have a "skewed perception" that they are better off away from their peers. She also referenced the government's new register for home-educated children, "so we know who they are, where they are, and who is taking responsibility for their education". Spielman welcomed the return of Ofsted inspections, stating that they are "about substance, not compliance," and discouraging schools from "schooling by numbers". Find the full transcript at [tinyurl.com/tp-ASCLspeech](https://tinyurl.com/tp-ASCLspeech)

## LET'S COUNT!

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has launched Let's Count!, a national campaign for primary schools, to bring census data to life. The ONS has created classroom resources in partnership with education resource centre iChild, including five easy-to-use lessons which help children understand how data is collected, analysed, and published. Each lesson is available in English and Welsh, and there will also be a video lesson for participating schools, delivered by ONS experts. The programme supports numeracy, history, geography and writing skills, and follows on from the 14 lessons developed for Let's Count! 2021, which are all still available. Register at [tinyurl.com/tp-LetsCount](https://tinyurl.com/tp-LetsCount)



## READING AND RHYMING

Michael Rosen, one of the nation's favourite children's authors and long-time advocate for reading with young people, has been appointed as the latest Writer in Residence for the UK's children's reading charity, BookTrust. During his residency, Michael plans to focus on the importance of reading and rhyming with children in their early years. He said: "We know that helping children start life playing with words, poems and songs is the perfect way to become a confident speaker and writer. Under-fives soak up language and we can help make that happen by sharing books with them. I want to do all I can to offer some ideas and inspiration to help carers, teachers and anyone who works with under-fives." Learn more at [tinyurl.com/tp-BookTrust](https://tinyurl.com/tp-BookTrust)

## THE GRUFFALO AND CONSERVATION

Conservation charity Twycross Zoo has announced the opening of its Gruffalo Discovery Land on 9 April, inspired by the beloved children's book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. Recent research commissioned by the zoo found that 85 per cent of parents feel that imaginary characters from books such as *The Gruffalo* have a positive impact on children's understanding of conservation. *The Gruffalo* is also featured in Twycross Zoo's 'Essential Reads for Young Discoverers' list, curated to inspire kids to take steps to help protect the planet. The reading list includes titles such as Ladybird's *What to Look for in Spring*, *There's a Rang-Tan in my Bedroom* by James Sellick, and *Somebody Swallowed Stanley*, by Sarah Roberts. For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/tp-GruffaloLand](https://tinyurl.com/tp-GruffaloLand)

## THE POWER OF FRIENDSHIP

The shortlists for the Yoto Carnegie Greenaway Awards 2022 have been announced. The UK's longest running book awards for children and young people celebrate outstanding achievement in children's writing and illustration, and are judged by children's and youth librarians. Sixteen books have been selected in total, from a longlist of 33 titles. This year's selections celebrate the power of friendship, and pictures that create empathy, connection and hope. Jennifer Horan, chair of judges for the Yoto Carnegie Greenaway Awards 2022, said: "I'm thrilled that our Yoto Carnegie shortlist showcases how friendship can help young people find the strength to navigate a path through challenging times. Many of our shortlisted books remind us that art can help us to communicate and connect with young people when words sometimes fail us." See the full shortlist at [tinyurl.com/tp-CarnegieGreenaway](https://tinyurl.com/tp-CarnegieGreenaway)

## EMMA RADUCANU Q&A

Schools across the UK have the chance to win an exclusive, virtual Q&A with US Open Champion and BBC Sports Personality of the Year, Emma Raducanu. Courtesy of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and its LTA Youth programme, for a chance to win, teachers need to register for and complete a free online training course, which lasts about two hours. The course provides training for the LTA's programme of PE lesson plans and accompanying videos, personal development, competition and cross curricular resources. On completion of the course, schools will also receive a £250 voucher to spend on 10 hours of team-teaching support from an LTA accredited coach or on equipment. Find out more and register at [tinyurl.com/tp-LTAEmma](https://tinyurl.com/tp-LTAEmma)





# 6 **WAYS** to give meaningful feedback

Written or oral; immediate or delayed; this is how your pupil comments can make the most impact, says Jack Dabell...

## 1 | **PLAN AHEAD**

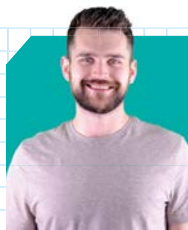
The best defense is a good offense. Planning to make feedback as meaningful as possible is essential if it's to be impactful. Think about what children are most likely to not understand. What are the top three misconceptions that could arise? Develop a plan that considers how you will scaffold pupils during the lesson, and how you can support them afterwards to work through those misconceptions. Plan how you will give feedback as part of your wider lesson prep. How can you ensure it is specific and targeted?

## 2 | **CONSIDER WHEN**

Deciding when you are going to give feedback is not straightforward. In fact, the Education Endowment Foundation's report *Using Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning*, which was published last year, offers no clear answer on the best time to provide it. Instead, this is where professional judgement should be trusted. A good option is to give live feedback – circulating around the classroom and providing support while the children are working. Immediate feedback like this works for some children, but for others providing enough time for them to digest and reflect on their own work is better. And of course, some children thrive with a mixture of both.

## 3 | **BE SPECIFIC**

Whatever the purpose of your feedback, you should be painfully specific. We've all written 'well done', or 'good work' when trying to get the last of our books marked. But this doesn't provide clear, specific information. Instead think about: what has the pupil done well? Why is this good work? What skills have they shown here? What skill do they need to practise more? What can they do now to deepen understanding?



Jack Dabell is education advisor at Tapestry, the online learning journal, and a former primary school teacher. He also writes for the Foundation Stage Forum.

## 4 | **1-1 TIME**

Time with each child is the best thing you can have with regards to feedback. I got to know my children's abilities, interests, strengths and weaknesses better during these sessions than any other time. Try inviting each learner to choose a book, project or piece of work they want to talk to you about. Make it entirely child led. Let pupils choose whether it's a "Look at how much hard work I did on this!" session, or a "I'd really like some more help on this" session. I valued every second of these conversations, as did (most of) the children!

## 5 | **CONSIDER HOW**

A mix of both written and oral feedback will probably benefit your children the most: oral works well in class and written can be helpful if children are revisiting work after some time. Of course, it's not always cut and dry. So, ensure your marking and feedback policy is flexible enough to utilise different methods at different times because all your children are... different! One of the main considerations for written feedback is that it takes a lot of time. I found (as does the EEF document) that written isn't any more effective than oral feedback; what is important is that it's specific and timely, and learners have sufficient time to engage.

## 6 | **TIME TO REFLECT**

It doesn't matter if feedback is written or oral, immediate or delayed, ensure you provide time to reflect; it can't be rushed. If you don't provide the child adequate time to listen, check they understand, and then act upon your feedback, it is all for naught.



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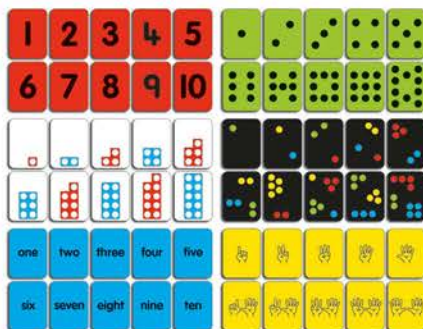
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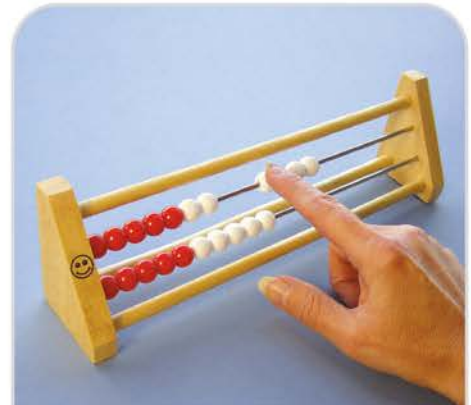
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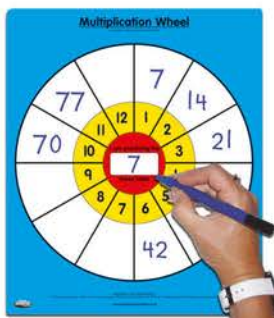
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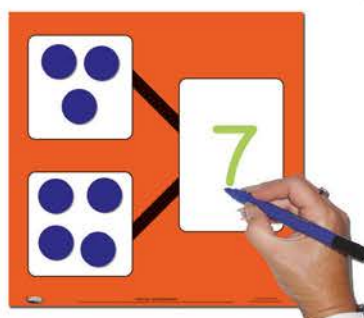
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The world is a frightening place, but shielding children from reality won't help them; we need to teach action and empowerment

# Debra Kidd



**T**he world must feel very scary for children at the moment. They've lived through a pandemic and now a war, and are highly attuned to the impending difficulties of climate change. It's hardly surprising that we are seeing record numbers of children reporting mental health issues. Some might argue that it is the role of a teacher to protect pupils from such issues and events, but we can't switch off their ears and eyes, or stop them talking to friends in the playground. But we can help. We must help.

In order to do so, though, we need to consider what children need; to be heard; knowledge to understand the problems they face; and to be able to both feel and express empathy and compassion. Pupils also need to feel they have some agency in the world – an element of power. If we took those things in turn, we could almost develop a pedagogy for dealing with difficult events:

1. Listen to their questions.
2. Provide factual information.
3. Consider how these issues are impacting on others.
4. Take actions to help in any way we can.

The fourth point is the most critical. Without action, children can be left floundering in a sea of emotion and fear. By taking initiative – even in small ways like raising money for a charity, campaigning, or joining in with a boycott – children can feel that they are making a difference to theirs and others' worlds. There are also pedagogical tools we can and should draw on.

Stories, as Daniel Willingham says, are “psychologically privileged” in the human mind. They offer a way of making learning more memorable, but also of making it safer. If children can be distanced from a traumatic real-life event, but explore the pertinent issues through a story, they are a) distracted from the real emotions, but b) able to access the important elements. For example, a class reading *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* is really exploring the difficulties of fighting a seemingly more powerful enemy, living in a world where fear is prevalent and all



seems lost. And yet, hope is there – in the characters who resist, take risks, and come together to challenge the Queen. They offer pupils a vision of what it might take to be brave and an ending that shows hope will win in the end.

We can take this further into dramatic play and explore the characteristics that people might have in order to overcome difficulty. The pedagogical approach of Mantle of the Expert in particular is deeply empowering for children, placing them in the role of a responsible team with a problem to solve. The focus is on agency and using knowledge to overcome obstacles placed in the pupils' way by a teacher.

Story-led dramatic approaches can be helpful for a number of contexts:

1. Having problems with social integration and/or bullying among the younger children in your school? What if a troll puts in a complaint to the council that he is being picked on by three goats? How would the council respond?
2. Want children to have a deeper understanding of the problems facing refugees? Get the children to create a cruise ship that encounters a boat of desperate people in difficulty in the middle of the Med. What would happen if

we took them onboard but then the port authorities at our next destination would not let us dock?

3. Tackling deforestation? First, we need to understand why some people in the world cut down trees or capture rare animals. Consider if the class were an organisation travelling to Indonesia to help local people to train to do other jobs than logging or bird selling. Would it be enough to simply say ‘stop’?

At the heart of these approaches is dilemma-led learning. Placing children in difficulty – making them wade knee deep through dilemma – teaches them something important about life; that there are rarely easy answers to difficult problems and sometimes we have to make difficult choices. If we can develop approaches in our schools that place this kind of thinking at their heart, then we start to develop cultures and capacities in our schools in which the problems of the world don't feel as insurmountable or frightening. We begin to empower. And an empowered child can change the world. **TP**

*Debra Kidd is an author and teacher trainer, and taught in schools for over 20 years.*





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# 'TO BE HONEST, IT IS A RELIEF TO BE FREE'

 @CrowtherSim

After 13 years in the classroom, I've blown the whistle on teaching. It's sad, but I'm done with the Sunday scaries...

“

What do you do now?”

It's the first question everyone asks when they discover you've

left teaching. If you're talking to a fellow educator, they're usually posing the question because they're wondering about a possible route out for themselves, to a career with a similar wage but a better work-life balance.

If the question comes from someone outside education who doesn't know any teachers and hasn't seen the inside of a classroom for 20 years, they're simply incredulous that anyone would give up 'those holidays'. What sort of a job could possibly be better than one which offers all that time off, right? They don't realise that half term breaks, for many teachers, amount to the briefest of pauses for breath, and that many of the longer holidays are spent in a state of dazed shell-shock or trembling trepidation at a fast-approaching tidal-wave of work.

Such is my Wookiee-like build, I used to serve as an excellent additional item of playground equipment. While suspended upside down from my arms and weaving in and out of my legs, the children would chat and laugh and ask endless questions about all manner of things. Towards the end of my long notice period, when they knew I was leaving, one small boy – pausing from his attempts to annex my left leg from the rest of my body

– posed a version of *that* question: “Mr C? Whatchoo gunna do when you're not a teacher?”

I didn't know the answer then and, in truth, three months on, I'm still trying to work it out. It is difficult to think about your future when your every waking thought is about the futures of the children in your care. My head was a thick fog of lesson plans, timetables, marking, SEN forms, interventions, progress pressure, curriculum re-writes, looming Ofsted inspections, covid disruptions and safeguarding alarm bells.

“I don't know,” was my honest answer. “What do *you* think I should do?”

Head tilted to one side, he peered up at me for a moment. “I fink... boxer!” He

said confidently.

To be fair to that little boy, I do look like I've been punched in the face a few times and, at that moment, I was out on my feet, like a journeyman heavyweight in the tenth round.

Of course, the most important question that needs to be asked is “*Why* have you left teaching?”

Leaders assume they know the answer, but I was never invited to an exit interview and few people will have seen my formal resignation letter. I suspect this is not unusual and yet understanding the ‘why’ is vital if individual schools, academy trusts and the profession as a whole are to solve the recruitment and retention crisis.

There are oft-quoted, broad-brush reasons why kind, caring, highly trained and highly skilled professionals leave one of the most remarkable privileges behind. But it's never the complete story. We have all taken our own route into teaching at different stages of our lives and there is a specific context to every departure.

For me, there was a tipping point, an epiphany moment after 13 years, when I finally realised what people close to me had long observed; that the demands of the job were utterly overwhelming me.

And so, it was time to go. Though there are regrets and sadness, it is a relief to be free. I am writing this article sitting calmly at my kitchen table on a Monday morning having enjoyed another Sunday without the creeping dread. I'm in awe of the colleagues I worked with and the remarkable, resilient, kind and talented people doing the job at this very moment in classrooms across the country. It's nothing short of heroic.

As for what I'm going to do next, who knows? But if you run a company designing and building climbing frames, I'm definitely your man. **TP**

*Simeon Crowther was a KS1 teacher and science lead in Oxfordshire primary schools for 13 years and left the profession in December 2021.*





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

# A letter to... the Department for Education

The ECT framework is creating disillusioned teachers, says **Lily Norris**, and we need more support...



I love being a teacher. It is a fulfilling job that keeps me busy all day. I can't relate to my friends who describe feeling like a 'clock-watcher' at their 9-5 office jobs, because I am occupied as soon as I set foot through the school doors. But as with every role, there are things I'd like to change. Here's my take.

Since September 2021, all new teachers must complete a two-year ECT period, replacing the previous one-year NQT. Arguably, this should promote wellbeing, as new teachers now have longer to pass their probation period and to adjust to the demands of a teaching career. However, it can actually result in more stress, as trainees are constantly being assessed via observations and reports for two years. Thus, the road to feeling like a 'real teacher' is much slower.

Though taboo, another major issue for ECTs is money. Previously, NQTs would start at the lowest point of the main pay scale (MPS) and move up after completing their NQT year. With the new structure, there is no clarity over whether ECTs will progress up the MPS, which will inevitably create inequity, depending on schools' policies. With teaching, this can feel particularly disheartening given that no matter how well you perform, the financial situation or motivations of your school can determine whether

your salary changes. Moreover, it is well-known that ECTs are cheaper for schools to employ, sometimes making it easier to get jobs but harder to keep them if contracts are fixed-term. This is creating some disillusionment. I have a friend who recently trained as a computing teacher, and despite the exceptional benefits offered in this subject, he could not justify the lower pay for two years, when there are plenty of computing employers out there willing to double or triple this salary. To put it starkly, it is quite apparent I could earn more money recruiting teachers than being one! Thankfully, like many others, I entered teaching for love of the profession and its connection to my future career goals, which makes it easier to accept the longer probation period. Nevertheless, schools need more direction over ECT pay, to ensure fairness and help prevent talented young teachers from being swayed into other careers.

Pay aside, the ECT period could provide new opportunities for schools and ECT providers to create wellbeing initiatives. For example, when I did my PGCE with the Tes Institute, they ensured all trainees had an in-school mentor, a tutor and weekly sessions with their partnership leads and local trainees. Comparatively, my ECT provider does little to encourage interaction between trainees. There are no group chats, no in-person events and no opportunities to encourage discussion and general 'teacher chat'. I am the only ECT in my school, making it isolating, but

even in schools with multiple trainees, the opportunity for peer-to-peer support has been challenging due to covid restrictions and the ECT framework setup. The course is delivered through an online learning platform, and is an inflexible system for mentors, as there is limited choice over the weekly targets they can set, and how they can report feedback. Importantly, there is little acknowledgement of previous learning that ECTs have gained from PGCE and degree courses, meaning trainees are having to put in long hours to cover content they have already learned. The content delivery and associated tasks ECTs must complete do not enable opportunities to strengthen and deepen this knowledge.

So, what could schools implement that would not only benefit young teachers, but all staff?

We focus a lot on pupil wellbeing at my school, but, strangely, there is no staff wellbeing lead. Schools making changes to reduce workload is great, but the addition of a dedicated staff member would be really beneficial. The lead could organise activities that are not linked to work, assess staff wellbeing through surveys and, importantly, feedback to SLT, making sure the leadership is discussing these issues. For all its positives, teaching is also stressful, emotional, and draining. All schools need to monitor and support wellbeing for staff, as well as for pupils.

*From Lily Norris*

Lily Norris is an education and psychology graduate from the University of Cambridge. Lily began her PGCE in September 2020 with the Tes Institute and has been working as a Year 5 teacher since gaining QTS in July 2021.



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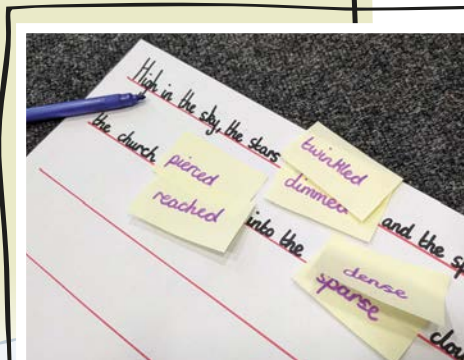
# How I do it

Investigate the power of word choice by building your own sticky-note mystery

CHRISTOPHER MANN

# 1

To begin, read a mysterious story opening, such as the brilliant *Monstrous Devices* by Damien Love, which beautifully weaves an ominous atmosphere. This will help children understand how an author creates a mood, the effect they want to have on the reader, and how certain words are carefully chosen to achieve this.



The author is the master manipulator, and clever, purposeful language is their most crucial tool.

As a Year 6 teacher, I know how children's ability to manipulate language precisely and consciously is crucial to achieving greater depth in writing by the end of KS2. However, it is essential for all writers to write as readers and

to understand how their words affect the audience and purpose of their work.

While teaching a mystery story unit, I decided we would focus on how we wanted to make the reader feel and how we could generate a suitable atmosphere simply through focusing on the words we used.

....>

- Next, present the class with a large picture of a mysterious-looking house atop a hill. Try preparing a short description based on this picture, and focus on some words that could be altered to significantly change the atmosphere. Write each of these words on sticky notes. Read through the description together as a class, discuss the effect on the reader and explicitly talk about how words such as 'glared' and 'beckoned' were able to deliver this feeling.

# 2

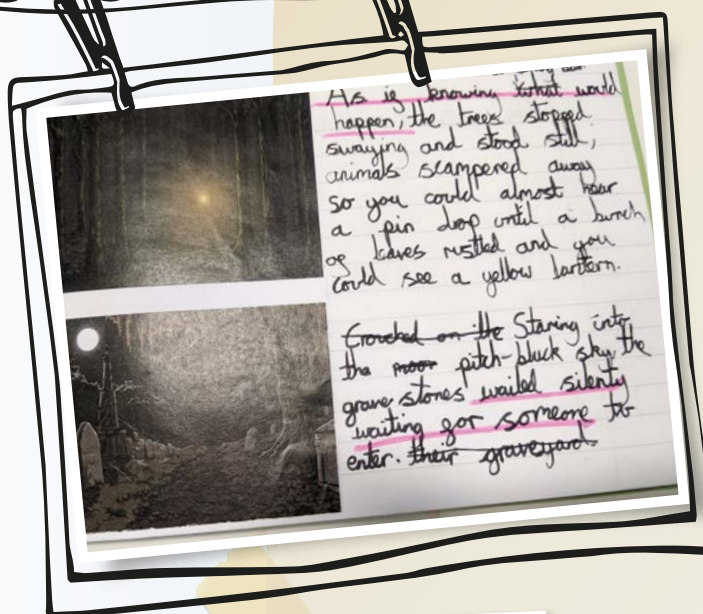
Once you have read through this short description, remove some of the sticky notes to reveal alternative words underneath that fit in the sentences. As a class, you can then read through the description once more and discuss how some of these new words affect the mood of the story.

# 3

# 4

In the final practice stage, you can get children to investigate a new short description you prepare

beforehand, containing more sticky notes with alternate words. This time, ask pupils to use a variety of word mat and thesaurus resources to create their own alternate words. Swap and change them around with your original ones, while talking about how they want the reader to feel based on their language choices.



Finally, allow everyone to read each other's mysterious descriptions and ask questions such as, "Why did you use that word?", "What image did you want to create?", and "What words did you choose to not use and why?" Finally, ask the class to write their own short descriptions for a variety of mysterious pictures. Guide them towards active redrafting and keeping the reader in their mind at all times.

# 5



Christopher Mann is an experienced primary school teacher and lead writing moderator for KS2 in Greater Manchester.

[@chrismann755](https://twitter.com/chrismann755)



**UNDERCOVER TEACHER**

*Our anonymous educator gets something off their chest*

*Kids love making stuff up.  
But sadly for us, some  
parents will believe anything...*

**F**rom a young age, children tell us stories of how they wish the world was rather than how it is.

*How did your drink get knocked over?*

*"Teddy did it."*

*Why is Teddy outside?*

*"I don't know."* (Yes, they do. They threw him out the sodding window).

As teachers, we understand the importance of listening to children and having their voices heard. This is how we safeguard their health and wellbeing, and it helps us to make school the best environment it can be for them to aid in their learning. But we also need to interpret what children tell us versus what they mean. Which is sometimes lost on parents when they email in with concerns or complaints after tears at bedtime (and maybe a glass of wine or three).

Often, it comes down to interpretation. A parent will say: "My child says your maths lesson was too hard today and they are upset!" You think: *yes, they did find maths hard, because they weren't paying attention, due to a falling out with a friend at break time. They were projecting their sadness at one event into their view of my lesson.* Or you'll hear the dreaded: "You told my child off in front of the class when he didn't do anything." Likely referring to: *the entire class has been spoken to about their behaviour and no one child was singled out, but your little darling was one of the worst and I'm glad they paid attention for once.*

Kids might even leave parts of a story out, or not fully explain it due to embarrassment. This leads to emails like: "My child is being bullied by Madeline – please deal with this immediately." *Well, if they hadn't kept telling Maddy that she was ugly then maybe Maddy wouldn't have given them a taste of their own medicine. Maddy is a gentle and perceptive girl who looked into the soul of your child and found what makes them a cruel bully. And then Maddy made your child aware of their own fears by asking them why they can't just be nice to someone for once in their life and then maybe someone might want to be their friend. If only you could actually say that!*

I bet we've all heard: "My child did poorly in their spelling test – please put them in a different group." *Your child is in the right group, but was too embarrassed to tell me that they lost the list of words and did not come and collect a new one from the pile that has sat at the front of the classroom for the last week.*

There are also times when children can be rather more selective with their interpretations of events: "My child was made to miss their playtime

@ # ? ! \*  
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**"Children can  
be selective with  
interpretations"**

*today and I have absolutely no idea why. PLEASE EXPLAIN!!!" Your child kept SHOUTING out. They were told to stop. They didn't. They were given a warning. THEY STILL KEPT SHOUTING. They were given a consequence as per the school's behaviour policy, which was writing a reflection on why their shouting out was disrupting the learning of others. Which they did in several paragraphs.*

And then there are the allegations that schools are duty-bound to spend hours of their time investigating, even if the incident in question would have

needed a TARDIS or Elder Wand to make it possible: the complaint about the member of staff shouting at a child when said teacher is off sick with laryngitis. The TA who removed a child from a lesson they were not in, nor even in the same building.

There is another side to investigating impossible events, too: the distress of your professional judgement being called into question, or your livelihood being threatened due to a series of fictitious occurrences. This can colour your view towards that child or family: *should I tell that child off for fear of them lying again? Will I be dragged into another investigation for applying the school's behaviour policy correctly?* Then there are the sleepless nights, and the imagined meetings with parents where you can tell them what a lying little so-and-so their child is.

Finally, the sad realisation that perhaps we live in a 'post-truth' world where parents don't want to listen to teachers – they just want to bolster their opinion of how wonderful their cherished little darling is. Maybe it's time for a glass of wine or three.

*The writer is a primary teacher in England.*



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# All things CONSIDERED

Disconnected topics getting you down? Try philosophical planning for a more cohesive curriculum

JONATHAN LEAR

I know this won't be a popular opinion, but I've always secretly liked planning. I've never admitted this before because I think it's probably one of the things that we're expected to feel deeply unhappy about as teachers, but I've always found the process – and in particular, the planning of topics – to be up there in my top five of teachery things to do.

A topic-based or thematic approach has been part of primary teaching for as long as I can remember, and I really hope it continues. Admittedly, when done badly, it can become a blur of tenuously connected subjects that all merge into one. Done well though, each distinct subject discipline is allowed to shine, and otherwise isolated subjects are integrated into a cohesive whole.

I think the appeal of planning a topic is that you can be a bit creative, and when you're finished, you can bask in the warm glow that comes from having created something interesting and exciting that will engage and motivate your children.

I've never met anyone who doesn't want motivated learners, but over time, I've had a sneaking suspicion that this process might be more about me than it is about the class. I'd come up with the ideas and make the connections; I'd be the one with the gel pens and spider diagram; and when it was all done and dusted, I'd deliver it to the kids – the passive recipients of my brilliance.

I suppose this bothered me because I wanted more than just engagement and motivation. What I really wanted was for the children to have some ownership; the ability to shape the context of their learning rather than having to follow a path that I'd set.

## Enquiring minds

It turned out that the seeds of a solution to this problem were already present in our curriculum. We'd been doing something called Philosophy for Children (P4C) for a couple of years, and while it was a bit of an add-on, we'd noticed that it was having an impact. If you've not come across it before, it's essentially a means of bringing teachers and children together to discuss stuff that matters. Pupils take part in a philosophical enquiry that is shaped by the concepts and questions that interest them the most. Our kids really liked it – the teachers did too – and it was definitely having a positive effect on the children's thinking and oracy.

The idea of using this approach more broadly hadn't really occurred to me at the time, but the more I thought about it, the more I realised that the use of philosophical concepts could play a significant role in creating a curriculum that was not just

cohesive, but also had children at the heart of the process.

## Association games

Before exploring the shift, let's have a quick look at the process involved in the planning of a traditional topic. The starting point would be the curriculum content. Let's say you're in Y6





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for any book that explores one or more of the concepts.

In Y6, you might choose *Kensuke's Kingdom* by Michael

Morpurgo, or *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park – both of which deal with adversity and resilience and can therefore form part of our project. There's also an opportunity to include the areas that often don't fit into topics as easily as others. What about RE or PSHE?

Given the nature of these subjects, they're ready-made for a philosophical approach.

When you've used the concepts to create connections with different subjects, the final stage of the process is to create a way in for the children – a starting point. This comes in the form of an enquiry question. A big, philosophical question that frames the concepts we're going to explore. For the concepts above, you could go for something like: 'Does adversity always make us stronger?'

### What do you think?

The fact that this represents the starting point is really important. Up to now, the teacher has selected the concepts, used them to make connections, and then wrapped them up in an enquiry question – in terms of child involvement or ownership, you're no better off than you would be with a topic. The key difference however, is in what happens the moment the project begins; the enquiry question is deliberately designed to encourage more and more questions as the project develops. Pupils' thoughts and ideas are collected and added to project walls – they're valued – and there may be certain concepts that the children become more interested in than others, which can be dropped or added, and their

produce or a way of sharing what they'd been up to.

The approach we took with our new concept-based model began in exactly the same place – with curriculum content. Having established this, rather than starting with the whole cross-curricular links business, we began to think about which philosophical concepts we might be able to explore with the children through that particular bit of curriculum.

If we stick with the same example I described earlier, this would mean thinking about volcanoes, earthquakes and natural disasters. To make the process easier, we used a bank of around 70 concepts we'd collected from P4C – including things like faith, change, class, consent, integration, wisdom and tradition – and took three or four concepts to form the starting point for our new philosophical, enquiry-based project.

So, let's say these were adversity, resilience, fear, and community. Instead of the literal links that are central to a topic-based approach, you can use these concepts to do a similar but much more interesting job. In English, for example, rather than struggling to find a high-quality text that links to volcanoes or earthquakes, you could go

and looking to cover the bit of National Curriculum geography that includes volcanoes and earthquakes – natural disasters. The first step would be to come up with some fancy topic name; maybe something like 'The force of nature'. With this established, you'd then immediately start looking for connections across the curriculum. In science this might focus on forces; in English, the go-to genre of non-chronological reports, possibly diary entries, maybe even journalistic writing. You could search out a couple of pictures to use with the children in art that showed the power of nature, or maybe start gathering old newspapers for some kind of papier-mâché volcano. The final stage of this process would involve thinking up an outcome – something the children might

questions can be woven into the planned curriculum.

You're not relinquishing control of the learning, but allowing the children to shape the context. The feeling of ownership that this gives them is huge, and it turns out that when given the opportunity, young people have some fascinating insights into the world and some incredibly important things to say. **TP**



**Jonathan Lear** is a deputy headteacher, speaker and associate of Independent

*Thinking. He has written two books: **Guerrilla Teaching** and **The Monkey-Proof Box: Curriculum design for building knowledge, developing creative thinking and promoting independence.***



MEDIUM TERM PLAN

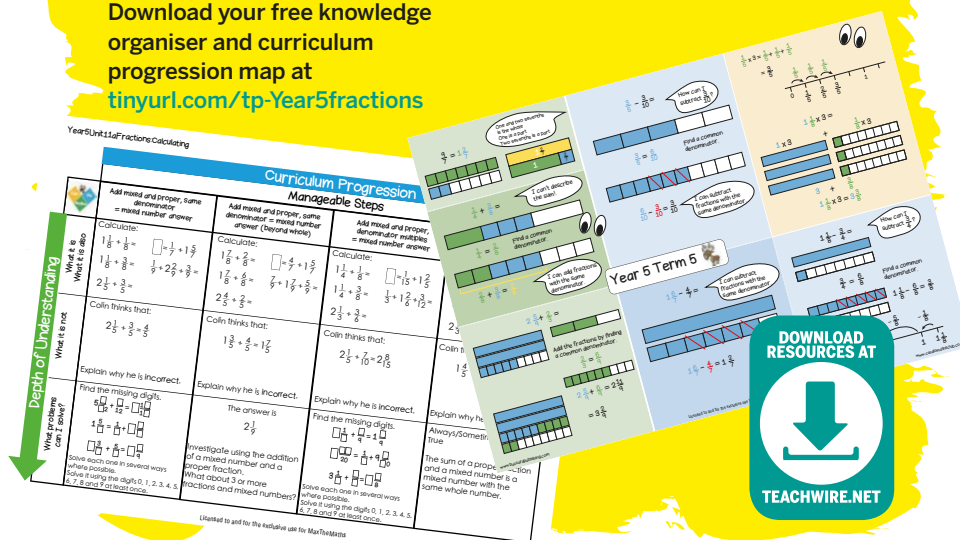
# UKS2 MATHS

# A PIECE OF THE FRACTION

STEVE LOMAX

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## WEEK 1

### Learning objectives:

- Add and subtract proper fractions with denominators that are the same
- Convert improper fractions to mixed numbers
- Convert mixed numbers to improper fractions

This week provides an ideal opportunity for revisiting knowledge of adding and subtracting fractions with the same denominator, plus introducing the concept of a mixed number.

The learning objectives can be broken down into these following manageable steps:

1. To add proper fractions with denominators that are the same within the 'whole'
2. To subtract proper fractions with denominators that are the same within the 'whole'

3. To add proper fractions with denominators that are the same beyond the 'whole'
4. To convert improper fractions to mixed numbers
5. To convert mixed numbers to improper fractions

Considering calculations such as  $\frac{4}{5} + \frac{2}{5}$  provides a great opportunity to introduce the concept of a mixed number by discussing different ways to describe the solution. Using a bar model to represent the calculation, some children will see the answer as 'six fifths' and some may say 'one whole and one more fifth'. Explore the concept of mixed numbers and improper fractions further in points four and five, above. It is important for children to be able to partition mixed numbers, e.g.  $2\frac{1}{5} = 2 + \frac{1}{5}$  as this will support the intended learning in the following weeks.

It is important that children experience more than 'standard' questions such as  $\frac{1}{7} + \frac{4}{7}$ . Try using non-standard questions such as adding or subtracting more than two fractions (e.g.  $\frac{1}{5} + \frac{2}{5} + \frac{3}{5}$ ) and using

This series of lessons is geared for UKS2, and builds towards children having a secure and deep understanding of adding and subtracting more complex fractions, a confidence with mixed numbers and an introduction to thinking about multiplying fractions and mixed numbers by whole numbers.

The plan follows a clear structure – each week has a set of overarching learning objectives, which are broken down into manageable steps to support a teaching for mastery approach.

At the end of each week, there are examples of different types of assessments – ranging from low-stakes quizzes and sets of diagnostic questions, to low threshold/high ceiling tasks – that can be used to assess pupils' conceptual understanding and identify any possible misconceptions that need to be addressed through same day or same week interventions.

misconceptions (see Assessment Q3 below) and 'empty box' type problems, such as  $\frac{7}{\square} - \frac{\square}{8} = \frac{\square}{8}$ , to secure and deepen children's understanding.

Key generalisations for week 1:

- To add (subtract) fractions with the same denominator, you add (subtract) the numerators and keep the denominators the same.
- A mixed number has two parts: a whole number and a proper fraction.

## Assessment:

1)  $\frac{4}{7} + \frac{2}{7} =$   
A.  $\frac{6}{14}$  B.  $\frac{6}{7}$  C.  $\frac{8}{49}$  D.  $\frac{2}{7}$

2)  $\frac{3}{5} - \frac{1}{5} =$   
A.  $\frac{4}{5}$  B.  $\frac{2}{5}$  C.  $\frac{3}{25}$  D.  $\frac{2}{10}$

3) True or False:  $2\frac{1}{3} = \frac{7}{2}$

Draw a diagram to explain your thinking.

## WEEK 2

### Learning objectives:

- Add proper fractions with denominators that are multiples of each other
- Subtract proper fractions with denominators that are multiples of each other

The theme for this week is 'It's nothing new!' Some children may think  $\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{6}$  is a new type of calculation, and using a 'What do you notice?' strategy, children will say things along the lines of 'The denominators are different so we can't do it', leading to a discussion about what types of fractions can be added. Using the generalisation from week one, you can move the discussion to 'How could we make the denominators the same?' and use equivalent fractions to transform  $\frac{1}{3}$



$+\frac{1}{6}$  to  $\frac{2}{6} + \frac{1}{6}$  – a calculation the children know how to do.

The learning objectives can be broken down into the following steps to explore the concept of adding and subtracting proper fractions with denominators that are multiples of each other:

1. Add proper fractions with denominators that are multiples of each other within the 'whole'.
2. Add proper fractions with denominators that are multiples of each other beyond the 'whole', expressing the answer as a mixed number.
3. Subtract proper fractions with denominators that are multiples of each other.
4. Subtract proper and improper fractions with denominators that are multiples of each other.

It is important for children experience more than 'standard' questions, such as  $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8}$ . Non-standard questions such as involving denominators that are not 'near multiples' (for example  $\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{12}$ ) or adding or subtracting more than two fractions (e.g.  $\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{8}$ ) and using misconceptions (e.g. 'Explain why  $\frac{1}{5} + \frac{3}{10} = \frac{4}{15}$  is not correct') will secure children's conceptual understanding.

Key generalisation for week 2:

- When adding (subtracting) fractions with different denominators, convert them to fractions with a common denominator.



### Assessment:

Find the missing numbers.

$$\frac{1}{3} + \frac{\quad}{\quad} = \frac{7}{2}$$

How many different solutions can you find for each problem?



## WEEK 3

### Learning objective:

- Add mixed numbers and proper fractions

The 'making connections' theme continues into this week. Some children may think  $1\frac{1}{5} + \frac{3}{5}$  is a new type of calculation as it involves mixed numbers. Using a 'What do you notice?' strategy and the generalisation 'A mixed number can be partitioned into a whole number and a proper fraction', the calculation can be transformed from  $1\frac{1}{5} + \frac{3}{5}$  to  $1 + \frac{1}{5} + \frac{3}{5} = 1 + \frac{4}{5} = 1\frac{4}{5}$ . This is a calculation the children can do using previous learning knowledge from week one.



This can be explored further by breaking the learning objectives down into the following manageable steps:

1. To add a mixed number and proper fraction with denominators that are the same within the 'whole'.
2. To add a mixed number and proper fraction with denominators that are the same beyond the 'whole'.
3. To add a mixed number and proper fraction with denominators that are multiples of each other within the 'whole'.
4. To add a mixed number and proper fraction with denominators that are multiples of each other beyond the 'whole'.

Take care with the two steps above that involve going 'beyond the whole', such as considering the answer to the calculation  $1\frac{7}{9} + \frac{4}{9}$ . Children need to understand why  $1\frac{11}{9}$  is not an acceptable answer and how to simplify it to  $1\frac{11}{9} = 1 + 1 + \frac{2}{9} = 2\frac{2}{9}$ .

A number line can be a very powerful representation to help children go 'beyond the whole', in this case, starting at  $1\frac{7}{9}$  and adding on  $\frac{2}{9}$  to 2 and then  $\frac{2}{9}$  more to land on  $2\frac{2}{9}$ .



### Assessment

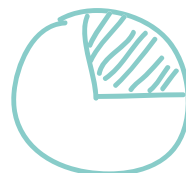
- 1)  $1\frac{2}{5} + \frac{1}{5} =$   
A.  $1\frac{3}{10}$  B.  $\frac{3}{5}$   
C.  $1\frac{3}{5}$  D. Something else

- 2) Find the missing numbers.

$$1\frac{7}{7} + \frac{4}{7} = 2\frac{3}{7}$$

- 3) True or False:  $2\frac{1}{2} + \frac{3}{8} = 2\frac{4}{10}$   
Explain your thinking.

- 4) True or False:  $1\frac{2}{3} + \frac{4}{9} = 1\frac{10}{9}$   
Explain your thinking.



## WEEK 4

### Learning objective:

- Subtract mixed numbers and proper fractions

The approach to this week's learning is very similar to week three but with a focus on subtraction rather than addition.

The learning objectives can be broken down in the same way, replacing 'add' with 'subtract'.



### Assessment

- 1)  $1\frac{3}{5} - \frac{1}{5} =$   
A.  $1\frac{4}{5}$  B.  $1\frac{2}{5}$   
C.  $1\frac{2}{5}$  D. Something else

- 2)  $1\frac{1}{5} - \frac{3}{5} =$   
A.  $1\frac{2}{5}$  B.  $\frac{3}{5}$   
C.  $\frac{2}{5}$  D. Something else

- 3) Explain why this is not correct  
 $1\frac{5}{9} - \frac{1}{3} = 1\frac{4}{6}$

- 4) Find possible values for a, b, c, d, e, f and g:  
 $a\frac{b}{c} - \frac{d}{e} = \frac{f}{g}$   
Find different values for c and e.



## WEEK 5

### Learning objective:

- Multiply proper fractions and mixed numbers by a whole number

This week provides an opportunity for children to explore other operations with fractions, starting with multiplying proper fractions and mixed numbers by a whole





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number. Rather than thinking  $\frac{1}{5} \times 3$  is something new, children should be supported to make connections with their fundamental understanding of multiplication as repeated addition from KS1. For example, if children are comfortable with reading  $5 \times 3$  as 'five multiplied by three', 'five, three times', or  $5 + 5 + 5$ , then they can interpret  $\frac{1}{5} \times 3$  as  $\frac{1}{5} + \frac{1}{5} + \frac{1}{5} = \frac{3}{5}$  (or  $\frac{1}{5}$  three times). The use of the bar model can support this conceptual development and help children to make the generalisation 'When multiplying fractions by a whole number, multiply only the numerator by the whole number'.



$$\frac{1}{5} + \frac{1}{5} + \frac{1}{5} = \frac{3}{5}$$

The bar model also helps address the possible misunderstanding that  $\frac{1}{5} \times 3 = \frac{3}{15}$  by asking the children to 'say what they see', for example: "Do you see any 'fifteenths'?"

The learning can be extended into multiplying mixed numbers by partitioning the mixed number into a whole number and a proper fraction, and using the distributive law to multiply both parts by the whole number.

$$\text{e.g. } 2\frac{1}{5} \times 3 = (2 + \frac{1}{5}) \times 3 = 2 \times 3 + \frac{1}{5} \times 3 = 6 + \frac{3}{5} = 6\frac{3}{5}$$

The learning objectives can be broken down like so:

1. Multiply a unit fraction by a whole number.
2. Multiply a non-unit fraction by a whole number.
3. Multiply a mixed number by a whole number.
4. Multiply a mixed number by a whole number beyond the whole.



## Assessment

1)  $1\frac{2}{7} \times 3 =$

- A.  $\frac{6}{12}$  B.  $\frac{2}{21}$  C.  $\frac{6}{21}$  D.  $\frac{23}{7}$

2) The product of a proper fraction and a whole number is  $\frac{12}{20}$ . Find at least four different solutions.

3) Use the digits 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8 to complete the statement:

$$\square \div \square \times \square = \frac{4}{7}$$

4) Find the missing digits:

$$\square \times \square = \square$$

Solve the problem in several different ways.



## WEEK 6

### Learning objective:

- Solve problems involving calculating with proper fractions and mixed numbers

Although children should have opportunities to solve problems throughout the six weeks, this week is the ideal time for all children to deepen their understanding by using a collection of rich tasks. For example, using this activity from CanDoMaths Y5 workouts (candomaths.org):

$$6\frac{A}{12} = ? \quad (\text{A is an even number})$$

Investigate how to get this answer by:

- Adding a mixed number and a proper fraction.
- Adding a mixed number and more than one proper fraction.
- Subtracting a proper fraction from a mixed number.
- Subtracting more than one proper fraction from a mixed number.
- Multiplying a mixed number by a whole number.

This week also allows children to apply their learning to solve a collection of familiar and unfamiliar contextual word problems, such as these examples involving measures, also from CanDoMaths:

1. Colin and Coco are trying to run 6km each week. The table shows the distances they have run so far this week.

	Coco	Colin
Monday	$1\frac{3}{5}$ km	$1\frac{3}{10}$ km
Tuesday	$1\frac{3}{5}$ km	$1\frac{3}{10}$ km
Wednesday	$1\frac{3}{10}$ km	$1\frac{3}{5}$ km

Who has the most distance to run to complete 6km this week?

What is the difference in their remaining distances as a fraction of a km?

2. Coco uses  $1\frac{3}{8}$  kg potatoes for a party stew. The bag of potatoes had  $3\frac{1}{4}$  kg potatoes in it. What weight of potatoes will be left?

3. A bottle contains  $2\frac{1}{4}$  litres of water. Colin pours  $\frac{5}{8}$  litre of water into a glass. What fraction is left in the bottle?

4. KeePupPI wants  $4\frac{1}{4}$  kg cheese. The pieces of cheese in the shop are  $1\frac{1}{4}$  kg,  $1\frac{5}{8}$  kg,  $1\frac{3}{8}$  kg. Is there enough cheese?

5. Coco plants a fast-growing sunflower. It grows  $7\frac{3}{5}$  cm a week. How tall will it be in 6 weeks?

6. KeePupPI wants to jog 20km this week. He jogs  $2\frac{5}{8}$  km per day for 6 days. How far does KeePupPI need to run on the seventh day?

Presenting word problems as a collection at the end of a unit is so much more powerful than using them within a specific lesson, as one of the key challenges for pupils is to identify which operation is needed to solve the problem! Week six also provides a lovely opportunity to explore some of the tasks from NRICH (such as Link Chains [tinyurl.com/tp-NRich](https://www.tinyurl.com/tp-NRich)) and consolidate learning using the DfE Primary Mathematics Guidance ([tinyurl.com/tp-DfEPrimaryMaths](https://www.tinyurl.com/tp-DfEPrimaryMaths)).



Steve Lomax is the strategic mathematics lead of the Balcarras Teaching School, a nationally accredited NCETM professional development lead and teaching for mastery lead. He is the co-founder of Kangaroomaths and CanDoMaths.

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# Some assistance, PLEASE!

TAs – beloved by teachers, essential in classrooms. But where, when and how should they be working with pupils, asks **Sara Alston**

We've all had that feeling: overwhelmed in the classroom, three different groups of children all needing attention at once, becoming frazzled, and then – you remember your teaching assistant. Your saviour. Your blessed knight-in-educational-armour.

The thing is, a TA is expected to perform many roles, often focusing on specific pupils. This means that for much of the time, TAs are often either passive, focused on behaviour management, or absent from the classroom, completing admin tasks or leading interventions. These tasks detract essential time from TAs providing whole-class support such as using visuals to support children's understanding of language, focus on learning and access to instructions; supporting with focus and attention and/or sensory needs, including through fidget objects and movement breaks; and acting as an 'extra pair of eyes' identifying who is or is not accessing the learning.

In *The Inclusive Classroom*, Daniel Sobel and I looked at how to promote inclusion by focusing on small tweaks and adaptations that could be implemented throughout five phases of the lesson; effective TA deployment is a key element.

## Phase one

*Entering the classroom and preparing to learn.*

Communicating with your TA when entering the classroom – and the role they play in supporting pupils through this transition – can be problematic due to the fact that many TAs arrive with the children. A better way to utilise a TA's expertise would be to have them 'meeting and greeting' the children alongside the

teacher (saying 'hello' and making eye contact supports effective relationships and enables adults to make a quick assessment of children's wellbeing and readiness to learn). They could also provide a personalised 'meet and greet' for those who need to come in earlier or later than their peers, or complete a set activity to make them feel safe in the classroom. Another option is to ask them to prepare and review personalised visual or written timetables for children who need them.

## Phase two

*Delivering instructions and whole-class engagement.*

Too often, TA support means that children are taken out for interventions during the delivery of instructions, so they miss this vital part of the lesson. As a result, they start their independent work at a disadvantage. Alternatively, a TA may need to listen to the teacher's input to understand learning that they will shortly be expected to teach and differentiate. During this time, a TA could:

- model learning behaviours and strategies;
- support children's responses to questioning. Oral rehearsal allows a child to 'practise' their response before sharing, reducing anxiety so they are more able to focus, listen and contribute ideas;
- use visuals and prompts to support understanding and focus.



## Phase three

### *Individuals working as a class.*

At this point in the lesson, many TAs 'take ownership' of their group – often the less able or those with SEND – and lead their learning. However, this can quickly become a model of 'segregation' where the most vulnerable learners are separated from their teacher and their learning is directed and managed by the TA. Alternative methods of TA deployment include 'helicopter' support, where the TA provides a child with a prompted start, models what the child needs to do and scaffolds the first calculation or sentences so the pupil doesn't face a blank sheet. Then they can work independently before the TA returns and provides further support in a repeated cycle, rather than the TA being 'velcroed' to a child's side. This

promotes the pupil's independence and enables the TA to work with others. Another approach is 'flipped' support, where the TA roves through the class, while the teacher sits with an individual or group, scaffolding and breaking the task down into short segments.

Where TAs are working with individuals or groups, it is important that they are prompting and scaffolding learning, not simply correcting or providing answers so that children can complete tasks. This could include:

- structured scaffolding of the task – by asking the child what they need to do next and what they already know, the TA can move the student towards greater independence;
- supporting children with the lesson admin, e.g. writing the title or sticking in worksheets, so that they can focus on their learning;
- using visual checklists, now and next cards, and task management boards to support children to identify and plot their way through lessons;
- supporting and modelling self-talk so children can identify the stages and structure of their learning;
- the provision of concrete resources and apparatus;
- supporting the use of IT to aid children's recording and reading.

Too often an adult either scribes for a child or writes while the child copies. This neither promotes the child's skills nor independence;

- providing encouragement and motivation for children through short-term rewards and 'live' marking and feedback.

## Phase four

### *Group working.*

It can be easy for adults to take a back seat during group work, but for many children, working with their peers adds a layer of anxiety and difficulty to a task. Asking them to work with others means managing academic and social learning simultaneously, making both more difficult. Furthermore, being part of a group makes a child's difficulties more visible

to their peers. This means that the teacher and TA need to be actively involved, by ensuring that children understand that they are part of the group and what their role in it is; facilitating interactions in team or partner work (it is important that adults promote interaction between children and don't replace it – taking the role as the child's partner can become a barrier to their inclusion); and providing learned scripts, sentence stems and support for taking turns.

## Phase five

### *The last five minutes.*

At the end of the lesson or day, the TA can become so involved in tidying up, preparing resources or moving to the next class, that their interactions with children are fleeting and focused on organisational issues. However, support at this point is key to facilitate a child's readiness for the next phase.

The use of individual time checks and clarifications about the expectations for their work can support children to finish their learning tasks. For this to be successful it is important that the TA and teacher are consistent, so as not to confuse children and undermine each other. It's also important to support children to evaluate their learning – many struggle to identify either what they have done well or how they could improve. Lastly, provide individual checklists to help children manage their belongings.

The various key roles of the TA throughout the lesson should be adapted to meet the needs of each class. While the teacher remains in charge, they should be able to swap roles with the TA as needed so that all children receive both focused support and quality teacher time. But for this to be effective, there needs to be good communication, and the TA needs to be in the room and engaged, rather than completing tasks elsewhere. **TP**



*Sara Alston is an independent consultant and trainer with SEA Inclusion and Safeguarding, and a practising SENCo.*





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PSTT offers resources to support teaching, learning, assessment and subject leadership in primary science. Resources cover cross-curricular learning for primary as well as teaching and learning science in Early Years. PSTT also raises awareness of diversity in science-related jobs with the 'A Scientist Just Like Me' resource.



## 3 PLANNING SUPPORT

PSTT delivers online Explorify Planning Support to help teachers get the most out of their science lessons. Explorify is a website with 500+ science activities, and is the ideal starting point for teachers new to science or who wish to incorporate engaging activities in their lessons.

## 4 TEACHER AWARDS

PSTT proudly sponsors the Primary Science Teacher Awards. This annual award celebrates outstanding primary science teaching across the UK. Award-winning primary teachers become part of the PSTT College Fellows and have access to a wealth of funding opportunities and support.



### Contact:

Visit [pstt.org.uk](https://pstt.org.uk) to explore or follow @pstt\_whyhow on Twitter

## At a glance

- PSTT resources offer cross-curricular links to history, D&T, music, reading and maths
- Easy for teachers, parents and home schoolers to access FREE ready-to-go primary science resources
- PSTT provides effective assessment tools for teachers to evaluate any age group

# 4 REASONS TO TRY... Schooltime Showtime

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### Contact:

Tel: 01457 889366  
Email: [Tessa@carrotproductions.com](mailto:Tessa@carrotproductions.com)  
More information: [carrotproductions.com/schooltime-showtime](https://carrotproductions.com/schooltime-showtime)

## At a glance

- Arts-reach activities can enhance children's sense of well-being and improve educational engagement (DCMS, 2016).
- Accessible and inclusive, Schooltime Showtime performances are available with sign language Interpretation and audio description.
- Music and the arts promote social cohesion through creative and celebratory shared experiences (DfE, 2021).


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\*Competition closes at 5pm on 31st May 2022. Winner will be notified within 21 days. Full terms and conditions available at [teachwire.net](https://www.teachwire.net)



# Right from THE START

Choosing a school is a huge undertaking for any job-hunting teacher, says **Sue Cowley**, so what are the most important considerations?

**W**hether you are looking for your first teaching post, or thinking of moving on from your current role, job hunting is always an exciting and nervous time. Because of the nature of teaching, and the likelihood that you will stay in a school for at least a few years, you will want to find exactly the right role for you. Children benefit from continuity, too, and it is therefore preferable for teachers not to move schools too frequently.

This means that it is crucial to do your research, and to take time to consider whether a job is right for you long-term before you accept it. The Education Policy Institute recently noted that “many more teachers now plan to quit the profession than before Covid-19 struck” and that a surge in applications for teacher training courses mid pandemic is now over. Anecdotally, primary headteachers are reporting that they receive one or two applications for a post, and sometimes none. Teachers currently appear to be in a good position to find a role that is right for them.

## Personality match

Key to a good choice is to pick a school that aligns with your values. Research consistently demonstrates the importance of a ‘person-organisation fit’ for retention, i.e. a match between your values and those of your place of work. For instance, it would be difficult to teach in a school where you have to use scripted lessons, prewritten plans and ready-made schemes, if a desire to be creative is important for you. Centralised approaches are often linked to workload reduction, so you may need to decide whether agency takes priority over workload.

## Take your time

The question of what school to choose is particularly tricky for new teachers, because you have limited experience on which to base your decision. A combination of nerves around not wanting to be without a job in your first year, and feeling grateful to be offered a post, can lead new teachers to leap at the first opportunity offered. This can sometimes be a cause for regret after the event.

From September 2021, statutory induction changed for new teachers. Instead of one year as ‘newly qualified teachers’ (NQTs), teachers now have a funded entitlement to two years of professional development as ‘early career teachers’ (ECTs). The induction period takes place over two years, with the ‘early career framework’ offering an outline of what will be learned.

This means that if you are looking for your first job, you need to be sure that the school is committed to supporting you. Ideally, you want to complete your induction within the one school,

because you should build up an ongoing relationship with your mentor. You could ask questions at interview about the support offered to new teachers and who your induction mentor and induction tutor will be.

Although it can seem early to think about career progression when you are a new teacher, good quality staff tend to be asked to ‘move up’ rapidly. Consider the kind of opportunities that might come your way within the school. Would a small or large school be better for the career path you envisage?

## Keep it balanced

For some teachers, an offer of flexible working is key to choosing the right post. In the DfE’s Recruitment and Retention Strategy, published in 2019, flexible working was suggested as a key strategy for attracting the best range of candidates. Even if the post is not advertised as being flexible or part time, there is no harm in asking if this matters to you.

Clearly you will read the school website, the policies, and the most recent Ofsted report, to get an overview of what the school is like. Headteachers always appreciate candidates who ask to visit ahead of interview, because it shows a keen interest in the setting. However, when it comes to finding out about a school, there is nothing to beat local word of mouth. Keep your ear to the ground, and an eye on parent social media groups, to get a true sense of what your potential new employer is really like. **TP**



*Sue Cowley is a teacher trainer, early years teacher and author of more than 30 books for teachers. She has helped to run her local early years setting for over a decade. To find out more visit [suecowley.co.uk](http://suecowley.co.uk)*



## INSIDE THIS SECTION



Jo Cummins delves into the life of a Viking warrior in this non-fiction adventure book...



Support children as they get their facts straight, with Sue Drury's guide to non-chronological reports...



Not sure how to choose which tier 2 words to teach? Ruth Baker-Leask has the answers...

## →→→ RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

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## Meet the AUTHOR



All children deserve the right to get lost in a story they love, says **Jen Carney**. For this to be a reality, we need more libraries

As both a primary school teacher and a mum, I've witnessed first-hand the positive impact reading for pleasure has on children's wellbeing and achievement. Books offer inspiration, escape, and the opportunity to step into someone else's shoes or see ourselves in the characters we connect with. Children who read for pleasure have better life chances, get better grades and report higher levels of wellbeing. And after the last few years all children deserve to be given the opportunity to let their imaginations run wild.

It was a complaint from my son that drove me to write the first draft of *The Accidental Dairy of B.U.G.* At the time, the only kinds of books he'd read independently were laugh-out-loud funny, highly accessible and often heavily illustrated. The sort of books you would hope to find in school libraries. He asked me: "Why do the main characters in these types of books never have two mums or two dads?". The stories he was reading didn't match his reality. After failing to source a book that fit the bill, I wrote one. I created a protagonist whose life vaguely represented his experience of being adopted by two mums – he loved it. It satisfied his hunger to see himself in a book.

And don't all children deserve access to literature in which they can find belonging? Where they can find

the real magic of reading so often lacking from prescribed schemes?

### Losing libraries

Of course they do. This is why I was so shocked to learn that 40 per cent of primary schools have no dedicated library budget, according to research by the National Literacy Trust. Where do these children find books they can read for pleasure? And I mean properly read for the sheer pleasure of getting lost in an adventure; being transported to another world; connecting with a character so much that they can't wait to discover what happens next. Where do these pupils find stories they can see themselves in?

The problem is only compounded in disadvantaged communities where one in four schools don't have a library or designated reading space, compared to the national average of one in eight.

School libraries have a proven positive impact on all areas of primary pupils' learning, including the development of reading and writing skills, wellbeing, and overall academic attainment. Recent economic analysis has also shown supporting reading for pleasure can result in more children achieving five good GCSEs, in turn boosting their lifetime earnings by an average of £57,500.

Social and economic disadvantages are reinforced when the poorest families don't





have access to books in their homes. The reading skills of the poorest children are up to 18 months behind those of their better-off peers – a literacy attainment gap that has worsened due to Covid-19 and associated lockdowns. How can we give children equal opportunities no matter their background when so many are held back?

During the pandemic there was an understandable focus on digital access for online learning – and as a mum, I experienced the joy of home schooling first-hand! But there has been no such focus on access to books for the recovery, or as part of the government's 'Levelling Up' or 'Build Back Better' policies. Many schools and teachers now have even less time and resource to focus on their libraries when their routines have been turned upside down, and with the added pressure of catching up on curriculum learning. Like the digital divide, the lack of access to books or opportunities to read for pleasure is essentially one of social inequality.

In disadvantaged areas or schools that don't have libraries, children are

left relying on their local public libraries, their parents or guardians purchasing books, or their teachers buying them with their own personal funds. Not all neighbourhoods have a public library anymore, many families can't afford to purchase books regularly when already making difficult choices on a daily basis, and, as wonderful as regularly forking out for books for your pupils is (I've been there), this is not a solution for the masses.

### Building book budgets

I was pleased to hear that the National Literacy Trust and Penguin Random House UK have launched a national alliance to address the chronic lack of investment in primary school libraries. The two organisations are calling for large-scale public and private funding, alongside collaboration from other charities, publishers, and ambassadors, to transform and equip 1,000 primary school libraries by 2025. This will support half a million pupils over the next four years. A fantastic step forward in enabling access to literature.

This is the first – and most important – step, but for those schools that are lucky to have libraries and resources, how can we engage reluctant readers? In my opinion, there are several key features of a book that can help to appeal to children usually disinclined to read for pleasure.

The format of the book is incredibly important – early attention-grabbing content and short chapters easily finished in one sitting will be key to maintaining children's interest and giving them a sense of accomplishment. I've never come across a child who wasn't thrilled to have found a book they actually enjoy reading, and a proudly announced "I've finished a whole chapter!" is a moment to be celebrated.

The content of the book is just as important. For many reluctant readers I have taught over the years, a full page of text was a real turn-off. Some children just feel too overwhelmed by dense paragraphs of words page after page and give up. Packing a book with doodles, interactive pages and activity ideas gives the readers a nice little break, despite these parts of the story still involving reading skills.

In my experience, the LOL-factor can be a magnet for many reluctant readers, too, as books are often competing with games consoles or phones for attention. Stories with funny speech bubbles, daft doodles, blatant jokes and the odd amusing hyperbole can help to make children laugh, which should never be underestimated!

Finally, a relatable and inspirational protagonist or cast of characters is crucial. Many reluctant readers enjoy reading about someone who's a bit like them. Research from Penguin Books and the Runnymede Trust for their 'Lit in Colour' campaign recently found that 51 per cent of young people agree that the English literature curriculum doesn't reflect the diversity of society today, and 41.2 per cent of them had not read a single book for pleasure in the last 12 months. This shows how stark the lack of representation is in the curriculum and the impact that subsequently has on young people's propensity to read outside of the classroom.

And that's the aim. Providing kids with stories they can relate to, and lose themselves in. That's the joy of reading. **TP**



*The Accidental Diary of B.U.G.: Sister Act*, written and illustrated by Jen Carney (£6.99, Penguin) is out now.

# CAN'T FIND THE RIGHT WORD?

What vocabulary should you be teaching your pupils?  
These strategies will help you decide

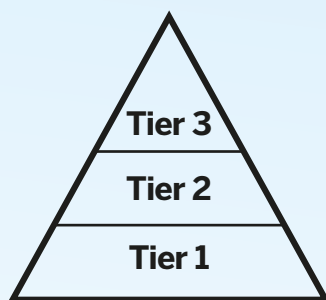
RUTH BAKER-LEASK

There are over a million words in the English language, so it is no wonder that teachers feel overwhelmed when choosing the words to form the focus of their vocabulary teaching. I'm going to tell you about some simple strategies that can help with this, but never forget that many of the words we chose to use ourselves are 'caught' from the books we read and the language-rich environment in which we live, so use every opportunity to model your own expertise in using language and words.

Let's start with a very popular resource. I have noticed that many schools are now familiar with the tiered vocabulary framework, created by education researchers Isabel Beck and Margaret McKeown. This is a great place to start because of the useful way it categorises words:

**TIER 1** – everyday, familiar words for those children who speak English as their primary language. These are often 'caught' rather than learned through direct instruction.

**TIER 2** – high-frequency, impactful language encountered more often when reading than used when speaking. These words are



useful in multiple contexts and help children express themselves clearly and with precision. These are the words that you should be directly teaching during English lessons (and beyond).

**TIER 3** – The words we use when talking and writing about specific subjects or a particular field of study.

This framework is a useful guide when selecting words, and we have become experts at spotting tier two language in a text, but this can still leave us with an unmanageable amount of words to focus on.

So what else might we use as a measure of a word's usefulness?

## High-value words (tier 2)

The direct teaching of tier 2 words will broaden children's vocabularies. While planning a Year 5 teaching sequence on *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell recently, I stumbled across several tier 2 words in the space of one paragraph: *summon*, *cascaded*, *assumed*, *compulsory*, and *exasperate*, to name but a few! It would take a week's worth of lessons to study all of these words; time which we just don't have to spare. So, how do we decide on our focus? Answering these questions can help:

- Which words are most useful to the children? Are any of the words transferable to other subjects or scenarios already familiar to pupils, allowing them to use these words more frequently?

For example, *summon* and *compulsory* can both be related to a school context: it is *compulsory* to attend when *summoned* by the headteacher.

- Which words are vital to understanding the plot? For example, *cascaded* describes the motion of a fast-moving river, and therefore impacts on the main characters' decision regarding the safety of building a raft.
- Which words are the children likely to understand most easily? Choosing words for which there is a simple definition can help to save time.



## *“If you want children to have a more expressive vocabulary, they must care about words.”*

• Do any of the words have interesting histories (etymology), and will studying the morphology (root, prefixes and suffixes) of the word be of interest?

A wise combination of these factors can help clarify the process of choosing the ‘right’ words to study.

### Book talk

Sometimes, choosing words to focus on can depend on the text you’re using. For instance, *The Explorer* traces the adventures of four children stranded in the rainforest, following a fatal plane crash. This, of course, is an experience you would hope the children do not have first-hand experience of! Bearing that in mind, there may

be additional words that become your focus for vocabulary instruction; words that are not necessarily part of the text itself but will help the children talk about it. For example: *tropical, vegetation, humidity, peril, jeopardy, and quest*.

One way you can test whether a word might be classified as tier 2 is to imagine its tier 1 counterpart. In this case, rather than *peril* or *jeopardy* the children might say *danger*. A *quest* may be replaced by a *hunt* or a *journey*.

### Morphology and etymology

Learning word families – that is, words that share a common root – is an important part of broadening vocabulary. It can be useful to look out for such words when reading. In this case, when looking at the word

*assume*, I would focus on the root ‘-sume’ which means to take up (derived from the Latin ‘sumere’). To assume is to take meaning from something but this is just the start:

*Consume*: to take and use up, e.g. Being hungry, he *consumed* his lunch with vigor!

*Presume*: to take onboard a thought or believe something without proof, e.g. I *presumed* you weren’t coming and yet here you are!

*Subsume*: to take something in or absorb something, e.g. All of the information was *subsumed* under one heading.

And there’s more...

Some of the other words in the passage from *The Explorer* also have interesting roots, and although exploring this will take some internet research, you will be expanding your own knowledge of words and how they work as well as the children’s. For example: *compulsory* has its root in the word *compel* which means to drive together (from the Latin *com*, meaning together, and *pollere*, to drive). This provides a number of options for how you might dive deeper into this word, such as:

- How many words can you find with the prefix ‘com’ that relate to togetherness? E.g. *combine, community, comfort, and communicate*.
- Can you add further affixes to the words above to create other words in the same word family? E.g. *combination, telecommunication*.
- Think about the meanings of the following words: *connect, congregate, concord*. Does the prefix ‘con-’ have the same

meaning as ‘com-’? How do you know?

Now, you are not going to study every word at this level of detail, but showing an interest and delving a bit deeper when the opportunity arises, will not only broaden children’s knowledge of words, but also their interest in how language works.

I know that the words above actually have multiple, nuanced meanings that are not represented here, but language is tricky and sometimes simplifying definitions, as long as you don’t lose the meanings along the way, can help children understand how to use the word. Based on my basic definitions you can see that each involves *taking* or *taking in* something – be it information, ideas or food. And you don’t need to be Susie Dent to plan such activities, there are many reputable websites that list root words and their meanings.

### Language is fun

Finally, be vigilant for those words that children just like the sound of. Learning language should be fun and I often find myself talking about how, if you really want children to have a more expressive vocabulary, they must care about words and language; they must become ‘word nerds’! We focus on word meanings and usage but sometimes it is just as important to ask the children what words interest them (regardless of their root or tier) and take it from there. **TP**



*A former primary head, Ruth Baker-Leask is director of Minerva Learning and chair of the National Association of Advisers in English (NAAE). To discover more, including a range of teaching approaches and activities, please head to [Plazoom \(tinyurl.com/tp-VocabCPD\)](http://Plazoom.com/tp-VocabCPD) and watch our Building Brilliant Vocabulary videos, made in partnership with the National Literacy Trust.*



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# Money Heroes

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"I will certainly be thinking about how we can embed financial education into our curriculum and possibly deliver a themed day or week in the Summer term."

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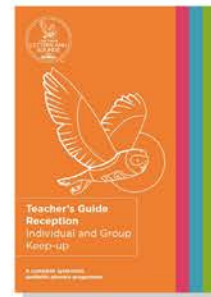
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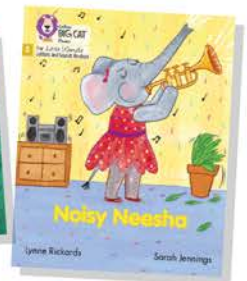
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# Report for duty

Support children as they get their facts straight, with this guide to presenting information clearly and accurately

SUE DRURY

**I**n a world where unsubstantiated ideas can seemingly be tossed around like confetti, it feels more important than ever to be able to coach children in the discipline of collating and presenting accurate information. The bedrock of factual writing at Key Stage 1 and 2 is the non-chronological report – so here are some tips to help you teach this crucial genre in your classroom.

## What's the deal?

Writing a non-chronological report is all about describing things the way they are. Although it might deal with historical information, the key is in presenting the current state of knowledge without necessarily worrying about the order in which things happened or were discovered. So, for example, you could write about either African animals or Roman gods as non-chronological reports – even though the latter would be part of a history topic – because they would both reflect our current understanding.

## Order, order

The absence of a chronological arrangement of ideas in a report does not mean an absence of order. The information has to be presented to the reader in a way that makes sense and is easy to follow – and to achieve that, you need a plan. In order to know how to successfully plan a non-chronological report before writing one, it will really help for pupils to see what they're aiming for. Make sure your archive of model/WAGOLL texts has a good representation of factual articles – such as those you can find in Plazoom's Real Writing curriculum (see panel) – so

children can get used to picking out key features of the writing.

## Find the features

Obviously, the expectations will be different depending on the age group, but some aspects of non-chronological reports are pretty constant, such as the arrangement of the available material. Headings and subheadings will be useful for this from KS1 onwards, sometimes worded as correctly punctuated question sentences.

As they grow in confidence and competence, pupils should begin to group information logically into different paragraphs, using the correct verb tense or tenses to express their points. Other grammatical features can be introduced at the appropriate age level. You can also promote the use of layout devices such as illustrations, tables, bullet points and maybe even the odd fact file.

## Plan to succeed

The effective organisation of the material will absolutely depend on the quality of the plan. There are plenty of ways of doing this but a key feature of non-chronological reports in

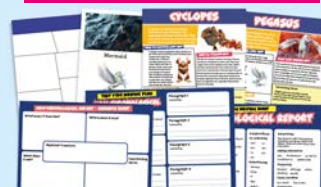
whichever style is used will be the corraling of information into different sections. This is also a great genre for practising the art of writing brief notes, and giving children permission not to compose full sentences in this context.

## A good read

As you model how to write a non-chronological report for pupils, as well as going through key features, do make sure you also place an emphasis on writing in an engaging way that really demonstrates an understanding of the audience. After all, 'non-fiction' should not be a synonym for 'dry and functional'!

Above all, you want to make sure that your KS1 and KS2 students understand the importance of facts and respect the need to convey information clearly and accurately. With any luck, not only will they blossom into effective writers, but they will also be better at judging what they are reading with a critical eye. Hopefully, we will then create a generation of people who are better at knowing when they can trust the information with which they are being presented. **TP**

### NON-CHRONOLOGICAL REPORT WRITING



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[bit.ly/PlazoomNC2](http://bit.ly/PlazoomNC2)

Use the model texts and planning sheets to inspire factual writing on animals in KS1



[bit.ly/PlazoomNC3](http://bit.ly/PlazoomNC3)

This three-week teaching unit for Y5 focuses on how Roman architecture still influences today's landscapes



*Sue Drury is literacy lead at Plazoom, the expert literacy resources*

*website. Find more advice at [plazoom.com/blog](http://plazoom.com/blog)*



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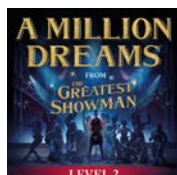
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# music class

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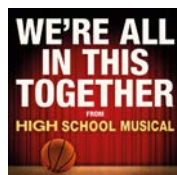
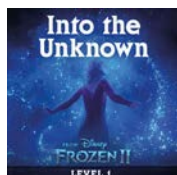
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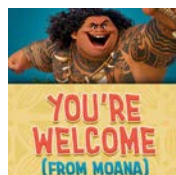
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Published by Walker  
Books, 2022

# Viking Boy: The Real Story

Step into a warrior's shoes and learn about everything from sacred spells to longboat life with this *Viking Boy* companion by **Tony Bradman**

**JO CUMMINS**

**T**ony Bradman is a prolific and well-respected children's writer, and his books feature in countless classrooms and libraries up and down the country. But the one I've seen used the most across KS2 is his epic adventure, *Viking Boy*, which stars son of a Viking chieftain, Gunnar, and follows him on his journey to avenge his father's death and rescue his

mother from Skuli and his Wolf Men. It's full of the actions, battles, and excitement you would expect from an author as exciting as Bradman!

Fans of this book will be delighted to know that there is now a non-fiction companion guide to accompany this novel, which allows readers to take an immersive tour of Gunnar's world. *Viking Boy: The Real Story* is a fantastic illustrated guide

to Viking life as described by Gunnar. Learn how the Vikings lived, how gender roles were divided, and how they gained their status as legendary warriors (plus many other things besides). It's an ideal book to dip into at leisure, with enough nuggets of information within its pages to satisfy any aspiring Viking raider.

Let's take a tour with Gunnar and dive deeper into *Viking Boy*'s pages...



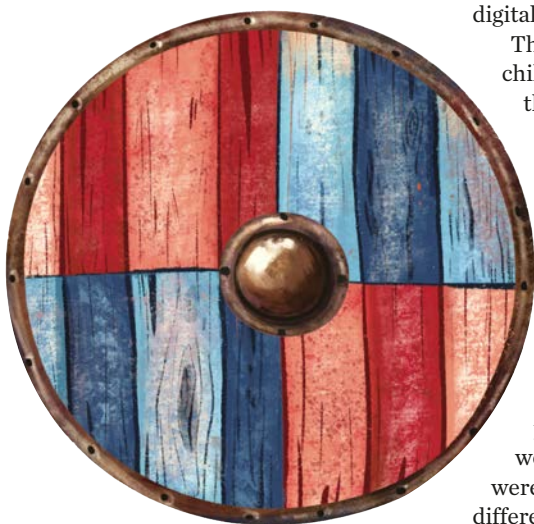
## Sharing and talking about the book

### Shape shifting

On page 11 of the book, readers are encouraged to become another creature, as Vikings believed that humans could shape-shift into different forms. In this instance, we become eagles soaring over the land below.

Read the description of what the eagle sees. Ask the children to underline any descriptive phrases, words, or figurative language that captures their interest or about which they have questions. Note which landmarks the eagle flew over. Discuss what they have found and magpie good examples to use in their writing later.

What other animals would have been around in Viking times? Share some examples (wolves, reindeer, boars, seals, elk etc.) How would the same landscape look from their perspective? What would be the same? What would be different?



What else would it be interesting to get an 'animal's-eye' view of? How about a longhouse or a steading? Or perhaps a Viking longship setting off on a raid? What are the key geographical features an animal would see?

After some research, children could then go on to write their own descriptions from the perspective of an animal of their choosing and in a location of their choice. Try and include lots of interesting descriptive phrases and perhaps some figurative language too.

## Activities

### Viking jobs Venn sort

On pages 30–31 and 34–35, we are given lots of information about the kinds of jobs male and female Vikings would have been expected to do. Make cards with all the different jobs on for pupils to sort into two overlapping Venn hoops – one for jobs men were expected to do, one for jobs assigned to females, and one for both, overlapping in the middle. This could be done as a class or in pairs, on paper or digitally, depending on your preference.

The first time around, have the children sort the cards without reading the text. You could then take a photo of their arrangement, ready to be compared to their second attempt.

Now it's time to share the text! Ask the children to re-sort the roles according to the information they've just read. Have any of the jobs moved? Are there any that surprised them?

To encourage further discussion, ask the class "Would you have preferred to be a man or a woman in Viking times? Why? How were expected gender roles the same or different to now?"

## Viking warrior women

I am sure pupils will be surprised to discover there is now evidence to suggest that there may have been Viking warrior women. As the children would already know, if they've explored traditional Viking job roles, it was usually the men of the village who went to war and fought.

In light of the recent discovery that a warrior found in a grave in Birka, Sweden, was female, challenge the pupils to find out more and create a fact-file. They may like to consider the following points:

- Where was the grave found?
- What artefacts were discovered within it?
- Why do archaeologists believe this was the grave of a warrior?
- What made them believe the warrior was female?

## Viking burials

Pages 67–69 look at the rituals surrounding Viking burials. There is some detail about the burials for warriors, but what about people with other roles? Ask children to draw on their knowledge of life in a Viking village and create a list of the jobs people would have had. If warriors were buried with swords and treasure, what items might other people be buried with to give clues as to what they did during life?

Children should create a labelled diagram of a Viking grave for their chosen worker. Think carefully about what clothing they might be buried in, where their grave would be positioned, and what objects will be put with them to take to the afterlife. Ensure notes are added to explain each item's significance. You could even encourage pupils to create a model of their Viking's grave in an empty tub or box.

## Take it further → → →

### FEELING ARTISTIC?

Vikings were incredibly skilled craftspeople, creating intricate knotted designs in jewellery and word carvings. Take a look at the door post carvings shown on page 28 and the artefacts on page 32. Encourage children to look carefully at the patterns and motifs used. Can they spot any lines of symmetry or perhaps rotational symmetry?

Now pupils are going to design and make a special brooch for their family or tribe. If they choose to use animal motifs, think carefully about what the

animal they've chosen might symbolise, e.g. a dragon could represent bravery or strength. Will they need to leave space in the centre to embed a precious jewel to show their wealth and status? They will also need to ensure they feature some type of symmetry – squared paper, mirrors, and tracing paper will help with this!

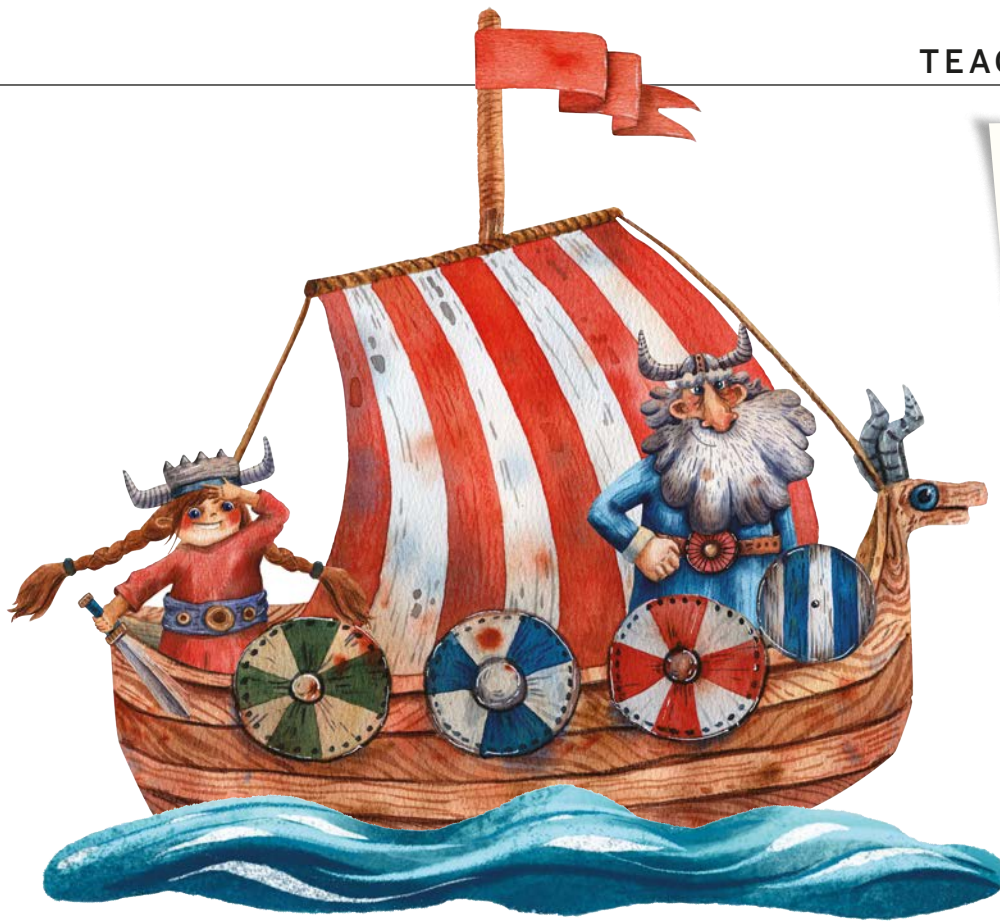
There are several mediums they could use to create their brooches – string glued carefully onto card then spray painted is one, though clay and metallic paint is my preferred method.

These designs would also look very effective as tile prints. Use polystyrene tiles, semi-sharp pencils, rollers and printing ink.

### SWORDS

No self-respecting Viking warrior would be seen without their sword. In the 'Way of the Warrior' chapter, we learn a lot about the armour and weapons Vikings would have had and the craftsmanship that went into making them. Viking swords were bestowed great power via special spells, represented by runes. The





## Loved this? Try these...

- ❖ *Odd and the Frost Giants* by Neil Gaiman (I love the version which is illustrated by Chris Riddell)
- ❖ *Loki – A Bad God's Guide to Being Good* by Louie Stowell
- ❖ *She Wolf* by Dan Smith
- ❖ *The Monster Slayer* by Brian Patten
- ❖ *Viking Voyagers* by Jack Tite

events are represented. Note also the balance of text to images, and the use of foreground, midground, and background in each frame.

Give pupils the extract you'd like them to represent (everyone could have the same, or different groups could focus on different sections). Asking pupils to represent events in this way provides an excellent opportunity to assess their understanding of the story and of Viking life. Have they managed to correctly capture the key events, characters, and settings? Are the buildings, clothing, boats and other details historically accurate? Are there areas of teaching that need to be revisited?



*Jo Cummins is an experienced KS2 teacher, English lead, and children's book blogger. She has been part of the judging panel for several children's book awards and has delivered workshops at conferences around the country.*

[@BookSuperhero2](https://twitter.com/BookSuperhero2)

[LibraryGirlAndBookBoy.com](http://LibraryGirlAndBookBoy.com)

## The way of the warrior

Viking warriors are a topic of perennial interest, with children often becoming great experts on the subject. After reading the relevant sections in Bradman's book, ask pupils to create a job advertisement for the post of Viking warrior. Make sure you look at more traditional job ads first and note the type of information requested.

If you were trying to recruit new warriors for your village, what qualities would they need to have? Think about: physical attributes, character and temperament, skills, previous experience, weaponry.

This could be extended to the role of chieftain or farmer etc, and then used to create a 'Jobs' page for *The Viking Times*.

## A graphic retelling

Several Norse Gods and myths are referenced throughout the book. Vikings were well-known as fantastic storytellers, reciting epic tales of bravery and monsters by firelight. Select one of the myths or stories mentioned in the book (Thor versus the Frost Giants, one of Loki's tricky tales, or perhaps learn about the Nornir, who speak in riddles and decide everyone's destiny).

Once pupils have had time to explore the selected story, ask them to create a graphic novel-style layout for some of the key events. If they haven't had much experience of graphic novels before, make sure the children have time to look at a selection to get a feel for the style and how

smith would then carve these secret runes onto the blade.

Children would love creating spells to imbue their own (cardboard) swords with great power, and what better way to do this than through a kenning? Kennings are full of alliteration, rhyme, and figurative language. For example, a 'gold-giver' could be a generous chieftain, or a 'sky-candle' could be the sun. Swords were often named in a similar fashion such as 'death-bringer' or 'flesh-splitter.'

Encourage the children to think of suitably blood-curdling names for their swords which they can then use to begin and end their kennings. Challenge

them to describe the actions of their blades in battle in a similar format until they have their complete kenning (or sword-magic.) These could then be displayed alongside replica swords.

## SETTING SAIL

Vikings were well-known for their daring raids abroad thanks to their longships, but how much do children really know about their crews and the conditions onboard? Read the beginning of chapter five – Fire and Plunder, and take time to familiarise pupils with the key features of a longboat and discuss the roles of the various crew members. To really

breathe life into the perilous journey involved in crossing the oceans to pillage monasteries, get the class to roleplay setting sail to England.

Organise pupils into groups and assign them roles in the crew to do research. They may also like to create some basic props. When they have had time to learn more about their jobs, encourage the groups to script and perform a brief scene where each crew member is discharging their duties. Think about who would need to speak or may remain silent. Alternatively, groups could create a 'freeze frame' of life aboard ship which clearly shows what each crew member is doing.





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The image features a large, bold white number '6' set against a solid red background. To the right of the number is a cover of the magazine 'teach PRIMARY'. The cover is predominantly red and white, with a photograph of a smiling young boy in a school uniform. Text on the cover includes 'teach PRIMARY', 'United We Teach', 'No more Sunday cup of tea', 'What are you up to with topics?', and '500+ STORIES & RESEARCH'. There are also smaller headlines like 'Faster than a rocket' and '500+ STORIES & RESEARCH'.

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# Top of the class

Resources and activities to bring fresh inspiration into your classroom

## The rise of Rekenrek

Originating in the Netherlands and used effectively in several other countries, Rekenreks or 'number racks' have recently risen to fame here as part of the DfE / NCETM

Mastering Number programme. They are a fabulous resource for encouraging progression from counting to subitising and then on to calculating. Autopress Education has supplied these resources to UK schools for 20 years and has the widest range of related resources. In addition to the child's Rekenrek, Autoexpress supplies two different demonstration versions including screens for 'hiding' beads, as well as two support books written by Rekenrek specialists. Find out more at [autopresseducation.co.uk](http://autopresseducation.co.uk)



1



2



## Essential Elements

Hal Leonard's Essential Elements Music Class (EEMC) is the new online solution for primary music that everyone's talking about. Affordable, inspiring, and simple to use, EEMC provides a bank of learning resources for over 500 of the best-known songs from pop, film, and musical theatre. Songs that children know and love are appropriately arranged and bursting with interactive tools. EEMC also offers ready-made classroom music lessons for ages six–11, digital whole-class instrumental methods, and a host of interactive learning tools such as a virtual music-book library, listening maps, and classroom playlists. With whole-school access only £99/year, EEMC offers affordable access to hundreds of popular song resources to enhance singing strategies, and so much more! Sign up for a 30-day free trial at [eemusicclass.com](http://eemusicclass.com)

3



## Book-based literacy

When pupils open a book, they enter new realms of excitement and wonder. Now, your whole classroom can be part of the adventure! Used by over 35,000 teachers, the Literary Curriculum is an award-winning book-based approach to literacy which immerses children in expertly chosen, high-quality texts, providing meaningful contexts for primary English, and nurturing critical readers and confident writers from the first page. School members have access to over 300 book-based resources for writing, reading comprehension and spelling as well as resources for catch-up and home-learning. [Literarycurriculum.co.uk](http://Literarycurriculum.co.uk)

## DfE validated phonics

Trusted by teachers and loved by children, Jolly Phonics is delighted to announce that it has been validated by the Department for Education as a complete systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme. This means that with its interactive and fun daily lesson plans, alongside a vast range of decodable readers, training options and so much more, it meets the 16 essential core criteria required by the DfE. With a systematic and progressive approach, Jolly Phonics empowers teachers to transform children's literacy ability, enabling them to get their children reading and writing confidently and fluently, embedding key phonics, spelling, punctuation and grammar. [jollylearning.co.uk](http://jollylearning.co.uk)



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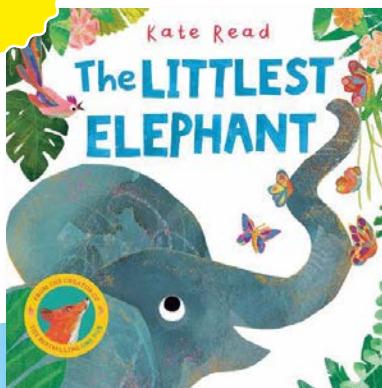
## Recycle mini whiteboards

Mini whiteboards are a sustainable alternative to endless reams of paper or space in notebooks, but what should you do with them at the end of their lifespan? Why not recycle your mini whiteboards, drywipe pens and whiteboard erasers with us! All suitable boards will get turned into new whiteboards, and those that aren't suitable may be restored and donated to charities overseas. All plastic Show-me whiteboards made since 2014 are fully recyclable and made in the UK using UK manufacturing. Register your interest in our free scheme at [show-meboards.com/recycling-scheme](http://show-meboards.com/recycling-scheme)

# Book CLUB

*We review five new titles that your class will love*

**KS1**

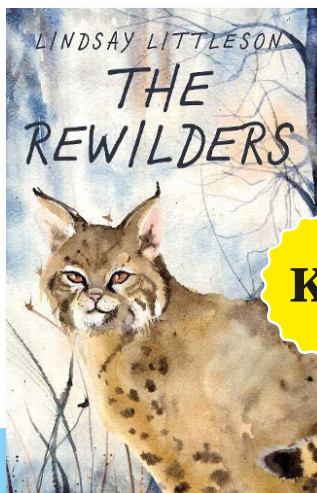


## ***The Littlest Elephant***

**by Kate Read**

**(£12.99 HB, Two Hoots Books)**

We've all heard plenty about how we should slow down and take the time to enjoy life, especially since the beginning of the pandemic. But there's an extra urgency to the idea when faced with an excitable baby elephant! Ellie, the littlest elephant, is in such a hurry to get in the pool that she's causing chaos through the jungle. Stomping right through everything in her path, and leaving a big old mess for other animals to clean up, she doesn't realise the kind of impact she's having. Only when she very nearly squashes a tiny mouse in her stampede, does Ellie learn the value of a gentler pace, and taking the time to help others. Filled throughout with colourful and joyous illustrations, this is a sweet moral for those children with a penchant for the zoomies, and a bit of validation for the mouse-like quiet ones; there's something for everyone, here.



**KS2**

## ***The Rewilders***

**by Lindsay Littleton**

**(£7.99, Cranachan)**

When Esme goes to stay with her gran for the weekend, 'in the middle of nowhere', missing out on her best friend Isobel's very cool party (DJ included) all seems lost. But, when Esme figures out that Cora, the abandoned kitten her gran has found on a nearby estate is in fact a wild lynx kit, suddenly she's on a dangerous mission to rewild her. This is a gripping story that takes the reader on a ride through the atmospheric Scottish Highlands, encountering everything from the local 'bad boy' Callum Doherty, to the worst-ever guard dog, Shug, and even some wolves! Meanwhile, the narrative also explores difficult topics that children are a lot more likely to encounter, such as the importance of conservation and complex family dynamics. Definitely one for the animal lovers in your class, this is a lovely read for older children.



**KS1**

## ***Piano Fingers***

**by Caroline Magerl**

**(£12.99 HB, Walker Books)**

There is a very particular joy in music, especially for children. And Bea is no different. Her box of 'noisy noises' contains untold possibilities – some of which her sister Isla is none too pleased about. But the real magic starts when Bea discards her tiny triangle and finds the 'baby mountain' of the piano. Follow the flowing and energetic illustrations through the book, and join Bea, Isla and their very talented cat, Maestro Gus, on their musical adventure of binks, tinkles, and crashtinkles. The joyful language speaks in the metaphors and similes of truly moving music, leaving the tingling feeling of your favourite song. With only a few words on each spread, you'll want to take the time to pore over this book and delve into Bea and Isla's chaotic, wonderful, musical life. This is a great addition to story time, or as inspiration for a music lesson.



→→→ **RECOMMENDED**

## RESOURCES



### GET SPELLING SORTED!

With Plazoom's Spelling Workouts resource collection, you get bright, engaging worksheets covering every spelling pattern, CEW and SSW

from Y1 to Y6 – giving children the chance to embed their learning and put it into action in a fun, creative context. Take a look for yourself, at [tinyurl.com/SpellingWorkouts](https://tinyurl.com/SpellingWorkouts)



**KS2**

### *Epic Adventures*

by Sam Sedgman, ill. Sam Brewster

(£12.99 HB, Pan Macmillan)

Whether it's the beginning of an exciting holiday, or even just your daily commute home, there is something comforting about the gentle rocking of a train (provided you can get a seat!). It's this classic interpretation of train-as-portal that Sedgman and Brewster explore in this colourful and informative tome. From the Eurostar and the Trans-Siberian express to the Tokaido Shinkansen and the California Zephyr (cue the Red Hot Chilli Peppers), this book reveals some of the rich history, culture, landscape and wildlife across six continents, 34 countries and countless cities through 12 of the world's most amazing real-life train journeys. Whether you tie it into geography, history, science, English, maths, or others, you'll learn innumerable facts as well as enjoying the sprawling and detailed illustrations. Buckle up!



**KS1/2**

### *I Love You Like Yellow*

by Andrea Beaty, ill. Vashti Harrison

(£12.99, Abrams Books)

Never mind red roses, blue violets, or sweet sugar; shady, stormy and bouncy are the new ways to express love. In this astonishing picture book, we get to explore the many different iterations of this most coveted of emotions, and how it can permeate and enhance even the duller parts of our lives. The simple poetry in *I Love You Like Yellow* only adds to its poignancy, complemented beautifully by Harrison's heart-warming illustrations. Get comfy and dive into the pages, where you'll find depictions of all sorts of families in all sorts of situations, helping to spark conversations about the differences we all have, the variety of human life, and how sometimes what separates us can actually bring us together. A spectacular addition to your bookshelf (whether in school or at home!), this has 'modern classic' written all over it.

## Meet the author

**ANDREA BEATY ON WHAT LOVE SOUNDS LIKE, AND THE BEAUTY OF CLASSIC RHYTHMS**



What was the inspiration behind *I Love You Like Yellow*?

I wrote *I Love You Like Yellow* back in 2006 after reading a string of "I

love you" picture books. I've always adored such stories, but they can be pretty sweet. I wondered if they could also be a little tart. Or crunchy. Or crispy. Or silly. Or sad. Love certainly is all those things. Zoom forward a dozen years or so, and I got to meet Vashti Harrison at a conference. After beginning to follow her on Twitter, one day I saw her tweet a beautiful illustration of a girl in a yellow raincoat. The rest, as they say, is history!

**The whole book feels like a classic in the making – did you explicitly write it as such?**

Thank you so much! That's an incredible compliment! My favourite thing, as a parent, will forever be the family reading we shared when my kids were young. Books like *Time for Bed* by Mem Fox and Jane Yager were in constant rotation for our bedtime stories. The rhythm of such books is soothing and reassuring and the perfect way to end the day for the kids, but also for me. When I wrote this book, I was thinking about such books, and also about how to share the most important message a kid can hear: that someone loves them.

**How would you like teachers to use this book in the classroom?**

I love knowing that this book will find its way into classrooms. Especially since it's a very quick read, I think it would be a great book to squeeze into those interstitial moments when you need something quick to calm the class, or fill a few moments before the next thing. I think there are also lots of fun ways it could be used to explore a wide range of topics. I'm excited to see what teachers do!

***I Love you Like Yellow* (£12.99, Abrams Books) is out now.**



*Sue says...*

Got a classroom question? Our resident literacy expert is here to help...



**Q** How can I fold in that new and exciting book all the children are reading without having to re-plan my whole unit?

Mr L., primary teacher

**A** First, I want to congratulate any teacher who is encouraging reading for pleasure in the classroom. That 'buzz' about a new book comes from promoting new and exciting titles and allowing time for 'book talk' so children can recommend reading to others. Unfortunately, there is no quick and easy way to produce a unit of work around a new book; however, there are a few ways that you could include it within the unit you are teaching without having to start from scratch:

- Read the book while thinking about the curriculum areas that you will be covering in the unit you would like to include it in, and making notes (my books are full of post-it notes!) for sections that could support the teaching of these areas.
- Choose an extract where the author has used grammar or punctuation well that you are currently teaching. Or there could be an excellent example of character descriptions, use of dialogue or where suspense has been created. Discuss why these choices were made and their effect on the reader.
- Discuss the theme of the book and how it might link with the book or texts used in your current (or past) units.
- Pick a short section of the book where you could focus on key reading skills that you are developing. Perhaps pupils could make inferences about the characters or setting from the information you have read.
- Discuss the story and encourage pupils to share recommendations for books with a similar theme, or by the same author, to encourage book talk in your classroom.
- And finally, continue to promote reading for pleasure by reading to the class for enjoyment. Try spending ten minutes reading the book to the children every day for the pure joy of it!

*Sue is literacy lead at plazoom.com, with over 20 years' teaching and mentoring experience.*

# The plazoom Room

*Ideas, techniques and resources for all your literacy needs*

## Promote mental wellbeing

Talking about mental health has arguably never been more important than it is right now; and often, a good way to start is with a conversation about feelings and how to recognise them. With Mental Health Awareness Week taking place from 9–15 May, why not use this free whole-school resource pack to plan in some lessons on emotional literacy? Pupils in KS1 and KS2 can use the emoji and word cards to identify different feelings and discuss examples of when they, or their friends or family, have experienced them. Question stems are included, too, to encourage children to think about actions and behaviours that could help them cope with difficult emotions, and support others. Inspired by the model text.

**FREE RESOURCE**

Download it at [bit.ly/PlazoomMH](https://bit.ly/PlazoomMH)



## Did you know...?

- One in six children aged five to 16 were identified as having a probable mental health problem in July 2021; that's five children in every class. (Young Minds)
- Research shows that talking about feelings lowers their intensity. (UCLA)
- The theme for this year's Mental Health Awareness week is 'loneliness'.

## 3 more ideas for mental health awareness

**1** 'People who help us grow' – whole-school pack with assembly slides and worksheets  
[bit.ly/Plazoomgrow](https://bit.ly/Plazoomgrow)



**2** 'Spreading kindness' – activities and discussion cards for KS2 pupils  
[bit.ly/PlazoomKind](https://bit.ly/PlazoomKind)



**3** 'Kind classmates' – encourage children in KS1 to complement their peers  
[bit.ly/PlazoomKindClass](https://bit.ly/PlazoomKindClass)







## Print your own...

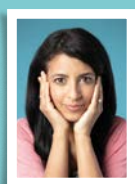
...high frequency words reminders! This cheerful bookmark can be personalised for pupils - nudging them to check the spelling of up to 10 HFW; setting targets; and keeping track of examples of successful usage. Follow the link to download and print off your FREE designed templates to be placed in writing books as a handy prompt.

Find them at [bit.ly/PlazoomHFW](https://bit.ly/PlazoomHFW)



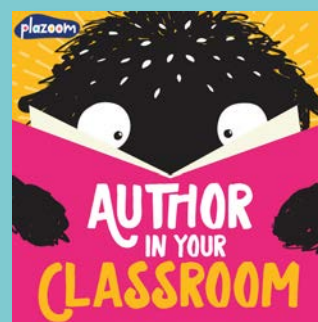
No one wants to teach to the test; but whether we like it or not, SATs are back on the table this year – so why not see how Plazoom could support you in ensuring your Year 6 learners are full of confidence and ready to shine when it's time to sit those papers? From practice packs for the reading assessment test, to activities designed to produce writing that can be marked against the Teacher Assessment Framework, to fun 'revision blasters' that make sure grammar knowledge is secure, Plazoom has you, and your pupils, covered! Explore the full collection at [bit.ly/PlazoomKS2SATs](https://bit.ly/PlazoomKS2SATs)

Of course, it's not just Year 6 facing end-of-phase assessments in May – and Plazoom has some great KS1 SATs revision resources, too; including practice packs based on fabulous model texts by children's author Mike Davies. Take a look at [bit.ly/PlazoomKS1SATs](https://bit.ly/PlazoomKS1SATs)



Konnie Huq is the longest-serving female presenter of *Blue Peter*, having presented the programme from 1997 to 2008.

As well as *Fearless Fairy Tales*, Konnie has written a series of three books about a marvellously madcap 10-year-old called *Cookie*.



Cet children writing their very own subversive narratives with Konnie Huq! Thanks to this free podcast, recorded especially for schools, your class can enjoy a 'virtual author visit' from Konnie herself as she talks with host Helen Mulley about *Fearless Fairy Tales* – her book of smart, funny and gloriously diverse retellings of well-known traditional stories. After sharing the episode, the free resource pack has everything you need to deliver a series of lessons based on what children have heard, leading to an extended – and empowering – writing outcome.

Listen to this episode and download your free teaching resources at [bit.ly/PlazoomKonnie](https://bit.ly/PlazoomKonnie)

## Hack your class!



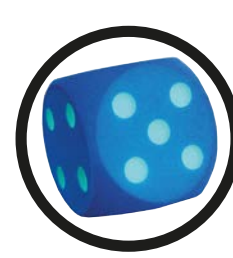
### Visualisers!

Need to share an illustration in a book? Want to show some excellent work or model editing? Planning to demo a skill in an art lesson? Pop it under the visualiser (a webcam will also do the job).



### Noisy class?

Display a traffic light visual at the front stating different noise levels (silent; paired/group chat; playground) and tell pupils the level of noise you expect.



### And reducing noise further...

Dice are a great resource for maths but can create a lot of noise when used with a whole class. Invest in foam dice, you'll never go back!

# HEALTH & WELLBEING SPECIAL

## INSIDE THIS SECTION



LGBT+ inclusive bullying policies benefit all pupils. Here's how you can develop your own...



Not sure how to bolster confidence and improve attainment? Online tutoring could be the answer...



Don't miss our maths special, on sale 20th May

# MOVIN' ON UP

Tie in everything from literacy to citizenship with these six ideas to shake up your PE lessons...

**W**ellbeing's never been higher on the agenda, so active time is more important than ever. However, pupil confidence is more exposed in a PE environment, so being inclusive while nurturing the passion of the high achievers is key. With that in mind, here are six ways to reinvigorate your lesson plans:

## 1. Put down the whistle

PE teaching can be autocratic; a teacher blowing a whistle at children, directing them when to start and stop.

It's much better to blur the lines by making your sessions more child-led. Ask six children (two high ability, two medium and two low) to plan the work out for the following week, which they'll have to lead as a group. Afterwards, ask the rest of the class for feedback and talk about how the session made them feel.

PE is the ideal environment for incorporating child participation. This mutual responsibility can make even disinclined children more motivated. In turn, the approach nurtures coaching and mentoring opportunities as well as leadership skills development. It's amazing how, out of the classroom context, you have the ability to turn the tables in this way.

## 2. Dance to a different tune

Music is a universal language, motivating even the most PE-resistant children. Whether it's classical music accompanying gymnastics, or lively pop

soundtracking your hockey practice, pupils are more likely to move when there's music playing. Even if they're waiting their turn, you'll see their toes tapping and their hips wiggling. They're smiling more and you'll notice a positive ambience.

The music doesn't need to be especially loud, but it's incredible how pupils' outlook changes. I sometimes use music to boost motivation when we have to exercise outside in bad weather. Or I'll let the children select the music themselves. It adds fun and energy to the class.

## 3. Maximise time

I've visited schools where, after you've factored in changing time and explaining or demoing the session, children are moving for just 30 minutes per lesson.

Changing time can be minimised by incentivising getting ready quickly; in other words, if the class get changed and out on to the field in under five minutes, they can plan the warm-up the following week. You'll find they're more stimulated, excited and ready to learn.

Another common issue I face is a dinner hall which needs vacating part-way through the lesson so it can be set up for lunch. Rather than let that bring down the energy of your session, take your cool-down somewhere else. See these as opportunities, not barriers.

## 4. Reverse cross-curricular links

Everyone talks about incorporating physical activity



into other subject lessons, but I like to flip that on its head.

Why not include numeracy by counting out star jumps, or tie in literacy by finding adjectives to describe movements. We can tap into science by talking about heart rate and anatomy, and for PHSE I ask the children to think about respect and democracy and how we can incorporate them into our PE lessons – voting is very popular! I give the children the opportunity to vote for what they'd like to see included in their next session (providing I've seen good behaviour and effort across the board), which nurtures their enthusiasm for the coming lesson.

I also like to link to some less-common sports, whether that's rolling a ball into a hoop with KS1 and introducing curling, or working on pivot movements for KS2 netball, then showing them speed-skating movements and linking them together. PE provides fundamental skills to enable children to participate in a range of sports, as long as they know about them.

## 5. Warm up... to warm up!

Nothing will destroy motivation faster than a queue of children standing in the cold waiting for their turn. It encourages behavioural issues, distractions and low mood.

Instead, get their hearts

pumping and include the skills focus from the offset. Ensure your warm-up is not simply a generic tagging game or a jogging-on-the-spot activity. When the session begins, children should have had prior instruction to get their piece of equipment, find space and begin moving and practising. For invasion games this often involves dribbling activities while finding space. If you're doing a net and wall activity, you might ask pupils to move to different cones and aim to bounce (netball) or hit (tennis/badminton) their ball into the nearest hoop or onto a spot before moving on. Having more time to use a piece of equipment allows for continued development while maintaining activity levels. Plus, this type of skills-based active warm-up is a great way to recap prior learning.

Be honest with your assessment of PE lessons, too. How active is your class? Use a stopwatch and turn it on/off when the children start/stop moving. You may be surprised with the amount of inactivity among pupils – it always amazes me

that when I stop to talk to a class, they revert to 'sit and listen'. Instead, I encourage them to stand, engage their core, stretch and balance while listening to me.

## 6. Join in and have fun!

If you're not interested in lessons, your body language will betray you. PE teachers have a responsibility to role-model active behaviour, and we have the opportunity to join in and not just oversee the pupils. It's about getting the right balance, so join in to encourage and motivate but also know when to step back and support from the sidelines.

If you're not naturally interested in PE, you're not alone. As a PGCE student, I received just four hours of physical education across my nine-month course, which unfortunately didn't give me the confidence to deliver lessons effectively, at least to begin with.

Ensure you seek help and support from your PE lead and maximise CPD opportunities in a format that works for you. For example, as a visual learner, seeing PE delivered practically is much more useful to me than reading a planning template. Utilise sport premium funding to upskill teachers with qualified coaches, too. Don't be afraid to put your hand up and ask for help! CPD will only serve to improve your subject knowledge and ultimately your enjoyment of what is a great subject with incredibly important health and wellbeing impact for each pupil. **TP**



*Michael Brennan is a former head of PE and now runs a team*

*of activity coaches for Premier Education providing physical activity sessions to primary schools across the Midlands. Find out more at [premier-education.com](http://premier-education.com)*





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# Somewhere over the RAINBOW

LGBT+ inclusive anti-bullying policies can improve the mental health of all pupils, says **Francesca Cowper**. Here's how to develop one...

**P** rimary education settings are at the heart of tackling anti-LGBT+ behaviours, including homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. While many primary schools will have few, if any, pupils who already openly identify as LGBT+ themselves, it is important to remember that statistically a certain percentage of your students will do so in the future, and they deserve to have these parts of themselves validated throughout their lives, not just when in secondary school.

An increasing number of children in schools also have parents, siblings or other relatives who are LGBT+ and they need to see their families represented. Equally, those who are not from LGBT+ families will benefit from learning about and celebrating different types of people who they will inevitably meet in their future lives.

As a former primary school teacher, I am aware of how daunting LGBT+ inclusion can seem. I, like many of my former colleagues, have always been aware of how important this work is, but was often unclear on where to begin. Luckily, there are many ways in which you can support your pupils in their inclusion journey, whatever your starting point. Here are some that I've learned over the years.

## Finding the words

When I was younger, the word 'gay' was frequently used to

refer to things which were bad or uncool. Unfortunately, more than 20 years later this still a regular occurrence in lots of primary schools. I have found that many teachers are unsure how to address it, and I myself sometimes reverted to chiding. While this can seem like the right way to

react, in fact it can have some negative consequences.

For instance, if a child uses 'gay' as an insult and is chastised for doing so, the message they take away is that 'gay' is a bad word. Instead, school policies can encourage staff to explain why using the word gay in

this way is not kind, partly by explaining its true meaning. There may be staff who are unclear about what they should or shouldn't say in this context, so it can be useful to have scripts to refer to.

Words such as 'gay' or 'lesbian' are knowingly used in primary schools to be deliberately insulting, too. In my experience, these words are often used hurtfully towards students who in some way differ from the 'norm', usually regarding gender. Sometimes, our own conscious

***"It's important to build a school culture where difference and diversity are not only tolerated, but celebrated"***



or unconscious stereotypes can lead to this kind of labelling as well. While teaching, I witnessed boys being called 'gay' because they played with what were regarded as 'girls' toys', and girls who got their hair cut short were called 'lesbian'. Remarks such as these stem from limited understanding of gender expression and identity, as well as misunderstandings about gay and lesbian people.

In this case, it is still vital that students are educated about the meanings of these words in a sensitive way. However, tackling this kind of anti-LGBT+ behaviour begins before the actions themselves even occur. Is your teaching as free of gender stereotyping as possible? If, for example, you're talking about careers, why not show a woman as a builder and a man as a dancer? It is also important that in these circumstances children learn there is no one way to look gay or lesbian. One way I have addressed this with pupils is by talking about

how we can't always tell what someone's personality, career or background is from the clothes they're wearing. This helps them to understand that appearance is not necessarily linked to sexual orientation or gender identity.

## No-bullying zone

It is, of course, also important that bullying is met with consequences. An inclusive anti-bullying policy will make it clear that anti-LGBT+ behaviour is hurtful and will be handled in the same way as other bullying in your school.

Sometimes anti-LGBT+ behaviour in primary schools can be directed at a pupil's family, rather than the student themselves. I had one student who had LGBT+ parents and other children did not always react positively. It was only through discussing LGBT+ diversity that this situation changed, significantly improving the wellbeing of my student and his family. An LGBT+ inclusive anti-bullying policy will make it clear that negative comments about someone's family can also be a kind of bullying.

These policies sit within the wider landscape of a school and are only one aspect of creating an inclusive space where pupils feel safe to be themselves. School should also be about sending positive messages. In fact, LGBT+ charity Just Like Us' research report *Growing Up LGBT+* found that positive messaging in schools is linked to pupils having better mental health – including being less likely to contemplate suicide – regardless of whether they're LGBT+ or not. Therefore, it's important to build a school

## 5 STEPS TO AN LGBT+ INCLUSIVE POLICY



Explicitly include anti-LGBT+ bullying. Include definitions, for example, of homophobia and transphobia. Do not shy away from naming these things.

Make it clear that these behaviours require the same consequences as other forms of bullying.



Make sure your policy includes bullying that focuses on pupils' families as well as students themselves. Celebrate the many different kinds of families there are throughout the school. Try to read books with LGBT+ families.



Make it clear that bullying based on gender and gender stereotypes is unacceptable. Challenge this kind of stereotyping across your school and embed a culture where children are treated the same, regardless of their gender. Make sure that staff, students and parents are on board with this.



Have a clear policy for staff on how to address incidents. This includes making it clear to staff how they should respond to 'casual' use of words such as 'gay' as an insult. You could develop staff scripts on how to respond in different situations and what language to use, as some staff can feel uncertain about this.



Celebrate diversity throughout your school to embed a culture of LGBT+ inclusivity. Just Like Us can help you with this – sign up for School Diversity Week to access a wide range of free and inclusive EYFS and primary resources.

culture where difference and diversity are not merely tolerated but celebrated. When this culture is embedded, we tend to see far fewer incidents of anti-LGBT+ bullying.

A fantastic way to do this is through the materials you use in school, including the books you read. Have a look at your book corner: are there any books which feature LGBT+ characters? There are lots of great stories you can include to introduce children to these topics, such as *The Pirate Mums* by Jodie Lancet-Grant. You don't have to do this exclusively through explicit lessons on LGBT+ issues, either. Bring inclusive materials and discussions into the mix wherever you can, to help avoid 'othering' of these identities.

Finally, School Diversity Week (20–24 June) is also a brilliant opportunity to embed LGBT+ inclusion across the curriculum and celebrate diversity in all its forms. Sign up at [tinyurl.com/tp-DiversityWeek](https://tinyurl.com/tp-DiversityWeek) and you'll get free access to LGBT+ inclusive primary resources for use across the curriculum. **TP**



*Francesca Cowper is a former primary school teacher, and education programmes*

*officer at Just Like Us, the LGBT+ young people's charity. Follow Just Like Us on Twitter @JustLikeUsUK and learn more at [justlikeus.org](https://justlikeus.org)*

@JustLikeUsUK



## Q&amp;A

# “It’s very powerful and purposeful”

Richard Ewart, primary teacher, discusses how NSPCC’s online assemblies help approach difficult topics



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

*Speak out Stay safe*

(SOSS) is an online safeguarding programme for children aged 5- to 11-years-old, supporting them to feel empowered - knowing how they can speak out and stay safe. It is available to all primary schools in the UK and Channel Islands.

### How have you used Speak out Stay Safe (SOSS)?

At Strandtown, a large primary school in Belfast with over a thousand P4, P5, P6 and P7 pupils, we engage with the NSPCC once every two years. The online assembly manages the sensitive nature of the topic of abuse thoughtfully, purposefully and in a way that primary children can understand and relate to. We also appreciate that the assembly features voices from England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland throughout. So, no matter where you are watching from in the UK it feels relatable.

### How have your pupils responded to the online assembly?

As a teacher, I think who better to introduce the assembly than Ant and Dec! Although the pair only present the start of the programme, our children’s attention is immediately captured. Their concentration throughout is superb and they are fully engaged in the programme. It’s been wonderful to see them responding with great listening and great awareness to what’s such an important subject. Overall, the content is very powerful and purposeful.

### How does it support safeguarding duties?

The assembly ticks a lot of boxes in our Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) curriculum such as teaching



*“You won’t be disappointed”*

children how to look after themselves, how to look after each other and how to be an active member of the community. As well as tying into annual focuses such as our anti-bullying week and safety online day, the assembly provides the opportunity for us to reinforce to the children that if they’re worried or concerned about anything they can talk to any trusted adult within the school.

### Are sensitive subjects managed well?

As the online assembly is prerecorded it’s almost



**ABOUT RICHARD EWART:**  
Richard is head of Year 7 and Deputy Vice Principal at Strandtown Primary School.

### Contact:

[schools@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:schools@nspcc.org.uk)  
[learning.nspcc.org.uk/services/speak-out-stay-safe](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/services/speak-out-stay-safe)

word perfect, dealing with sensitive issues such as sexual and physical abuse with just the right level of care. One of the pupils’ biggest takeaways is the saying ‘I have the right to be safe, you have the right to be safe, we have the right to be safe.’ The constant drip feeding of key messages throughout the assembly ensures they stay front of mind.

### Anything else to share?

I wholeheartedly recommend the SOSS online assembly to other teachers; you won’t be disappointed. Our collective hope at Strandtown is that SOSS will lead to safer children – children who know how to reach out for help when they need it. Well done NSPCC for taking an exceedingly difficult subject and bringing it down to a child’s level. It’s vital that the message isn’t lost and for our children it really hits home.

## What’s the difference?

- + Helps children understand abuse in all its forms and how to recognise the signs
- + Teaches pupils that abuse is never a child’s fault and that they have the right to be safe
- + Explains where to get help, including the NSPCC’s Childline service



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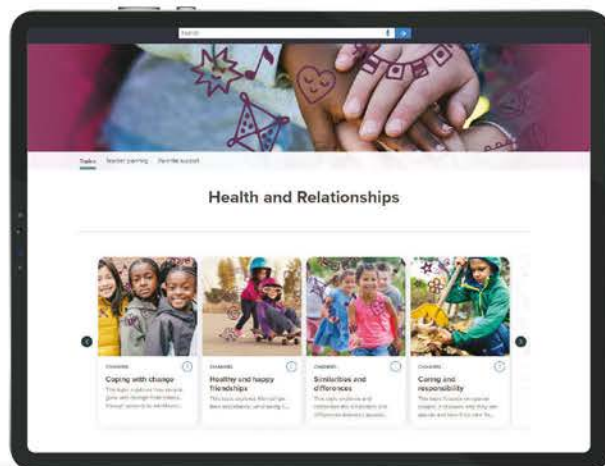
- **Follow a spiral curriculum** that introduces new and more challenging material as pupils progress through the school.
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*"We wanted a complete scheme of work that teachers could pick up and run with. Health and Relationships has saved us huge amounts of time and is brilliant to teach. The resources and support have given us confidence to approach challenging topics and our pupils are very engaged."*

Sam Winton Deputy Headteacher  
at St Margaret's CE Primary School, Crawley



Scan for a virtual demo





# WHY I LOVE...

Sarah Anyan, class teacher and PSHE subject leader, shares why Discovery Education Health and Relationships is her go-to-resource for primary RSHE

## ABOUT ME:

### NAME:

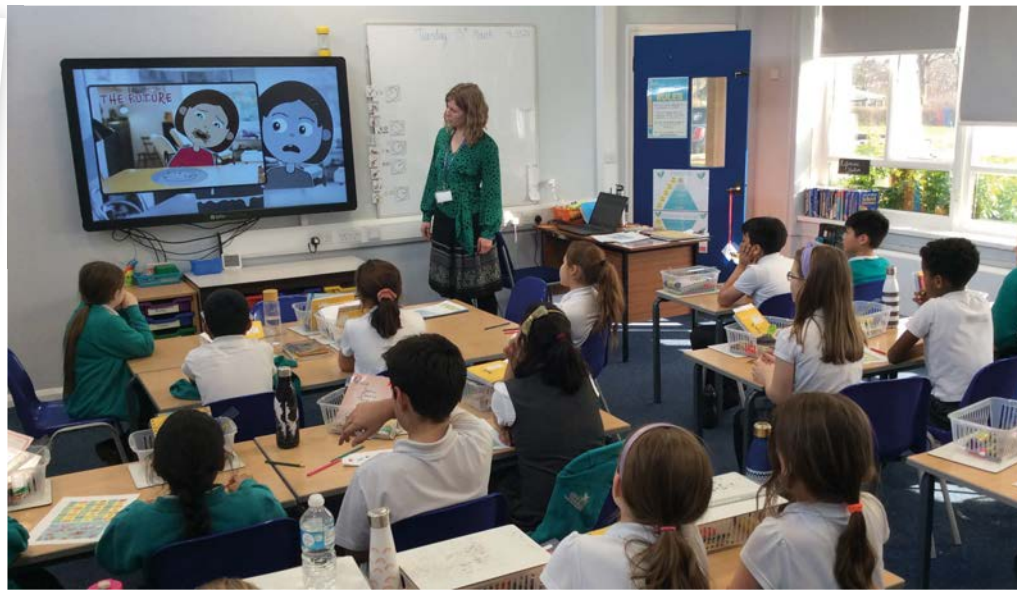
Sarah Anyan

### JOB ROLE:

Year 4 teacher and PSHE subject leader

### SCHOOL:

Iveson Primary School in Leeds



## TALKING ABOUT: DISCOVERY EDUCATION'S HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAMME

### “ How did you discover the programme?

When the new RSHE curriculum was launched, we started looking for resources to support our teaching. We came across Discovery Education Health and Relationships, which is a complete digital scheme of work for primary RSHE. It gives us coverage across the whole school, supports our planning and delivery, and has definitely increased teacher confidence.

### “ How does the programme support teachers?

Health and Relationships provides lesson plans, videos and activities to help our teachers meet the statutory RSHE guidance. It saves us a huge amount of planning time. Each lesson is mapped out with objectives, resources and success criteria. It's all there.

The programme also supports teachers to create a safe teaching and learning environment. It helps us to set ground rules at the start of each lesson and to encourage pupil questions. We use comment boxes, so that our pupils can ask questions anonymously or simply share something to make their friends smile.

### “ What do pupils like about the programme?

Our pupils really enjoy learning with Health and Relationships. They like the fact that we can sit down together and talk about things. Sometimes we cover difficult subjects, but



### Contact:

Discovery Education  
1 Lyric Square  
London  
W6 0NB

Phone: 0800 6 527 527

Web:

[discoveryeducation.co.uk/rse](https://discoveryeducation.co.uk/rse)

that's ok because we all respect each other and our classroom is a safe space. We try to end each lesson with something positive, perhaps relaxation or sharing jokes!

The content is age-appropriate and engaging. The videos are presented by real children, so they're very relatable. They're a great starting point for exploring topics such as friendships, relationships and mental health.

### “ Why is this programme different to other RSHE resources?

Good RSHE teaching should reflect real life and Health and Relationships does this very well. Pupils see their own experiences reflected. The sex education resources cover topics such as Caesarean Sections and IVF, which are very real issues for many families.

We can use the programme to teach flexibly, taking our lead from the children. Sometimes a video might spark a discussion that takes things in a different direction.

Health and Relationships follows a spiral curriculum and as subject leader, I find the built-in progression grid helpful. I can clearly evidence pupil progress and show what we've been teaching during each half term. Our pupil voice interviews show that it's having a positive impact for the children as well as teachers, which is really lovely.

## WILL IT WORK FOR YOU?

- Health and Relationships provides an all-in-one digital RSHE programme for primary schools.
- It provides lesson materials, teacher support and advice for measuring progress – all in one place!
- The resources are centred around child-led videos to help pupils relate to subjects.
- Preview the programme for yourself at [discoveryeducation.co.uk/rse](https://discoveryeducation.co.uk/rse)

# CATCH-UP KIDS

Not sure how to bolster confidence and improve attainment? Online tutoring could be the answer, says **Adele Key**

**L**ike every primary school across the nation, we were very much aware of the impact that lockdown had on our children, before the second bout even began. Of our 210 pupils on roll, 21 per cent are eligible for pupil premium funding, with about 16 per cent classified as having special educational needs. Missing lessons and adapting to new routines had been tricky for many.

We were already doing our own catch-up tuition with our Year 6 children after school in pre-pandemic times, but I didn't feel we could continue a home-grown approach during Covid, as we were all exhausted from the imposed restrictions. So I recommended to my headteacher that we should buy in online tuition, rather

than using our own staff and adding to their workload.

We managed to find some funding from our budget, later subsidised through our recovery premium, and started a trial of online tuition with 12 Year 6s; six focusing on English and six on maths. We chose these children based on our end of autumn term NFER data; they were all still working at the very beginning of Year 6 expectations, and we felt these pupils needed a boost in their confidence that would help them with attainment as well.

We could tell this first

spell of live online tuition worked well, simply because we could see the links the children were making

between their sessions and what they were doing in class, so we expanded it to include additional tutoring for Year 5 once the children were back in school in March.

## How does it work?

We buy online tuition in blocks of one-hour sessions involving one tutor with small





groups of two or three children (we use Pearson, but there are multiple providers out there). Once we've specified the subject and topics we want to cover, we choose the tutors and then send them a short biography of each child they will be working with. The information includes where they are in their age-related expectations and the key areas in which they need help. At first our children had weekly sessions, but we soon moved to twice weekly as we felt it was much more beneficial, so we've done that for all pupils this term, too.

We've worked hard to marry up the tuition sessions with the concepts we're teaching in class as much as we can. In maths, the Year 5 teacher chose number units for tuition sessions to support arithmetic and improve speed and accuracy. In Year 6, I chose fractions as I know this is an area of weakness and it crops up a lot in SATs. It was a little more straightforward for English as we chose reading skills, which are transferrable across all aspects of the curriculum.

It is vital that we have a feedback loop, too. Most of the time we will see the children 'getting' concepts that challenged them before, but we also get feedback directly from tutors. At the end of a session, the tutor will rate each child on their confidence, understanding and engagement using a function on the Bramble live online tuition platform. They can also

give us more detailed written feedback through a text summary, picking out the areas where a child has excelled, but also pointing out concepts they struggle with. We read the feedback every week and it helps to inform our own lesson planning as well.

Each session is automatically recorded and transcribed, so we can use this feature as an added layer of safeguarding. If there was ever an issue during an online session, we would be able to quickly check the transcript, and the children are aware that we could go in and check up on what happened in a session if necessary. We've never had to use the feature and never expect to, but it gives teachers, tutors and parents peace of mind, just in case.

## How do children respond?

When I go to get the children for their tuition sessions, they're already out of their seats and on their way. Kids are so motivated by technology these days that they don't seem to see it as work. It's also easier for many children to say that they don't understand something when they are in a group of three learning online than when they are in a class of 30. We had one Year 6 girl who was very quiet in class but when she was on a live online tuition session she couldn't stop talking! The fact that the sessions mainly use an online interactive whiteboard with brief face-to-face

introductions and goodbyes probably helps.

The children build up really lovely relationships with their tutors, too. Some found it quite an emotional experience when they got to the end of their sessions! I think the

## EEF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SMALL GROUP TUTORING

When implementing tuition, schools should consider these points to ensure positive impact



**Accurately identifying the pupils that require additional support.**



**Understanding the learning gaps of the pupils that receive small group tuition and using this knowledge to select curriculum content appropriately.**



**Ensuring teachers are well-prepared for having high quality interactions with pupils, such as delivering well-planned feedback.**



**Ensuring that small group tuition is well-linked to classroom content.**

Read more at [tinyurl.com/tp-EEFsmallgroup](https://tinyurl.com/tp-EEFsmallgroup)

online approach works so well because our children see it as a privilege to be chosen; they know they will get lots of attention from their tutor – something which is not always available in a whole-class situation.

Needless to say, we're continuing with the programme this year. We've already got 16 Year 5s signed up, along with six Year 6s and we are about to include another 12 Year 6 pupils. I think there will be a permanent place for this type of support at our school even when the pandemic is long gone. I talked to my headteacher about this and he agreed that the live online tuition could replace some of the interventions that we already use in school, such as after-school tuition, which is currently delivered by staff members.

My main piece of advice for anybody who goes down the tuition support route is to meet the tutor online at the start of a block of sessions. Taking the time to develop a relationship and to talk through the background of each child makes it easier for the tutor to hit the ground running. We have met all of our pupils' tutors and have built good relationships with them.

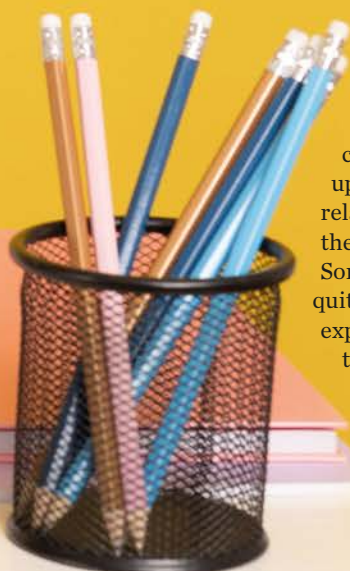
You also need to be aware of your technology capabilities. Sharing devices doesn't give pupils the best experience, so each child needs access to their own. We've found that iPads don't work as well so I'd recommend using either laptops or Chromebooks. Also, if the tuition happens during the school day, it ideally needs to be outside the classroom to avoid background noise. We're fortunate to have access to our ICT suite and library. Headsets with microphones are also a must-have.

We've had an excellent experience with our tuition support and we'll continue with it even when all the pandemic-related grants have gone. It does need some investment in time and preparation, but once you get going it's very straightforward and the benefits come back by the bucket load. **TP**



**Adele Key** is deputy headteacher and Y6 teacher, as well as English and maths

subject leader at Woodlea Primary School in Chester-le-Street, County Durham.



# Collins

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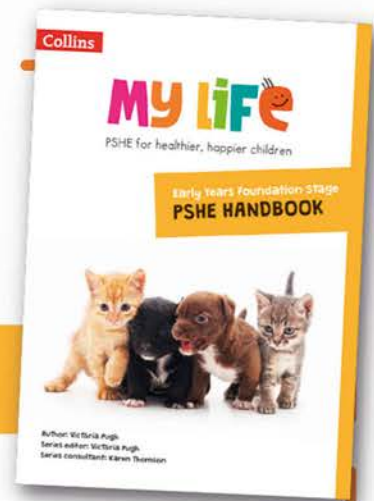
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# NEW

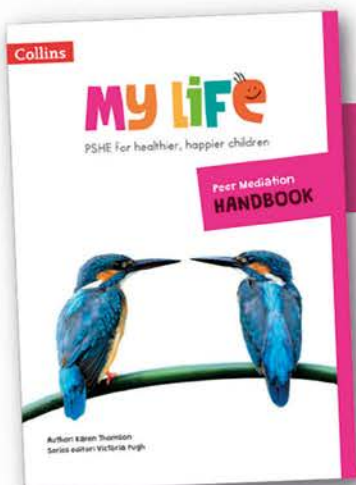
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# The inside story

[activeschoolhero.com](https://activeschoolhero.com)

ukactive Kids and Nike expand Active School Hero to every school in the UK following huge success in England

ukactive Kids, in partnership with Nike, has announced a nationwide campaign to recognise unsung primary school staff who have inspired physical activity among schoolchildren.

The Active School Hero Award, backed by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, one of Britain's greatest Paralympians and chair of ukactive, has now opened for nominations and will see finalists nominated from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, ahead of a UK winner, to be announced at the ukactive Awards.

## Empowering and inspiring

A recent government report revealed that due to the impact of the pandemic, many schools reduced the amount of PE time that was made available to children and young people.

Studies have shown that physically active children do better in school – and in life – and it is where school staff can make a real difference, not only teaching, but motivating, empowering and inspiring children to get active and realise their full potential.

ukactive Kids and Nike created the Active School Hero Award to shine a spotlight on the amazing work these heroes do and to share their stories, to inspire others. It is available to all primary school staff – whether they teach PE or not – and those deployed to work in primary schools, who create fun environments for children to be active.

## Join in!

The Award, now in its fourth year, is open to nominations from all primary schools in the UK, following huge success across the nine regions of England in 2021, and in Birmingham and London in 2020 and 2019. Last year's winner was Joe Danquah, a PE Teacher from Byker Primary in Newcastle.

During the nomination process applicants will be encouraged to demonstrate how their 'Active School Hero' has encouraged an inclusive school environment by positively engaging



under-served groups of young people to become more active. In addition, nominees will be asked to share how they have been creatively tackling inactivity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once nominations close, a shortlist of 20 people will be chosen by ukactive for each of the four nations. The shortlists will then be reviewed by a judging panel made up of representatives from Nike, Sport England and ukactive, in order to choose two winners for each of the four nations. An overall home nation winner will then be selected and invited to the ukactive Awards ceremony at The International Convention Centre in Birmingham on Thursday, 30 June 2022, where the overall UK winner will be announced.

## Hooray for heroes

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, chair of ukactive, said: "We are delighted to expand Active School Hero to the whole of the UK this year, which gives us the chance to celebrate school staff inspiring kids to be active in every community."

"Primary school children and staff have faced another tough year as we recover from the pandemic and try to establish a stable environment for growth and learning. Unfortunately, the catching up of children's education has come at the cost of a reduced number of hours of PE in many schools.

"The Active School Hero Award is our way to recognise the primary school staff making sure that children and young people can enjoy being active every day, particularly at such a critical time in reducing our health inequalities and recovering from the pandemic."

Dan Burrows, Nike's senior director of social & community impact, EMEA, said: "At Nike we believe in the power of sport to positively impact the lives of individuals and their communities. We know that active kids do better and that's why the role of those that inspire kids to be active is so important."

"When it comes to getting kids excited about – and committed to – playing sports, school staff can make all the difference. That's why as part of Nike's Made to Play commitment to get kids moving, we're proud to partner with ukactive for a fourth year to celebrate the heroes in primary schools across the country."

"Rising to unprecedented challenges, these extraordinary individuals have gone above and beyond to remove barriers and create more inclusive environments so that all kids have the opportunity to access and benefit from play and sport."

**Any adult can nominate one or more Active School Hero before the deadline on Monday 11 April – just visit [activeschoolhero.com/nominate](https://activeschoolhero.com/nominate)**



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## TWIN YOUR SCHOOL TOILETS

**1.7 billion people don't have a loo.**

Rachel's school in Ivory Coast used to be virtually empty. Most children were either sick or involved in household chores.

Rachel was often ill and missed a lot of school.

**'My brothers and I used to get diarrhoea, and our parents didn't have enough money to pay for medicines.'**

Since her family built a toilet at their home, and started washing their hands regularly, Rachel's health has improved. She is able to go to school a lot more, and get better grades.

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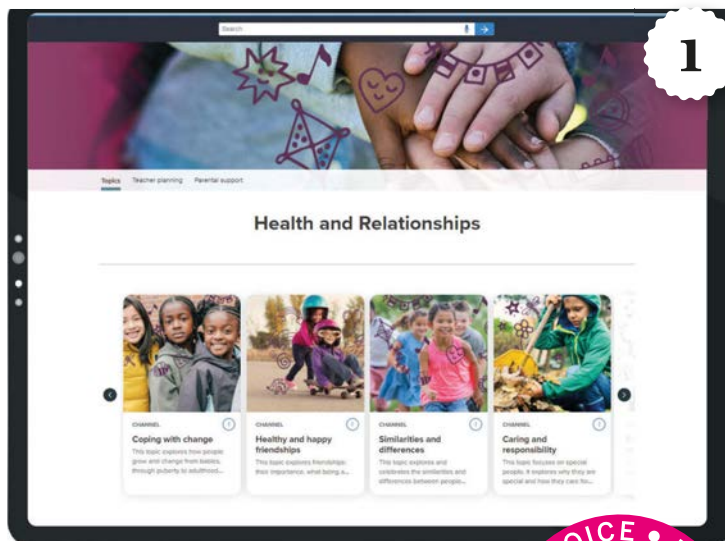
# Feel good, do good

Expert resources to help you support your pupils' health and wellbeing

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engage all pupils. Written by subject-expert teachers, Health and Relationships makes it easy to teach the curriculum across the whole school. Centred around child-led videos and animations the resources help pupils relate to the subject, encouraging them to participate in discussions and be more engaged in their learning. Find out more: [discoveryeducation.co.uk/rse](https://discoveryeducation.co.uk/rse)



## Sun safety

Join the 5,000+ primary schools already registered with the FREE Sun Safe Schools National Accreditation Programme and receive all the tools, resources, guidance and support you need to outline your commitment to providing an environment that enables children and staff to stay safe in the sun; learning about sun safety to increase knowledge and influence behaviour; and working with parents, the management structure and the wider school community to reinforce awareness about sun safety. Find out more at [sunsafeschools.co.uk](https://sunsafeschools.co.uk)



## Active School Hero

Only one in five children in the UK gets the recommended level of physical activity each day, and that's why UKActive created Active School Hero to celebrate the achievements of the heroes working in primary schools across the nation to inspire 'generation active'. Nominations are free of charge and you may nominate as many heroes as you like. Nominate your Active School Hero at [activeschoolhero.com/nominate/#active-school-hero-nominate](https://activeschoolhero.com/nominate/#active-school-hero-nominate)

## Whole-school PSHE

Encourage every pupil's personal development with great value, flexible primary PSHE resources! My Life provides a scheme of work for Foundation through to Year 6, and boosts children's understanding of health, relationships, safety and social issues in structured, age-appropriate steps. Complete your school's PSHE curriculum with the newest additions to the series – with an EYFS handbook fully aligned to the revised framework and Development Matters, and a peer mediation handbook packed with ways to help children communicate more effectively and develop their emotional literacy. Download free lessons to try with your class inside the My Life wellbeing pack at [collins.co.uk/MyLife](https://collins.co.uk/MyLife) or chat to your local sales consultant at [collins.co.uk/findarep](https://collins.co.uk/findarep)



## Monitor moods

Primary schools have a vital role to play in supporting children's mental health; teaching them the skills they need to recognise and deal with their emotions and helping those with difficulties get the support they need. Moodtracker is interactive software designed for primary school pupils to log their feelings using modern technology. The software generates effective data for educators to monitor the moods of children in order to become more proactive in managing mental health, helping schools effectively prevent and tackle bullying, and create safe, disciplined environments where pupils are able to fulfil their potential. [themoodtracker.co.uk](https://themoodtracker.co.uk)



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- To consider both sides of an issue
- To form an effective argument
- To structure a speech
- To listen and challenge other's views constructively
- To deliver a speech clearly and confidently

# Let's agree to disagree, shall we, class?



Are computers better than books? Help pupils make clear and confident arguments with class debates, says **Debbie Newman**

@noisyclassroom [noisyclassroom.com](http://noisyclassroom.com)

Would you have rather lived in Victorian times? Can children make a difference to the environment? Were Romeo and Juliet's parents to blame for their deaths? Debates can be used in every curriculum subject and breed a culture of speakers who deliver confident and articulate arguments, listeners who engage actively and critically with discussions, writers who lay out their ideas in structured points, readers who interrogate texts and citizens who approach divisive issues with an open mind. Let's look at how to get started with this powerful pedagogical tool.

## START HERE

Argument Tennis is a great way to get pupils warmed up and practising articulating arguments. The game is played in pairs and children label themselves A and B. The object is to knock an argument back and forth across an imaginary net, using imaginary bats, by giving reasons for and against. Give the class a topic such as "Children at primary school should not have their own phones" or "We should ban zoos" and give As the service (meaning that they start and agree with the topic). Bs disagree. Run the game a few times with different topics and sides, giving them a couple of minutes for each theme. For extra help, you can watch a video of this game and find ideas for topics at [tinyurl.com/tp-DebateTennis](http://tinyurl.com/tp-DebateTennis)



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | PREPARING FOR A DEBATE

Every debate starts with a motion which starts "This house...". For example, "This house would have preferred to be an evacuee than to stay in London in WW2" or "This house would ban cars from city centres". It's a good idea to explain to the class that "This house" refers to the houses of parliament who debate motions that can become laws. We are essentially role playing that we are the government and opposition, debating the laws of the land and that is why debates are very formal. Often the best debates come at the end of a topic unit when the

students can apply the knowledge they have learned.

Once you have your motion set, divide the class into groups; half of the groups agreeing with the topic (the proposition side) and half disagreeing (the opposition). Give them some silent time for thinking up points and then follow with a group brainstorm where they gather all their ideas on a large piece of paper or sticky notes.

The next stage is to pick two or three points for each of the main speakers and to develop those points using Name, Explain, Evidence, Link. The name should be short and clear, ("My first point on why we should all be vegetarian is health."). The explanation goes into the detail of what this point is and why the audience should be persuaded by it, ("A





***“Being able to confidently and respectfully challenge other people’s ideas is a kind of superpower”***

debate rather than introducing any new points. The debate ends with an audience vote on the issue. There are lots of examples of debates you can watch online, including this one on computers versus books: [tinyurl.com/tp-computersVbooks](https://tinyurl.com/tp-computersVbooks) Showing a video to the children will make it easier for them to grasp the rules.

You can choose two groups to do a debate in front of the class with the other pupils acting as audience members, judges or journalists. Alternatively, you can run multiple debates simultaneously to get maximum engagement.

### **3 | ENGAGING WITH POINTS**

A debate shouldn’t just be a series of speeches. All the students should start their presentation by explaining why they disagree with the specific points made by the speaker before them on the other side. We call this *rebuttal* and it requires close listening and thinking on your feet. The more the students do it, the better they will get. Make sure to set the ground rules: no *ad hominem* attacks (attacking the speaker rather than the argument), and always use polite and respectful language (don’t call a point stupid, explain why you disagree with it). Being able to confidently and respectfully challenge other people’s ideas and being able to receive challenges to your own views without feeling threatened is a kind of superpower that will benefit children their whole lives.

*Debbie Newman is a former English teacher who coached the England Schools Team to victory in the 2010 World Debating Championships. She is now the director of the Noisy Classroom, an organisation that supports the use of debate and critical oracy in schools.*

vegetarian diet is generally healthier as plant-based foods are lower in saturated fats which can cause heart disease, diabetes and strokes. On average vegetarians live longer.”). The evidence is an example, or some facts, a study or quotation from their research, (“According to the American Diabetic Association, you get seven times less saturated fat when you eat a veggie burger rather than a beef burger.”). Finally, the link shows why this point means the audience should support the overall motion. (“So, because everyone becoming a vegetarian would lead to people having longer, healthier lives which is a good thing, you should support our side today.”).

Pupils should write bullet points rather than a full script. You may choose to scaffold this

using note-taking sheets ([tinyurl.com/tp-DebateNotes](https://tinyurl.com/tp-DebateNotes)).

### **2 | HOLDING THE DEBATES**

Debating formats vary but I suggest beginning by using a three-on-three model with two-minute speeches. The order of the debate is:

First Proposition  
First Opposition  
Second Proposition  
Second Opposition  
Audience Debate  
Opposition Summary  
Proposition Summary Vote

The audience debate allows for short questions, challenges and points to be put forward and the last speaker on each side delivers a summary of the

## **EXTENDING THE LESSON**

- Spend some time looking at engaging delivery and rhetoric to help the students give more persuasive speeches.
- Make the speech lengths longer, the preparation time shorter or set more challenging topics. Debating is enjoyed at senior school, university and beyond so there is plenty of scope to stretch every student.
- Follow up with writing persuasive letters or balanced arguments to allow the students to transfer what they have learned into their writing.
- Extend debating outside the classroom by setting up a lunchtime or after-school club. You could even have friendly or competitive debates against other schools.

## **USEFUL QUESTIONS**

- Why do you believe that?
- Can you back that up with any evidence?
- What different groups are affected by this?
- How could you disagree with that point?



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- How to map the factors of a number
- How these relate to multiples
- How factors and multiples are different
- How to structure their ideas using pictures and diagrams.

# Planting seeds and sprouting leaves



Are children getting confused with factors and multiples? Put your class in the picture with this, says **Matthew Lane**

@MrMJLane

[theteachinglane.co.uk](http://theteachinglane.co.uk)

Children often confuse factors and multiples with each other as they are (at face value) similar. Pupils can also struggle to connect the two pieces of learning and see how factors and multiples show us different aspects of a number. This lesson is best employed as a summary, or activity after children are secure in their understanding of factors and multiples as separate concepts. You can also use it as a recapping or revision exercise later in the year as a fun way to revisit the learning.



## START HERE

You may wish to give children time to review prior learning in their books before getting underway. Then, start the lesson with a recap. Ask

“Who can tell me what a factor is?” and “What are the factors of 16?”. Pick a number with few factors (like 16) so students are not finding long lists of them (24 or 32 are not good choices, for example). Similarly, recap on multiples: “Who can tell me what a multiple is?” and “What are the first five multiples of 4?”. Keep the cognitive load low; the introduction to this lesson can be short.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | PLANTING SEEDS

The aim of the lesson is for children to understand the concept that factors feed into a number and multiples grow out of a number; that a factor is always smaller or equal to the target number and that the multiples are always bigger or equal. By the end of the lesson, children should see that factors and multiples are distinctly different, yet are part of the same body of learning and knowledge.

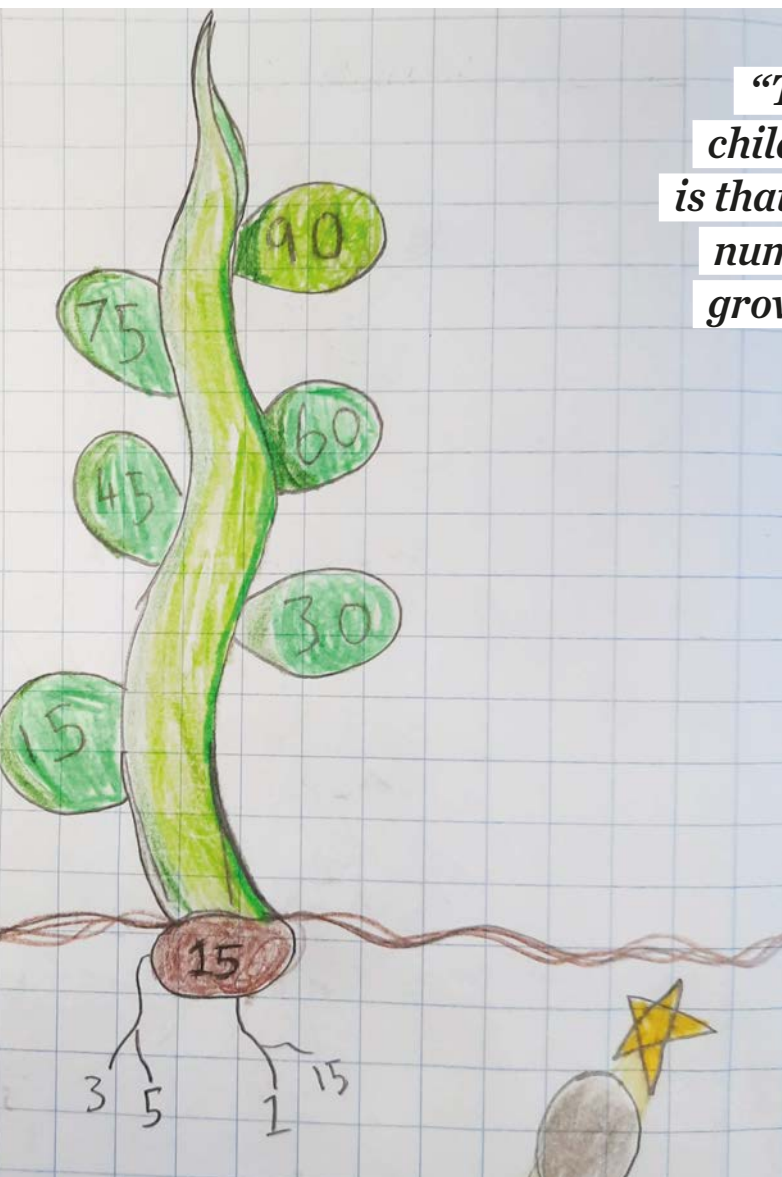
Start by writing the number 12 in the lower centre of your board and put a circle around it. This will be the ‘seed’ of your model. Good plants grow from good roots, so we need to give our seed some roots and

numbers to feed on – in this case, the factors. Ask children to make suggestions, and draw each factor pair as a separate root from the seed. That way children will see the factors as working together and you’ll have fewer lines should you later pick a number with many factors. As an extension or in a second example, you could write the factors in numerical order, but at this stage we are embedding the model rather than testing pupils’ number skills.

### 2 | SPROUTING LEAVES

Now we are going to ‘grow’ our number plant, with the multiples of 12 sprouting as leaves on a sunflower. You could use any flower of your choice, but sunflowers are easy





*“The key concept for children to understand is that factors feed into a number, and multiples grow out of a number.”*

represent that number. They should draw a root with a single number on the end.

### 3 TREE OR DINOSAUR?

Now it's time to let the children loose and gather assessment pictures. Ask pupils to draw out three different models. These could be trees, vines, space rockets, dinosaurs – anything they like as long as it shows the concept that factors feed into a number and multiples grow out of a number. After some time to work, children can share their models with partners or table groups for peer assessment, revision and evaluation. Ask pupils to look at their more avant-garde or creative models and summarise their thinking. This can also be an opportunity for children to explain why these models were or were not effective in demonstrating the concept, and therefore further revise the underpinning learning.

If time allows, you could ask children to draw up their best model for display in the classroom. Sheets of A4 1cm squared paper are best for this as it encourages writing at a display scale size.

**Matthew Lane is a Year 6 teacher in Norfolk where he is often found doodling as part of a CPA approach to teaching maths.**

to draw! Mark out the first five or six multiples as leaves, explaining that you could keep growing your sunflower indefinitely. This could also be a good segue into the story of Jack and the Beanstalk and seeing just how far you can take your multiples.

At this point, ask the children to copy the example into their books, or use your sunflower model with a different number seed. Try using eight, as it only has a few factors and children

should know the times table for finding the multiples. Then ask children to complete a model for a square number (four or nine are good ones) to see how they



## EXTENDING THE LESSON

- Can you find three different models for presenting this learning? Do they all need to be plants?
- Is a cake a good drawing to use for this model? The factors are cherries on top and multiples are layers of the cake. Is this a helpful diagram?
- Write instructions for drawing one of these models.
- Look at your partner's models: do they all show the learning coherently? What could they do to improve them?
- How big a number would this model work for? Would it work for a three-digit number?
- How would you explain this model to a younger or less confident pupil?
- What is the simplest or fastest way you can construct this model so you could use it in a test?
- How could you make it clear that your number is a square number?

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What is the difference between a factor and a multiple?
- How can you be certain you have found all the factors?
- How will you calculate the multiples?
- Does your model clearly show that factors go in and multiples come out?



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Who the characters in *Macbeth* are and what they are motivated by
- How gesture, expression and body language can express characterisation
- The conventions of playscripts
- How the English language has changed over time

# Why you don't need to fear the 'Scottish Play'!



Unlock the immersive power of drama to bring *Macbeth* to life in your classroom, with **Marc Bowen**

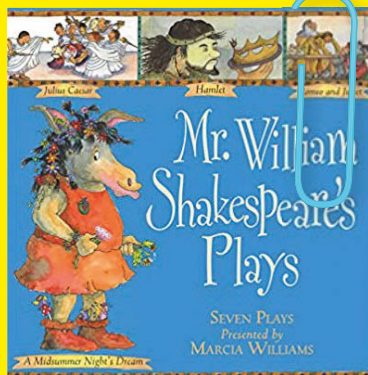
@Y5RaglanMrBowen

I've always been entertained by the reaction I get from colleagues at the utterance of 'Shakespeare'; some recoil from secondary school scars, whereas others enthusiastically sparkle. A final test is to see how many of those keen few still have the same vigor when I mention *Macbeth*. The political intrigue, violence and downright gore are often too much for some to think about for a Year 5 or 6 class. However, if you stray away from the common focus of the Bard's mischievous fairies and star-crossed lovers, you will find a fascinatingly complex world which is more than within reach for your pupils.



## START HERE

I would strongly suggest avoiding the original text of *Macbeth* in the early stages your Shakespearean sojourn. This could prove overwhelming for some children and we aren't trying to turn them off the Bard; we need to leave our secondary colleagues with something to do! Instead, expose them to forms of the play that will help them understand the plot. The original BBC Animated Tales (YouTube: [tinyurl.com/tp-MacbethBBC](https://tinyurl.com/tp-MacbethBBC)) is still one of the best interpretations for kids which, when combined with the cartoon strip retellings of Marcia Williams in *Mr William Shakespeare's Plays*, will help them to enter the world of *Macbeth*.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | WRITE YOUR OWN

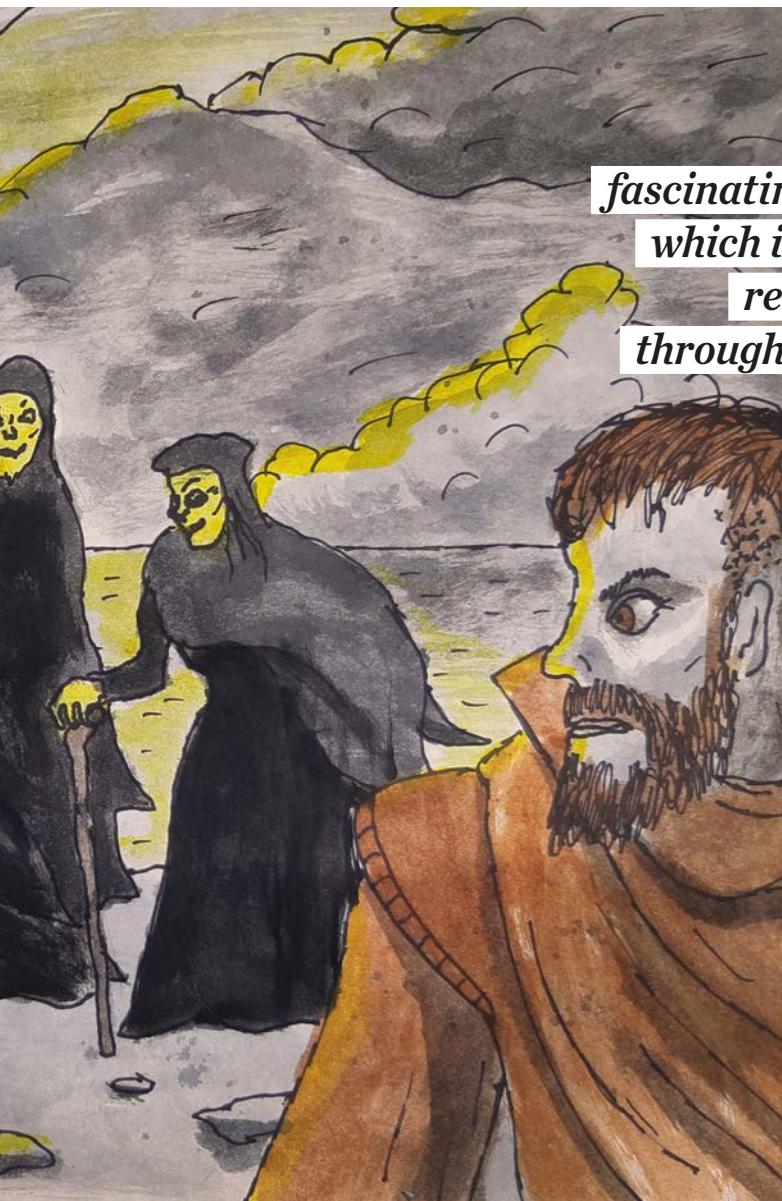
Now that your budding thespians are familiar with the story of *Macbeth*, it is time for them to take on the role of playwrights themselves. I would suggest separating the class into mixed ability teams, assigning each group a specific section or scene of the play; the first meeting with witches, for example. Working from a scene-specific plot synopsis and using some selected quotations, the teams can then be challenged to draft a playscript for their own performance. By assigning different portions to different teams, not only will the

scripting and performance be more manageable but you will also have a rich starting point to discuss the different interpretations of characters and events.

### 2 | ACT IT OUT

With pupils' scripts in draft, now is the time to consider how they are going to perform them. Our goal is to move the children away from dryly reciting lines of script, encouraging them to fully embody the characters. This is best achieved by improvising the banquet scene, combined with a bit of furniture removal! I would suggest taking a whole morning to do this so children can become immersed. Reorganise the classroom desks to form your central





*“You will find a fascinatingly complex world which is more than within reach for your pupils through the use of drama.”*

banqueting table and give every child a character to portray. These can range from Macbeth to the servants and broader entourage. The children must initially choose how and what they are going to mime while the banquet is underway, with the knowledge that you are going to freeze-frame the action periodically; at this point each individual or group will form an appropriate tableau. During these freeze-frames, you will then tap into the thoughts of particular characters or groups, while also commenting on how the gestures, facial expressions and body language communicates these thoughts and contributes to broaden the storytelling. While this

evaluation is taking place, the rest of the actors can drop out of character to appreciate the individual performances and your teaching points. This becomes particularly powerful with the arrival of Banquo's ghost, which could be signified to the cast through the single toll of a bell. It is your choice whether to cast a ghost but I have found an empty chair plays well to the 'is there a ghost or not?' theme within the play.

### 3 | DISCUSS THE IMPACT

When the banquet is done, Lady Macbeth has retreated to scheme some more and the supernatural has subsided, it is time for the whole class to draw out

what gave the performance impact and interest. This co-construction of your drama success criteria will form the basis for the final stage in the project. With the improvisation experience fresh in their minds, having reflected on the performances of their peers and appreciated the importance of stage directions, it is time for the children to return to their draft scripts. Building on these experiences, pupils should now be able to redraft and rehearse the performance of their assigned scenes. The final outcome can then be as small scale or as expansive as you wish. You could record all the performances for the children to then watch as one complete play, or invite another class to view the scenes live. Perhaps invite the headteacher, school governors or secondary school English colleagues to form a premiere audience.

*Marc Bowen is a deputy head and primary teacher in South Wales. He is always keen to engage in professional dialogue, sharing ideas and experiences for use in the classroom. He welcomes any responses to this article or further questions through Twitter @Y5RaglanMrBowen.*

## EXTENDING THE LESSON

- This project could offer meaningful opportunities to explore digital video editing. You could provide the children with the recording of their scenes, to which they then add titles, credits, image effects and music within iMovie.
- Alternatively, give the pupils access to all the recordings and challenge them to use the iMovie 'trailers' resource to make a filmic trailer for the whole class performance.
- Provide the children with the original Shakespearian script for Macbeth's 'dagger' soliloquy, challenging them to translate this into a more modern dialect. To add an extra dimension, you could perform the translated soliloquies for the class while they give feedback on the choices made in each version. This is another excellent opportunity to model effective expression, intonation and gesture.

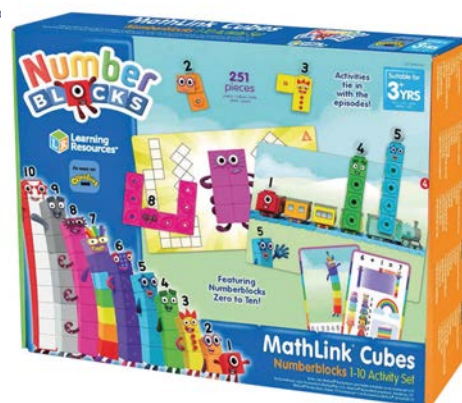
## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Have you watched the BBC animated tale before showing it to the children? It is classified as a U-certified but there are some scenes, containing blood, which you might feel aren't suitable for your class.
- Is there a local theatre group that you could engage with for advice or even to support the final performance in a theatre?

## MATHS

# Numberblocks MathLink Cubes

Multi-award-winning maths activity sets, linked to the hit TV series, for a hands-on introduction to numbers



## AT A GLANCE

- Activity sets for Numberblocks 1 – 10 and 11 – 20
- Provides a practical accompaniment to the popular TV series
- Fosters an in-depth understanding of numbers
- Attractive, customisable and reusable resources backed by activity cards
- Designed to give a physical experience of numerical concepts for EYFS and KS1 pupils

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



There is often the temptation to race ahead with teaching maths. Perhaps it's the urge to get the children doing things that might be considered more practically useful, such as calculations; or maybe it's the sense that children know it already – well, they can count, can't they? It could even be the sense that, as grown-ups, we are so familiar with numbers, especially the smaller ones, that we forget what abstract ideas mathematics can involve.

I know I will probably be preaching to the converted here, but there is a growing appreciation of the importance of giving children a firm foundation in the very basics of number. We need to allow them time to get a really good grasp of what numbers mean, what they represent and how they can be manipulated. And, to get a good grasp of anything, it helps to get your hands on it.

Now, as we all know, there are plenty of physical counting resources on the market. No doubt you could reel off the names of a fair few of them without drawing breath. These MathLink Cubes from Learning Resources do have an added advantage, however – they come with an 'as seen on TV' label.

*Numberblocks* is the hit children's programme from the BBC's CBeebies

channel. Using a cast of colourful characters, it gives youngsters an excellent introduction to the basic number concepts upon which their whole understanding can be built. That doesn't just mean how many things a number represents, but also how those numbers can be displayed, partitioned and combined.

These bright and appealing play sets put that sense of fun and exploration directly into children's hands. There is one for Numberblocks 1 – 10 and another for 11 – 20. They include snap-together cubes, along with faceplates, stickers and accessories with which to recreate the characters they see on screen.

Each set includes a character card for each number. There are also double-sided write-and-wipe activity cards which closely follow the on-screen action from specific episodes. These are accompanied by clear instructions for recreating the learning independently.

For children at the very beginning of their journey into the world of numbers, I can see these sets being a big hit. More importantly, they could really help to embed an in-depth understanding of numbers that will set children up for their future learning.

## teach PRIMARY

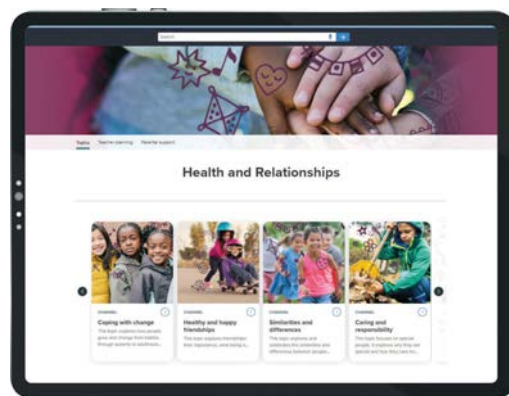
### VERDICT

- ✓ Bright and colourful design
- ✓ Solid, durable resources
- ✓ Fun and engaging
- ✓ Well designed for little hands
- ✓ As seen on TV
- ✓ Introduction to basic number concepts
- ✓ Exploratory approach to maths

### UPGRADE IF...

You want to give young learners an engaging, hands-on experience of manipulating numbers, based on TV characters they know and love.





# Discovery Education

An appealing, accessible, child-centred way to teach health & relationships

## AT A GLANCE

- Comprehensive coverage of the new curriculum
- Meets statutory requirements
- Well-resourced lessons introduced by enjoyable and relatable videos
- Detailed teacher guidance and ongoing support
- Invaluable parental engagement resources
- Designed by experts that understand schools' needs



REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES

Maintaining good health and relationships can be a hard enough challenge for many adults, so it would be no surprise if the prospect of teaching these topics to primary school children made you shudder.

Luckily, there are resources available to ease that burden. If you are seeking a quality solution for your school, the Health and Relationships programme from Discovery Education could be just the ticket.

As with anything that has the potential to cause anxiety, finding reassurance is often a good start. And what could be more reassuring than being guided by people who know what they are talking about?

This programme has been designed by experts with a seasoned eye for the needs of schools, yet it is adaptable to the specific characteristics of your community. There are detailed progression maps so that you can be confident that the new curriculum has been fully covered. The offer also includes comprehensive teacher guidance, so you're not left entirely to your own devices.

Having got the practical stuff out of the way, let's focus on the materials themselves. For me, this is where it really

shines. The main topics are organised into 'channels'. For each of these, there is a series of three lessons per year group (complete with editable, printable plans and resources), introduced by a video.

The videos are delightful. Though professionally produced, they are child-led, with an unselfconscious diversity, which makes them instantly relatable. There is also an authentic charm about the performances, largely because they often feature real pupils expressing their own views in their own way. They are like the very best circle times you've ever had with any distractions and disruptions edited out.

Back to the tough practicalities – parents. We all know that the topics covered by this area can cause all sorts of issues. Fortunately, this programme comes complete with a whole section dedicated to parental communication. This includes ready-made presentations as well as letter templates so you don't have to agonise over what to say and how to say it.

With everything covered in such a neat package, this programme won't just deliver this important part of the curriculum – it might also go a long way towards safeguarding your own staff's mental health and personal relationships.

## teach PRIMARY

## VERDICT

- ✓ Reassuringly knowledgeable and authoritative
- ✓ Adaptable for regional differences
- ✓ Enjoyable, engaging lessons
- ✓ Wonderfully accessible videos
- ✓ Supports parent-teacher communication
- ✓ Detailed progression maps
- ✓ Teacher guidance is available

## UPGRADE IF...

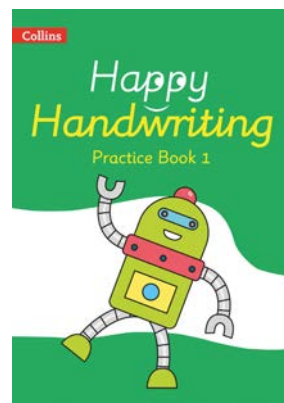
You want to feel confident you are covering the whole new RSHE curriculum in a positive, thoughtful and engaging way.

From £275 per year. [discoveryeducation.co.uk/rse](https://discoveryeducation.co.uk/rse)

## HANDWRITING →

# Collins Happy Handwriting

Help children master this essential skill, with all the resources you need ready-made



## AT A GLANCE

- A whole-school handwriting course to help children from Foundation to Y6 become confident and fluent writers
- Consists of teacher guides, practice books, whiteboard slides and downloadable content
- Provides clear plans for frequent and discrete direct teaching
- Quality materials that focus on effective joining and developing automaticity
- Penned by experienced literacy consultants

REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL



The digitally-savvy are always having a swipe at handwriting, bemoaning it as a redundant language skill. But it is still hugely relevant, and learning to write the specific English orthographic patterns plays a critical role in composition and the generation of creative and well-structured text.

The ability to write legibly and quickly continues to be a basic and essential skill and it also has a significant impact on the ability of children to recognise letters and activate their reading circuits.

The bottom-line of any handwriting scheme is to help children generate legible writing that can be produced comfortably, at speed and with little conscious effort, so they can attend to the higher-level aspects of writing composition and content.

This is what Collins Happy Handwriting helps to do, and supports teachers to implement and integrate effective, evidence-based teaching strategies using a cumulative programme of skills. It strikes a healthy balance between practice and explicit instruction of a simple, modern cursive font.

Children's write-in practice books are full of colourful and engaging activities that provide short, 'little and often' practice of letter formations and letter joining for successful hand habits and movement.

These 32-page user-friendly books feature

focused activities to teach different aspects of handwriting that concentrate on legibility, consistency and quality. They focus on the correct movements to form lower-case letters, followed by their capital formations.

The teacher handbooks contain gallons of gold-standard guidance and support, too. They have clear and practical advice for writing a whole-school handwriting policy, and feature the latest research and expert tips regarding the best practices to implement. The handbooks also address the needs of left-handed children and have helpful notes on handwriting teaching routines. Each week of content is presented as detailed, grid-based lesson outlines for easy reference and flexible planning. A range of activities are also included, which support children in their writing skills such as note taking, writing with a time limit, writing neatly and proofreading.

The course also includes a licence for the Collins Handwriting font so that teachers can create their own activities and displays, as well as resource sheets and home practice sheets to support all children in meeting ambitious handwriting goals. For regular review and assessment there are structured diagnostic activities to identify handwriting needs with recording sheets to evaluate each family of letter movements, joins, letter formation and alphabet knowledge.

## teach PRIMARY

## VERDICT

- ✓ Promotes automaticity of letter production to facilitate higher order composing processes
- ✓ Contributes towards independence and confidence in written composition
- ✓ Improves handwriting efficiency, stamina, resiliency and creativity
- ✓ Stimulates children to express themselves with more self-assurance
- ✓ Helps learners to remember and think about ideas
- ✓ Valuable as a systematic handwriting intervention and development programme

## UPGRADE IF...

You want to raise the profile of handwriting in your school, support transcription skills acquisition and boost the development of confident, happy and fluent writers.

Practice books £3.99; teacher's guides £49.99. Find out more: [collins.co.uk/HappyHandwriting](http://collins.co.uk/HappyHandwriting)



LITERACY

# Reading Planet Rocket Phonics

A complete systematic synthetic phonics programme for the whole class, regardless of ability



## AT A GLANCE

- A DfE-validated SSP programme meeting all 16 core criteria
- Fully decodable texts at every stage for graduated practice
- Rigorous and substantial pupil practice and application activities
- Lesson plans and scripts for ease of use with in-depth guidance
- Interactive, multimedia reading platform

REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL



A complete SSP programme is one that provides all the essentials children in Reception and KS1 up to or beyond the standards expected by the National Curriculum. Reading Planet Rocket Phonics goes well beyond that, and sits at the quality end of the SSP continuum. This programme ticks all the boxes by teaching two letter-sounds a week progressively and continuously to enable more practice of each core phonics skill.

The steady pace is designed to support children to keep up so they don't need to catch up, and is a tried-and-tested solution to support reading and writing success in Reception and Year 1. It is expertly written to help teachers take ownership and enjoy it as a resource for quality teaching and learning.

The aim of Rocket Phonics is that all children, regardless of SEND, are included in the main teaching input and the core phonics teaching covers the knowledge and skills children need. The resources are rich in language content, feeding into the intrinsic SSP principle that children learn to use phonic decoding as the route to reading unknown words.

The use of fully decodable books, dovetailed precisely to stages of learning, plays a key role in guaranteeing that children's early reading practice involves

words they can decode, rather than guess. Importantly, children are not asked to read texts by themselves that they can't yet understand.

The bookbanding of the scheme ensures a logical structure so you can match children appropriately to the text corresponding to their challenge level. It's easy to do this because the phonics titles are aligned to Letters and Sounds.

Lessons are also supported by structured but fully adaptable teaching guidance and timesaving daily and weekly plans. Following the guides will ensure that teachers have clarity about the what, why and how of phonics, so they can explicitly include SSP teaching principles.

There is some stellar support for assessment offered in the programme, too, so that you are able to reliably measure progress and identify children who need the help the most. All materials are also adaptable to children's needs with a complete set of half-termly assessments, pupil quizzes and brilliant reporting tool.

This is core phonics provision at its very best and when followed with fidelity, expect the best outcomes to wash over your school.

Rocket Phonics for Year 2 will be available in summer 2022.

teach  
PRIMARY

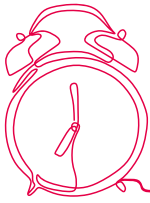
## VERDICT

- ✓ Offers clear progression and deeply embeds knowledge and skills
- ✓ Engaging and relevant books pitched perfectly to reading abilities with full SEND support
- ✓ Packed with vocabulary and word-building opportunities
- ✓ Provides realistic, accessible lesson plans with a strong and clear structure
- ✓ Comes with a full suite of attractive, engaging, matched resources
- ✓ Clear expectations for children's progress

## UPGRADE IF...

You're looking for an effective, high quality programme accompanied by all the guidance and materials teachers need.

A one-year subscription is £350+VAT. For more information, see [risingstars-uk.com/rocketphonics](https://risingstars-uk.com/rocketphonics)



# DAY in the LIFE



A one-day diary from first alarm to lights out

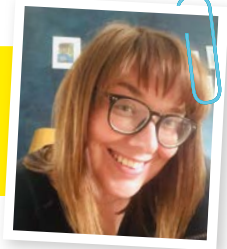
## WAKING UP

My alarm goes off at 6.15am, and the first thing I do is make lunchboxes for my two boys. I could do them the night before, but I know that my fussy eaters will complain about the soggy sandwiches!



**IRINA JONES IS HEADTEACHER AT A SMALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL IN THE WEST MIDLANDS.**

@IrinaJo70778148



**GOOD MORNING**

## MY MORNING

I get to school for just after 8.00am, check my emails, have a quick catch up with my colleagues and get ready for the children to arrive. I am on gate duty twice a week. If I am not greeting the parents and children at the gate, I am having a chat with the pupils during morning activities. Each Monday morning, I lead a whole-school assembly. Then, I normally have full days of teaching or meetings.

## MY AFTERNOON

More teaching and learning. I teach basic Spanish - though I am a Russian and French speaker, so we are learning together. In science, we promote the investigative approach, so I could be dissecting a fish or conducting a lung capacity experiment. Once a week, I take the children to the swimming pool and try my best to do some planning poolside while my class is being taught by the instructor. In this profession, every minute counts! However, I frequently get distracted and join the swimming instructor marvelling at the children's progress.



## LUNCHTIME

Lunchtime is taken up with catching up on emails and phone calls, playground duty and preparing for the afternoon lessons. Twice a month I treat myself to a lunch at the local café, complete with a hot coffee and a panini.



## MY EVENING

I leave at 3.30pm to pick up my own children from their school. We head home to change into our trainers or wellies and take the dog out for a long walk. Once back, we have dinner and I carry on working from home replying to emails, preparing for meetings, developing, or reviewing policies and schemes of work. I also check Twitter to catch up on what's been going on in education and to magpie some brilliant teaching ideas.



## BEDTIME

I aim to stop working by 9pm and wind down by chatting to friends. A bath or a shower does wonders for destressing before bed, as well as a nice cup of rooibos. If all else fails, I volunteer to tell my boys a bedtime story which usually results in me falling fast asleep mid-sentence – and before they do!

## QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

- ❖ **Career plan B?** Teaching is my second career. I used to work in hospitality management, organising conferences and events, so I have always been in active, 'on the go', roles requiring a lot of interaction with members of the public.
- ❖ **Must-watch?** Being a parent, I predominantly watch children's shows. This month it was Disney's *Encanto* (about 10 times). By now, I know the lyrics to all the songs and associate myself with Luisa who, despite of her gift of immense strength, wants to be taken care of once in a while.
- ❖ **Must-read?** Mary Myatt's *The Curriculum: Gallimaufry to coherence*; a great book on curriculum principles and practice.
- ❖ **Twitter hero?** There are so many amazing educators out there but Sarah Mullin (@MrsSarahMullin) is the one who I really admire for her generosity, kindness and standing up for the things that really matter to school leaders and teachers.





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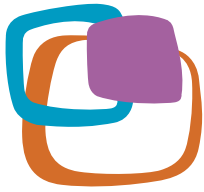
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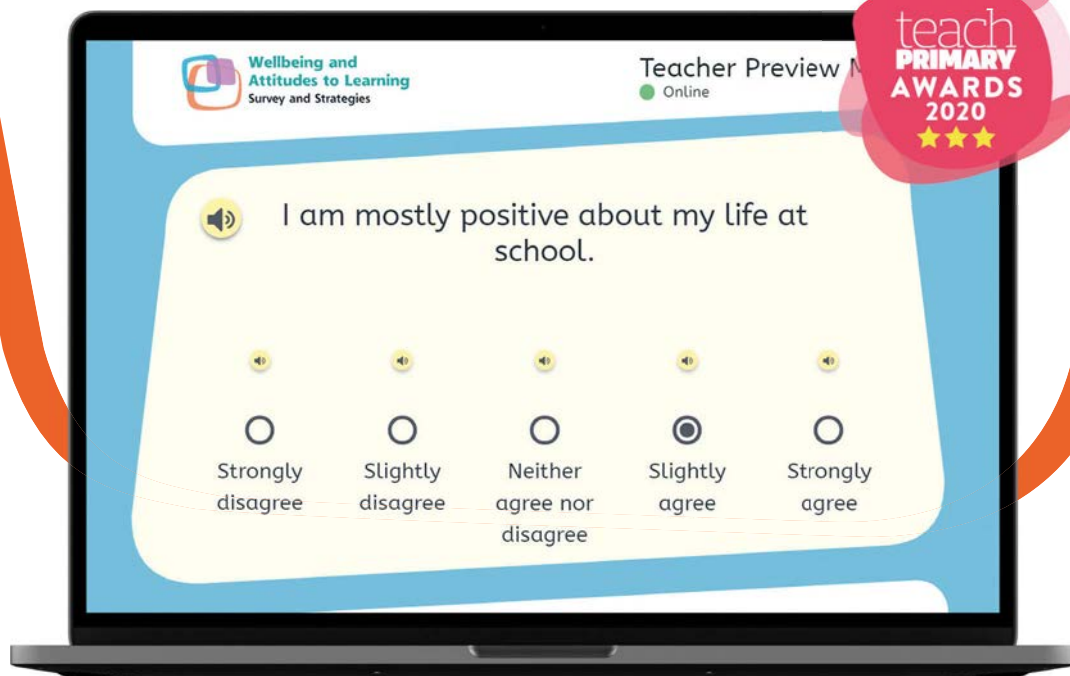
## Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning

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