

VISIT TEACHWIRE.NET/PRIMARY

teach PRIMARY

Outstanding advice from the UK's top education experts

teach
co

**NAIL DOWN
FORCES!**



6-WEEK PLAN

+ FREE RESOURCES

THE WRONG WAY TO

TEACH SPELLING

**ARE YOU
A VELCRO
TEACHER?**

OVERLOOKED

Why no child
should go
unseen

GOING UP?

How to clear the
way to KS3

**WHEN
PRAISING
PUPILS
IS A BAD
IDEA**

Maths Wins

for your multi-ability class

artichoke



Maths

Computing

Workload

POST OFFICE WEIGHTS + MEASURES

HACK THE NEWS WITH CODE

PROVEN IDEAS TO PREVENT BURNOUT

ISSUE: 17.4
PRICE: £4.99

Electronic Phonics

sh

Encourages independent phonics learning through fun games and practice
- supports SEND and intervention too.

ai

HOPE
developed
product



Reasons to love

- ✓ Supports any validated SSP programme
- ✓ Great for independent learning - 10 second record function allows children to record and listen back to their own segmenting and blending
- ✓ 842 programmed words including year 1 & 2 example words

Electronic Phonics

HE1827530 £76.99

HP00050528 Spare tiles pack 200 £5.99



Download our free teaching guide, packed full of fun games, challenges and tips from our website.



HOPE
is all you need



FINDEL

sh

OW

Part of the Findel family

Get the latest prices and promotions online at hope-education.co.uk

Hello!



And welcome to another issue of Teach Primary. As we come towards the end of the penultimate term of 2023 (where did the time go!?) we've been reflecting on the existing challenges and wins that pervade the sector, and focusing on health and wellbeing – both for your pupils, and for yourselves. So, whether you're revelling in longer days and happy pupils, or still working through tough circumstances, I hope there will be something within these pages to make your day just that little bit better.

One of my own favourite memories from primary school is delving into a fresh new box of reading books and picking out something to take me through the next few weeks. Little brought more joy to my eight-year-old self than getting settled into a new story for a few hours, or even a few minutes. So Elaine Bousfield's article on how a daily dose of literature can really enhance children's wellbeing (p65) rang especially true. But, as we all know, wellbeing can look very different for everyone, so there are plenty of ideas in our special this month for you to try. Check out Carole Black's award-winning ideas on how to stave off workload-induced burnout (p52), Debra Wade's exploration of how to improve confidence in PE (p58), or, if you're at the point where you need to react to a problem rather than try and prevent it, Catherine Roche shares her tips on when (and how) to call in professional mental health help (p62).

If you, too, are as delighted as I am by the prospect of a new book, and sharing that with others, have a peek at Rachel Clarke's tips on integrating fluency into wider reading lessons (p38), hear from Kelly Ashley on why closing the word gap relies on a broader view of communication (p40), and explore Russian folklore as well as a range of novel-inspired activities with Sophie Anderson's *The House With Chicken Legs* (p43). As always, we've also got a roundup of five new books your class are sure to love, on page 48.

Until next time, – happy reading!

Charley

Charley Rogers, editor

 @TeachPrimaryEd1

POWERED BY...



JON BIDDLE

on why the quiet kids shouldn't be ignored, and may even be the glue that holds the class together...

"They might not demand the spotlight, but that doesn't mean they shouldn't have it."

p13



SUZANNE TERRASSE

explains why managing a mixed-ability maths class needn't be a struggle with these lesson ideas...

"Children know when they're on the 'low ability' table, and this affects their self-esteem."

p33

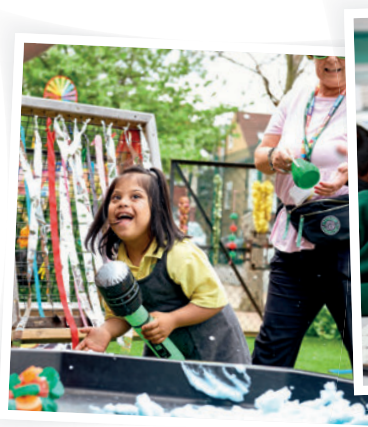


ANDREW COWLEY

Shares his top five wellbeing tips for busy teachers – and it's not all about staff yoga and lavender...

"A principled wellbeing approach enables teachers to look after their wellbeing."

p57



Save time and effort with **CGP+**

Over 10,000 **teaching resources** to choose from!

With brilliant
member benefits!



Just
**£3 per
month!**



- **Plan your perfect lessons...**
Yep, we cover the whole **Primary Curriculum**
- **Discover stacks of engaging resources...**
Including **interactive games**, **worksheets**, and more
- **Always something to discover...**
We're adding **brand new resources** all the time!

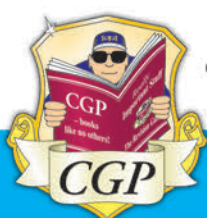
"Brilliant value for money with a massive range of resources"

Jack, Teacher



"This site has become my 'go to' site!"

Bridget, Tutor



Try **30 days free** at www.cgppplus.co.uk

0800 1712 712 cgppplus.co.uk



Contents

ISSUE 17.4



REGULARS

08 BREAKTIME

VOICES

11 HAYLEY FORBES

Why I left leadership for supply...

13 JON BIDDLE

Why 'invisible children' deserve our attention

15 A LETTER TO...

Parents about trusting teachers

19 UNDERCOVER TEACHER

Where can teachers turn when they're unfairly treated by the head?

SPECIAL SECTION

HEALTH & WELLBEING

52 THE CREEP EFFECT

Staff goodwill gets eroded when roles become more demanding over time – this teacher is tackling the issue head on

57 FIVE WELLBEING TIPS FOR BUSY TEACHERS

It's not about standard self-care tips or tokens, but a personal approach, taking ownership, and getting support

58 EVERYONE'S A WINNER

We need to apply the same principles we use in the classroom for PE to boost confidence for both teachers and pupils

62 CALLING IN THE EXPERTS

If you suspect a child has a mental health condition, when and how should you ask for professional help?

65 BOOKS ON PRESCRIPTION

A daily dose of literature can enhance children's mental wellbeing and help them cope with daily life

We're all ears!

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

**teach
PRIMARY**

We want to hear from you!

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



teachwire.net

facebook.com/teachwire

twitter.com/teachprimary

charley.rogers@theteachco.com

EDITOR:

Charley Rogers,
charley.rogers@theteachco.com

GROUP EDITOR:

Joe Carter,
joe.carter@theteachco.com
01206 505925

HEAD OF COMMERCIAL SOLUTIONS:

Richard Stebbing,
richard.stebbing@theteachco.com

PRODUCT MANAGER:

Samantha Law,
samantha.law@theteachco.com
01206 505499

SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER:

Hannah Jones,
hannah.jones@theteachco.com
01206 505924

ACCOUNT MANAGER

Demi Maynard,
demi.maynard@theteachco.com
01206 505962

ART EDITORS:

Richard Allen & Sarah Barajas

PHOTOGRAPHY:

cliQQ Photography,
cliqq.co.uk

ACCOUNTS:

artichokemedialtd@integral2.com

DESIGN & REPROGRAPHICS:

Ace Pre-Press
01206 508608

SUBSCRIPTIONS**DEPARTMENT:**

Andrea Turner

CUSTOMER SERVICES:

events@theteachco.com

DISTRIBUTED BY:

Frontline Ltd, Stuart House,
St John's St, Peterborough,
Cambridgeshire, PE1 5DD.
Tel: +44 (0) 1733555161.
www.frontlinedistribution.co.uk

PUBLISHED BY:

Artichoke Media Ltd.



We are committed to journalism of the highest standards and abide by the Editors' Code of Practice which is enforced by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). If you have a complaint, you can email us at <mailto:readerseditor@dcthomson.co.uk> or write to the Readers' Editor at [name of publication] Artichoke Media Ltd, 21/23 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester, Essex CO2 8JY.

The views in this magazine are not necessarily those of the publisher. Every effort is made to ensure the veracity and integrity of the companies, persons, products and services mentioned in this publication, and the details given are believed to be accurate at the time of going to press. However, no responsibility or liability whatsoever can be accepted for any consequence or repercussion of responding to information or advice given or inferred. Copyright Artichoke Media Ltd.



FEATURES

17 8 WAYS

To prepare pupils for secondary school

20 HOW I DO IT

Use recycled materials for this art/science/citizenship lesson on fish fossils for LKS2

21 PRAISE AND THE PRIMARY PUPIL

It's a double-edged sword, so what type of approval should teachers give their children and when?

24 MEDIUM-TERM PLAN

Master forces and magnets for Y3 with this six-week science plan and free downloadable resources

28 VELCRO OR HELICOPTER?

Having a TA stuck permanently to their side means children don't develop the skills to learn independently

33 MODEL BEHAVIOUR

Managing a mixed ability maths lesson needn't be a struggle...

36 THE SUPPLY ROLLERCOASTER

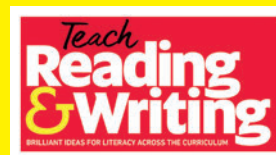
Naughty kids, spiteful staff and no consistency – supply teaching can feel like a trip on the big dipper, but it's not as scary as you think

LESSON PLANS

66 COMPUTING

68 MATHS

70 ENGLISH & SCIENCE



38 GO WITH THE FLOW

Reading fluency can be taught as a standalone skill, but it makes sense to embed it within a broader reading lesson

40 CAN YOU SEE THE WOOD FOR THE TREES?

In order to close the word gap for our children, focusing on the big picture of communication is crucial

43 BOOK TOPIC

Explore Russian folklore and plan a range of activities around Sophie Anderson's enchanting debut novel, *The House With Chicken Legs*

47 HOW NOT TO TEACH SPELLING

Modelling invented words? Teaching spelling 'rules'? Saying that letters are 'silent'? No, no, no...

48 BOOK CLUB

We review five new titles that your class will love

50 CREATIVE WRITING'S SECRET CODE

How can light, sound and movement help pupils to develop a gripping narrative? It's all in the imagination...



"Literacy Tree has ignited a passion for writing across our community, transformed our English provision, and raised the standards of Writing & Reading in all key stages at my school."

Headteacher, Dalmain Primary

THE NEXT CHAPTER IN PRIMARY LITERACY

The award-winning book-based platform now used by over 40,000 teachers!



Open the cover to the time-saving platform for teachers that provides complete coverage of your primary English objectives through:

- 300+ book-based resources with cross-curricular links.
- Spelling and reading comprehension resources.
- Coverage and progression documents.
- Termly subject leader meetings.
- RATE Assessment tools for reading and writing.



START YOUR STORY

Explore Literacy Tree here. Find the right membership package for your school, download plans and join us on our next free introductory webinar at:

www.literacytree.com

020 3196 0140
literacytree.com
info@literacytree.com



Breaktime

News | Interviews | Ideas | Resources | Research



What You Will

As we approach the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's first folio, Coram Shakespere Schools Foundation (CSSF) is launching a competition for young people aged 8–25, encouraging them to take a fresh look at Shakespeare's plays and to create a new speech for one of the characters. The competition, titled What You Will, celebrates the original publication of the first folio 400 years ago, which contains plays such as *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, and *The Tempest*. It is sponsored by one of the world's oldest publishing houses, Cambridge University Press, and entries are open now, closing on 31 July.

To create an entry, children should write a new speech for a major character like Othello, Juliet or Prospero, or a character who speaks less, such as the Porter who brings important news in *Macbeth*. CSSF has created resources, top tips, and curriculum-aligned PSHE schemes of work as inspiration, which can be found at tinyurl.com/tp-WhatYouWill

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



HAPPY NEWS

Looking for positive news stories to inform your lessons? Look no further than this newsletter that covers only good news, created specially for children. Published every Wednesday, you can download the Happy News newsletter for free at tinyurl.com/tp-HappyNews



DREAM BIG

Careers information company Careermap for Primary has launched Dream Big Day (16 June), aimed at helping primary schools to increase the social mobility of the next generation. Find free careers lesson plans and assembly ideas at tinyurl.com/tp-DreamBigDay



ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Celebrate National School Sports Week (19-25 June) with free Sports Slam resources from the Youth Sport Trust and Sports Direct. Sports Slam 2023 will include a week-long programme of fun-fuelled activities and challenges, inspiring kids to get active. Sign up at tinyurl.com/tp-ActiveSchools

→→→ TODAY'S **TOP** **RESOURCES**



Handwriting practice sheets

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



Q & A



Noel Fitzpatrick (Supervet)

Veterinary surgeon and author

What was school like for you?

I went to a small primary school in Barnashrone and then on the Patrician College, in Ballyfin. School was rough. I wasn't bright, and I couldn't read or write very well. Of course, the boys spotted that I was different straight away; they threw me in a ditch and poured milk over my books and did anything they could to make my life a misery. My salvation came in the form of my best friend – a sheepdog on my family's farm called Pirate. He was there for me and loved me. I found sanctuary with him.

Have you always wanted to be a vet?

I knew from an early age that I wanted to become a vet – but when I was 10 a life-changing experience set me on this path forever. I was helping with the lambing one night and a ewe was stuck in a ditch, and subsequently lost both her lambs. I never felt such a profound and overwhelming feeling of despair. I was intensely frustrated by the lack of options available to our animal friends. I felt powerless and helpless. I realised that I could spend the next 30 years feeling like that, or I could do something to make a difference, so I was determined to study hard so I could do the very best possible for the animals that came into my care.

What made you want to write this book?

I've always loved comic books and wanted to write about my own superhero. I'm eternally 10 years old inside! Vetman has always been there for me, since I dreamed him up, and I'd like him to be there for other people, and for all the animals too. He inspires me to be the best I can be with compassion and creativity.

Noel Fitzpatrick is an Irish veterinary surgeon. His children's book *Vetman and His Bionic Animal Clan* (£7.99, Hodder) is out now.

Keep it simple



In response to the Education Select Committee's enquiry on teacher recruitment and training, the

Association of Professional

Staffing Companies (APSCo) has warned that recruitment guidance for education needs to be simplified. APSCo argues that in order to attract and retain teaching talent, the sector needs to address issues in its recruitment processes. It has urged the Committee to prioritise Early Years and literacy due to impact on later attainment; allow more school-based and localised decision making and reduce focus on external measurement as signifiers of success or failure; finance more teacher training, increase routes into the profession and increase focus on wellbeing support; and reduce and clarify the Department for Education's (DfE) and Ofsted's guidance on recruitment and compliance. Read more at tinyurl.com/tp-APSCo and learn more about the inquiry at tinyurl.com/tp-RecruitmentTraining

Art in real life

The National Portrait Gallery has announced a new programme for schools, ahead of its reopening on 22 June. Designed to engage learners with the world's largest collection of portraits, the programme has been co-created with artists, historians, educators and teachers, and will include practical sessions and gallery tours for Key Stages 1-5 and SEND groups, as well as teacher CPD events focusing on art, history, society and identity. The gallery has also developed 12 new workshops to engage pupils in creative ways, encouraging them to think like artists and historians, while building skills in visual literacy and portrait making. Find out more and book now at tinyurl.com/tp-NPGprimary



*Just Like Us

74% of LGBT young adults believe children should learn about LGBT+ inclusion in primary school or nursery

Look ahead | Book ahead



DYSCALCULIA CONFERENCE

A specialist conference aimed at sharing best practice around dyscalculia and neurodiversity is coming to Edge Hill University on 29 June. Sign up at tinyurl.com/tp-DyscalculiaConf

EMPATHY DAY

Empathy Day is back on 8 June, supported by figures such as Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho, who will share an exclusive poem. Learn how to get involved at tinyurl.com/tp-EmpathyDay23





Experience the ActivPanel 9 with up to 60% off



Purposefully designed for the classroom, the Promethean ActivPanel empowers educators with the ultimate interactive display for education. Now is your chance to get one for your school for an incredibly low price.



Save up to 60% on an all-new ActivPanel 9 or ActivPanel 9 Premium

This limited time offer provides access to the world's No.1 interactive panel* and all the training, support, and resources that come with it.

Promethean will subsidise one ActivPanel 9 purchase for all customers in the United Kingdom and Ireland for orders placed between 29 March and 31 July 2023 as follows:

ActivPanel 9 / ActivPanel 9 Premium 65"

– up to 50% off SRP

ActivPanel 9 / ActivPanel 9 Premium 75"

– up to 60% off SRP

A subsidised package

Subsidised pricing gives you the chance to put the ActivPanel 9 through its paces and experience all the value that comes from partnering with Promethean, including:

- ActivInspire software supplied as standard with no subscription fees
- Five-year on-site warranty
- Virtual ActivPanel orientation session with a Promethean consultant
- Access to a fully funded CPD programme through Learn Promethean

Unlock up to 60% off now by visiting:

www2.PrometheanWorld.com/ETA-TeachCo

*As reported by Futuresource; excludes China.
2023 Experience the ActivPanel Promotion Terms and Conditions: Offer applies to ActivPanel 9 and ActivPanel 9 Premium only. Discounts are as follows: up to 50% off 65" models and up to 60% off 75" models. Offer excludes 86" models. One discounted panel per customer. Orders must be placed by July 31st 2023. Orders must ship by August 31st 2023. For full terms and conditions visit: <https://www.prometheanworld.com/gb/experience-the-activpanel/>



connection. Every child has something unique about them and being in the classroom allowed me to get to know so many funny, caring, challenging young people.

Another key thing that persuaded me to leave leadership was the fact that after returning to work after the birth of my daughter I missed her immensely. Most of the photos I have of us together in 2018 are selfies of us in bed, because that's the only time I spent with her. As a one-year-old she spent long ten-hour days at a childminder. Before becoming a parent I always stayed late at work and was constantly looking for further opportunities. I was ambitious and driven and could afford to be a workaholic. However, when I returned from maternity leave I was no longer the driven, ambitious deputy the school needed. Leaving my position gave me the opportunity to spend more time with my family. Children are only little once and now I get to be a mummy who has time to play, read and laugh with my little girl, and to me that is priceless.

Now I'm back in the classroom as a supply teacher I love finding out what works for each unique group of children. No two schools are the same and I've quickly learnt to adapt lessons to suit the pupils in front of me. Supply teaching has provided me with a fascinating opportunity to explore, learn and grow in a short space of time. It's not all rosy, of course. Sometimes there's no work and that can be disheartening, but fortunately that doesn't happen too often.

When I began the process of leaving leadership I faced some scary truths, but I don't regret my decision. I miss my school and colleagues, of course, and the opportunity to make a big impact on the lives of the children and families I worked with. However, I'll return to leadership when I'm ready with a renewed vision, passion, ambition and drive. Ultimately, I've learnt that leadership is not just rising up the ladder as fast as possible. It's about growing others, standing alongside them and connecting. I hope that I can use my time as a supply teacher to make mistakes and learn, so that when I'm ready to lead again, I'll do so with the greatness that our children deserve. **TP**

Hayley Forbes is a primary supply teacher from Inverness and a former deputy head.



QUITTING SLT GAVE ME MY LIFE BACK

I was a deputy head by age 26 but gave it all up to get back in the classroom as a supply teacher

 @hayleyjanepeace

In March 2019 I left my position as deputy head of a large primary school in Inverness, a role I'd held for almost three years. I'd built strong and meaningful relationships with children, staff, parents and the wider community. I'd learnt more than I could ever imagine in terms of leadership and pedagogy. I'd led the development and implementation of a new maths scheme, did a stint as acting head, mentored probationers, appointed new staff and supported the nursery through a huge transition. Despite achieving all this, I walked away to join the supply list.

When I became a deputy head I was 26 and extremely ambitious. At that time, I truly believed that success meant reaching the top of the career ladder as quickly as possible. However, I'd started to have a growing realisation that I wasn't the leader I

wanted to be or that the school needed. In fact, I was stressed and often hid away, powering through my to-do list, rather than checking in with my team. I often felt I was asking staff to add to their workload so I could tick items off *my* list. Ultimately I realised that I was avoiding tough conversations because they made me uncomfortable.

My headteacher had such a clear vision for the school. I really wanted to believe in that vision too, and at one time I did, but I'd lost my way. Walking away was the hardest decision I have ever had to make – I'm not usually a quitter. However, if I felt I was lacking integrity, what did my staff think of me? The thought terrified me. How could I expect my team to support a leader that they couldn't believe in?

If I'm honest, I deeply missed being in the classroom. I missed the joy of watching children learn; the banter; the relationships built on trust and



STABILO®

STABILO® EASYoriginal

Ergonomic handwriting pen approved by UK teachers* and loved by children.



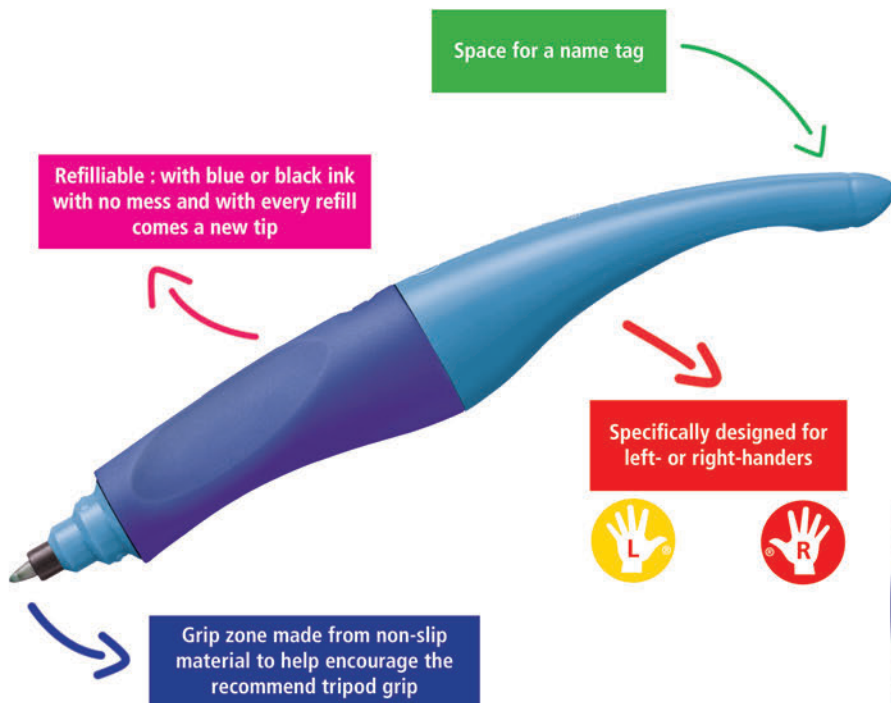
STABILO® EASYoriginal class packs

- 36 piece class pack includes 30 right handed pens and 6 left handed pens, with 200 blue ink refills
- 12 piece class pack includes 10 right handed pens and 2 left handed pens, with 12 blue ink refills

*In UK user trials 95% of teachers approved the use of STABILO EASYoriginal pens and STABILO EASYgraph pencils in their schools.

Learning to write is one of the key aspects of a child's development, but it can also be one of the most challenging. STABILO EASYoriginal is the first ergonomic rollerball specifically for left or right-handers, uniquely designed by scientists for children when learning to write.

Supported by the
National Handwriting Association 
Promoting good practice



Available to purchase from:



Follow us on:



FREE STABILO Pen Licence!

DESIGNED FOR TEACHERS TO
REWARD CHILDRENS HARD WORK

Reward your handwriting stars with a FREE full colour print A4 Pen Licence certificate.

The process is simple...

Register below for your FREE Pen Licences:

www.stabilo.com/uk/pen-licence





WHY 'INVISIBLE CHILDREN' DESERVE OUR ATTENTION

Some pupils demand more teacher time than others, but we should make sure to celebrate them all

At some point in our respective teaching careers, we've all tried to put a class list together from memory. The first dozen names are pretty easy; they tend to be the children who demand more of our time, whether it's down to the fact that they're more vocal during lessons, or because they have additional learning needs, or because there are three children in the class called Jack or whatever it may be. The next group generally needs a bit more thought and effort, but is usually manageable by recalling friendship groups or by going through the alphabet. The final group of three or four children are the ones who, despite racking your brain and trying to visualise who sits next to who in the classroom, you just can't remember.

While writing my end-of-year reports last year, I quickly realised that there were a couple of students who I hadn't got to know as well as I'd have liked, or as well as they deserved. This was partly because a lot of the school year had been spent at home due to lockdowns and pupils or staff self-isolating, but also because there were other children in the class who regularly seemed to take up significant chunks of my time. I wrote a tweet (below) about these 'forgotten' students

as it concerned me that, despite my best intentions, this had happened.

It was fascinating to read the replies and to see how this group were referred to by different people. The always children. The grey children. The shadow children. The missed children. The children that you can sometimes go through the day without interacting with, apart from when they answer the register. They were even talked of as 'buffer zones' for when teachers are drawing up seating plans.

None of these descriptions are accurate or fair because these children deserve to be supported, valued and celebrated just as much as their peers. They're often the pupils whose quiet resilience holds a class together or who are the solid foundations on which a successful school is built. They might not demand their moment in the spotlight but that doesn't mean they shouldn't have it. Even if they're a pupil who deliberately avoids attention and feels

uncomfortable with public praise, a quiet 'Well done and thank you' as they leave at the end of the day, a couple of scrawled sentences on a sticky note which is then put in their reading book, or a quick phone call home can show them and their family that they matter, that they've been seen, that they're valued. The couple of minutes that it takes is always worth the payoff, even if that payoff is several years down the line.

The fact they can sometimes quietly get lost in the background certainly isn't their fault, nor is it directly the fault of their peers or the staff that work with them. It's often down to the high-pressure classroom environment caused by SATs or a looming visit from Ofsted; because support staff are being stretched too thinly, or the school behaviour system allows certain children to demand a huge percentage of a teacher's time. It will be caused by different reasons in different schools but the outcome is generally the same. There's always something more pressing or more urgent to deal with in a classroom than interacting with a child who appears to be ticking over quite nicely, who gives the appearance of working hard and who isn't disrupting the learning of others.

We all know it isn't right and it isn't what any of us want but it's a sad indictment of the current situation we're facing in education. No pupil we teach should ever become one of the grey children. At some point over the next few weeks, maybe spend five minutes putting together a class list off the top of your head. If there are children who don't appear on it, find out who they are and keep them at the forefront of your thinking throughout the school day. They deserve to be remembered, just like every other child in the class. **TP**

Jon Biddle has been a primary teacher in London and Norfolk for over 20 years. He currently leads English and teaching and learning at his school. He also coordinates the national Patron of Reading initiative, and was the Egmont Reading for Pleasure Teacher of the Year in 2018.



Jon Biddle
@jonnybid

Some children pass through school almost unnoticed by staff. They might not shine, they might not need extra support, they might just come in and quietly get on with their learning. They need recognition too because they're just as important as every other child in the class.





Timotay
PLAYSCAPES



Transform Your Outdoor Space!

Timotay Playscapes, your access to award winning inspirational outdoor play spaces. Using imaginative thinking and natural materials to create an inclusive and nurturing environment specific to your school.

- Playground design and construction
- Outdoor classrooms and canopies
- MUGA
- Forest Schools
- Climbing frames
- Playground surfacing
- Playground equipment
- Mile a day track

Contact us for
your **FREE**
funding guide



Book your
FREE
consultation
today!



Call **01933 665151** or email enquiries@timotayplayscapes.co.uk
to book your **FREE CONSULTATION**
timotayplayscapes.co.uk



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

A letter to...

parents about trusting teachers

As cheesy as it sounds, try to see yourself and your child's teacher as a team



an educator will often jokingly reply: "The parents!"

As a parent myself, I get it. We carefully nurture these precious little things we have created and then all of a sudden we're made to hand them over to another adult that we don't even know for a big chunk of the day. It can be jarring. We're left out on the playground to gather tiny reluctant snippets of info from our kids while the teacher is privy to all that's going on in their lives. The teachers know their levels, what's expected of them, the embarrassing facts that kids love to share from home ("My mummy has a hairy tuppence" was the best one I was ever told in the classroom!). As a parent, it's quite hard. How much would you love to be a fly on the wall in your kid's class just for a day?

I think the thing that is most difficult is that there needs to be an element of trust on the part of parents towards teachers, but we don't get masses of time to build that. We just have to have it. Between teachers and the adults responsible for each child, there are multiple forms of communication: parents' evenings, notes

I have heard it said (many a time in staffrooms across the various schools I've worked in) that when asked "What's the most difficult thing about being a teacher?"

sent home in schoolbags, reading record scribbles, "Can I have a quick word?" chats on the playground, as well as emails. Some of these can get lost in translation or be misunderstood, and I have at times seen frustration build on both sides. Playground chatter between parents can swing between hugely helpful to massively confusing, depending on how and when the information is passed over.

When I worked with children with additional learning challenges, I sometimes found their parents had grown up with similar challenges, or their own fear of school and education was clearly apparent. It reminded me that everyone comes with their own story, and the best way to build trust is to move forward with patience and understanding, while ensuring that the child is always put first. Which is why, if there is something big happening at home or in your child's life, it is really useful for the teacher to know this. If someone who usually lives in the child's house has moved out or they've experienced the death of someone close, or anything at all that might affect their world, then please pass that information on to the school if you feel you can. If a teacher knows a child is going through something particularly difficult outside school, they can help to support in many different ways.

When it comes to communicating, there are definitely challenges on both sides of the fence. As a teacher, you are trying to carefully get across as

much information as is needed without bombarding parents or carers with stuff that isn't necessary for them to know. It's a fine balance, as some parents wish they knew more, and others are begging to be told less. Teachers are often trying to encourage parents to become involved with their child's learning, knowing their support is vital to a pupil's success in education, but are also aware that too much pressure won't help anyone.

So, if at any point as a parent, you are finding it all hugely confusing, then please reach out to the teachers. Ask to talk to them or write them a note. Perhaps, before you go, make a list of all the things you want to talk to them about. It's totally natural that some people feel intimidated in a school setting, so to save yourself any anxiety, scribble down your thoughts and questions first to make sure you cover everything you wish to know.

During my time as a teaching assistant I supported many different teachers in the classroom and, despite their differing styles and personalities, I know we all had one thing in common: we were fiercely protective of all the children in that class and wanted to get the absolute best out of every single one of them. As a parent, it's nice to remind ourselves of this and, as cheesy as it sounds, try to see ourselves and our children's teacher as a team working towards the same goal.

From Daisy

Daisy Upton is the author of Five Minute Mum: Time For School, available now in Penguin paperback.



MELVA

A fun, creative digital package supporting children 7-11 years old and their adults, to talk openly about and better understand their mental health, emotions and wellbeing.

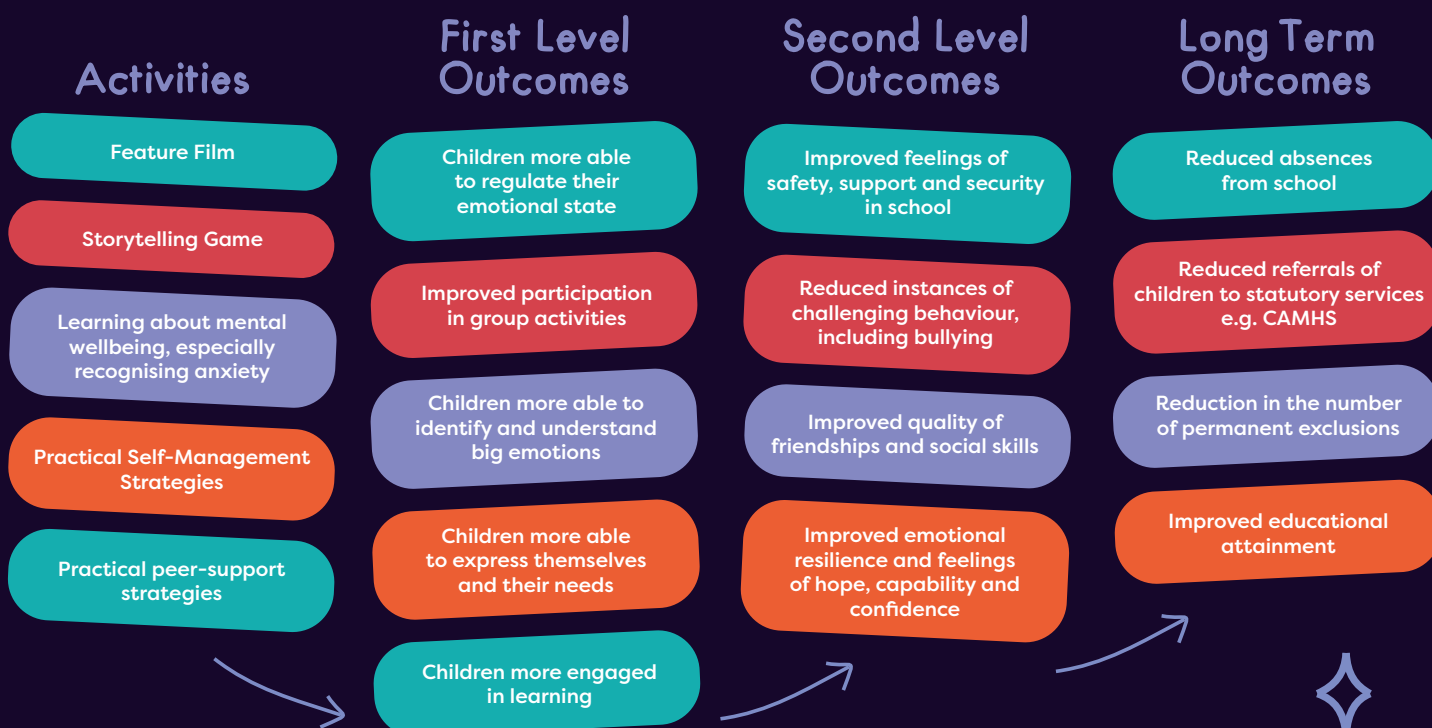
By purchasing Melva, you gain access to an online portal, a toolbox of resources, an episodic film, lesson activities, a choose your own adventure digital game, an interactive activity booklet and a teacher user guide.

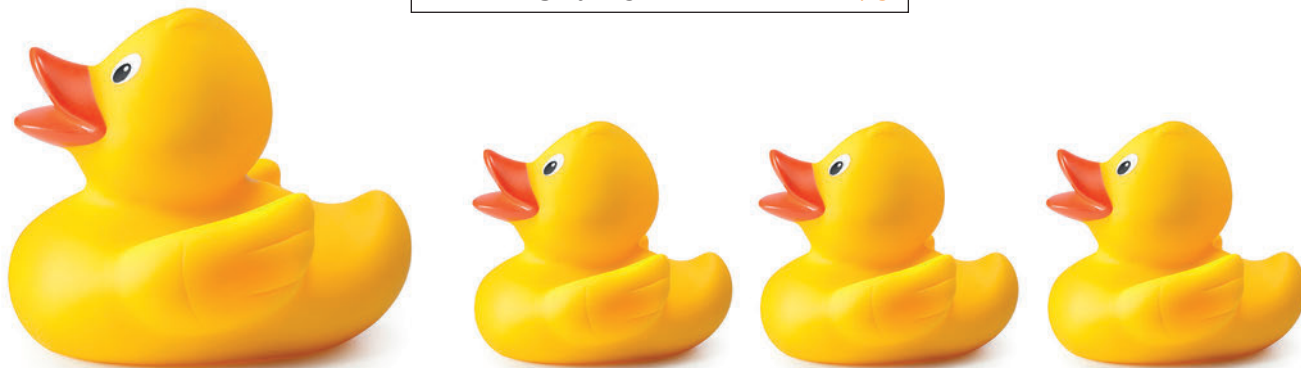
Developed in consultation with children, teachers, mental health professionals and educational psychologists, Melva is a high impact revolutionary way to invest into practical mental health education, a meaningful way to deliver RSHE curriculum AND enhances The Thrive Approach.



Available to Primary Schools & other education settings now!

Impact map for children





8 WAYS to prepare pupils for secondary school

Here are some tips to make sure your pupils are ready for a seamless transition by the end of Y6

1 | EXPLORE

A good starter for ten is to set up a time that you can take your pupils along to visit a local secondary school.

Transitioning to secondary school will, for many children, be one of their first major life steps. Getting used to a new environment will feel a lot less intimidating if they've had the chance to visit beforehand.

2 | FIND A MENTOR

Encourage your pupils to reach out for guidance during their first few days and weeks.

Adjusting to a new environment and routine can be daunting even for the most confident child.

From moving classrooms during the school day to managing a new daily timetable, the transition to secondary school has lots of challenges. The mentor can be a teacher, an older peer or even someone on the school's pastoral team – what's important is that they're supported as they get used to their new surroundings.

3 | BUILD CONFIDENCE

Of all the transferable skills that your pupils will need as they make their transition, confidence is key. Building a community within their school environment is essential for their personal growth and helping them to achieve this is important. Try getting your pupils to reflect on their own confidence levels by identifying a situation they've been challenged by and think of positive ways they could respond.

4 | TALK ABOUT TIME

In secondary school, pupils will be faced with a range of new responsibilities that might take them out of their comfort zone. Time management is one of these.

Managing their timetable and homework and ensuring they have time for extra-curricular activities is very important. It's essential for them to make the most out of their school experience and build a core transferable skill that they'll need throughout the rest of their lives.



**KIRSTIE
MACKEY**

is head of LifeSkills Created with Barclays, which has developed specific support to help teachers and parents equip their Y6 pupils for the transition to secondary school.

5 | IDENTIFY STRENGTHS

Transitioning to secondary school is the time when most young people initially identify their strengths, both academically and in terms of their wider life skills. Whether they figure out that they like presenting in class, solving the hardest equation in maths or leading their group projects, recognising and developing their key strengths isn't only a confidence booster, but it's also crucial as they progress through school and start to think about what they might like to do in their career.

6 | FIGURE OUT GROWTH

Giving pupils strategies to identify and strengthen the areas that they are not as confident in is also vital as they prepare for this new phase of their education. For some children, developing new skills, like leading a group or managing homework deadlines, will be a real challenge, so it's important to take the time to spot these and work on them as soon as possible.

7 | TACKLE MONEY

Getting your pupils thinking about money management might not be front of mind as they prepare for secondary school, but having their own lunch money, perhaps for the first time, is a great opportunity to instil solid financial management skills at a young age and start talking about the money basics such as saving and having a responsible attitude to money.

8 | THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE

Having a full-time job might seem a way off for pupils in Y6, but as they prepare for the new chapter, it's a good time to start having conversations about their future. The skills they'll need to transition successfully into secondary school are actually very similar to those they'll require once they begin considering their future careers. Get your pupils thinking about these skills and how they can make the most out of Y6.

We'll help you bounce beyond

Outdoor adventure learning helps young people build their social skills, teaching them how to face challenges head-on, cope with adversity and build resilience. It's not about bouncing back. At Kingswood, it's about bouncing beyond...

Whether cautious or confident, Kingswood will support you every step of the way!

Find out more and book at www.kingswood.co.uk

**Mid-week
residential trips
from just
£86pp***

*Prices are subject to VAT. Limited availability.

UNDERCOVER TEACHER

Our anonymous educator gets something off their chest

Who can teachers turn to when they feel they are being unfairly treated by the head? The answer isn't straightforward – or conclusive

I am a very good teacher. So I am told, anyway. Ofsted observations have always gone very well, classroom observations have been mostly great. I've been teaching long enough to realise I'm pretty good. There are many of us.

However, once you've worked in a toxic school, you realise how vulnerable you are. What is toxic school? Perhaps there are too many negative teachers pulling the school down (mood hoovers). Perhaps the SLT is putting too much pressure on staff. Perhaps teachers are being targeted because they are expensive. Perhaps the head is bullying members of staff. It can be a whole range of things. You'll know if you've worked in a toxic school. It's horrible.

My experience of it was when an academy took over the school. A new head of school was appointed and within three months, staff morale plummeted. Staff were systematically targeted with support plans, non-negotiables (not based on research) were introduced and observations were frequent and unsupportive. These were very good teachers working in challenging conditions. The academy had to prove they were impacting on the school. They got it all wrong, in my opinion. So many good teachers left the profession as a result.

I was soon hit with a support plan and threatened with capabilities. This was despite a long track record of good teaching and subject management. In fact, Ofsted had visited the school almost immediately after the academy took over and my teaching was deemed good.

I was devastated. Unannounced learning walks were introduced and the level of scrutiny that was put into place (to support me) was patronising and unnecessary. As upset as I was, I decided to crack on with it and prove them wrong. It didn't work. Two weeks later, I was told everything I was doing wasn't good enough. I was on UPS3. Maybe this was why.

Every week, despite the fact I had done everything they had said to do on my support plan, they would find something new to criticise. Once

I had accepted that I was indeed being targeted, I spoke up. It made no difference. And this is the point I want to raise. Who can teachers speak to about career-threatening decisions that are being made about them?


In my case, I spoke to the head first. I was very honest. I told him I felt I was being targeted unfairly. He disagreed and suggested someone from the academy could come in to observe my teaching too. Mmm. OK. That might help. A second opinion, perhaps. I was very naive. It didn't go well. Of course it didn't. The academy was probably putting pressure on the head to target staff in the first place.

Perhaps my union could help. They came into school and spoke to the head. They gave him a ticking off and said he shouldn't treat staff this way. He said there was nothing the union could do as he was free to make judgments on the teaching and learning in school. My rep wasn't a teacher. She didn't observe me. She took no interest in progress in books or my classroom environment. She knew her legal stuff but couldn't argue my case about teaching. Back to square one.

I wonder if there should be a 'third party' support team that could be called upon when a teacher feels they are being treated unfairly.

I desperately needed an independent person or a team of people to come in to verify the head's decisions. Oh, but wait... Ofsted came in. They said I was good. That didn't matter. Another third party then, away from Ofsted? They could scrutinise the head's support plans and discuss why capabilities are threatened. Is the head being fair? Career-changing decisions should be taken very seriously.

I was lucky. I was able to find another job before things worsened. Others crumbled and went off on long-term sick. They never returned. Would an independent third party – quality control – minimise these occurrences? I still feel very angry about what happened. I felt very vulnerable. It never should have happened. **TP**



"I was soon hit with a support plan and threatened with capabilities"

The writer is a primary teacher in England

How I do it

Use recycled materials for this art/science/ citizenship lesson on fish fossils for LKS2

MANDY BARRETT

1

FOSSILS

We begin by drawing fish, fish fossils and fish bones. The lesson is made memorable with the arrival of real sardines, (on a bed of ice to curb the stench) our children then draw these in different ways. They use continuous line drawings, draw with a variety of media and fully explore the shape of the fish."



As a school we're working hard to create a more sustainable practice while designing new art schemes of work for our children. One of the many things we are considering is the use of materials. How can we look after the environment while developing interesting and engaging art projects? After contacting local businesses, we discovered a printing and sign writing company who sent bursting skips of heavy duty, plastic vinyl to the tip. It struck me that we could help this company reduce the plastic it sent to landfill, while teaching our children the importance of recycling beyond their homes.

MATERIALS

Ask the children to work both individually and in groups to share their drawing knowledge. What is it like drawing with biro compared to pencil? If you draw with wax crayon then add watercolour paint over the top, what do you see? Make opportunities within the lesson for the children to discover the answers to these questions independently and then share the findings with their peers.

2

ADDING SCIENCE

Now move on to looking at fish fossils and fish bones; both linking to the science curriculum in Year 3. Ask the children to look carefully at the bone structure of the fish and make comparisons to a human skeleton. All while they'll develop their ability to observe and use a range of drawing media.

3

4

CUT AND STICK

Their final image is then created using the sticky-backed vinyl. Henri Matisse famously said that creating his colourful cut-out images was like "drawing with scissors". This is the perfect opportunity for children to develop accurate cutting skills. Let pupils select their favourite colours, and then cut the vinyl into bone shapes. Help them peel away the back of the vinyl, allowing the child to fix the piece onto the paper. After repeating the process, a fish starts to appear. Fish have very tiny bones, and this ensures the children spend time developing accuracy and building up resilience when it comes to peeling the backing from the vinyl.



CLIMATE AWARENESS

Talk with your class about the importance of looking after the environment and the different ways to do so. Do pupils recycle at home? What do they think you could do as a school to make use of 'another man's rubbish' in your local community?

5



Mandy Barrett is a specialist art teacher at Gomersal Primary School, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire.

gomersalprimaryschoolart.blogspot.com

@GomersalArt

Praise and the PRIMARY PUPIL

It's a double-edged sword, either helping or hindering – so what type of approval should teachers give their children and when?

BRADLEY BUSCH AND EDWARD WATSON

Wielded correctly, praise can help students flourish and increase their confidence, self-belief and reinforce their learning; when used incorrectly, it can result in pupils becoming too dependent on it and seeking it out too much. Praise can have an unintended negative impact on children when it falls into one of three categories: if it is excessive; if it focuses on natural ability; and if it is used in comparison to others. Praise is best thought of like penicillin. It should not be administered haphazardly and excessive doses can lead to people developing immunity to it. For example,

one study found that too much praise often comes across as patronising and resulted in pupils lowering their standards as they were being acknowledged for things that should already have been expected of them. This chimes with our anecdotal experience, as we have heard from many teachers who say that once you start praising children too much, they become reliant on it. For example, if you think it is standard behaviour for students to put their hands up to ask a question, then once they have done this a few times it makes little sense to continue to praise this.

Natural ability

When students do well in an exam or on a piece of work, it is not uncommon for them to be told that they are 'a smart boy' or 'such a clever girl'. However, this type of praise is often unhelpful for two reasons. Firstly, it does not provide a template for what they should do next time (as how does one 'be clever' again in the future?) and secondly, if they are told they are smart when they succeed, what are

they to deduce about their intelligence if they fail? If a student's perception of where they lie on the smart-dumb continuum is brought into question with every piece of work, then evidence suggests this leads to excessive stress, shaky self-confidence

and ultimately students disengaging from the task at hand.

Comparison

We have been told by many of the teachers we work with that as children progress in primary school, their sense of competition with one another increases. Although this can have a short-term boost to motivation, it is a poor long-term strategy as emerging research has indicated that those who are often praised compared to others exhibit more narcissistic behaviour. Comparing to others is a zero-sum game, as for one to be up, another must be down. To help children develop a robust motivation for learning, the focus needs to be on their individual development and improvement, rather than how they did in relation to others.

Three 'S's

We have been into over 300 schools, running workshops with staff, students and parents. Over the years, we have developed and taught the concept of 'purposeful praise'. The best way to think about purposeful praise is that the only thing you should praise are the behaviours you want to see next time. Everything else is hot air. To help ensure your praise is purposeful, it should fall into one of these three 'S's':

Selectively: What are the values and behaviours you

value the most in your classroom? If curiosity, courage, effort and persistence are key to learning, then these are the things that should be praised. For example, one primary school teacher once told us that they prioritise praising their students if they demonstrate resilience, as they believe this to be fundamental for success both in and outside of school. **Sparingly:** Too much of anything is bad for someone. By consciously choosing when to praise someone, it will have more of an effect than if they receive praise all the time. **Specifically:** As with most psychological interventions, a one-size-fits-all approach often fails to hit the mark. Carefully consider the individual student and frame praise in terms of their individual development as it will be more likely to resonate and be more effective.

Final thought

Praise is how we communicate to students what we think matters and what's important. When viewed in this light, it makes much more sense to praise the processes, behaviours and attitudes that you think lead to both better learning and development. **TP**

Bradley Busch and Edward Watson are the authors of The Science of Learning: 77 studies that every teacher needs to know, published by Routledge.





FOR THE THRILL OF LEARNING



023 8081 4442
education@paultons.co.uk



@paultonseducate
paultonspark.co.uk/education

4 REASONS TO TRY... Dot Com Digital

Get everything you need to deliver your PSHE curriculum, and improve children's confidence, with this comprehensive programme

1 A COMPLETE SOLUTION

Dot Com Digital is aimed at children aged 5-11 and includes over 24 themes, enabling schools to deliver a rich PSHE curriculum whilst fulfilling the requirements of the RSE framework. With 170 lessons it provides schools with a complete solution including overviews, videos, lesson plans and online and paper-based activities all hosted in a secure online platform. There is also a free version with lessons that are perfect to use as pupils transition to secondary.



that it gives children the confidence to manage their own problems and know how to ask for help. It also gives them an emotional vocabulary and space and time to practise talking about feelings.

2 REAL-LIFE APPLICATION

The programme gives schools a mechanism to ensure that children have all the knowledge they need to deal with real life. Teachers report

3 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

The platform includes a Digital Dot Minute, which children can use if they are feeling worried or afraid of something. This can provide a safe way

for them to report worries and allows them to confidentially raise issues with the teacher.

4 IMPROVES CONFIDENCE

The Dot Com Digital approach teaches children about core values and builds upon their self-awareness and confidence. It encourages pupils to recognize that speaking up is safe when they are uncomfortable or scared. It also allows them to develop their own network of people they can turn to if they need to ask for help.

2 simple

Contact:

Visit: 2simple.com/dot-com-digital

Email:

sales@2simple.com

At a glance

- A unique safeguarding programme that supports children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Gives children the confidence to speak up about worries.
- Hosted in a secure online platform.

ASK THE EXPERT

Implementing edtech with fidelity

Emma Ringe, global school partnership director at Whizz Education focuses on four key non-negotiables for effective edtech



1 PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Our educational partners work with schools to first create a plan for how tools can be best used to drive superior outcomes. Our plans are aligned with learning goals and objectives set by senior leaders and include clear actions for how and when the tool will be used, and how progress and impact will be monitored.

2 TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Ongoing training and support is paramount in effectively embedding edtech into the classroom. Our support team provides ongoing professional development sessions

and continuous opportunities to collaborate and share best practice with other experts to ensure you are always getting the most from the partnership.

3 MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION

We regularly monitor how edtech tools are being used in the classroom. Our team of experts often visit schools to observe how leaders are using the tool and continuously capture student, teacher and parent feedback and use this sentiment, along with live continuous qualitative data to identify areas where additional support or training may be needed.

4 EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS

Our key priority is to constantly evaluate the effectiveness of its tools to ensure they are having the desired outcomes for your school. We have regular reviews throughout the academic year with senior leaders to analyse student data and generate insights that are paramount to driving superior impact.

At a glance

- Have clear goals and objectives
- Prioritise professional development and training
- Ongoing evaluation and assessment

Contact: whizz.com/teachers

MEDIUM TERM PLAN

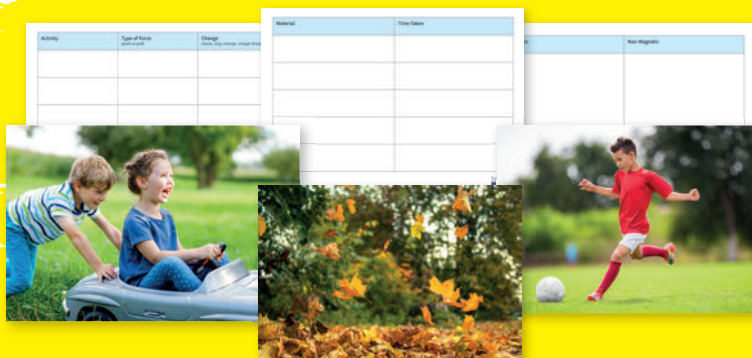
Y3 SCIENCE

FORCES & MAGNETS

ABBY BALL

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES AT

tw teachwire



Download **FREE** accompanying worksheets and Powerpoints for this plan at

tinyurl.com/tpforcesmagnets



WEEK 1 Learning objectives:

- Understand that forces are pushes and pulls which can make things move, stop, or change shape
- Make systematic and careful observations

In preparation for this unit of work, make sure you have enough action men, or other similar figures, and toy cars that the children can use for their investigations. You'll need at least one per group.

Begin the session by reading *Traction Man*, by Mini Grey. Discuss the different ways in which Traction Man is moving, ensuring the children use the language of push and pull. Explain that this is called a force, and forces

make things move, stop or change shape. Can we identify any of those effects in the story?

Set up different scenarios from the story around the classroom: for example, some dolls buried in sand; a bowl of water with an action figure to 'swim' in; an action figure sitting in a car; dressing an action figure; an action figure in a shoe. Put the relevant picture from the story next to each scenario as a reminder.

Model recreating something that happened in the story and ask the children to identify which forces you are using – push or pull? Discuss whether the force has moved, stopped or changed the shape of something. Changing shape is the most difficult



This six-week series of lessons focuses on giving Y3 children an understanding of forces and magnets, and what makes objects move and how. Plan author Abby Ball has devised a range of activities for effective and engaging learning using different materials and the character Traction Man from the book of the same name by Mini Grey. We've produced a range of free resources to make delivery of this medium term plan as easy as possible – download them from our website.

effect to identify, so you may want to model moving the action figures' legs to demonstrate a push that changes its shape.

Ask the children to rotate around each activity and investigate the forces they need to use to move the action figure, as well as the effect of the force. Give out the activity sheet for them to record their findings (**resource 1**).



Assessment

Children should be able to identify whether the force was a push or pull. They should also be able to explain whether the force has moved, stopped or changed the shape of something. Use their recording sheets as evidence for their learning.



WEEK 2 Learning objectives:

- Compare how things move on different surfaces
- Set up simple practical inquiries, comparative and fair tests
- Record results in different ways

To start the lesson, show the picture of Traction Man sitting on top of the kitchen drawers. Show the children a wooden plank and explain that we are going to make a slide so that he can get down safely in his car. We need to investigate which materials we could wrap around the plank so that Traction Man can slide down easily.

Show the children a range of everyday materials, such as bubble wrap, sandpaper, cotton towel, foil and carpet. Ask them to suggest which ones might be the most effective for the car



FEATURES PLANNING

Extend the investigation by asking the children to find out how far away the magnetic force can act. How can we find this out? What can we do? What will we observe or measure? Which equipment should we use? How can we make it a fair test?

Discuss a variety of ideas, such as making a paperclip chain; attracting paperclips through layers of paper; measuring how far away the magnet can be and still attract the paperclip. In groups or pairs, let the children carry out their own investigations, then report back on findings.



Assessment

Children should be able to explain that magnets can work at a distance, so they don't need contact with an object to move it. They should also be able to set up a simple enquiry to find an answer to a simple question.



WEEK 4

Learning objectives:

- Observe how magnets attract some materials and not others
- Compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of whether they are attracted to a magnet and identify some magnetic materials
- Use results to draw simple conclusions and suggest improvements
- Report on findings from enquiries

In preparation for this session, source and wrap up a magnetic fishing game. Write a letter from Traction Man, explaining that he's been sent this new piece of equipment, but it seems to work sometimes and not others.

Can we help?

Begin the lesson by reading the letter and opening the package.

Arrange a selection of objects that are magnetic and non-magnetic, for example, paperclips, keys, metallic toys, book, pencils, cardboard, fabric, bubble wrap and tissue. Ensure that the metallic objects are all magnetic. Ask the children to use magnets and sorting hoops to classify the objects as magnetic and non-magnetic and record on their table (resource 4). Can the children make a generalisation to predict which objects are magnetic? Once they have concluded that

to move over. How can we test the materials? Which equipment might we need? How can we make it a fair test? Ensure the children understand that the height of the plank should be the same each time and that we will need a timer to compare how quickly the car can slide down the different materials.

Compile trays with a range of materials: a plank, a stopwatch, a toy car and some tape. Ask the children to investigate which material lets the car move down the ramp the quickest. Their results can be recorded on the activity sheet (resource 2).

Compare what the groups found out. Did we all find the same thing? Could we come up with a rule that predicts which surface things move over more quickly?

Help the children to conclude that smoother materials allow the car to move over them faster, while rougher materials slow the movement down. Discuss the practical implications of this. Are there times we might want to move faster? When might it be helpful to slow our movements down?



Assessment

Can the children use their results to compare the materials investigated? Can they explain why the test was fair or not? How could we do the experiment more effectively next time?



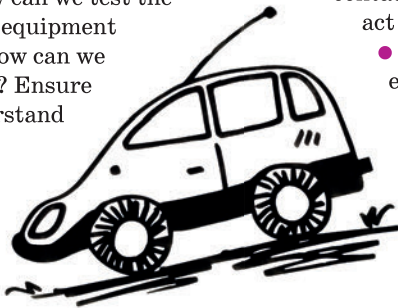
WEEK 3

Learning objectives:

- Understand that some forces need

contact, but magnetic forces can act at a distance

- Set up simple practical enquiries, comparative and fair tests



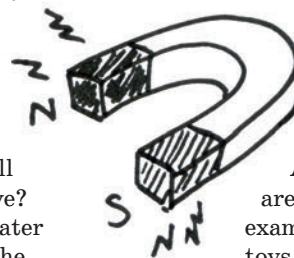
Recap on the learning from week 1 by looking at the slideshow (resource 3). Which

forces can you see here?

Look at the toy car being pushed. Does every force (push or pull) need some kind of touch or contact? Look at the picture of the leaf blowing in the wind. Does this force need contact? Explain that even though you can't see it, the leaf is still being 'touched' by the air that is pushing it along. What happens when it falls to the ground? What is pulling it down? Talk about gravity being a force that doesn't need contact. Do we know any others?

Arrange for a letter to be sent into the classroom at this point in the session that explains Traction Man has a problem: lots of paperclips have been dropped into the sink and it's too deep for him to get them out. Can we help him? Show the children a range of equipment that we could use, such as tweezers, measuring jug, spoon, pipet, fishing net and magnets. Which will be the most effective?

Set up boxes of water with paperclips at the bottom. Can we get them out without touching them? Ask the children to investigate which equipment is the best for getting the paperclips out of the water. Point out that everything requires contact to pull up the paper clips, apart from the magnet because magnetic forces can act at a distance.





2023 RSC Education Prizes

**Who would you like recognised for
their contribution to science education?**

The **Excellence in Education Prizes** and **Horizon Prizes** recognise achievements in primary science through to higher chemistry education.

You can nominate an individual, team or collaboration, including but not limited to, teachers, technicians, teaching assistants, professors and education researchers.

Anyone can submit a nomination. Closing date for nominations is 21st June 2023.

rsc.li/education-prizes



objects made of metal are magnetic, ask them to test their hypothesis with aluminium foil. Can we now refine our conclusion? Explain that iron, or metals that are a mixture of iron and other metals, like steel, are magnetic, but other metals, like aluminium are not.

To conclude the session, ask the children to write back to Traction Man and explain why his fishing rod attracts some materials and not others. Use the template and word bank (**resource 5**) for children who need more support.



Assessment

Can the children explain their findings using scientific language?



WEEK 5

Learning objectives:

- Describe magnets as having two poles
- Describe points on a compass
- Observe how magnets attract or repel each other
- Predict whether magnets will attract or repel each other, depending on which poles are facing

For this lesson, you'll need to prepare magnets, paperclips, corks and bowls of water.

Explain that we're going to spend the final two sessions of our work on forces preparing some new equipment for Traction Man so he can set off on his new adventures.

Begin by asking the children to rub a metal paperclip with a magnet, then place it near the other paperclips. What can we notice? The children should observe they have created their own magnets. Next, ask them to push the magnetised paperclip into a cork, place the cork into a bowl of water and observe what is happening.

Repeat this a few times and notice if the same thing happens each time. Explain the cork moves because the Earth has its own magnetic field and the paperclip is lining up with magnetic north. If one end of the paperclip is north, what will the other end be called? Can we use sticky notes to label the other compass points?

In pairs, ask the children to tie thread around a bar magnet and hold it up by the thread. Can we notice what happens? Explain that all magnets



have a north and south pole. Ask the children to predict what will happen if we bring similar poles together. What will happen if we bring opposite poles together? Allow the children time to investigate with the magnets. Ask them to draw and label their findings using the language of attract, repel, north pole and south pole.



Assessment

Use the quiz (**resource 6**). Children should be able to predict whether the magnets will attract or repel each other based on their poles.



WEEK 6

Learning objective:

- Report on findings from enquiries, including oral and written explanations, displays, or presentations of results and conclusions
- Record findings using simple scientific language, drawings, labelled diagrams, and keys

In preparation for the final session of the unit, set up trays with an assortment of materials and equipment. You'll want to include different types of fabric, plastic, such as cling film or cut-up carrier bags, magnets, string, foil, magnetic materials and any other suitable equipment.

Explain to the children they've been asked to present ideas for a new suit and equipment for Traction Man. Give them the following design brief: Traction Man's new equipment must

include something that can repel or attract magnetic materials. His new suit must be warm, waterproof, and must be able to slide across different surfaces smoothly, so he can escape danger when he needs to.

In pairs, ask the children to create a design for the new suit and equipment. They should sketch their ideas and attach samples of the materials they would choose. They should also label their diagrams, giving reasons for their choices related to the scientific discoveries they have made throughout the unit. Use the worksheet (**resource 7**) as a template to support any children who may need it.

At the end of the session, ask each pair to feed back their designs to another pair. Encourage the children to ask each other questions about their work and modify their designs where appropriate.



Assessment

Use the children's diagrams to assess their understanding. Can they explain that magnets have different poles and attract and repel each other on this basis? Do they show an understanding of how materials might move on different surfaces? Have they fulfilled the design brief?



Abby Ball has worked in KS1 and 2 and currently teaches at an inner-city primary school in Birmingham.

@abbykingwrites

medium.com/abby-king-writes

Velcro or HELICOPTER?

Having a TA stuck permanently to their side means children don't develop the skills to learn independently

SARA ALSTON

As any classroom teacher will tell you, a good TA, LSA or any of the other numerous titles given to these marvellous people is worth their weight in gold, if not more. Yet, the role of teaching assistant remains one of the most controversial in education. While the majority of TAs are highly effective, there is considerable evidence that some are less so and can even block the learning process. The main reasons behind this are TAs' lack of skills and training and their poor deployment and direction.

Many TAs start without training or experience and learn on the job. Equally, few teachers are trained to deploy other adults. This is combined with a confusion about time, hours and funding allocations for children with an EHCP or high level of support. I still meet heads, parents and SENCOs who say, "They have 25 hours of support" and believe that this should be one-to-one. All the evidence is that, except in exceptional cases where there is a high level of physical or safeguarding need, this is not what 25 hours of support means in the mainstream classroom. Yet this belief persists. This is exacerbated by few people in schools having a clear understanding of what is meant by

'supporting' in class. Too often, support is equated with an adult being stuck to a child for a set number of hours: the velcro TA.

Dropping down

A focus on 'velcro TAs' leads TAs and teachers to believe that teaching assistants should be with 'their child' only and at all times. This belief restricts how teachers are able to deploy TAs in their classrooms and frequently

TA' prepares a child for learning by 'dropping down' the strategies and resources needed. Then they lift off and 'hover'. They can drop down again when the support is needed to re-focus or remind the child to use the strategies and resources available before leaving again. This approach means that TAs can both provide children with the support they need and give them the opportunity to learn independently.

Changing the model

The 'helicopter' approach requires TAs to be confident and feel that they have permission to leave 'their child'. This has to come from a shared

"TAs need to be given the time, resources and skills to prepare children to access learning independently"

deprives children of teacher time. Moreover, with an adult permanently alongside them, the child may not be able to develop the confidence to try or the skills to learn independently. Further, they are denied opportunities to fail safely.

The velcro TA endures as staff don't feel confident enough to consider the alternatives. Swapping the TA and teacher so the latter can work with 'the child' is not a long-term solution. A more effective option is the 'helicopter' model. A 'helicopter



understanding between TAs, teachers, senior leaders and parents of what is meant by classroom support. TAs need to be given the time, resources and skills to prepare children to access learning independently. Key to this is opportunities for TAs to read and understand teachers' planning, so that they know what is coming

up in lessons and are able to prepare children for it, such as getting maths resources and teaching the child how to use them, rather than sitting beside the child prompting as they complete each calculation. It may mean that TAs (under the teacher's direction) prepare resources, provide pre- and over-learning and support the development of IT skills, so may be less visible in the classroom.

The focus needs to be on support to access the instructions. Rather than concentrating on completing the task, the TA focuses on how to approach the learning using visual reminders and checklists (for example, task management boards, 'now and next' cards, visual timetables and worked examples) so the child can attempt the task independently. By making the support visual, and not

dependent on the TA at the child's side, we reduce the repetition of information and instructions, which inhibits learning and leads to confusion and dependence.

There is an ongoing mantra in SEND about preparation for adulthood. Few people go into this next stage of their lives with another adult velcroed to their shoulder. If we perpetuate dependence on a continued TA presence, we are not preparing children with SEND to be independent adults. Preparation for independence means schools need to support children to learn independently, enabling them to tackle tasks on their own and experience success and failure.

If we are to improve outcomes for SEND children, we need to ensure that we are prompting children to be independent instead of developing pupils who are dependent on adult prompting to learn. This means we must reconsider how we use TAs and give them and teachers the confidence that the majority of children with SEND can access learning without a constant TA presence. **TP**

Velcro or helicopter?

We explore the pros and cons of both models.

VELCRO

In this model, the TA is constantly with the child in question and works directly with them.

- ✓ There is always someone there when the child needs help.
- ✓ It is clear that the pupil has support which can make them and their parents feel secure.
- ✗ The child becomes dependent on having an adult there to attempt any task.
- ✗ It undermines the pupil's and adults' belief that the child can do anything on their own.

HELICOPTER

In this model, the TA starts the child off on an activity then moves away and works with others, returning to their focus child to check in, help with any problems, reassure and re-focus. They then move away again, returning as and when they are needed.

- ✓ The child develops independence.
- ✓ They learn that they can do things on their own.
- ✓ The TA is available to support others.
- ✗ The timing won't always be right, so there is a risk that the child might not have support available at the point they need it.



Sara Alston is a practising SENCo and an independent consultant

and trainer with SEA Inclusion and Safeguarding.

 @seainclusion

 seainclusion.co.uk

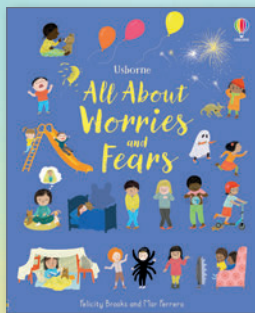
15th–21st
May



Supporting Mental Health Awareness Week



£7.99 • Early Years • 3+



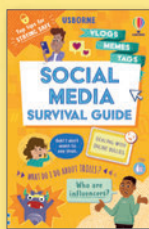
£9.99 • Early Years • 3+



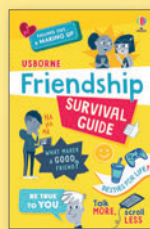
£10.99 • KS1 • 6+



£6.99 • KS2 • 7+



£6.99 • KS3 • 11+



£6.99 • KS3 • 11+



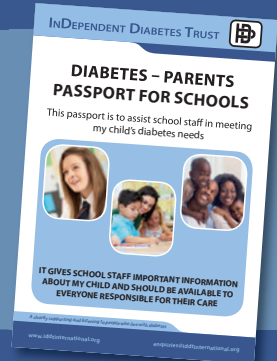
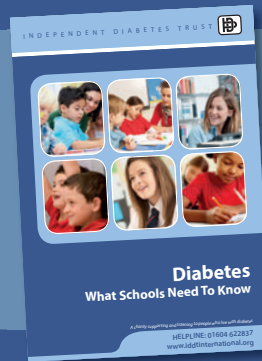
Scan to
discover more
or visit usborne.com



Copyright © Usborne Publishing Limited, 2022. Illustrations by Shelly Laslo.



INDEPENDENT DIABETES TRUST



DO YOU HAVE A CHILD IN YOUR CLASS WITH DIABETES?

DIABETES – WHAT SCHOOLS NEED TO KNOW
DIABETES – PARENTS PASSPORT FOR SCHOOLS

ASK FOR YOUR FREE COPIES TODAY

EMAIL: martin@iddinternational.org

or TELEPHONE: 01604 622837



InDependent Diabetes Trust
P O Box 294, Northampton NN1 4XS

www.iddtinternational.org
Charity Number: 1058284
Registered Number: 3148360

LITTLE WINGS

The story of
AMY JOHNSON
&
Spitfire Girl
WW2 spitfire pilot Jackie Moggridge



2 brilliant books in 1
Buy it on Amazon
‘Little Wings & Spitfire Girl
by F.J. Beerling’
Website bbbooks.uk

WHY I LOVE...

Sandra Skelton, TA and Entrepreneur Club leader at Newland House and King's House schools, discusses the joyous impact of The Fiver Challenge

ABOUT ME:

NAME:

Sandra Skelton

SCHOOLS:

Newland House School, Twickenham and King's House School, Richmond

JOB ROLES:

TA/Entrepreneur Club leader

FAVOURITE FEATURE:

The sales pitches! They're lively, innovative, and delivered with pride!



TALKING ABOUT: THE FIVER CHALLENGE

“ How did you hear about Fiver?

I have been running The Fiver Challenge for three years, but my journey with Young Enterprise began over a decade ago, when I ran Company Programme with 16–19-year-olds, so I was familiar with the excellent quality of the schemes available, the exceptional support provided and the clear benefits for the young people and educational practitioners alike. A career change led me into primary education, and it was hugely important to me to offer that same enterprise opportunity to younger children at an age-appropriate level. Revisiting Young Enterprise's portfolio led me to discover The Fiver Challenge.

“ What encouraged you to run Fiver at your school?

The pandemic encouraged us all to think differently, more creatively and beyond the status quo – qualities that we aim to nurture in the flourishing, enterprising mindsets of our pupils. Our children are quite simply amazing, and their enthusiasm to help others, take ownership of their successes and challenge themselves beyond what society may feel is possible for a 6-year-old is infectious! Evidence suggests that introducing enterprise education at an early age leads to widespread positive outcomes, and I believed this initiative would enable our children to become more resilient, self-motivated and efficacious.



Contact:

Visit: fiverchallenge.org.uk

Email: fiver@y-e.org.uk

Call: 0207 549 1980

“ How does it fit into the curriculum?

The programme lends itself incredibly well to a diverse range of subjects, for example the use of break-even analysis to support division in maths, discussing sustainability in geography or PSHE, or market research to support a proposal to host a school event – the options are flexible to meet individual schools' needs. At our schools, we offer our children an experience that extends beyond the classroom, and the extra-curricular clubs further support the value we place on our breadth of curriculum; our Entrepreneur Club is the perfect place to explore the challenge freely.

“ How has it made an impact?

The Fiver Challenge encourages and nurtures the confidence and ambitions of our young people, helping to build the foundations of a growth mindset that will last a lifetime. It aligns perfectly with our key school values of kindness, courage and community, and since our journey began, it has empowered our children to discover themselves, their passions and their talents and given them a safe platform from which they have learned that taking risks and making mistakes are as important as celebrating successes. It is inspiring to see them emerge more resilient, confident and curious, knowing that through the social enterprises they create, they can make a huge difference to the world.

WILL IT WORK FOR YOU?

• This year's challenge is taking place from 5–30 June 2023 across England and Wales

• Challenge children to create, plan and run their own business with £5 in four weeks

• Schools can apply for the Fiver funding or fund the £5 pledge themselves - it's entirely up to them

• Free enterprise and financial education resources available to access in English and Welsh all year round

Find the perfect SCHOOL TRIP in an instant!

There's something for every

AREA

AGE

SUBJECT

BUDGET

SEARCH BY
Curriculum Link
Postcode
Age
Budget

We have curated the best educational trips from around the UK and beyond for your students to enjoy.

From free days out to curriculum-rich excursions and residential adventures, there's something for every class and every budget.

FREE support to help you plan the perfect trip

Download guidance and templates for completing your risk assessment

Download
NOW



Download your school trip proposal and planning guidance

Download
NOW



Find the perfect school trip for your students this year.

Visit: www.teachwire.net/school-trips





and deepen their own understanding as they explain to their less confident peers.

Ask the right questions

Open-ended questioning helps pupil engagement. We all know that to enable pupils to progress in English, especially to deepen their understanding and analytical abilities, we need to ask the 'who, why, how, where' questions. Maths is no different. Asking the following questions, which support the development of metacognitive skills, allows active learning to take place: How does this work? Who can find a way to...? Is that right? Is there another way to do this?

The pupils are all working on discovering a method to solve a problem, and, at the same time, they are appraising the method a peer has discovered. This maintains a high level of concentration in pupils for much longer, as they are actively engaged and interested in the process. Pupils love marking each other's work, and this is no different. As maths mastery expert Ban Har says: "We agree to listen to our friends, but we do not necessarily agree to agree with them!" Critical thinking is thus developed and, without much teacher effort, better classroom behaviour for most students will be achieved.

Pace is crucial

Small children cannot concentrate for extended periods. Some studies estimate that listening time should be limited to a child's chronological age plus one. So, a five-year-old child can concentrate for up to six minutes at a time. A lesson should include plenty of time for exploration, discovery and playing with concepts.

Breaking down a lesson into component parts will greatly assist behaviour,

Model BEHAVIOUR

Managing a mixed ability maths lesson needn't be a struggle

SUZANNE TERRASSE

Strategies for behaviour management are top of most teachers' wishlist. How do we keep students engaged, learning and well-behaved all at the same time? Ofsted requires it, appraisals depend on it, but it can be a challenge – especially in maths. Here are some tips to help you support and challenge in every lesson...

Mixed tables work best

If, in the interests of differentiation, you think it will be easier to plan with a top table, a middle table and a bottom table – which can only be based on previous attainment and will necessarily therefore limit potential – you are setting up most of your class for demotivation and lack of

progress from the start.

Even very young children know when they have been put on the 'low ability' table, and this affects their self-esteem dramatically. It is far better, in subjects like maths, to group advanced learners with their struggling peers. Advanced learners will model correct thinking, encourage discussion of concepts



NOTES FROM THE CHALKFACE

Alex Laurie and Emily Downing from St James' C of E Primary, Enfield, discuss their approach to behaviour in the maths classroom...

- We sit our children in mixed ability groups of four. This allows for more mathematical conversation which, in turn, moves children forward in their learning. Groups of six can be daunting to struggling or shy learners and, especially in Y1, the tables are simply too big for the children to engage in conversations as a table, so they choose, instead, to talk only to their partner which limits the opportunity for deepening understanding.

- Storing resources can be a struggle. We have found using 'maths boxes' for each table extremely useful. Inside we put textbooks, concrete manipulatives and a range of other resources such as number lines and blank diagrams. Throughout the year as we learn new concepts and use new resources, we add to or remove from the box appropriately. This means children have access to a range of resources to support their learning.

- Our maths lessons can be loud, and messy! We encourage the children to use a variety of different resources and refer to their textbooks throughout the lesson. They are excited to discuss new concepts and the volume in the classroom can quickly increase. However, to maintain control it is important to have a quick tidy up routine. We assign monitors to assist in this. It is also important to have a class signal (we use a rocket noise) that indicates it is now time to listen to the teacher.

as pupils remain engaged and learning throughout the lesson. Presenting a topic through questioning engages pupils and helps them develop creative and critical thinking as they come up with multiple methods to solve a problem, and then assess whether these are valid. Children can debate their solutions with the rest of the class, led by the teacher's questioning, before working in small groups or pairs to play with the concepts introduced and explore textbook examples under the guidance of the teacher. Next, they can write about what they've learned in their maths journals, becoming maths storytellers in the process and deepening their understanding of the ideas explored. Finally, children can work individually in their workbooks, to practise what they've learned, working at their own pace, to grapple with a range of differentiated problems which support learning and push the limits of their understanding.

Organise your resources

A well-organised classroom is a boon to teachers. Small children (and bigger ones,

too!) often struggle to locate resources quickly, bring them back to the table, set them up and get on with the task. A folder or basket arrangement where each pupil, or pair of pupils, has their own folder or basket of frequently used resources, already set up before each lesson, together with the relevant textbook, maths journal and workbook, can save much time and fuss. Think about the pairings. Do not assume that grouping similarly able pupils together is the only way for all children to achieve mastery. A more creative pairing, considering different abilities, concentration levels and personalities, can be far more effective. Both students can learn from each other and often, a calmer classroom will ensue as a pupil who is more able mathematically learns from a calmer and more expressive peer and vice-versa.

Noise isn't always bad

It is often perceived that a noisy classroom is out of control. This is not always the case. Constructive noise is a sign of debate, of the productive exchange of ideas and confident

learners. The test should be whether the noise stops when the teacher is ready to move the class on. If it does, then there is no problem with noise. Within the classroom of an effective teacher, pupils will spend much of their time discussing the work, comparing solutions and working in small groups. Of course, the teacher will be circulating to monitor and assess the level of learning that is taking place, inputting where necessary to keep students on track, to extend or to support. **TP**



Suzanne Terrasse is commissioning editor at Maths – No Problem!, producer of the only textbook on the DfE's list of recommended textbooks for schools on the maths mastery programme. It was also named Education Publisher of 2017 by the Independent Publishers Guild.

 @mathsnoproblem

 mathsnoproblem.com



plazoom

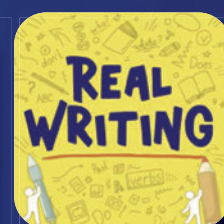
Only
£4.99

Want to raise literacy standards with ease?

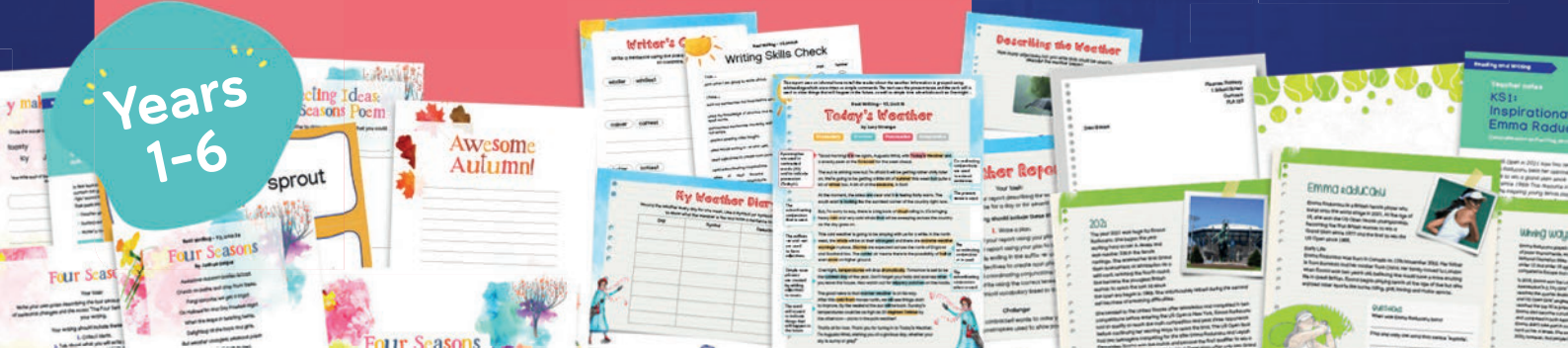
Discover 1000s of high-quality resources with
a monthly subscription to Plazoom

For **just £4.99**, receive all this and more:

- ✓ Up to 1,500+ top quality downloadable literacy resources – covering every objective in the English PoS – with more added every week
- ✓ Our Real Writing curriculum: 25 high-quality model texts to use across the year, covering all the NC writing objectives for your year group
- ✓ Our Real Comprehension curriculum: 9 powerful model texts (3 per term), fully resourced for your year group to accelerate progression
- ✓ Outstanding literacy CPD support, including 2 video training courses and 80+ bitesize teaching guides
- ✓ Remarkable resources from superhero brands, including *The Beano*, *The Week Junior* and *Animal Planet*
- ✓ Access to our huge webinar archive and live literacy training every term



Years
1-6



Ready to explore the range?
Visit plazoom.com/offers/monthly-offer today!

Scan me to claim
the offer!



The supply ROLLERCOASTER

Naughty kids, spiteful staff and no consistency – supply teaching can feel like a trip on the big dipper, but it's not as scary as you think

ANNA-CHRISTINA CONNELLY

As a teacher, you're used to being prepared. You're in control. You know exactly what you're doing. When you first start supply teaching, however, being cast into the unknown can be nerve-racking. If you find yourself experiencing a few concerns, remember: you're not alone.

The first worry for any new supply teacher is: 'What work do I need to take?' In all my time on supply I've never turned up to find that absolutely nothing has been left. Honestly, I don't know any school that irresponsible. And even if you do arrive to an empty desk, it's not a weakness to ask: staff would rather the kids do something on-topic.

That said, you will need a few indoor and outdoor ideas as backup for PE sessions, and some 10-20 minute classroom activities

– pre-prepared websites, revision games and teasers – to make sure you're not disarmed by last-minute changes. Because when you've got kids lined up for the 1pm assembly, someone will inevitably pop their head around the door and say, "Assembly's at 1.20pm now."

Supply teaching brings a whole new meaning to flexibility. But the more you deal with things that are out of your comfort zone, the greater your confidence will be. For example, one thing I've learned is 'don't judge a book(ing) by its (invitation of) cover.' I've had truly maddening days in 'outstanding' rural schools where they don't believe they have behaviour problems, even though teachers are constantly battling low-level disruption and an invisible SLT. Likewise, I've dreaded a Friday with post-SATs Y6 in an inner-city school, but was met with a toughly-imposed behaviour policy and attentive students who were eager to learn.

Unfortunate events

Another thing you'll fear is that some dreadful incident will happen on your watch. Realistically, though, nothing ever really does. You'll have days that will be hard and times when nobody listens, and you'll think, 'Is it me?'. Then you'll go to another school, have a great experience and think, 'No, it's not me. Today was great.' It is teaching, after all; not everything will go right all the time. The biggest thing I've learned is to stay calm and positive, and be unafraid to ask for

support. Don't worry about the pupils either. Reflecting on my experiences, they're the ones who have been the stars. Most students are fab; they understand your position and want to help. You'll see the best of them and will be impressed by their initiative.

Of course, when a new teacher comes in not everyone will cope well with change. And I'm not talking about the kids. Unfortunately, you may encounter staff who are negative and difficult. Experienced supply teachers will recognise this scenario:

TA: "Why are you out of your seat talking to Kai? You never do that for Mrs Lee. Why today?"

Finlay: "Um, Miss told me to help Kai thread his embroidery needle."

TA: "I'll put you on a warning for talking. Too

much noise today. And that never usually happens with this class.”

Me: “OK, Finlay, why don’t you and Kai sit together on the bean bags in the book corner?”

TA: “Kai! You know very well you only sit down there at golden time.”

Class teacher, popping in: “Going OK?”

TA: “Mrs Lee! We’ve had people out of their seats! Noise! People lying around on the floor! Needles all over the carpet!”

She made it sound like I was running a drug den, not a Y3 classroom. After two hours,

I was on the verge of snapping, and running out of the school like John Bender in *The Breakfast Club*, tearing down the displays and smashing in the lockers. If you’re stuck working with someone like this, bite your tongue, focus on interacting with the kids and try not to take it home with you. We’ve all been there.

Supply and demand

With all of these classroom concerns, people forget to worry about money until it’s too late. The decline of LA supply pools means most supply teachers now work

bottom’ model exists: one agency pays a low rate, so that agency is the cheapest, ergo it has all the work. On long-term placements you have more bargaining rights though. You should be paid more because you will be undertaking PPA, so push for an uplift of daily rate. And I don’t mean £2.50.

These figures aren’t set in stone, but your access to the same salary as permanent staff after 12 weeks in the same school or LA is. Read about the Agency Workers Regulations 2010 (AWR 2010), it says so in there.

Avoid umbrella companies. Ultimately, these are payroll middlemen who shift the responsibility of paying 13.8% employers’ NI onto the employee, who pays their own NI too, plus usually a ‘service’ fee. It is, I would say, a rip off. Use an alternative and insist on PAYE. Never be afraid to challenge your agency; know your rights and fact-check. If you’re not in a union, join one.

So, work hard, give it your all, smile and, if you do your best, it will show. While I won’t deny that supply is a bit of a rollercoaster ride, rollercoasters are still lots of fun. Enjoy yourself! **TP**



Anna-Christina Connelly is an ex-teacher who now works for an education trade union.

“After two hours, I was on the verge of snapping, and running out of the school like John Bender in The Breakfast Club”

for private agencies. To put pay into a general context, as per the school teachers’ pay and conditions document (STPCD), a teacher’s daily rate is their salary point, divided by 195 (the days a year a full-time teacher works). Therefore, as a minimum, outside of London, an ECT would expect around £115 a day. But on day-to-day supply, most agencies will not pay to scale.

In many areas, a terrible ‘race to the

FIVE GREAT BENEFITS OF SUPPLY TEACHING

1 HOMETIME IS HOMETIME
With well-documented issues with workload, more teachers are turning to supply in order to gain work-life balance. Once the classroom’s tidy and the books are marked, you’ll be off home to spend more time on your social and family life. And box-sets.

2 YOU CAN PICK WHERE YOU’D LIKE TO WORK
We all have schools where we fancy working, things we would like to try. Fire off an email to the school office to ask them which agency they use, or ask yours if they can get you some assignments in there. No harm in getting your foot in the door, right?

3 AND WHERE YOU WOULDN’T
Sometimes you’ll encounter unsupportive staff, unhelpful SLT, and a school culture you really don’t like. Supply is the best way to get to know the schools in the area.

4 YOU MIGHT SURPRISE YOURSELF
The first time I taught KS1 it was like *Kindergarten Cop*. I never thought that a few years later, it would be my favourite Key Stage. Many find their niche on supply.

5 YOU MIGHT SURPRISE THEM
It gladdens my heart when I hear from supply teachers who, after a bad experience, or fears about their confidence, receive rave feedback. Yay!

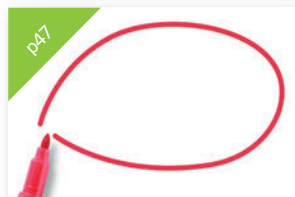
INSIDE THIS SECTION



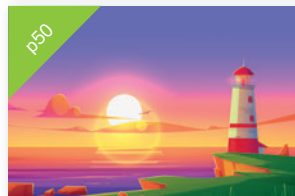
In order to close the word gap for our children, focusing on the big picture of communication is crucial, argues Kelly Ashley...



Explore Russian folklore and plan a range of activities around Sophie Anderson's enchanting debut novel...



Modelling invented words? Teaching spelling 'rules'? Saying that letters are 'silent'? No, no, no, says Charlotte MacKechnie...

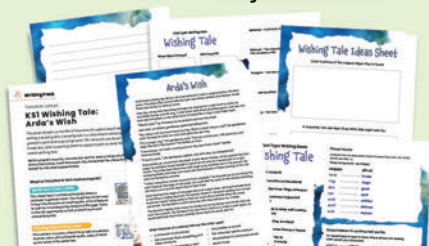


How can light, sound and movement help pupils to develop a gripping story? It's all imagination, says Tim Taylor...

→→→ RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

100S OF MODEL TEXTS

If you're struggling to find extracts that demonstrate the genre, vocab or grammatical structures you want to teach, take a look at Plazoom – where you can browse the WAGOLL collection, featuring more than 70 examples of great writing, plus planning sheets, inspiration cards and much more. bit.ly/PlzWAGOLL



Reading fluency can be taught as a standalone skill, but it makes sense to embed it within a broader reading lesson

RACHEL CLARKE

Reading fluency has become something of a hot topic in recent times. This is almost certainly a consequence of the KS1 teacher assessment framework setting out 90 words per minute (WPM) as the expected rate of reading for children at the end of Y2 and more recently the Ofsted education inspection framework saying that learners should read with “fluency and comprehension”. But what is meant by reading fluency, why is it important and how can we teach it in primary?

What is reading fluency?

First off, reading fluency is more than reading quickly. Certainly, reading with pace is an important aspect of fluency but it doesn't tell the whole story. In addition to speed, Pikulski and Chard (2003) identified accuracy, expression and understanding as other key aspects of reading fluency. Children who stop to segment and blend words find it difficult to remember what

they have read and therefore find it harder to understand texts, but when children decode accurately and quickly, and when they use the appropriate expression, they are more likely to understand what they read and this is reading fluently. The benchmark for this point is 90 WPM. Clearly there will be children reading at a slower rate who have good comprehension and children reading much faster who have less understanding of what they have read. And we all know a child who read expressionlessly but with indisputable accuracy and understanding. Generally though, all exceptions aside, 90 WPM is the point where children are no longer simply decoding text and recognising words but reading at a rate that enables them to gain understanding of what they read. Fluency, then, is a vehicle for reading comprehension.

Fluency is not just about reading aloud. Being able to decode accurately at pace and with expression are skills that readers apply during (and enable) their silent reading comprehension. Encouraging children to read expressively in their heads cannot be underestimated. It is also worth noting that fluency is not a higher-order reading skill. Children should be taught how to read fluently alongside decoding so that

they understand the books they read, engage with them fully and develop the skills they need to read independently.

Quick and easy ideas

Reading fluency can be taught as a standalone skill, but as it is a vehicle for comprehension, it makes sense to combine fluency skills within broader reading lessons. All of the following activities can be used as standalone reading fluency tasks or used as part of your whole class or guided reading practice.

Marks out of ten

Most children are familiar with TV judging panels so will feel at home with the format of this activity. Read a passage to the children (you may choose to make some errors). Encourage pupils to listen attentively and act as the judges, giving you marks out of ten on their whiteboards for your reading. As they award their mark, they must provide feedback just like the judges on TV, commenting on what you did well and how you could improve. It's a good idea to create the success criteria with the class before you read. You could include your use of phrasing; how you attend to the punctuation; whether your pace is too fast or too slow; how you use intonation and expression to give meaning to the text. You could even include elements such as volume, facial expressions and eye contact with the audience. Once your class is familiar with giving feedback, they should repeat the activity with a partner or in a small group in order to evaluate each other's reading fluency. This approach is a valuable independent activity to include in the guided reading carousel.

Choral reading

Choral reading is a strategy where groups or the whole class read together. Poems and texts with rhythm or rhyme work particularly well. It often helps to read the passage to the children first so they have a model, but you don't have to do this. You can vary the approaches to suit your class and to maintain interest so that,

for example, each group takes turns to read a verse of a poem, section or paragraph of a text. This approach works well in whole-class reading lessons as a way to ensure all children participate in a non-threatening way.

Copy reading

Read a short passage or poem to the class, demonstrating fluent reading, expression and attention to punctuation, and so on. Discuss your reading by talking about any tricky words or phrases and providing their meanings. Also look carefully at the punctuation, pointing out how it affects your delivery. Ask the children to take turns rereading the text to a partner. If any pupils get stuck on a word, their partner should help them to read it. Then, for additional practice with the tricky word, they should read the whole sentence or line again before continuing with the reading. This repeated reading approach is an effective way of improving sight vocabulary, accuracy and pace.

Echo reading

You are the best model of fluent reading. Read a sentence or a line of a poem and ask the class to read it back to you in exactly the same way. Echo reading is a shorter, but similar approach to copy reading – the difference being that it focuses on one line rather than a passage. Just like copy reading, you can combine this approach with other strategies such as choral reading and marks out of ten. It's a useful strategy for teaching phrasing, pace and expression.

Recorded reading

Allow the children to make an audio or visual recording of their reading so they can play it back and hear what it sounds like. This is a great opportunity for self-evaluation and could also be saved for assessment.

GLOSSARY

Expression: A combination of intonation, phrasing and pace that shows the reader understands what they are reading.

Intonation: The tone or pitch of reading which shows understanding of the words, phrases and context of the writing.

Pace: The speed of reading. Readers sometimes need to vary the pace within a passage to convey, for example, falling and rising action.

Phrasing: Reading groups or phrases of words as units of meaning rather than reading word by word. Phrasing also involves paying attention to punctuation to maintain the sense of a text.

You could encourage children to use the success criteria from marks out of ten to make their self-evaluation comments.

And of course... make time to read to your class for pleasure. When you read aloud to your class, you bring text alive through your phrasing, characterisation and pace. By listening to you read aloud, pupils learn how to read text aloud themselves. It also has the benefit of enabling the children to hear texts that may be beyond their own reading ability and that contain vocabulary and concepts that they may otherwise not experience. **TP**



Rachel Clarke is the director of Primary English Education. She trains teachers all over the UK and beyond and is the author of Reading Detectives and Writing

Mechanics, both available from Collins.

 @PrimaryEnglish

 primaryenglished.co.uk

Can you see the wood **FOR THE TREES?**

In order to close the word gap for our children, focusing on the big picture of communication is crucial, argues **Kelly Ashley**

When deciding how to boost children's vocabulary, it sometimes seems like we can't see the wood for the trees. A focus on smaller details (such as introducing a 'word of the day') can show quick wins, but is this really addressing wider communication needs? What would we see if we took a step back, looking at the whole 'forest' of communication in school? So, how can we take a more holistic view of communication in the classroom?

First steps

First, we must consider how the curriculum offer invites learners in with opportunities to use vocabulary and language for different purposes. Receptively ('receiving' information), we use language to read and listen – interpreting ideas. Expressively ('expressing' ideas), we use language to write and speak – crafting ideas for different purposes and audiences, actively making decisions about style and form. Consider the role and purpose of communication across the curriculum. How does it foster communication for a range of purposes and how are knowledge and skills explicitly developed to strengthen these processes?

Second, we need to help learners to access and connect the word and knowledge that exists in their personal, mental libraries. We all have different experiences in life that shape who we are with connected word and world knowledge – associations and links that are uniquely ours. Our 'mental library' is a result of these experiences – each of us with our own, bespoke network of connections. By planning opportunities to 'unlock' this information (Ashley, 2019), we can help learners to make

connections between new and known vocabulary. Rather than starting from a place of deficit, 'unlocking' celebrates what learners bring to the table. A simple 'talk box' with objects or images related to a topic that you plan to explore can be an eye-opening way to unlock and gather the language that learners use to express ideas.

Levels of detail

Third, it's important to support the retrieval and organisation of language within the mental library with purposeful, layered planning and practice. To explore this point, let's consider Walt Disney's



four ‘levels’ of detail – the mantra of ‘Imagineers’ who design well-loved attractions in Disney parks around the world. Within each of these levels we get closer to the intricate detail created as part of the attraction experience. Let’s relate these levels of detail to the idea of descending deep into the ‘forest’ of communication:

Level 1 – *You’re on the top of a mountain and looking down at a vast, green forest. You can see the tops of the trees blanketing the lush space.*

At this first level, we are taking stock and considering the big picture of communication across the curriculum. What different opportunities can we plan in – receptively (reading/ listening) and expressively (writing/ speaking) – across the year or stage? At this point, we are mapping out opportunities for learners to use communication for different purposes. Ensure that these experiences are varied, purposeful and contextual – helping novice communicators navigate the language landscape.

Level 2 – *You’ve descended down the mountain and you’re now just on the edge of the forest. You can see the mass of trees in front of you.*

At the edge of the forest, we are now planning a learning sequence. We start by building in opportunities to unlock existing language and then use these ideas as a starting point for deciding what new language will be taught through explicit vocabulary instruction. Importantly, we also plan out how learners may choose and use new language to communicate in different contexts.

Level 3 – *You’re now in the forest and you walk further inside. You see an interesting cluster of trees, noticing their colours, leaves and shapes.*

We are now ‘deep’ in the learning sequence, actively building knowledge and skills to support communication. Targeted vocabulary instruction is deliberate, teaching language that is linked to chosen purpose. Learners become word archaeologists, digging up connections between new and known vocabulary using word-learning strategies – exploring sound links, visual features, layers of meaning, word history, meaning in context, etc. The adult expertly draws learners in –

getting them to notice and being the amplifier of new learning and ideas.

Level 4 – *You’re now at the base of a tree. You reach out to touch the rough bark, feeling the texture and the sticky sap on your fingers. You hear birds chirping overhead, unlocking a memory. Your nose fills with an earthy smell and you feel the breeze on your face as it chases through the trees.*

Even though we are now ‘up close’ to language application, we have the benefit of the rich experiences provided by the other ‘layers’ of communication that we’ve travelled through. Through skilful planning and support, communication power has shifted to the learner. They are now agents of communication; linguistic foresters forging their own path. The implicit opportunities that have been nurtured as part of a language-rich environment now come into their own. Pupils are armed with new word and world knowledge, ready to share, discuss and debate new ideas – putting their communication skills to work.

Put it together

Whilst Disney wanted his guests to experience ‘level 4’ for a fully immersive experience, we can see how all four layers work together to help transfer responsibility to the communicator. By ‘not seeing the wood for the trees,’ we could jump too quickly to the finer details of tackling ‘gaps’ with quick-fixes, before carefully considering how all of these essential ingredients in the process work together to build strong communication.

The dictionary defines communication as ‘the imparting or exchange of information, ideas or feelings.’ To ensure that our classrooms are communication ‘rich,’ we must think carefully about imparting and exchanging as part of the bigger picture – helping learners to unlock, power-up, charge and recharge new understanding. Take a step back to consider how the strategies chosen to boost vocabulary development address the wider agenda. As rangers of communication, let’s focus on building fruitful conditions to foster these processes, nurturing growth and interaction. In the wise words of Stephen Covey, ‘You can’t have the fruit without the roots.’ **TP**

Five ways to focus on the big picture

● PUT WORDS TO WORK

Intentionally plan opportunities for learners to choose and use new language, in rich contexts. How are opportunities to put words to work carefully woven into the curriculum offer?

● UNLOCK KNOWLEDGE

Actively unlock learners’ existing word and world knowledge – build on what they already know. How can we be sure to celebrate our learners’ unique store of knowledge and experiences and use these as a springboard to connect new ideas and information?

● POWER-UP STRATEGIES

Teach new words and power-up word-learning strategies through deliberate and explicit vocabulary instruction. What personal connections can learners activate in their mental library to make word learning more memorable and purposeful?

● CHARGE AND RECHARGE

Charge and recharge new language through implicit instruction within a deliberately language-rich environment. How often (and how effectively) do learners talk to and interact with each other in pairs and groups to deepen and extend their knowledge and understanding?

● TALK, TALK, AND TALK...

Dialogue is key – talk, talk and talk some more! How will we ensure opportunities for learners to be engaged in both formal and informal dialogue that can also assist them to communicate their feelings, creative ideas and intuition?



Kelly Ashley (@kashleyenglish) is a freelance English consultant based in Yorkshire and author of **Word Power:**

amplifying vocabulary instruction (2019). For more information, visit kellyashleyconsultancy.wordpress.com

Win

GIVEAWAY

Early Years 3+ Early Years 3+ KS1 6+

KS2 7+ KS3 11+ KS3 11+

Copyright © Usborne Publishing Limited, 2022. Illustrations by Shelly Laslo.

WIN

a bundle of
books from
Usborne

Win a bundle of books from Usborne, in support of Mental Health Awareness Week (15–21 May).

From EYFS to KS3, this super prize bundle covers a wide range of topics to support your students, and will provide a valuable resource for use in your classroom and library.

Including helping children to understand and recognise their feelings, activities to calm and unwind, and insightful guides exploring friendships and social media, the books will empower children of all ages to express

and manage their emotions and develop a range of social, emotional and life skills.

Visit [usborne.com/mentalhealth](https://www.usborne.com/mentalhealth) to explore Usborne's full range of books supporting mental health, such as *Why Do I (Sometimes) Feel Sad?*, *Friendship Survival Guide*, and *All About Worries and Fears*.

2023 also marks Usborne's 50th birthday – 50 years of creating brilliant books for curious children of all ages.

To discover more just look for the Usborne balloon and visit [usborne.com](https://www.usborne.com)

What's on offer?

From EYFS to KS3, this super prize bundle covers a wide range of topics to support your students. The bundle contains a copy of:

- Lift-the-flap *Very First Questions and Answers: Why Do I (Sometimes) Feel Sad?*
- *All About Worries and Fears*
- Lift-the-flap *Questions and Answers About Feelings*
- *Wind-down Activities*
- *Social Media Survival Guide*
- *Friendship Survival Guide*

Discover more at
[usborne.com/mentalhealth](https://www.usborne.com/mentalhealth)

Enter now at [teachwire.net/giveaways](https://www.teachwire.net/giveaways)

*Competition closes at 12 midnight on 15th June 2023. Winner will be notified within 21 days. Full terms and conditions available at [teachwire.net](https://www.teachwire.net)



Published by
Usborne, 2018



The House With Chicken Legs

Explore Russian folklore and plan a range of activities around
Sophie Anderson's enchanting debut novel

ASHLEY BOOTH

The *House With Chicken Legs* is the extraordinary debut novel from Sophie Anderson. Steeped in traditional Russian folklore with the author's own unique twist, the story focuses on the age-old tale of Baba Yaga.

In many stories, Baba Yaga is a crooked, evil witch with a long nose who rides around on a pestle and mortar and eats children. Here, Baba Yaga (more affectionately known as just Baba) is actually the sweet grandma to main

character, Marinka. She is also the guider of the dead through the gate to the next world, which happens to reside in their house – a house with chicken legs that regularly uproots the pair to different places around the world.

Much to her chagrin, Marinka is destined to be the next guardian of the gate. When Baba disappears, Marinka has to figure out on her own whether she is truly suited for such a destiny. With the help of her house – which

has a mind of its own – and friends she meets along the way, Marinka has to quickly mature and be brave as she seeks to truly understand her own fate and find her beloved Baba.

This truly excellent book offers up a tremendous addition to primary classrooms, and there are endless possibilities in terms of things you can do to link learning to the book, including finding out about other cultures and researching fascinating Russian folklore...



Practical activities

Wherever you will go

A main theme of the novel is that the house (which has its own personality) can get up and go to another place on a whim.

It moves to find new collections of dead people who need to pass through its gates. With this in mind, there's interesting scope here for some collective writing and geography.

Where could the house take you? Using physical and online maps and atlases, research and look at various places around the world and then describe the house moving there. What would you see from the windows? How might the terrain of the new area affect the house's movements? In what cultures would you find yourself immersed?

Because there are so many options, there is opportunity here for multiple short bursts of writing. Take it a step further and use the maps to figure out which other locations the house would pass on the way to its new location. Can you design a trip around the world? What would the challenges be?

This is your life

When the dead amass at the house, Baba states that one of her favourite things that happens during the feast before they



**DOWNLOAD
RESOURCES AT**

**tw
teachwire**



Download our **FREE**
newspaper front page
template for this lesson at

**teachwire.net/
teaching-resources/
newspaper-template**

leave is that they share their whole life with her – their family, memories, legacy and everything they have experienced and felt over the course of their lives.

If, through some seriously unfortunate series of events, your pupils found themselves at the gate, what would their legacy be? What could they tell Baba about their life that would make her happy and leave a lasting impression on her?

This is a lovely opportunity to get to know your pupils better as they discuss their family, the people they love, the places they've been, the food they like to eat, their best memories and so on. This information can be presented in many different ways, including a memoir, but perhaps the most interesting would be to have the children present it as a speech to Baba Yaga. This will allow you to focus on the genre of speech writing in class and it's also a great way to show children how to be really emotive with their language.

Building a house

How often is there a great link to design technology within a class novel? Not often enough for my money, so what a tremendous opportunity there is here to literally design and build a model house.

Children should begin by designing the house, using what they know about it from the book. It's a good idea to limit the rooms to one bedroom, the kitchen, a bathroom and the living room with the gate in it. Pupils need to consider how they are going to get this house to adequately stand up on chicken legs. What materials do they need to make this happen?

Take it further → → →

YOUR OWN GLOSSARY

In the back of the book, author Sophie Anderson has produced a helpful glossary of Russian terms to make the story more accessible to readers who do not speak the language or are not familiar with the culture.

Ask pupils to imagine they are writing a book about the country they come from. Hone in on the food they eat as part of that culture. Create your own glossary, naming foods from that culture and

detailing what they mean. Pupils may want to use more informal names for dishes. For example, sausage and mashed potatoes – a British staple – might be referred to as 'bangers and mash', which is a term that may need explaining. Include colloquial terms such as 'grub' or terms with different dialectal meanings such as 'dinner' to give the reader more information.



How sturdy do the legs need to be and how can we achieve this?

Take things further by designing the front of the house on a hinge that can be opened (the book is very explicit about the facial features of the house). Work on making legs that have joints so they can move. After building your houses, ask children to review and evaluate them, thinking about how they could have been even better.

A feast for the dead

When the dead come to Baba and Marinka's house, it is customary that the guardians hold a feast for them to enjoy before they pass through the gate. Throughout the book we are introduced to a plethora of Russian traditional foods including pirog, borsch, blini, schi, kvass and chak-chak, to name a few. Explanations of these can be found in the book's glossary.

There are so many good opportunities here. First, it would be interesting to research what these are. Ask children to construct a menu based on the different foods presented. By far the most fun thing to do, though, is to cook them as a class and hold your own Russian feast. Children can then evaluate each food and say whether they liked it or not and why. There are also writing opportunities here – ask pupils to become food critics. You could also invite in parents, other year groups or senior leaders to enjoy the feast.

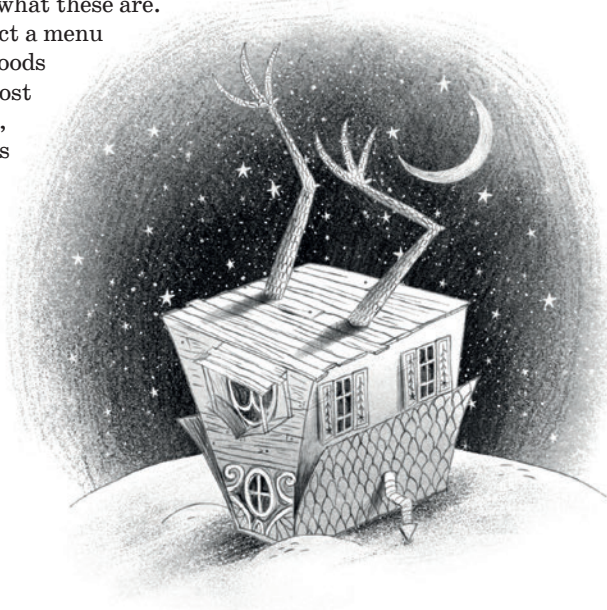


Become a reporter

In one scene in the book, Baba and Marinka's house is accidentally set on fire. All the characters desperately work to put the fire out, but in the end the house has no choice but to stand up in a busy area and run into the ocean to put out the flames. Shortly after this, the house, Baba and Marinka have to move on as the general public have seen what has happened.

Here lies a great writing opportunity: imagine you were a member of the public who had witnessed this incident.

Write a newspaper report detailing exactly what happened. Interviewing other eyewitnesses is a great chance to practise direct and reported speech. Look at journalistic bias and have one newspaper report that details the event as a magical experience full of wonder and another that details it as a terrifying event that threatens



Loved this? Try these...

- ❖ *The Jamie Drake Equation* by Christopher Edge
- ❖ *Who Let The Gods Out?* by Maz Evans
- ❖ *Nevermoor* by Jessica Townsend
- ❖ *A Place Called Perfect* by Helena Duggan
- ❖ *Cogheart* by Peter Bunzl

civilians. How would the features differ? Would even small details, like the pictures chosen, be different? Download our newspaper front page template at teachwire.net/teaching-resources/newspaper-template

Different legs

Imagine how the house would function and act if it had animal legs that did not belong to a chicken. For example, how might a house with horse legs look? It would surely move faster than a house with chicken legs. What about a house with mouse legs? Surely it would need to be much smaller – or could it just have giant mouse legs?

There's a plethora of discussion work that could be undertaken here, particularly about what pupils see as the optimum animal legs for the house. After this, create artwork or writing based on the ideas the children have come up with. **TP**



Ashley Booth is a Y6 teacher in Toxteth, Liverpool.

 @mrboothy6

 theteachingbooth.wordpress.com

INSTRUCTIONAL WRITING

There is scope for a variety of instructional writing activities within this book, both non-fiction and 'fictional non-fiction' (written as though it is fact, but rooted in something that is made up).

For the former, get pupils to focus on the idea of having Benji the lamb as a pet. They will need to find out how to look after a lamb and then create a how-to guide for caring for one.

For the 'fictional non-fiction' piece, pupils can write about guiding the dead through the gate. Through reading the book,

children should pick up that there are explicit ways to do this, from the actual ceremony on the night through to building the gate and getting the house to the right place. Once again, this presents a great opportunity for a 'how-to' guide.

CHANGING PERSPECTIVE

One way of stretching writers that are cruising towards the greater depth standard is to get them to change the perspective of part of the story. This is a

really complex type of writing that demands a keen understanding.

One scene that works particularly well for this is when Baba takes Nina through the gate. The scene is written from the perspective of Marinka, but can pupils alter it to be from either Baba or Nina's point of view? How are they feeling? What's different? What's occurring around them? Afterwards, challenge the children to do a critical evaluation of what they chose to write and why.

Top of the class

Resources and activities to bring fresh inspiration into your classroom



1

Hiring teachers made simple

Find the right primary teachers for your school, without the stress. Teach First recruits diverse, talented candidates to teach in the schools that need them most. The rigorous selection process and expert, research-led Training Programme – rated ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted – mean you’ll get the highest quality trainees, ready to hit the

ground running. Teach First’s new primary programme aligns closely to school need, giving teachers the tools to think creatively. They’ll work with you, supporting your school and trainee at every stage. This includes a mentor within your school, professional coaching, expert academic guidance from a leading university, and wraparound support from Teach First. Because when your teachers thrive, so do your pupils. Visit teachfirst.org.uk/teacher-recruitment



2

Race for Reading

Clock up the miles this summer term with Schoolreaders Race for Reading, and help more children leave primary school able to read well. The 80-day virtual Around the World challenge runs until 19 June 2023. Set your distance, go it alone or with friends, and commit to walk, run, cycle or even swim to help cover the distance around the world – 25,000 miles – following in the footsteps of legendary fictional explorer Phileas Fogg! Every step will help literacy charity Schoolreaders recruit more volunteers to provide crucial reading support to UK primary schools. Everyone’s collective effort contributes to the total distance, and there are medals and tees available for fundraising and mileage goals. Visit raceforreading.org



3

Boost physical literacy

A programme designed to improve children’s physical literacy and activity levels has been launched by Premier Education. Wow Active helps primary schools measure the impact of their PE delivery and tracks pupil progress through a series of fun and inclusive challenges. Schools using Wow Active identified on average a 24 per cent increase in performance, with children participating in PE more effectively and being more accountable for their own health and fitness.

Teachers can access Ofsted-compatible data, track and monitor individual pupils, compare class average scores against national averages and identify those requiring interventional support. Sign up now to get 50% off Wow Active until the end of the school year. Visit premier-education.com/wow-active



4

Unique residentials

With four locations across the Cheshire Countryside and North Wales, Conway Centres is the perfect place for children and young people to enjoy a residential visit. We know being in the great outdoors has many benefits for both physical and mental wellbeing and at Conway Centres they take away so much more than just fantastic memories. Conway Centres have ready-made programmes that support with building resilience, growing confidence and claiming independence – all supporting health and wellbeing. Conway Centres understands every residential should be as unique as the school that visits, which is why they can tailor programmes to support your goals and your curriculum focus. Visit conwaycentres.co.uk



5

Diabetes support

The InDependent Diabetes Trust offers support and information to people with diabetes, their families and health professionals on the issues that are important to them. Its helpline offers a friendly, understanding ear when the going gets tough.

IDDT supplies information packs to parents and teachers so they understand the needs of children with diabetes in school and provides much-needed aid to children with diabetes in developing countries. Diabetes can cause serious long-term complications and a cure is still elusive, so IDDT funds essential research. As a registered charity IDDT relies entirely on voluntary donations.

For more information or to join, visit iddtinternational.org

How not to TEACH SPELLING

Modelling invented words? Teaching spelling 'rules'? Saying that letters are 'silent'? No, no, no, says **Charlotte MacKechnie**

If you allow a child to spell 'he' as 'hee' or 'they' as 'thay', they're going to practise misspelling these words. They'll become so familiar with their invented spellings that they may struggle to unlearn the inaccurate sound-spelling correspondences. I use 'invented spelling' because the notion of 'phonetically plausible' spelling is flawed. All spellings are phonetic. If a word wasn't 'phonetic', you wouldn't be able to say it. Anything that is spoken can be represented with various combinations of the 26 letters in the English alphabet. Spelling has been standardised since the 1700s, yet pronunciation is constantly evolving. While many words are certainly complex to spell, they are not phonetically irregular.

Unfortunately, it appears to be common practice for EYFS and KS1 teachers to model 'phonetically plausible' (ie invented) spelling. The rationale? Depending on where you are within your systematic teaching sequence, there will be parts of code that you haven't taught yet. The misconception that teachers should model invented spelling likely comes from the Early Learning Goals for writing in EYFS which state that:

"Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. [...] Some words are spelt correctly

and others are phonetically plausible."

The key word here is 'children'. Pupils use their phonic knowledge for spelling; sometimes they misspell words, but their attempts are phonetically plausible. This doesn't suggest that teachers should model invented spelling. Instead, we should provide the parts of the code that haven't been taught yet. Here are some more 'dos and don'ts' for teaching spelling:

- **Don't** introduce only one spelling of a vowel sound. It's particularly important not to encourage children to use this one spelling whenever they write that sound. You'll be reinforcing illogical positioning of alternative spellings. For example, the 'ay' spelling is rarely used before the sound 'l' (there's no 'snayl', 'tayl' or 'whayl').
- **Don't** replace phonics with spelling rules at the end of Y1. Phonics is reading and spelling. It takes a minimum of three years to teach the alternatives of the English alphabet code, and phonics should continue to underpin spelling beyond KS1. Here are some alternative spellings to work on in Y5 and 6, for example:

'ie' sound – island
'ee' sound – deceive
't' sound – doubt
'm' sound – climb

- **Don't** teach spelling 'rules' such as 'i before e except after c'. English spelling doesn't obey rules. If you take this approach you'll probably spend more time teaching the exceptions ('seize', 'feisty', 'foreign'...).
- **Don't** use 'look, cover, write, check'. This whole-word memorisation ignores the fundamental construct of the alphabet and the research into eye movements in the context of how we read. Similarly, don't encourage pupils to look at 'word shapes' or to 'look and say'.
- **Don't** refer to letters as 'silent'. Take a moment to listen carefully to the letters on this page – every letter is silent. Letters do not make sounds – *we* do. Why do we accept 'k' as silent in 'know', but we don't question the 'w'? Teach 'kn' as a spelling of the sound 'n' much like you would teach the spelling 'funny' or 'gone': it's as simple as that.
- **Do** approach the complex code (one sound: different spellings) in a systematic

way. Introduce the frequent and consistent spellings first, then introduce the less frequently encountered spellings in successive cycles. For example:

EYFS: play, rain
Y1: cake, they, great
Y2: vein, eight, straight
KS2: gauge, ballet

• **Do** insist that children say the sounds when they are writing the words. The integration of sensory input (auditory and visual) and the motor output (writing the spellings) helps embed sound-spelling correspondences and reinforces the link between sound and spelling.

• **Do** teach children to spell high frequency words by drawing attention to the spellings which are exceptions. Remember, an exception word is simply a word with sound-spelling correspondences that are beyond the systematic teaching sequence.

Find the first 100 and next 200 high frequency words organised by sound at tinyurl.com/tp-hfw-sound **TP**



Charlotte MacKechnie is a *Sounds-Write* trainer and reading development lead for

STEP Ahead Teaching School Alliance.

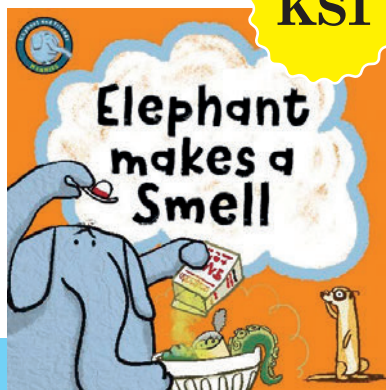
@c_mackechnie

linguisticphonics.wordpress.com

Book CLUB

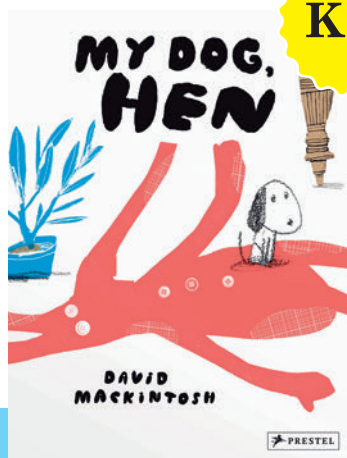


We review five new titles that your class will love



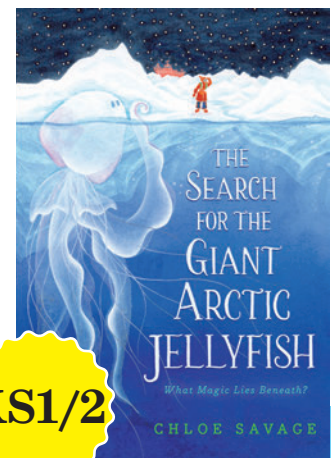
Elephant makes a smell
ill. Mr Griff
(£6.99, Noodle Juice)

This title for your littlest littles is a charming and humorous introduction to manners, personal hygiene and the senses. Printed as a board book, you can introduce it from EYFS, allowing the children to follow the bright illustrations, and carry it through KS1 as a funny story that years 1 and 2 are bound to find entertaining. The rhyming text tells a story of Elephant, who loves all manner of pongy pastimes, from eating piles of junk food and strong cheese, to forgetting to wash his PE kit after games. Can pupils spot the items within the illustrations that are causing the smell, and can they think of other things that might give off a stink? Might you even have some items around the classroom that would have a certain whiff? Hours of fun.



My Dog Hen
By David Mackintosh
(11.99 HB, Prestel)

This sweet tale told from the point of view of a child whose family adopts a rescue dog is at once a beautiful ode to the animals in our lives, and a keen reminder that we really don't need as many brand-new things as we think we do. Not only is Hen the dog from a rescue shelter (rather than 'brand-new' from a breeder or pet shop), but it turns out his favourite toy is also one that Gran ends up making him from all the fancy toys he destroys as a puppy. Follow Hen's story from wobbly, chewy puppy through to contented and settled as part of his family. Whether you're talking about recycling with your pupils, or just looking for a story that exemplifies how happy we can be with things we already have, this book is a sure-fire hit.



The Search for the Giant Arctic Jellyfish
By Chloe Savage
(£12.99 HB, Walker Books)

Dr Morley loves jellyfish, and she's determined to travel to the northernmost tip of the earth and look for an amazing specimen that everyone talks about, but nobody has ever seen... the Giant Arctic Jellyfish. It's a gruelling trip, but Dr Morley has the help of her brilliant crew, so she's holding out hope. Will she ever find what she's looking for? This beautifully illustrated book is a tale of adventure and following your dreams, and whether your pupils are old enough to read the text and research underwater fauna, or just interested in the pictures, there are numerous things to spot and learn – glorious spreads depict details from inside the ship and deep underwater. Can the children see where the jellyfish is hiding on each page?

→→→RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

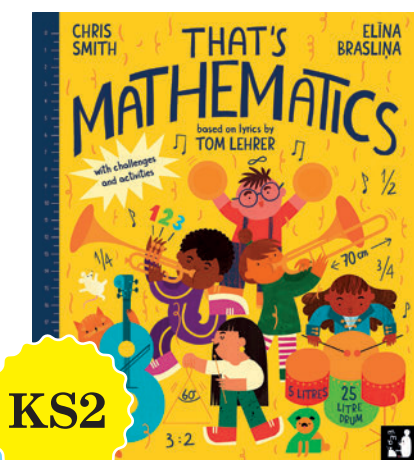
plazoom



BUILD WORD POWER

Word Whoosh, from Plazoom, is designed to clarify and extend children's understanding of tier 2 words from Reception to Y6+, enabling them to make more ambitious and accurate language choices when speaking and writing. Each resource pack explores six words through a series of four mini-lessons: read and visualise, associate, understand, and define and master (based on the Frayer model). Find out more at bit.ly/PlzWords

KS2



KS2

That's Mathematics

By Chris Smith,
ill. Elina Braslina

(£12.99 HB, Mama Makes Books)

For anyone who may be a fan of comedic musician Tom Lehrer – is this a joy to behold. And if that name doesn't ring a bell, you may still be familiar with the Elements Song, which trails through the names of all the elements in the periodic table (more recently made mainstream by Harry Potter himself, Daniel Radcliffe, through a talk-show rendition). Either way, this book is a perfect maths companion. Smith applies Lehrer's amusing approach to explaining the role of maths in our everyday lives, and adds age-appropriate information that expands on how we might 'be fair when there's something to share' or learn 'how much gold we can hold in an elephant's ear' by using our numerical know-how. With added challenges and activities, this is a great way to make maths fun.



Wildsmith: into the dark forest

by Liz Flanagan,
ill. Joe Todd-Stanton

(£7.99, UCLAN publishing)

When war hits the town of Gallren, young Rowan and her mum are forced to flee, leaving her dad behind to fight. As Rowan is whisked off to the wilderness to stay with a mysterious Grandpa she didn't even know she had, getting used to nature turns out to have a much bigger influence on her life than she could have ever imagined... What are those noises coming from the dark forest, and why is Mum so reluctant to tell her about them? A gloriously told tale of friendship, dragons, and the bond between humans and animals, the first instalment of Flanagan's *Wildsmith* series is a joy for children and adults alike. Perfect for a whole-class read, or to recommend to pupils with a love for our furry (or scaly!) friends, adventure or suspense, you won't be sorry about picking up a copy.

Meet the author

LIZ FLANAGAN ON TALKING TO ANIMALS AND INVENTING DRAGONS

Photo © Matt Radcliffe



What inspired *Wildsmith*?

The series was inspired by my experience of fostering cats and

kittens and wishing I could speak directly to them, especially when they were scared or ill. It also arose from the lockdowns of 2020 when I was feeling worried and a bit cooped up – the daily walks in the woods near my house definitely helped my mental health back then and made me realise how much I value wild spaces.

What do you think children can learn from Rowan and her actions?

Rowan isn't perfect by any means, but I hope she's a character readers will enjoy spending time with. She's brave and curious, as well as being a bit stubborn and not afraid to show when she's fed up. She is close to her parents and misses each of them when they're separated. She's open to making friends in her new home and learning new skills, even when it feels strange and she's homesick. She cares deeply about the animals she rescues – which can make her a bit reckless, as her Grandpa says! But I hope readers will cheer Rowan on in her animal-rescuing wildsmith adventures.

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

There are some wonderful free resources available for teachers to download at lizflanagan.co.uk/forteachers – created by reading development consultant Jake Hope. Activities include reading comprehensions, drawing a map, inventing your own dragon, taking leaf-rubbings, planning a menu, as well as starting to discuss themes which are covered lightly in the book, such as nature conservation, poaching and displacement by war. I've been so grateful for the response from teachers to this series, and hope they will feel inspired to adapt any of these ideas to work in their context.

The first two instalments of *Wildsmith* (£7.99 UCLan Books) are out now.

Creative writing's SECRET CODE

How can light, sound and movement help pupils to develop a gripping narrative?
It's all in the imagination, says **Tim Taylor**...

How can we support students to write creatively? It is a great teaching conundrum. We have all been there: spending hours setting up a stimulating scenario – a story-starter, an intriguing image, a dramatic moment – in the hope of grabbing the children's imagination and inspiring them to write a gripping narrative. Only to sit down later and read something truly depressing like, *I walked to the door, I was scared. Then I opened the door and a monster attacked me. I died. Aagh!*

It is easy to get frustrated (I know I have) but there is a solution: it is called the dramatic imagination. The dramatic imagination is the secret code of artists. It is used in literature, film,

theatre, art, and music. It is the vocabulary of mood and atmosphere, the language of setting and environment, the magic key to 'show, not tell'. And we can teach it to children.

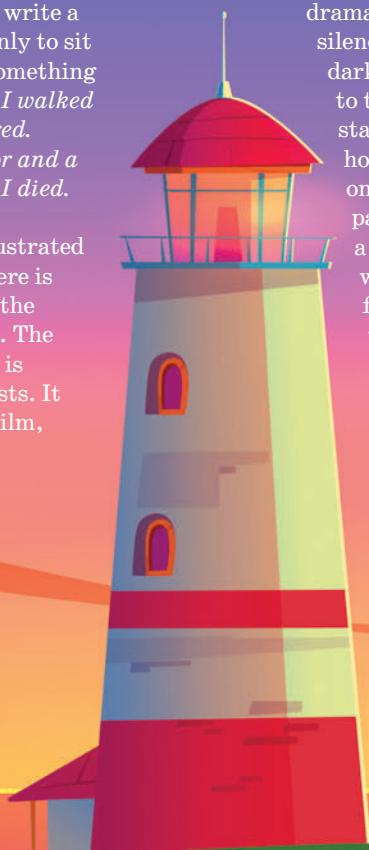
A little bit dramatic

There are six dimensions to the dramatic imagination: sound/silence; movement/stillness; darkness/light. You might like to try them yourself. Imagine standing in a room in an old house. It is night-time, on one side of the room is a paned window, on the other, a single door. Now describe where the light comes from and where it falls in the room. Is it from the moon outside, casting a silver light on the floor? Or a flicking candle on

a table near the door? Describe what sounds you can hear: the wind outside; the creak of the floorboards; the sound of your heart beating? Now take a step towards the door, describe your movement. Describe the stillness in the room; the darkness; the silence. Now reach out to take hold of the door handle, describe the response from your body, the blood rushing through your veins, the slow movement of your arm, the stiffness of your hand...

How much did you write? If you are like me (and the students who learn how to do this) it will have been a lot. The story hasn't progressed far, but there is a sense of atmosphere, of suspense, of fear. You can imagine it as a film: the music slowly building, the screech of violins, the close-up of the actor's hand. This is the power of imagination.

We can start using the dramatic imagination as soon as children come to school. In fact, it is one of the



great features of the six dimensions that we already use them as a natural part of our teaching whenever we read a book to a class or share a picture. They are all around us, all the time, the trick is to point them out, and later to teach them explicitly.

The secret code

I first did this successfully with a Year 2 class using Ted Hughes' *The Iron Man*. I started by writing the six dimensions on a large sheet of paper and asking the students to point them out as we read through the story (projecting the text onto the whiteboard):

The wind sang [sound] through his iron fingers [movement]. His great iron head, shaped like a dustbin but as big as a bedroom, slowly turned to the right [movement], slowly turned to the left [movement]. His iron ears turned, this way, that way [movement]. He was hearing the sea [sound]. His eyes, like headlamps [light], glowed white, then red, then infrared [light], searching the sea. Never before had the Iron Man seen the sea.

I then supported the students to use the dimensions in their own writing, first while doing guided writing, and then in independent writing. Giving them feedback such as: "You've got a sense of movement and sound here, but where is the stillness and silence?", it was surprising how quickly the children

picked them up and how effectively using them improved their writing. Later, when I taught Year 6 the effect was quicker still and even more effective.

The dimensions are, in my experience, something children understand intuitively and begin to apply almost as soon as they become competent writers. They often find joy in using a 'secret code' used by expert writers, artists, and filmmakers, and the six dimensions can transform children's writing, giving them a strategy to move beyond 'then/and' stories, as well as providing a vocabulary for teachers to provide practical feedback which the children can use to develop their story-telling skills. It is exciting to use too, and you'll have fun incorporating it into your own teaching – teaching as storytelling:

The old house stood alone at the top of the hill, no one had been inside for years. Nothing moved except for the dark figures of animals scurrying across its rotten floorboards, nothing lived in the rooms but shadows filling every corner and every space. The wind and the sun and the rain had not been kind to the house's paintwork which had once been bright and beautiful, but now lay still on the ground like a pale snow. "Why," I asked myself, "had I promised to spend a night here, alone?" TP

"The dramatic imagination is the secret code of artists. It is the vocabulary of mood and atmosphere"



Tim Taylor is a freelance teacher, and author of *A Beginner's Guide to Mantle of the Expert*.
@imagineinquiry
mantleoftheexpert.com

INSPIRE IMAGINATION THROUGH ART

1 Introduce the lesson by telling the class you're going to look at the dramatic imagination and its six elements. Write these on the board.

2 Explain the elements are used by authors, filmmakers, music composers, and artists to generate atmosphere and to provoke an emotional response.

3 Show the students Joseph Wright's painting 'An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump' (1768). Find it on Wikipedia at tinyurl.com/tp-JosephWright

4 Ask the students to identify each the six elements in the painting.

5 Discuss the image and the effects created by the artist's use of the dramatic imagination. Give the students more information from your research on this painting using its Wikipedia page (tinyurl.com/tp-ExperimentOnABird).

6 Ask the students to each choose the point-of-view of someone in the painting and to write a description of events using the six elements. Get them to imagine describing the scene as if they were writing a letter to someone about that night, for example: *Dear Margaret, last night I saw an experiment with a bird in bell jar. The room was very dark, the only light a lamp in the middle of the table and the moon outside the window... etc.*

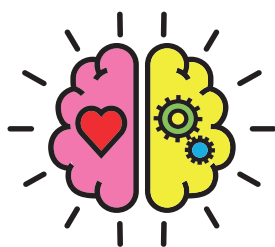
7 Support the students as they write, asking for examples to illustrate the process as their work develops.

8 Once they have finished, ask some of the students to read out their writing, prompting the rest of the class to listen out for their use of the dramatic imagination.

Health & wellbeing SPECIAL

INSIDE THIS SECTION

p57



Wellbeing isn't about standard self-care tips or tokens, but personal approaches...

p58



We need to apply the same principles we use in the classroom to PE to boost confidence

p62



If you suspect a pupil has a mental health problem, when and how should you get help?

p65



If you suspect a pupil has a mental health problem, when and how should you get help?

**Don't miss our humanities special,
on sale 23rd June 2023.**

The creep EFFECT

Staff goodwill gets eroded when roles become more demanding over time – so one teacher is tackling the issue head on

CAROLE BLACK

“Earlier this year a colleague was experiencing significant issues outside school and the workload and isolation of her role in school meant that she didn't have any capacity to deal with them,” says assistant headteacher Carole Black. “Her role had evolved over time and she had just accepted the additional demands without question, but when things outside school became more difficult, it suddenly brought into sharp focus how unrealistic and unreasonable her workload had become. She discussed resigning because it was affecting her health and she felt like she could not go on anymore.”

This is a scenario that will not feel unfamiliar to many teachers. However, being in that situation is one thing; how your school helps you to overcome it is a totally different matter. Carole was awarded mental health charity Mind's first ever Senior Wellbeing Champion Award back in 2017 for her commitment to prioritising mental health in her school. Here's what she's learned.

Burnout risks

Three years previously, Carole's school decided to make both student and staff wellbeing a focus. The three main bugbears raised by staff, and no doubt echoed by teachers around the country, were increasing workloads,

work requirements that had questionable benefits on pupil outcomes, and self-applied pressure to achieve high standards. “Teaching is a caring profession and this does attract staff who have a high sense of duty, which can lead to higher risks of burnout,” explains Carole. She could see how these issues were having a knock-on impact on other areas of school life, eroding the staff's sense of community. “Teaching staff felt isolated in classrooms, unable to leave because of marking, lesson planning and emails,” says Carole. “Meanwhile, support staff were stuck behind desks dealing with paperwork and phone calls.” Face-to-face communication was diminishing across the board, with email taking its place. “The sense of isolation was impacting on how staff were feeling,” continues Carole. “There was a sense that no one fully understood how hard they were working and the pressures they were under. Staff were trying to cope on their own, while feeling less valued and supported.”

Determined to grasp the bull by the horns and tackle the issue, Carole's first step was to try and start an honest and open dialogue, with guidance from Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index initiative. “We asked staff across the school what we could do to make them happier at work.” Carole's questions weren't met with universal

approval, however. “Initially there was some scepticism,” she explains. “I think it was hard for staff to be honest about some of the issues that they felt were impacting on their work/life balance. The fear of being judged and how this may impact on their future was a genuine concern.” To tackle this, staff were invited to give feedback in a number of different ways, such as through team contributions and anonymous surveys.

Quick wins

The findings of Carole’s investigation fell into five broad categories: workload, the impact of change (especially IT), community, recognition and environment. Eager to prove that the school was prepared to act on the feedback, Carole’s team began by looking for ‘quick wins’. “For example, we brought the timings of parents’ evening forward so it didn’t go on too late in the evening and introduced hot food so staff were able to have a proper meal after school.”

Carole also made it a priority to assess how current and upcoming initiatives added value to student outcomes. “While the school wants to continue to be innovative and do more, we

needed to ensure we weren’t asking too much of our staff,” says Carole. “We are also being more honest about the ‘creep’ effect, where roles and expectations change over time and staff goodwill is perhaps exploited or eroded – we need to manage this and not take it for granted.” Other measures to come out of the survey have been a reduction of staff duties and changes to report writing expectations. “Additionally, we’ve reduced some enrichment activities, looked at the automation of some admin tasks and tried to create more stability with our IT systems,” Carole says.

Steady pace

On the whole, most staff have been very receptive to the changes. “Of course, different people have engaged in different ways,” explains Carole. “For some, this topic is one that they are passionate about so they have taken the initiative to get involved with things like staff yoga and mindfulness. Others are less direct in their engagement, but no one has suggested this is not helpful or worth doing. We are trying to take staff with us and go at their pace, rather than forcing issues that might create other problems.” It would be unrealistic to suddenly expect everyone to be best buddies, but Carole believes that having trusted, supportive colleagues around you is a major factor when it comes to staff wellbeing. “It doesn’t mean you have to be friends out of school, but increasing the sense of community and team building was something that came out strongly from our staff feedback.

Some staff felt like second-class citizens, and breaking down some of the issues between teaching and non-teaching staff and

SIGN UP TO THE WORKPLACE WELLBEING INDEX



Carole’s school has signed up for the Workplace Wellbeing Index; mental health charity Mind’s benchmark of best policy and practice. Emma Mamo, head of workplace wellbeing at Mind, says: “In the last few years we’ve seen employers make great strides when it comes to tackling stress and supporting the mental wellbeing of their staff, including those with a diagnosed mental health problem. We’re delighted to recognise and celebrate employers making mental health a priority for their organisation.”

Participating in the Index enables your school to gain public recognition of its commitment to workplace wellbeing, learn where you benchmark in comparison to other organisations and be part of a movement for change in workplace mental health. “Being involved gave us the opportunity to have an independent review from a credible and highly respected organisation,” explains Carole. “It allowed us to assess our progress to date, so we could consider what was going well and what areas we needed to improve. We are also hoping to exploit the networking opportunities on offer so we can learn from other organisations and share ideas.”

Find out more at mind.org.uk/workplace

“Some staff felt like second-class citizens. Breaking down issues between teaching and non-teaching staff was important”

trying to get different teams to mix and get to know one another was important.”

And what of the staff member mentioned at the beginning, who was feeling deflated and ready to quit? “We listened to everything she wanted to share and considered what we could do to support her in school and create space and time for her to deal with the issue affecting her outside of school,” explains Carole. “She took a few days off to start getting the support she needed outside school. When she returned we found colleagues who could assist where the workload had become unmanageable.”

With teacher recruitment and retention an ongoing issue, Carole is dedicated to making sure her staff feel valued and taken care of. “You can only deliver high quality teaching and learning if you have staff who feel supported and have a healthy work/life balance. We know our pupils can’t thrive when their wellbeing is compromised, so we need to apply the same principles to our staff.” **TP**



Carole Black is assistant headteacher at Dr Challoner’s Grammar School in Amersham, Buckinghamshire.

Find a primary teacher who brings learning to life

Our brand-new primary programme, designed by sector experts to align with school need, gives our teachers the right tools to inspire the next generation.

Learn more at
teachfirst.org.uk/teacher-recruitment

Teach First is a registered charity, no. 1098294



CARE SUPPORT SERVICE

Easing
Isolation &
Exhaustion



We provide support, respite and home care to families who have children aged 0-19 with congenital heart defects or feeding issues across the North West of England.

- ♥ All staff are Enhanced Child DBS Checked
- ♥ CQC Registered and fully insured
- ♥ Minimum of 2 hours support each week
- ♥ Fully trained support workers (Hoist, Meds, Suction, CPR, Vent etc)

This service is free to access for families who do not qualify for a funded care package from local authorities or CCG's. To refer a family or indeed yourself please get in touch or complete our simple Referral Form online.



 info@lagans.org.uk

 01204 800300

 www.lagans.org.uk



5 WAYS YOU CAN... Switch up your residential visits

Check out these unexpected perks and money-saving tips to plan your next stay-away trip with a twist!



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Although residential visits are not mandatory, they are a key part of the national curriculum and give children and young people a unique opportunity to claim their independence, make their own decisions and build new friendships. Here are five ways you can switch up your residential to get the most out of your visit.

1 WHEN TO VISIT

Schools fight for dates in the summer months but a residential in the autumn or winter has so many benefits. We know that a winter residential brings more challenging weather, but what better way to encourage children to thrive in the natural environment? Whether you choose to challenge them by navigating the demanding Menai Strait in Anglesey or by venturing into the vast woodlands of Delamere, children will be tested to achieve the unachievable. You will pay less but children have the opportunity to take away so much more.



tailored to support your school's goals and your curriculum focus.

4 PROGRESS THROUGH THE CENTRES

With four locations within Cheshire and North Wales, Conway Centres has somewhere perfect for every year group. Why not consider progressing through the different centres? Schools often start by taking Year 1s or 2s for their first residential to the Delamere centre, then visiting the Burwardsley centre in Year 3 to learn about the Iron age. The largest Cheshire centre in Tattenhall is great for year 4s before

they experience the Anglesey centre which is the home of high adventure in Year 5 or 6. Your school, children and young people will be welcomed back by the same friendly faces and you'll have the comfort of knowing the centres and how they work. Discounts are also available for multiple residential visits.

2 BRING MULTIPLE YEAR GROUPS

With the price of coaches ever on the rise, why not consider bringing multiple year groups? You may choose to take one group Monday – Wednesday and then another Wednesday – Friday to save on coach costs on the Wednesday handover day. Or why not take two year groups to their large Anglesey centre? Bringing multiple groups not only reduces costs but children can enjoy socialising, bonding and making life-long memories with other year groups.

at Conway Centres they can work with you to set curriculum-linked outcomes. Whether you want to visit the Delamere centre to support with the geography curriculum, where children will learn about the flora and fauna they share with the wider world, or you visit the Burwardsley centre to learn about the Iron Age era in the replica roundhouse to support with the history curriculum, there's something for everyone. All the activities and programmes have been designed to tie in with the curriculum and can be



Find out more:

Visit: conwaycentres.co.uk

Email: conwaycentres@edsential.co.uk

Call: 01248714501

5 WHY NOT CONSIDER A DAY VISIT?

At Conway Centres schools, children and young people can visit for a day full of activities. From kayaking off the private dock on the Menai Strait in the morning to reaching new heights on the high rope course in the afternoon, children and young people will enjoy a day full of adventure, all at a low cost.

3 SET CURRICULUM LINKED OUTCOMES

A residential is a great chance for children and young people to enjoy an adventure-filled few days, but

KEY POINTS

With four locations across North Wales and Cheshire, all activities are integrated into the beautiful natural surroundings.

Conway Centres only employs the highest calibre of qualified staff who come from and understand education, and are committed to improving outcomes for children.

From real-life outdoor adventure to the immersive cultural arts, the ready-made programmes pack so much into each day to guarantee a residential children won't forget.

Whether you are looking for accommodation for 250 children or smaller private accommodation for a class of 30 – Conway Centres has something for every school!

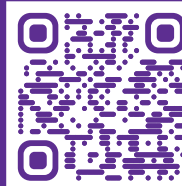


Collins
BIG CAT

Love
Reading

Support pupils' health and wellbeing while they learn to love reading!

Discover 12 new books for pupils in upper KS1 and KS2, designed to help children understand topics including mental and physical health, relationships and self-esteem.



Discover the
collection

collins.co.uk/BigCat

Five wellbeing tips FOR BUSY TEACHERS

It's not about standard self-care tips or tokens – it's about a personal approach, taking ownership and getting support

ANDREW COWLEY

I could quite easily pepper this piece with 'try some yoga'; 'have you joined our lunchtime meditation class?' or (and this was actually mentioned in a meeting in all seriousness and has a much-loved colleague in hysterics every time it comes up) 'have you tried lavender?'

Yoga, meditation and lavender are all well and good, but they are representative of self-care, not necessarily of wellbeing. Wellbeing isn't about these kinds of things; it needs to be approached strategically. Part of a school's wellbeing strategy should be to ensure staff are enabled to exercise self-care, but the essentials of self-care (sufficient sleep, keeping hydrated, eating well, taking regular exercise and having a digital detox) are applicable across the UK workforce, not unique to teachers.

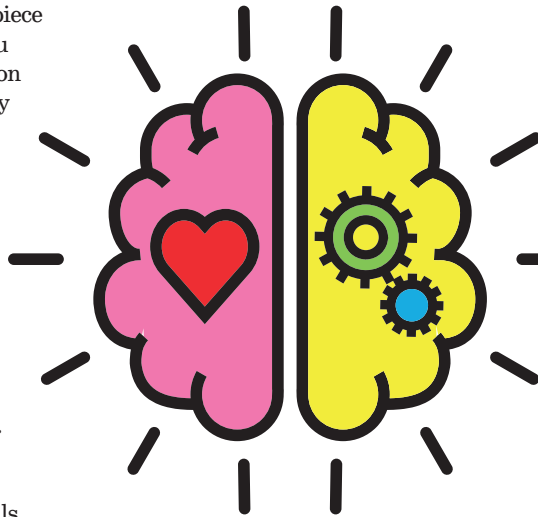
Schools that offer the bowl of fruit and an Indian head massage aren't offering wellbeing; they are offering tokens. The wellbeing experience will be different for every one of your colleagues.

In these financially restrained times some of the few effective things we have at no cost are principles. A school with a principled wellbeing approach can enable its teachers to look after their wellbeing; how can teachers take ownership of this?

♥ Show some empathy

Self-care doesn't mean that wellbeing is all about you. As teachers, we are part of a team and the effectiveness of any good team relies on the relationships between its members. Wellbeing is an equal right: ECTs are just as entitled as SLT to having their wellbeing looked after.

Empathy receives little coverage in terms of professional development in initial teacher training but also in leadership training. All of us are impacted positively or negatively by the words and deeds of others, so it's essential to our own and to our colleagues' wellbeing to have self-awareness. Missing a deadline, for example, may create additional work for a



colleague responsible for processing data or signing off reports. Deadlines exist for good reasons! I believe that empathy pays back; if we show it, when we need some for ourselves, our colleagues will repay it.

♥ Talk the talk

Have you considered how your colleagues talk to each other? During the course of any busy school week and at more pressured times, tempers may fray and occasionally snap. If this is you, have the good grace and self-awareness to apologise. This will do your wellbeing and that of those you have apologised to no end of good. Clearing the air, rather than leaving a feeling of simmering tension, is therapeutic.

We also all know someone who can't be positive and every word seems to be a criticism of school leaders, colleagues, parents or children. Let them know how their words make you feel; the chances are that they aren't aware of the image they portray.

♥ Time

Your time is your most precious resource. Don't let it go to waste. Plan your valuable PPA time and make it count. But this is time in the short term. You aren't going to be busy for a week; you are going to be occupied for the entire year. If your school is working to

an empathetic model of workload, it will spread the key events through the year, the pinch points of parent evenings, nativities, sports days, concerts and the big one: reports. Plan as effectively for yourself as you can so the pressure doesn't pile up. Write a report a day over a month, rather than squeeze them all into a week, which will impact the quality as well as the usefulness of them.

Wellbeing-focused schools will also seek to eliminate the meaningless tasks. Try and plan your holiday times as meticulously as you do your work week so the 'me time' is 'your time'.

♥ Find a friend

Many schools will encourage colleagues to 'buddy up'. Used well, your buddy can be a confidante, someone to trust in times of anxiety or heightened pressure. Even if this isn't in place at your school, a trusted and perhaps more senior colleague with a sensitive but realistic ear can be invaluable in helping ease some of the more challenging situations teachers find themselves in.

♥ Find the right school

The ultimate driver of wellbeing is the culture in your school. When visiting a potential new place of work, sound out the school for its wellbeing and workload commitment. If the senior leader showing you around makes mention of wellbeing as a genuine pledge to potential new teachers, alongside an unambiguous promise to be a values-led school, then that school immediately becomes an attractive place to work. **TP**



Andrew Cowley is a primary school deputy headteacher in South London and the author of *The Wellbeing Toolkit* (£19.99, Bloomsbury Education).



@HealthyToolkit

healthyteachertoolkit.wordpress.com

Everyone's A WINNER

We need to apply the same principles we use in the classroom for PE to boost confidence for teachers and pupils alike

DEBRA WADE

As a headteacher, I'm constantly reviewing what we offer our teachers and children at school. The question I find myself asking most frequently is: "Are we successfully stimulating our pupils' lively, enquiring minds and encouraging them to become independent, lifelong learners across the whole curriculum?"

It's easy to fall into the trap of pigeonholing some children as 'not sporty' and others as 'gifted and talented' in a PE context, rather than believing that every child can achieve and that opportunity, a great learning environment and appropriate practice are key determinants. We take this approach with many other subjects, so why should PE be any different?

But how do we apply the same principles that we use in the classroom to our PE lessons to ensure every child experiences success and challenge during PE and physical activity? Many assume only specialist PE teachers or coaches can deliver an exciting and engaging PE lesson. But all primary school teachers understand learning and know their children better than anyone. They already possess the majority of the key skills required and demonstrate them in other subjects. The key challenge, then, is how we arm teachers with suitable knowledge and give them the confidence to deliver exceptional PE lessons while making the very best sustainable use of the PE and sports premium.

At Bawnmore, we've changed our approach in PE and have raised its profile across the whole school, from Nursery to Y2. We've adopted a child-centred – rather than an activity-centred – approach, which links with the core values we are working on as a school.

Instead of prioritising and praising only physical performance – for example, for being the fastest, the most able or finishing an activity – staff now focus on and reward children for effort, perseverance and for giving positive feedback to their peers, to give just a few examples. This places the learner at the heart of practice and, by applying all of the high-quality learning and teaching skills that are the norm in other subjects, it is transforming how we teach PE.

Each PE lesson focuses on one of six abilities: personal, social, creative, cognitive, physical and health and fitness – all delivered, of course, through the physical. We were introduced to this approach when we had real PE whole-school training from Create Development and it has been a priority in our learning improvement plan for the past two years.

The children are fully engaged in their PE lessons now. We use thematic approaches, from role-playing astronauts going on a space trip, to developing jumping and landing skills. The children love the stories and activities that link to the multi-abilities, and the skills are all transferable to the classroom. Reception pupils, in particular, are keen to engage with the story and then follow through with linking the skills. They love, for example, to be pirates following the captain's instructions to scrub the deck. They also love taking part in the songs

and watching the on-screen videos of other children performing physical skills.

We have also seen good levels of progress in children's skill development. They now lead their own learning in PE. They have clear next steps in each

lesson to challenge themselves and are more motivated to beat their personal best as opposed to compete against the child next to them. Each child achieves success which, in turn, has boosted their confidence, and their willingness to challenge themselves has helped develop resilience. This has all helped create a

positive relationship with PE and physical activity. Pupils who are struggling with a particular skill get some additional time in smaller groups with our PE apprentice.

"Instead of praising only physical performance, we reward children for effort, perseverance and giving positive feedback to peers"

Growing confidence

Our teaching staff are very positive about the approach, too. They all say they now feel more confident in delivering lessons and enjoy teaching PE. They tell me they are happy to be observed during PE lessons, not only during monitoring visits by governors but even by Ofsted. This certainly wasn't the case previously!

Are we enabling everyone to enjoy success through an inspiring and exciting curriculum? Yes, we are. What we've developed at Bawnmore is an enabling environment in PE where young people feel included, valued, challenged and supported to achieve their maximum potential in school and in life. **TP**



Debra Wade is headteacher at Bawnmore Community Infant School in Rugby, Warwickshire.



Provide high-quality, dependable childcare and generate income for your school



By offering a lifeline to busy parents, your school could receive hall hire fees of up to £10k. Our industry-leading, Ofsted-registered childcare provision takes care of everything meaning there's no extra admin for you.



Scan to find out more about
our wraparound care provision

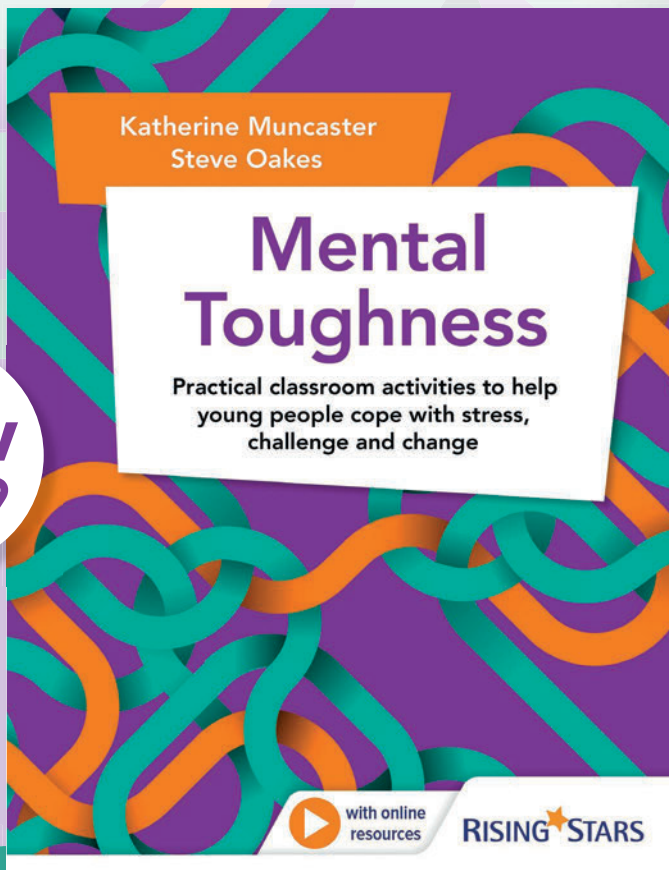
premier-education.com/schools/wraparound-care



Based on over 17,937 reviews

Develop your pupils' mental toughness and adopt a whole school approach to building resilience

New
£39.99



- Evidence-based strategies, underpinned by theory from the 4C Model of Mental Toughness
- 8 practical classroom activities for each year group, from Reception to Year 6
- Accompanying downloadable and editable slides to help teach each session, plus an example video lesson for each year group

**Save
20%**
with the code
WO0002096*



**Scan to
save**

*Terms and Conditions apply. UK and European educational establishments only. Orders must be placed online by midnight on 30/06/2023. Not valid in conjunction with any other offer. 20% discount only applies to single copies of Mental Toughness only and excludes all RS Assessment from Hodder Education and eduu.school resources. This discount code cannot be applied retrospectively.

Risingstars-uk.com/tp-mentaltoughness

RISING STARS
FROM HODDER EDUCATION



ASK THE EXPERT

“Normalise challenge”

Education consultant **Katherine Muncaster** explains how you can help your pupils to cope with obstacles using the 4C model of mental toughness

What challenges are schools currently facing?

Concerns about children’s mental health and resilience have been on the increase over the last 20 years, and have been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers are observing a shift in pupils’ behaviour, both in the classroom and in the playground. Often, when approaching challenging situations, children are now displaying low levels of resilience. We are seeing more behaviours that can be described as ‘mentally sensitive’ rather than ‘mentally tough’ and effective for approaching difficulties.

How do we overcome these challenges?

We need our children to develop their mental toughness. We are not trying to develop superheroes who approach problems and learning as if they are invincible, but rather help our children build up a healthy self-efficacy, where their self-esteem is built on learned accomplishments and can withstand failure.

What are the 4Cs of mental toughness?

Peter Clough’s 4C model of mental toughness provides an effective framework for schools and teachers to support their children. It consists of four attributes that help pupils to develop mental toughness: challenge, control, commitment and confidence. This framework is used in the new wellbeing handbook *Mental Toughness: Practical classroom activities to help young people cope with stress, challenge and change*.



EXPERT PROFILE

Name: Katherine Muncaster

Job title: Author, education consultant and headteacher

Area of expertise: School culture and mental toughness

Best part of my job: The children, and helping schools to develop their learning

How can I support this development?

As teachers, it is important to normalise the challenges that children face. The development of ‘visible thinking’ is one approach. This is the process of verbally sharing your own experiences, both positive and negative, and how you would approach challenges and difficulties. As you talk about your own experiences of feeling scared and anxious about a new experience, for example, it normalises these situations for children. An integral part of this process is the relationship within the classroom between the teacher and pupils; the stronger they are, the more effective this approach will be.

What has been the impact of this approach in schools?

The mental toughness lessons were piloted in a number of schools both in the UK and overseas. The sessions have helped to develop children’s awareness of mental toughness and have also helped to normalise finding things challenging. Teachers report seeing shifts in how pupils view challenges, and are now much more open about discussing any concerns.

ASK ME ABOUT

IMPACT: focusing on developing mental toughness in your children will impact them as individuals and create a collective culture in your classroom and school.

CPD: encourage staff to reflect on their own mental toughness and how they approach challenges. Use some of the sessions in the book as part of your CPD.

IMPROVEMENT: working together as a staff team with the children and their parents will enable you to effectively embed a powerful learning culture in your school.

Twitter: @everychilda Website: risingstars-uk.com/tp-mentaltoughness

Calling in the EXPERTS

If you suspect a pupil has mental health problems, when and how should you get help from a professional?

CATHERINE ROCHE

Like many teachers, SENCo Sarah really cared about the mental health of her pupils but lacked the time or resources to address it properly. She had been trained to manage angry outbursts from pupils as and when they happened but said, “I felt like I was trying to stick a little plaster over a massive hole and didn’t know how to help with the bigger stuff, the reasons behind the anger.” Both as a class teacher and as a member of her school’s leadership team, Sarah felt unable to fully meet pupils’ needs.

This experience is not uncommon. Schools today are increasingly under pressure to not only achieve academic excellence, but also to cope with a growing number of pupils who are struggling with their wellbeing. Back in 2017, the government

released a green paper that emphasised the role of schools in improving children’s mental health. Yet in a survey we conducted in partnership with the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) in 2022, 95 per cent of school staff report witnessing increased levels of pupil anxiety since the start of the school year, in contrast to a normal autumn term before the pandemic.

Meeting the educational and emotional needs of 30 pupils is a big challenge, especially when data tells us that, on average, three of those children will have a diagnosable mental health problem. And that doesn’t include all of those who will be coping with challenges like bullying, family breakdown and bereavement, as well as smaller worries and pressures on a daily basis. Sarah’s concerns are echoed by many

school staff. Expectations are high and there are only so many hours in the day.

Above and beyond

From Place2Be’s work in schools over more than two decades, we know that many teachers already go above and beyond to support pupils and plenty of schools are already putting mental health at the centre of their school culture or ethos. When I visit schools from Edinburgh to Hastings I am so often in awe of the commitment to mental health shown by the whole school community.

HOW TO PICK A COUNSELLOR FOR YOUR SCHOOL

- Read the DfE’s guidance for schools about setting up counselling services (tinyurl.com/tpcounselling) and the counselling section of Heads Together’s Mentally Healthy Schools’ website (mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk).
- Ask other local school staff about their experience and what they recommend. Could you group together to commission a counselling service?
- Check out what services are available in your community, including agencies, charities, organisations and individuals.
- Make sure any counsellor you employ is registered and accredited with one of the recognised professional bodies, such as the BACP or UKCP. This ensures they have met certain training and qualification standards, are working to an ethical framework, have supervision requirements and are subject to a complaints procedure. You could even look using the search engines on the BACP or UKCP websites.
- Check the counsellor has training in working with children, is confident working with parents and carers and is qualified to at least Diploma level.

Many hundreds of schools across the UK join us to celebrate Children’s Mental Health Week each year, shining a spotlight on the crucial role that schools can play. Yet in our survey with the NAHT, 91 per cent of respondents noted a negative impact on staff workload and capacity, and 89 per cent on staff wellbeing. The ‘bigger

stuff’ that worried Sarah is getting bigger and we can’t expect teachers to deal with it alone.

Throwing chairs

Teachers aren’t mental health experts and no one should expect them to be. But we must equip them with the

when behaviour – whether it’s chair throwing, silence or something else entirely – has some deeper cause. You may even know some of what lies behind it. But how likely is it that you have the time, resources or expertise to look into things further? And how are you supposed to manage the behaviour quickly so

that it causes minimum disruption to the rest of the class, while making sure that the child is getting the support they need? Sarah isn’t the only one to feel caught between a rock and a hard place.

We feel strongly that mental health training is one piece of the puzzle. One option is Place2Be’s ‘Mental Health Champions – Class Teachers’ programme, an independently evaluated programme to enhance teachers’ understanding of emotional wellbeing, while boosting staff confidence and helping them manage their own stress in practical ways.

In-school services

However, as well as training, teachers should be able to call on advice and support from a professional. Many school leaders face the frustration of knowing that staff and pupils are struggling, while feeling limited as to what additional professional support they can provide. When you’re looking to bring in a professional, the mental health landscape can feel

like a foreign land with its own language and unfamiliar rules. Our research with the NAHT, found that only 23 per cent of staff said they had regularly been able to access specialist support for pupils with mental health needs, leaving a majority of children and young people struggling without access to the support they need. They also highlighted the wider impact on many aspects of school life, such as pupil progress and behaviour. It’s vital to help school leaders develop a ‘whole-school approach’ to mental health, in which pupils, parents and staff are all supported and there are strong links with local mental health services. For Sarah’s school, that help came in the form of our in-school service, which provided what she called “the longer term, systemic approach as opposed to the spur of the moment, six-week anger management course”. The government’s proposal in the green paper for a designated senior lead in every school and mental health support teams could also be good starting points, provided both are adequately trained and have ongoing support.

Making a difference

Training initiatives aimed at senior staff like our ‘Mental Health Champions – School Leaders’ programme can help staff focus on making changes that make their school more mentally healthy overall. Brenda, a school leader in Leicester, had been worried about a particular pupil, but after taking part in

the programme she felt able to have a conversation with CAMHS “using the language which enabled me to be listened to”.

In an ideal world, every school in the UK would be able to make changes like these. In the meantime, the significant impact that teachers can – and do – have on the wellbeing of their classes is being recognised on a national scale. The Heads Together campaign, which was spearheaded by the Prince and Princess of Wales and Prince Harry, also launched ‘Mentally Healthy Schools’ (tinyurl.com/tp-MentallyHealthySchools)

which remains a useful one-stop shop for resources that primary schools can use to support emotional wellbeing, if you’re looking for a place to start.

The green paper, and more recent discussion paper (2022) are also a great opportunity to be part of what could be a truly transformative

period for children and young people, and we are hopeful that we can continue to seize these opportunities and make a difference to future generations. **TP**

“I felt like I was trying to stick a little plaster over a massive hole and didn’t know how to help with the bigger stuff”



Catherine Roche is chief executive of the children’s mental health charity **Place2Be**.

@place2be

place2be.org.uk

skills they need to keep an eye on the mental health of their class and spot problems

early, while knowing where to turn if more serious issues present themselves.

“Sometimes teachers have got kids throwing chairs on a daily basis,” Sarah told us. “That’s a really difficult thing to deal with.” Teachers tend to know their classes well, so you can probably tell

5 REASONS TO TRY... Kapow Primary lesson plans with CPD

Ambitious and thorough schemes of work to help you teach with confidence



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Kapow Primary provides schemes of work with full national curriculum coverage and integrated CPD for the foundation subjects. Integrating CPD into lesson plans empowers teachers to teach any subject with confidence. The high-quality and easily accessible resources enable teachers to develop their subject knowledge effectively.

1 REDUCES WORKLOAD

Do you get frustrated spending hours trying to find ideas and resources when planning a new unit of work? Kapow Primary does this legwork for you. Each lesson plan comes complete with bite-sized teacher presentation videos demonstrating the skills and knowledge required for each lesson. We've covered what to teach and when, leaving you free to focus on delivery. The videos are self-explanatory and clear, while the integrated CPD immediately upskills teachers, boosting confidence and reducing their workload.

2 SUPPORTS SUBJECT LEADERS

Kapow Primary's integrated CPD approach is especially beneficial for subject leaders, particularly non-specialists or those who are new to a subject. You can use the video presentations, knowledge organisers, staff knowledge audits and assessment tools to help support and train staff. There is a consistent and progressive approach to planning across year groups, and each long-term plan demonstrates how the scheme meets national curriculum requirements. Kapow Primary takes care of the details, allowing you to concentrate on the quality of your teaching.



3 IMPROVES SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE AND TEACHER CONFIDENCE

How many times have you taught a subject you aren't confident in and felt like you are 'winging it'? Kapow Primary's teacher video presentations give you the information you need to teach like an expert in just a few minutes. By demonstrating exactly what to teach, the videos enhance teacher

subject knowledge in an accessible way and build confidence. A confident teacher is an enthusiastic teacher, and an enthusiastic teacher inspires enthusiastic learners. Never feel like you're 'winging it' again!

4 HIGHLY RELEVANT AND SPECIFIC

It can be difficult for schools to cover CPD for teachers in foundation subjects. The requirements vary widely and often there isn't time to prioritise it. Kapow Primary's integrated CPD is specific both to subjects and to individual lessons, allowing teachers to learn as they teach. The first-rate resources are presented when they are needed as opposed to other forms of CPD that can't necessarily be applied straight away. Delivering CPD in this way makes it more meaningful, impactful and relevant.

5 ONGOING SUPPORT

As well as incorporating CPD within plans and schemes of work, Kapow Primary offers teachers and subject leaders an abundance of other support, including regular live webinars with experienced specialists, dedicated communities on social media, and blogs full of useful ideas and information. Subscribing schools can also access a back catalogue of popular webinars covering subject-specific topics, as well as advice about using and implementing the schemes of work. See kapowprimary.com to sign up for the next webinar and read the latest blog posts.

Kapow Primary™

Find out more:
kapowprimary.com
enquiries@kapowprimary.com
0203 873 1326

KEY POINTS

Kapow Primary's comprehensive schemes of work provide everything you need to implement impactful teaching and learning with full national curriculum coverage

Kapow Primary's lesson plans and schemes are created exclusively by teachers for teachers. Experienced subject specialists are continually developing the first-class resources

Try Kapow Primary for free with a 14-day trial, including unlimited access to all eight subjects for your whole school

Kapow Primary is growing rapidly; established in 2019, it is now trusted by over 5,000 schools and used by more than 37,000 teachers weekly

Books on PRESCRIPTION

A daily dose of literature can enhance children's mental wellbeing and help them cope with daily life

ELAINE BOUSFIELD

Do your pupils read in their spare time? Or, perhaps more importantly, do they read for pleasure? We all know that reading is great for academic reasons, but how about mental health?

Children as young as primary age are struggling. Depression and anxiety can be counted among the issues young people are facing, and 27% of teachers said that those with symptoms were aged between 7-11, according to research by the NASUWT teaching union.

In the midst of cuts to specialist support, what's a teacher to do? Reading and mental wellbeing are possibly not things that seem obviously linked, but they are something I've been passionate about throughout my career working with young people.

I've found that children who enjoy reading, and who read for pleasure, often have a high level of mental wellbeing. Reading can play a vital role in helping young people cope with daily life. It's more important than ever to encourage a love of reading, especially when the growing pressures of exams and daily life can all too often take it away.

In my experience, reading, especially fiction, can be a form of therapy for young people. It has been suggested that reading boosts confidence and self-esteem, and the more stories we read, the more we empathise. When children read about people like themselves and characters they relate to, it can help to quell feelings of loneliness and isolation. Further more, reading helps us to understand each other, and emotional intelligence is vital for today's children who are learning how to face a multitude of modern pressures, both academically and at home.

Try guided reading

As a primary teacher, there are a number of ways to encourage your pupils to read for pleasure, and to boost their mental wellbeing.

Guided reading is the perfect way to lift the focus from a potentially

self-conscious child. Fictional stories are often great starting points for discussions around tricky topics. Try reading the story together a couple of times, and if the child is facing a particular issue – bullying, for example – find a passage that resonates to help them to talk about it. Repeating a story once or twice is no bad thing – it shows that children are interested.

Talk about characters

Talking about a character might help children recall certain challenging experiences in their own lives, and thus help them to confront and discuss them. Seeing a character they relate to resolving conflicts lets children explore ways of dealing with issues that may be too difficult for them to confront otherwise. Discussing fictional problems can also help children to explore difficult issues in reality, and to build an understanding of different relationships.

Encourage families

Good habits often begin at home, and it's never too early to start. In fact, reading at home is one of the biggest indicators of academic achievement. This is why the more you can do to encourage reading with a parent or guardian, the better. Ask parents to read with their child at least once a day, preferably one-on-one – this way there are fewer distractions, and the book they are reading can be matched to the child's level, rather than a younger sibling's. Physical contact with loved ones while reading is also great – it releases happy hormones and helps children bond and associate reading with positivity, thus boosting their mental wellbeing.

Use books to prepare

The move to secondary school can be a crucial time in a child's development,

and according to the National Literacy Trust it is also a time when reading for pleasure decreases, alongside mental wellbeing.

As well as being useful tools when it comes to helping children look at past experiences, reading can also be helpful when it comes to preparation. If a big event is on the horizon, reading about the experience beforehand is a great way to familiarise children and help them accept what is to come. **TP**



Elaine Bousfield trained as a counsellor and has worked in mental health. She is the founder of ZunTold Publishing, a new publisher of fiction for children and young people. The first two titles in ZunTold's Gangster School series are now available to buy.

@zuntold

zuntold.com



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Key phrases of HTML code
- How websites are structured
- How easy it is to make 'fake news'
- The choices journalists need to make when producing web content

KS2 LESSON PLAN

Use a simple tool to hack BBC Newsround



Show pupils how to play around with code to insert themselves into the news, says **Adam Parkhouse**



If you were going to make the headlines, wouldn't you want to be in control of your own story? This lesson allows pupils to do just that. With a few simple lines of code and the right image you can bring children's newspaper article writing to life. Before the lesson you'll need to install the 'X-Ray Goggles' bookmark onto your web browser (see below for more information) to allow you to edit the BBC Newsround website. The changes disappear once you refresh the page, so don't worry about any lasting damage!

START HERE

Before you start creating your own headlines, have a discussion about the impact of the news.

Ask your class if anyone has been in the newspaper before. Can they remember the headline? How would it feel if you appeared on the front page with a positive headline? What if a different newspaper showed a different image of the same event with a negative headline? Having a discussion about the ethics of an editor's role and the impact of the language and images chosen will encourage children to take more care over their own choices later in the lesson.



MAIN LESSON

1 | PREPARING THE WEBSITE

Prior to the lesson, install the X-Ray Goggles bookmark onto your web browser (follow the simple instructions at x-ray-goggles.mouse.org). Next, visit the BBC Newsround website (bbc.co.uk/newsround). Click on the bookmark you have just installed and select one of the boxes. You can now change the image and headline. Take screenshots of the below process to turn into a step-by-step guide – this will be useful for pupils later.

Search online for an image of your own school. Right click it and select 'copy image address' then paste

this URL into the code that appears when you click one of the Newsround images. Change the headline to something that will grab pupils' attention. When you are happy, take a screenshot of your creation. Use a program like Microsoft Paint to crop it, then before pupils enter the classroom, open the image with Internet Explorer for added authenticity.

Once pupils enter the classroom, act casually and don't mention the fact that your school is on the Newsround website. Hopefully there will be a ripple of excitement when children notice that something is up. Now it's time to show them how it's done...





“Once pupils enter the classroom, act casually and don’t mention the fact that your school is on the Newsround website”

it with a sensible suggestion from the class. When you hit update, the class will see the clear change. It is worth repeating this before letting pupils attempt a change of their own.

3| CHANGING IMAGES

If you have a school website, and with the right parental permission, you may be able to attach photos of pupils to the headlines. If not, explain to the children that all images have their own web address that can be accessed by right clicking on it and selecting the ‘copy image address’ option. This is also a useful opportunity to introduce children to abbreviations such as ‘.jpeg/.jpg’ and the idea that addresses start with ‘http’ or ‘https’.

In the same way that you replaced the headline text, show how to delete the existing image address and paste in the new one. This should replace the image on the screen in front of you. Check for understanding then let children create their own ‘fake news’.

Make sure pupils take a screenshot of their creations. You may need to show them how to paste this into Microsoft Paint. Save the image in a shared folder so children can see each other’s work. End the lesson by selecting some of the best images to share at the front of the class.

Adam Parkhouse was a silver winner at the Pearson Teaching Awards and is a Y5 teacher at Little Plumstead C of E Primary, Norwich.

EXTENDING THE LESSON



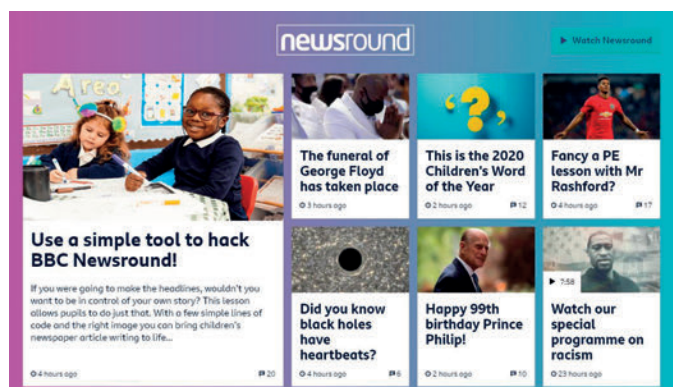
- How could pupils use this new skill in other ways or on other websites? Why is this potentially dangerous? What are the benefits of it? Is someone who doesn’t use the internet going to know something is wrong?
- Ask pupils to make their own tutorial using screengrabs for another child to use. Consider using screen recording technology if you have it available. If not, Powerpoint or similar works well.
- Investigate the webpage for other codes aside from ‘’ and ‘<p>’. Make a list of them. Click on them, read the code and see if you can change anything else. Find out how to change font colours by looking at HEX numbers

2| SHOW THE CLASS

This lesson works on the assumption that the children have little knowledge of HTML code (as may you!). The key elements to show them are the tags that say ‘’ and ‘<p>’. This requires whole-class modelling. Giving pupils the step-by-step guide you created earlier will allow

them to refer to the process during the lesson.

Hover your mouse over a piece of text on the Newsround website and show the children how it is highlighted. Clicking on the box reveals a strip of code. Get the children to find the original headline in the code. Using the backspace key, remove the text and replace



USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What do the bracketed phrases ‘’ and ‘<p>’ stand for (image, paragraph)? Which one changes the image?
- How do you find the web address of an image?
- How can you make your changes look believable?

Maths



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Measure, compare, add and subtract masses and lengths
- Read and interpret information presented in tables
- Use a range of measuring tools
- Understand and use scales with accuracy
- Develop fluency, mathematical reasoning and competence in solving problems

Fix a post office parcel mix-up



Practise your measuring skills by working out what it would cost to post a variety of packages, says **Julianne Britton**

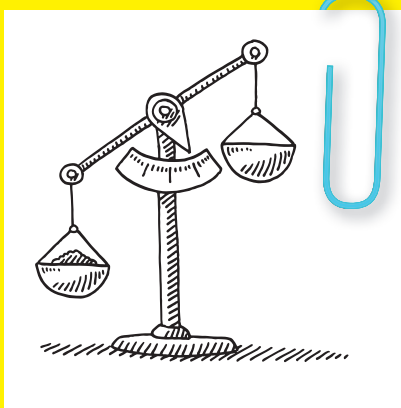
@juliannebritton missbritton.co.uk

This lesson takes a little bit of preparation, but it's well worth it to see pupils engaged with maths and enjoying problem-solving. During this lesson, children will be apply their knowledge and understanding of measure to sort out an imaginary post office mix-up, while also demonstrating reasoning skills and teamwork. This lesson works so well because children are engaged from the moment they set foot in the classroom. Maths really comes to life for pupils when they have the opportunity to apply their learning to a real-life situation.



START HERE

To begin, ask pupils to complete an activity that involves balancing masses on imaginary scales. Children must work together to decide which masses go on which side of the scales. Encourage less able pupils to take a practical approach in order to see the effect of the masses on a real pair of scales. To challenge more able pupils, present them with a range of mass cards (download these from [teachwire.net/teaching-resources/ks2-measuring](https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources/ks2-measuring)). They can use these numbers to calculate which masses should be put on either side of the scales illustration. Differentiate the level of challenge for different groups by carefully choosing the masses you give them.



MAIN LESSON

1 | READING SCALES

Explain to your class that they will be working for the post office today. Which maths skills might you need in that job? Discuss children's ideas before introducing the lesson objectives.

Recap and demonstrate how to read scales. Use your interactive whiteboard to display scales with varying increments. Ask children to read the scales, showing their answers on their whiteboards. This is a good opportunity for formative assessment, giving you a better understanding of your pupils' capabilities. This may affect your decision about where support will be needed most during the lesson.

2 | POST OFFICE PROBLEMS

Bring the children back together to play an interactive game on your IWB. Find it at tinyurl.com/tpmailgame. Explain that this game is similar to the activities pupils will be completing today. Share and discuss the Royal Mail price list that they will use during the lesson (download it from [teachwire.net/teaching-resources/ks2-measuring](https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources/ks2-measuring)). Ask for a volunteer to measure the dimensions and mass of an item. Model how to find the postage cost using the table.

Explain that there are several post office tasks that need to be completed and that pupils will be working in groups to complete these. Ask children to suggest rules for effective teamwork. This will



“This lesson works so well because children are engaged from the second they step foot in the classroom”

help the lesson to run more smoothly as children will have consciously thought about how they are going to work well as a group. Present each group with an envelope containing one of the following problems. There are three different ones to suit different abilities – find printable versions of the problems at [teachwire.net/teaching-resources/ks2-measuring](https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources/ks2-measuring). Tell each group to open their envelope, read their problem and discuss what they think they need to do.

3| THE PROBLEMS

Here are the three problems to give to your different groups:

ADVANCED

Prior to the lesson, prepare several different parcels with blank labels. Download an

example of our clues sheet from [teachwire.net/teaching-resources/ks2-measuring](https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources/ks2-measuring).

You may need to rewrite these clues before the lesson, depending on the masses of your chosen packages. Present pupils with this problem:

There's a bit of a problem at the post office. Some parcels have been mixed up and they are missing their labels. It is your task to use the clues provided to find out which parcel is being sent where. You must also complete the price tags on each parcel by using the Royal Mail price chart.

To complete this task, children must measure the mass, height and length of each item, before choosing the correct label and identifying the postage cost.

MIDDLE

Prior to the lesson, prepare a range of different sized parcels. Present pupils with this problem:

William has sold some items on eBay and now he needs to send them to their new owners. Before he can send the items, he needs to know how much he needs to pay for delivery. You must measure the mass, height and length of each item in order to work out the delivery cost using the Royal Mail price chart.

SUPPORTED

Prior to the lesson, gather a range of food items that you might send in a charity parcel. Present pupils with this problem:

We are sending a parcel of food to Africa to help those less fortunate. Your task is to weigh each item of food then find the total mass. When you know the total mass, we can work out how much it will cost to send the package.

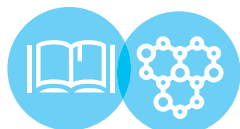
Julianne Britton is a qualified teacher with seven years' experience, and owner of website Miss Britton where she offers downloadable teaching resources and private tuition services.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

- Continue the post office theme by asking pupils to convert the measurements of different parcels from metric to imperial in order to work out international postage costs.
- To enhance their understanding of measure, ask pupils to carry out an area and perimeter investigation in which they contribute to school improvements by calculating the cost of new fencing and flooring for an area of the playground.
- Following a similar approach, set a range of problems involving time, using the context of a train station.
- To build on their understanding, encourage pupils to use their measuring skills at home, eg accurately weighing ingredients for a recipe; ensuring that luggage meets an airline's guidelines; checking their own measurements in order to buy clothing or enter a theme park ride.

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Are the heaviest items always the largest?
- What does each interval represent on the scale?
- How much would it cost to post a 500g parcel?
- What is the most appropriate unit of measure to use?



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Use the possessive apostrophe in sentences that contain both singular and plural nouns
- Use high-level vocabulary when writing sentences about orangutans
- Enhance their interest in and improve their knowledge and understanding of the natural world

Use orangutans to teach about apostrophes



Use the hook of amazing Attenborough wildlife clips to get children engaged in grammar lessons, says **David Millington**



@natural_curric



naturalcurriculum.co.uk

This Y5 grammar lesson, based on a David Attenborough clip about orangutans, will help children to develop an understanding of possessive apostrophes in plural and singular nouns. It's been adapted from the Natural Curriculum, a website developed in partnership with the Educational Recording Agency, that features fun, free, animal-themed grammar lessons for Y4-6 centred around captivating clips from the BBC's natural history archives. Use the resources in the classroom to engage pupils in literacy learning with a science twist!



START HERE

The activities outlined in this lesson can be broken down into grammar starters and spread out over consecutive days or taught together as an hour-long session. Begin the lesson by visiting the Natural Curriculum website (tinyurl.com/tp-orangutan1) and showing children the picture of the orangutan that appears on screen one. What do pupils already know about this remarkable creature? This will give children the opportunity to connect their learning, and the exciting animal focus will get them instantly engaged in the lesson.



MAIN LESSON

1 | WAYS OF THE FOREST

Introduce the following grammar objective to the children: "We are learning how to write sentences that contain possessive opportunities." Next, read the clip description at tinyurl.com/tp-orangutan1. The facts about orangutans and details about the clip should excite the children about what is to follow and focus their attention on Sir David's fabulous narration.

Watch the four-minute clip on the website as a class. It shows a mother orangutan teaching her youngster the ways of the Borneo rainforest. Once it's finished, compile a

class list of words and phrases to describe the appearance and behaviour of the furry primates. A focus on the word level early on will help children construct descriptive sentences as they move through the lesson sequence.

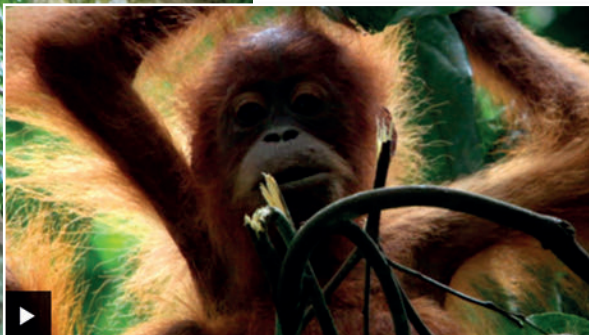
2 | MASTER APOSTROPHES

Use the following orangutan-themed sentences to teach the mechanics of possessive apostrophes:

- The infant's human-like fingers probed deep inside the termites' nest.



“Ask children to write their own sentence about the orangutans featured in the film clip”



The prickly skins, that belonged to the durian fruits, made them hard to carry.

Now ask children to write their own sentence about the orangutans featured in the film clip that includes a possessive apostrophe within a pluralised noun. Display the word wall on screen three (tinyurl.com/tp-orangutan1). It features rich vocabulary relating to the film clip, such as ‘termites’, ‘raided’ and ‘ripened’. Encourage children to use words from it in their sentence.

3| INDEPENDENT WRITING

Download and adapt the worksheet that appears on screen four so that it suits your pupils’ needs. This task gives pupils the opportunity to apply their knowledge of possessive apostrophes by adding apostrophes to sentences where they have been omitted, rewriting sentences so that they include possessive apostrophes and writing their own follow-on sentences including possessive apostrophes.

To finish the lesson, recap the main grammar points, drawing on examples from pupils’ own writing. Once you have done this, get the children to discuss with their talk partners what they have learned about the natural

- The orangutan’s daughter was learning how to identify when the durian fruit’s flesh had ripened to perfection.
- The lumberjacks’ chainsaws could be heard from far and wide.

They each contain a possessive apostrophe (used to show that someone or something belongs to someone or something else). Draw pupils’ attention to the fact that when something belongs to a single noun, an apostrophe is added and this is followed by an ‘s’, e.g. ‘orangutan’s nest’. When something belongs to two or

more (plural) nouns, we add an apostrophe after the existing ‘s’, e.g. ‘termites’ nest’. Exceptions to this include pluralised nouns that don’t end in ‘s’, e.g. ‘children’s’.

Ask children to copy and complete the following sentence by putting in a possessive apostrophe:

The orangutans reddish-orange fur was thin and shaggy.

Next, rewrite the following sentence so that it contains a possessive apostrophe:

EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Use your knowledge of orangutans to write a persuasive letter to a supermarket chain that buys and sells palm oil. List the accurate use of possessive apostrophes in the success criteria.
- Writing as a mother orangutan, create an instructional leaflet that will help infants learn the ways of the forest.
- After watching both film clips, ask children to imagine that they are members of a film crew that have been tasked with filming orangutans in Borneo for a new BBC wildlife series. Write a diary entry about a day’s filming that didn’t quite go to plan. Again, encourage children to accurately use possessive apostrophes in their writing.

world and orangutans. Bring the lesson to an end by watching another orangutan clip (see screen four) that shows a mischievous youngster hurling a branch at a wildlife presenter.

David Millington teaches at Cotham Gardens Primary in Bristol. He is the creator and principal author of the Natural Curriculum.

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Where have you come across apostrophes before?
- How do we show possession when something belongs to two or more (plural) nouns?
- Why are orangutans critically endangered and how can we help them?

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Collins Big Cat



Help pupils navigate tricky subjects such as emotions, friendships, family and self-esteem with this new set of purpose-written books

AT A GLANCE

- A new set of 12 mental health and wellbeing books added to the collection of 1500+ Big Cat books
- Stories showcasing diversity, inclusivity and mental wellbeing
- Levelled for guided and independent reading
- Written by a talented pool of wellbeing authors

REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL



Books are powerful tools because they can inspire, provoke, challenge perceptions and provide children with some much-needed support. They don't just help pupils learn about the world around them, but also help them to process it, and Collins Big Cat has just the bundle.

The team has produced 12 new banded titles in an eclectic collection of fiction and non-fiction covering a range of topics from healthy eating, learning how the brain works, meditation and screen-time to anxiety, friendships, family relationships, self-esteem, feelings and emotions. Written in an accessible but not patronising tone, these are must-reads for children.

The fictional tales are full of engaging scenarios and practical advice, and help to unlock a number of different routes for children trying to problem-solve and navigate their way through what can be a maze of complex situations and feelings.

There are stories that weave creative and therapeutic elements throughout in sensitive, adventurous and humorous ways. The authors include children's therapists, counsellors and top children's writers such as Michael Rosen who speak from experience, know how to pen a tale, and – critically – how to engage young readers.

Two pages of each book are dedicated to reflection and so allow pupils to revisit the preceding content, supporting comprehension skills, vocabulary development and recall. There is also a wealth of ideas for reading in the back of each book, providing practical support and stimulating activities.

Some subjects can be hard for children to talk

about, but books can help to open up conversations and offer new perspectives and insights.

These Collins Big Cat books are terrific 'growing up' companions and will help pupils get to grips with and think about situations they might very well find themselves knee-deep in.

They can also be used to explore appropriate uses of language and behavioural boundaries, help children work through and let go of the anxieties that affect them, explore their feelings, and communicate with adults who may be working with them such as a parent, carer, teacher, member of support staff, social worker or counsellor.

You can also use the collection to get pupils thinking about themselves in relation to their behaviour, and start seeing the two as separate. They can help encourage children to be brave, bounce back and build resilience and resilience. There is also scope for children to help their own family members open up about their feelings, too.

There's no sugar-coating the tough topics and sometimes, especially with primary-aged children, it can be difficult to find the words to help. Thankfully we have these brilliant Collins books to help so we are not at a loss for words when it matters most.

Children can use these books as a place to turn to for information, suggestions and building habits to enhance their lives and develop a strong, positive outlook on the world and on their capabilities.

Some children's books are like shoes: when they fit the children perfectly, they work wonders.

teach
PRIMARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Positive mental health books to help children navigate challenging and complex issues
- ✓ A great way to start conversations from a young age and develop a growth mindset
- ✓ Jam-packed with useful tips and techniques for healthily expressing how they are feeling
- ✓ Straightforward strategies that children can use to deal with particular feelings
- ✓ Helps children to adapt to change head-on and be flexible in their thinking

UPGRADE IF...

You want to regularly use books as a wellbeing support and emotional literacy tool for children going through difficult situations. Help them dive deep into their emotions and find healthy ways to deal with their thoughts and responses.

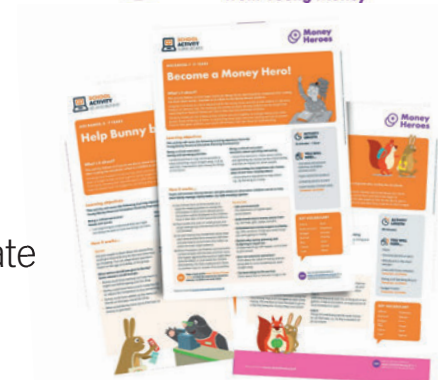
Titles range from £7 to £7.75. See collins.co.uk/BigCatWellbeing for more info



FINANCE

Money Heroes

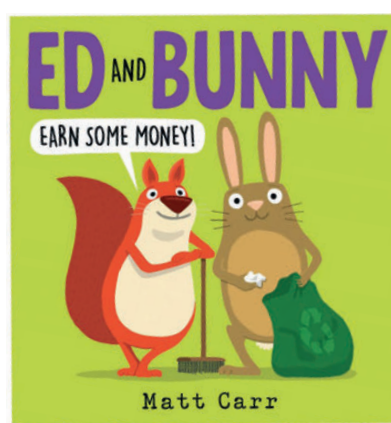
A free, fun and accessible programme that seeks to educate primary children about the sound management of their personal finances



AT A GLANCE

- Created by Young Money and supported by HSBC UK
- Well-pitched resources for KS1 and KS2 children
- New SEND resources and accessible, adapted books available supported by BBC Children in Need
- Resources & books launching in Welsh
- Storybooks written by well-established authors
- Includes activities and a board game
- Easily available via a bespoke online platform

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



As Mr Banks from *Mary Poppins* will tell you, being sensible and careful with money is not a particularly enchanting subject for anyone, let alone children. Nevertheless, it is extremely important that all young people, no matter their circumstances, receive an appropriate financial education. This reflects our new, adaptable approach to SEND, and the launch of new, accessible versions of our books and resources.

Of course, schools are now required to make sure their curriculum prepares children for the realities and responsibilities of life. So, how can you make this topic appealing for children who might not give tuppence for saving but happily blow their cash on bird seed and kites?

Fortunately for teachers, Young Money, part of Young Enterprise, has a long track record of offering the knowledge, resources and training they need to bring money matters to life for primary children. Backed by HSBC UK, they have now developed Money Heroes to help parents and teachers develop children's financial capability skills.

Money Heroes comprises books and activities that deliver important financial lessons about things like saving and budgeting for young people. The team have even teamed up with Orchard Toys to create a shopping board game to accompany some of them. In 2022, they also partnered with BBC Children in Need to create ability-focused versions of all their resources, and five new accessible versions of all the books –

now available in braille, BSL sign language, audio-books, large print and early readers. Accessibility is key for Money Heroes, who are also about to launch Welsh versions of all the resources, too.

For KS1 children, they offer *Ed and Bunny* books which look at earning and spending money. As you would hope, they are bright, cheerful and very accessible. Somehow, author and designer Matt Carr has managed to convey all the right messages without being too preachy. He has even managed to weave in some helpful thoughts on kindness and friendship.

KS2 children get three stories in two lively and appealing books – the newest with a climate spin. I really liked the way the author conveyed difficult issues, including families falling on harder times, in such a positive yet realistic light. I imagine there are many difficult and even angry conversations within households that could have been avoided by sharing these well-pitched tales beforehand.

When it comes to potential savings, time must come close to the top of the wish-list for teachers so they will, no doubt, find the ready-made, full activities particularly attractive. Nevertheless, schools will also be delighted to discover that the books, games and activities are all free if acquired through the programme's website.

In one of the stories, it is very wisely pointed out that if something seems too good to be true, it probably is. Money Heroes might just be the exception that proves the rule.

teach PRIMARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Created by financial education experts
- ✓ Helps to develop good financial habits from an early age
- ✓ Free teacher training available – both mainstream & SEND versions
- ✓ Saves teachers' precious time
- ✓ Further free resources available online
- ✓ Fun and engaging stories
- ✓ Related, free shopping board game available from Orchard Toys, and a digital game for KS2
- ✓ SEND accessible versions of books
- ✓ New, accessible activities make the programme suitable for all pupils

UPGRADE IF...

You need to offer your children a quality introduction to financial matters in an appealing and accessible way.

Money Heroes resources are available for free through their online platform at moneyheroes.org.uk

Q & A

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

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

For me, happiness in my job is feeling that I've played a part, however small, in enabling our pupils to leave school ready to face the next stage of their life with confidence. Yes, that means helping them achieve the learning and qualifications they need, but it's more than that. It's the personal qualities and skills that mean they have a better chance of living fulfilling and rewarding lives as adults. That really makes me happy.

2 What is your greatest fear at work?

About once a term I have a nightmare that a class turns up and I don't know what to teach them, the lesson disintegrates into chaos and I wake up thankful that it wasn't real. So forgetting to plan a lesson is my greatest fear. Oh, and opening my snack drawer and finding it's empty!

3 What is your current state of mind?

It's a stressful time of year in secondary schools as we're preparing pupils for exams which can affect their future, and right now I'm feeling the pressure of that. It doesn't help that some pupils lost varying amounts of learning time in Year 8 and 9. So now I'm focusing on support and encouragement, and will hopefully build confidence in their knowledge and skills.

4 What do you consider the most overrated teacher virtue?

Teachers who drag themselves into work when they're not well enough to be there (and I include myself in this). We need to prioritise getting better, as well as not passing bugs on to others. Of course, teaching is an incredibly important job. But it is just a job after all.

5 On what occasion do you lie to your class?

Pupils often want to know if they are my favourite class, especially when I teach several groups in the same year. In order to avoid an outburst of indignant outrage, I'm likely to tell each class they're my favourite and hope they don't discuss it with their friends at break time.

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

I often feel like I've got so much content to get through each lesson – especially with my KS4 classes – that I can't allow myself to be distracted by off-topic chats or the latest football results (however much I'd like to). So I use the phrase 'We're on a mission' a lot as a reminder for myself as much as the pupils that we've got a great deal of work to do before the bell goes.

7 What do you consider your greatest teaching achievement?

Probably becoming a part of the local community. I started at my school in April 2000 with the intention of

staying a couple of years before moving on. I quickly realised how much I liked teaching the pupils here and working with my colleagues, and a couple of years grew into 23 (and counting). I've taught entire families, and a surprising amount of the teachers too. But the first day a pupil says to me "You taught my Grandma" I'm done!

8 What is your most treasured teaching possession?

After some serious deliberation, I'm choosing two things. First of all, I love my stationery stash. Glitter highlighters, oversized Post-it notes and a multitude of coloured pens always make a job seem a little less onerous and a bit more fun.

More importantly, I have my memory box. Over the years I've been lucky enough to have been given some wonderful cards from pupils and colleagues and I've kept them all. If it's been a tough day, a flick through some of them is a rewarding wander down memory lane, remembering names and faces, and reminds me why I'm still a teacher after all these years! TP



NAME: Karen Knight

JOB ROLE: History teacher at Malet Lambert School in Hull

EXTRA INFO: You can download Karen's resources to adapt for your own classes from her Twitter account @KKNTeachLearn

Great Ormond Street Hospital is a place where extraordinary things happen every day

Your school can help us save more lives, develop new treatments, build new wards and support our young patients and their families.

Start fundraising today!

Visit **gosh.org/schools** for great ideas, fun activities and handy resources.



Get in touch:
schools@gosh.org or
020 7239 3131

Schools

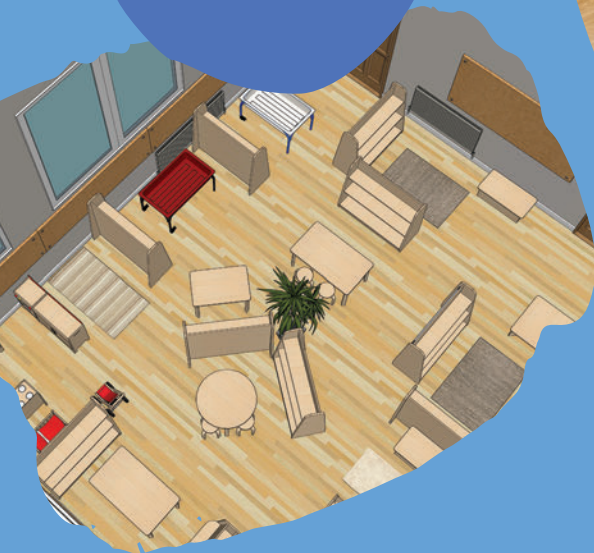
Transforming Early Years Classrooms



Early
Excellence
Inspirational
Learning

Enrich
learning with
high-quality
resources

Design Early Years
classrooms with
expert support



Planning to revitalise
your provision?
Explore Early
Excellence today

To find out about Early Excellence and gain expert help to equip your Early Years and KS1 learning environments visit earlyexcellence.com or call 01422 311 314

To explore our FREE design service visit:
earlyexcellence.com/design

Download a FREE early
years learning environment
audit today & order our
latest brochure pack

