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Hello!



And welcome to the final Teach Primary of the academic year. You did it! You made it through yet another trialling 12 months, and it's almost time for a very well-earned break.

It seems that not a term goes by in the last couple of years without a nationwide educational controversy, and 2022 has been no different. This time, we've been privy to a lot of conversations about the return of SATs after two years off due to the pandemic, and – especially when it comes to those in Y6 – people are not pleased. Our Undercover Teacher delves into why this year's tests unfairly favoured the already advantaged on page 25.

On a lighter note, you can see how well one school handled SATs-week stress, used their policy of building on a solid foundation of staff and pupil wellbeing to improve engagement, and foster kindness amongst pupils, in our profile of Glade Primary School in Ilford, starting on page 31.

Before you head off for your summer break, we've also got plenty of ideas to make your final term memorable, and to take some of the pain out of planning it. Our art and design special breaks open the paintbox to explore 23 ideas that you can grab right off the page and play with in your classroom (or playground). On page 48, Sophie Merrill sorts the myths from the truths surrounding art practice, while on page 54 Adele Darlington goes into some very realistic plans, perfect for the unpredictable British weather. Finally, Robert Watts shares a six-week unit on urban nature, starting on page 56; ideal for exploring your local area whether you're in an inner city or right in the countryside.

As always, we've also got plenty of ideas and lesson plans – including a special focus on the Women's Euros – to keep you going right up until the last day.

Thanks for all your support this year. Have a wonderful break!

Charley

Charley Rogers, editor

 @TeachPrimaryEd1

*Don't miss our
next issue, on sale
9th September*

POWERED BY...



MIKE ASKEW

on how to answer the age-old question 'but why do we have to learn maths?'

"As someone who finds delight in maths, the utilitarian argument is not enough"

p26



ALISON WILLETT

cuts through and explains what the DfE's recent SEND green paper really means for teachers

"The paper's proposals aim to create a fully inclusive system"

p38

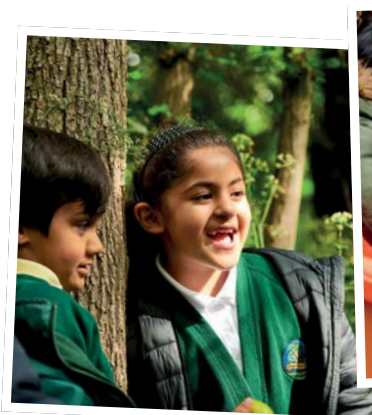


KELLY ASHLEY

dives into morphology, and how to help your pupils power up their word knowledge

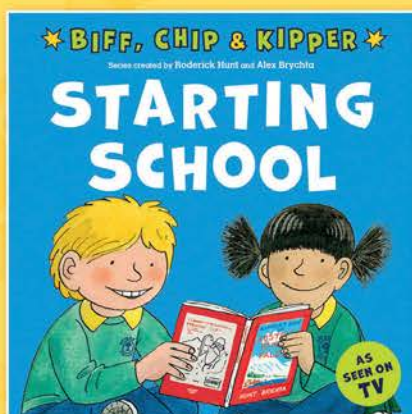
"Building blocks within words can be channelled into learning potential"

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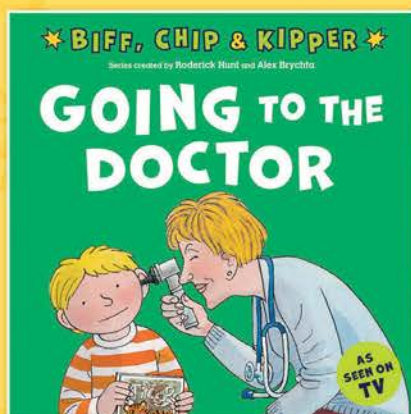




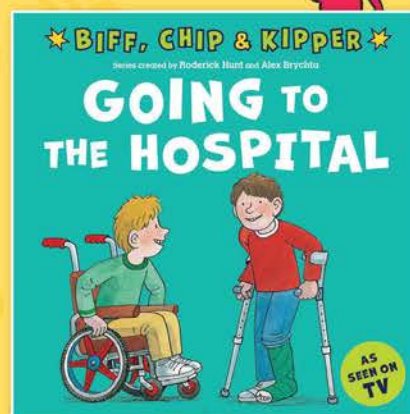
Familiar Favourites that Children Love to Read!



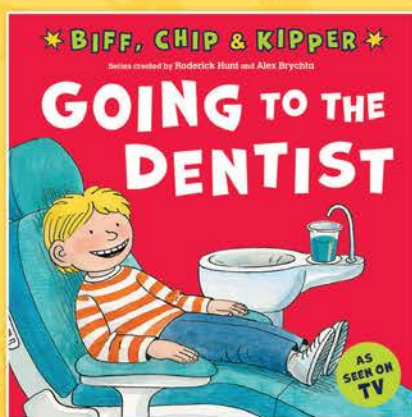
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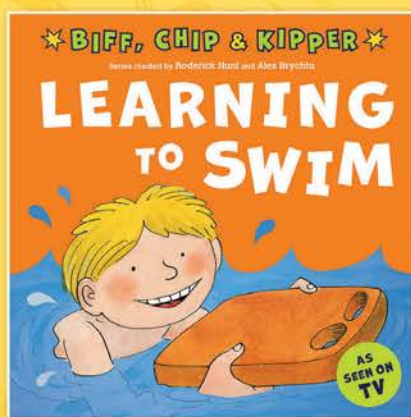
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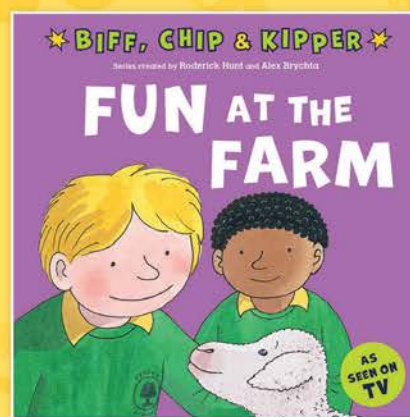
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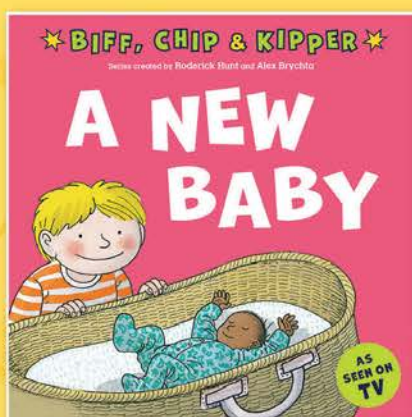
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We're all ears!

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

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PRIMARY**

We want to hear from you!

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



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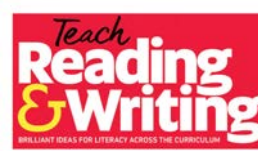
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We review five new titles that your class will love



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Life's Big Questions

KS2 pupils across the UK are invited to participate in an interactive survey from Dreamachine, a new immersive experience from Collective Act. The online survey, hosted by Newsround's Martin Dougan, neuroscientist and author Anil Seth and philosopher Fiona McPherson, is rooted in the UN's Conventions on the Rights of the Child, and invites children to explore big scientific and philosophical questions about how we experience the world around us. Pupils that take part will then be able to see how their answers compare with children across the UK – encouraging them to consider the ways we are similar – and what makes us unique.

Each question is introduced by a short video on Dreamachine's website, for teachers to build into lessons or enrichment sessions, and includes Q&As with world-leading experts in science and philosophy. Sign up at tinyurl.com/tp-LBQ

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



FOOD WASTE WARRIOR

Encourage KS2 pupils to be responsible for the food they use and throw away by monitoring the waste in their home in order to gain an official Food Waste Warrior title and certificate. Find out more and get free teaching resources at tinyurl.com/tp-FoodWaste



LITERACY SUPPORT

The NEW Ten Minute Box follows the Five Minute Literacy Box. It builds confidence in literacy by teaching digraphs in words and sentences. Fun, individualised sessions motivate reluctant learners, and are suitable for all primary ages. Get a free trial at tinyurl.com/tp-FiveMinute



TRAUMA-INFORMED

Barnardo's children's charity has created a website where teachers can get advice on supporting children and young people through trauma, grief, loss and bereavement. Resources are aimed at teachers from Early Years up, and are completely free. Visit tinyurl.com/tp-Barnardos

→ → → TODAY'S **TOP** **RESOURCES**



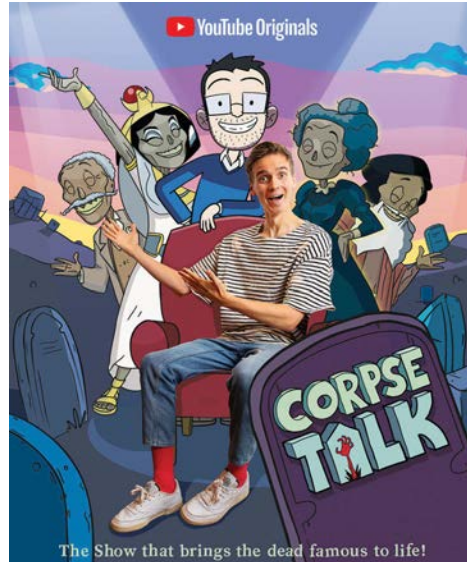
Check understanding

Grammar Slam, from Plazoom, is a brilliant way to check children's understanding of Appendix 2 terminology from Y1–Y6. Presented as PowerPoint slides, each set of resources is broken down into five steps – culminating in a fun writing task – making Grammar Slam the ideal way to start your classroom day! bit.ly/PlazoomGS



Corpse Talk

A new cartoon chat show for children aged 7–14, Corpse Talk, is now available on Youtube. The series, voiced by Joe Sugg, brings history to life by showcasing the amazing achievements of a selection of diverse and entertaining historical figures such as stories from these amazing characters. “Corpse Talk” features a diverse line-up of guests including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Cleopatra, Leonardo da Vinci, George Washington Carver, Julie D’Aubigny, Marie Curie, Nero, Ching Shih, Elizabeth I, Ibn Al-Haytham, Mary Seacole, William the Conqueror and Josephine Baker. The series will consist of 13 episodes, dropping on Tuesdays and Fridays, available exclusively on the Cartoons for Kids YouTube Channel and the YouTube Kids app. See them at tinyurl.com/tp-CorpseTalk



Q & A



Gemma Hunt

Presenter and author

Why did you decide on the story of Jesus for your retelling?

I wanted to show my favourite role model in action through everyday family experiences. Children learn so much through imitation and as a parent I see the power of that in our family. I try to reflect the characteristics of Jesus in my everyday life to share his loving kindness with those around me, like sharing, being selfless and helping each other out. I have partnered these stories with family situations to show how we might best reflect Jesus’ positivity in different circumstances that all families will be able to relate to.

What has writing your first book been like, in comparison to presenting?

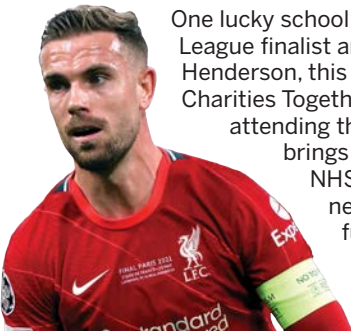
It’s been a very challenging experience! I’m usually so used to saying lots of words to convey something so I’ve had to really work hard to condense my words in to the desired word count! It’s also opened my eyes to family life in a different way to keep note of any examples or experiences we have which might fit in with a theme I’m trying to write. Lots of my friends and family feature in the book, so I am using lots of real life examples from our lives.

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

I hope it is written in a way in which any person can pick it up and read it with a great storyteller’s performance as the font has been refined to emphasise certain words to help tell the story. It’s also written with text on one side so you can hold it out to the side to read more easily to a class. There are moments in each story where you could get the children to repeat a line, or make a sound or action which I hope you will have fun experimenting with.

Gemma’s first book, *A Good Friend* (SPCK) is out now.

Win a visit from Jordan Henderson



One lucky school in the UK could win the company of Champion’s League finalist and double cup winning Liverpool Captain, Jordan Henderson, this summer. Jordan is an ambassador for NHS Charities Together, and will be supporting our health service by attending the NHS Big Tea at one school on 5 July. The Big Tea brings the nation together to celebrate the birthday of the NHS, while raising funds to provide the extra support needed for its staff, patients, and volunteers. All funds raised this year will contribute to key projects supporting staff mental health and the long-term recovery of the NHS. Find out more, and enter your class at tinyurl.com/tp-BigTea

7 IN 10 PARENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC, ACCORDING TO OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROVIDER PGL.

Look ahead | Book ahead

GET READING!

International Literacy Day, founded by UNESCO, takes place on 8 September 2022. This year’s focus is learning through lockdown and beyond. tinyurl.com/tp-LiteracyDay



ROALD DAHL DAY

Celebrate one of the most beloved children’s authors on 13 September. Find activity ideas and free lesson plans to share with your class at tinyurl.com/tp-RoaldDahlDay





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7 NEWS STORIES

you might have missed

SOCIAL MOBILITY 'BLEAK'

Research from the Sutton Trust to mark its 25th anniversary shows that the current generation of school-age children face 'declining opportunities' compared with the 'golden era' enjoyed by those born shortly after the Queen's coronation in 1953. The report predicts a 'step change' 12 per cent decline in social mobility, driven by learning losses during the pandemic. It also reviews a range of measures to assess overall mobility trends, such as social class and education. Researchers conclude that while specific education schemes and schools can transform young people's lives, the education system overall 'has not acted as the great social leveller'. They argue that long-term education policies will be needed to support the most disadvantaged pupils and improve the transition between education and work. See the full report at tinyurl.com/tp-SocialMobility

CAREER CONCERNS

New polling from YouGov and Teacher Tapp, commissioned by Teach First, highlights significant concern amongst both businesses and teachers about how prepared young people are for the world of work, particularly after the pandemic. The polling has been released alongside a new report from Teach First, *Rethinking Careers Education: Investing in our Country's Future*.

The report makes a series of recommendations on how improving careers education can help 'level up' opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. It reveals that eight in 10 teachers believe their pupils are less ready for the world of work when compared to previous generations, and more than half believe the pandemic has negatively affected children's perceptions of career prospects. See all findings at tinyurl.com/tp-CareerProspects

ASSESSMENT IS 'TOO NARROW'

Leading educators, employers and policy experts have signed a statement calling for a new approach to UK education. The statement argues that the way we assess our young people is too narrow, and that it causes 'an increase in stress', labelling a third of learners as 'failures'. Signatories are calling for the adoption of a digital learner profile which will better reflect young people's achievements, and give their future employers more relevant information about their skills. The concept for the learner profile has been developed by the Rethinking Assessment Coalition, and it is currently up for consultation on development. Those with experience of working with young people can feed back at tinyurl.com/tp-LearnerProfile



IMAGINARY FRIENDS, REAL BENEFITS

A new study from York St John University shows for the first time that autistic children with imaginary friends may be better able to understand others. Parents of children with autism report that children with imaginary friends have stronger social skills than their peers without imaginary friends. Dr Paige Davis, senior lecturer in psychology at the university, led the study, and said: "The study provides more evidence that the understanding of others' minds is not all or nothing in autism and gives reason for researchers to investigate whether the causes of these differences are the same or different for autistic children." Read more at tinyurl.com/tp-ICautism

LIFE-CHANGING LIBRARIES

Waterstones Children's Laureate Cressida Cowell is renewing her call on the prime minister to provide £100m in funding, annually, for primary school libraries. The call comes as the Life-changing Libraries report is published by the BookTrust, at the end of Cowell's tenure as Laureate. Cressida says: "This report shares the powerful stories of the 'Life-changing Library' schools, adding to the raft of evidence about the crucial role reading for pleasure and school libraries play in a child's life chances. A great library positively affects an entire school ecosystem, encouraging teachers, parents, students, as well as the wider community." Key findings include a transformation in attitudes towards reading, with an enthusiasm and passion for books ignited amongst the students of the six pilot schools that took part in the Life-changing Libraries initiative. Read more at tinyurl.com/tp-LifeChangingLibraries

POETRY COMPETITION

Sir Chris Hoy has launched a nationwide poetry competition for pupils across England, Scotland and Wales. Partnering with Digital bank Chase, the poetry competition is going live ahead of the Commonwealth Games coming to Birmingham this summer, and aims to inspire young children to celebrate the power of sport through poetry. The winners will win tickets for them and their entire class to a session at the Games, as well as 100 books each for their schools. The judging panel will include Sir Chris Hoy, together with representatives from the Chase Rewarding Futures initiative. Poems will be judged on a number of factors including: originality, the use of poetic techniques, reflecting personal experience and conveying emotion. The competition is open to pupils in KS1 and Foundation for the First Level and KS2 for the Second Level. Entries open until 4th July at tinyurl.com/tp-PowerOfSport

CHILDREN IN POVERTY MISSING OUT ON FSM

There are over 800,000 children living in poverty in England who are missing out on free school meals (FSM), reports the Child Poverty Action Group. New analysis based on free school meals data released on 9 June by the DfE shows that children in England 'continue to be overlooked' by the government, which means-tests the provision 'using restrictive eligibility criteria'. England is held in contrast to Scotland and Wales, which are moving to a universal model of free school meals provision in primary schools. In England, to be eligible for FSM, a household on universal credit must earn less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including benefits) regardless of the amount of children in the house. The charity is calling on England to adopt the same model as Wales and Scotland. Read the letter from school leaders sent to Nadim Zahawi MP at tinyurl.com/tp-FSM



6 WAYS being a governor can improve your teaching

Seeing how other schools do things can help develop your practice, says Steve Edmonds...

1 | GAINING PERSPECTIVE

Governing provides you with a helicopter view, rather than the classroom view, and that's helpful for teachers because it explains how a policy – for instance 'a focus on writing' – moves from being strategic to being taught. The opportunity to see how another school, or group of schools, implements something is genuinely interesting, too. Understanding different approaches can inform your own thinking and help you to bring new ideas back to your own school, or classroom.

2 | UNDERSTANDING WIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

Being a governor provides useful insight into aspects of school life with which teachers may be less familiar, such as budget and finance, health and safety, and risk management. Many schools use an integrated curriculum and financial planning approach, so sitting on the finance committee can develop your understanding about how curriculum decisions impact the school's budget, etc.

3 | IMPROVING QUESTIONING AND CHALLENGING SKILLS

School governors hold the headteacher to account, and one of the key ways they do this is to ask questions and constructively challenge. These are valuable skills for teachers to develop and can be applied in the classroom, in staff meetings and other professional contexts. Understanding the right question to ask sounds straightforward but there is an art to it. A good, thoughtful question finds out how things are working and what can be done collaboratively to improve, e.g. "How do we make this work?" rather than "Is this going to work?"



Steve Edmonds is director of advice and guidance at the National Governance Association (NGA).

4 | REFLECTING ON YOUR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The chance to oversee the strategy of another school provides a useful means to reflect on your own practice. Your contribution to discussions and decision making at the school – or trust – you govern, will require you to look in different ways at areas such as the curriculum, behaviour, attendance and meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. This will both deepen your understanding and benefit your professional practice. Visiting your school in a governing capacity and talking to fellow teachers also provides a chance for valuable professional dialogue.

5 | DEVELOPING AS A LEADER

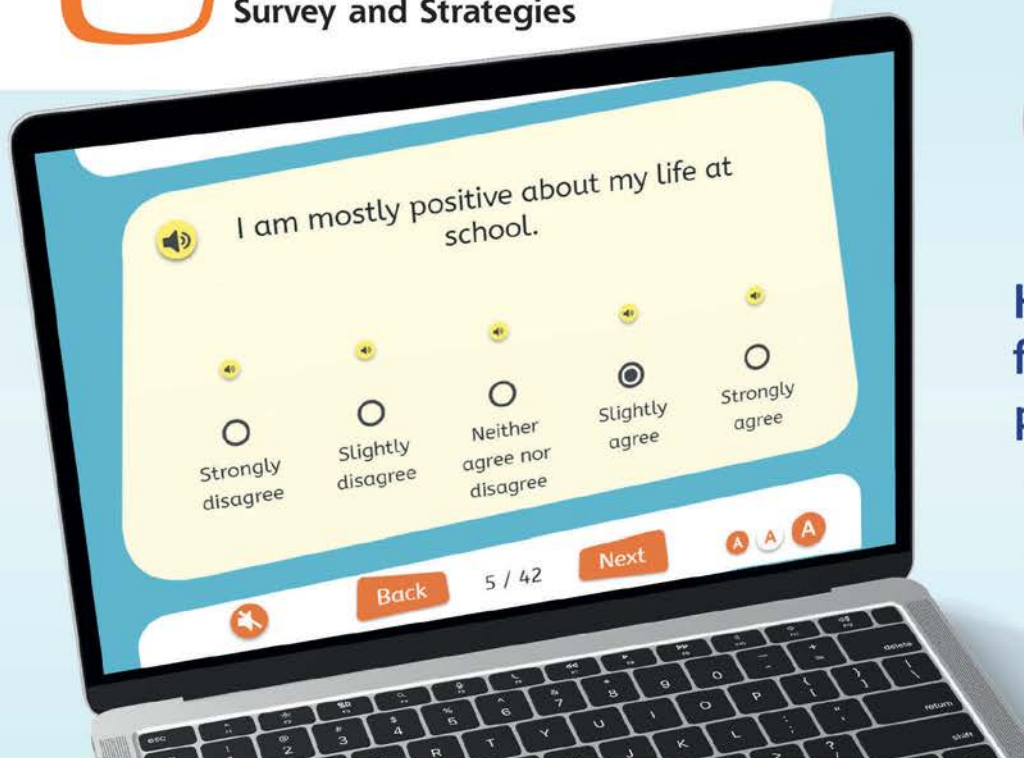
Leadership is not just the domain of leaders, it's important for us all to be able to lead – wherever we may be in our career. Governing can help to develop these skills. At the National Governance Association, we regularly hear from teachers who say that governing is the most valuable CPD they have experienced. Governing also provides numerous opportunities for professional development and training, whether in terms of the initial induction or to develop your knowledge in a specialist area such as safeguarding or finance.

6 | PREPARING FOR LEADERSHIP ROLES

Of course, governing is also incredibly useful preparation for leadership roles, whether taking the reins as a head, or as a deputy or assistant head. One of the core functions of governance is to hold leaders to account for the educational performance of the school or trust. This provides a solid understanding of what a board's priorities are and the information they require, which is really useful in a senior leadership role where you will be expected to work closely with your own governing board.

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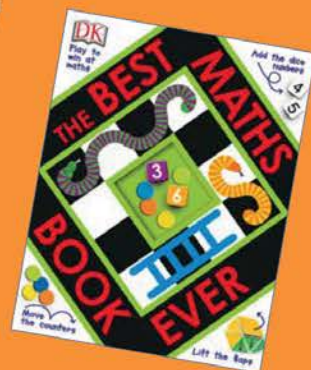
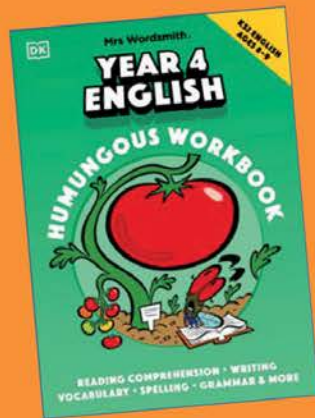
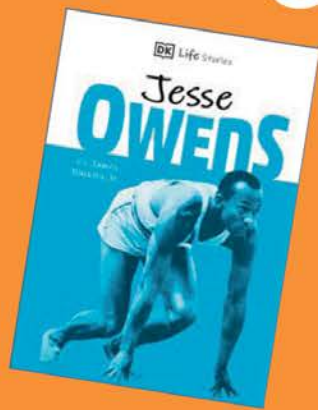
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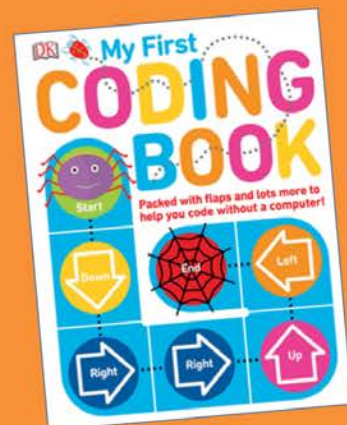
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encouraging children's conversation, have long pointed out the need for speech and language therapists to help to address the gap between children from the most and least favoured and supportive household backgrounds. Report after report, including Andrea Leadsom's *The best start for life: a vision for the 1001 critical days*, has emphasised the need to build a support system for families that could begin to overcome some of the terrible conditions that determine the restricted educational trajectories of far too many children. In the light of the pandemic, Ofsted reports that the youngest children have been affected the most during Covid, for example, with speech and language development hampered by adults wearing masks.

While we know that success is built on strong foundations, there is virtually no mention of significant reinforcement for this early stage of learning, as a 'harder, faster, stronger' approach is urged to regain lost time. The DfE is even commissioning a 'powerful learning' team to support 'catch-up' in Early Years, now. Those doing sterling work with our youngest children need a light shining on the real needs of their pupils very quickly. About 20 years ago, concerns over the quality of provision for pre-school and foundation stages brought a much-needed standardised expectation but, coupled with the gradual downward pressure to shrink the length of the infancy, we are at risk of reducing childhood to a measure of competencies. Our children are not pebbles to buff up and make shine by sailing through a phonics test or by working at greater depth to use as evidence of the productivity of their educational setting. They are precious, growing people and the roundedness of their development is vital.

As Casals put it so beautifully: "*And what do we teach our children? We teach them that 2+2 makes 4, and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to each of them: do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In the entire world there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed, there has never been another child like you. You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel? Let us make the world worthy of its children.*" **TP**

Tim Brighouse and Mick Waters have each spent a lifetime working in the school system as teachers and in high-profile leadership positions. Their book *About Our Schools: Improving on previous best* is out now and all royalties.



IS OUR VIEW ALL WRONG?

Are we at risk of reducing childhood to a measure of competencies through education's obsession with tests?

There is much concern at present about the impact of the pandemic on learning, evident delay and children 'falling behind' some linear marker of progress.

Politicians emphasise the urgency for children to 'catch up' and the recent White Paper sets new targets in English and mathematics for primary and secondary schooling by the end of the decade. This mirrors the approach to schooling over decades, as the measure of success has been the 'outcomes' and how to increase test, GCSE and A level results. Such results of course matter, but are they the 'be-all-and-end-all' of schooling's role in education?

Many would say there is more to schooling than that. Learning to take those steps from home and community into a wider world, being ready to take the opportunities and avoid the pitfalls of an increasingly digital society, understanding the world of work, being ready to make a

positive difference to self, neighbourhood, nation and planet are all important, and surely what we expect our schools to address with all their pupils.

Without agreed purposes for schooling we resort to the simple metric of results in testing and examining what is easily measurable and, with that, comes some unintended consequences.

While some of those unintended consequences often blight and narrow the secondary curriculum, their most serious adverse effects are potentially on our youngest children in the Early Years and Key Stages 1 and 2. The problem is that the backwash of unintended consequences has now splashed over the youngest in the system.

For years it has been acknowledged that if we could just get it right in the Early Years, we might have it right for life – 'give me the child until they are seven' is how it was often expressed. Primary school teachers, after tirelessly



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TEACHER ON AN INTRODUCTION
TO PHONICS IN EYFS, 2021

"Great, creative, useful ideas, techniques and resources. Great facilitator, very passionate and knowledgeable on the subject which came across very clearly."

TEACHER ON TEACHING WRITING,
FACE-TO-FACE COURSE, 2022

'Without funding and concrete support, the DfE's sustainability strategy is in danger of disappearing into an accountability fog'

Rebecca Stacey

 @bekblayton



A watershed moment for the tackling of our climate crisis is playing out across the planet, in our government, and inevitably in our schools. The DfE's new Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy was first seen in draft form during COP 26 back in November 2021, where it was welcomed with open arms. It's fair to say that other news items have taken over the public eye since then, but the strategy is worth a read, and it contains actions which many educators, campaigners and academics have applauded.

So, what does it mean for schools? There is a lot to consider in this strategy – much that school staff, leaders and administration need to get their teeth into. On the surface they seem to have listened to much of what teachers were asking for – we have curriculum changes, modelling of good practice, and the development of teacher skills and knowledge. Secondary schools have a Natural History GCSE, and primaries have a 'model' science curriculum incoming. There will be a digital resource hub where high quality resources and the sharing of good practice will be encouraged. There is a huge focus on the natural world across the curriculum with schools being tasked to ensure there is an 'appreciation and understanding' of it. This last point is crucial to the development of children's understanding of positive climate action and is very welcome – and many schools are glad to have been given the green light to develop this area of the curriculum. It is welcome that Early Years gets a mention as well, as this is an area often overlooked by system-wide strategy changes.

Ongoing CPD is also highlighted. Staff will be expected to develop their own understanding and knowledge – which should reap rewards across the sector since this is an area in which teachers have previously said they lack confidence.

Developing understanding across all areas of society is a big part of the government's 'net-zero by 2050' strategy and schools need to lead the way here. In addition, all settings will be required to have a sustainability lead. The development of an on-the-ground



leadership post is welcome, but what is less so is the lack of detail that comes with it. Many of us will remember the 'out of hours' learning and emphasis on school sports about 20 years ago now, as well as the audits, hours and funding that came with it. Sustainability leads will need time, the support of governors, training... and time – I mention time twice because all the changes this strategy demands from schools need time, which is arguably the most precious resource schools have.

How schools find the time is not mentioned.

Time will also be needed for leaders to implement and plan for these strategic changes and auditing, as they will be committed to report on their progress, to audit their buildings, to look at their supply chain, and develop their own policy – with some specific demands that have been recommended from other areas of the government, including the removal of single-use plastic by 2025 and sustainability targets for new builds.

How this reporting will look, again, we just don't know. How schools will be held to account, when other areas

of the curriculum, safeguarding and behaviour already cram the crowded accountability measures is also a question yet to be answered. Importantly, yet unsurprisingly, the support available for schools is 'incoming' – with some areas expected at the end of this year, and others not given a specific timeline. Funding is also muddled – some of the ideas are centrally organised (the online education hub, the climate literacy training). Other funding and implementation steps are still unclear however, such as how we will become single-use plastic free. We don't yet know just how they will realistically be achieved. Schools will need support – this strategy does not go deep enough into the detail to achieve its aims, and by not providing clear timelines, funding and concrete support, there is a danger that it will disappear into an accountability fog that means schools are merely ticking a list.

Rebecca Stacey is a former headteacher. She is currently studying for an MSc in Zero Carbon Communities and working for a sustainable charity in Cumbria.



‘EVIDENCE’ IS SIMPLY NOT ENOUGH

 @SHU_SioE

We need an inclusive approach to research in primary literacy education to really see results – it’s not just about large-scale studies

The recent schools white paper, *Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child*, makes a commitment to evidence-based teachings. Using ‘evidence’ to inform literacy learning, however, is a complex business.

When policy makers refer to ‘evidence’, they often refer to the kind of work being done by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and their network of Research Schools ([tinyurl.com/tp-EEF](https://www.tinyurl.com/tp-EEF)). In recent years, the EEF has done a huge amount to fund and disseminate findings from randomised controlled trials, and to synthesise research from various sources. Partly as a result of this, it’s been claimed that England has one of the best infrastructures for evidence-based teaching in the world.

Randomised controlled trials can indeed provide important information for schools when identifying approaches that may support aspects of literacy learning. But it would be doing schools, teachers and children a disservice to claim that the only contribution that research can make is to provide evidence based on large-scale trials. It’s clear that there are many other ways in which research can speak to literacy education – and many other kinds of research that can be useful in supporting professional thinking and decision-making.

In-depth qualitative studies that focus on a single classroom or even a single child can also help teachers and schools to reflect upon and refine approaches to literacy teaching and learning. Jacqueline D’Warte from the University of Western Sydney, for example, spent two years studying what happened in one class when 6–8-year-old, newly arrived

bilingual learners were invited to share their knowledge about different languages and dialect, to describe their experiences of using language at home and school, and to use languages other than English to support understanding across the curriculum. Her work is a great example of how a case study of a single class can show how generic approaches might play out for individual children.

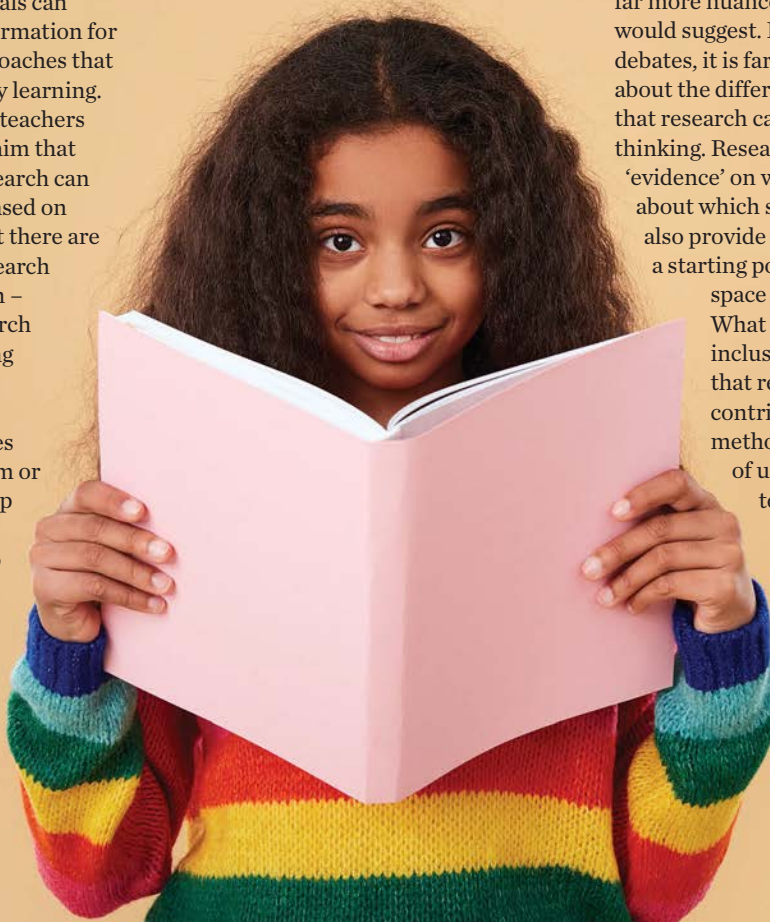
We can also draw on research to challenge assumptions about children’s literacy at home and school. We often hear it said, for example, that boys don’t read fiction and that, if we are to get boys reading, we need to provide them with non-fiction. Laura Scholes, Nerida Spina and Barbara Comber however – again writing from Australia – draw on interviews with thirty 8–9-year-olds

to debunk this idea, showing that boys’ reading preferences can be varied and sophisticated and often include fiction. Such research is a reminder never to over-generalise and that, if we make assumptions based on gender or anything else, we might miss opportunities to engage and cultivate children as readers.

Research can also challenge us to rethink the aims and scope of literacy provision. This is important because literacy doesn’t stay the same. Nowadays reading and writing usually involves navigating multiple texts produced by different groups and individuals (e.g. searching online), interacting with people we never meet (such as on social media) and using images as well as words. Given this, for over 20 years literacy researchers have argued that the literacy curriculum should accommodate creative, collaborative and critical use of *digital* text for a wide range of purposes. If we use research only to decide what works within the existing curriculum, we may fail to support the literacy learning that children need for their current and future lives.

Of course, ideas about literacy and how it is learned have been the subject of much debate over many years, as have the relative benefits of different kinds of evidence. Famously, phonics-centred approaches to teaching early reading were long ago pitted against whole-language approaches and this divisive perspective often persists. Such controversies, however, are often overplayed and different perspectives and practices are far more nuanced than press coverage would suggest. Rather than polarising debates, it is far more useful to think about the different kinds of contributions that research can make to professional thinking. Research may well provide ‘evidence’ on which to make decisions about which strategies to try. But it can also provide a sounding board for ideas, a starting point for reflection, and a space for imagining possibilities. What we need therefore is an inclusive approach to research that recognises the distinctive contribution of different research methodologies and different ways of understanding what matters to literacy learning. **TP**

Cathy Burnett is professor of literacy and education at Sheffield Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University.



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

A letter to... *Reading teachers*

Neil Almond on why we need to settle the 'reading vs decoding' debate once and for all...



Teaching children to read is one of the most rewarding parts of being a primary teacher. It is also, in my opinion, the most crucial. Being functionally literate is one of the greatest gifts that we can provide our pupils, as it not only opens up other areas of the curriculum – the rich tapestries of stories that make up the other subjects – it also provides a vast number of opportunities for them both within and outside school: the importance of reading a certain warning sign or the joy of reading a book that was recommended by a friend or adult, to name only two. It is no wonder that teaching such a life skill is one of the most researched areas in education. However, despite this, arguments rage over teaching pupils to read. Historically, the arguments usually come from one of two camps. The first is those that favour a 'whole language' or 'balanced literacy' approach to teach reading, where pupils are surrounded with high-quality literature and invited to guess meaning based on context, pictures and perhaps the first sound of a word. The second group believes that systematic synthetic phonics – carefully teaching students the way sounds of spoken language are spelled in print in a coherent way – is the superior way to get students reading. I have my preference between these two, so I am heavily biased in what follows.

You will have noticed that reading was italicised when outlining the two approaches. This was done purposefully. Many of the arguments that occur over Twitter on this subject conflate what reading is. I believe many people will agree

that to read successfully one must be able to comprehend what has been written. Research is quite clear that the act of reading is a multifaceted process made of two central components: language comprehension (understanding everyday and increasingly specialised language) and word recognition (decoding letter strings fluently back into their sounds). The relationship between these two components is multiplicative, not additive, and is commonly understood like this:

Reading Comprehension = Word
Recognition x Language Comprehension

To use an equation analogy - for us to comprehend successfully, both our word recognition and language comprehension must be greater than zero.

To understand why these arguments about reading happen (and to prevent more in the future) we need to, in my opinion, separate reading and decoding when talking about the use of phonics. Phonics is the body of knowledge that all fluent readers possess. It is what you are using to convert the abstract symbols on the page (or screen) that you are seeing now into sounds. To understand this, you rely on your comprehension of language. You understand what these words mean because of what you know about the conventions of the English language but also your specialist knowledge – not many people outside education may know what 'phonics' is.

The purpose of those phonics lessons is not to get students to 'read', as defined as decoding and understanding the text. Rather, it is to ensure that the word

recognition component of the above equation can get to 1 as soon as possible. Our lessons in other curriculum areas and the day-to-day lives where students gather a myriad of experiences of language and knowledge will support language comprehension. We should, therefore, be precise with our language. Phonics lessons are there to teach decoding, not to teach reading. This distinction seems small, but it is important to understand for those tasked with teaching students to read. Phonics never has been, and never will be, the sole way that pupils learn to read. It is, however, an integral, part of the process.

An easy way to experience for this yourself would be to learn the sounds of a shallow orthographic language (a language where the sounds used in that language can only be spelled one way) that you cannot speak. Welsh is an excellent example. As a result, it would be easy for a Welsh speaker to teach you the sounds and the corresponding spellings of those sounds. Armed with this knowledge you would stand an excellent chance of being able to decode any word in the Welsh language. Of course, however, you would not understand what those words meant unless you were told, despite being able to decode them. So, let us bring an end to these arguments and understand that phonics does not teach reading. It teaches decoding, which is necessary for reading.

From Neil



Neil Almond is deputy head at a south London school.

@Mr_AlmondED nutsaboutteaching.wordpress.com

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How I do it

Use classic stories and word lists to help pupils construct their own poetry

KAREN HART

1

Begin the activity by asking children if they are familiar with the stories of King Cnut and King Midas, before recapping the stories of how Cnut believed himself so powerful, he could turn back the tide, and how Midas was so greedy he wished for all he touched to turn to gold – and how things didn't turn out the way either had hoped.



These KS2 activities, inspired by the stories of King Cnut and King Midas, garnered real enthusiasm from the children in working with mime, poetry, storytelling and writing. I previously found many of my attempts at using poetry were met with apathy, but by using a whole-class, collaborative approach, offering a basic framework and kicking things off with a list of interesting words that children can drop into their poetry, pupils found the daunting task of summoning up something poetic much easier to navigate.

... >

Use a movement and drama session to improvise mimed scenes starting with King Cnut commanding the waves to turn back, concentrating on facial expressions and body language. You can make some really simple card crowns in preparation for this which helps get everyone in character. Go on to improvise the scene of King Midas touching objects and turning them into gold – being at first grateful, then frustrated with his magic power.

2

Using the stories as your starting point, talk as a class about how they could be brought up to date. Suggestions (supplied by my class!) could include: a rich businessman believing he could control the weather, but ending up getting soaking wet with a bad cold; and a chef turning all his food into gold, eventually losing his job. Now create a list of expressive and descriptive words connected to each of the stories. Some more suggestions: *controlling, fierce, foolish, twinkly, shimmering and greedy.*

3

4

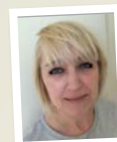
Next, you can create class stories based on those of King Cnut and King Midas, using the framework of: **beginning** – the characters, their dream/aim/plan; **middle** – the actions they took to make their dream work; and **end** – the result of their actions. Invite everyone to contribute, using your word list as inspiration. You can write the stories on the board, then later, type them up to turn into a class storybook, while children can supply the illustrations.




Finally, listen to Michael Rosen's free-verse poem, 'The Seagulls' (tinyurl.com/tp-Seagulls) before using your word list to inspire your own free-verse poems.

Ask children to write their poem using a theme from one of the class stories. Let pupils know that although their poems don't need to rhyme, they should include some imaginative and descriptive vocabulary. The end results will surely be lovely – they make a great wall display, too.

5



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

 @KarenStevie23

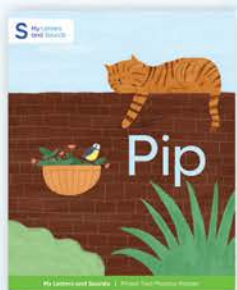


My Letters and Sounds

The new SSP programme for Letters and Sounds schools

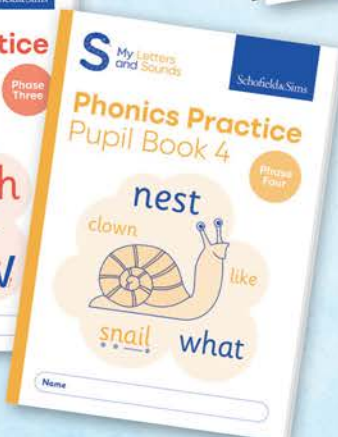
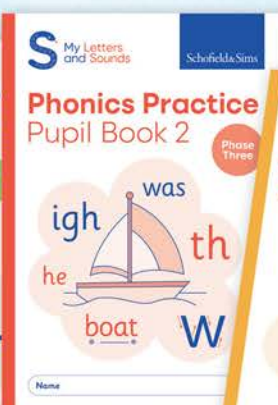
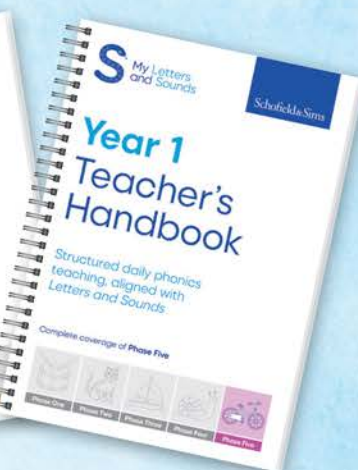
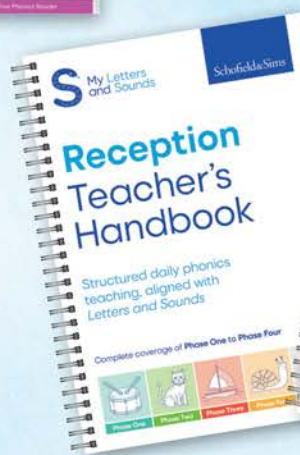
My Letters and Sounds is a complete phonics teaching programme that builds upon the original 2007 *Letters and Sounds*. It has been carefully designed to provide schools that wish to continue using the Letters and Sounds framework with an up-to-date and comprehensive set of resources that meet the DfE's revised core criteria for effective phonics teaching.





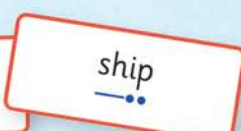
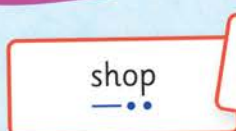
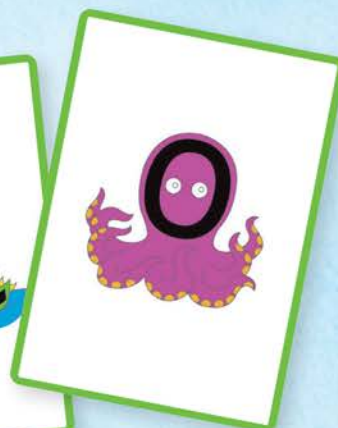
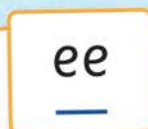
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RS ASSESSMENT
FROM HODDER EDUCATION

UNDERCOVER TEACHER

Our anonymous educator gets something off their chest

This year's reading SATs paper was biased towards the already advantaged. But does the STA care?

At the end of this year's English reading SATs paper, something strange happened: as the children filed out of the hall, instead of the usual ashen-faced signs of exhaustion and stress, a good number came out positively beaming.

"We've done this before!" they said. "That was so easy!" I had never seen a reaction like that to the most gruelling of all the papers. I had just been invigilating a small group of children who either had extra time or who were prone to panic; none of them had found it easy.

I asked these jubilant pupils what they were talking about and was told a section had been on the 11+ paper they did earlier in the academic year. The very same extract from the very same book.

The controversy revolves around the third and final piece that children had to read and answer questions on. Typically, this is both the hardest piece to read and comes at a point in the exam where pupils' stamina is often flagging. In this case, it was an extract from a 1939 text called *A Traveller in Time* by Alison Uttley.

In the extract, time seems to stand still as a girl passes by a mysterious lady in old-fashioned clothing on a staircase. There is a greeting smile between the two before the girl turns and follows her, only to find she has disappeared. The text makes perfect sense if you are forearmed – as many of my children were – with the knowledge that the lady comes from the Elizabethan era and that we are in a time-slip story. Without this knowledge, as was the case for most of the children who did not take the 11+, it would be easy to read this story literally and miss the symbolic value of much of the detail – particularly if they were struggling to stay on time.

When I notified the Standards and Testing Agency (STA), they argued that they 'cannot entirely mitigate against pupils having read certain texts, or against them being used by other organisations'.

They also argued that checking the texts against other tests would be 'impractical and expensive.'

Of course, if you choose to use a real and readily available text in the exam there is always a chance children would have encountered it before. It would

therefore make sense for them to write the texts from scratch (or at least take a cursory glance at the biggest test our Y6 children had ever faced...). The STA had three years to get these tests right (with no SATs in 2020 or 2021) and they did not succeed. It failed at the single most important part of its job; after all, what is the point in standardised testing other than to provide a fair and impartial measure of the children's abilities? To allow a situation where a particular (often privileged) demographic of the cohort is at an advantage seems to be allowing, and possibly encouraging, bias.

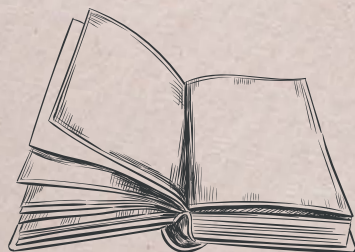
The brighter children; the ones from more affluent backgrounds; the ones with inbuilt societal advantages, were once again given a leg-up that they did not need, entrenching their advantage over their peers.

"But the SATs are pointless," I hear you cry. It's true. Obviously, it can be psychologically demoralising to fail a test; or even to miss out on 'Greater Depth', but the results are unlikely to have a huge impact on individual children. For a school, however,

the difference can be huge. School league tables play a large role in parental choice, impacting intake. What's more, the Department for Education recently announced Ofsted will, this year, return to using SATs data to inform the Quality of Education judgement – I'd need a whole other article to make it clear why this is a terrible idea!

I work in a school with a comparatively affluent intake. Close to half of the children in the year group took the 11+ this year, all of whom received private tuition to prepare them for these exams, paid for by their parents. Almost half again got into a grammar school.

My school strives for, and has achieved, SATs results way above the national average; we have not had an Ofsted inspection since 2013. A well-respected school just up the road, in a less affluent area and with lower SATs percentages, has been inspected four times in that period. The difference between the schools themselves illustrate the deep divisions in education, rooted in socio-economic circumstances. The carelessness of the STA only serves to exacerbate this... **TP**



"The STA failed at the single most important part of its job"

The writer is a primary teacher in England.

What's the POINT?

From appreciating art to the joy of solving puzzles, Mike Askew explores the true purpose of mathematics

MIKE ASKEW

“Why are we doing this?” My least favourite maths lesson question. When still teaching and tired, I sometimes had to fight saying, “Because I have to teach it, so just get on with it.”

When asked recently to speak at a meeting on the theme of why mathematics is so valued, I had to ask myself – why do we do maths?

Teaching mathematics is easily justified on utilitarian

mathematics educator with an anthropological bent, he studied how different cultures actually used maths, aiming to see if he could find commonalities. He did, listing six ‘universal’ activities in which widely differing communities engaged, and that gave rise to or required the use of mathematics.

I found Bishop’s six universals – counting, measuring, locating, designing, playing and explaining – key to addressing the value of teaching and learning maths.

make ‘uncountable’, continuous quantities – the length of the hall, the weight of a box, the amount of sand in a pot – countable. I cannot count how long the hall is, but I can count the number of strides taken to walk its length, strides being replaced eventually with metres and centimetres.

This counting-into-measuring tradition is not fixed in stone and learning which starts through experiences of continuous quantities – such as comparing lengths of ribbon or quantities of water – presents interesting insights. The Measure Up curriculum, in Hawaii, introduces mathematics through continuous quantities, an approach grounded in the theory and research of the psychologist V. V. Davydov. Children initially engage with tasks such as talking about two jars of water, one containing more than the other, and putting an elastic band on the jar containing more to show where the difference lies. To record the situation, they are introduced to using letters and the inequality symbols, $<$ (less than) and $>$ (more than). Evidence from children going through the Measure Up curriculum demonstrates, at the end of primary, stronger understanding of multiplication, fractions, and algebra.

Locating and designing

Locating and designing give rise to geometry. The ‘position

and direction’ strand of the English National Curriculum acknowledges the ‘locating’ aspect of working geometrically, but the other strand, ‘properties of shapes’, does not quite capture the essence of designing.

Design and its history provide powerful ways into thinking about properties of shapes. For instance, tiling patterns in places such as the Alhambra in Spain are not only beautiful, but become impressive accomplishments when you know that they were constructed with nothing more than a straight edge for drawing lines and a pair of compasses for marking off equal lengths. Challenging pupils to construct

“A curriculum without the satisfaction of tussling with an idea, and without the pleasure of moments of insight, is an impoverished curriculum”

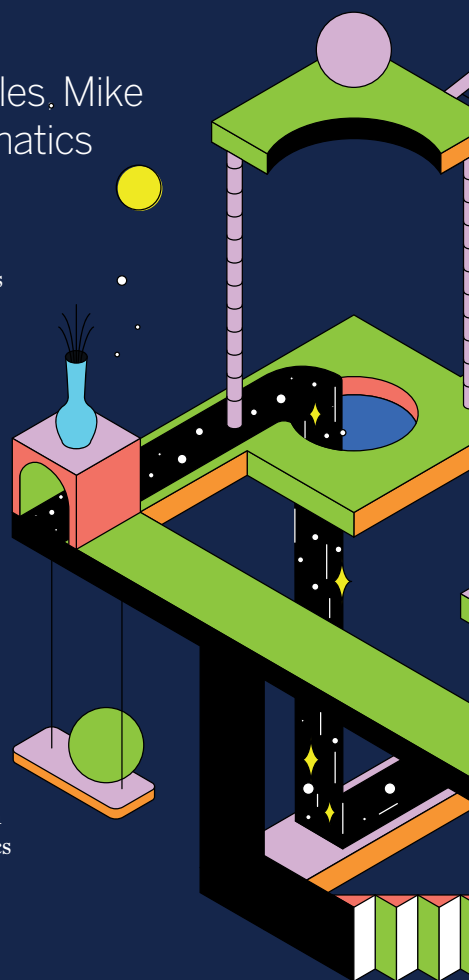
grounds – that we need it in our everyday lives, or for certain jobs – but that argument is weakened by the fact that much of the maths (or arithmetic at least) we need is now outsourced to our mobile devices. And, as someone who finds delight in the subject, the utilitarian argument, for me, is not enough.

I gathered my thoughts for the meeting by looking back over writing that had influenced my thinking, particularly Alan Bishop’s work from the 1990s. A

Counting and measuring

Counting and measuring as two mathematical universals are not particularly surprising; more so is evidence that we might be better off focusing more on measuring, particularly in Early Years.

Children’s early encounters with maths are commonly based around counting discrete quantities – fingers, bricks, stairs. Later, measuring is introduced to



PLAY FOR FIVE

Ways to play with mathematics in the odd few minutes

Count. Write the date as a series of digits, for example, '12 May 2022' as 1 2 5 2 0 2 2

Insert operation symbols between digits, or put digits together to make a multi-digit number, e.g. $12 + 5 \times 20 + 2 \div 2$. The aim is to get close to a target number, say, 50 or 100. Young pupils simply add or subtract the digits to try and reach the target.

Measure. Working in pairs, get pupils to list five things around the class, such as book, chair, pencil, etc. Combine these to make a 10-item list, and then ask pupils to order it according to estimated measures, say, weight or height.

Design a flag for a holiday, the class, or something meaningful to the children. Set conditions: the flag has to have at least three triangles and two rectangles.

Locate. Play a version of eye-spy but every question has to be about the location of the object is the room. Is it on the wall? Is it above the clock? Older children have to ask unambiguous questions: "Is it within one metre of my desk?" Rather than "Is it near my desk?"

Explain. Put up a calculation and solution showing unusual working. $9 + 8 = 10 + 10 - 3 = 17$ or $19 \times 5 = 38 + 38 + 19 = 95$. Working together, can children figure out what was done and apply the method to a similar calculation?

the solution to a puzzle, and being shown why two odds add to be even is more like to elicit a 'Meh' than an 'Aha'.

Which is why playing and explaining are more challenging to teach than curriculum 'content'. I cannot directly teach the pleasure of solving a puzzle, I can only offer puzzles to work on, and encourage pupils to persist, try different approaches

and share strategies. I cannot directly teach how to justify and explain, but I can listen to pupils' attempts, provide images and resources to support their inquiry and, again, encourage persistence and patience. A curriculum

without playing and explaining, without the satisfaction of tussling with an idea, and without the pleasure of moments of insight, is an impoverished curriculum. As the National Curriculum stated aims say: 'A high-quality mathematics education therefore provides a foundation for understanding the world, the ability to reason mathematically, an appreciation of the beauty and power of mathematics, and a sense of enjoyment and curiosity about the subject.' **TP**



Mike Askew is adjunct professor of education at Monash University, Melbourne.

A former primary teacher, he now researches, speaks and writes on teaching and learning mathematics.

mikeaskew.net

[@mikeaskew26](https://twitter.com/mikeaskew26)

provides a way into exploring the designs based on tessellations.

Playing and explaining

Bishop argues that playing and explaining are qualitatively different to the other four universals. Counting, measuring, locating and designing are primarily about engaging with our environment, whereas playing and explaining involve engaging with each other. Because of this, these universals do not have such an immediate sense of being useful. No-one needs to do a Sudoku, or play Snakes and Ladders, but puzzling and playing are pleasurable in their own right.

Puzzling, playing, explaining why – these can all bring satisfaction, pleasure, and delight. But such emotions must be experienced for oneself – there is no fun in being given

their own designs using such tools provides the ground from which to articulate and name properties more formally. For example, constructing triangles with a compass set to a fixed length can lead to the insight that only one triangle is possible – equilateral. Constructing quadrilaterals with four equal sides results in a range of shapes, all being rhombi, and with one particular rhombus – with four right angles – getting the special name of square.

More recent designs such as the geodesic roof of the library in the British Museum, or the domes of the Eden project can lead to further inquiry into the nature of angles. And, of course, the work of the artist Escher



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ASK THE EXPERT

“Progress requires building blocks”

Stella Formosa explains why we must focus on crucial knowledge in order to address lost learning

Why is crucial knowledge so important?

With student and staff absence, schools have been decimated by Covid. Add the summer learning loss yet to come and many children will continue to struggle. It's a mountain to climb. I don't see myself as an expert but have upskilled my team to be experts. Children need building blocks to progress to the next stage of learning. Our routines and structures focused on crucial knowledge mean we all work on establishing the same firm foundations.

How does this work in practice?

We have written our own curriculum, which is stripped back to crucial knowledge and made relevant for our children. Even enrichment of the curriculum is linked to crucial knowledge. We prioritise reading to enable progress in other subjects with strong phonics in place, and every half term we have a re-cap week, so children are confident before new learning is added. However, maths presents the biggest challenge as new knowledge can't be acquired easily, unlike reading.

How do you address lost learning in maths?

We use tuition and catch-up provision to fund afterschool and in-person tuition. We use White Rose Maths for materials, and work with Whizz Education and the virtual tutor Maths-Whizz to keep enthusiasm going. Maths-Whizz is great as we can set homework and use it in class to back up learning. Despite the challenges, we have a positive perception of maths as Maths-Whizz pitches lessons for individual's needs and so children feel successful.



EXPERT PROFILE

Name: Stella Formosa

Job title: Head teacher, Chesterton Primary

Area of expertise: Organisation and developing staff to build a team of experts that deliver crucial knowledge and prioritise learning effectively

Best part of my job: Seeing children progress

How important is assessment?

We know there are gaps in learning. The data provided by Whizz Education enables our maths coordinator and class teachers to continually assess, identify and target lessons. The virtual tutor automatically focuses on weaker areas for individual students. If we identify a whole-class issue, we tend to pull back and re-align. In this way we can use the real-time data to 'course correct' to ensure we are addressing all areas of crucial knowledge.

How have you made maths a positive experience?

As a result of Covid, we have children with attachment issues – some just don't want to be in school after so much time at home, and having Maths Whizz helps. It's been a tough time for everyone. Maths has traditionally been the subject no-one likes! However, with Maths-Whizz children are motivated with games, awards and trophies. It works for parents, children and staff, and enables us to make progress in challenging times.

ASK ME ABOUT

IMPACT: Keep it simple. Focus on prioritisation and what creates the greatest impact on learning crucial knowledge

CPD: Upskill and empower staff to become the experts in edtech, and ensure everyone drives a key area

IMPROVEMENT: Every aspect of the school needs to be working towards improving learning outcomes. If not, change it!

W: [whizz.com](https://www.whizz.com)



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2. Use videos to check understanding

Tigtag's context films help to anchor concepts in the real world. Once you have watched and discussed the curriculum film (and perhaps done some other activities), move on to the context film. This will open up further discussion and allow you to check if students really understand how concepts apply in real life.

3. Set practical activities as homework

Ask your students to try the Tigtag activities at home and come back to the next lesson ready to share their results. This is a great way to engage your students and make them feel more involved in what they're learning, while also giving you a chance to assess their understanding.

4. Make use of quizzes and review questions

Tigtag content comes with ready-made quizzes and review questions that are designed to assess and extend learning.

5. Self-assessment and assessment

Tigtag's Tidbit films are ideally used toward the end of a topic, with interactive games and activities that help you assess what students have understood, such as "True or False" and "Odd one out".

At the end of a lesson or session, ask your students to assess their own learning using the key learning points.

For your whole school

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School profile



Name: Glade Primary School
Headteacher: Farzana Hussain
Location: Ilford, Essex
Ofsted rating: Good
Size: 472 pupils
Extra info: Glade Primary is a London Borough of Redbridge Community School



Farzana Hussain, Headteacher

“We can’t build on learning until we know we’re looking after wellbeing”

An understanding of the natural world and exposure to culture are top priorities for this city school



As soon as I entered Glade Primary School, I was quickly ushered into their on-site woodland area, to observe an outdoor lesson. As we walked into the forest, the traffic sounds and tarmac of the outer-London borough of Ilford quickly disappeared to reveal a pastoral vision of children singing and hugging trees. Now, this may, on first reading, sound a little disturbing, but let me clarify – we were viewing a hands-on music lesson, where children were singing a song about trees, and were encouraged to use their imaginations to ‘hear’ what the trees might say. The Year 2 class were absorbed in the song, and clearly revelling in the outdoors.

What this might not immediately illustrate, is that I was at Glade during SATs week. However, rather than an atmosphere of stress and strain, the whole school seemed remarkably relaxed. Although teaching and learning are inevitably a high priority for every year group, it’s equally as important to make sure pupils feel safe and comfortable, says headteacher Farzana Hussain. “We can’t build on education until we know we’re looking after everyone’s wellbeing; staff and pupils,” she says. “It’s the strong foundation that we need to grow.”

As a rights-respecting school, Glade has been focusing on wellbeing as a core curriculum driver for some time, but when they came across a Quality Mark for wellbeing, they jumped at the chance. “We didn’t want to just get a badge or a certificate as a tick-box exercise,” explains Farzana, “but rather we wanted to use the award as a tool to self-evaluate and assess where we were as a school, in terms of both pupil and staff wellbeing.” The senior leadership team was also keen to highlight the great things the school was already doing, and celebrate some wellbeing initiatives that may have not previously been called out. “We sometimes dismiss great things as ‘just what we do’,” says Farzana, “so we felt it was time to really shine a light on them.”

So, what does this look like in practice?

OUTDOOR LEARNING

Well, to take you back to our woodland scene, a lot of Glade’s arts provision takes place outdoors (at least when the weather’s good enough; there are ‘nature classrooms’ for when it isn’t). Exposure to culture and engagement in the natural world is very important to the team here. The next lesson I got to see, for example, was a Year 6 survival skills workshop on building fires, and not only did it make me wish I had had such experiences during my own primary years, but it highlighted the respect that pupils have for one another. As we approached the

purpose-built firepits, shouts of “We did it! Teamwork!” could be heard, and the squabbling you’d expect amongst a group of 10- and 11-year-olds setting fire to cotton wool was remarkably absent. Children were readily helping each other with the difficult task of using a flint to make a spark and the lesson was rounded out with toasting marshmallows around their central fire. All the while, class teacher Mr Merchant was discussing with the pupils the chemical requirements for fire (fuel, oxygen, heat, etc), and the groups of children were conferring about the amount of each element they would need to help their fire along.

But it wasn’t just hands-on skills that were being developed. Another outside lesson, this time focused on learning about Homer’s *Iliad*, was next. If I asked you to describe a lesson on poetry or classics, I imagine that a Year 5 pupil dressed up in a giant crisp box wouldn’t be part of it. Well, at Glade, it is. Enter Jonny Walker – poetry workshop leader, and instigator of this dramatic lesson. The children were fully absorbed in their re-enactment of the battle that wounded Achilles, wearing costumes they’d made themselves and, with Jonny’s help, bringing this crucial scene from the epic to life. “By teaching this topic over six weeks, we’re able to check back with the children really often and build in lots of different storytelling techniques, so that they’re able to hold on to the story,” he says. In order not to overwhelm the children with the heavy content of the *Iliad*, and to make sure everyone can participate, Jonny builds up knowledge week by week, making sure to draw out elements that will appeal to his young audience. “The comedic side of Homer plays a big part in that,” he explains, “and to start with, I’ll take volunteers to act parts out, but week by week their willingness grows, so eventually, like you saw, every child is active”.



Pupil voice



Abdul

We don’t have to just do English and maths all the time – we have lots of outdoor learning and extracurriculars. And in our subjects, we don’t just focus on one race, we go around the world.



Zaviyar

Whatever subject we do, the teachers try and make it fun, so school isn’t boring! I’ve enjoyed doing the *Iliad* reconstruction, because it helps me understand what it all means.



Imaan

We had fun in science recently, measuring how high we could jump, and the height of our hips. I like to learn new things at school, because the work is interesting.



Veer

You never know quite what you’re going to be doing next, at Glade. We’re going on a poetry retreat soon, to the New Forest, so I’m really looking forward to that!



REPRESENTATION MATTERS

This level of inclusion is essential at Glade, and something Farzana and her team are constantly working on. “We’re really consciously focusing on representation at the moment,” she says. “It’s a lot of work, and we realise it’s not an overnight fix, but we want to make sure our children are represented in the curriculum.” Pupils also have ownership over their identities at school. “I didn’t want this to be top-down – to all come from us,” explains Farzana. “We follow British Values, but one of them is about mutual respect and tolerance. That wording didn’t ever sit right with me, though – nobody wants to simply be *tolerated*, we want to be celebrated.” The rest of the staff take this on board, too. “Jo Porter, our art lead, noticed that the entire primary art curriculum focused on white, European men,” says Farzana, “so we have worked to include more female artists, global figures, and artists with differing needs – there are musicians for instance that are deaf, or blind, and we want to include as many of them as possible, to show our children that everyone can be included, and there is no ceiling to creativity.” Every subject lead has delved into the curriculum, Farzana says, and the staff recently had an INSET day based entirely around exploring diverse books. “I want my children to be exposed to all sorts of different points of view,” she adds, “so they learn to accept people for who they are, even if they seem ‘different’.”

These links don’t just exist in literature, either. The school has also been working with the British Council to connect with schools in the US, and during lockdown, pupils were able to video conference with the Manhattan School of Music, and have a cultural exchange with the students there. Glade even made it onto ITV News for their efforts, not only to continue the children’s learning, but for bolstering their wellbeing with this kind of contact. “Louisa Willers, our LKS2 phase leader, was leading on the video conferencing,” says Farzana, “and because she was so passionate about it, it worked really well.” There’s certainly something to be

said for the passion of the staff at Glade. Louisa’s use of online tools over lockdown was based largely around helping children stay engaged – both with school and with their community – and as such, she got them involved in all sorts of challenges. “We wanted to encourage our pupils to take those steps outside, at a time when people were feeling scared and worried. Even going out into the garden, or to a park, can really help your wellbeing, and we also placed a lot of importance on coming together, virtually, as a community,” she says. Some of the online challenges Louisa and the team organised included the RSPB Wild Challenge, made up of 24 activities linked to outside learning, such as investigating bugs children could find outside, and using time in nature to inspire creative writing. Once pupils were back on campus, the staff took as many lessons as they could outside, teaching in small groups, and this has continued.

TRUE INCLUSIVITY

Making sure all children feel welcome and valued is a central driver at Glade. In light of this, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are fully integrated into mainstream classes, supported by LSAs. “I’m proud of how inclusive our school is,” says Farzana. “We have children with special educational needs in each class, but you wouldn’t necessarily notice unless I pointed them out. And that’s how we think it should be – totally inclusive.” Some pupils do require specialist support outside of their classrooms, Farzana explains, and the school has a sensory garden to cater for children who require that extra time out. “In some schools, SEND pupils do the register with classmates, but then go off to different rooms to complete their lessons. There is of course a place for schools that work in that way, but it’s not what inclusivity means to us,” she says. Rather, at Glade, Farzana explains, though children might spend small parts of their day in the sensory garden, or participating in interventions, for the majority of the time they’re in a mainstream classroom with their peers. The rest of the children work well with this setup, too. “Honestly, children are better than most adults when it comes to working alongside their SEND peers,” says Farzana. “They don’t blink an eye. Even with children who have behaviour issues, they know that meltdowns can happen, and that they just need to carry on with whatever they’re doing – there are always adults around to help.”





Teach Primary

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FOCUSED SUPPORT

There is also a more targeted approach to wellbeing, for those who need it. Like many schools, Glade has mental health first aiders and staff that are trained in emotional literacy. But more unusually, they also have an on-site counsellor who is a professional therapist, and the school pays for this private service one day per week so that any staff or pupils that may need the support can access it for free. "There's no feedback to the school from the counsellor," explains Farzana, "because ultimately, we just want the process to be impactful for those that need a little extra support. For example, some children have experienced bereavement, so it's great for them to be able to speak to a professional."

A large part of this mental health provision, says Farzana, is to help children become more resilient. "Some of our Year 6 pupils will apply to selective schools in the area," she says, "but no matter where they go, we want them to feel confident in their abilities." This goes for staff, too. Glade's CPD offering is "very personalised," says Farzana, and staff turnover is low (Louisa has been at the school for 21 years). "We're very lucky that lots of our staff have been here a long time," she explains, "but even if they should choose to go somewhere else, we're happy to train them in the areas they'd like to develop, because whatever school a teacher is at, they'll have an impact on children, and that's what we're all in this profession for."

Teachers are even encouraged to visit other schools, so that they can share ideas and moderate work with peers. "We've hosted cross-school events, where teachers from Year 2 to Year 6 came and moderated work together," Farzana explains. This can help keep staff from getting complacent and falling into bad practices, she says, as well as giving them the chance to share skills and connect with fellow educators. Another reason staff are encouraged to learn from one another is to ensure that training isn't always top-down, and that teachers who aren't in the senior leadership team still get a chance to share their valuable expertise. Farzana is also very keen to avoid asking staff to complete tasks "for the sake of it". "We don't ask them to do anything



Meet the staff



JONNY WALKER
POETRY TEACHER AND
WORKSHOP LEADER

The children here are really sensitive with each other. I'm in the fortunate position of seeing other schools as I work with a few, and they're all great, but I definitely feel something special at Glade. The relationships between the kids are really nice. There's a lot of work [behind the scenes] that goes into that.



SUE JONES
WELLBEING LEAD &
SENDCO

Pupils know how to proactively take care of their own mental health and wellbeing, because we've helped them develop strategies. And the main thing is that they realise there's no stigma around asking for help. We ran a campaign on this recently, to show that school is a safe space.



LOUISA WILLERS
LKS2 PHASE LEADER AND
CLASS TEACHER

The children have learned the tools to be able to communicate their thoughts and feelings so they don't get stuck. Some of them do this through poetry, and lots of pupils voluntarily bring in their notebooks or stories they've written - you don't see that in many places.



SUMANA JAIN
YEAR 6 TEACHER AND UKS2
PHASE LEADER

We've got a really diversified curriculum, so we celebrate all sorts of different cultures here. We've been reading stories from the Caribbean recently, and that's extended into other subjects, so we had a music teacher bring steel drums in, and we've explored samba and salsa.

if it doesn't have an impact on the children," she says. "We've had a good debate recently about planning and marking. But the main question for me is, who are you doing it for? If staff are planning or marking for SLT, we've got something wrong. Everything teachers do should be helping children move their learning forward, not just ticking boxes."

Everything that happens at Glade Primary is carefully considered through the lens of wellbeing, and helped along with a healthy dose of creative arts. Whether it's end-of-term BBQs for staff, or on-site camping for Year 6s, the point of all activities is to build community and make use of the resources the school has to make everyone's day that little bit brighter.

One other thing that Farzana says she is particularly proud of, is the camaraderie and professionalism amongst staff of all levels. "You could go into any of our classrooms, and I bet you would be hard pressed to distinguish between teachers and support staff," she says. "That's a great sign for me that there is no 'us' and 'them', there's just a team, all working together for the same goal - for the children."

Like the Year 6 class making fires, then, respect is the key to a harmonious existence. And isn't that just what art teaches us? That at the end of the day, we're all in this together, and celebrating different points of view can be truly beautiful. Glade is a pretty good demonstration of that - inside and out. **TP**

HOW TO BUILD A COACHING CULTURE

Tying on your cape and launching to everyone's rescue may seem helpful, but allowing staff to become their own problem-solvers is better, says **Damian Mitchelmore**

Educators are hard-wired to want to help people achieve their best – it comes naturally as part of the job. But school leaders or senior staff who try to give their colleagues all the answers or who dive in and solve problems for them are not providing their team with the tools to succeed.

To illustrate the point, imagine a Y2 pupil coming to you at breaktime with their shoelaces undone. The simple act of stepping in to tie those laces gets the child back out into the playground, but it doesn't really solve the problem at hand. In the long term, pupils need to develop the confidence and ability to tie their own shoelaces.

Likewise, we need to empower people to develop their own brilliant ways to address issues in our schools, and that's where coaching comes in. School staff can sometimes feel they have the weight of the world on their shoulders, particularly during unsettled times. However, there is no need to carry that burden alone. Rather than trying to fix everything all at once, it is better to build a team of capable problem solvers who are always ready for the next set of challenges.

Anyone in a school can be a coach. A less experienced teacher could have a coaching conversation with a more experienced colleague; for

example, to help them find ways to address day-to-day challenges such as how to help pupils collaborate on a project using technology, or how to teach a maths lesson outdoors. However, getting to this point involves embedding coaching throughout a school, and that calls for a culture shift...

A different approach

Take the example of a teacher who is experiencing low-level disruption in their Y5 class. If

children tired, distracted or disengaged? Then you become a facilitator by asking your colleague what techniques they could use and how they could make the most of their own professional qualities to address the situation.

Here are some coaching steps for this scenario:

- Encourage the teacher to explore what the issues could be. Are the pupils really misbehaving or are there other factors making them play up?

“Teachers who are trusted to develop their own strategies will be better prepared to tackle even the most complex challenges”

the teacher comes to you for help, your natural instinct might be to tell them what you would do in that situation and recommend they do the same. Alternatively, you might be tempted to go to the classroom and talk to the children yourself.

However, this won't help the teacher find their own way to approach the issue next time.

In a coaching culture, the first thing to do is listen – and empathise. Find out what the issue really is: are the

to solve the problem.

- Challenge them to take ownership of the issue and encourage them to think of one or two new actions they could try, to see if it changes the pupils' behaviour.

Coaching conversations

Coaching gives teachers the time and space to express their individual voices as professionals. That's because it is not passive – coaching is not done *to* someone, it is done *with* them. In a school with a coaching culture, these conversations become a part of everyday learning.

A good coaching conversation will follow the 80:20 rule. The coach should keep a teacher in the 'what' part of the conversation for 80 per cent of the time. This is when you encourage the teacher to fully explore what the issue is, accept what is happening as a result, and identify what they want to achieve.

For the remaining 20 per cent of the time, you focus on the 'how'

part of the conversation, when the teacher talks about how they want to move forward. At this point, the teacher should create one or two tangible, positive actions to address the issue.

It can be useful to have a set of coaching questions to give structure to the conversation, such as:

- Where are you now? This explores the teacher's strengths and areas of development without overly focusing on or brushing over the negative.
- Where would you like to be? This question examines what the teacher wants their practice to look, feel or sound like next.

- What do you already do? This keeps the conversation positive by establishing what is working well and what they should keep doing.
- How could you be more effective? This is the point where the teacher considers their next steps and sets some well-defined goals.

Positive challenge

Coaching can take a bit of getting used to at first. While training and mentoring focuses on imparting knowledge and demonstrating skills, coaching is more about encouraging people to change their behaviour and mindsets. As a result, some teachers initially feel challenged by coaching. And yes, they are being challenged, but in a positive way.

Ultimately what happens is people learn to self-coach.

They ask themselves difficult questions and are always seeking out opportunities to improve, flourish and progress.

Paul Day, assistant headteacher at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy, says this about the impact of coaching in his school: "The problem with many approaches to professional development is that they focus on what people are not so good at, and what they need to improve. Coaching, on the other hand, gives staff greater autonomy over their own development, and it encourages them to seek out opportunities to learn and grow.

"One of our teachers was having difficulties in the classroom and the leadership team were trying to find ways to offer support. But the real difference came when this teacher started her coaching journey. She became inspired to take ownership of her future, found her spark as a teacher and flourished. This teacher is now a head of department."

Keeping good teachers

Schools urgently need to recruit and retain great talent, and the best teachers want to work in an environment where they can grow as professionals and make a genuine difference to their pupils' lives. Teachers will want to work in your school because it is a place where everyone thrives, and is empowered to succeed.

In fact, coaching comes naturally to people who work in schools. Good teachers are already supporting their pupils to tackle problems and figure out solutions for themselves; empowering them to use their own teaching style to overcome hurdles will help your school whatever the future brings. **TP**



Damian Mitchelmore is a former deputy head and

managing director of OLEVI, a leading coaching organisation for schools.

Find more at
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The SEND green paper EXPLAINED

How will the government's enquiry into special educational needs and disabilities really affect primary schools?

On 29 March 2022, the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care released the long-awaited, much anticipated green paper, *SEND review: right support, right place, right time*, for consultation.

It is no secret that the current system of provision and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) isn't working well enough. We know this from many indicators, not least the poor educational outcomes for many children and young people with SEND. The green paper itself refers to academic attainment disparities, including the fact that only 22 per cent of KS2 learners with SEN reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018/19.

While the green paper recognises that the current system is driven by a hard-working, dedicated workforce, who are committed to delivering excellent support, it also states that the experiences and outcomes of children with SEND are still poor, and that good practice is not the norm everywhere. Its proposals aim to create a fully inclusive system, starting with improved mainstream provision, and prompt access to targeted support

Context and aims

Underlining the need for earlier identification, part of the government's proposed solution lies in further investment in family hubs, and in training more SENCos for Early Years settings.

Good primary education is undoubtedly crucial in ensuring

that children thrive and achieve – providing high-quality teaching that is inclusive of all.

The green paper considers:

- what provision for SEN is consistently made 'ordinarily available' in every class, in every school, by every teacher;
- the thresholds at which learners are identified as requiring SEN support, or an education, health and care plan (EHCP);
- how schools communicate with families and carers, and partner with them by way of co-production.

A common difficulty encountered by schools arises around achieving access to specialist support. The green paper acknowledges this challenge, suggesting improvements that include the need to better understand the picture of demand for support for children with SEND from the therapy and diagnostic workforce.

Encouragingly, there is also a pledge to invest in new research on SEND classroom-based practice and thereby grow the collective understanding of 'what works'.

Creating national standards

One of the government's key proposals is to create consistent national standards around how needs are identified and met – arguing that far more children should be able to access support in their local mainstream setting without the need for

an EHCP, or specialist provision.

National standards would specify what support should be ordinarily available in every school to ensure that the experience of every child with SEND is equitable, and that families know what to expect from every school. These standards would include:

- how/when a child is identified as requiring SEN support;
- clear processes for assessment;
- the support that should be made ordinarily available in mainstream education;
- the circumstances in which an EHCP is needed;
- the circumstances in which the involvement of a specialist setting is required.

Under the proposals, mainstream schools will also receive a package of tiered support from alternative provision settings, which includes targeted support on the addressing of behavioural needs, with potential for 'on call' advice, and extra provision such as self-regulation classes.

Improving EHCPs

Implementing the 2014 SEND reforms focused heavily on statutory provision, through the shift from Statements to EHCPs. For many in schools, EHCPs

subsequently became a key area of frustration and difficulty.

The freedom to work at a local level in the creation of EHCPs resulted in a broad range of approaches being employed, leading to varying content quality and processes that remain challenging to navigate – particularly when children move between local authorities (LAs), or within multi-academy trusts whose schools sit across several LAs.

The green paper talks of addressing these inconsistencies by introducing standardised EHCP templates. There will also be a requirement to co-produce plans with families, carers and children, which moves us forward from the requirement in the current SEND code of practice (2015) in which LAs must consult the child and their parents or carers throughout the process of producing a plan. This development might mean teachers need more opportunities to work collaboratively with families to decide upon provision.

Perhaps one of the most overdue proposals in the green paper is that of digitising EHCPs, enabling easy access for all contributors, including teachers. This could help overcome the current barriers that arise during pupil transitions between schools, giving greater control to parents and carers by ensuring plans cannot be changed without their input.

Support for staff

For teachers and support staff, the prescription of ordinarily available provisions could be helpful; possibly taking the form of a framework of enabling strategies to support children with a wide range of needs, helping teachers to ensure access to learning for most children. This development could encompass considerations such as lesson pace, language, use of visual cues, and the facilitation of multiple

means to demonstrate learning.

Again, structuring nationally consistent processes for identification, assessment and SEN support could be particularly helpful for instances in which children – and teachers – move between schools and LAs, as well as empowering parents and carers to feel more confident in understanding what is expected of every school. The hope would be for those standards to uphold a level of helpful consistency; giving firm guidance on when, how and why to assess for – and identify – SEN, for instance, whilst enabling schools to respond to the individual circumstances and needs of children.

Implications for schools

It's important to recognise that many schools already have a robust repertoire of universal provision and SEN support. For them, the national standards may be helpful in levelling the playing field between schools, and in challenging perceptions that some schools cannot provide for SEND.

School leaders, including SENCOs, will want to plan for the implementation of the standards, ensuring all staff offer the mandated provision. Though we don't yet know the details, this may include the adoption of universal teaching and learning strategies – such as breaking down tasks into manageable steps – and the provision of scaffolds; for example, with resources to support working memory.

Making it happen

Of course, just knowing *how* to facilitate access to high quality learning – and acknowledging why this is crucial – is not enough to ensure that change is efficiently implemented. With the green paper consultation currently live, everyone has a chance to contribute, sharing their own experiences and insights.

If you want to make sure your voice is represented, join in with the consultation here: sendreview.campaign.gov.uk. **TP**



Alison Willett is Education Director at nasen (the National Association for Special Educational Needs), a charity and membership organisation that includes leaders, SENCOs and teachers from over half of schools in England

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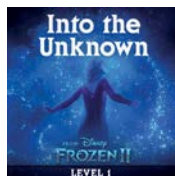
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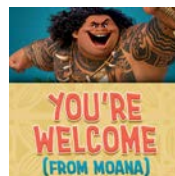
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Rockets, snowmen and skipping songs... help children plan their own science experiments with no stress and very little budget

EMMA RANADE

In my job, I am lucky enough to witness Science Week in many different schools and I love seeing the enthusiasm of the children (and staff!). I recently visited Freshwaters Primary Academy, in Harlow, where everyone in the school got involved with the 'Harry Potter Science Week' theme by either dressing as magical folk or scientists. When the headteacher spends the entire day wearing a decorated lab coat, purple wig and roller skates, you can't help but get excited about science!

Freshwaters had an external workshop provider in for hands-on potions

classes, a visit from some amazing birds of prey, and a whole host of in-school activities across the week. According to the children I spoke to, it was "epic" and "the best week ever", but the thought of organising such a big event can be daunting, with months of planning for the science co-ordinator and a chunk of budget to make it happen. However, there are many ways to engage children in science with minimal cost and minimal planning. Here are some of my favourite practical activities that can stretch children's scientific thinking and get them hands-on, either in Science Week or any time.

I've chosen child-led investigations as these give pupils the opportunity to be 'real' scientists, and investigation planning is often one of trickiest 'Working Scientifically' skills to cover.

Rubber band cannons

Cut the bottom off a Pringles tube (grown-up job!) and cut four slits in the end to attach a couple of elastic bands. Next, you need to push a (blunt) pencil through a plastic bottle; the elastic bands attached to the Pringles tube can loop over the pencil. Pull the bottle down and let go to fire projectiles such as screwed up paper, ping pong balls, cotton wool, pom poms, etc. See fig. 1 over the page for visual instructions. If you get the children to bring in the tubes and plastic bottles, you only need some elastic bands. Use sticky note planning (fabscience.co.uk/sticky-note-planning) in class to come up with ideas for variables. Many can be done with no further resources: change the projectile, number of elastic bands, twists in the bands, angle of launch, pull-back distance, etc. Every time I do this, the children think of ideas I haven't thought of! The dependent variable can also be chosen from distance flown, height reached, force (i.e., can it knock down cups?) or even accuracy (can you get it into a cup?). This could be used as part of the forces topic in Year 3 or Year 5, or as a standalone STEM project any time.



Stomp rockets

These can be made easily using old lemonade bottles and the only resources that need to be bought in are a few sections of plumbing tubing and hosepipe. If you know any plumbers, you can probably get some offcuts for free, but the tubing only costs a couple of pounds in any DIY shop. The resources can be used year after year and don't take up much space in the science cupboard. The rocket is made by rolling paper around a plastic tube and sealing the end with LOTS of sticky tape. Use a short section of hose (and more tape) to connect the bottle to the tube. When the bottle is stomped on, the air will rush through the hose and tube and the rocket will fly! Have a look at fig. 2 below to see the rocket in action, and find full instructions at tinyurl.com/tp-StompRockets

Film canister rockets are great fun, too, if rather messy... this is one for outside! The canister is launched into the air when the lid is forced off due to gas pressure. The source of the gas is carbon dioxide being released by a soluble vitamin C tablet in water in the canister. Ask your local camera shop to save up the canisters for you. Fuji ones (white with white lid) are the best. Possible variables are volume of water, temperature of water, flavour/brand of tablet, and the size of the table (use quarter, half etc).

The snowman's coat

This is a classic investigation of insulation – how can we keep ice frozen for the longest period of time?



fig. 2



It is usually just done by investigating different insulating materials, but it can be opened up to all sorts of ideas from the children. Wrap beakers of ice cubes in different materials of different thicknesses, and use different lids or change the size/shape of the ice cubes or the outside temperature. Be careful when choosing the dependent variable for this ('what will we measure?'); measuring the change in temperature should be avoided. The temperature of the ice won't change until it has all melted, so best to go for measuring the volume of melt-water, the change in mass of the ice, or the time it takes to completely melt.

Heart work

Investigating changes in heart rate is great for combining science and PE. Ask children to find out what affects how our heart rate changes after exercise, or how quickly it returns to normal afterwards. Obvious ideas are changing the type or duration of exercise, but this is another one where I have found children are fantastic at coming up with their own investigations. My favourite was "What happens when I sing different songs while skipping?". The group chose three different songs that were 'normal skipping songs', 'normal singing songs' and 'big voice songs' (basically The Greatest Showman with skipping!). With older year groups, this can also be used for data collection across the class and discussion of sample sizes and experimental design.

Clothes horse

Drying laundry is extremely easy to resource as you only need some fabric (towels, flannels or rags will do) and water. Investigate what can make wet fabric dry the quickest. You could look at temperature, sunlight, whether the fabric is flat/scrunched/folded, air

3 MUST-HAVES FOR CLASSROOM SCIENCE

Trays

My favourite low-cost investment for the science cupboard is a stack of trays. Ikea do some huge ones for a couple of pounds each. This can really take the stress out of transforming your classroom into a temporary science lab as the clear-up can be done in minutes.

Sticky notes

Perfect for jotting down ideas for variables, and for planning experiments. Log your questions and investigation notes on stickies so they're easy to access and moveable, especially for a 'how we do it' timeline.

Curiosity

Children are full of ideas, opinions and creativity. Foster their natural curiosity and your science lessons will really blossom.

movement, and type of fabric. You can check if it is dry just by feeling it, or some students might choose to weigh it before and after to see how much water has evaporated.

All of these activities can be used for child-led investigations as choosing different variables hardly affects the resources needed. They could also work well for whole-school investigations as each class or year group could investigate a different aspect. Sticky note planning can be used with any of these and really encourages children to think about what they are investigating and gives them ownership of their work.

Whatever investigations you do, happy experimenting! **TP**



Emma Ranade is the founder of Fab Science, a provider of engaging hands-on workshops for primary schools.

She is a specialist science teacher and has written several science activity books for younger children.

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Consider YOURSELF

Why this headteacher cancelled a staff meeting to give teachers some time off and put themselves first...

VICKI MANNING

When I posted a quick tweet after our recent staff meeting, I did not expect the passionate responses I received. Usually, my tweets gain a vast audience of between one and three people, so the barrage of comments was a bit of a surprise. But it highlighted the strength of feeling many practitioners have around the buzz word of the moment: wellbeing.

The tweet in question: *"We put today's staff meeting aside and challenged teachers to use the time to boost their wellbeing. Some people headed off to the theatre, some went home early to see the children and some of us took a few moments to read and have a coffee. What would you do?"*

Lots of people jumped on immediately to praise what we had done, but there were (as always on Twitter) those who offered some points of reflection. One of the main reasons I am on Twitter is to learn and to enhance my practice. These questions and challenges are always welcome, and I enjoyed those who challenged with a curious and kind approach.

Staff wellbeing

At my school, we produce a half-termly schedule for staff, detailing what is coming up, such as planned CPD, school events, deadlines and monitoring for the half term.

In spring 1 we had included a staff meeting dedicated to wellbeing. The purpose of including this on the schedule was to allow teachers to plan in advance how best to use the session. In my tweet, I deliberately used the word 'challenge', because I know that busy teachers will often see any extra time in the school day as the perfect time to 'catch up' on work. And, yes, having more time for our to-do lists can be just the thing for improving wellbeing, but for this specific session I wanted it to be something more powerful.

Over lockdown I joined a remote event where the speaker talked about filling your cup, and about how, for him, the opportunity to go running before he got home for the day meant that he could return to his family with energy and calm. As professionals, we are always busy and I know the teachers and leaders in my school will often work in the evenings and weekends. This can very quickly lead to overwhelm, stress, burnout and exhaustion.

Not just a tick-box

We all know that to provide the best education we can for our pupils, we need oodles of patience, calm and energy. But everyone's heard of the horrors of the mandatory staff yoga session, and I've worked in many schools where 'wellbeing' is ticked off through these kinds of novelties; a junk food

Friday, forced fun in the pub, or a Zoom quiz. But the reality of true wellbeing is that it's different for all of us. We all get our energy from different things, and events like this won't hit the spot for everyone. I wanted the scheduled session to have the flexibility for teachers to choose what would work for them.

Prior to the session I asked staff what they were planning to use the time for. Some

catch up on work. I made sure to visit them at the end of the school day, asking them to compromise a little and perhaps finish earlier than they would have. These discussions were useful in understanding the staff a bit better. It is becoming clear that some are

"The reality of true wellbeing is that it's different for all of us"

were already clear; they had seen the meeting listed on the schedule in advance and had made plans, such as booking theatre tickets. Others were not so sure, and were surprised when asked directly. It wasn't so much that I wanted to hold people to account for their use of this time, but more that I was hoping to prompt their thinking about what would work for them, and to support them in prioritising themselves amongst their busy to-do lists.

I started having these conversations a few days before the session, but on the day of the event there were still some teachers who had decided to use the time to

able to see the benefits of time out, and others find the thought of it uncomfortable.

Making time

Deciding to dedicate directed time like this of course means that we lost an opportunity for direct staff training or

specific work. Time in school is valuable, and this did mean we had to carefully consider what would be missing from the development schedule this term. However, we have also been considering how to make staff development more effective, useful and engaging for teachers. We've introduced more active approaches, such as a peer development cycle, loosely based on the lesson study approach. This allows teachers to visit each other's classrooms and choose their own development foci, and it takes place within the school day and weekly phase meetings. We've also taken a more responsive approach to our school improvement work this year, ensuring we review regularly and focus on the most essential areas each half term. This creative use of the time we have available has allowed us to be more flexible with scheduled staff meeting time.

Truly developing wellbeing is going to take a lot more than a one-off event in the school diary. Ultimately, staff CPD sessions are part of our directed time. Staff need to attend them, and there are always so many things we could use that time for, but openly dedicating sessions to wellbeing demonstrates a commitment to the individuals in our teams.

It is all too easy for teachers and leaders to put their own wellbeing at the bottom of that to-do list, and it can help if leaders model the importance

3 WAYS TO PUT YOUR WELLBEING FIRST



Six tips for teacher wellbeing

Prevention is better than cure so why not commit to some good health habits this term... tinyurl.com/tp-TeacherWellbeing



Stop striving to be perfect

We need to bin the idea of relentlessly trying to achieve the unachievable... tinyurl.com/tp-NotPerfect



How to avoid burnout

We must make sure we have a teaching stress-management plan... tinyurl.com/tp-AvoidBurnout

of focusing on this, even when there are so many competing priorities. Giving up a staff meeting for this purpose is not the answer to improving wellbeing, and of course there is only so much that can be achieved in an hour or two, but it is certainly a start.

We aim to hold sessions like this every term, and we are currently writing our own strategy to be shared with everyone in school. Of course, key to this is consulting with staff and finding out what really helps them. If you have ideas to contribute, I'm always keen to hear them! Find me at @HeadOnTheHill on Twitter. **TP**

Vicki Manning is headteacher at Ash Hill Primary School in High Wycombe.

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TRUE OR FALSE?

Misconceptions about art are rife in primary education, so **Sophie Merrill** sorts out the facts from the fiction...

Art's place in primary education needs to change, now more than ever, as historically schools seem to have a slightly strange view as to what art is and what it should be, as opposed to the possibilities that it really holds within the primary curriculum.

So, let's separate the myths from the truths.

Myth 1 – Teachers need to be artists to teach art

The biggest issue around primary art is teachers' confidence levels. So many educators have the 'I can't draw' voice planted in their brain. The thing is, if you experience this, you are the perfect model in your classroom to support the children in not developing this doubt for themselves. You can model experimentation, thinking, problem solving, resilience and what happens when you make mistakes; because you will, and so will they, and that's exactly what we should do. You might want to have a practice of the skills you are teaching before the session to feel prepared, but that's no different to how you would plan out your modelled or guided writing.

Myth 2 – A sketchbook is for sketching

It's so much more than that. A sketchbook is a free space for children to experiment. Don't get me wrong, there is nothing scarier than a blank piece of white paper, but all too often our pupils are confined to lines and squares. A sketchbook gives them opportunities to work with different materials in ways that no

other subject allows. A sketchbook is a place to think, analyse, experiment and evaluate. It's a place to make marks, mix colours, layer papers, sketch, scribble. It's a place to be free.

If you ever get the opportunity to look in an artist's sketchbook, do. They are utterly fascinating and

spellbindingly beautiful. You can see how ideas evolve and emerge, where research begins and takes on a journey of its own. Sketchbooks show the children's thinking, bravery, resilience, evaluation, determination and are therefore priceless and should be valued as such.

Myth 3 – Art is for making walls look nice

Celebration of work is so important regardless of the subject. From the nature of art and the way society celebrates it, it is natural to want to display and to view your class' creations, but we should not limit art to being solely for the purpose



of filling up display boards in the hall with variations of *The Sunflowers* or *Starry Night* by Van Gogh.

Truth 1 – Art can add depth to the curriculum

All too often, when we are learning about a period in history, we link it to English... for example when learning about the Victorians, we might read *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* or *Street Child*. But why not look at paintings and drawings that depict this era? Artwork can tell us so much about the past and the way

that people saw what was happening. Work by Ford Madox Brown or *Derby Day* by William Powell Frith give us amazing insights to life at the time, from the wealthy to the poor.

The Highwayman by Alfred Noyes has always been one of my favourite poems to teach. However, today children's concept of a highwayman is a man who works on the motorway. It is not the romanticised idea of mask-wearing men that held up carriages with a pistol! There is a great painting called *Claude Duvall*, again by William Powell Frith, that puts what these men

did into perfect context before delving into the poem.

Art has been used throughout history as a social commentary, so why not take advantage of that in the classroom?

Truth 2 – Art needs to be well planned

Like in any other subject area, art needs to be well planned and thought about before teaching. The best advice I can give is to think about art like you would a piece of writing. When you approach a new genre in literature, you consider what the children will need to master in order to write in the genre themselves: the features of the text, the vocabulary, and the grammar they'll need to know. Art is the same. If the children are going to be making a Greek pot, then they need to know about the patterns that ornamented Ancient Greek pottery, and about how pots often told stories of

pots, for example). This gives it meaning, purpose and value.

Truth 3 – Pupils need to encounter a breadth of artists, craftspeople and designers

All too often primary school children are confined to learning about the same dead white men whose art society has decided is the most valuable. I can't count the number of long-term plans I've seen with the same men strategically placed for the children to encounter and imitate during their primary education – Picasso, Van Gogh, Klimt and Henry Moore.

In contrast, early Islamic art offers our pupils a wealth of opportunities to look at and master shape, colour and pattern, and has inspired contemporary artists such as Joyce Kozloff. Nigerian-American portrait artist Kehinde Wiley incorporates motif into his paintings and has been inspired by the floral patterns created by William Morris to create backgrounds for his portraits, including of Barack Obama.

The work of Yinka Shonibare enables pupils to explore race, identity and colonialism through art as well as enabling pupils to look at pattern and colour. There is plenty to explore outside of white Europe! **TP**

myths or sporting achievements. They also need to know about the different shapes of pots, how to carve into clay, and how to join pieces of clay together.

Also, consider where there are opportunities for the art you are working on to enhance and reencounter work in other subjects (think about shapes and measurements you've learned in maths when making your



Sophie Merrill is a curriculum leader and arts specialist based in

Manchester. She is also part of the #PrimaryRocks team.



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In the SUMMERTIME

Take advantage of sunnier days, and explore these season-appropriate art activities from **Jude Harries** with your youngest pupils

Nesting for beginners

Spring and summer are when birds build nests, ready to lay their eggs. Ask the children to collect nest building materials to help the birds. Find sticks, twigs, moss, and grass and make piles on the ground or on plants for birds to find. Alternatively, let children choose collage materials to make a crafty nest. Provide shredded paper, straws, ribbons, string, wool, strips of fabric, and invite children to stick them into a nest shape on a paper plate. Cut out egg shapes or birds to add to the nests.

Foraged nature cuffs

Wildflowers and weeds flourish during this time of year! To make foraged nature cuffs, cut rounds from paper towel rolls and cut a slit along one side so they fit on children's wrists. Put double-sided sticky tape on the outside of the cuffs. Go on a walk and look for spring treasures to stick on the cuffs. Remind children to only pick a few daisies and dandelions, and leave other flowers for the bees. Add leaves, pieces of bark and grass. The cuffs won't last long so let children take them home straight away.

Sakura trees

Make some model Japanese cherry trees to give as end-of term gifts to parents and carers. Go outside with the children and find suitable branched twigs. Stick the twigs into lumps of plasticine or clay at the base of flowerpots or yoghurt pots that can be decorated later. Add blossom using small

"Make some model Japanese cherry trees to give as end-of-term gifts to parents"

pieces of pink or white tissue paper, which can be torn or scrunched before being glued or wrapped around the twigs. Alternatively, use pompoms as blossom.

Paper magic

Give each child a paper towel and ask them to fold it in half. Ask children to draw a simple outline of a rainbow or flower on the top layer of the folded towel using a permanent marker. Lift up the top half and they should see that the pen has gone through to the lower layer. Colour in this lower image with washable markers. Place each towel into a shallow tray of water and watch the colours from the lower layer appear on the top layer as if by magic! Remove quickly and leave to dry.

Outdoor painting

Let children start with some water painting, using a variety of brushes and pots of water. Can they watch their paintings disappear when the sun comes out? Make some 'fizzy paints' by mixing bicarbonate of soda (two cups) with cornflour (one cup), then add water until it makes a thick consistency. Divide into smaller bowls and add food colouring. Let the children paint pictures on the playground floor or pavement with their new paints. Make the pictures fizz by squirting vinegar out of a squeeze bottle. Don't forget to film their reactions!

Rainy watercolours

Look at images of paintings by JMW Turner, such as 'Waves breaking against the wind'. He specialised in watercolour landscapes and paintings of the sea and liked painting outside whatever the weather. Ask the children to cover their paper with a wash of water. Add thin streaks of different watery colours such as blue, green and yellow. Watch the colours spread on the wet paper. On a showery day, invite children to paint pictures and then take them outside and wait for the rain to fall and spread the colours. **TP**



Jude Harries is an author and teacher of music and drama, with experience of working with children aged nine months to 11 years.

Come rain OR SHINE

Revel in our unpredictable British weather and store some of these creative ideas under your sun (or rain) hat to enjoy with your class

ADELE DARLINGTON

Like the incalculable UK climate, no two days are ever the same in the world of a primary school. One thing is for certain though – each new day offers us the opportunity to combine the creative subject of art with our erratic outdoor elements to provide exciting, engaging and educational experiences for young learners. Children love the freedom of the outdoors – the fresh air and space trick them into thinking they're not learning even when they are! Contrary to stereotypical thinking, classrooms do not have to have four walls and a ceiling, and they certainly don't have to be indoors. Education and optimum learning can take place anywhere and at any time.

All weather types, no matter wet or dry, hot or cold, offer a multitude of ways for learners to explore, experiment and create wonderful works of art. As the saying goes, there's no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing. So, stock up on puddle suits, coats, hats, sun cream and wellies and prepare to take your class on some outdoor arty adventures...

Rainy days

The rain lends itself to a plethora of explorative activities. Whether it's actually coming down outside or just wet from previous rainfall, take advantage of nature's showers and venture out onto the playground. Powder paint and puddles combine perfectly to provide the opportunity for pupils to explore basic colour

theory. Give them pots, spoons, brushes and powder paint and let children play about with quantities and combinations of colours. You will most likely end up with a playground of brown puddles, but your class will have discovered so much in creating them – notably the fact that mixing the three primary colours together results in brown! Encourage discussion as the children explore and drop in subject-specific vocabulary – such as the terms

'primary' and 'secondary' colours – to aid learning and create meaning. As well as puddle painting, there are oodles of other arty activities children can partake in when the weather is wet. Paint pictures then hang them in the rain to see how the drips alter their appearance, use tissue paper on a white canvas and watch the colours bleed, or attempt some raindrop photography with an iPad. The children will be full of amazement if they look closely at a raindrop to photograph it; the inverse image within the drop will fill them with awe and wonder!

Sunny days

With sunshine undoubtedly comes shadows, and these can be used to create a variety of pieces of artwork – some transient and some of a more permanent nature. You can use example of work by artists such as Vincent Bal to excite and inspire pupils. They will love his fun, cartoony style and the imaginative ways he uses shadows to complete his artwork. Give children time to play with objects and the shadows they cast, time to

explore and time to experiment with compositions. Using a camera to photograph shadow artwork means creations can be kept forever rather than lost when the sun goes behind a cloud. If you have a wall in the sunlight, or a sunny section of playground your pupils can use their hands in different positions to create shadow pictures. Task them with creating different animals and see who can make the most realistic looking shapes. Children also love to draw around shadows – place objects on a roll of paper and draw an outline (toy dinosaurs cause much excitement!) or use chalk

directly on the playground. Drawing around human shadows is another fun activity and facial features and hair can be added either with chalk or found objects in nature such as stones, leaves and flowers.

Sunny days are also perfect for landscape artwork. Arm your class with paper, pencils and clipboards, find a shady spot and spend an afternoon admiring the view. Discuss what they can see, touching on compositional elements such as foreground, midground and background. Encourage them to look at the space on their blank canvas and visualise their drawings. Thumbnail sketches are fun ways for them to compose their pieces before diving onto their plain page and viewfinders can help your artists if they wish to focus on particular aspects of the landscape. Don't worry if your area is more man-made than natural, the aims of the session can remain the same whether they are drawing trees and fields or a playground and buildings. For a landscape with a twist, use the artwork of Alma Thomas to get your pupils thinking about a bird's-eye view of what is in front of them.

Chilly days

While sunny days may be preferable for outdoor adventures, don't let winter's freezing temperatures put you off venturing into the playground;

THINGS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR OUTDOOR ART KIT



Wet weather clothing such as puddle suits and wellies are essential for a rainy day. They not only keep the children dry but also ensure school uniform is protected from the colourful masterpieces being created.



Sunhats are a must for those hot, cloudless days to protect children's heads from the sun. It is also advisable to ask parents to send sun cream in with children if you are planning on creating in the sunshine.



iPads or other tablets/photography equipment for outdoor photography projects.



Tools such as brushes (decorator size as well as the usual school brushes), pots, palettes and toothbrushes. It is helpful to store this equipment together in a labelled storage container so it can be easily accessed for impromptu outdoor art experiences. Keeping indoor and outdoor art equipment separate is advisable as outdoor tools can obviously become a little bit grubby.



A collection of objects with which to print on a large scale, such as old bike or pram wheels, sink plungers of various sizes, old wellies, trainers and other shoes with interesting sole patterns.



Art easels for playground landscape and observational painting.



Chalk is a fantastic medium for use outdoors. It will work on most outdoor surfaces including the playground and walls, and also develops a lovely velvety texture when mixed with puddles.



Powder paint for creating colourful puddles.



Old wooden or plastic frames can provide focus to outdoor art. Children can place them on the playground or field and fill with their artistic creations, whether that be drawing, painting or using found natural treasures.

just wrap up warm and remember to pop on some gloves to avoid frosty fingers! Snow is a sculpting gift to the world from mother nature and children can create with it in much the same way they would magic sand or play dough. Provide sand moulds, buckets and other containers and encourage sculpting with hands, too. Many will want to create snowmen but why not give your class some other challenges – who can

create a snow dog, a castle, a car or a boat? If the icy temperatures last, you could invite viewers to admire your snow creations in your sculpture park. **TP**



Adele Darlington is an EYFS teacher and art lead in Rutland. She is

also the author of 100 ideas for primary teachers: art published by Bloomsbury.

 @mrs_darl

MEDIUM TERM PLAN

KS2 ART & DESIGN

THE ART OF URBAN LIFE

ROBERT WATTS

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RESOURCES AT



TEACHWIRE.NET

One of the few benefits of life under lockdown was that many of us began to re-engage with nature. Restricted to a few precious hours outside, we rediscovered

the beauty of the natural world on our own doorsteps, whether in the great outdoors or our local park.

On these pages you'll find a sequence of lessons in art and design aimed to help children reconnect with nature. But we're not reaching for the rucksacks and heading off for a week in the wilderness – instead, we're focusing on noticing, appreciating and responding to the natural world that waits just a few steps from every urban classroom.



Assessment

Have some children found inventive ways of illustrating contrasts? How do they articulate the qualities of their photographs?

WEEK 2

Learning objectives:

- To think about shape and structure in the built environment

In this lesson children will create collages in response to the shapes and structures they see in the built environment. They'll need large sheets of coloured sugar paper, scissors and paste.

Choose a place where you can assemble the class outside in front of a school building.

Ask children to look carefully at the building and describe the shapes they can see. Emphasise terms such as *size*, *shape*, *structure* and *angle*.

Place a big sheet of sugar paper on the floor and demonstrate how to cut or tear large strips of paper to represent the main elements of the structure. Describe the decisions you're making and encourage children to offer advice.

Ask pupils to work in pairs to create large-scale collages of their own, and challenge them to include a combination of large and small pieces to represent different parts of the building.

When you share the outcomes, prompt children to describe the contrasts and connections between each piece.



Assessment

Have some children included an interesting range of shapes? Can pupils use a range of vocabulary to describe differences?

WEEK 1

Learning objectives:

- To capture contrasts in the environment

We'll start with a medium that children now use more than any other: photography. But while they often use smartphones to create and share images, children rarely take time to pause and reflect on what makes one photograph more interesting than another.

The aim of this lesson is for children to capture the combination of natural and built aspects of their environment through photography. Take some time to explore pupils' understanding of what we mean when we use these terms, before heading outside to explore. The location is up to

you: it might be a local park, but any school environment will feature a combination of natural and built elements.

Divide children into groups and provide a tablet or camera for each group. Explain they can take as many photos as they like – but that they will only share a few with the class.

Encourage them to focus on details that capture the contrasts between the natural and built environments. It might be a building half-hidden by trees or a weed growing through a gap in the concrete.

Back in the classroom, ask each group to share their selected images with the class and talk about the decisions they made. What makes their photographs interesting? What makes them different from one another?



WEEK 3

Learning objectives:

- To explore contrasting textures in the environment

Explain to children that, so far, we have focused on what the environment looks like. But what does it feel like? This lesson encourages children to appreciate the textures of their environment. You'll need oil pastels (or soft crayons) and large sheets of paper.

Demonstrate to children how to create a rubbing of a textured surface. Find a texture outside and use the side of a crayon to rub on the paper so that an impression of the texture appears. Explain how you can create different effects by varying the pressure you apply.



Use coloured crayons to explore different textures. Describe the decisions you are making about which colours you think will work well together. Ask children to describe the qualities of the textures and the contrasts between them.

Emphasise to pupils that they should explore the contrasts between natural and constructed textures. How does the bark of a tree feel different from the surface of a brick wall?

Extend the activity back in the classroom by providing children with watercolours to paint across their rubbings. The wax will resist the watercolor to create some beautiful effects.

Ask children to share their outcomes and talk about the textures they've found.



Assessment

How have pupils combined colours and textures in effective ways? Can children use a range of descriptive language to articulate the contrasts between their textures?

WEEK 4

Learning objectives:

- To develop use of line and tone through observational drawing

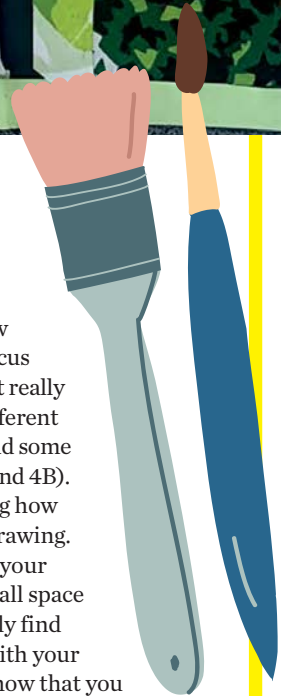
We're now half way through our project and we're going to draw for the first time. Previous lessons will have provided children

with time to engage with their environment, but without the pressure of having to represent it realistically on paper. Now they'll have a chance to focus on some of the details that really interest them. Provide different sizes of cartridge paper and some soft drawing pencils (2B and 4B).

Begin by demonstrating how to focus on detail when drawing. While you may not think your drawings are worthy of wall space in a gallery, you'll probably find children are impressed with your efforts! Be positive and show that you are enjoying the experience.

Rather than trying to depict a whole landscape, focus on a small detail, such as a weed growing between paving stones. Begin by lightly sketching essential lines, before retracing some lines with greater pressure. Explain that this will create darker tones.

Describe to children what you are doing, what you find tricky about the process and what you find rewarding. Tell them you don't expect perfection and explain how the process of drawing will help them to notice details of things in way that they couldn't before.



Picture perfect

Expert resources to get you and your pupils excited about art

Art inspo

Looking for art inspiration? MyLearning is a hub website that hosts FREE learning resources created by cultural organisations from across England. We work with museums, galleries and archives to bring together high-quality resources in one easy-to-use website. MyLearning's mission is to get all the wonderful objects and the fabulous stories they hold out of museum stores and archives, and into classrooms. Our content covers the whole curriculum, from KS1 – KS4 and includes accurate information, images, audio, video, downloadable resources and digital interactives. Established for 16 years, MyLearning is a non-profit and funded by Arts Council England. Learn more at mylearning.org or email info@mylearning.org



1



Virtual gallery

Art Bytes is a national inter-school art competition and edtech programme that utilises a bespoke, immersive, virtual gallery which incorporates augmented reality elements. This gives participants the opportunity to see their art exhibited online and engage with new technology from the safety and convenience of their own home or school. It builds confidence and nurtures talent, allows children to see galleries as places 'for them' and builds cultural capital. Art Bytes is open to all Y5 pupils across England. Visit artbytes.co.uk



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Kapow Primary's schemes of work provide teachers with fresh and inspiring lessons that ensure pupils' progression of skills and knowledge in art and design, design and technology, computing, languages, music, and RSE and PSHE throughout KS1 and 2, as well as EYFS for computing and music. Created by subject specialists, the schemes of work contain over 800 lessons, explanatory teacher videos and resources with built-in CPD that cover the full curriculum and help specialists and non-specialists alike deliver exciting lessons with confidence. Visit kapowprimary.com

4



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5



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Now set pupils the task of making their own drawings, focusing on places where nature is emerging and growing from the built environment.

Midway through the lesson, choose two or three drawings that illustrate diverse response to the task. Look for drawings that feature a range of lines, marks and tones and ask children to describe the differences in their own words.



Assessment

Have children used a wide range of lines and tones in their drawings? Have they paid close attention to the details of their chosen focus?

WEEK 5

Learning objectives:

- To develop children's thinking about composition

In this fifth lesson of the sequence children will create collages of shapes cut from magazine images to represent the different colours, tones and textures of the natural environment, before combining their shapes with drawings of the built environment. You'll need some magazines, scissors and paste.

Ask children to work in groups at their tables and to search through magazines for 'blocks' of colour. One person can search for red, another for blue, etc.

Once they have assembled palettes of colour, pupils can work in pairs or groups to sketch out a composition that combines natural and built elements of the landscape.

Children can now dip in to their palettes to add collaged pieces, and also add cut-out drawings of buildings. Encourage them to experiment with different compositions by placing cut pieces on paper before pasting down.



Assessment

Have children thought about the ways they have combined different elements into their collages in order to create an engaging composition?



WEEK 6

Learning objectives:

- To think about design

We often abbreviate art and design to 'art', but we should remember that design is an important strand of the subject. In this final lesson of the sequence, children will create posters designed to encourage people in the community to value nature in their local environment.

Begin by asking children to choose an image they have worked on in the past few weeks and photograph it. Don't do this for them – teach them how to do it! Placing the work flat on a table near a window should provide enough light for the image.

Demonstrate how pupils can transfer their photograph to a computer, then open an image-editing software app. Children will go on to learn to use programmes such as Photoshop in secondary school, and there are free online equivalents (such as pixlr.com) that are very similar.

Open the image and demonstrate how to use the text tool. Show children how to select different fonts and to manipulate them by changing the size, colour and 'weight' (bold, light, etc.)

Emphasise to your pupils that when we work as designers we need to make decisions that consider our intended audience. What will attract people's attention?

What do they like to look at? How will we make our message clear to them?



Assessment

Have children developed their knowledge of how to use the text tool and combine it with an image in a way that captures the viewer's attention?



Robert Watts is senior lecturer in art and design education at Roehampton University, where he teaches and supervises student

teachers in primary and secondary schools. His recent PhD focused on using photography and interviews to explore children's perceptions of beauty in urban and rural environments.

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Christmas at Conway

Is it too early to mention Christmas? We don't think so! Get your students together before the end of the term and enjoy all of the magic of Christmas at Conway Centres. Creating your very own songs and dances inspired by the Christmas festival, decorating gingerbread houses, and creating outdoor tree decorations for the birds are just a few of the activities that will get you and your pupils in the festive spirit. This special residential will celebrate and teach children all about the gifts of Christmas.

Arts education in a multi-cultural society (AEMS)

Immerse students in cultural celebrations... Led by a range of renowned, professional multi-cultural artists, this course celebrates our diverse society through the arts. Whether children are writing lyrics and performing a beatboxing song with a championship beatboxer, learning the history and moves of Brazilian capoeira, or being transported back in time and creating beautiful Celtic art pieces – this reflective course truly brings cultural learning to life.



WE LOVE TO LEARN

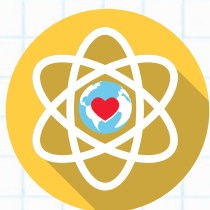
Immerse your pupils in culture

Bring learning to life in unique natural surroundings with an arts residential...

With four centres across North Wales and Cheshire, Conway Centres combines the great outdoors with immersive cultural arts. In beautiful natural surroundings, the reflective programmes are a place for children to feel inspired and be creative while learning about various subjects, topics, and themes. Conway Centres has carefully considered the demands of the National Curriculum and has created

inspiring arts programmes to support pupils in broadening key topic knowledge. But don't think you'll just be stuck in a classroom! The Conway Centre's provision is about more than moving indoor activity outside: they have created learning spaces rich in natural finds to inspire children in their studies through the arts, with support from the moment you book your trip to when you're settled back at school.

CURRICULUM LINKS



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Meet the AUTHOR



Inspire hope and resilience in your pupils through nature stories.
Polly Ho Yen explains how...

You know how it goes. You close your eyes on the first night of the summer break, ready for the holidays to roll after a long year of teaching, and staring right back at you are the faces of the kids you've just ushered out of your classroom. There are some kids who always stick with you – days, months and even years after they were your students. I particularly remember one such boy. He had brown eyes, incredibly curly eyelashes, and a deep and unshakeable love for nature. In the reception class where I taught him, he spent most of his time by the flowerbeds. He took home seedlings that we grew in school. When he was in an older year, I vividly remember an afternoon he came back to visit reception and spent the whole time sketching the daffodils that had just bloomed.

For him, he was doing something that was both special and unremarkable. He was seeing the miracle of nature and he was nurturing it because it felt like the right thing to do. He just knew it in his bones. But there's one thing I haven't yet told you about this boy – he didn't have a garden; he hadn't been raised by gardeners or growers. In fact, he lived in inner-city London where the closest park to him was a scruffy patch of balding grass that was hemmed in by busy roads on every side. His parents looked quite bemused by the pot of mint he adopted and he tended with

such fondness. But he sought out nature in his grey, concrete world and cared for it nonetheless.

The story of my latest book *The Boy Who Grew a Tree* is completely inspired by my nature-loving pupil and it's got me thinking about how much I'm drawn to writing about nature and ultimately how important these stories are for young readers.

Natural connections

There's much to draw out from stories about nature and why I think they are absolutely essential reading in our childhoods. Above all, these kinds of tales guide readers through the cycle of growth to which we are all in thrall.

Let's look at an enduring classic childhood book about nature: Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Why has it remained so popular? The child-friendly bright illustrations? The clever structure and elegant simplicity? Possibly. But I wonder if the reason it remains so beloved is that within those few pages, we see a tale of utter transformation, of change, growth and development. And how does it end? The little caterpillar becomes a beautiful butterfly. It's wonderful, remarkable,

magical, and yet also quite ordinary.

Change and growth are what a child faces day after day – from the moment they are born, they are in a state of change and by the time they reach school-age, they are interacting with that change. Who are they and who might they turn into? How will they deal with unexpected curveballs? Will they be alright on their journey?

In stories about nature, we see firsthand how its wheels never stop turning. One day a caterpillar is munching on a leaf, on another it's encased within a cocoon. There's a steadiness to this growth. Change keeps happening, and that's OK. Stories about nature are imbued with the reassuring message that growth is nothing to be afraid of and that, in fact, it can lead to beautiful butterflies.

Strength and sanctuary

I also believe, as well as processing their own growth and change, stories showing the interaction of children with nature reflect and celebrate how resilient children are in facing their own

“These kinds of tales guide readers through a cycle of growth”

challenges and the ups and downs of life.

call upon another absolute classic of children's literature, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Mary Lennox's relationship with the secret garden she tends is transformative – not only for her character and personal fulfillment but for those around her. Her friendship with Colin, who believes he cannot walk, flourishes within the wall of the garden. It's a sanctuary to them, a steadying force in the midst of the tumultuous circumstances they've encountered and there, like the garden, they bloom. There, Colin walks.

In *The Boy Who Grew a Tree*, my main character Timi discovers a tree that's growing at an unexpected rate and at the same time, he is also making sense

of change in other areas in his life. His sister has just been born and it feels

different to how he expected – in fact, it's unsettling and strange. Though he's feeling out of sorts, Timi continues to care for the tree, day after day. He has to show commitment, resilience and persistence and he sees the rewards of his efforts in the growing, flourishing organism. In the same way, he continues to care for his sister and finally, at the end of the story, Timi meaningfully connects with her.

Breath of fresh air

Through the last two years of the pandemic, it feels to me, especially during the first lockdown, that there has been more public appreciation for nature. While our outdoor time was so restricted, we felt the joy of being in the open air, hearing bird song, and seeing greenery – wherever we were able to find it. Many families turned to growing during the home-school weeks as something tangible to do. I remember vividly the first trip that I took out of our local area was to a wood, and being surrounded by the shady trees and the bluebells felt so nourishing that I felt as though my brain was lighting up, being actively enriched by the experience.

I find myself drawn to writing about nature in every story I write and, post-lockdown, I'm also trying to create for the reader that same experience that I had in that woods that day; a feeling of connectedness, of enrichment, of finding peace in a world and in a time that is troubling and unsettling. Timi in my story discovers a tree seedling growing in a place where it should not be and he knows that unless he cares for it, it will not survive. He makes the choice to tend to it. He chooses positivity, kindness and care. He waters it, he makes sure it gets light, he treats it gently. And under this simple care, the tree flourishes beyond all expectation. What I've learned is that a story about nature is ultimately a story about hope.

And in remembering this particular nature-loving student to you in the development of *The Boy Who Grew a Tree*, I also feel the significance in celebrating a character whose 'power' is simply caring for nature. I wanted to make my past student a hero in the story because I suppose I see him as such. When the world feels like a bewildering place, a small act of care towards nature is a hugely empowering act that we all can choose. **TP**



Before becoming a children's author, Polly Ho-Yen was a primary school teacher in Camberwell, London. *The Boy Who Grew a Tree* (£5.99, Knights of Media) is out now.

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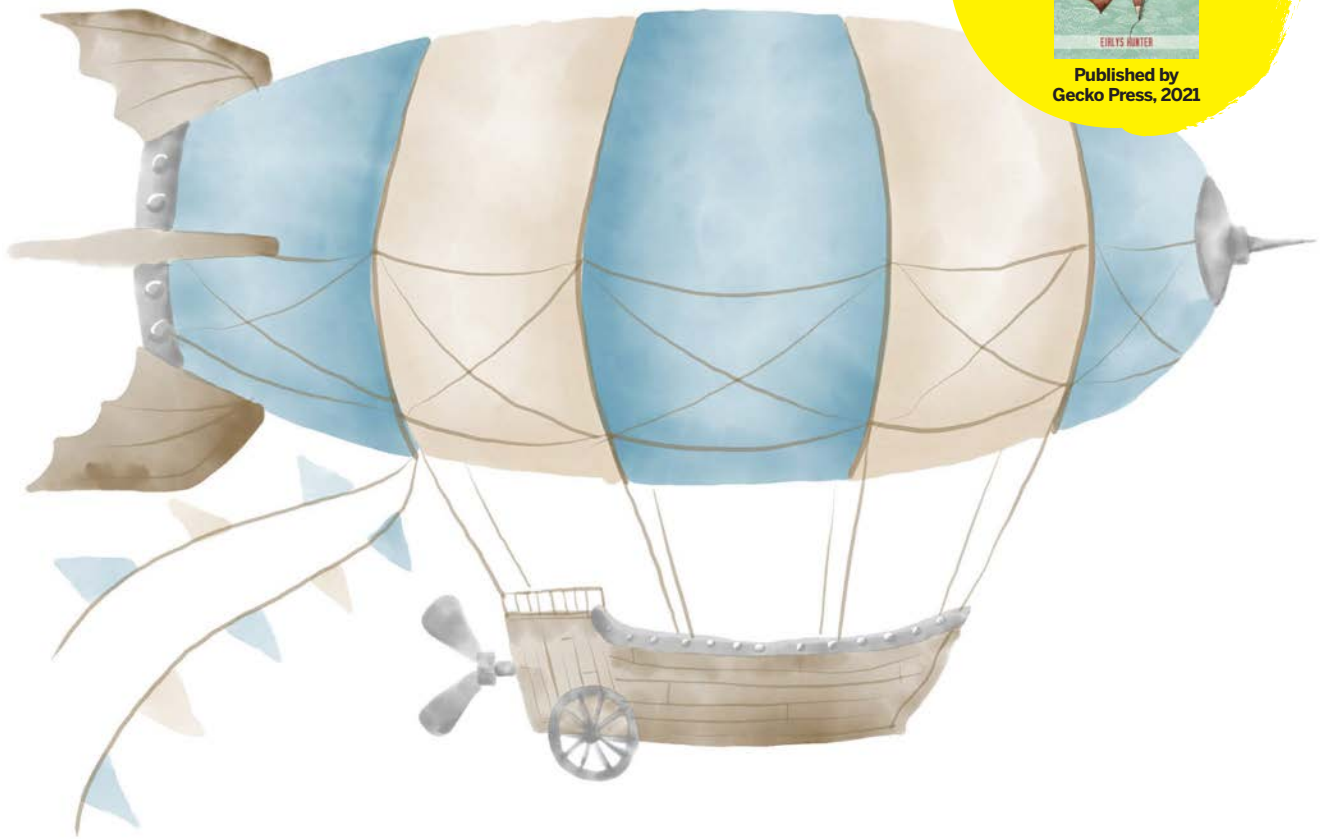
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Published by
Gecko Press, 2021



The Uprising

Make friends with Carrot the Parrot and the Santander children as they explore the distant city of Cruxcia in this gripping middle-grade tale from **Eirlys Hunter**

CAREY FLUKER HUNT

This absorbing adventure story about a family of mapmakers makes a great class read-aloud and is packed with intriguing ideas to inspire creative learning right across the curriculum. The geographical themes are particularly inviting – success depends on the Santander children's ability to survey, map and interpret landscapes – but other topics are also prominent, and the story provides rich opportunities to experience and reflect

on good leadership and teamwork, self-confidence and wellbeing, and effective problem-solving.

Set in an imaginary country ruled by a greedy and dishonest Governor, this story follows Sal, Joe, Francie and Humphrey Santander who are looking for their Pa, a famous explorer who vanished on his last expedition. Their search takes them to the distant city of Cruxcia where people are fighting to protect an ancient valley from the destructive plans of the Grania Trading

Company. Along with many local citizens, it seems that Pa has been imprisoned, but the task of freeing him becomes something much bigger when the Santanders join forces with the brave and resourceful children of Cruxcia. To save Pa and the valley, the Governor must go – but it's amazing how one thing leads to another when top-notch teamwork is involved, and a peaceful revolution really does seem possible.

Eirlys Hunter's thoughtful, humorous text is packed with action and

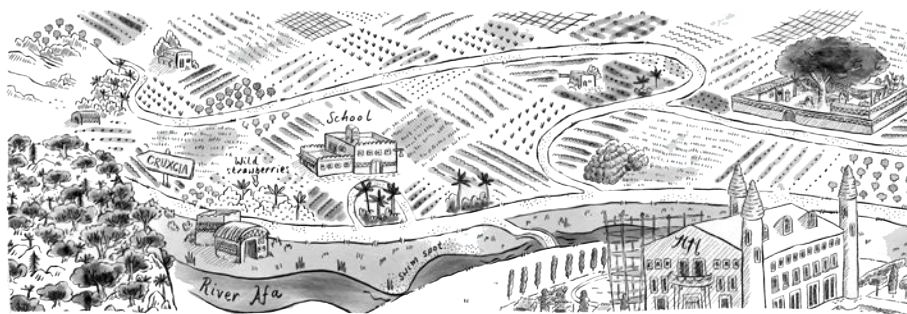
excitement, and features rounded and appealing characters, including Francie, a girl with an amazing talent (she can ‘mind-fly’ and view the landscape from above) and Carrot, a talking parrot who provides a very different viewpoint. Eirlys is adept at *showing* her readers what’s important, rather than *telling* them, and complex ideas are explored naturally, as part of the story, in an accessible and child-friendly way.

The Uprising is a sequel to *The Mapmakers’ Race*, so you’ll hear the Santanders referring to events that happened in that book, but it also reads effectively as a standalone, and is illustrated throughout with infographics and line drawings

fertile ground for rich and rewarding discussions about wellbeing and empathy, and the setting and storyline are full of possibilities for cross-curricular activities.

Choose your theme...

The Granian festival of Hallowmas Eve (complete with ghostly stories and fireworks) plays a central role in this book, so it would make an exciting focus for an Autumn project. But lots of other topics are explored – *mapping the landscape* / *teamwork* / *exploring new places and*



Illustrations © Kirsten Slade

cultures / gadgets and inventions / curiosity and creativity / freedom / colours / rights and responsibilities / good leadership – so you’ll be spoiled for choice at any time of year!

Activities

A parrot on the team

“You can find a tree for a day or two, or play dead on my hat.”

What role does Carrot the Parrot play in this story? Is he a useful team member? Collect and discuss evidence from the text, then write a character profile.

Re-read an episode involving Carrot. How does he help (or hinder) the action? What does he think about what’s going on? Rewrite this episode from Carrot’s point of view.

Imagine you’re exploring new territory and there’s a place on your team for a bird or animal. What creature will you choose, and why? What skills does it have? How will you interact with it? Write about your adventures.

“The land holds the truth. The maps will reveal it...”

Find examples in this book of a map, an aerial view, a cross section and a plan. Describe the places and landscapes they represent. What do you notice about these methods of sharing information? What are their advantages/disadvantages?

What instruments do the children use

when drawing maps and infographics? What skills do they need? Find references, discuss the processes involved, then have a go at drawing sketchmaps and aerial views of your neighbourhood. Share your work, discussing processes and outcomes. Are your maps effective and easy to use? How could you improve them? Compare with those available commercially.

How do maps help Sal, Joe, Francie and Humphrey to survive in an unknown environment? What truths do these maps reveal?

Write about a journey through Grania, using the maps in this book to help you imagine the landscape and make your descriptions more interesting.

Exploring characterisation and teamwork

What skills and qualities does each Santander child possess? Research their characters and roles, finding quotes and examples to support your conclusions. Share your findings and discuss. How does the *whole team* (i.e. the Santander family) benefit from these skills and attributes?

As a class, produce character profiles for Sal, Joe, Francie and Humphrey. Copy to create sets containing a profile for each sibling. Group children in fours, give each group a ‘family set’ and assign the role of Sal, Joe, Francie or Humphrey to each child. Use drama techniques

Take it further →→→

INVENT A GRANIAN-STYLE GADGET

List the inventions and contraptions in this book. What do they do? Why have they been constructed? What are their drawbacks? Gather evidence from the words and pictures, then write a report.

Challenge children to invent a Granian-style contraption. What does it look like, and what is its purpose? Draw annotated diagrams and/or build a

model. How do these inventions make Grania a better place?

CREATE YOUR OWN PAINT AND PYROTECHNICS WORKSHOP

How is colour used and enjoyed in Grania? Where and why do we use colour in our world? Do a *colour audit* in your school and report back.

Set up a ‘paint and pyrotechnics workshop’ like Lysander’s in *The*

Uprising, where children can mix colours and investigate different media. Set challenges such as making fireworks pictures using wax resist or scratchboard techniques, or creating graded colour strips, like those available in DIY shops.

CELEBRATE SPECIAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Celebrating Hallowmas Eve with the

such as Hotseating, Conscience Alley, Thoughttracking or Paired Improvisation to become familiar with these roles, then describe an exciting cliff-hanger scenario and ask groups to decide how to respond by discussing possible actions in role. For example: *you're camping in the mountains and wake to find Carrot has been parrot-napped. There's a ransom note demanding your mapmaking equipment for his safe return. What will you do?*

Ask groups to share their responses (still in role) and invite others to question and comment. How and why did each group choose to act as they did? How do they feel about their actions? What will happen as a result? Revisit your discussion about skills, attributes, teamwork and leadership. Why do you think the Santander children make such a great team?

Can you make a list of *dos and don'ts* for effective teamwork? Extend by writing an exciting new adventure for Sal, Joe, Francie and Humphrey based on your experiences.

New places and customs

This book tells the story of the Santanders' first visit to Grania. What do they learn about its language, customs and history? Build on your discussion by researching and writing a guidebook to Cruxcia and its surroundings. Include information about the area's language, cuisine, industries and technologies, together with its history, geography and customs. Use quotes from the text and illustrate your work.

Share your experiences of moving house and adapting to new places and customs. What did you gain by moving somewhere new? What was challenging?

Who/what makes the Santanders feel welcome in Grania? How could you make newcomers feel more welcome in your school?

Gathering, sharing and evaluating geographical information

List everything the book tells/shows us about the prison building and its routines. Note how these facts are discovered, and by whom. How is this information presented or shared (e.g. eyewitness account, aerial view, sketchmap, cross-section...)? What are the advantages and drawbacks of these methods?

Take children to explore a new location. Allocate tasks to small groups, prompting them to collect/present information in different ways, e.g. writing a narrative account; drawing a sketchmap, plan or elevation; making accurate measurements; taking photograph, etc. Evaluate the outcomes. What's the benefit of each approach? .

Freedom for Cruxcia!

What does this book tell us about Governor Mundle and the GTC? What offences do they commit, and how do ordinary people respond to their threats and actions?

How do the Granians overturn Mundle's dictatorship? Pool your memories of the story, then re-read chapter 30. Find text examples showing how Eirlys Hunter holds the reader's attention and makes the rescue exciting. Use to help you write an exciting account of the rescue from a different viewpoint.

Extend by roleplaying a peaceful protest between the Granian people and Mundle's Custodians. Involve children in planning, allow plenty of time for feedback and discussion, and build on the experience by writing about it.

Where will it take place?

- In a courtroom, in Cruxcia's main square, near the prison, on Mina Mendalwar...

Loved this? Try these...

- ❖ *The Mapmakers Race* by Eirlys Hunter and Kirsten Slade, Gecko Press
- ❖ *Frostheart* by Jamie Littler, Puffin
- ❖ *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell, Bloomsbury
- ❖ *Don't Cross the Line!* by Isabel Minhos Martins and Bernardo P. Cavalho, Gecko Press
- ❖ *The Girl of Ink and Stars* by Kiran Millwood Hargrave, Chicken House

Who will be involved?

- Loyal custodians, other custodians, officials who may/may not be in Mundle's pay, citizens who hope to profit from Mundle, citizens who oppose Mundle...

What will people say, and how will their voices be heard?

- Making speeches, writing placards, shouting slogans, holding persuasive conversations with friends or strangers, making posters, writing newspaper articles...

Ask children: what changes would you like to see happening in our school or neighbourhood? Share ideas, choose a worthwhile cause and use what you've learned to campaign for positive change.



Carey Fluker Hunt is a freelance writer, creative learning consultant and founder of *Cast of Thousands* (castofthousands.co.uk), a teachers' resource featuring a selection of the best children's books and related cross-curricular activities.

Granians makes the Santander children feel welcome and helps them learn about Granian culture.

How is Halloween celebrated in Cruxcia? Find references and list the information given. How would you describe this celebration? Does it remind you of any real-world events or festivals?

On a calendar, mark special events that are celebrated where you live, along with those taking place in other countries. Research them and share your discoveries.

In *The Uprising*, Lysander creates 'small performances of scariness' to celebrate Halloween. How does he do this? What does he include or use?

Imagine, create and present your own performances using lighting, music, voices, costumes, puppets and other props and tools.

EXPLORE RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Link to your campaign for change and, use open-ended questions to explore these complex ideas, then ask children

to write a balanced report about their discussion. Some examples:

- ! How does Mundle govern the Granian people? What do they think about him and his actions?
- ! What does being responsible mean? What are you responsible for?
- ! What responsibilities do leaders have towards the people they govern?

For more information and activities, check out the teaching resources for this book on Gecko's website at tinyurl.com/tp-GeckoUprising

Q&A

“We pride ourselves on building relationships”

How a personalised recruitment journey, complete with CPD and contacts across England and the UAE, could benefit your school



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Aquinas Education is an agency that cares about the schools it works with. We ensure our candidates are fully compliant and encourage them to attend professional development courses that we offer, to promote lifelong learners. We provide a personalised journey from start to finish and guarantee on quality.

Who are we?

Aquinas Education is an educational recruitment agency that has been working with schools across England for 14 years. Our ethos is quite simple; we strongly promote ambition within educational settings. We want to promote the positive meaning of the phrase ‘to be ambitious.’

We help with day-to-day, short term, long term, and permanent recruitment needs. We have dedicated client managers, consultants, and candidate consultants that work relentlessly on recruiting and ensuring all teaching staff are compliant.

How can we help your school?

We ensure to pair each school with the right consultant to guarantee you the highest calibre of candidates. We offer special terms with temporary to permanent contracts.

We also have The Aquinas Foundation, which is a charity backed by Jermaine Jenas and offers a wide array of life-changing initiatives within the schools we currently work with. We help to close the gap on behaviour, attainment, and attendance, with the aim to bring students together as one.

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We can offer your school a range of benefits from the best calibre of staff, access to the Aquinas



Foundation, full compliance checks, and exclusive rates for day-to-day supply teachers and support staff. We have also launched our Teacher Recruitment Platform that allows each school to communicate directly with our teachers across the globe. We offer our candidates CPD courses on a range of topics, too, so they can continue to develop their skills as teachers and teaching assistants.

Who do we work with?

We work with a range of schools within England – including many academies and trusts, as well as faith schools and local authority schools – and



ABOUT SAM:
Sam Leggitt is the director of Aquinas Education



Contact:

Argyle Works
29-31 Euston Rd
London
NW1 2SD
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0781 055 1177

settings in the UAE. We have some fantastic relationships with these schools, and we pride ourselves on continuing to build relationships. We can offer exclusivity contracts and no temp-to-permanent fees.

What makes Aquinas Education different?

We pride ourselves on ensuring each school has the best teachers and support staff. We offer our candidates a personalised journey from start to finish and ensure we are matching our schools with the right people. Our teams across England work hard to ensure we help all schools with their staffing needs. We help our support staff to achieve their Level 2 and Level 3 as a teaching assistant, and aid our candidates if they wish to become qualified teachers. The Aquinas Foundation makes us stand out from other agencies as we provide much-needed additional resources to schools.

What's the difference?

- + The Aquinas Foundation – helping to provide additional resources and support to our schools.
- + Teacher recruitment platform – affordable and ethical recruitment, access to global candidates, total transparent communication, and Q&A sessions.
- + Dedicated team – ensuring we provide your school with a dedicated client manager and consultant who you have access to 24/7.

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Years
1-6

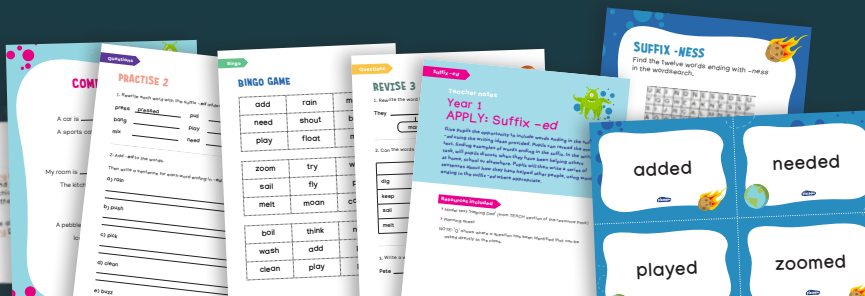
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WHY I LOVE...

Nicole McLean, Y6 teacher, explains how the updated Discovery Education Espresso platform provides exciting digital content and time-saving resources

ABOUT ME:

NAME:

Nicole McLean

JOB ROLE:

Year 6 teacher

SCHOOL:

Fraserburgh South Park Primary School, Aberdeenshire



TALKING ABOUT: THE UPDATED DISCOVERY EDUCATION ESPRESSO PLATFORM

“ How are you finding the changes to the Espresso platform?”

The content is now displayed very clearly and it's easy for teachers and pupils to navigate. The new search function is simple to use and great for finding resources for topic work. There's also a good variety of timely content, covering a whole range of topics from Fairytales to World War II. And I like the fact that you can filter this by curriculum level. The videos have a follow-up activity such as a quiz, and we often complete these as a class on the whiteboard. The children then try the quizzes independently on their tablets. Each child has an individual Espresso login, which makes for easy access. They can also log in quickly with QR codes, which they enjoy.

“ How does it support teachers?”

I've been using Discovery Education Espresso for several years and it definitely makes my job as a teacher easier. It gives me all of the content I need for lessons, such as videos, quizzes and activities. Best of all, everything's in one place. I don't need to look elsewhere for resources, which saves me time. Espresso has lots of great digital resources and I use these to support my teaching, especially in maths and literacy. The videos introduce new concepts, while the quizzes and games consolidate learning and check for understanding.



Contact:

Discovery Education
1 Lyric Square
London
W6 0NB

0800 6 527 527

discoveryeducation.
co.uk

“ What has been the effect?”

Our pupils love Espresso and not just because they enjoy online learning. The content is engaging and lots of fun. They love the quizzes, seeing their scores, and the fact that there aren't too many questions. They like the video content, too. Sometimes they'd rather watch a video on the carpet than listen to a teacher's explanation. And the videos are pitched at the right level for each age group. It's easy for pupils to use. They can see the difference between the learning at each level, and navigate from one to the next. Above all, they're having fun and learning, which helps them to stay engaged.

“ Why is Espresso different to other curriculum-aligned teaching resources?”

It is very easy to use. I like the variety of content, all linked to one subject and in one place. This is a big plus for me. You can log in quickly and find what you're looking for. The videos introduce new concepts, while the quizzes and games consolidate learning and check for understanding. The grammar and punctuation videos are especially good. Recently I used these to teach about speech marks and my Y6 class were very engaged. The video helped them to grasp the different rules and learn how to put these into practice.

WILL IT WORK FOR YOU?

• Easy to access – Individual Espresso logins for each child.

• Intuitive navigation – Clearly-displayed content plus search function.

• Helping pupils to go further – Ideal for homework and extension activities.

• Activities and games – Support differentiation and progress.

- Used in thousands of schools worldwide
- For all learners who struggle with literacy and numeracy
- Time saving programmes of activities

**FREE
TRIAL**

“A valuable addition to any classroom”

– Dyslexia Action



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A convincing success

Can you afford to miss out? Read on to discover the best persuasive writing technique tips ever, says **Sue Drury** – absolutely free!

Persuasive writing is an interesting genre – as unlike most other text types, it is generally intended to provoke an action (not just a reaction), from the reader. The following techniques will help your class produce truly convincing arguments, from promotional leaflets to compelling letters.

1. Powerful vocabulary

The choice of words really matters in persuasive writing – almost as much as in poetry. Apparently, there has been research carried out into this, and indeed, a quick internet search reveals a broad consensus as to what the most powerfully persuasive words are. Here are just a few to share with your pupils, remembering that not every word will be relevant to every persuasive writing task. They aren't necessarily the most adventurous words in the dictionary; they are just known to be effective.

New, free and save always grab people's attention, for obvious reasons. *Because* is always a useful one – because people like a good explanation. *Easy* and *guaranteed* tend to put the reader's mind at rest. Discover is like a more active version of *new*; *hurry* builds a sense of urgency and everyone likes to think they are in on a *secret*. However, there is one word that tops them all...

2. Second person

We're talking to *you*! Wherever possible, pupils should be encouraged to write a persuasive piece in the second person. This is because it is much easier to persuade someone if they think you are addressing them directly. Obviously really, wouldn't you agree?

3. Enough hype

Short for hyperbole, hype is one of the most important strategies featured in more commercial forms of persuasive writing. Hyperbole means exaggeration – and while it's undeniably potent, it should be used with care, as it can actually damage an argument if spread too thickly. Encourage pupils to use words like *amazing*, *outstanding* and *incredible*, which are powerful without being quantifiable. Words like *unbeatable* are certainly hyperbolic, but might

stretch credibility too far (almost anything can be beaten, after all).

Oh, and an additional thought on the subject of hyperbole: one exclamation mark is enough... and often one too many!

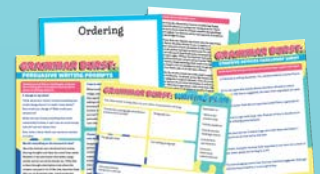
4. A logical flow

Putting your ideas in the best order is a crucial part of getting this genre right. After all, a good persuasive text should be like a well-thought-through argument, giving the reader a real reason to believe you. If the order of your essay or letter doesn't make sense, nor will the logic, and your point might be lost. That's why planning is so important.

5. Rhetorical questions

Do you want to be a more persuasive writer? If so, you need questions in your writing. Questions draw the reader into an argument because you can hardly avoid answering them the moment you read them, even if it's only subconsciously. Just make sure that these carefully placed queries have no chance of making the reader say "No!" – because then the audience will be lost. Finally, persuasive writing should be seen as a non-fiction genre, because any proposition being promoted should be grounded in honesty. That's why we have things like advertising rules, libel laws and trading standards. At the end of the day, as teachers, we should insist on children using language to persuade rather than deceive. **TP**

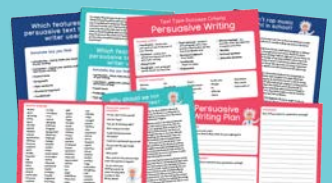
4 GREAT PERSUASIVE WRITING RESOURCES



bit.ly/PlazoomPW1
Everything you need to teach a series of five lessons on cohesive devices in persuasive writing



bit.ly/PlazoomPW2
These worksheets are an excellent way to develop children's understanding and use of persuasive writing



bit.ly/PlazoomPW3
Persuasive writing model texts, success criteria lists and planning sheets



bit.ly/PlazoomPW4 A fantastic teaching sequence in which your pupils will persuade you to eat insects!



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

website. Find more advice at plazoom.com/blog



IT'S MORPHIN' TIME!

Unleash pupils' potential through the mighty power of language and get a class full of confident writers, says **Kelly Ashley**

In my younger years, I loved the *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*. This American superhero television series was part of 90's pop culture. For those of you not in the know, the show was based around a team of youths who morphed into the Power Ranger superheroes – using their strength and agility to fight various enemies. Each had their own unique power and they combined together to battle larger opponents.

Now, what does this have to do with language? Well, language itself is powerful, but the building blocks within words can also be channelled into learning potential. These small units of meaning are called *morphemes* and they cannot be divided into smaller parts, but they can be combined with other morphemes to change the meaning, function or usage of words.

Consider the word *cat*. This contains a single morpheme – a single unit of meaning. The word *cats*, however, consists of two units – the root word (base or stem) *cat* and the suffix *-s* indicating that there is more than one cat. When we combine morphemes (roots, prefixes and suffixes) to form words, we call this morphology. Morphemes themselves are the building blocks of vocabulary and can play an important role in the way we

approach the teaching of spelling and reading comprehension. Just as the Power Rangers combine to battle opponents, so can we teach our learners to recognise and combine morphemes – supercharged tendrils of lexical information.

Back to the roots

So, how do you help your learners explore these meaning networks within language? In the Foundation Stage, children learn to express ideas relating to different points in time. For example: “I like to jump” vs. “I jumped in the pool”. Which is happening now? Which happened in the past? How do the words *jump* and *jumped* sound different when we speak them out loud?

These morphological changes in words (e.g. the addition of an -ed suffix indicating past tense) are often learned implicitly through communication – hearing and sharing stories read aloud and absorbing language patterns in action. Morphological knowledge is foundational as it helps children to express ideas more specifically when communicating for different purposes. To strengthen this knowledge, play a simple game of ‘Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow.’ Give children an action (e.g. smile, laugh) and ask

them to use the word to share something that happened at each point in time. How did the word change? What stayed the same?

In KS1, children learn ‘compounding’ – fusing two or more root words together to create something new (*doghouse, playtime*). The morphology of the word *compound* helps us to explore its meaning; *com-* (a Latin root meaning ‘with’) can also be found in words like *communicate* and *complement*. Playing a compound-word matching game can be a fun inroad to this concept. Provide a range of familiar roots such as *one, where, any, time, some, thing* and discuss how words can be

mixed and matched to create compounds with new meanings. Try them out in sentences.

Inflectional suffixes are also introduced in KS1. These change the function or purpose of the root but do not change the word class. These are explored in the following forms:

“The Power Rangers were always stronger as a team. This is the same when learning about words”



and suffixes that can be used to alter the grammatical function of words. This is when vocabulary, grammar, spelling and comprehension begin to truly intersect.

Word families are groups of words with a common root. To investigate this idea, encourage learners to create a word web of related words with the target root at the centre. Consider the *scrib/script* family (from the Anglo French 'scrit' meaning 'to write') –

words such as

scribble, scribe, script subscription, prescribe, describe or *description* may be identified around the web. Now, tune children in to the morphemes within each word by segmenting them in morpheme frames.

de
scribe
sub
script
ion

These frames reveal opportunities to link associated words with shared morphemes – *describe* (*descend, defer*) or *subscription* (*education, institution*). This is where the mighty morphing power of language truly shines – akin to the pinnacle moment in the show when the Power Rangers would shout, "It's morphin' time!" The Power Rangers were always stronger as a team. This is the same when learning about words. Springboard and connect mental models of language by linking morphemes. Discuss and unlock connections and personal associations. The power is in the connection. This power to harness and transform our lexicon must reside with the learner. Strong morphemic knowledge can

unleash this potential.

When teaching the range of affixes (prefixes and suffixes) in the KS2 curriculum, consider how to group morphemes based on meaning, usage and purpose. This will help to further mobilise connections between the teaching of vocabulary, grammar and spelling. A large proportion of the KS2 curriculum focuses on derivational affixes – those which are added to root words and change the word class. Here are a few examples to consider:

- verb to noun – enjoy/*enjoyment*, educate/*education*, teach/*teacher*
- noun to adjective – sense/*senseless*, child/*childish*, poison/*poisonous*
- adjective to adverb – sensible/*sensibly*
- noun to verb – garden/*garden**ing*, identity/*identify*, local/*localise*

If learners can spot a familiar root word, access knowledge of the function of affixes and use syntactic (sentence structure) knowledge, they are on the road to more active comprehension. Prefixes (another type of affix) are somewhat easier to teach as they do not result in spelling changes, but rather change the meaning of the root word. Model connected thinking by introducing prefixes in meaning groups, for example: negation – *in, im, il, ir, dis, un, de*; numbers – *uni, tri, bi*; location – *super, trans, post, sub*. Finally, consolidate knowledge of prefixes in upper KS2 by teaching Greek and Latin pairs such as: *hyper/ super* (above); *hypo/ sub* (below); *di/ bi* (two/ twice); *hydra/ aqua* (water); *anti/ contr* (against) and *peri/ circu* (around). Use these

TRY THESE MORPHEME MARVEL CHALLENGES:

- Think about words we've been learning together. Can you spot the root words? Can you think of other words in a word family that are connected?
- Look for prefixes in words. How does the prefix affect word meaning?
- Spot the suffixes. How do suffixes change the function, use or word class of the root word?
- Get ready for a morpheme shuffle! Write a range of prefixes, suffixes and roots on individual whiteboards. Choose a board and shuffle around to form, reform and discuss new words.
- Be a morpheme spotter. When you come across an unfamiliar word as you're reading, look for a familiar prefix, root or suffix to help you unlock meaning.

strategies to help learners channel their inner Power Ranger – kick, punch and roundhouse your way to more focused vocabulary teaching. Go, go, vocabulary rangers! **TP**



Kelly Ashley is a freelance English consultant based in Yorkshire

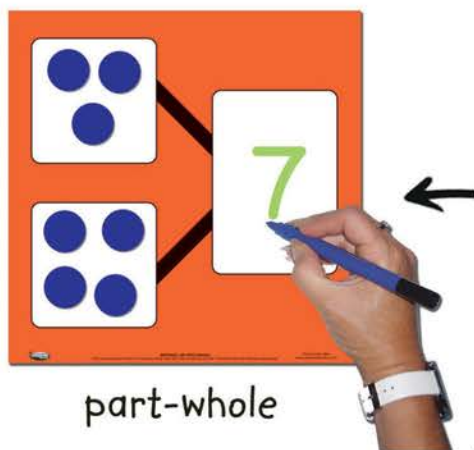
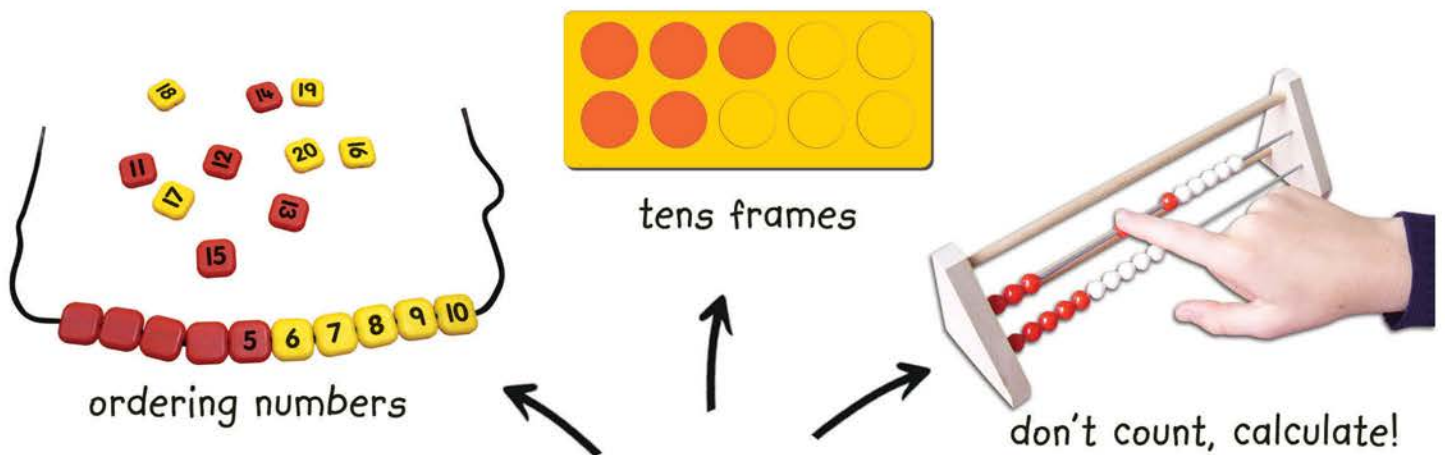
and author of *Word Power: Amplifying vocabulary instruction* (2019).

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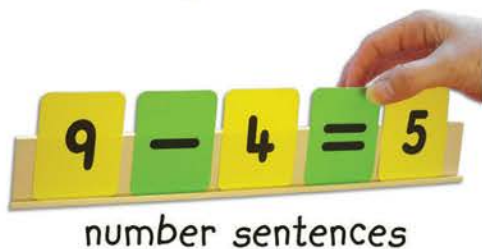
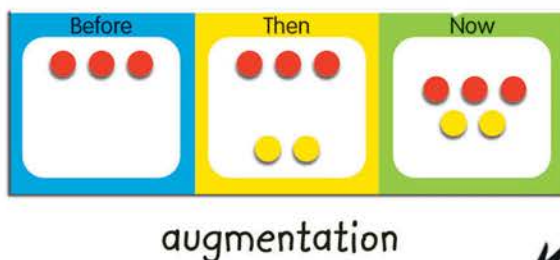
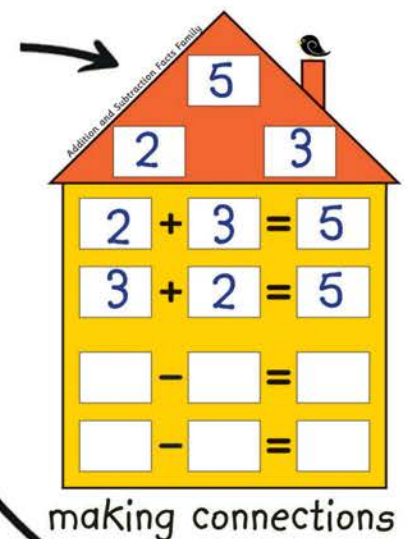
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Family matters

Just as the Power Rangers harness their skills and powers, by the end of KS1 children have a range of morphological tools with which to explore and connect language for more sophisticated purposes. As they move into KS2, the focus shifts to word families as learners traverse the challenge of examining a range of prefixes



Mastering Number Sense



ORDINARY HEROES

From a nameless teddy bear to a publishing success story – a diverse and inclusive approach to literacy is no more than our pupils deserve, says **Shirley-Anne Brightman**

“Miss, we can’t think of enough names!” I was on playground duty, and the Christmas Fair was fast approaching. Two Primary 5 pupils (Y4) were holding a large piece of cardboard on which they had drawn a 5x10 grid. About half a dozen of the squares were filled: James, Emily, Sally, John...

“What do you need names for?”, I enquired, slightly absent-mindedly as my ‘on duty’ eyes scanned the raucous cricket game beyond.

“For the teddy,” one girl explained. “We need 50 names and we don’t know enough – can you help?”. Realising with sudden, gut-wrenching clarity, what the issue was, I looked around the playground again. St. Albert’s Primary School in Pollokshields, Glasgow, has a pupil intake that is almost 90% non-white. And the horrible truth was that these intelligent, diligent and impeccably behaved girls considered neither their own nor any of their classmates’ names worthy for inclusion, even in this most trivial of contexts.

“Of course I can help,” I said, sincerely; and the conversation that followed, in which I suggested their own names, their friends’ names and their parents’ names, was the first of very many exchanges which have shaped our successful social enterprise and our culturally responsive literacy teaching policy over the past two years.

Written out

Talking with colleagues and senior leadership, we gathered other examples of the pupils’ deference to Western ‘white’ names: they chose them for characters in their own stories, they used them in imaginary play. An infant teacher even commented that she had seen many children draw themselves with pink (white) skin when theirs was most definitely brown. We asked the children why, and they said that they had never read books or seen films featuring characters with Arabic names.

Of course, as a school we quickly looked into buying new books for our pupils; but as the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) would reveal later that year (2018), there weren’t many to be had. CLPE’s first Reflecting Realities research report on children’s publications found that of new books published in 2017, just four per cent had Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) characters, with only one per cent featuring a BAME protagonist. Happily, the head teacher at St. Albert’s, Clare Harker, is a creative and brave leader. “We’ll just have to write our own, then!” she said.

Success stories

Over the following few years, a small group of teachers and pupils led a project called ‘We Can be Heroes’. It aimed to engage South Asian writers to work with our pupils on stories that would feature characters like them. The pupils co-wrote the stories and we self-published

three beautiful, illustrated editions of short stories in November 2021. To date, we’ve sold over 300 copies of our books direct from the school and via our Etsy online shop (see panel). It’s a major success story which has run in parallel to the Black Lives Matter movement and a zeitgeist of change which we are now

“Texts are forming our pupils’ ideas of who can be a hero”



seeing in new publishing. The 2021 Reflecting Realities report showed an encouraging increase in books featuring BAME characters – now 15%; and 8% of main characters were BAME. It is progress, but it's far from ideal. The demographics of St. Albert's are such that we would want every book in our children's hands to feature a range of ethnicities of character.

The Social Enterprise Academy (SEA) has worked with St. Albert's on a number of projects over the past five years and we have been repeatedly recognised as a National Social Enterprise Champion school by them. 'We Can be Heroes' operates as a social enterprise model, whereby sales revenues go back into the social aim of the project – in our case, into producing more stories. So now, in phase two, 'We Can be Heroes' is working with parents to delve deeper into the school community's heritage and six new stories are in production, dealing with themes such as cultural norms for marriage, bilingualism and pre-partition India. This next phase of the project has attracted a grant from the Scottish Library and Information Council's School Library Improvement Fund, which has enabled greater partnership working, including with Glasgow's Barrowland Ballet, to create a performance element to the storytelling.

Real change

The St. Albert's school motto is 'Conscience-led Communities'. The writing project has raised awareness and built momentum and excitement as it has attracted funding, awards, media coverage and the acclaim of

national organisations such as the Scottish BAME Writers' Network, the Scottish Book Trust and BBC Scotland. The real work, however, is only just beginning at St. Albert's, as we now translate this into classroom practice and into a true overhaul of our school's literacy resources.

Three new library spaces are currently in development to be stocked with all the titles featuring diverse characters that we could purchase, thanks to advice from Glasgow's Mitchell Library team and specialist bookshop A New Chapter. A new literacy teaching policy is in development through a collaborative process, and it has been encouraging to see almost half of the class teachers engaging in it. Ultimately, the real impact of the work will emerge when the teaching and learning in St. Albert's consistently interrogates

the texts (including audio-visual influences) that are forming our pupils' ideas of who can be a hero.

Why bother?

In March this year, I took four pupils along to the Social Enterprise Schools: Glasgow 'Dragon's Den' event run by the Social Enterprise Academy to present an update on 'We Can be Heroes'. As we were preparing, I asked the children if they felt like what we'd

done mattered. Did they really mind that characters in books didn't very often have names or skin like theirs? Part of me has always been conscious that back when the pupils asked me for teddy bear name suggestions, they were in no way sad, angered or feeling second-rate about the fact that their names didn't seem appropriate. Had we, in fact, drawn attention to something that wasn't causing them any immediate problems?

One said, "Well, when characters are nothing like me, I feel like, why should I bother reading this?", another added, "If your family is like the ones in books or films, you feel included", and a third told me, "When a character is like you, it gives you a value in the world". What better reason to continue could there be? **TP**



Shirley-Anne Brightman studied languages at the University of Cambridge and holds an

MSc in Social Policy from London School of Economics, and has taught ESL and primary in four countries. She is currently a Leader of Learning for Glasgow City Council's Improvement Challenge



WANT TO KNOW MORE?



The books produced by the St. Albert's social enterprise can be purchased via Etsy (scan the QR code to visit the shop). There's also a blog, where you can find out more about the social

enterprise project and see the latest updates: **blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/gc/wecanbeheroes**



@StAlbertsG41

4 REASONS TO TRY... Operation Ocelot with Steve Backshall

Why the campaign by the World Land Trust (WLT) Patron, where pupils go outdoors to save the rainforest, is the perfect way for schools to make a difference

1 SAVING A NATURAL PARADISE

Operation Ocelot will help WLT partner REGUA protect some of the last 7% of Brazil's Atlantic Forest from logging and hunting. This is one of the world's top five biodiversity hotspots and the home of hundreds of species from ocelots to tapirs, toucans, sloths and more.

2 A FUN, OUTDOORS PURSUIT

The Operation Ocelot process is simple: teachers take students outdoors to measure playgrounds or any other space; you use WLT's online calculator to work out how much you need to raise to protect the same size area in Brazil; and you then work, as a team, to raise your target.



3 PROTECT HABITATS FOR GOOD

As students discover the outdoors back home, they discover their power to protect nature abroad. Through Operation Ocelot, they join a global movement of fellow young conservationists funding reserves packed with life (and carbon) that REGUA will then safeguard and patrol – for good.

4 TEACHER AWARDS

As Steve himself puts it: "If you're a teacher, this is something relatable for your students to engage with – to look at a place they can see every day, like their school, and know that they are saving the same size area of rainforest full of ocelots, toucans, sloths and more."



Contact:

worldlandtrust.org
Calculate your target, download educational material or send your questions to Steve Backshall

At a glance

- Nature's protection is one of the most impactful actions for our climate, UN scientists confirmed recently
- Through Operation Ocelot, your students will help to safeguard one of Earth's most biodiverse places
- This project will support them to learn about curriculum subjects like species, ecosystems and environmental challenges

MISSION TWO

- ✓ Measure your school, football pitch, playground, or any space;
- ✓ Use the Operation Ocelot calculator to create your target;
- ✓ Donate or start raising money as a team to save the same size area in Brazil.

OPERATION OCELOT

ATLANTIC FOREST, BRAZIL

BRAZIL'S ATLANTIC FOREST, ONE OF THE WORLD'S TOP FIVE BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS, IS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED. ONLY 7% OF THIS ONCE-VAST FOREST REMAINS INTACT TODAY.

JOIN STEVE BACKSHALL IN HIS MISSION TO SAVE THESE HABITATS AND TAKE THIS FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY TO INVOLVE YOUNGSTERS IN A PROJECT THAT TEACHES THE IMPORTANCE OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.

A DONATION OF ONLY £100 WILL SAVE 1 ACRE OF ATLANTIC FOREST FOR GOOD!



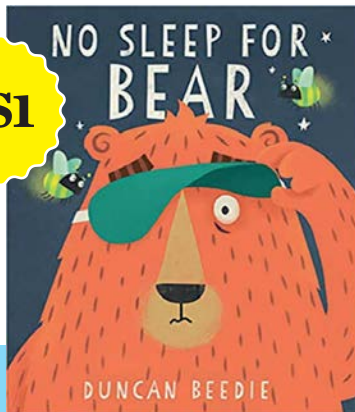
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Book CLUB

We review five new titles that your class will love

KS1



No Sleep for Bear

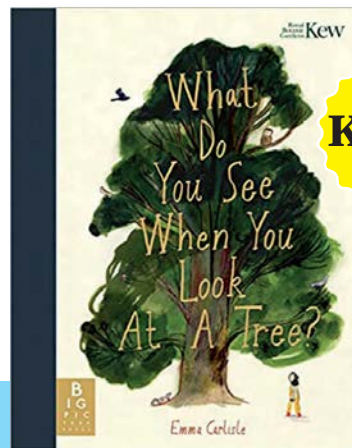
by Duncan Beedie

(£7.99, Templar Books)

In this cute follow-up to *The Bear Who Stared*, it's nearing wintertime and Bear is having trouble getting to sleep. After wandering through the forest, trying out the approaches of different animals – hanging upside down like Bat, burrowing like Badger, and sitting atop a (very uncomfortable) tree like Blackbird – Bear is at a loss. It's only when he meets the peaceful, quiet frog that he learns the key to getting some shut-eye...

This simple, lighthearted story would be wonderful to share with your very youngest pupils, and is an excellent reminder for those who find it hard to settle down. With plenty beautiful, full-page illustrations by the author, it's also a great way to introduce some information about animals and their habitats; can your class match Badger to his sett and Bat to his cave?

KS1/2



What Do You See When You Look At a Tree?

by Emma Carlisle

(£12.99 HB, Big Picture Press)

Opening with a beautiful poem played out over 32 pages, with a couple of lines on each, this book is a true homage to trees. Combining an ethereal point of view with facts about real-life trees, it's a one-stop-shop for anyone interested in this essential organism. Whether you're sitting down for story time with your youngest KS1 pupils, or exploring the science behind plantlife with UKS2, this will be a useful resource. Once the poem – which deals with how trees might feel, their astonishing variety, and the animals to which they are home – concludes, the final two spreads include some scientific information about trees, such as how they might communicate with one another and what they need to survive. Soft, colourful illustrations throughout add a sense of calm – perfect for a quiet read.

KS2



Funny Bums, Freaky Beaks

by Alex Morss & Sean Taylor, ill. Sarah Edmonds

(£7.99, Welbeck)

For anyone who's ever felt like they look different to everyone else, or that they stand out in a crowd, this book is a celebration of all that makes us unique. Highlighting some of the most amazing and unusual features in the animal kingdom, this informative and humorous title explores all manner of strange but useful adaptations, from the sun bear's very long tongue (measuring a quarter of its height!) to the Australian spotted katydid's unlikely ear placement (can you guess where they are?). Beautifully illustrated throughout, with colourful watercolour-style images, this book is one you could pore over for hours. Whether you're studying animals or just intrigued about the planet's myriad species, there is plenty to explore. Plus, there are links to some organisations working to protect endangered species at the back of the book – a great extension exercise.

→→→ **RECOMMENDED**

RESOURCES

plazoom

RESOURCES FOR CHANGE

Are you looking for resources to support children moving to the next stage of their education?

Part of Plazoom's powerful Real Comprehension curriculum, this layered reading unit of work is perfect for Y6 pupils and is based on a beautiful original poem by Sue Hardy-Dawson, itself inspired by Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken*. See them at bit.ly/PlazoomRoad



KS2

Our Time on Earth

by Lily Murray, ill.

Jesse Hodgson

(£15.99 HB, Big Picture Press)

Kids are full of questions. Have you ever been asked how long a tortoise can really live for, or what an axolotl is? If the answer is yes, or if you're constantly fielding questions from curious littles on all sorts of topics, this book is for you. Exploring animal lifespans, from the mayfly to the immortal jellyfish (yes, it says *immortal*), this lovely tome is packed full of info, sure to satiate even the most inquisitive of young minds. Some of my favourite facts include that the Etruscan shrew's heart beats at an amazing rate of up to 1,500 beats per minute, and that a certain type of clam in the North Atlantic can live for 400 years! Beautiful, intricate illustrations light up every spread, so even those pupils who may not be able to follow all the text will be able to enjoy it. This could even be a great starting point for an animal-related art project.



UKS2

The Misunderstandings of Charity Brown

by Elizabeth Laird

(£12.99 HB, Macmillan Children's Books)

As she's recovering from a bout of polio, Charity Brown's life is about to change even more. Her parents have inherited a huge house from the mysterious Mr Spendlove, and want to move in right away. With older siblings Hope at boarding school, Faith at her nurse's home and Ted away in the Navy, Charity's lonely being the only one still living at home – especially since her parents are still overprotective after her illness. However, when she makes friends with her new neighbour Rachel, the two learn a lot about making connections with people whose lives are different than their own. Based on the author's real-life childhood experience of rheumatic fever, and her own strictly religious upbringing, *The Misunderstandings of Charity Brown* will ring true for anyone who experienced worry about the pandemic, and is an endearing story of belief, acceptance, and family.

Meet the author

ELIZABETH LAIRD ON EMBARRASSING PARENTS, THE JOY OF YA, AND CLASHING CULTURES



How did growing up as part of a strict religious group influence your view of 'popular' literature?

I can't really separate the religious aspect of my childhood from the fact that I grew up in the 1950s. The whole of society was much stricter then. People had very rigid views about sex. Gay men could go to prison. Only married women could get hold of contraceptives. There were far fewer books, and 'YA' fiction didn't exist. We jumped straight from *Little Women* to Agatha Christie. Of course, the liberal times in which we now live are in many ways much better, but I'm sad that children are exposed to so much violence, horror and sexually explicit material both in books and on screens. I think it erodes their confidence and makes them more fearful.

Why did you decide to include polio? Was this a conscious effort to address Covid?

I had rheumatic fever when I was a child. I was in bed for a long time, and was only slowly allowed to be active again. Who's heard of rheumatic fever now? But most know about polio. I made the decision to give my character polio before Covid struck, but the resonances worked for me.

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

As they grow up, all children have to confront the different cultures of home and school. For some it's easy, though even children from mainstream backgrounds are embarrassed by their parents. It comes with being an adolescent! But for those from any strict religious or cultural background the clash between home and the outside world can be agonising. Teachers could encourage children in Charity's situation to identify with her, and others in more liberal homes to empathise with those who share her problems.

Elizabeth's new book, *The Misunderstandings of Charity Brown* (Macmillan) is out on 7 July



Sue says...

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



Q What is the best way to teach grammar? Should it be folded into writing or in discrete lessons too?
D.B., Y3 teacher

A Well, in my experience, the answer to that is a little bit of both!

The best way to teach grammar overall is within the context of writing. When I was in the classroom, I linked particular objectives to units of writing according to the text type I would be teaching. Finding a great model text that contains the grammar that you want to teach is an excellent way for pupils to see how particular rules or constructions are used in context. You can then discuss as a class why these grammatical features have been chosen for purpose and effect. Quality texts or extracts that explicitly show the skills that you would like pupils to use can be tricky to find, but Real Grammar from Plazoom, which is being launched for first teaching from September 2022, offers a variety of model texts for each year group that are annotated to show the grammar and punctuation used, to support your teaching (find out more at [plazoom.com/offers/real-grammar](https://bit.ly/plazoom.com/offers/real-grammar)).

By teaching grammar within a unit of writing, pupils are more likely to use the structures taught when writing independently and will have a better understanding of why they are used.

But of course, there are always times where discrete grammar lessons may be needed. Perhaps there is a particular objective that you may need evidence for, or you may want to expose pupils to assessment-style questions ready for the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assessments (SATs). Moreover, short grammar activities can be great to keep skills fresh and revisit areas where needed, and games or quick tasks completed at the beginning of lessons or during registration times can help keep children's grammar knowledge sharp.

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

Oh, the places they'll go!

It's hard to believe that we're at this point in the year again – but sure enough, the end of the summer term is in sight; and of course, for Year 6 pupils, that also means the conclusion of their time at primary school is approaching.

The move to secondary education can be daunting for children to consider; so why not think about planning in some work designed to help youngsters understand and deal with their feelings about the change ahead?

This gorgeous resources pack is based on Dr Seuss' classic book, *Oh, the places you'll go!*, with activities that will allow pupils to articulate their hopes and ambitions, and plan how they might be achieved; building their confidence and encouraging a sense of excitement and anticipation, rather than anxiety.

FREE RESOURCE

Download it at bit.ly/PlazoomY6



Did you know...?

- 'Seuss' should be pronounced to rhyme with 'choice', not 'deuce'.
- Dr Seuss almost certainly invented the word 'nerd' (although not with the meaning it has today).
- In his lifetime, Dr Seuss won two Oscars, two Emmys – and a Pulitzer Prize.

3 more ideas to support end-of-year transition

1 Back to School – Year 6 to Year 7 transition passport for pupils to complete themselves
bit.ly/PlazoomTransition1



2 'A New Beginning' – comprehension pack based on a story about starting secondary school
bit.ly/PlazoomTransition2



3 'The Arrival' – a scheme of work by Debra Kidd, linked to Shaun Tan's wordless novel
<https://bit.ly/PlazoomTransition3>



Print your own...

...word snail games! Encourage children in any year group to broaden their knowledge and use of vocabulary by completing these word snails, writing synonyms for each previous word in the shell. There are six sheets with starter words provided, as well as a blank template for you or your pupils to suggest different ideas. Follow the link to download and print your pack, for FREE.

Find them at bit.ly/PlazoomSnails

A powerful vocabulary



It is increasingly common knowledge that the gap between the number of words that are known, understood and used by advantaged pupils, and by their less advantaged peers, can have an enormous impact on outcomes.

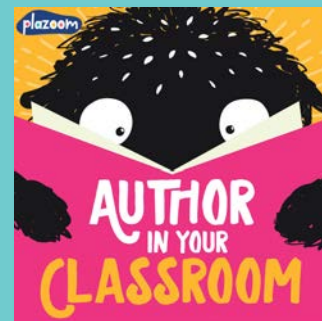
Experts agree that in order to close the chasm, explicit teaching of vocabulary is crucial – which is why Plazoom has developed Word Whoosh: powerful resource packs designed to clarify and extend children's understanding of tier 2 words from Reception to Year 6+. Explore the full collection at bit.ly/PlazoomWords

Discrete vocabulary lessons are also woven throughout Plazoom's Real Comprehension programme – with a focus on two or three words per fiction, non-fiction and poetry text to encourage really deep understanding. Find out more at bit.ly/PlazoomRealComp



When Jason was 16, he talked his way into an internship at Marvel Comics in New York.

Later, he taught English in Japan for five years.



An action-packed adventure with amazing characters and a gripping storyline is tricky to write, but this is precisely what Jason Rohan manages to do with the first book in his new high-octane series – *S.T.E.A.L.T.H.: Access Denied*. In this episode of the Author in Your Classroom Podcast, he explains exactly how he planned the plot, and talks about the importance of strong contrasting characters to carry the story – themes that are then picked up in the accompanying resources pack.

Listen to this episode and download your free teaching resources at bit.ly/PlazoomJason

Hack your class!



Spread some joy

Try to catch two or three parents a week to say something positive about their child. It helps build strong relationships and stops them worrying when you approach them in the playground.



A sticky solution

Ask pupils to occasionally write sentences on sticky notes. You can then put these on a display or glue them in books to show what kids can do, instead of losing their ideas when whiteboards are wiped.



Wipe it clean...

Has someone used permanent marker on your whiteboard? Simply go over the writing with your usual whiteboard pen and wipe – the permanent ink should disappear!

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Lesson PLANS

We're taking the hard work out of planning with innovative ideas from some of the UK's most creative teachers

KS2

p86



GROUND AND CALM YOUR MIND THROUGH NATURE
Explore emotions and help your pupils build up tools to deal with everyday stressors, says Emily Azouelos

KS2

p88



ON THE PITCH AND ON THE PAGE – WOMEN'S EUROS
Learn about what it takes to be a professional athlete, and celebrate female footballers with Adam Jevons-Newman

KS2

p92



COMPARING STORIES OF NOAH AND NUH
Events in the Bible and Quran can show children how different religions can share a similar worldview, says Matthew Lane

KS2

p94



THE CLIMATE CRISIS – HOW CAN WE CHANGE THE STORY?
Investigating the past can help children develop their own visions for a sustainable future, says Ben Ballin

LESSON PLANS



Even more ideas...

Get dramatic

The BBC has released a series of three videos, which offer guidance on using simple classroom drama activities to non-specialist teachers at KS2. The videos also have accompanying notes and frameworks, aiming to show how classroom drama can enrich a wide range of curriculum objectives. View them for free at tinyurl.com/tp-BBCKS2drama



Celebration Day

KS2 pupils are invited to enter a free writing competition in honour of the inaugural Celebration Day on 26 June – a time to pause and honour those who are no longer with us. Prizes include winning stories being read by renowned actors such as Lennie James, Gemma Arterton and Harriet Walter. Download an entry pack at tinyurl.com/tp-CelebrationDay



LGBT+ history

June is Pride Month, but teaching children about LGBT+ history and respect is important all year round. If you're not sure where to start, have a look at LGBT youth charity Just Like Us' free downloadable poster pack, which explores historical icons, sources of support for young people and an illustrated guide to British LGBT+ history. Find it at tinyurl.com/tp-LGBTHistory



Find more online! Visit teachwire.net/teaching-resources



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Teamwork skills by listening and responding to each other's ideas
- Self-care techniques connected to nature and the importance of time outdoors
- How to use nature to inspire creative ideas

Ground and calm your mind through nature



Explore emotions and help your pupils build up tools to deal with everyday stressors, says **Emily Azouelos**

[@HalfaString](#) halfastring.co.uk

This lesson plan delves into the themes of nature and wellbeing by looking at outdoor learning opportunities linked to English, art and PSHE. Creativity is an effective tool to explore emotions, and teaching children how to be mindful is a self care technique that they can draw upon in times of need. Now, more than ever, we need to equip our students with the tools to navigate an often busy and overwhelming world, and what better place to start than the familiar environment of their schools grounds and local green spaces?



START HERE

Discuss how nature can ground and calm us and that when we activate our senses outdoors, we can feel more connected to our environment.

Take your class outside and teach them the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique: name five things they can see, four things they can touch, three sounds they can hear, two things they can smell and one thing they can taste (note this should be what they can taste in their mouth already, NOT putting something in their mouth to taste). Gather feedback on how doing this made them feel, and relate it to connecting to nature and being mindful in the moment.



MAIN LESSON

1 | TREE POETRY

Take your class on a walk outside and split into groups. Assign them a tree, or allow them to choose their own, and encourage them to spend some quiet time exploring the tree and noticing all the details about it. Connect back to their self care technique of being mindful in the moment. Ask them what makes their tree unique and different.

Work through some playful prompts with your groups to encourage creative ideas and fun discussions based on their trees. These could include questions such as:

- Would your tree talk in a loud or a soft voice?
- What is your tree's favourite weather and what season makes them the saddest?
- Has your tree got a favourite view of the area? What does the tree see?
- What personality would your tree have based on its appearance? Is it a spiky tree and therefore harsh and cantankerous; does it have big, bold leaves and therefore have a brash and loud personality; or is it curved and wispy with a soft and calming demeanor?

Explore how to turn children's answers into poetry. Why not experiment with starting every line of their poem in the same way, listing all the qualities



“When we activate our senses outdoors, we can feel more connected to our environment.”

about their tree? Or write an acrostic poem after selecting an adjective that describes their tree (a great vocab exercise); or use personification to bring their tree and all its components to life.

2 | NATURE ART COLLECTION

Take some time outside to collect interesting bits of nature (leaves, twigs, feathers stones, etc), focusing on different textures, colours and shapes. Ask the children to notice how it makes them feel when they slow down and examine the little details in their environment.

Arrange their findings back in the classroom

to form a display, and encourage pupils to write creative captions and attach them to their objects. These could be factual labels recording what the object is, where it was found and facts they have researched, or they could be creative labels about the details they notice, what they could compare the object to, and how it makes them feel. Include some close detail sketches of children's objects, or construct their objects out of 3D recycled materials for a display. Play calming music as they construct their displays and focus on how slowing down and connecting to nature makes them feel.

3 EXPLORE MINDFULNESS

Darwin and Einstein practised nature walks to inspire their thinking and to be focused and present in the moment. In our busy world, this seems more impactful than ever. Take the children on a mindful walk around their school grounds or in their local area. Encourage them to be silent and to soak in all they can see, hear, feel and touch. Ask them to notice how the trees and plants move. Get down to the ground and look up as high as they can – taking a different perspective. Ask them to notice the small details they may overlook as they walk, and to reflect at the end how walking in this way made them feel, or what they were thinking about – there are no wrong answers!

Back in the classroom, ask pupils to draw their most memorable part of their walk, or draw how it made them feel. Hang up the images around your classroom as a reminder that we can practise mindfulness whenever we're feeling overwhelmed or stressed.

Emily Azouelos is a freelance writer and consultant, currently working with Half A String Theatre to develop learning resources linked to their latest play, Breathe, in collaboration with the Gulbenkian Arts Centre, Canterbury.

EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Get the children to write their own playful prompts for the tree poetry. Display them in the classroom, and refer back to them when approaching another topic or producing creative writing inspired by real-life objects.
- Ask your class to research some more self-care techniques and present their findings. Work through the list together and discuss whether the activities helped, and what could be improved.
- Use technology on the mindfulness walk and ask the children to film themselves explaining what they are doing and noticing. Or use Google maps to create their own walking routes with pins and captions that highlight details to notice. Link it to the school website as a learning tool for other classes or parents to try out.

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What self-care technique has been the most helpful and why?
- Why do you think we don't always take the time to slow down and notice the little details?
- Could you incorporate any of these techniques into your daily or weekly routines?



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- To reflect on the concepts of diet, fitness and mental health in sport
- Strategies for describing and contrasting emotion
- To write emotively and engagingly, in first person
- About the UEFA Women's European Football Championships

On the pitch and on the page – Women's Euros



Learn about what it takes to be a professional athlete, and celebrate female footballers with **Adam Jevons-Newman**

@JNCurricEdu

With the UEFA Women's European Football Championships just around the corner, now is a great time to look at how we can use the beautiful game to inspire writing. In this diary activity, we think about the life of a footballer including the health, fitness and mental preparation required ahead of a big game. Just what do pupils think it might be like for Leah Williamson as she captains England's women to open their Euro campaign on July 6? And can they put themselves in her and her teammates' boots?



START HERE

Before you begin, try reaching out to your local football club (through organisations such as Football in the Community – fitc.org.uk) as you may be able to get an insight into the life of a footballer, in person. I was fortunate to first deliver this project alongside Mansfield Town Football in the Community and pupils gained a super view. Initially, ask pupils "What do you think it's like to be a footballer?" The children may have ideas about luxuries and lifestyle and these should be acknowledged. However, try to steer the conversation through scaffolded questions about life off the pitch – diet, keeping fit, and being away from home at a tournament like Euro 2022.



MAIN LESSON

1 | THE PRE-MATCH ROUTINE

Make the experience immersive and begin with a fitness session to remind pupils that being a footballer (or any elite athlete) isn't just about the match. Children can also design (and make) their own healthy matchday menu, learning about the diet and nutrition of a sports person. Before heading out onto the pitch, take the time to find out more about the England squad or team of your choice. Who plays where? Who might pupils 'be' in their game when they take their penalty, free kick or lead out their team? Record emotive and sensory

adjectives and thoughts or opinions at regular intervals, inviting pupils to respond to the experience. Build up this bank throughout the day.

2 | KICK OFF

Next, it's time to hit the pitch. Create mini Euro '22 scenarios like a penalty shootout, free kicks, leading out the 'team' (this could be with another class) as well as some fun, small-sided mini-games. A good tip here is to film the penalty shootout and watch it back together – there's even chance to commentate! After the penalties have hit the back of the net, invite pupils to do post-match interviews. Were you pleased with your goal? How well did you play? Primarily, these scenarios are to help engage pupils emotively



“What do pupils think it might be like for Leah Williamson as she captains England’s women to open their Euro campaign on July 6?”

players’ heads before they take to the pitch or strike the penalty? How did the sound of the crowd make them feel? What about when the ball hit the back of the net? Pupils can craft sentences by contrasting emotions with coordinating or subordinating conjunctions, e.g. ‘I felt nervous until the ball hit the back of the net’. These can be levelled up with the use of show, not tell, e.g. ‘My heart raced and everything around me paused until the ball thundered in’.

Pupils can make their footballing personas even more relatable by reflecting on the effort made by their professional heroes. For example, ‘I munched on my prematch breakfast, although secretly I would rather have had a greasy bacon buttie!’ Then, bring in the sensory experience for a footballer:

the noise of the crowd, the smell of the grass, the sense of jubilation, tiredness, victory. Building sensory sentences can create powerful setting descriptions such as ‘I love the cacophony of the thunderous, packed crowd as I entered the luscious, hallowed turf’.

Having planned the chronology and associated emotions and developed the quality of some individual sentences, pupils can then craft their diary to recount their footballing day.

Adam Jevons-Newman is the Key Stage 2 and curriculum leader at Farmilo Primary School and Nursery and a freelance curriculum consultant and writer.



with their writing, but this stage can fit seamlessly into a longer PE unit. Don’t forget to add to your ongoing bank of language and opinions.

3 | THE FINAL WHISTLE

Full time and now we put pen to paper – albeit not on a three-year contract! Pupils can now apply the ideas, thoughts and opinions they have gathered throughout the experience. You may need to begin by clarifying the features of a diary structure. Then, reflect on the chronology of the day and the emotions at each stage. Match the event and the emotion side-by-side to formulate a structure. You could do this whole-class to give an agreed structure, create a rubric together or let pupils work independently. Next, it’s time to think about the mental side of the game (positive and negative) and write in first person. What worries might go through the

EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Reach out to your local football club’s Football in the Community team. We were able to build this day alongside Mansfield Town thanks to Gary Shaw and their FITC team which added even more authenticity to the experience!
- With The Commonwealth Games in Birmingham this summer, compare and contrast by writing a diary for another athlete or sport.
- Look beyond the playing squad and into the many other vital roles in football teams. How will Sarina Wiegman be preparing on 6 July?
- Check out the Premier League Stars materials at plprimarystars.com, which can support writing around football.

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What is it really like to be a footballer?
- Can you put yourself into the boots of a Lioness ahead of kick off?
- How do you think it feels to score for your town or country?
- Is football coming home?

ACTIVE KIDS DO BETTER!



Active Kids Do Better equips teachers and parents with tools to get primary aged children moving through play. It features a suite of free resources including videos, activity cards, games and teacher materials.

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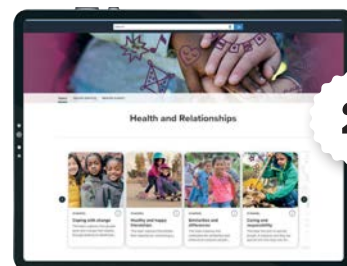


EE Music Class

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.co.uk



Confident RSHE

Feel supported in delivering the new primary RSHE curriculum with Discovery Education Health and Relationships. With ready-to-use lesson activities and comprehensive teacher support, this digital RSHE programme equips teachers with the resources and knowledge they need to confidently 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



3

Number sense

Getting to know the numbers to 10 is a significant part of every child's journey towards numeracy. This set of 60 cards from Autopress Education presents children with different representations of each number, and helps to develop a deeper understanding. The carefully selected images support a relational understanding, too, helping pupils to see how one number compares to another. The ability to order numbers and to subitise small quantities is also a key part of number sense, as well as the ability to recognise number digits and words. Find out more at autopresseducation.co.uk



The Ogress and the Orphans

You know Kelly Barnhill – she's the award-winning author of bestseller *The Girl Who Drank the Moon* – and now she's back with another beautiful fantasy fable for ages nine and up: *The Ogress and the Orphans*. With her story of a small town, a dazzling-but-deceitful mayor, and an unfairly victimised Ogress, Barnhill has penned a modern masterpiece. A wonderfully moving and utterly compelling tale of kindness in the face of lies and the enduring power of love and light when all around is dark, *The Ogress and the Orphans* confirms the author's place at the very top table of young person's fiction. Shop now at lnk.to/OgressOrphans



Free financial training

Money Heroes, an award-winning programme supported by HSBC UK, seeks to transform financial education for primary children. Money Heroes offers free, accredited teacher training and mentoring to teachers, and this is now available to book until December 2022. The training, which can be delivered in person or virtually, is designed to support teachers to embed financial education into the primary curriculum, as well as provide a detailed overview of the Money Heroes resources and how they can be used. Find out more about Money Heroes and their teacher training offer at moneyheroes.org.uk



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- How different religions can share similar stories and therefore similar beliefs
- How our personal worldview influences our interpretation of a sacred story (hermeneutics)
- How to closely read a sacred text to find meaning
- How to question their interpretation of a text

Comparing stories of Noah and Nuh



Bible and Quran events show pupils how different religions can share a similar worldview, says **Matthew Lane**

@MrMJLane

theteachinglane.co.uk

Religious education is a subject filled with knowledge about people, culture and community. Ofsted describes learning in RE in three ways: 'substantive', or the specific content children learn; 'ways of knowing', or how we can frame the information; and 'personal knowledge', where children build an awareness of how their own worldview can influence or bias their learning. In this lesson, children will compare the stories of one person who is important in two religions: Noah (as he is called in the Bible) and Nuh (as he is called in the Quran)...



START HERE

Begin with asking children which sacred stories they can remember. Can they think of any that are similar or the same from one religion to another?

Introduce or recap on how there are historical links between the three Abrahamic religions, and that these can be looked at together. This lesson can also be a starting point for teaching children how to handle sacred texts respectfully and how traditions differ on handling texts between religions. When using Qurans, children should:

- wash their hands at the start of the lesson
- keep the Quran shut when not being read
- store the Quran as the highest book in the room



MAIN LESSON

1 | MEETING NOAH

Introduce the story of Noah. Explain how it is from the Old Testament and is one of the oldest stories in the Bible. Explain how Genesis is the first of the 66 books that makes up the Bible and how the book is a library of stories from different authors and times. Read the story of Noah. You can do this from a video or by reading Genesis 6 - 8 (the NLV – New Living-translation is good for this). Note some of the key events from Noah such as the pairs of animals; Noah's whole family boarding the Ark; and how the world was flooded for 150 days. Ask children to think

about what the key messages from the story are (the need to be faithful to God; the power of God...). You could record these in books or on the board.

2 | MEETING NUH

Next, introduce the story of Nuh. Explain how this is from the Quran which is seen by Muslims as a book that was spoken to the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) directly from God. Explain how Allah is the Arabic word for God, and that Allah is used as the word for God by Christians in the Arabic speaking parts of the world - 'al-Lah' means 'the God'. Read through the story of Nuh (Quran 11:25-49). List the key events: Nuh being ignored by many; his followers planting trees and building the Ark; the world flooding; animals and



“Explore how religions can have shared histories, influencing each other and the stories they have in common.”

Muslims board the Ark; some of Nuh’s family not boarding the Ark. Ask children to think about the key messages from the Quran. You could record these in books or on the board.

Depending on your class, you may wish to introduce the story of Nuh first to better suit prior knowledge or learning.

3 | COMPARING THE SCRIPTURES

Now, discuss the similarities and differences between the two stories. Ask children to read the texts again and make two lists: one of similarities and one of differences. Ask pupils if they think they are the same story but written by different authors. Talk about how there are many

prophets in the Quran that are also seen in the Bible, but have Arabic versions of the Hebrew or Romanised names. For instance, Jesus is in the Quran, but is called Isa.

4 | THINKING OF READERS (HERMENEUTICS)

Pause to discuss how there are differences between the reader and the writer, and how as modern readers we do not always have the same beliefs, understanding or cultural references as the writers of these ancient texts. Ask children for the questions they have as modern readers of both texts, such as ‘how did the whole world flood?’ or ‘how did all the animals get to the Ark?’. Now discuss the answers, asking pupils to

think about when the texts were written (500BCE for Genesis and 600CE for the Quran – approximately). For instance, when the texts say ‘the whole world flooded’, this could mean the world that the writer knew of, which was the land around the Mediterranean basin. Conclude the lesson by asking children to think about the purpose of story. Is it a record of an historical event or one that is designed to show a message? Or is it a mixture of both? Or could it be something else entirely? There is debate if the mountain upon which the Ark lands is a real location. We have records in the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh (amongst other sources) of a great flood event within the Mediterranean basin. This Epic predates the Torah by 1000 years and itself is based upon older myths.

Some useful resources for this lesson include fantastic CPD from Jennifer Jenkins on hermeneutics (tinyurl.com/tp-JJenkins) and advice for teachers on teaching hermeneutics from Canterbury Christ Church University (tinyurl.com/tp-Canterbury).

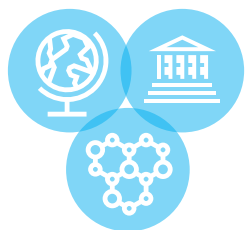
Matthew Lane is a religion & worldviews lead at a primary school in Norfolk.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

- Look again at your notes. Do Noah and Nuh have the same message? What do you think are the key messages from the two texts?
- Compare answers or responses in pairs or groups. Ask the children whether there are parts of this text that they view differently compared with their partner or table. What differences in their personal worldviews might cause this?
- Discuss how Christian/Muslim people might respond to this text compared to someone of no religion.
- Explore other similar stories in the Quran that are also in the Bible.
- What do these stories tell you about the nature of God/Allah? Is this a kind or caring Deity? Or a teacher Deity?
- How would you present the story of Noah or Nuh to a younger student? What are the key points of these stories they may need to understand? What is the core message of the story?

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Do Noah and Nuh have the same messages?
- What do you think are the key messages from the two texts?
- Is it the vocabulary or your personal worldview that is making this text tricky to comprehend?



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- How the local area has changed
- What these changes can tell us about the climate
- How different people might feel about those changes
- What this evidence tells us about the sort of shift that might be needed

The climate crisis - how can we change the story?



Investigating the past can help children develop their own visions for a sustainable future, says **Ben Ballin**

@BenMBallin

changethestory.eu/uk

What is happening to the planet can seem huge and unmanageable to both grown-ups and children. With care, however, we can help pupils start to get a handle on it. Our lesson plan invites children to investigate stories of change from past to present as a stepping stone to creating their own stories about the kind of future they want. It draws on activities trialled with UK schools as part of a European project called 'Change the Story.' Other activities, including children's stories, can be found on the project website.



help them devise some good interview questions that will secure the information they are looking for (e.g., "Do you think more people have cars nowadays?", "Have you noticed trees being planted since you were young?").

START HERE

Ask children what they already know about climate change. What are people doing and saying about it? What is the difference between

weather and climate? You might want to show a short online clip that outlines the basics. Schools involved in the project found this one especially useful - tinyurl.com/tp-ClimateChange

Explain that change is always happening, but some developments are more helpful than others. What changes can children remember from their own experiences? Guide them towards big things that have happened to them, such as a house move or the shift from infant to junior school. How did that feel? Did everyone feel the same about it?



MAIN LESSON

1 | INTERVIEWING ELDERLY

Ask children to find out about past changes in the local area by holding discussions and interviews with older members of the community (parents, grandparents, other elders). They could do this via Zoom, by inviting an elder into class or as a homework activity. Even relatively young parents, teachers or teaching assistants will have witnessed changes since they were children. It will be useful for pupils to practice and develop their interviewing and questioning skills before carrying out 'live interviews'. This will

2 | COMPARING PAST AND PRESENT

Next, get pupils to compare old and modern maps of the local area and annotate them with evidence of change (Digimap for Schools is an excellent resource for this). Supplement this with a comparison of past and present photos of local sites and landmarks (local history societies and museums are good sources). If there is time, they can even visit some of the sites in the images and maps and see what evidence they can find of these past changes. Elicit from the pupils what they can figure out about



“Explain that change is always happening, but some are more helpful than others.”

what each example of change might mean for a different local person (e.g. a taxi driver, a shopkeeper, an elderly person with limited mobility, a parent with toddlers, a farmer, a conservationist). Pupils can then move their examples around the washing line accordingly.

4 | THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE FUTURE

Based on what they have found out about change in the past, and their ideas about its impact on different people and the climate, get children to return to their modern-day maps and photos. How would they like the neighbourhood of the future to look and be?

How can it take the climate crisis into account? Having discussed and annotated their sources, pupils can then create a 3D model of their future neighbourhood. Before completing this task, project schools found it useful to explore the values children wanted to see in their future community. It was also helpful for the class to have access to innovative ideas about future solutions (the project website – changethestory.eu/uk – offers ‘futures cards’ with this in mind).

Ben Ballin is a primary geography consultant, writer and sustainability education specialist. He is UK project worker for the Change the Story project, developing ideas with UK and European colleagues.

local changes from these secondary sources. Are there changes that both elders and secondary sources have highlighted that seem especially significant? In small groups, get children to choose one example of change to investigate further and note it on a sheet of paper. Keep hold of these pieces of paper for the next activity.

3 | THE WASHING LINE

Stretch a piece of string or a washing line across the classroom (or if you want to take it outside, between two trees). Put a sign at one end, saying ‘no impact on changing the climate’ and at the other end a sign saying, ‘big impact on changing the climate.’ In their groups, get the children to decide where on the line to peg their example of change. When all the sheets are placed



on the line, give pupils the opportunity to move their examples in relation to others. (NB the process of doing this is more important than getting it ‘right’). To explore perspectives on change, replace the signs at each end with ‘positive/negative for me’ and invite children to think about

EXTENDING THE LESSON

- As a bridge between past and future, ask children to investigate (and/or interview) changemakers in their local community and the wider world: what changes are they trying to bring about?
 - Encourage pupils develop their own ideas about how they can bring about or influence change, using ‘circles of change’ – concentric circles that ripple out from local change to the whole country and the wider world.
 - Children can then decide on things that they are going to do – individually or as a class – to help bring about some of the changes they want to see.
 - Having envisioned their neighbourhood of the future, help pupils create a story about it to share with others (e.g. as a PowerPoint presentation or a short online film).
- Who do they think most needs to see it?

Download teaching resources for free, including classroom activities, CPD support, and planning and assessment materials, at changethestory.eu/uk

USEFUL QUESTIONS

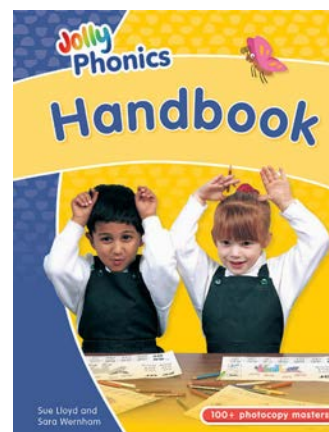
- How has my local area changed in the recent past?
- How much is this to do with climate change?
- What are people feeling and doing about the climate crisis?
- How would we like to change the story?

LITERACY ➔

Jolly Phonics Handbook

A comprehensive resource to support the systematic teaching of synthetic phonics

Jolly Phonics



AT A GLANCE

- The official handbook of the popular Jolly Phonics scheme
- Validated by the DfE as a complete, systematic synthetic phonics programme
- An improved and refreshed edition of a well-established resource
- Provides a wealth of photocopyable resources

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



Did you know the teaching of synthetic phonics was re-introduced to UK schools nearly 25 years ago? Which means it is the approach that most newly qualified teachers will have grown up with.

Perhaps more surprising is that Jolly Phonics was well established long before the teaching of synthetic phonics was included in the National Literacy Strategy of 1998. That suggests two things. First, Jolly Phonics enjoys enduring popularity in a competitive market. Second, it is due a makeover.

In fact, this is the fifth edition. While it remains true to the essence of its previous incarnations, it has been given a significant overhaul including a new look, new logo and new content. Just as important, it has been made better and easier for teachers to use.

For those who are new to it, Jolly Phonics is a comprehensive, fun, multisensory programme designed to get young children reading and writing. Further resources, such as Jolly Grammar, continue the journey, but this handbook focuses on this initial breakthrough phase.

The first part of the handbook provides detailed teacher guidance along with suggested timetables for teaching the three steps of the programme. The

bulk of the resource, however, is comprised of time-saving photocopyable material – well over 100 pages of it.

Whatever you need to teach phonics, it's all here. No doubt, teachers will welcome the pre-written lesson plans that cover the 42 letter sounds one at a time. For each one, the plan offers a sweet little story and hand action to hammer home the connection between the phoneme and the grapheme. There is also an accompanying activity sheet which promotes the practice of blending, segmenting and letter formation.

Beyond this, there is a wealth of flashcards, word sheets and other activities, including homework sheets with accompanying parental advice slips. 'Tricky words' and alternative spellings are also well covered as the programme builds towards guided writing and reading comprehension practice.

As you would hope, the presentation from the pupil's perspective is simple and attractive. As far as the teacher is concerned, it exudes the confidence and clarity of purpose you would expect from one of the leading and most enduring players in the field of phonics. If that sounds good to you, you'd be jolly well served to take a closer look.

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PRIMARY

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- ✓ Convenient and comprehensive
- ✓ Packed with over 100 pages of photocopyable resources
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- ✓ Well-established system
- ✓ Contains detailed teacher guidance
- ✓ Pre-written lesson plans
- ✓ Promotes a fun, multi-sensory approach to learning letters and sounds

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LITERACY ➔

Ten Minute Box

A little suitcase that packs a punch for bite-size but effective literacy learning



AT A GLANCE

- A multisensory phonics intervention for teaching digraphs to pupils of any age
- Contains instructions, assessments, lesson plans, activities, games and resources
- Dedicated and designed for children who struggle with progress in literacy
- Teaches 50 digraphs and 300 curriculum words through fun multisensory phonics games

REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL



If you are looking for a systematic and individualised intervention programme for maximising learning potential that can be used alongside any phonics scheme, then Ten Minute Box offers a structured and cumulative curriculum with multisensory support second to none.

This adaptable and flexible resource uses a simple but effective approach for helping children needing further support with their reading and spelling, by using carefully thought through activities for just a few minutes a day that make a positive impact.

Ten Minute Box is basically a mini-suitcase of learning that uses a systematic sequence of teaching and comes with a whole host of supporting materials, record of achievement booklets and an illustrated teaching guide with really clear planning. To make the learning fun, children take on the role of Digraph Detective and their tutor assumes the persona of Inspector.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants will find this resource particularly useful because everything you need can be found inside the box which saves valuable time.

For something so small, this colourful case really does pack a lot of quality materials inside and includes an instruction manual, activities book, sentence list and sentence isolator, record of achievement and record of work bundles, nine digraph panels, nine sets of digraph cards, A5 whiteboard, two coloured pens and eraser cloth, blank game board, Beginning, Middle and End flags

and End board, two shoelaces, round and long beads, timer, six-sided die and four coloured cubes and treasury tags.

The idea of the Ten Minute Box is to regularly support the learning of digraphs through quality one-to-one input so that gaps in understanding can be addressed, targeted and plugged. Children follow their own individual programme and still access whole-class provision so they are getting the best of both worlds.

The box is ideal for TA use but is very much for children to 'own' so they don't fall into learned helplessness and they are encouraged to unpack and select what they need for each session.

Each child has a record of achievement booklet so they can see the progress they make by working on skills in small steps. Comments can easily be added to the booklets and these show what children have grappled with and mastered over time.

A highly supportive teaching manual is provided written by SEND experts, and there is also online training available in how to get the best out of the Ten Minute Box to suit every setting.

What makes this resource so powerful is that lessons are short, snappy and focused, tuning into attention spans for long enough to make a difference. It reduces cognitive load so all pupils can feel a sense of progress, and it can be used from Year 2 upwards. This is an excellent classroom investment for a wide range of learners.

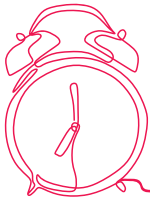
**teach
PRIMARY**

VERDICT

- ✓ Highly inclusive and especially useful for children with specific learning difficulties
- ✓ Allows teachers and TAs to diagnose and address areas of strength and weakness
- ✓ Perfect for teaching in bite-sized chunks
- ✓ Ideal for one-to-one support or small group interventions to help children 'crack the code'
- ✓ Allows children to take ownership of their own learning and encourages independence
- ✓ Provides a range of strategies for pupils to access
- ✓ Recognises learning anxiety and tackles self-esteem problems

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You are looking to purchase a portable, professional and unique toolkit for teaching digraphs packed with literacy materials for reading and spelling.



DAY in the LIFE



A one-day diary from first alarm to lights out

WAKING UP

The alarm goes off at 5.45am but usually I'm up before! I'll post the #MorningTom mood board on Twitter to start the day and then begins the morning rush of getting the whole family out the door.



TOM GRIFFITHS IS AN ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER

 @TJGriffiths



MY MORNING

Generally, I drop my own kids off, and am at school for about 7.45am. Photocopying is the first job – every year, I say I'll get the day's resources ready the night before, but it never happens! Year 6 are in at 8.30am for their morning starter then it's maths, English and whole-class reading.



MY AFTERNOON

In the afternoons we'll focus on a foundation subject, and we end the day with our class story (currently the incredible *Show Us Who You Are* by Elle McNicoll). Our story time is a non-negotiable on the timetable.

LUNCHTIME

Lunch flies by as it's only 45 minutes. I will eat with my class, wander around the playground and possibly try to mark a few books. I always make sure I pop into the staffroom at some point otherwise you can go for days without seeing some people!



MY EVENING

Most evenings, I'm gone before 5pm as my daughter seems to have a different club to attend each day, so once that's sorted and the kids are asleep, my wife and I will have dinner and do a bit of work with the TV on in the background.



BEDTIME

I'm trying to go to bed between 9.30–10pm at the moment, as then I can get some reading time before sleeping. I always find that if I read, I'll fall asleep much quicker.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

❖ **Career plan B?** I dreamed of being a scriptwriter or director when I was younger (I was always writing plays and stories) so perhaps that. I have a law degree so that would be an option, too.

❖ **Must-listen?** I took my daughter to see *Juliet* over Easter so the soundtrack is always on in the car at the moment. I have a short commute to work so don't tend to listen to podcasts, but if I do, I enjoy Kieran Mackle's *Thinking Deeply about Primary Education*. There's always great guests and lots to ponder after.

❖ **Must-read?** I read mainly children's books as it definitely has a positive impact in the classroom, and they are so well-written. A recent one that kept me gripped was *My Friend the Octopus* by Lindsay Galvin. I'm currently reading *The Mermaid Call* by Alex Cotter, and my edubook on the go at the minute is *Primary Huh* by Mary Myatt and John Tomsett. It's really valuable for my role as a curriculum coach.

❖ **Twitter hero?** Kyrstie Stubbs (@KyrstieStubbs) is someone I really admire on Twitter – an authentic, helpful leader who's given me lots of support over the years.

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