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Hello!



his issue's focus is on wellbeing, and it does seem to me that everyone is in dire need of advice on how to boost the mental health of both pupils and colleagues right now.

At West Lea, a special needs school, there is a strong focus on the idea that if a school community is to flourish then its staff must feel supported and secure (p59). On p56 Kate Landsman explains why teaching social and

emotional literacy is so important in helping children navigate the challenges that come their way. Viv Trask-Hall has some great advice on what to do if pupils get overwhelmed in class (p67), and Adam Bushnell (p70) suggests ways you can incorporate invaluable reflection sessions into the school day.

One challenge no teacher ever wants to face is needing to support a bereaved pupil; Bob Usher and Tracey Boseley offer some research-led guidelines on what to do in both the short- and long term if you do find yourself in that situation (p63).

Other highlights for me in this issue include Alom Shaha's exploration of how you can use fiction to engage children in science (p34), and Emily Azouelos' tips on using objects and artefacts to get children thinking deeply (p31). Bismha Afzal's medium-term plan on the Hajj pilgrimage (p22) incorporates RE, history and geography into a very interesting unit of work.

We have some super lesson plans this issue too. Adele Darlington celebrates summer with sunny paintings inspired by American artist Alma Thomas (p74), while Ruth Astley takes KS1 pupils on a piratical trip round the playground to help them get to grips with positional and directional language (p76). To mark Refugee Week, Charlie Stansfield from the National Holocaust Museum has put together some thought-provoking activities around the experiences of the Kindertransport children (p72).

As ever, do drop me a line if you have any interesting lesson ideas to share!

Lydia

Lydia Grove, editor X @TeachPrimaryLG

Don't miss our next issue, available from 21et June

POWERED BY...



BISMHA AFZAL takes us on the journey of a lifetime

"The Hajj pilgrimage is considered to be the spiritual apex of a Muslim's life" P22



SUE COWLEY shares her behaviour management expertise

"Establishing your expectations is not about listing long series of rules" P32



JON BIDDLE presents some thrilling *Brightstorm* topic activities

"The action starts almost immediately and doesn't let up" P47









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Daily reflections can have a transformative effect on children's learning, and they're easier to fit into the school day than you might think



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teachers about what

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Let's bring motivation, enjoyment and authentic writing purpose back into our classrooms, say Ellen Counter and Juliet McCullion

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MAY

Breaktime Interviews Ideas Resources Research News



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



MOBILE MATHS

Fables World is a laptop and phone friendly teaching platform that helps children aged four and up to master maths in just five minutes a day. This popular app is used by over 10,000 families in the UK whose children struggle with maths. Find out more at fables.world



ENERGY & CLIMATE The Centre for Sustainable Energy, a fuel poverty and climate charity, has developed a new collection of primary teaching resources to help teachers embed environmental education in the curriculum. All the resources, including lesson plans and assemblies, can be downloaded at tinyurl.com/tp-CSE



ONLINE SAFETY

Digital Explorers, a new internet safety game from leading edtech charity LGfL-The National Grid for Learning, is designed to make learning about keeping safe online engaging for KS2 pupils. This 'safety quest' activity is presented as a downloadable board game. Visit tinvurl.com/tp-**DigitalExplorers**

Communication and camels

Up to 14 million people in the UK (20 per cent of the population) experience communication difficulties at some point in their lives.

Woburn Safari Park has partnered with visual communication experts Widgit (widgit.com) to create a selection of new symbols and images for visitors that support communication in a visual way. These include information about the animals, food options, and leisure activities. They support neurodiverse people in sharing their preferences, interests, and needs, helping to foster a calmer and more enjoyable environment when visiting.

To launch the new symbols, Woburn Safari Park and Widgit invited pupils from Windmill Hill School, a local special education needs school, to a birthday party for Wednesday, a one-eyed Bactrian camel. The children prepared carrots for all the camels to eat, and enjoyed learning about the animals' unique personalities, habitats and food preferences.



Start each day with a

quick, fun helping of SPaG revision, courtesy of Plazoom's Grammar Slam collection - five-step PowerPoint activities covering key word, sentence, text and punctuation skills from Appendix 2, for all year groups. Find out more and try Grammar Slam for yourself at Bit.ly/PlazoomGS

IN EVERY ISSUE



Pupil poverty

A charity that gives away free school uniforms saved parents across Kirklees almost £1m last year. Huddersfield-based

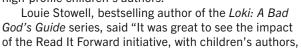
Uniform Exchange helped 10,188 children in 2023, donating more than 92,000 items of clothing. Founder Kate France says it's proof of how badly this frontline service is needed at a time when the average cost for a full primary school uniform is £287.

Thousands of people donate outgrown clothes and shoes to Uniform Exchange each year via dozens of drop-off points from which the charity collects, cleans and redistributes items to families in need.

Each year, Uniform Exchange prevents 50 tonnes of school uniform needlessly going into landfill in Kirklees, and so many pieces of clothing are now collected that anyone can apply for free school uniform to help reduce waste.

A big book boost

A charitable initiative from Bookshop.org has provided reading support to over 1,000 families in need. The Read It Forward campaign, in partnership with BookTrust, ran throughout February. Bookshop.org donated 10 per cent of the sales of each children's book sold via their platform (bookshop.org) to BookTrust, who are the UK's largest children's reading charity. The campaign received backing from a raft of high-profile children's authors.



publishers and independent bookshops sharing the recommendations for a really diverse range of children's books."

Lizzie Catford, director of children's books at BookTrust, said "The money raised will help over 1,000 children from low-income backgrounds access books to support, or perhaps even start, their reading journeys."

1% of primary teachers think their pupils have adequate financial skills

Look ahead Book ahead

PRIDE MONTH

Celebrate in style this June – and learn about the struggles LGBTQ+



people face – with this roundup of the best KS2 resources. tinyurl.com/ tp-TW-Pride

FATHER'S DAY

Show some appreciation for dads on 16th June with these cra activities from



with these craft and literacy activities from Teachwire. They're all FREE to download at tinyurl.com/tp-Dads



Andy Griffiths Author of the phenomenally successful *Treehouse* series

1. Why did you start writing children's books?

As long as I can remember, I've written humorous short stories, poems and cartoons to amuse my friends and family. In my late twenties, I became a high school English teacher and, for the first time, met students who had no connection to, or love for, reading or writing. I instinctively began writing short humorous pieces for them to demonstrate the wonderful freedom of the imaginative world and to model the many possibilities of self-expression – and pure mischievous joy – of writing for themselves and their friends.

2. You were once lead singer in a punk band. How did you bring that spirit to your books?

I fell in love with punk rock's irreverent spirit from the moment I discovered it. Loud, raw, direct, confronting and often funny – I mean, what's not to like? It blended perfectly with the spirit of anarchic fun and fearlessness I was always searching for in the books and comics I read, as well as the spirit I was trying to express in my writing.

3. Why did you decide to end the Treehouse series?

Well, every book has 13 chapters, Jill has 13 flying cats and Edward Scooperhand's ice cream parlour has 78 different flavours, which is multiple of 13... As we approached the 13th book, I realised that this would be the perfect place to end the series and let Andy and Terry sail off into the sunset (or zoom out into the universe).

The 169-Storey Treehouse: Monkeys, Mirrors, Mayhem! by Andy Griffiths, illustrated by Terry Denton, is out now.

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FEATURES SCHOOL BUSINESS



8 WAYS to ace your first school budget

Pin down the essentials to create an effective budget that will help your school deliver a great education for every child

1 DON'T JUST USE LAST YEAR'S BUDGET

Managing school budgets gets more challenging every year. Gone are the days of replicating last year's budget lines and simply adjusting them for inflation; using that approach now is a sure-fire way to make more work for everyone in the long run.

Take the time to analyse outcomes from the year-end. What did you overspend on, what wasn't worth the investment, where could you make efficiencies? This will help you create a budget for the future which is going to work harder for your school.

2 DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR PUPIL NUMBERS

The number of pupils on roll is an important factor in the National Funding Formula, and for planning provision, so it's a key piece of information for realistic budget setting. To make sure your student number predictions are as accurate as they can be, check your figures against your local authority's place planning data to see what they are predicting for your area.

3 ALIGN WITH YOUR SIP

Your budget should reflect your school's strategic plans for growth and development, and the resources you are going to need to get you there, so check everything against your School Improvement Plan/School Development Plan.

4 | REVIEW YOUR STAFFING LEVELS

Staffing should account for between 75 per cent and 80 per cent of your total revenue income. If your costs exceed this, you might need to consider how to structure both classrooms and the back-office to optimise impact. Start by looking at how many teaching staff you will need to deliver the curriculum effectively, and then allocate classroom support hours against a strategy designed to ensure the highest quality learning outcomes for every pupil. Budget deficits are like a rising tide, so it's key to your financial sustainability that you take early action if you have too many teaching and/or support staff in your structure. Don't delay, and utilise any resignations as an opportunity to rethink structure and staff deployment.



KEEGAN is resource advisor at HFL Education (hfleducation.org). She has been supporting schools with their finances for over 20 years.

5 | FULLY COST YOUR SEND PROVISION

Provisionally mapping your SEND support is essential. Review how much it's costing to provide SEND support for pupils versus the additional funding you receive, and ensure these two amounts are in balance. Don't forget to include the £6,000 notional SEND budget per pupil. If you're struggling to make the numbers align, consider how you could deliver support in a different way and in line with the funding received. For example, moving from one-to-one support for children with SEND to a team teaching approach for a group of pupils.

6 | PUPIL PREMIUM NUMBERS

A large percentage of your Pupil Premium expenditure will invariably be sat within your staffing expenditure already. Ensure that you have calculated your Pupil Premium staffing costs before adding additional non-staffing expenditure such as subscriptions, therapies, trips and activities so that you are clear on the resource envelope available to you.

7 CHECK YOUR WORK

If you want to check that your budget is on the money, so to speak, the Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning (ICFP) tools on the Department for Education website (**tinyurl.com/tp-ICFP**) are really helpful. You can check where your proposed budgets sit in comparison to national thresholds, and it has a calculator to help you work out the teaching resources needed to run the classes in your school.

8 | BE PREPARED TO MAKE DIFFICULT DECISIONS

If you can't make the figures fit in your budget, you will have to make some tough choices about your expenditure – sooner rather than later. The longer the books don't quite balance, the larger the deficit position the school will find itself in. This will have a cumulative impact on education outcomes, staff morale, your mental health and much more. We always suggest school leaders open a dialogue with staff and be honest with them about any financial challenges the school is facing.

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Sabina Khanam





Should we promote taking risks in school?

Forest school can be a perilous business, but that is where its value lies

chools are places where the safety and wellbeing of children are of paramount importance, and rightly so. But how does this fit in with encouraging children to take risks – often ones that could result in physical harm – in outdoor environments?

This was often a preoccupation of mine when I started out as a forest school leader seven years ago and is still at the forefront of my mind in every session I lead.

Of course, every effective forest school leader will have well-written risk assessments in place for everything from fire-lighting, through chopping wood with an axe and building a shelter, to climbing a tree. However, as is always the case in schools, in practice things are rarely such plain sailing.

I recall a session where I had to keep one eye on the capture of a millipede (the holy grail of minibeasts on our site!), while simultaneously keeping the other on a child who was whittling a stick with a sharp knife. I did contemplate taking the knife from the pupil so that I could look away. But I chose not to.

Should we encourage our children to

take risks like this? Couldn't we simply teach about trees and the changing seasons in the safety of a classroom? Why not ask children to read about the ever-elusive millipede in a book, rather than making them hunch quietly by an overturned log in the pouring rain waiting for one to scuttle past?

For us as forest school leaders, the benefits must outweigh the risks. Our starting point is always to assess the likelihood of harm and how severe that harm could be, and then balance it against the potential rewards of the outcomes from the activity. If, after an assessment, an activity is judged as high risk but beneficial, then measures will be put in place to mitigate the risks so that the activity can go ahead.

For example, we wear protective clothing when felling a tree, change the adult-to-pupil ratio according to the needs of the children, rig up a shelter when using tools on a rainy day to avoid wet slippery hands, and teach children about keeping a safe distance from a fire. Rather than trying to avoid all 'high-risk' activities, it's about being aware of the risks, and managing them properly.

A compelling reason for allowing

children to take measured risks is to better train and equip them so they can recognise and manage risk throughout their lives. In forest school sessions we actively encourage this for children.

Recently, a group of Year 2 pupils decided to create a slide using pallets. They worked out the angle the pallet needed to be placed at in order for them to land safely on their feet, rather than tumbling into the sandpit with a thump. Apart from the wealth of scientific information they were gathering (why a wet pallet allowed them to travel more quickly than a dry one, and whether their waterproofs or wellies were better for this activity), the children assessed the potential harm and made changes accordingly.

Offering all pupils the opportunity to take risks is fundamentally important, as many of them will not have had the chance to challenge themselves in potentially risky play or learning scenarios before. For those children, their environment may be so carefully managed that forest school is the only place where they are free – and actively encouraged – to take risks.

Early in my teaching career, I recall a parent firmly insisting that I should not allow her child to run in the playground, purely to avoid him ever falling over and hurting himself!

In our woodland area, an environment filled with logs, trees, bushes and long grass, children naturally want to explore. Not only does this environment challenge learners, but a number of other risks may arise due to our changeable weather affecting site conditions. Thus, the children must learn how to respond to dynamic and unpredictable situations safely.

As the outdoors is increasingly seen as an important place for people to spend time in, surely we need to train children how to be safe, while maintaining a healthy interest in exploring? Ironically, for many children, forest school may be the only place where they can 'safely' take risks. So, forest school leaders have a professional (and moral) duty to provide opportunities for this. Through risk-taking, children gain an awareness of their own limits and boundaries and, ultimately, learn how to be safe. **TP**

Sabina Khanam is an experienced primary school teacher and forest school leader. She currently teaches Year 2.



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s a teacher, you should be able to take pupils on exciting visits that broaden their horizons. The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) can help you make the most of every school trip.

Established in 1978, the OEAP is the lead body for guidance, advice and training related to outdoor learning and educational visits in England and Wales. It has around 120 members and provides information and training to support these advisers in their work with schools.

The OEAP was initially set up as a professional support network for staff advising local authorities and schools on issues relating to outdoor education and educational visits. Prior to its formation, these advisers often worked in isolation. Over time, various government guidance documents defined the important role of these advisers. This advice has been refined over the years. You can now find it on the OEAP website (oeapng. info). It's endorsed by the DfE, HSE, NAHT and NEU, among others. The OEAP believes that every child should have access to a comprehensive programme of high-quality outdoor learning, educational visits and adventurous activities as an integral part of their school curriculum. So, what can the OEAP do for you?

Specialist training and resources

Selected OEAP members can provide your school with up-to-date, focused and relevant training to ensure that your staff are working to the very highest standards. They also offer learning cards that feature a range of activities which can support schools in the delivery of outdoor and environmental learning.

Professional guidance

The OEAP has developed national guidance to help anyone who organises outdoor learning, educational visits and

adventurous activities (oeapng.info/ guidance-documents). This includes residential visits and overseas visits. The guidance supports safe learning experiences for young people and is enabling, rather than restrictive. It covers provision across England and Wales, but much of it is applicable elsewhere, too.

The guidance helps visit leaders and schools to plan and deliver high-quality and safe learning experiences. The starting point for planning school trips is being clear about your rationale. Once you've identified your aims and thought about how you'll measure the trip's impact, you can effectively plan the location and method of delivery.

The OEAP's national guidance is referenced in DfE guidance and is also supported by Welsh government and the Health and Safety Executive. The guidance comprises eight sections, from basic essentials through to FAQs and more. It's an online resource, which the OEAP continually improves and updates to reflect a developing understanding of good practice. Do remember that as a visit leader you should always follow your school's own trip policies and guidance as well.

Membership

So, can you as an educator join the OEAP? Absolutely!

Members progress through a series of membership levels as they develop. Ordinary membership is when your contracted role includes or supports the functions of an outdoor education adviser and/or educational visits adviser. An Ordinary member hasn't had their competencies verified by the OEAP, and employers may need to confirm those competencies to match up with the national guidance document defining the role.

Accredited members are verified by the OEAP as having the competencies to fulfil the role of an outdoor education adviser. A Fellow is an individual who meets the Accredited member definition and demonstrates through an application process that they have made significant contribution to the work of OEAP.

Thomas Booth is an education visits advisor employed by Rochdale Borough Council. He works with a number of neighbouring LAs and MATs to provide advice, guidance and training.

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

A letter to... Fellow educators

There are so many ways we can bring joy into the classroom, says **Farida Baxamusa**

eachers are entrusted with a unique opportunity to cultivate joy in learning, and to make it a delightful

journey for our pupils. The question is, how to do it effectively?

As an educator, I've learned that the most impactful lessons, routines, and plans emerge from a partnership between teachers and carers. When we work hand-in-hand with parents or carers, and when family members supplement learning with additional resources at home, we create a holistic support system that helps the child reach their full potential. It fosters a lasting love for learning and helps develop them into well-rounded individuals, who are ready to navigate the world with confidence.

If we are to bring more joy into the classroom, we must also rethink our approach to lesson planning and curriculum development. When we start to infuse our curriculums with interactive activities, hands-on projects, and real-world connections - that is when we start to see the difference a joy-driven approach can make. This belief, coupled with the importance of parent-child involvement, led me to create Brings Joy Learning (bringsjoylearning.com), an interdisciplinary unit-style supplemental curriculum that seeks to revolutionise how children are introduced to the concept of learning.

Another important aspect to making learning a joyful experience is to model

joy in learning ourselves. When pupils see teachers who are passionate and excited about the subjects they teach, it becomes contagious, encouraging children to approach learning with a similar mindset. For example, I often take my college students on hiking excursions to explore the mountains, where we connect the theoretical concepts from our textbooks to tangible, real-world experiences. It's something I'm truly passionate about and also enjoy doing in my free time with my family.

Joy in the classroom holds transformative power, for both pupils and teachers. It fosters a sense of belonging,

"Embracing joyful learning experiences is not just about creating a fun classroom environment"

> encourages exploration, and supports holistic development. When children experience joy in learning, they become more motivated, attentive, and engaged, leading to deeper understanding and retention of the material. This engagement supports a positive classroom environment where pupils feel safe to express themselves, ask questions, and take intellectual risks. Moreover, it cultivates resilience and



perseverance in the face of challenges, which are some essential skills for lifelong learning.

Now, I couldn't write about 'bringing joy' to learning experiences without mentioning a shift in focus from grades to the process of learning and personal growth. As convenient as it may sound, this approach is necessary if we want to cultivate independent thinkers and resilient individuals. This shift also allows pupils to explore their passions without having to constantly worry about failure.

That being said, shifting away from focusing on grades doesn't mean we stop tracking pupils' progress. There are many effective alternatives for monitoring development, such as using portfolios, self-assessments, and project-based assessments, that allow for real-world application. By adopting these methods, we can offer meaningful feedback and support pupils' journey toward personal and academic success.

Embracing joyful learning experiences is not just about creating a fun classroom environment; it's a way of empowering

pupils to become confident explorers of knowledge. It's something we, as educators, can achieve by prioritising the process of learning, personal growth, and holistic development.

Together, let's change the way children perceive learning, and pave the way for a new era of inspired and passionate learners!

From, Farida

Farida Baxamusa is founder and CEO of Brings Joy Learning, teacher/professor, curriculum writer, entrepreneur, hiker, and a homeschooling mom of three.

Wraparound care funding - what do you need to know?

With some important updates and announcements already happening this year regarding wraparound care – particularly relating to funding – we wanted to outline how the funding works and what you need to do next.

What is the funding for?

Essentially, the funding should be used to:

- Expand an existing provision. Create additional places where the current demand isn't being met. Extend the hours that the provision is available – unless data shows that existing hours suit demand for the area.
- Create a new provision. Establish a facility where there is none, currently. The provision should run from 8am-6pm.

How does the funding work?

The funding will be distributed via local authorities, who are responsible for leading the programme locally. However, it's schools who are central to the delivery of the scheme, and you'll be responsible for making sure parents know how and where to access wraparound care even if you are not delivering it directly. Before funds are allocated, schools are required to demonstrate that there is a supply or demand issue, recommend the most effective delivery model and indicate costs associated. The local authority will review what's put forward by the school and grant funding if they deem it a viable solution.

What are the different delivery models?

- A school-led provision provided on the school site, by staff
- A private provider-led provision, held either on or off the school premises
- Community or cluster model
- Childminders
- Early years providers

What are the next steps for schools?

- Work with your local authority as they start to map and predict demand. As part of this, it's also important to understand the current wraparound provision in your area. Your local authority will be able to help with this.
- 2 Once supply and demand mapping as taken place, you'll need to consider which delivery model would be most effective for your locality.

- 3 After funding allocations have been made, you'll need to work with your local authority to establish a new wraparound care provision, or expand an existing one.
- 4 If you've chosen to run the facility at your school, internally, please see our Ultimate Guide to Wraparound Childcare for practical help and advice on establishing a quality provision.
- **5** Promote the availability of the new or expanded provision to parents and carers.
- 6 Communicate to parents that childcare funding such as tax-free childcare or universal credit support can be used to help fund wraparound care.

We are here to help you navigate the challenges of wraparound care, and have a number of resources available such as a free webinar and downloadable Guide.

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INSPIRING ACTIVITY

UNDERCOVER TEACHER

Pen licences should have been consigned to history long ago

Rewarding those pupils who are more suited to writing is an unnecessarily divisive practice

andwriting. A skill that has always been high on the agenda in primary schools, and one that still gives me the shivers today when I see it approached badly. To those outside of education, handwriting may seem to be a dying art. Indeed, with the rise of computers, tablets, and modern technology, why do children need to able to write fluently in cursive by hand? In secondary schools, in fact, the idea of cursive handwriting is obsolete. But in primary schools, it is still the Holy Grail, and a target we expect children to achieve if they wish to meet the expected standard in writing in the KS2 SATs.

It's not cursive handwriting that I have an issue with though; my gripe is around pen licences. It's 2024 and there are schools out there who still don't understand why this practice should be archived into the vault of 'never to return' alongside triple marking and Brain Gym.

As a child, I was creative. I would write and draw on everything, about everything, everywhere. I remember distinctly being around three years old, taking a paper clip and scratching stick people proudly into the wood of my dad's bureau.

This creativity did not serve me well when I started primary school. I would use both my left and right hand to draw and write, but had not chosen a preferred form. As draconian as it sounds, I was told it was better to be a right-hander, and was thereafter forced to use my

right hand only. As a result, I never felt comfortable writing by hand, and was made to stay in at break to write 'better'. In fact, I suspect I probably would have written better if I'd been allowed to use my left hand...

To this day I still do certain things as a left-hander would, including playing guitar and setting knives and forks at a table. But at school I was never given the freedom to find out the best hand to write with. I was never allowed to use pen in primary school, either, as my writing was 'too messy' – and that stigma persists today. As a teacher, whenever I write on a board or in a WAGOLL book, I still hear that inner doubt. No child should be made to feel this, or carry it into adulthood. I don't know exactly when this obsession with perfect cursive handwriting in primary schools started

> to manifest itself in the issuing of pen licences, but it's something I see all too often, unfortunately: the idea that those children who are deemed worthy enough can wield a pen in lessons and elevate themselves above their peers with a biro. Now I know for a fact that 'child me' would never have achieved this. Child me got an A* in English lang. and lit. GCSE, despite my appalling handwriting, but child me would not have got a pen licence. My son never did.

It was humiliating and demoralising for him – and totally unnecessary, as the moment he went to secondary school, all students were expected to write with a pen. And not to use cursive handwriting!

My arguments against using pen licences stem from an emotional resonance as a parent and my own background. Personally, I feel that pen licences are not inclusive. They create segregation in class between peers and they negatively impact self-esteem. As a teacher, I also know how some of my left-handed pupils struggle to apply adequate pressure with a pencil, but suddenly fly in pen. How can anyone judge how well they will write in different media until they experiment?

6

As a teacher I value the discipline of writing in cursive. It trains the brain to learn functional specialism and improves memory and fine motor skills. I'm not debating the explicit teaching of good handwriting and the impact it has, simply stating that a pen licence has no part in this model. Just teach children as they pass through primary how to explore different writing tools and what suits them best, because after Year 6, they'll be writing in pen whether you chose to deny them in primary or not. **TP**

The author is a teacher in England.

"Those children

who are deemed

worthy enough

can wield a pen in

lessons and

elevate themselves

above their peers

with a biro"





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5 A Conway Centres residential

Make memories that will last a lifetime

1 LEADERS IN THE FIELD

"Having visited so many different residential centres over the years, what you offer is so totally different, it's incomparable" – St Mary of the Angels Primary School

Winners of the 'Best Residential Experience' at the recent School Travel Awards, Conway Centres pride themselves on offering a completely unique experience that can't be replicated. Leaders in outdoor adventure education and curriculumlinked residential trips for over 45 years, their distinctive identity and offering is one of the many reasons schools return year after year.

2 SKILLED PRACTITIONERS

"Your staff go above and beyond to maximise the impact of this experience for the children and staff" – St Winefride's Catholic Primary School

Schools always say staff are one of Conway Centres' biggest assets. With many residential providers only offering new apprenticeship staff every season for the busy times, schools love that at Conway Centres the same familiar faces welcome them back year after year. You can rest assured that when you visit Conway Centres you and your students will be in the hands of the most dedicated, gualified and experienced staff in the game, who live and breathe adventure and education. Even the freelance team are long-standing staff members!



3 INCLUSIVE PROVISION

"The instructors are so skilled at adapting the activities to meet the needs of the different group" - St Andrew's Primary School

At Conway Centres, no child gets left behind. They pride themselves on offering every child a completely unique experience. Whether they want to be top of the tree climb, belay their friends up or they want to cheer their peers on – our team will always encourage children to believe in themselves whilst supporting them in however they would like to be involved. Working closely with SEAS charity who enable people and ConwayCentres

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30 SECOND BRIEFING

With four residential centres set in Cheshire and Anglesey, Primary schools love the curriculum-linked adventure and arts residentials that Conway Centres provide. But don't just take our word for it...

families living with SEND to enjoy outdoor adventure – the staff are fully trained in supporting all abilities. The Anglesey centre is fully equipped with specialist equipment like wheelchair accessible sailing boats, purpose-built accommodation and much, much more!



"The setting is beautiful" - Capenhurst CE Primary School

Whether you visit the Burwardsley centre nestled on the Cheshire Sandstone Trail, the Delamere centre situated in the forest, the Tattenhall centre located with WW2 landmarks at every turn or the Anglesey centre overlooking the Menai Strait and Snowdonian mountain range – the unique surroundings are the perfect place for children and young people to make life-long memories.

5 A BROAD CURRICULUM

"Activities to meet all our children's needs" – Hayfield School

At Conway Centres, they offer a range of land-based, high-ropes, waterbased, Arts and off-site activities. They know that every child can have different comfort zones, which is why they offer broad and balanced programmes to support. From the thrill seekers in your group who will want to tackle the Via Ferrata and dive into a kayak to your creative pupils who get more of a thrill putting paint to paper – there is something for everyone to enjoy.

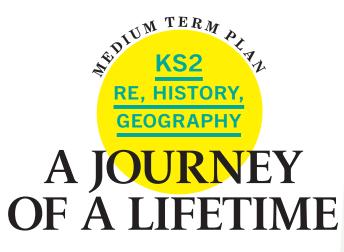
CONWAY CENTRES TOP PICKS

WW2 Experience Day

Surrounded by WW2 landmarks in Tattenhall and with an on-site Anderson shelter and WW2-themed activities, children will learn through immersive workshops.

Iron Age

With its very own Iron Age roundhouse, children will instantly be transported to this historical era. Delamere Discovery Explore the natural habitats, flora and fauna we share with the wider environment. Set in Delamere forest, children discover so much from simply stepping out the gate... Adventure at Anglesey Gorge walk at Ogwen Valley, navigate the Via Ferrata, kayak on the Menai Strait, create batiks in the Arts rooms – children make memories that will last a lifetime...



BISMHA AFZAL

very year, millions of Muslims from across the globe set forth to Makkah (also known as Mecca) to complete a fundamental pillar of their faith –

the Hajj pilgrimage. Often referred to as 'a journey of a lifetime', the Hajj pilgrimage is considered to be the spiritual apex of a Muslim's life.

In this unit, pupils will investigate why the Hajj pilgrimage is so sacred to Muslims. Over the course of six lessons, the children will be presented with the opportunity to discuss the significance of pilgrimages, explore the history of Hajj and its rituals, and understand how the Hajj experience has changed over time. The unit will conclude with an analysis of two Hajj case studies.



tinyurl.com/tp-HajjMTP

WEEK 1 Learning objective

• To understand why Muslims perform the Hajj pilgrimage

.....

For this lesson, each child will need a copy of the **Lesson 1 worksheets**.

Ask pupils where in the world they would love to go. Explain to them that for many Muslims across the world, the Hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia is a bucket list destination.

Facilitate a discussion around the concept of a pilgrimage. Ask the children if they can think of any other religious pilgrimages. See **slides 3–5** for visual aids, further prompts and

discussion points.

Next, shade in Saudi Arabia on the map of the world. Label Makkah.

Tell the children that they are going to watch a short film and then answer some questions. Play the ITV Hajj documentary (tinyurl.com/tp-ITVdocu) until 2 minutes and 45 seconds. Play it through again and then ask pupils to complete the set questions on the worksheet.

Summarise for the children what you have learned so far: that the pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia is a bucket list destination because the Hajj pilgrimage is the fifth and final pillar of Islam and is a journey that must be completed at least once in every Muslim's lifetime if they are fit and able to travel.

Ask talk partners to discuss why pilgrims go on a pilgrimage, and whether this is the same as a holiday.

Assessment

- Do pupils understand the concept of a pilgrimage?
- Can pupils differentiate between a pilgrimage and holiday?
- Can pupils identify some of the reasons why pilgrims perform pilgrimage?
- Can pupils identify the reasons why Muslims perform the Hajj pilgrimage?

WEEK 2 Learning objective

• To demonstrate an awareness of the history of Hajj

It's time to trace the origins of Hajj. When did it all begin?

Explain to pupils that the Hajj pilgrimage takes place annually during the month of Dhul Hijah which is the 12th and final month of the Hijri (Islamic) calendar. Explain the difference between the Hijri (based on a lunar year) and Gregorian calendar (based on a solar year).

Tell the children that the origins of the Hajj pilgrimage can be traced back thousands of years. Narrate the story of the Prophet Ibrahim that is on the **story narration worksheet**. Ask the children to retell the story to you.

FEATURES PLANNING



At this point, you can discuss with more able pupils how and why, out of respect, Muslims do not re-create any images of God, the Prophets or angels.

Assessment

- Do pupils know when the Hajj pilgrimage takes place?
- Can pupils differentiate between the different calendars and years?
- Can pupils summarise the story of the Prophet Ibrahim?

WEEK 3 Learning objective

• To begin to summarise some of the rituals of Hajj

.....

Before this lesson you'll need to print and cut out enough copies of the **Hajj rituals cards** for children to have one set between each pair.

Explain to pupils that over the course of the next two lessons, we will be exploring the rituals of Hajj and their significance.

Split children into pairs and hand each pair a set of the Hajj rituals cards. Pupils will need to digest each of the rituals and then organise the cards in chronological order.

Facilitate a whole class discussion on how pupils arranged their cards. You can then use the visual aids on slides 14-22 to confirm the correct order of the rituals.

Assessment

Can pupils identify the Hajj rituals?
Can pupils make connections between the history of Hajj and the Hajj rituals?

WEEK 4 Learning objective

• To be able to summarise most/all of the rituals of Hajj

Begin by reviewing what you learned in the previous lesson.

Now explain to pupils that they will work in small groups to create a news report on the rituals of Hajj. Each group will have up to five minutes to present their news report and every pupil must contribute. You may wish to scaffold this activity by providing sentence starters for pupils.

Assessment

- Can pupils list the rituals of Hajj in chronological order?
- Can pupils describe the rituals of Hajj with accuracy?

.....

WEEK 5 Learning objective

• To understand how the Hajj experience has changed over the years.

Ask pupils to think about their bucket list destination again. How would they

.....



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FEATURES PLANNING

get there? Explain to pupils that due to advancement in air travel, travelling to Makkah is now relatively easy. However, air travel only became accessible to the masses during the 1970s. Ask the children how they think pilgrims would have travelled to Makkah prior to this.

Describe to pupils how, initially, pilgrims would travel to Makkah by camel caravans. For pilgrims travelling from Syria, Egypt and Iraq, this could take up to three months!

Following the Second World War, railways and steamships became a lot more common and affordable to the masses. With this, the number of pilgrims travelling to Makkah from across the globe drastically increased. (Before the Second World War, the number of Hajj pilgrims was approximately 100,000 per year.)

Share the images and videos embedded within slides 27-32 and pose the suggested questions.

Now hand each pupil a copy of the Lesson 5 worksheet. Using the graph data, reflect upon the number of pilgrims over the years. Explain to pupils that Covid resulted in a huge decrease in the number of pilgrims allowed to perform Hajj. During 2020 and 2021, international pilgrims were not allowed to perform Hajj. The Ministry of Hajj restricted the pilgrimage to a limited number of Saudi nationals after strict testing. You may wish to explore how the Hajj experience has been streamlined over the years, and the impact this has had on pilgrims. See slides 33-34 for prompts.

Assessment

• Do pupils demonstrate an awareness of how the mode of travel to Hajj has



changed over the years?

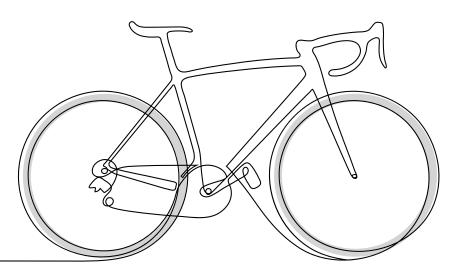
Can pupils interpret graph data to make accurate conclusions on how the number of Hajj pilgrims have changed over the years?

WEEK 6 Learning objective

• To explore the similarities and differences between the Hajj experience of Lady Evelyn Cobbold and the 'eight British cyclists'.

Explain to pupils that that today they will investigate two Hajj case studies. The first is the story of Lady Evelyn Cobbold, and the second explores the

.....



story of eight British Muslims who cycled all the way from London to Saudi Arabia.

Play the videos embedded within slides 43–45. You may wish to share the quotes worksheet with pupils too. Note that Lady Evelyn's quotes have been paraphrased.

Facilitate a whole-class discussion on the similarities and differences between the two experiences.

After the discussion, hand each pupil a copy of the **Venn diagram worksheet**. Explain that they will now make a note of the similarities and differences on the diagram.

Assessment

- Can pupils identify the similarities and differences between Lady Evelyn Cobbold and the eight cyclists'
- Hajj experience? Are pupils able to explain why the Hajj pilgrimage is so sacred to the individuals they have explored? **TP**



Bismha Afzal is a former secondary school History teacher and the current schools coordinator at Educate Against Islamophobia (EAI).

eai.org.uk

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Make it MAKE SENSE

Mary Gregory introduces a new data science project for primary schools and explores how teachers can bring data to life

ata has become the foundation of our digital world, and understanding data is a skill we all need. It's easy to underestimate how often we use data in everyday life. For instance, just planning a journey using an online route planner involves gathering data, including traffic conditions, road type and speed limits, from multiple sources.

Data science uses technology, statistics, and specific topic knowledge to extract useful information from data, which helps us understand our world.

Supporting pupils to build interest and confidence in the use of data from an early age is critical, putting them in the best position to navigate future challenges. We need to instil in children an instinctive ability to employ critical thinking when they encounter data and information. By doing so, children can also better understand how they contribute to data collected by organisations, digital platforms, apps, and, increasingly, artificial intelligence – with and without their knowledge.

The skills of data scientists are in demand. Data science is increasingly seen as an essential skill for lots of jobs. Demystifying data science (tinyurl.com/ tp-DataScientist) is an important step in helping spark an interest in the

"We need to instil in children an instinctive ability to employ critical thinking when they encounter data and information" subject. Hopefully, it will increase the number of young people interested in a career in data science and help more young people engage in data and coding.

Data science appears in many parts of the English, Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh curricula – including geography, science, mathematics, computing, ICT and understanding the world, as well as health and wellbeing.

Demystifying data science and its role in the world

When you turn on the TV, you might see discussions about big data, which can feel quite mysterious and anonymous. And yet, big data is relayed to us during things like weather forecasts, presenting information in ways we can all understand.

Working with data can be broken down into four main activities:

1. Collecting – gathering data

- Analysing asking questions about the data
 Interpreting – establishing
- what the numbers tell us
- 4. Presenting how best to tell people about the findings

Demystifying data science and engaging children with data is one of the reasons the Office for National Statistics has teamed up with BBC Children's and Education and the micro:bit Educational Foundation, to invite primary teachers to get involved in the BBC micro:bit playground survey. This national initiative provides a series of free, hands-on activities that allow children to use their micro:bits to collect and visualise data in a fun way. Free classroom sets of the micro:bits, which are pocket-sized computers, were given away to nearly 90 per cent of UK primary schools at the end of last year.

How can we interest primary children in data science?

We can engage more children in data science by making it relevant to them. For example, the playground survey does this by linking the activities to a place that children are familiar with and visit nearly every day.

It is also important to make data science fun and intriguing. A good way to do this is thinking about how the children can collect their own data, using surveys, counting or measuring (see panel).

One of the most exciting things about data science is discovering new information. This could be a class project, for instance, investigating biodiversity in the playground (tinyurl. com/tp-PlaygroundSurvey) or, at the other end of the scale, a big national project such as the census. Asking children about the information they have gathered and what they think it means is an essential in helping them to interpret data. Here are some prompts that will help children think about data:

- Does the number make sense? Is the number too big or too small to be real? What is the context for the number?
- Do you trust the number you've been given? Who collected the data and how did they do it? Do you think it is reliable?
 What does the number
- mean for your own decisions?

Ask pupils what they'd think if they were told their class uses 300 pencils a day. Would they believe this number? What if they were told the *school* uses 300 pencils a day? What if it was the headteacher who told them? Would that make them trust the information more? Would they trust it enough to decide how many pencils the school should buy?

The opportunity to spark a class discussion about information children have gathered, and what they have interpreted, is valuable and reflects part of the role of being a data scientist. There are lots of ways your pupils can do this:

- Talking about their findings with classmates, or delivering a class presentation.
- Writing about their findings or creating a video report.
- Sharing information in an assembly (particularly good for larger projects like the playground survey).

Teaching primary-aged children to think like data scientists might seem an ambitious aim, but, in fact, it's largely a case of looking at activities you are already doing through a slightly different lens - and in doing so, giving your pupils key tools they will need to successfully navigate the world in which they are growing up. To get involved with the BBC micro:bit playground survey and contribute to a national data set, visit bbc.co.uk/teach/ micro:bit TP

Everyday data

• Modes of travel to school: How did children travel to school? What was the most popular mode of transport? What was the average distance travelled by different modes?

• Biodiversity in the playground: Try this activity from the playground survey at tinyurl.com/tp-PlaygroundSurvey. How many plant and animal species are there in the playground? Can you see any patterns?

• Making predictions: Based on the size of their class, can your pupils estimate how many children are in the school? Or if you have a reward system, can they estimate how many points have been given out in school this week?

Data exercises

• Getting outside: Leaving the school grounds to count items such as vehicles, buildings or animals.

• Carrying out a survey Pupils could contribute to a survey to decide which sport the class should do during PE. Or they could survey children in another class. e.g. to gather information about school dinners and packed lunches and compare this with their own preferences.

• Using physical props to support learning: Try counting books and pencils in the classroom, or comparing playground temperatures (tinyurl.com/ tp-SurveyTemps) with the BBC micro:bit.



Mary Gregory is interim director of Population Statistics for the

Office for National Statistics.



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SCHOOL TRIPS

HRILL OF



Farms for City Children

Donna Marie Edmonds

Who are Farms for City Children?

Farms for City Children is a charity established in 1976 by children's writer Sir Michael Morpurgo and his wife Clare, who identified the need for children and young people from urban areas across the country to overcome the obstacles that prevented them from having access to the countryside. Since then, we have welcomed over 100,000 children to Nethercott House in Devon, Lower Treginnis Farm in Pembrokeshire, and Wick Court in Gloucestershire to have one of the most memorable and empowering weeks of their childhood.

Operating now both in term time, and nonterm weeks, we support over 3300 young people each year to enjoy a life-changing, immersive residential for up to 39 children aged between 8-19 and 5 accompanying adults over a Monday-Friday visit. We welcome children and young people from city, rural, and coastal communities across England and Wales from primary, secondary, and FE colleges, particularly focusing on serving those communities with high levels of deprivation and disadvantage.

What does Farms for City Children offer?

Farms for City Children exists to remove the barriers that prevent children and young people having meaningful access to the natural world. Through our food, farming, and nature-connected wellbeing offer, we strive to empower the next generation to experience the physical and mental health benefits of being in the countryside, and to see themselves as the custodians of our land for generations to come.

A residential stay on one of our stunning heritage farms offers children and young people the opportunity to participate in seasonal



farming tasks alongside experienced farm teams and partner farmers. A holistic offer of outdoor education activities induces personal and social development achieved through profound connections between peers and their teachers. The health and wellbeing benefits of sustained physical activity and consumption of nutritious, locally produced, and home-cooked food grown and prepared by the children themselves, results in a nurtured and empowered young person, ready to return to school and home with new grit, growth mindset, and a set of valuable transferable life skills.

What is the impact on children and teachers who visit?

The impact of a week in wellies is wide-ranging and profound. In addition to gains made in learning and links to curriculum subjects, teacher feedback tells us that the week stimulates bonds between the children that endure in the classroom upon return to school. Benefits include significant changes to behaviour, attendance and punctuality, and levels of confidence and engagement. Teachers tell us that children are more curious, courageous, and compassionate because of the week on the farm, and that these character developments permeate the school and family setting when children return home. Additionally, children experience a deep connection to nature, a sense of their own social and moral responsibility to be stewards of our planet, and an emerging feeling of agency in visualising a future for themselves that involves remaining in contact with nature beyond their visit.

What do children learn?

Days start early and, whilst the cycle of the seasons and vagaries of the weather ensure that each day is different, there is a reassuring routine and structure to life on the farm. The animals must be looked after before breakfast; stalls need mucking out, new bedding laid, goats milked, cattle and sheep stock checked, eggs collected, and seeds sown. Long walks in the countryside, taking in the sights of hedgerows, riverbanks, cliff edges and stunning beaches, or night-time observations of bats and stars, are just a taste of what is on offer each day.

At the farms, children learn where their food comes from on a field > farm > fork journey. They grow, harvest, prepare and cook their own food, which improves children's food choices, increases their consumption of fresh, locally produced meat, fruit and vegetables which can help them develop longer term commitments to leading a healthier life.

Children learn to be mindful and notice their environment. They learn to take responsibility for themselves, each other and their animals and land. With no technology on site, their analogue imaginations are liberated, and they enjoy arts and craft activities, mindfulness and storytelling sessions by the fire pit and inventing and playing games together, interacting in a way that only children can – with total abandon!

Being on the farm gives each child or young person that space to just be. With reduced stress levels, increased freedom, and more meaningful interactions and connections, children return home with greater resilience and an enormous sense of pride as a result of being a "Farmer for a Week."

How do I make a booking to bring my school to Farms for City Children?

If you think this sounds like the experience you have always wanted to offer your pupils, please do get in touch to discuss how we can bring this inspiring experience to your school community.

For further information, look at our website, social media channels, or speak to our sales team **bookings@farmsforcitychildren.org** or phone **01392 276678**





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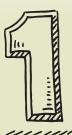
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FEATURES HISTORY, ENGLISH

How I do it :

Bring stories, characters or historical events to life with these hands-on activities

EMILY AZOUELOS



First, it is important to get the children used to handling objects and thinking deeply about them. Invite pupils to bring objects from home that are special to them, working through questions designed to get them thinking more deeply. Questions could include: What do you think this object is? How does it feel? Why have you chosen that

object? Does it remind you of anything or make you think of a memory? Why do you find it interesting?

o your pupils struggle to connect to characters or themes in the stories that you study? Could your class discussions do with a boost? Perhaps the children find it hard to imagine what life was like when studying historical events? Many children I've worked with had these same struggles, and I found that introducing objects helped to spark discussion, pique interest and engage pupils, leading to high-quality work. Here are some different ways you can use objects in vour classroom.

Use **discovery boxes** to explore characters or settings, both fictional and non-fictional. Place images and objects connected to the area of study into boxes, alongside labels (creative or factual). Show the boxes to the class and use groups to encourage the children to examine the objects, read the labels and make suggestions about what these objects reveal, what they may be studying and what their initial thoughts are. Display their

ideas to add to as they learn more.



A **teller's table** is a useful whole-class activity to employ when first introducing a character. On one table, place interesting objects linked to a character. Encourage the children to look at, rather than touch, the objects as they form their ideas and questions. Hand out sticky notes and ask pupils to write down all the questions and ideas they have based on the props. Stick the questions on one side of the table and pupils' ideas on the other side ready for discussion.



Contact local museums and libraries for access to their loan box schemes.

Before you use these items in class, explain to the children that they must hold each object with both hands, take care when passing them around and not force any moving parts.

Group the children and assign an object. Use A3 paper to record their thoughts about the object. Explain that they

can draw, write or annotate ideas. Leave time for groups to walk around, read the sheets and add questions or ideas in a different colour pen.



Use the thinking routine called **parts and purposes** to examine historical objects in greater depth and to spark discussion. • What are all the parts of your object?

- What do you think is the purpose of your object?
- How do the parts work together?
- What would happen if a part was missing or changed?

After the discussion, reveal the name of each object, explaining more about what the object is and how it was used in the time-period studied.



Emily Azouelos is an experienced primary teacher who moved to the world of heritage and arts-based organisations two years ago. She creates educational related content for a variety of settings.



Pre-empting THE PROBLEM

Sue Cowley explains how to get ahead of classroom management

ne of the keys to classroom management is forward planning – getting in front of tricky behaviour before it happens. rather than reacting to problems after they occur. Not only does this allow you to avoid the stress caused by poor behaviour, it also helps keep the atmosphere in your classroom calm and focused. Forward planning is about being crystal clear about your expectations, but having plenty of ways to manage, reinforce and revisit them. It is about making sure the learning is suitably scaffolded, so that all the children feel a sense of success. Forward planning also means thinking about the timings and format of lessons and transitions, to help children stay focused and engaged.

The better prepared you are ahead of time, the more your children will feel confident and ready to learn. In addition, you will feel more secure in your ability to manage inappropriate behaviours when they do happen, and you will come across as confident in your ability to handle them. Where the children believe that their teacher can calmly manage the classroom, this feeds into their sense of working together a learning community. In the sixth edition of my book on behaviour, Getting your Class to Behave, I explore lots of ways to plan ahead for more positive outcomes.

Setting the standards

We all know how important clear expectations are in managing behaviour: they give clarity of intent and a sense that the teacher is in control of the situation. It's useful to remember that most children are well used to teachers establishing expectations. Those children who attended an early years setting before school will have had several years of 'golden rules' being shared and reinforced. It is not that they do not know what they need to do; if they are struggling, this is because they have not yet fully developed their selfregulation skills.

> "Establishing your expectations is not about listing long series of rules"

Establishing your expectations is not about listing long series of rules children are unlikely to retain them - it is about creating a shared sense of purpose. By talking through and narrating the why of the behaviours you need, we can help children understand that rules are there for a reason. In addition, it is vital to come back to expectations repeatedly to reinforce the learning. Praise the children when they are doing the right thing, model the behaviours you ask for, and consider strategies such as having a

'talked over' a class that was not completely silent. Unfortunately, every time we do this, we send the message that we did not really mean what we said.

'golden rule of the week',

Following through

expectations is to ensure that

One of the keys to clarity of

you follow through on what

easier said than done). Ask

any group of teachers what

they need from the children,

and they will always say that

good listening is a priority.

We need 'one voice', so that

being said, whether it is the

learners. However, most of us

would admit that sometimes,

through sheer frustration or

the pressure of time, we have

everyone can hear what is

teacher speaking or the

where you focus on one

behaviour at a time.

This is where forward planning comes in handy think ahead of time about what you will do to get your class's attention, and to ensure everyone listens silently. You might agree a 'call and respond' with the class; you could try a sound (we use a handbell in our early vears setting); you might praise those children who are sitting quietly ready to listen.



The more options you have in your 'backpack' of strategies, the less likely you are to get defensive when issues occur. and the more likely you are to follow through.

Imaginative approaches

Young children are brilliant at entering the world of the imagination: typically, they love going along with strategies that encourage them to think creatively. Research shows that when children take on a role, this helps them manage their impulses. Imagining that they have become 'someone else' allows them to 'self-distance', and in turn supports them to persevere. One of the times when issues often arise with behaviour is when pupils need to leave their desks to make



a line, for instance to walk to assembly. Taking an imaginative approach at these times, by creating a target for the children about how you want them to move, gives them a stronger sense of focus.

For instance, you could ask them to imagine that there is a giant, asleep under the floor, and they must creep to the line so as not to wake him up. Alternatively, you could ask them to move in slow motion, like actors in an action movie. By planning ahead, you give them something specific to focus on and encourage them to work as a team to achieve it.

Planning ahead for individuals

It's clear that many teachers are currently seeing higher

levels of needs in their children, especially around emotional regulation, than was the case before the pandemic. Some individuals are really struggling in the classroom environment, and we need to make reasonable adjustments to help them succeed. Where a child struggles with a particular situation – for instance, whole-class input - consider giving them a specific role to help regulate their behaviour. For example, if they struggle to sit still during teacher-led times, they could act as your 'helper', wiping the board or handing out resources.

Similarly, if you have a child who has problems with sensory overload, aim to catch them before they get to the point of melting down. Once a child is already experiencing overload, it is much harder to encourage them to selfregulate. So, when you notice the child start to struggle, ask a teaching assistant to take them outside for some fresh air, or get the child to take something to the office for you. By pre-empting the problem and getting in front of the situation before it escalates, you will better support children's needs and in turn get better behaviour in your classroom. **TP**



Sue Cowley is an author and early years teacher. Her latest book is the

sixth edition of Getting your Class to Behave, published by Bloomsbury.

My five key strategies

Observe pupils' behaviours and think about what they are communicating. This will help you figure out what they need. If children are wriggling while sat on the carpet, that behaviour suggests they need a chance to move. Get them up and active, for instance 'acting out' part of the class story.

Consider the times of the day when behaviour issues most often occur, and find strategies to manage those times. Typically, some of the trickiest moments are during transitions, so it is useful to explore creative options for managing these.

Find ways to adapt your curriculum to help you support children in learning behaviours. Be flexible about what you teach and when you teach it, to align with the children's body clocks and their physical/emotional needs. If the children are not focused, they are not learning, so adapt to support selfregulation skills.

Encourage the children to use imagination to support their behaviour. When children encounter a playful, creative strategy or technique, they are more likely to pay attention and consequently to behave as you need.

Identify useful strategies for individual children ahead of time, making reasonable adjustments to help them regulate their behaviour. The standards need to remain consistent, but we can use flexible strategies to help all children reach our goals.

Science through STORIES

Alom Shaha explains how we can use fiction to engage children with science

re you going to write a science fiction novel?" This was the question I was frequently asked while studying for a master's in creative writing a few years ago. It must have seemed an obvious question to ask the only person in the class with a science degree, but my fellow students usually seemed surprised to find that my literary tastes were often very similar to their own. Neither did mv classmates expect that I would have a greater passion for literature than I do for science - if I had to choose between reading novels and reading science books, I'd pick novels every time.

I've loved reading since

my father first taught me how to do it. We were Bangladeshi immigrants, and the only books we had brought over with us were a Quran and another Islamic text. But one

day, my father turned up with a children's alphabet book, sat me on his knee, and eventually led me to that wondrous moment that lots of primary teachers must share with their pupils: realising that the squiggles on a page can be decoded into words. Without giving you the whole sob story of my childhood, I'm not exaggerating when I write that reading was central to my happiness back then.

Choosing a path

Science was not something I took much interest in

until my GCSEs, when I was lucky to have great teachers who made me see that their subject could open up exciting new ways of looking at and making sense of the world. I had always enjoyed my English lessons, regardless of who was teaching them, because I loved books and reading so much that it didn't really matter what the teachers did. As well as having teachers who engaged me, there was another crucial difference between my science and English lessons: my English teachers never made me feel that writing books was something someone like me could ever do. My science teachers, however, made it clear that any one of us could

"The methods of science – observation, experimentation and thinking skills – can all be drawn out of stories you perhaps already use"

> grow up to be a scientist. As a science teacher

myself now, I joke with my English-teaching colleagues that their jobs are much easier than mine – they don't have to work so hard to engage students with their subject. I mean, it must surely be easier to captivate children with stories written by the best writers who ever lived than it is to make them engrossed in the behaviour of electric circuits or the properties of a gas? Whilst this may not be entirely true, there is plenty of research

that supports the power of storytelling as a teaching tool, and it's something that I've come to rely on in my work as both a teacher and an author who specialises in writing books about science.

Making links In their paper

Rethinking Narrative: Leveraging storytelling for science learning, Engel, Lucido and Cook write 'A compelling narrative capitalises on the way children's brains naturally develop to

process ideas, and it provides rich context to make otherwise seemingly abstract ideas relevant in a personally meaningful way.' The authors apply this to developing

'learning experiences' at the Field Museum in Chicago and it's something I have tried to do in my first picture book, *How to Find a Rainbow*.

The book tells the story of two very different red panda sisters, who go in search of a rainbow, fall out with each other along the way, and ultimately work out for themselves how rainbows are formed. *How to Find a Rainbow* follows what is known as a 'classical' story structure, with an instigating incident that sets the main characters off on a journey of discovery. But it also has a science element to it that, I hope, might be useful for colleagues wanting to teach about light, or just science in general.

According to the national curriculum, science teaching at KS1 should 'enable pupils to experience and observe phenomena, looking more closely at the natural and humanly-constructed world around them'. And that's really one of the messages at the heart of *How to Find a Rainbow*, and indeed, the other books I've written for

TEACH READING & WRITING

RECOMMENDED READS

Key Stage 1: *Tadpole's Promise* by Tony Ross and Jeanne Willis

This book works on many levels – it's either incredibly dark, or hilarious, or both, depending on your sense of humour. The ending both shocked me and made me laugh. It shows the life cycle of a tadpole and of a butterfly, but can also be used to discuss other aspects of the natural world like shared habitats and predators and prey.

Key Stage 1: *The Story of the Little Mole Who Knew it Was None of His Business* by Werner Holzwarth and Wolf Erlbruch

This is a much more straightforwardly amusing tale of a mole who goes on a hunt to find out who has done their 'business' (a poo) on his head.

Key Stage 2: *The Diary of Curious Cuthbert* by Jack Challoner

This collection of stories effortlessly combines compelling storytelling with accurate and accessible explanations of some of the biggest ideas in science. Not only that, the whole thing is written in rhyme!

Key Stage 2: *The Same Stuff as Stars* by Katherine Paterson

The title of the book refers to the scientific fact that the elements of which we are all made were formed in a dying star. This is just one of the things about stars and the planets that the main character, Angel, learns from the 'Star Man', in this story about a neglected child who has to take care of herself and her little brother.

children. So, while I may not have become a science-fiction writer, I have become an author who writes science *in* fiction.

In the classroom

I love stumbling across 'science in fiction' that I can use in my own lessons.

When teaching about space, or stars, for example, I like to use the wonderful explanation of why people are drawn to astronomy, as said by one of the characters in the novel *Postcards* by Annie Proulx. Another favourite of mine is When the Wind Blows by Raymond Briggs, which provides an incredibly powerful way of conveying to children the dangers of nuclear radiation, as well as allowing for discussion around the political and social implications of nuclear science.

It's not just the facts of science you can find in stories. The methods of science – observation, experimentation and thinking skills – can all be drawn out of stories you perhaps already use. For example, on his Science Fix blog, former science teacher Danny Nicholson suggests using The Gingerbread Man 'as a starter for investigations into how long a gingerbread man would survive in water'. Similarly, you could use Jack and the Beanstalk to introduce a project on plants, or The Gruffalo to explore habitats. I know that primary teachers don't need reminding of the power of storytelling, but I hope my thoughts here might just help you extend that power to science as well. TP



Alom Shaha is a physics teacher, writer, filmmaker, and

science communicator. How to Find a Rainbow is out now.

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How technology can help you get ready for SATs

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Need to know

With SATs season upon us, it's time to reflect: Are you and your pupils truly prepared? In the build-up to the exam period, schools will often ramp up efforts to ensure readiness, with many educators embracing technology to streamline preparation and boost outcomes. Were you one of the schools that utilised EdTech in the run-up to SATs, or maybe you wished you were? Juniper Education knows too well the pressures primary schools face when it comes to preparing for SATs. In addition to teaching the curriculum and preparing pupils for exams, teachers must identify areas for improvement and tailor learning accordingly, an essential but timeconsuming task when done manually.

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WAGOLL

Hide and Seek: a Bletchley Park mystery by Rhian Tracey

Peer inside the mind of the author, and help pupils understand how writers can create a flashback to provide background

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ased on historical events, *Hide and Seek* is about Ned Letton and his mother, Helen, who are swept up in the government's efforts to save the nation's art collection from destruction during the second World War. They are sent from Bletchley Park, after signing the Official Secrets Act, to Manod in North Wales, where they are led into a secret quarry. Inside this 'Aladdin's Cave' are thousands of priceless masterpieces – and an army of workers from galleries and museums across the country, striving to conserve and protect the collection.

Ned and his mother lodge with Mrs Thomas (the local teacher), her son Harri and Anni, a Jewish refugee. Anni's father has been interred as an enemy alien and her mother is away on war work. Mrs Thomas, who relies on Kip, her guide dog, looks after Anni as if she were family, but some in the village aren't as welcoming to refugees. Ned's mother is tasked with running the Picture of the Month scheme, (which still carries on to this day!), taking one piece of art from Wales back to London once a month. When something happens to Ned's mum, he is left to carry out her vital war work, because if he doesn't, she'll lose her job and they'll be sent back to Bletchley – something that neither of them can face.

Hide and Seek:

a Bletchley Park

mystery (£7.99,

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Ltd) is out now.

With his old friends from Bletchley Park, as well as new ones from Wales, by his side, and of course, Kip, the fantastic guide dog, Ned embarks on a dangerous and desperate journey to London, carrying with him the most precious and priceless cargo.

Hide and Seek is the second book in the *Bletchley Park Mystery* series.

FIVE TOP TIPS ON WRITING A FLASHBACK

LOOK AROUND

Link the present moment to the past with visual objects that the reader can spot, such as a telescope.

WHY ARE YOU WRITING THE SCENE?

What do you want the reader to learn from this extract? Flashbacks must serve a purpose, shining a light on a moment from a character's past.

LESS IS MORE

Keep it short. You don't want your reader to get lost between the present and the past, or worse, to get confused.

FEEL THE STORY

Sensory language allows your reader to connect in a four-dimensional way with the character's past. Think about going to a 3D or 4D screening at the cinema; your writing should feel the same. Activate the flashback by bringing your character's sensory world to life.

SOUND IT OUT

Listen to your writing using one of the free text-to-speech software packages that are available. You'll be able to hear the flashback and listen to how it fits with the section of writing that comes before and after it. Pretend it's an audiobook you are listening to!

TEACH READING & WRITING

Extract from

Chapter 2, pages 10–11

I've used the telescope detail to link Ned on the mountain with Ned in the flashback on his journey to Wales. Ο

This continues the link, as well as showing what makes Ned tick.

Readers will be familiar with photos and reports about the Blitz, but I wanted to make this personal and zoom in on the chaos, through Ned's eyes.

And here's another link to Ned's affinity with astronomy, which helps highlight this theme throughout the flashback.

Hide and Seek: a Bletchley Park mystery

A circle of torchlight shone towards them, dazzling Ned, and making him think of Sirius, the brightest star, also known as the Dog Star. People thought the North Star was the brightest, but this wasn't true. He'd borrowed books on the solar system from the library in town, when his mother had taken him. And his grandfather had given him an old pocket telescope. Ned had shoved the telescope into the pocket of his shorts before his mother rushed him to the station to catch the train.

After many trains, they'd eventually reached Birmingham, where they'd walked through the blitzed streets, navigating by pubs and cinemas and other landmarks. He wondered if he'd ever be able to navigate by the stars, like sailors did. It wasn't until he had to step out of the path of air-raid wardens that he realised he'd been feeling sorry for himself, and quickly pulled himself together.

The wardens were working their way through the rubble of a building to find people, dead or alive. Although he'd seen the pictures in the papers and heard the reports on the radio, Ned wasn't ready to see the ruins of strangers' lives. Yet as they passed one bombed-out house, Ned had found he couldn't take his eyes off it. The front was ripped open, and a bedroom exposed, like a doll's house from a horror story. Splinters of plaster and jagged edges of bricks were all that was left of a church. His mother gently suggested he recite the names of the planets aloud, which helped distract him, as it always did. Then they'd caught another train and somehow, finally, arrived in Wales.

As the circle of light got brighter, the gloom of the tunnel gradually receded.

10-11

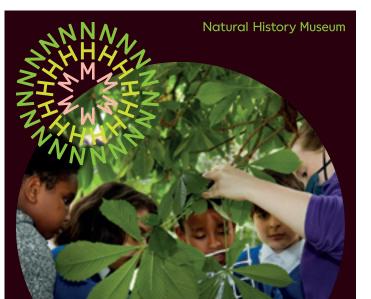
I added this detail to remind readers that the signposts had been removed, and to help them visualise the scene in this flashback.

Ned's attitude here echoes the mood of the moment, and how people were encouraged not to dwell on things.

> The image of a doll's house in this flashback gives the reader a sense of the scale of damage, as well the powerlessness people would have felt during the Blitz.

Q

I wanted to create a circular pattern in this flashback, beginning and ending with light, allowing the flashback to recede, much like the 'gloom of the tunnel'.





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Search 'Premier Education Ultimate Guide to Wraparound Childcare' to download the guide today.

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From page TO STAGE

If you really want children to engage with poetry, turn it into a performance, says CLPE learning and programme director, **Charlotte Hacking**

Children need time to read,

that we don't jump into

before giving pupils the

trying to dissect the poem

respond to it at a personal

engagement will involve

group discussion, where

responding to poems from

children can come together in

their own unique viewpoints

As poet Ruth Awolola,

highly commended in the

level. Ideally, initial

and with their own

experiences in mind.

re-read and respond to poetry.

However, we must make sure

opportunity to internalise and

n important part of the Centre for Literacy in Primary Poetry Award (CLiPPA) is our school shadowing scheme, which aims to directly engage children with the award and the poetry it celebrates. To support schools, CLPE provides planning and video resources. These are based on what we know works in effectively teaching and engaging children with poetry.

Children listen to the shortlisted poets perform poetry and engage in reading and discussing poetry, before performing poetry for themselves. Schools can submit videos of the best performances for the chance to win the ultimate prize – the opportunity to perform on stage at the National Theatre in London at the award ceremony alongside the poets themselves.

Listening to poets

The best way to get children really engaging with poetry is to make sure that they hear a wide range of it, as often as possible.

It's so important that children hear and feel the distinct rhythms of different voices and dialects, and see that poetry comes in different forms and can be written by a range of different people.

Each year, we video the five poets shortlisted for the CLiPPA, so that children can experience the form out loud, from the writers themselves. Poets like Valerie Bloom, Joseph Coelho, Matt Goodfellow, Kate Wakeling and Karl Nova show children the range and breadth of voices and styles that exist in children's poetry, and serve as inspiration for pupils to perform and write poetry of their own.

These video performances give children a model of what poems sound like off the page. Through these they not only learn what fluent reading sounds like, but also how to imbue reading with the

> "Video performances give children a model of what poems sound like off the page"

meaning contained in the poem and engage the listener most effectively. As Steven Camden, who won the 2019 CLiPPA with his collection *Everything All at Once* shares, "What matters to me most is the connection to what you're saying. It's fitting your emotional connection to the words and then translating that to your audience."

Engaging with texts

Finding that connection with a poem comes from hearing it, then re-reading and discussing it multiple times. 2019 CLiPPA, recognises, "It's impossible to be wrong about poetry. Any interpretation a child has of a poem is valid; it can't be wrong. The author is the least important person when reading a poem. The reader is the most important person, and each individual person is going to have a different interpretation. They'll find different things in it, hidden gems."

As children read and re-read a poem, not only does their fluency improve, but their focus also moves from simply lifting words from the page to understanding the words and their collective meanings. Children will also be able to secure and deepen their emotional connection with the poem, whether it be a laugh-out-loud limerick or a moving free verse.

It's often helpful to print copies of particular poems for pupils to explore in pairs or groups to gain and share multiple perspectives. The children can mark up and annotate the poems with their thoughts, feelings, observations and questions, and highlight particular language that interests them.

These multiple chances to read and talk about texts will then teach children much about how they could and should be performed. Once pupils have established their own connections with the poem they can then mark it up with ideas on how best to perform it.

Preparing to perform

It's important to allow pupils to choose the poems they most connect with to perform, as this will engage them and make their performance more authentic. Preparing for a performance allows children multiple opportunities to practise reading, working to express the meaning behind the words most effectively by

TEACH READING & WRITING

using their voices in differentorganise the performance:ways, and understandingwhether they think that ithow intonation and prosodywould be best to performcan help translate thisindividually or in pairs, orto an audience.they want to work as a gro

Allow opportunities for children to decide for themselves how best to organise the performance: whether they think that it would be best to perform individually or in pairs, or if they want to work as a group. Give time for them to look at the poem multiple times, talking specifically about the mood created and the emotions they feel as they read, and how they might convey this when they perform the poem.

As the children work up performances, allow them to record themselves and to perform to others. This will give them the chance to see and reflect on their poems, re-working parts along the way and trying out different ideas to improve things. When they are happy with their performance, they can make a final recording, and submit it for judging.

For the schools who win a chance to take part in the CLiPPA ceremony, the effects are profound and extensive. Angela Murphy, a teacher at St Margaret Mary's Primary in Manchester, who performed at the 2023 CLiPPA award show alongside poet Matt Goodfellow, explains:

"After the performance, the children told me that this was a day they would never forget, and it is one that I won't forget in a long time either. Being chosen to take part in such an amazing event was wonderful but I know that the effects of this day will be much more far-reaching. As a result of our participation in the shadowing scheme, the children have entered into a long-term relationship with poetry. They are no longer afraid of reading, discussing, writing and performing poetry and they talk about it with such passion." TP



Charlotte Hacking is the Learning and Programme director at the Centre

for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE). Find out more about the CLiPPA Shadowing scheme and access the videos and teaching sequences to support schools to engage with poetry at clpe.org.uk

LAST YEAR'S CLIPPA SHORTLIST

Blow a Kiss, Catch a Kiss by Joseph Coelho, illustrated by Nicola Killen (Andersen Press) A rich mix of poems that play with words and sounds, engage the youngest readers with rhythms and rhymes and show that poetry can tell a story or

Marshmallow Clouds by Ted Kooser and Connie Wanek, illustrated by Richard Jones (Walker) This collection engages children with the world around them. Evocative language describes experiences, conveys feelings and draws young readers into specific moments.

share our feelings.

Let's Chase Stars Together by Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Oriol Vidal (Bloomsbury Education) A perfect collection for UKS2, containing humorous poems, evocative imagery and moments that allow children to relate to and empathise with others.

Choose Love by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Petr Horáček (Graffeg)

A deeply resonant collection which provides insight into the real-life experiences of refugees forced to leave their homes to face an unknown future.

These are the Words by Nikita Gill (Macmillan Children's Books) Ideal for older readers moving into secondary, this collection features poems of rage, consolation, solidarity, hope and love.

Visit clpe.org.uk/ poetry/CLiPPA to see performances of these poems as well as the latest information on this year's award.

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Brightstorm

Set forth on an epic adventure with Vashti Hardy's exciting story of exploration

JON BIDDLE

hen Vashti Hardy released her debut book, *Brightstorm*, in 2018, there was a genuine sense of excitement in the children's book community. Comparisons were made to other popular steampunk titles such as Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* series and *Airborn* by Kenneth Oppel. The book went on to be nominated for several awards, including the 2019 Waterstone's Children's Book Prize and the 2019 Blue Peter Book Awards. Brightstorm is an energetic and high-paced adventure story featuring a pair of 12-year-old twins, Arthur and Maudie, whose life takes a dreadful turn when they learn that their father, Ernest Brightstorm, has been reported dead on his expedition to reach South Polaris on the Third Continent. Their family's reputation is also tainted, perhaps forever, when he is accused of stealing the fuel from the ship of another explorer by Eudora Vane, a rival sky-ship captain. With no other way of restoring their father's reputation, the twins join the crew of Captain Harriet Culpepper's sky-ship, The Aurora, in an attempt to reach South Polaris and clear the Brightstorm name.

As they depart Lontown and begin their journey to the Third Continent, the twins meet several fascinating characters, including a pack of thought-wolves, the wonderfully named Felicity Wiggety, and King Batzorig and King Temur from the Citadel, who all play important roles in helping the children on their quest.

Book topic

However, as they fly further away from the safety of the First Continent, they realise that they're not the only crew in the race, and the odds look increasingly stacked against them...

It's an ideal book to read with a Year 5/6 class, as the action starts almost immediately and doesn't let up. Pupils quickly begin to side with the Brightstorm twins, and are often outraged by the injustice of the situation the children find themselves in. The chapters are short and punchy, with more being revealed about the Brightstorm world and characters as the story moves forward. The cast of characters is relatively small, but this works in the book's favour, as the personality and motivation of each of them receives enough time in the spotlight.

The story's ending beautifully sets up the sequels, *Darkwhispers* and *Firesong*, which pupils are often desperate to read immediately after *Brightstorm*. There's also now a fourth book in the series, *Serpent of the Sands*, which features some favourite characters from the third book but can also be read as a stand-alone story.

Activities

Although the main reason for reading *Brightstorm* is simply the fact that it's a wonderfully engaging book, it can be used as inspiration for some exciting curriculum opportunities. It could also act as a springboard into a topic on explorers and exploration.

Front cover

Using the front cover as an opening point for discussion can often engage and excite the pupils before they even start reading. Brightstorm's front cover is perfect for this as it includes several clues about the story. Using a variation of the 'Tell Me' grid by Aidan Chambers (things I observe, wonder and infer), will lead to lots of excited speculation about what's inside.

How is Ernest Brightstorm perceived?

After having read the first few chapters, it quickly becomes clear that Arthur and Maudie's opinion of their father is very different from that of the general public. Asking questions such as, "Was Ernest Brightstorm a good explorer?", "Was he a good father?", "How did he die?" and "How might he be remembered?" can provide some interesting conversation starters. The pupils will probably have several other suggestions. The book also provides a chance to talk about fake news and how the media can influence what people think.

Applying to join the crew of The Aurora

The job advert on page 61 of the book is based on Ernest Shackleton's famous advert, which featured in London newspapers in the early 20th century. (There is now significant debate about whether the original advert is actually genuine, as nobody is



able to find the newspaper in which it allegedly appeared.) Getting pupils to think about the skills and experience needed to join a dangerous expedition to South Polaris is a great chance for them to produce some high-quality persuasive writing, especially when a clear structure is provided (*why I'm applying for the job, the skills I have, my relevant experience, what I can add to the crew,* etc) and the type of formal language needed is modelled.

Expedition equipment

Once the children's applications to join The Aurora have been successful and they're part of the crew, it's time to start thinking about the equipment that they'll need on the journey. I've

Take it further \Rightarrow

POETRY ABOUT ARRIVING ON THE THIRD CONTINENT

There are some stunning videos available online which are taken from ships arriving in Antarctica for the first time. Watching these with the pupils and then coming up with related vocabulary lists (*what I saw, what I heard, how I felt*) as a class can provide inspiration for poetry based around Arthur and Maudie's first experiences of South Polaris.

INVESTIGATE POLAR EXPLORERS

Most people have some knowledge of Scott, Amundsen and Shackleton, three of the more famous polar explorers, but there are many lesser-known figures whose stories are equally interesting. Matthew Henson (now commonly believed to be the first person to reach the North Pole, in 1909) was, until quite recently, marginalised in history books due to his ethnicity. His story can be discovered in the gripping short novel *Race to the Frozen North* by Catherine Johnson.

Female explorers such as Ingrid Christensen, the first woman to visit Antarctica, and Ann Bancroft, the first woman to reach both poles and to ski across Antarctica, also offer fascinating life stories. Providing the children with names of polar explorers and then showing them how to do research and then create a fact file or timeline of their lives would help provide some real-life context around the book and the world of exploration.



previously found that splitting it into three categories – clothing, navigation and survival – helps them to focus their thoughts and ideas. In addition, restricting them to a maximum of ten or twelve items usually ensures that nobody tries to sneak in an Xbox or PlayStation 5. Not always, admittedly, but usually.

Working with a learning partner can lead to some passionate debate about what is considered essential and what isn't. If the children are struggling to get started, suggest some items such as sunglasses (to prevent sun glare), a compass, ropes (to help pull people out of crevasses) and something to light fires with. However, pupils are normally full of suggestions and find trimming their list quite a challenge.

Explorer's journal

Non-fiction books Against the Odds by Alastair Humphries and *Explorers* by Nellie Huang are a fantastic starting point for creating an explorer's journal. Once the expedition sets sail, writing either as one of the twins or as another member of the crew can lead to an impressive piece of work that builds up as the story progresses. Writing longer entries when something significant happens in the book, alongside shorter entries which detail day-to-day life on board The Aurora, will help ensure that interest and enthusiasm is maintained. Recounts are a style of writing that the children will be very familiar with, and they should be able to attempt the task with a good level of confidence.

Creating a sky-ship

Books such as *Sky High!* by Jacek Ambrozewski and *Planes* by Jan Van Der Waken are full of incredible illustrations showing the evolution of flying machines over the past century. Sharing the artwork with the children and then encouraging them to draw and design their own sky-ships can take work based on the book in an entirely new direction. They can design the exterior and interior of the ship, label it with technical details such as top speed, fuel and flying height, work out how many crew members they'll need wwto operate it and much more.

Thought-wolves

For me, one of the most interesting characters in the story is Tuyok, the brave and valiant leader of the thought-wolves, who rescues the children on more than one occasion. Writing an account of a rescue – or of an incident unrelated to the main quest – from his point of view could be challenging, but it would also produce writing full of empathy and compassion.

Loved this? Try these...

- Sky Song by Abi Elphinstone
- Northern Lights by Philip Pullman
- The Elemental Detectives by Patrice Lawrence
- ✤ Wolf Brother by Michelle Paver
- The Polar Bear Explorers' Club by Alex Bell
- Cogheart by Peter Bunzl

New villain

Creating a new character for an existing story is always enjoyable, even more so if it's a dastardly villain. Does Eudora Vane have a partner in crime? Is there an even more cunning member of the Geographical Society with an even more despicable plot up their sleeve? Do Arthur and Maudie have a long-lost sibling eyeing up their inheritance? Because there's so much potential in the world that Vashti has created, there are numerous ways that a new antagonist could fit in. Pupils can draw their new villain and then annotate the image with key words that describe them. They could create a new backstory which explains why they have villainous tendencies, and write an account of one of their most wicked schemes - this could also be done in the form of a comic strip, where graphic novels such as Lightfall by Tim Probert can provide extra inspiration. **TP**



Jon Biddle is an experienced primary school teacher and English lead. Winner of the 2018 Reading for Pleasure Experienced Teacher

of the Year award, he coordinates the national Patron of Reading initiative.

GEOGRAPHY

Opportunities here include linking the book to map work and to climates around the world. One activity that is always successful is getting the children to draw the as yet undiscovered Fourth Continent. They need to consider the environment (polar, desert, mountainous, forest, volcanic), whether or not it is inhabited, the wildlife that might be found there and any potential dangers that explorers might face. Depending on the time available, they could write stories based around what they have created.

RSHE IDEAS

Brightstorm addresses some issues that would make a basis for valuable RSHE lessons. For example, Maudie is assertive, scientific and fearless, whereas Arthur is generally quieter and more sensitive. Arthur also has a mechanical arm, which was designed and built by his sister. You could thus explore topics such as challenging gender stereotypes and increasing disability awareness.

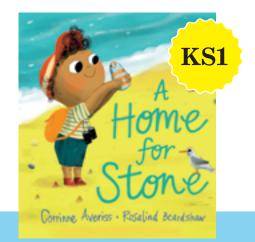
The importance of teamwork and cooperation is a thread that runs through

the entire book, and is something that could be related to real-life situations the children encounter. There are also some events and elements in the story that can be linked to the damage that humans are doing to the natural environment.

As well as the ideas suggested above, Hardy has provided lots of resources based on the books in the series, including maps and posters, so do make sure you and your pupils find the time to visit her website, **vashtihardy.com**

Book CIUB

We review five new titles that your class will love







A Home for Stone

by Corrinne Averiss, illus. Rosalind Beardshaw

(£12.99 HB, Orchard)

With stripes just like an old-time bathing suit, Stone really does stand out, but his face is the picture of misery. When the child finds him, all they want to do is make Stone smile – and so begins a quest to find Stone a new home. Surely, he'll want to be somewhere with other folks like him? Told in rhyming verse, this warm-hearted picturebook joyfully explores profound ideas. Fitting in does not mean being the same. Our differences bring pleasures and possibilities, and with them come learning, change and growth.

The bright artwork has a fresh, contemporary feel, and FS/Y1 children will enjoy responding to the rich visual landscapes. Stone's story also invites thoughtful reflection about collecting and its impact on the environment.

Monsters Never Get Haircuts by Marie-H Hélène Versini

and Vincent Boudgourd

(£12.99 HB, Boxer Books)

Have you ever seen a monster drinking strawberry milk? Probably not, because monsters don't exist... or do they? Are you absolutely sure? In this imaginative and visually sophisticated picturebook, fifteen monsters try – and fail – to do un-monsterly things, framed by a deadpan text that chips away at their dignity and power.

Defined by pencil lines in ways that bring them vividly to life, Boudgourd's colourful critters emerge from paint washes alongside the tiny, hapless humans attempting to co-exist with them. Humour abounds, but younger or more sensitive children could find some of these illustrations unsettling. It's all great fun though, for those ready to be playful in this way. KS2 children in particular will enjoy responding with their own stories and illustrations. Rabbit and Bear: This Lake is Fake! by Julian Gough, illus. Jim Field (£10.99 HB, Hodder Children's Books)

Winter's over, and Rabbit's had a vision of a perfect world: an island that reminds him of hot chocolate. True to form, he's being ungracious about finding it, but Bear's willing to go the extra mile to help her friend. When they arrive, the island clearly isn't edible, but Rabbit's so sure of himself that it's hard to acknowledge the gruesome truth. Will this be a catalyst for much-needed personal growth?

The sixth and final instalment in the Rabbit and Bear series, this fully-illustrated hardback is as endearingly daft as its predecessors. More than a passing interest in poo is taken, alongside gentle lessons about teamwork and friendship; emerging readers will be charmed.



EXPLORE OLIVER TWIST IN UKS2

Part of Plazoom's powerful Unlocking Inference collection, this resource pack includes a fully annotated extract, with close vocabulary work as well as questions designed to elicit sophisticated, evidenced inferences from all pupils. A complete course of video training explains the layered reading approach that will ensure deep understanding of the text for the whole class – try it today, at **bit.ly/PlzOliver**



Unstoppable Us Volume 2: Why the World Isn't Fair

By Yuval Noah Harari, illus. Ricard Zaplana Ruiz

(£25 HB, Puffin)

This fascinating look at history from the author of *Sapiens* takes the human desire for control – over the natural world and each other – and asks when and why it arose. Readers will discover that everything stemmed from the agricultural revolution, which fundamentally changed the way our species interacted and lived together.

The inclusion of imagined conversations and scenarios from the ancient world helps to make this fact-packed read more relatable to today's children. A particularly useful feature is the way that key sentences are highlighted in bold colourful font which, as well as acting as a useful 'rolling' summary, encourages less enthusiastic readers to dip in and out of the text.



Finding Hope: A Whistledown Farm Adventure

by Nicola Baker, illus. Rachael Dean

(£12.99 HB, Simon & Schuster)

City girl Ava doesn't want to stay at Whistledown Farm while her parents are away, and her cousin doesn't want her there either. When Ava rescues an abandoned lamb, though, things improve – until she forgets to lock Tom's hens up for the night and there's a fox attack. No wonder Tom won't believe her about the strangers in the wood! Will Ava find the courage to speak up before the rustlers strike?

Inspired by TV personality Nicola Baker's childhood experiences, this gentle adventure is a realistic reflection of rural life, with a direct, empathetic viewpoint that will appeal to readers from Y3 up. Rachel Dean's black-and-white artwork provides context for children unfamiliar with the settings.

Meet the **author**

YUVAL NOAH HARARI, AUTHOR OF SAPIENS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMANKIND, ON HIS LATEST BOOK FOR CHILDREN.



What would you like children to take from reading the *Unstoppable Us* series?

I'd like the books

to help children understand their own lives and the world around them. History is often told as something separate from our lives, prompting the question of "What does this have to do with me?" The point of these books is to help children constantly connect historical events with their daily existence. Why do we like eating things that aren't good for us, like sugary foods? Well, thousands of years ago, when humans lived on the savannah, if you found a source of sweet berries it would make sense to eat as many as possible there and then. If you waited until the next day, baboons might have stripped the berry bush bare! This goes all the way to the big questions like politics; if you don't know your history, you can't fully understand your present.

What challenges did you face writing for children?

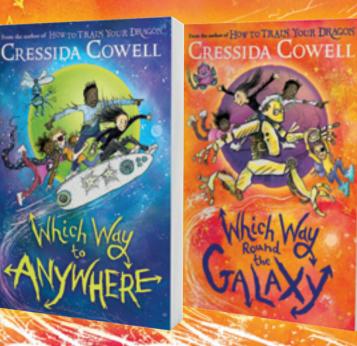
It forced me to think even deeper and harder. When writing for adults you can hide behind complicated language, but for children you have to make everything very clear. Children's books are full of descriptions of animals, but how many times a day will a child in the UK encounter a lion? The dangers they face come from corporations; how do you explain to an eight-year-old what a corporation is?

What was primary school like for you?

Looking back, many of my most important experiences took place during the breaks. And this ties in with how I believe formal learning should relate more to children's everyday lives. From being an outsider who was bored by lessons in the lower grades, I moved to a programme for gifted children, where intellectual achievement became our entire identity and emotional development was neglected. Getting the balance right is so important.

Unstoppable Us Volume 2: Why the World Isn't Fair is out now.

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THE CRAFT

Let's bring motivation, enjoyment and authentic writing purpose back into our classrooms, say **Ellen Counter** and **Juliet McCullion**

🖌 itting down to write can be daunting. There's a blank screen in front of us, a few ideas in our heads – and the impetus to write. We note down a plan and general structure, and ideas begin to blossom, but tying them together takes time. As adults, we likely have the privilege of reading many articles, so we know why they're written and what makes them enjoyable to read. Yet, it's not always easy to marry those things together to get to the finished product. Ideas bounce around our heads, words and phrases appear in our mind, but it takes care, motivation. and the many steps of the writing process to get to the publishable result. It's a hugely complex and demanding skill. Not only this, but writing places great demands on our *emotional* resources alongside the cognitive requirements.

As teachers, we place writing demands on children every day in school. To do something so demanding, pupils need to feel that writing is a worthwhile pursuit - they have to be motivated, volitional, autonomous and confident writers. If they are going to leave a little piece of themselves on the page an insight into their identity for scrutiny – then there had better be good reason to do so.

As Young & Ferguson state: 'Emotionally healthy young writers are able to produce better texts because they have secure writerly knowledge (cognitive resources) to draw on, they know how to manage the processes involved in



"To do something so demanding, pupils need to feel that writing is a worthwhile pursuit"

writing, and they can use and apply a variety of writerly techniques'.

We know that there has been a stark decline in the percentage of children and young people in the UK who are volitional writers. In June 2023, the National Literacy Trust produced results from its latest survey, which showed that only 34.6 per cent of children and young people aged between eight and 18 enjoyed writing in their free time.

In 2023, 71 per cent of pupils met the expected standard in writing, down from 78 per cent in 2019.

The good news

Despite these gloomy figures, there is hope. An increasing demand for research-informed writing teaching is blossoming, led by the clarion call of Ross Young and Felicity Ferguson at The Writing for Pleasure Centre, and other hugely influential academic researchers. In a recent article, written by Debra Myhill, Teresa Cremin and Lucy Oliver, entitled Writing as Craft: Reconsidering Teacher Subject Content Knowledge for Teaching Writing, the authors suggest that there is a distinct lack of empirical evidence concerning what constitutes teacher subject knowledge for writing. They propose reframing writing as a 'craft' rather than a subject, and suggest five key themes of

writing craft knowledge. We've outlined and expanded on these in the panel overleaf.

Whilst we cannot go into details for all of these areas, let's briefly focus on the three text-oriented themes: the reader-writer relationship; language choices; text-level choices. In other words (and this is a huge simplification!) how can we write effectively based on our purpose for writing, and how we want our reader to feel/think/do/understand? Following on from that, what language and text choices can we select to do this?

The national curriculum currently does not help teachers to understand the craft of writing. Statements such as 'In narratives, create characters, settings and plot' offer up no guidance as to how a writer would go about bringing a character to life, or the techniques writers use to construct a vivid setting. This lack of direction



often leads to writing being skewed towards box-ticking of grammar terms and punctuation (sometimes leaving out the craft of composition entirely). Consequently, in many classrooms, the authentic craft of writing remains a mystery to all involved.

However, within its aims, the national curriculum does emphasise the importance of an awareness of purpose and audience. There are various suggestions for a range of writing purposes, but we could broadly categorise them as writing to: entertain, inform, persuade, discuss.

Michael Tidd has previously blogged about his approach to devising a writing curriculum using these four writing purposes (tinyurl.com/tp-Purpose). Of course, these can overlap, but there is usually an overriding one at play. Carefully constructed writing curriculums should support children in building an understanding of writing for different purposes, and enable them to connect with their audience as a writer, and provide them with opportunities to make choices

about their writing.

When pupils start to notice that different writers use similar writerly techniques according to their writing purpose, they can start to build writing schemas alongside a developing understanding of genre knowledge.

For example, pupils can observe that when writing to persuade, we often:

- Use 'you' to put the reader on the spot and make them think about what we are saying or asking.
- + Use carefully-selected facts
- to support our opinions.
 Sometimes use rhetorical questions to make the reader think more deeply about a subject.
- Sometimes use emotion or exaggeration to make a point more memorable or emotive.

When they notice that writers often use adverts, letters, posters or reviews when writing to persuade, pupils will be able to match appropriate persuasive devices and genres for their writing purpose. (See tinyurl. com/tp-LanguageChoices for an illustrated example).

Putting it into practice

Curriculum design should therefore be carefully crafted to allow children to recognise that their language choices do not exist in a vacuum, and they can return to their knowledge of writing purpose to transfer this into different contexts (such as a variety of genres) and make links to any new learning. Not only within English lessons, but across the curriculum, with conscious control and choice.

Of course, we need to combine an understanding of both the cognitive and emotional demands that are placed on children when they are learning to write. Both domains must inform our decisions when creating any sort of writing curriculum within schools. We must include children in the decision-making concerning their writing making writing an enjoyable experience for them along with feeling a sense of satisfaction in their own high-quality creations (Young & Ferguson, 2021). As Michael Rosen states in his book Did I Hear You Write? (1989, p. 43): '...language

WRITING AS A CRAFT

Writer-orientated themes

• The writing process – idea generation, planning, drafting, editing, proofreading, publishing.

• Being an author – living the writer's life, writerly habits.

Text-orientated themes

• Text-level choices – general knowledge.

• Language choices – composition, sentence- and word-level choices, grammar and punctuation selection.

• The reader-writer relationship – knowledge of writing purpose, being able to link language choices to have the intended effect on the reader.

doesn't have to seem like A Thing; something that doesn't belong to you; or something that isn't part of how you think. Rather, it is a way of thinking you can control'. **TP**



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adviser at HFL Education.

@EllenCounter
 @HertsEnglish
 HfLPrimaryEnglish



Juliet McCullion is a primary English teaching and learning

adviser at HFL Education.

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Turn children's climate fear into climate fun with book 1 from the 'MASC to the eco-beat' series. This lower key stage 2 performing and creative arts resource, by Rona D. Linklater, highlights the effects of environmental pollution. Designed to galvanise children into action, the novel music and stories will encourage them to help protect our ecosystem and make a difference. It will also teach all children how to make music together and develop their creative writing and communication skills.

Why choose this resource?

✓ A unique fusion of fiction and nonfiction, delivered through an integration of novel music, art, stories and creative tasks, will captivate and allow children to relate to the characters or creatures, such as Kitti kittiwake and Toyesh, the little turtle, explaining about the dangers they face from climate change due to human pollution.

MUSIC

STORIES

CREATE

QR codes in the book allow access, via my website, to free music accompaniment WAV files for the novel songs, and free instrumental parts for classroom percussion. Ideal for music- non-music specialists, peripatetic sessions or out-of-hours clubs. (*Scan QRclip*)



Stunning illustrations by Stu McLellan, through agent Beehive Illustration, create a magical world to stimulate children's imagination. Differentiated creative activities provide a fun reinforcement of the learning through interaction and inclusive participation for children of all abilities. This approach aims to encourage experiential learning, and develop communication, confidence and wellbeing.

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Teaching information—Throughout this book, children are encouraged to take responsibility for developing their own ideas and those of their peers. (Five+ books recommended for class use.) While there are opportunities, through basic and extension activities, for the teacher to adjust the 'Let's Create' tasks to suit the individual needs of their children, the focus of these tasks has been linked to the primary grading system assessment statements. See the Teacher – Parent – Leader Guides from my website for suggested objectives and outcomes.

"There is no more powerful message in the 21st century than climate change. There is no more powerful vehicle for communicating and delivering such a message to children than the performing and creative arts." So...

Inspire—Create—Enjoy!

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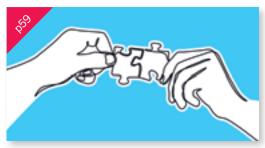
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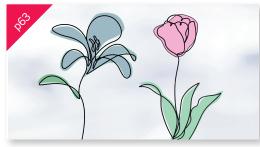




INSIDE THIS SECTION



Practical examples of how a culture of wellbeing can be put in place across a whole school...



Strategies for supporting bereaved pupils...



Practical ways to deal with overwhelm...



How daily reflections can have a transformative effect on children's learning...

Don't miss the end-of-term special in our next issue! Available from 21 June.

A different kind of LITERACY

Kate Landsman explains why and how we should be embedding SEL in the curriculum

ocial and Emotional Literacy (SEL) is a bit of a buzz phrase at the moment. In simple terms, SEL involves the ability to identify and label feelings in ourselves and others, and includes the ability to cope with and express emotions in appropriate ways.

By developing SEL skills, we can form stronger relationships, improve problem-solving skills and ultimately have a better quality of life. This is important for people of all ages, but if we develop these skills in children, right from the early years, we set them up to better deal with the challenges that they will face in life.

What impact does improved SEL have?

Without a good level of SEL, children are unable to identify and understand how they are feeling, and as a result it's more difficult for them to understand the underlying cause of their behaviour. This may then lead to a child reacting or behaving inappropriately. They may feel confused and frustrated, and act impulsively.

In developing their SEL, children build the skills they need to identify and understand their feelings; for example, they learn to acknowledge an unpleasant feeling's temporary state, and how to sit with it by developing self-soothing strategies. Ultimately, they will gain the ability to transition from these unpleasant feelings to ones they are more comfortable with. A child struggling to regulate their feelings can't concentrate properly on the activity at hand – whether that be learning, playing or building relationships. So, if we give them the necessary tools to help, there will be a huge improvement in their behaviour, connections with others, communication and academic attainment.

Embedding SEL in the curriculum

In a busy day at school, wellbeing is often overlooked and seen as another thing to try to fit into the timetable. SEL should be at the heart of everything, as without it children will not be in the right frame of mind to do anything. You will get far more out of a class who have strong SEL skills – and this will then free up time to do all those other things you have to fit in.

There are a few advanced Social and Emotional Literacy programmes available with resources to teach children about feelings and emotional regulation. These are based on the following principles, which you can use straight away to improve your pupils' SEL and embed it into your day:

• Link SEL into what you are teaching. There are so many opportunities to discuss feelings in different subjects. Ask children to consider the feelings of historical figures, or of refugees fleeing war. Think about how an artist might be feeling when producing their work, or a sports team winning/losing an important tournament. In doing this, children better understand characters and plotlines, and develop empathy. As well as this, by normalising talking



about feelings, it becomes a fundamental part of learning, and children become more emotionally literate and comfortable sharing their feelings. Get talking about feelings! Make time at the start of the day, during snack time, or after lunch to 'check in' with how your pupils are feeling. Introduce them to more nuanced language: they will start with very simple descriptors like happy, sad, angry, fine, but encourage them to think about other ways of explaining their state of mind. You could create a word wall of all the new feelings they come up with, or get children to place a photo of themselves on the feeling they are experiencing. Don't forget to tell them how you are feeling too –

"Remember to remind them that no feeling is bad"

sharing feelings creates an emotionally open environment and allows children to see that it is ok to feel. Remember to remind them that no feeling is bad: it may be unpleasant, but all feelings are valid, and temporary.

Ask children how their feelings feel. What does their body feel like when they're in a certain mood? Do they feel comfortable? Are they full of energy? Do their toes tingle? Does their tummy feel fluttery? Does their heart race? Do they feel hot and flushed, or shivery and want to curl up? Getting children to think about how their feelings manifest in their body – developing the skill of interoception – will help them learn to identify how they are feeling and manage their behaviour accordingly.

Create helpful spaces in the classroom. As children become more familiar with their feelings and the different levels of energy they have, create areas in the classroom with activities that reflect them. Then, when children feel a certain way, they can identify this and choose activities that work with how they are feeling. This also helps children with unpleasant feelings learn how to sit with them, and transition out of them.

The power of journaling and self-reflection. For older children, allow a short period in the day, maybe when they return to the classroom after lunch, or before pick-up, for them to reflect on their day. Give them prompts to enable this: What feelings have they had that day? What challenges did they have? What was really great about the day? This develops self-awareness and emotional processing skills, which are critical elements of mental wellbeing. If you do this activity at the start of the day, it can set positive intentions for the day, too. As humans, we are predisposed to think negatively, and so allowing ourselves to consider the positives in our lives improves optimism and increases happiness and positivity. This is a great activity for you to do at the same time as the children - end your day feeling positive, albeit exhausted!

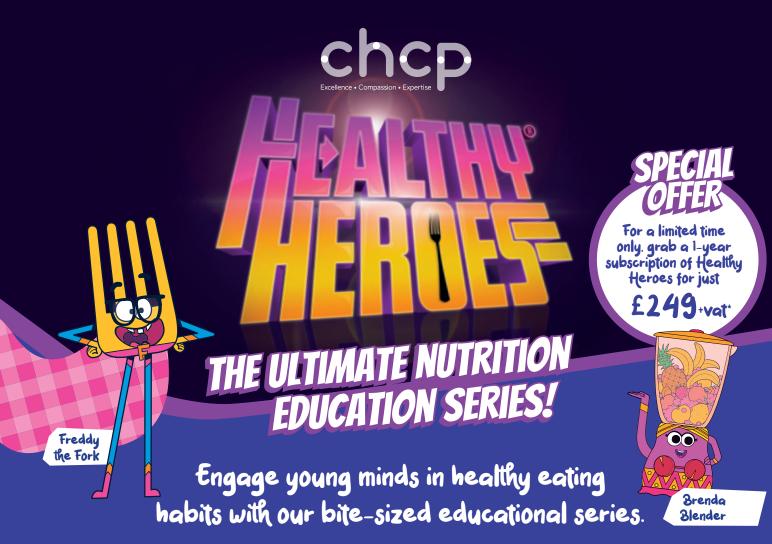
Although a whole-school approach to SEL is preferable, by implementing some of the suggestions above just in your classroom you can make a great difference to your pupils. Make children's wellbeing a priority and watch your pupils grow into resilient, self-aware, empathetic individuals who are equipped with the tools they need to be happy, successful adults. **TP**



Kate Landsman has 20 years of teaching experience from EYFS to

KS5 across the state, grammar and independent sector. She is the schools' communications manager at The Happy Confident Company.

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Food for thought

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Nurturing VELLBEING

Catherine Goodwin explains how to embed a whole-school approach to mental health



t West Lea, a special needs school, developing more positive

relationships across our community sits at the heart of our approach to mental health and wellbeing. The power of regular connections with a trusted adult is something that cannot be underestimated, and has been transformational in supporting our pupils.

To look at this holistically, we follow the guiding principles of Martin Seligman's theory of wellbeing, based on his PERMA model (see **tinyurl.com/tp-Perma)**, which incorporates five building blocks that help members of our community flourish while at school or work. These are: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment.

These elements help ensure we're focusing on strengths and achievements, equipping learners with a 'suitcase' of skills to help them on their exciting journey towards adulthood. It also means we can make sure our mental health and wellbeing approach isn't simply a reactionary response, but one that celebrates success and promotes human connections to build a hopeful and optimistic future.

Starting with our people

Many schools are very open about their commitment to putting children first, something which is admirable and understandable. However, we believe the key to delivering the best possible education experience is prioritising the people guiding and supporting our learners on their education journeys. Our people have regular meetings with their line managers as part of our 'partnering for performance' process. Part of these performance management meetings focuses on the wellbeing of each member of staff: to what degree they feel they have flourished in their role and whether they need wellbeing support – something they have access to 24/7 via external agency services.

Equipping our people with the skills and knowledge to champion good wellbeing throughout the school not only increases their capacity to support learners, but also enhances the school's culture of care and compassion.

Investment in training and personal support helps them lead by example and lays the foundation for an educational environment that nurtures the wellbeing and happiness of each of our learners.

It's important for our people to feel empowered and well-equipped so they can build trust among learners, spot the signs and in turn, support them through any challenges so that they can flourish both at school and beyond.

Creating a caring culture

Our curriculum places a large focus on good mental health practices, helping young people understand the importance of showing kindness and empathy as well as connecting with others and keeping physically, emotionally and mentally healthy. As part of this, our

"It's important that our people feel regulated, supported and motivated before anything else"

use zones of regulation (zonesofregulation.com) to help pupils more easily identify their feelings and build strategies to support these different emotions. This approach supports effective social emotional learning, and while there is no 'bad' or 'wrong' zone for a child to be in, certain zones may mean they aren't within their window of tolerance, and therefore need support to increase or reduce their energy levels.

Encouraging our people to model this process, we demonstrate how mood can move up and down a scale throughout the course of a day depending on what has occurred. As well as the old adage of 'tomorrow is a new day', we have the mindset that every lesson, and even every hour, offers a chance to reset and start over.

The right support

We have a range of professionals working with us, including a team of speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, school nurses, clinical and educational psychologists, school counsellors and mental health practitioners from the Enfield MYME team. The team works holistically to ensure our learners are getting the support they need.

Some of our support staff have also become pastoral mentors. This involves meeting with pupils who are experiencing difficulties, and undertaking short intervention programmes. Collaboration between our mentors and other professionals has been key to developing this holistic offer in school.

Beyond this, we are incredibly fortunate to work with a range of external agencies and partners to provide wrap-around care for our learners, tailored to their specific needs. This includes colleagues from The Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS and SCAN, Cheviots, Childrens' Social Care, Early Help team and the Enfield Advisory Service for Autism.

We have also recently worked with a music mentoring company called Everybody Loves Music (ELM), which has been inspirational for our pupils. While not deemed a therapeutic intervention in a traditional sense, the songwriting and music production sessions have provided learners with an outlet for self-expression, which in turn has boosted the children's self-esteem and confidence.

The wider school

Of course, wellbeing extends beyond the school gates, and our wider school community plays an important role within the network of support. Collaboration with parents, carers, and local external partners allows us to ensure learners receive the support they need beyond the classroom, while helping to mitigate issues, or proactively prevent them from arising.

To create a wide supportive ecosystem, we engage with parents wherever possible and provide guidance on supporting their child's mental health. Part of our parent support advisor's role is undertaking weekly home visits to deliver food donations, which is a good opportunity to check in with parents and carers.

As part of this approach, we even developed our own preventative educational resources in partnership with the Childrens' Society. These support young people who might be at risk of being exploited.

It is essential to consider and support the role of others within a young person's wellbeing network – teachers, staff, parents and loved ones. It is only via this wider strategic approach that we can take a holistic approach to wellbeing and provide meaningful wrap-around care that benefits learners and helps them flourish both within and beyond the school gates. The



KEY FACTORS FOR A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

• Develop your village: In support of the well-known saying, 'It takes a village to raise a child', build a stronger community by getting to know your local partners and creating opportunities for collaboration.

• Empower your learners: Prioritising social and emotional education helps learners develop resilience and understand how to look after their own mental health or where to seek help if they need it. This will ensure they can succeed beyond school or whenever they are away from their familiar support networks.

• Utilise the expertise of your people: Not all pupils need counselling from external providers – sometimes they just want a friendly, trusted person to speak to and to show an interest in their lives.

• Provide check-ins with a trusted adult: Some children who may be struggling can really benefit from a regular catch-up with a trusted adult they have identified. This can be invaluable in creating positive attachments at school, as well as a sense of safety.

• Listen to parent and carer voices: Don't assume that you know what support your parents and carers need. Provide opportunities to capture their voice, including coffee mornings and check-ins.

• Personalise support to the needs of learners: Explore a range of interventions and therapies and be open to changing providers to better meet the ever-changing nature of your school context.

REASONS TO TRY... OResilience-building trips at Kingswood

Outdoor adventure education backed by research

EVIDENCE-BASED

PRACTICES

We know that well-delivered OAE

trips can enhance learning back in

the classroom, but understanding

challenging. Kingswood recognise

practices - not only does this give students the best possible

tools they need to justify, organise

and enhance the impact of a trip.

Kingswood's latest research was

publishing in the peer-reviewed

the life-changing impacts of their

OAE offering. What this research

building' residentials do not simply

tick an Ofsted box, the impacts can

It is not surprising that the negative

impact of the pandemic is still being

felt by children and young people.

What is encouraging is the positive

residential adventures can have a

powerful and immediate effect on

94 per cent of children felt they

wellbeing, confidence and resilience.

gained in self-confidence after their

Kingswood experience. Moreover,

impact children's capacity to cope

with uncertainty, and improve their

outdoor learning can positively

So much so that Kingswood's

change outdoor learning can create.

CHANGES

be transformational.

 $\mathbf{2}$

and evidencing this can be

the need for robust, research-

informed and evidence-based

1

30 SECOND BRIEFING

All year round, Kingswood's 11 UK outdoor activity centres welcome schools of all age and ability to experience skill-building, memory-making adventures in beautiful natural environments

achievement - whether from participating in an activity or bonding with their camp mates. The residential aspect of a Kingswood experience builds on this and can often be missed when primary schools opt for day trips.

21ST CENTURY SKILL 4 DEVELOPMENT

The 'four Cs' of 21st century skills: communication. collaboration. creativity, and critical thinking, are integrated into Kingswood's programmes. These attributes are widely recognised as essential life skills that lead to success academically and in the workplace. Honing these skills from a young age can be highly beneficial, especially for Year 6s ahead of their leap to secondary school.

SELF-ESTEEM IS $\mathbf{5}$ **EVERYTHING**

Bolstering self-esteem is at the core of the experience Kingswood provides. By giving children the chance to believe in themselves, they are often surprised by their capabilities. Beyond the rush of adrenaline from abseiling down a high tower, children realise they can do anything they set their mind to; a feeling that resonates long after a residential experience. Kingswood pride themselves on highly-trained, agile instructors who can adapt to their group with positive influence and encouragement that enables individuals to set their own goals and really go for it.



94 per cent of participants said they felt more selfconfident because of their Kingswood trip

4 in every 5 students reported being more confident in meeting new people

70 per cent reported feeling more confident about their education

80 per cent felt more positive about people from different backgrounds to themselves

stress responses, creating healthy, resilient youngsters. **BUILD SOCIAL**

3 CONNECTIONS

Why is this so important? Through the years, we have thrived as a species by connecting with others. We need human connection with others physically and emotionally to improve our health and overall wellbeing. By bringing children together on a residential, opportunities to bond and connect are unmatched. After a day of adventure, encouragement, social interaction and laughter, every individual feels a sense of

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PUPIL bereavement

Bob Usher and **Tracey Boseley** discuss the importance of developing staff understanding, skills and confidence in dealing with grieving pupils

e are all likely to have experienced some form of bereavement in our lives, and can understand the immense sense of loss and grief that's involved. Talking about death is always difficult, but schools can provide vital support for bereaved pupils and their families.

What death means to children

A child's understanding about death develops with age. Between the ages of five and seven, children gradually begin to understand that death is permanent and irreversible, and that the person who has died will not return. As awareness of the finality of death develops, children who have been bereaved earlier in their lives often need to re-process what has happened.

Young children's imagination and 'magical thinking' can lead some to believe that their thoughts or actions have caused the death, and they can feel guilty. They may become extremely angry or, alternatively, try to be exceptionally 'good', to compensate for what they believe they have done.

By the end of KS2, most pupils will understand the inevitability of death, and be aware of their own and others' mortality; this can lead to fear and insecurity. They will seek information and answers to their questions.

Children who are not given sufficient information in age-appropriate language, can 'make up' the gaps in their knowledge. They may also take on the responsibilities of a surviving adult or siblings and, by trying to appear grown up, put themselves under additional stress.

How children grieve

Children can grieve just as deeply as adults, but they will often show it in different ways.

There is no time limit on grief, and it doesn't go away, it just changes over time. Although the grief will always be there, a bereaved pupil can grow a new life around their grief. Everyone grieves in their own unique way, but it's hard work and can be exhausting.

"Young children's imagination and 'magical thinking' can lead some to believe that their thoughts or actions have caused the death" Behaviour following a death can be affected by both loss-orientated thoughts (being tearful and wanting to talk about the person who died) and restoration-orientated thoughts (playing and spending time with friends).

Coping with bereavement usually involves switching between each of these mind-sets.

Younger children can find it difficult to cope with sad feelings for too long, and can 'puddle jump', appearing to move in and out of their grief, a bit like they are jumping in and out of a puddle.

One very common misconception is that a bereaved pupil who is acting normally in the playground is 'unaffected by their grief' or has 'got over a death', which is simply not the case.

How you can best support bereaved pupils

Most grieving pupils do not need a 'bereavement expert', just people who care. By carrying on with the usual day-to-day activities while acknowledging the bereavement, schools can provide a huge amount of support to a grieving child.

Children learn how to grieve by copying the responses of the adults around them.

Younger children in particular have a limited ability to put feelings, thoughts and memories into words, and tend to 'act out' rather than expressing themselves verbally. Therefore, their behaviour is often the best indicator as to how they are feeling.

Adults sometimes feel afraid to say words like 'dead', 'death' and 'dying', to young children, thinking alternatives such as 'passed', 'lost' or 'gone to sleep' are less harsh. However, euphemisms often cause confusion and frustration, particularly for younger children who are very concrete in their thinking: 'passed' - where to? 'lost' can we look for them? 'gone to sleep' – will I die when I go to sleep? Children find it easier to have information given in clear, accurate, age-appropriate language. Using 'dead' and 'death', with a simple biological explanation is much clearer.

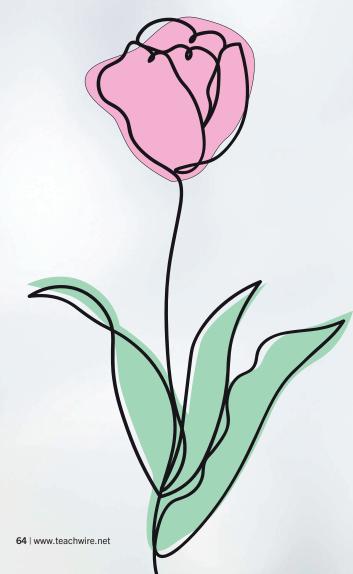
Try phrasing the concept as 'the heart stops beating, the lungs are no longer breathing and the brain does not work anymore', or 'when someone is dead, their body doesn't work anymore and

they no longer feel hot, cold or any pain, nor do they need food or drink'.

It's also important to check a pupil's understanding of the words people use to describe what has happened. Although children may repeat words they have been told by adults, such as 'heart attack' (who attacked the heart?) or 'stroke' (like stroking a pet?) they might not necessarily understand the meaning.

A bereaved pupil may experience new rituals surrounding the death, such as religious services and funerals: alternatively. they may not be included in the events, and just hear what happened through conversation. Children need opportunities to ask questions and receive age-appropriate information.

It can help a bereaved pupil if their friends are aware what has happened, so it's important to



encourage them to share their news, even if it is only with their closest friends.

Be prepared -abereavement policy

It's much easier to think about how to respond following a death if it's been thought about beforehand. A bereavement policy can offer guidance for all staff when dealing with death, grief and bereavement. Having a 'bereavement-aware' culture will ensure that all members of the school community feel supported. It's important to be mindful of social media and the indiscriminate spread of news.

As every school is different and every situation unique, the policy should be a flexible working document. It could include:

- Draft outlines of documents, such as letter templates.
- Resources to support bereaved pupils, other pupils, vulnerable staff, family/carers.
- Designated roles and responsibilities, for example who will communicate with the family, staff, pupils or press (if required).

Visit lgfl.net and childbereavementuk.org for more guidance. TP



Bob Usher is content manager at LGfL-The National Grid for Learning.

] Igfl.net



Tracey **Boseley** is head of Education Sector Support at Child

childbereavementuk.org

Support guidelines

Bereaved children are much better placed to manage their grief when supported in school as well as at home.

 Check in regularly to see how things are for them. Try asking specific questions about their friends, schoolwork or how their family or carers are.

 When appropriate, mention the person who died. It can be very strange for a child when nobody ever talks about their special person.

 Activities such as creating a memory box help provide a connection to the person who has died, as the child continues to move on with their life.

• Be sensitive to significant anniversary dates and check in to make sure the child is managing their grief.

 Try to prepare the bereaved pupil before a lesson where the topics of death or grief may be raised.

 Remember that bereavement is forever. From time to time the child may need more support as they process the impact the death has had on their life.

Bereaved families may also look to school for help and guidance. Grieving adults can sometimes struggle to support their child and manage their own grief.

 Share information with families and carers. Building and maintaining relationships with a bereaved family means information and support can be shared between home and school.

 Signpost support organisations and resources, where necessary.

• If there are safeguarding or risk issues, refer to the school policy on what action to take.

For a comprehensive, free-to-access training tool for schools, created in collaboration with CBUK, please visit childbereavement.lgfl.org.uk

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POSTCODE EARTH TRUST

Taking a MOMENT

Viv Trask-Hall offers some tried-and-tested techniques to help children who are feeling overwhelmed

o doubt many of us will have experienced situations when things get too much for our pupils, and their feelings become imbalanced. This can be described as 'overwhelm' – when children have a strong emotional response that they can't regulate.

How can we spot it?

Aggression is the easiest sign of overwhelm to identify. It can be displayed as physical or verbal aggression to other people or to the child's immediate environment. Even though this behaviour might make us feel angry or threatened, it's important to see it as a symptom some children present when they are feeling out of control and their mental health and wellbeing is out of balance.

Agitation can be exhibited in various ways, including quick movement, nail-biting, leg tremors and sleeve-chewing. This behaviour is often a form of self-soothing. It can also be the result of children's anxiety about what's coming next: they are not able to be fully present in the moment because they're always thinking about the next thing.

Over-adaptation is when a child puts the adult's needs above their own interests. So instead of going out to play, they will ask if they can stay in and tidy the bookshelf. Children often do this because they feel more regulated when they're able to help and support an adult. It's a fine line, of course. We want them to be helpful, but if this behaviour is getting in the way of them meeting their own needs, then this is



over-adaptation.

Incapacitation is another sign. This is when children let you know that something isn't quite right with them physically. It might be tummy pain or earache, and they then become fixated on having their needs met through that condition.

The natural response of many adults will be to just treat the physical discomfort, but sometimes children are expressing these symptoms in order to say, "I don't know how to tell you how I feel, so I'm going to let you know that my body is physically unwell."

So, what can we do to tackle overwhelm? Well, there is a range of tools and approaches we can use that can help with feelings of overwhelm. It's not a one-size-fits-all situation, so it is worth exploring different options so that you can arrive at a set of strategies that work best for your children.

Solutions for stress

Create a stress regulation

toolkit tailored to your setting. For example, you could make a 'calm-down corner', with a drawer or box full of objects that will help children to learn about themselves, their emotions, and stress regulation skills.

These tangible objects might be squashy balls, a bead threaded on a length of jumbo pipe cleaner that can be moved up and down, or a malleable chunk of playdough. Once a child has found an object that works, it can really help them to ground themself in the moment.

It's up to us as adults to get curious about these objects and think about how they could be used. And we need to be present alongside the children as they build confidence in what they find.

Pressure sources

A heavy shawl or a weighted blanket can also help a child who is experiencing overwhelm. Wrapping themselves up creates a feeling of containment a bit like receiving a hug – giving the child a sense of safety.

Better breathing

There are various breathing techniques that you can employ to help you and your children. One is box breathing.

Imagine a box in front of you. Breathe in and count to four, moving up the side of the box, then hold the breath and count to four as you move across the top. Exhale to the count of four moving down the other side of the box, then hold for four as you move back to the start. Repeat several times.

Bee breathing is another useful tool to master. Putting your fingers just in front of your ears, start to hum or buzz like a bee. This creates a vibrato that can help to regulate the cranium's vagus nerve. It's a simple technique that can help to calm and soothe your whole body.

A breathing buddy can really help breathing control too. I have a small cuddly dove that I place on my stomach while I lie on the floor. The aim is to focus on keeping that little bird moving up and down without falling off.

This careful movement helps to control your breath, and that helps with your self-regulation, slowing down your heart rate and reducing your blood pressure. **TP**



Viv Trask-Hall is head of Product and Innovation at Thrive

(thriveapproach.com), which trains teachers and other education professionals to support children's wellbeing.



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PARTNER CONTENT



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To find out more, visit purelynutrition.com



Jigsaw Education Group

Jigsaw PSHE and Jigsaw RE help pupils explore and develop their social, emotional, ethical and moral skills. and develop an understanding of the world around them. Both programmes are designed with consistent pedagogy and mindfulness techniques into age-appropriate spiral curricula, ensuring learning is revisited and deepened each year. The programmes are accessible through a single portal, with comprehensive lesson plans and resources all in one place, saving teachers valuable time and ensuring consistency in teaching standards and learning outcomes.

Jigsaw schools enhance wellbeing and personal development, so children are prepared to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

Visit jigsaweducationgroup.com/ age/primary



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

Pause for THOUGHT

Daily reflections can have a transformative effect on children's mental health, says Adam Bushnell

e are fortunate enough to work in an

amazing profession. Yes, we all are all overworked, underpaid, under-resourced and underappreciated, but it is still an incredible job full of tremendous highs and frequent hilarity. In my experience, teachers are overflowing with enthusiasm, but constrained by time. With endless planning, marking, emails, meetings, training and more, there is always just so much to do - all of this while being under the constant shadow of an inspection or new and increasingly bizarre government demands. We might have no glue sticks or whiteboard pens that work, vet still we continue, with smiles on our faces and stress in our veins.

So, when somebody suggests that we should take time to introduce daily reflections into our classroom, it's perfectly reasonable to ask, "When?"

A better question, though, might perhaps be, "What are the benefits?" By taking the time to pause and reflect upon topics such as gratitude, forgiveness of self and of others, anger, perseverance, self-awareness and more, we can encourage children to look at life more positively and to live in the here and now. This helps children to examine their own feelings and gives them the tools to know how to respond to each of these emotions, which can be oh-so -useful for us, too. It's a great method for helping pupils and teachers alike deal with the stressful situations they face every day.

We see many pupils suffering from problems such as social anxiety, separation anxiety, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, school-based anxiety and more. I work with children who have mental health problems like these every day, and since the lockdowns caused by COVID-19, mental health problems seem to have increased dramatically. Indeed, a survey carried out by 'Young Minds' (a charity that supports children with mental health issues) early in 2021, stated that 67 per cent of respondents aged between 13 and 25 believed

"We can encourage children to look at life more positively and to live in the here and now"

that the pandemic will have a long-term negative effect on their mental health.

So, what can we do as educators to help children with their mental health? It is my belief that we urgently need more emphasis put onto mental health in primary education in order to give children the tools they need to battle anxiety in later life. This is why practising daily reflections is an important first step, or at least a step further forward with what you are already doing. Many primary schools do already offer fantastic support to all children to promote positive mental health, but taking time to reflect daily on important messages could be an important addition.

But what are daily reflections? Well, you might begin with asking a question such as:

- What does kindness look like?
- Why are people kind to each other?
- What do you do that is kind to others?

How can we be kind to ourselves?
When can we be kind to others? at home, such as making someone else's bed or making a gift for someone, and doing good things outside, such as playing with someone

This might then prompt a discussion, led by you but also directed by the responses of the children. You could guide pupils by explaining that kindness can be lots of different things. For example, pupils can be kind in school by giving someone a compliment, using good manners or letting someone go in front of them in the line. You can also mention doing things they don't usually play with, offering to tidy up PE and breaktime equipment or holding a door open. You can even talk about doing kind things that help the environment, such as turning off the tap when brushing teeth, picking up litter or reusing paper.

You could finish this daily reflection by suggesting that the children choose to do something kind on that day. Explain that this will make them feel good and make others feel better too.

The topic for a daily reflection doesn't have to be restricted to kindness. of course. The theme can be as varied as you want it to be. It might be a reflection on gratitude, perseverance, present moment awareness, volunteering, positive routines, problem solving or making positive choices. You could focus on advice to overcome adversity or meditation practices, such as breathing exercises to feel calm, and more.

But when is it possible to do this on a daily basis? The setting for the daily reflection could be in an assembly for a whole school, with a class, or a small group of children. You might begin the school day with a class discussion of this sort, or perhaps have it before a lesson begins. If there have been particular issues over a breaktime or lunchtime with footballs or friendships, then that can be an excellent opportunity for an impromptu daily reflection. You could reflect at the end of the day to promote mental wellbeing at hometime. The idea is for you to decide when a reflection would be most useful; basically, they are meant to fit into the versatility of primary school life.

So, let's put contemplation into education and live in the now, with daily reflections as part of our standard practice. **TP**



Adam Bushnell is an award-winning author, and former teacher. He has written over 40 books including 100 Ideas for Primary Teachers: Daily

Reflections, Modelling Exciting Writing and Descriptosaurus: Story Writing.

☆ @authoradam
♂ @authoradam

DAILY REFLECTION IDEAS

What can we change?

- Discuss the things we can't change in life, such as how tall or short we are.
- Discuss what we can change, such as becoming better at football, gymnastics or reading. The more we do it the better we get at it!
- But can we really make changes to the world? Yes! There are lots of things we can do to help people, from donating to food banks to giving charity shops a bag of unwanted clothes or toys.
- Discuss with the children what small things they can do to change the world. You can make suggestions such as holding a door open, picking up litter or even just smiling more often.

The power of positive thinking

- Discuss some examples of negative thinking such as:
 - I'll never be able to do this.
 - It's all his fault.
 - She's doing so well. I'll never be as good as her.
- Explain that we all think like this sometimes and that's okay, but when you notice yourself having a negative thought, it's good to see if you can change it into a positive thought:
 - I can't do this yet.
 - I'm in charge of my own actions.

• Everyone is different. I can't compare myself to others because no one else is me.

 Another way to help children to focus on the positive rather than the negative is to get them to make a list of things that they are grateful for. This could be friends, family, pets, food, toys, games or something simple, like a rainbow. History, RE, English, PSHE/ Citizenship



• Why children were leaving Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938–39

 What children brought with them as refugees and how their experiences were different and difficult

• Why it is important to remember not only the Kindertransport, but also the many families that were left behind and suffered

Refugee Week: displaced people in history



Learn about the experiences of the Kindertransport children in this thought-provoking lesson from **Charlie Stansfield**

💥 @HolocaustCentUK 🛄 journey.holocaust.org.uk

Between December 1938 and September 1939, 9,354 mainly Jewish children made the long journey to Britain to escape Nazi persecution in Germany, Austria and the former Czechoslovakia. They were refugees. So one especially meaningful way to mark Refugee Week is to revisit these children's stories and consider our collective response to refugees in the 1930s and today.

People remember important events in different ways. We might wear a poppy or plant a tree, for example. How can we commemorate these child refugees, and why does it matter?



START HERE

Begin by asking

children what they think causes people to become refugees today, and whether the journeys that refugees go on are similar or different from ones we all make in our daily lives. Focus on the differences.



and provide a short explanation of why parents wanted to help their children flee persecution from countries like Germany in 1938. Make a point of explaining that although we have laws aimed at preventing discrimination against our citizens, not all countries past or present are the same. In 1938, the Nazi German government had already been persecuting Jewish families for five years.

MAIN LESSON

1 | IDENTITY

Ask the children to consider what makes up their own identity. Then ask, what do your students know about Jews? Explain that being British, for example, is a nationality, and that Judaism is both a religion and an ethnicity. Not all Jewish people past or present are religious. Jews are also an ethnic group, and in the 1930s they were less than one per cent of Germany's population.

Next, explain life for the Jews of Germany before 1933. Although anti-Jewish racism existed throughout Europe before the rise of the Nazis, many German Jewish families were happy and patriotic, evidenced by the number of Jews who fought for Germany in WW1. However, things began to worsen when the Nazis came to power in 1933 and convinced millions of Germans that all their problems could be blamed on the Jews.

Show your class examples of the anti-Jewish signs, posters, books, and newspaper headlines. What impact may these have had on both the Jewish and non-Jewish Germans of the time?

The Nazis introduced over 2,000 anti-Jewish laws. Show your class some examples and discuss which ones may have had the biggest impact. There were hardly any routes to escape, as most countries at the time, including the UK, were not welcoming to Jewish refugees. The Kindertransport was set up by charities and individuals, with strict rules, to help a small number of unaccompanied children leave. Under the scheme, the British

UKS2 LESSON PLAN

"Although anti-Jewish racism existed throughout Europe before the rise of the Nazis, many German Jewish families were happy and patriotic"

Sometimes, families received

financial help from British

Those who were not able to

afford the costs, including

many who had seen their

to stay behind.

foster families and charities.

assets taken by the Nazis, had

Next, using maps of

that the children boarded

trains from Germany,

Europe and England, explain

Austria, or Czechoslovakia to

the Netherlands, where they

were given a warm welcome

there, they boarded a ferry to Britain, eventually arriving at

Liverpool Street Train Station

in London. At the station, the

Ask pupils to discover the

children were given to their

stories and objects of your

think about the children's

Do the students think the

children were happy? How

might their early experiences

and what memories of home

did the children bring with

3 | REMEMBRANCE

Britain declared war on

them, and miss?

in England have been difficult

Finally, explain to pupils that

the transports stopped when

Germany. That day, a train

stopped. Those children did

carrying 200 children was

not gain freedom and it is

died in the Holocaust.

thought that most of them

Return to the stories of

chose. What contributions did

their life? What did the world

were not able to reach safety?

the child survivors that you

they make to Britain during

lose when so many children

chosen children. Guide their

discussions by asking them to

first experiences in England:

the language; streets; houses; people; schools; and even food.

foster families.

and hot chocolate. From



government agreed to waive the usual immigration rules for this small group of unaccompanied children, leaving their families behind under Nazi rule.

Ask your class to create a short headline and paragraph from a typical 1939 British newspaper that explains why Jewish children would be arriving from Europe.

2 | DIFFICULTIES

Next, turn pupils' attention to the stories of two or three different children. If possible, find the stories of children who settled in your local area, as this can add greater relevance and interest. You can find the stories of survivors on the National Holocaust Museum website (holocaust.org.uk/survivors) as well as elsewhere, for example in books such as *Journeys*, which is available to purchase from the museum's online shop.

Ask pupils to predict why this was such a difficult journey for both the parents and their children. Explain to the class the different rules of the journey, such as that children had to be able to carry their own suitcase. The children packed both practical and sentimental items, including clothes, dolls, photographs, and religious objects.

The scheme did not allow adults to come with their children as the government was concerned about the impact this could have, with jobs being taken from British citizens. As a result, there were not many visa waivers offered. Families also had to provide financial assurance for the children so that there was no apparent burden on the British government or public. EXTENDING The Lesson

• Explain that, in many ways, these children were extraordinarily fortunate. 1.5 million children died in the Holocaust. A challenging question could be to ask why we memorialise the Kindertransport in the UK more than we do those children who died.

• Ask the children to consider their own behaviour and how they treat people who are different from themselves.

• To stretch pupils' thinking and creatively assess what they have learned in the lesson, ask them to plan and create a memorial for the Kindertransport children. Thinking about the different stories of these child survivors and the objects they brought with them to the UK, how could we remember them? The children could create a sculpture, painting, symbol, poem or song, for example. Importantly, ask pupils to think about what message their memorial gives about the Kindertransport and what both children and adults would gain from experiencing it.



• Why were children forced to leave their home countries in the late 1930s?

• How was the journey a difficult one?

• Why is it important to remember not just the Kindertransport, but also the 1.5 million children who died in the Holocaust?

Charlie Stansfield is a teacher with a master's degree in the Second World War. He currently works at the National Holocaust Museum, whose team visit schools across the country.

KS1/KS2 LESSON PLAN



Art



• That colours can be categorised as warm or cool

• How to mix up a warm colour palette

About the artwork
 of American artist
 Alma Thomas

• How to represent the sun in their own paintings inspired by Alma Thomas

Here comes the sun... so let's paint it!



Adele Darlington shows us how to celebrate summer with paintings inspired by the work of Alma Thomas

💥 @mrs_darl 🧿 @mrsdarlingtonsworld

The warmer weather is here! Use the source of the heat – the sun – as the primary muse for your class in this summery art lesson. Inspired by the artwork of American artist Alma Thomas, your class will create bright, vivid solar masterpieces using her recognisable dash stroke style. Temperatures inside will soar as the warm colours of red, yellow and orange dance out of the paint palettes, off the paintbrushes and fill the classroom with the heat of a tropical holiday. You might need to pop your sunglasses on...



START HERE

Alma Thomas was an American abstract artist. Her works of art are well known around the world for their clear, characteristic brushstrokes and striking use of bright colours (**tinyurl**. **com/tp-AlmaT**). She applied short,



thick dashes of acrylic paint to large canvases and often used stripes and circles to create her artwork. Alma's concentric circle works such as *The Eclipse* (1970), *Resurrection* (1960) or *Pansies in Washington* (1969) – with their rings of bright colour emanating out from central circles, much like the rays of light and warmth shine out from a hot, blistering sun – form the inspiration for this sun painting lesson.

MAIN LESSON

1 | TURN IT UP

The colour palette for these paintings needs to be hot, hot, hot. Talk to your class about warm and cool colours – referring to a colour wheel can help illustrate this aspect of colour theory.

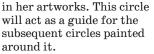
The warm colours are red, orange and yellow, evoking feelings of warmth and energy. The cool colours are blue, green and purple, which make you think of ice, water and all things cold, in addition to drawing out feelings of sadness or calm. In these paintings, pupils will be using the warm colours to represent the heat and brightness of the sun.

Invite pupils to mix up their own fiery colour palettes using only the primary colours of red and yellow. They will need paint palettes or mixing trays, red and yellow ready mixed paints and brushes.

First, encourage them to mix equal parts of red and yellow to create the secondary colour, orange. Then encourage them to explore mixing more red than yellow to create a red orange akin to a blood orange colour, then more yellow than red to create a yellow orange, also known as amber.

Give pupils time to continue exploring the different oranges they can create though the combination of different amounts of red and yellow. They may wish to create a paint swatch chart of their colour palette, naming each red, orange and yellow as they go. Maybe they'll mix up a burnt red, banana yellow or

"Temperatures inside will soar as the warm colours of red, yellow and orange dance out of the paint palettes"



The first circle is a block of colour, the circles around the outside are to be made from dash brushstrokes. You may wish to give your pupils the opportunity to practise these dashes before they paint them on their sun composition. To create a dash, pupils need to load (not overload) their brushes with paint and make gentle, sweeping motions to apply it to the paper. Different size brushes will create strokes of different thicknesses and add interest to the final piece.

Once the central circle is painted, pupils can select the next colour from their palette to form their first dash circle. Encourage them to work carefully, keeping the dashes close to the central circle but not touching it. They may find turning the paper as they go helps them to control the marks that they make. Once this circle is complete, it's time to paint the next one! Pupils should select another colour from their palette and paint the next ring of dashes. Repeat this process until the artwork is complete: depending on the thickness of the dash strokes, around six to eight rings will create a striking effect.

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

EXTENDING The Lesson

• Explore the art world of Alma Thomas further with your class. There are many paintings to study and admire. After exposure to her creations, provide your pupils with paints, brushes and canvases to paint as they wish, inspired by Alma.

• Use books and the internet to research Alma's story. It is a truly inspiring one of resilience, bravery and a love of art. The picture book *Alma's Art* by Roda Ahmed and Anita Cheung is a good place to start.

• How have other artists painted the sun? Share some sunny pictures with your class. Which ones do they like best? Paintings to share could include *The Sun* (1909) by Edvard Munch, *The Sower with Setting Sun* (1888) by Vincent Van Gogh and *The Red Sun* (1948) by Joan Miro.

a traffic light orange!

2 | GET CREATIVE

Now it's time to get started on the artwork. For best results, use cartridge paper for these creations; any size will suit.

Share some of Alma Thomas' concentric circle artworks (tinyurl.com/ tp-AlmaT) with your pupils to demonstrate the style of painting and to act as inspiration. Discuss their main features, drawing attention to the shapes and marks used in each.

The background needs to be painted first and, if possible, given time to dry adequately before children move on to the next stage – the painting of the sun. This background is a representation of the solar atmosphere; yellow is a good choice of colour for this. Not only does yellow suit the hazy heat of the sun's surroundings, it also allows all the other hues in the pupils' fiery palettes to show

up when painted on top of it. Encourage your pupils to paint the whole piece of paper, leaving no white spaces in between the yellow.

3 | HERE IT COMES

Once the backing is dry, it's time to place the sun in the middle of it. Pupils can choose a colour from their palette to use to paint the central circle – the sun – in the middle

of their page,

just as Alma did

USEFUL QUESTIONS

• Can you explain how warm colours make you feel?

If you were to create a cool, moon version of your painting, which colours would you choose? Why?
Do you like Alma Thomas' artwork? Can you explain why?

KS1 LESSON PLAN

Maths





• To describe a one-step movement of an object (left, right, up, down)

 To describe a one-step movement of an object including a direction (forwards, backwards, left, right)

 To follow a series of movement instructions

• To write a series of steps to describe the movement of an object

Playground pirates and buried treasure



Develop pupils' positional and directional understanding with this swashbuckling outdoor activity from **Ruth Astley**

💥 @bwcet 🛄 bwcet.com

Teaching position and direction to young children is tricky. The concepts can seem abstract and may be limited by pupils' understanding of the language, as well as a potential lack of directional understanding. The best way to introduce these concepts is through a practical, concrete approach, where children can complete these directions and actions themselves before transferring them to pictorial learning. Using the outside environment to teach position and direction gives these concepts a real-life context, providing a more creative activity and an enriching experience.



START HERE

Begin by introducing the terms 'direction' and 'position' to the children. Discuss real-life situations, such as car or bus journeys and treasure hunts. Explain to the



children that they'll be pirates for the lesson and will bury their treasure in a safe place. Before they become pirates, elicit the children's understanding of positional and directional vocabulary (backwards, forwards, right, left, up, down), sharing key words on vocabulary cards. Model moving a 2D pirate on a map for each of the directions. This may be the point to show the children a method for identifying their left and right hand.

MAIN LESSON

1 OFF TO THE ISLAND

Now it's time to step into the world of the pirates. Take on the role of a pirate captain and lead the children (the pirate crew!) follow-my-leader style out to their secret island (the playground). Give them basic positional and directional instructions as you walk. You could also use this as an opportunity to introduce quarter turn, half turn and ¾ turn if appropriate to their level of development.

When you reach the outside space, explain to the 'apprentice pirates' that before they can bury their treasure, they will need to complete some practice routes. Show the children a basic route of cones set up on the island (playground/field). Encourage them to explain how they would guide each other through the route. What will they need to think about? What language must they use? Focus on clear, one-step directions. As the pirate captain, guide the children around the route, modelling the directional vocabulary introduced in the starter activity.

Once children have a secure understanding of the language and its meaning, you can expand this stage of the lesson to further smaller routes of cones. Pupils can work in small groups or pairs to guide each other around the cone track using the vocabulary introduced.

This could be set up as a carousel of routes. The whole crew could be guided by the 'pirate captain' through the first route, and then split into smaller teams and rotate

"Using the outside environment to teach position and direction gives these concepts a real-life context"

understanding of directional vocabulary through observation. Depending on the length of the session, children could repeat this activity in different teams, swapping their instructional list to complete the activity more than once. Alternatively, all teams could be given identical instructional lists which increase in difficulty, for example an increase in the number of steps, or level of directional vocabulary. It may be appropriate during this lesson to encourage children to use imperative verbs to introduce their directional instructions. For example: "First, move forward three steps." Children may also be encouraged to tick off each step as they move through the series.

3 FINDING THE TREASURE

Once all the treasure is buried, the 'pirates' now need to be given the opportunity to lead others to find the treasure. As you explain to the children that they are now going to create their own set of steps to find the treasure again, return to the original ideas about what would make this task successful. Children can choose their own starting point for this final activity, and then work as a team/pair to guide one of the pirates in their crew from the starting point to the buried treasure ensuring that they are transferring their knowledge and understanding to the task. This will provide the opportunity for children to extend their reasoning and problem-solving skills through a more challenging scenario. The teacher's role in this section would be to support pupils with this reasoning activity.

Ruth Astley is a former assistant headteacher, SLE for assessment and English, and former LA moderation manager.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

• Finding the treasure could be a totally practical activity, or it could incorporate the opportunity for pirates to record the steps they create. This would be a chance for the children to practise their spelling of the positional and directional vocabulary. If this were the case, as the lesson is outside, don't forget to include clipboards in the resources needed.

• Encourage the pirates to discuss how best to tackle the problem with their crew, and explain how there is not just one route. You could challenge them to find three different routes, or ask each member of the crew to find a different route.

• To extend the final task further, the pirate captain could introduce challenges to each crew. Can they find the shortest route to their treasure? Can they design a route with four turns?

around each coned route. This would allow different children the opportunity to give the instruction orders at each station they visit. Alternatively, if children are not at this point of independence, multiple identical routes could be set up and you can give the orders to everyone to follow.

Finally, announce that the pirates have passed their training and are ready to bury their treasure.

2| BURIED TREASURE

Explain to the children that they are now ready to bury their treasure. You could use mathematical equipment or plastic coins as the treasure – or even chocolate coins! Provide the children with a list of directional steps to work with in pairs or teams. It's important to ensure you allow the children positional and directional vocabulary themselves. Each set of instructions will have a series of steps to follow with the directional language chosen for the lesson. Planning a range of starting points for each pair or team would be really useful for this activity to work successfully. Being outside allows for a larger area to be used, allowing different teams the space they need to follow their instructions without bumping into another 'crew'.

opportunities to read the

Now children follow their instruction list to bury their treasure. This section of the lesson gives the children the opportunity to follow a series of directional steps independently. Asking the children to work in teams allows the adults the flexibility to assess pupils' USEFUL QUESTIONS • What does it mean when we say something is

above another object? • Show me how to move forward. • "Move two steps forward." Can you demonstrate this movement?

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LEADERSHIP



THIS WAY! School improvement advice for headteachers and SLT

MIDDLE LEADERS | CPD | SUBJECT LEADERSHIP



Before we consider how we might empower middle leaders, it's essential we establish that we should. School leadership is a collective endeavour and if we're to succeed in our aims, we must surround ourselves with leaders who have the capacity to contribute towards the meaningful development of our schools. Of course, strong deputies and senior leaders are essential travelling companions, but we must give equal consideration to the strength of leadership beyond the SLT.

As they are typically classroom

teachers with additional responsibilities, middle leaders drive change in a physical sense. They're our proverbial bridge to the classroom, and the lens through which they view strategic decisions will be planted firmly in the day-to-day practicalities of school operations. They live and breathe our ideas, can relay messages in both directions, and are perfectly placed to support our efforts to be responsive and reflective in real time.

Increasingly, it should be said, they're an essential cog in a curricular

machine which seems to grow year on year. There are limits to how much subject and pedagogical content knowledge one person can possess and we must place our trust in our middle leaders that they will fill in the gaps where necessary, so that our pupils are in receipt of a rich, vibrant and complete education.

Find the right match

It's imperative that those we ask to take on middle leadership responsibilities are suited to the role. Leadership isn't for everyone, and that's okay. The system might be skewed in such a way that it more readily provides financial reward to those who do move into school leadership, but we should do what we can to try and stem this tide, by celebrating those who want to remain in the classroom, hone their craft and become truly masterful teachers.

At the same time, we should also consider the reasons why the pieces might not quite fit, so that we can take steps to support those with an interest in taking the next professional leap. Whether our future leaders lack personal organisation, are the primary carer for young children, or do not have the passion for a particular subject, our best course of action is the establishment of systems which support them in reaching their goal. Anyone can learn to be organised and think strategically. Children grow up, and some of the most passionate mathematics leaders I know despised maths when they were at school. What astute heads recognise in them is the potential for effective leadership and the empathy that comes with understanding the plight of the struggling pupil.

As senior leaders we should pay attention to the smallest of clues that will, in time, allow us to make those connections between passionate members of staff and areas of middle leadership. We should talk to our teachers about what they need from



us and what we need from them. If we make the boundaries of the relationship with middle leadership clear and the operational routines transparent, we're more likely to see our leaders flourish in the way we hope they will.

Subject knowledge

Subject leaders are the first port of call for teachers in search of subject knowledge support. Thus, they will need to know the breadth and depth of their curricula to execute this aspect of the role effectively. The greater the subject knowledge of our middle leaders, the greater their capacity to think in a deep and meaningful way about how they can realise their ambitions for their pupils.

To support our leaders in developing their own subject knowledge, we must initially provide them with access to the relevant subject associations. The stellar offering from the Historical Association, for instance, is central to the development of any history lead and the same is true for the associations covering the expanse of the national curriculum.

Equally, the wise headteacher understands that there are countless

Create leadership communities

Growing and empowering teachers – regardless of their level of experience - carries both opportunities and challenges. But amongst a range of strategies I have used as a curriculum leader, some have worked much better than others.

1 | SUBJECT CARETAKERS

When I support and coach staff on subject leadership, I explain we should think of ourselves as 'caretakers'. It is our job to 'take care' of the subject(s) for which we are responsible: to ensure our pupils receive the very best education and that the subject contributes positively to the overall quality of education in the school. From the outset, we need everybody to see themselves as being part of the big picture.

Together, as a community of teachers, we discuss, agree and conclude what features we'd hope to see across the teaching of each subject. This gives us a shared vision, so everybody knows what we're aiming for.

2 | A COLLEGIATE MODEL

We work collaboratively to create and review our 'features of effective teaching and learning' in each subject. How often do we get to talk about great teaching in art? Or PE? Or MFL?

As part of these conversations – which we have during an inset day or series of staff meetings – we review guidance from a range of organisations such as The Historical Association or the Association for Science Education to inform our thinking.

3 | KEEPING FEEDBACK FOCUSED

We support subject leaders to evaluate the quality of education in their subjects using the 'features of effective teaching'. Evaluating against this whole-school vision for each subject keeps the conversation about the subject, and not on the individual. This also helps to define what makes a great geography lesson, as distinct from a great PE lesson. Whilst we know there will be some generic features – there will be many differences, too.

4 | CURRICULUM CONVERSATIONS

Holding bi-annual discussions about key areas in each subject has been one of the most effective activities I've introduced as part of this approach. They support me as overall curriculum leader, but also help the subject lead to reflect and look ahead.

Around two weeks prior to these conversations (for which I allow 45 minutes) I share six question prompts or discussion points. Examples include 'What good practice is happening?' and 'What CPD may we need to provide?'.

Points are linked to SIP priorities and have accompanying prompts to help prepare subject leaders; it's not a test!

Then, together, we discuss each point. By sending the points in advance, subject leaders have already reflected and come prepared. It gives me the chance to gauge their feelings and assess what support I can give them, whilst also helping us to build a whole-school picture.



Adam Jevons-Newman is headteacher at Abbey Hill Primary & Nursery School, Nottingham

LEADERSHIP



"Top-down CPD stifles change"

Aside from the obligatory audience participation and mandatory role-play exercises, INSET days tend to be passive affairs where an in-house or external expert imparts their wisdom to an expectant audience. The agenda is almost always decided on in response to past events or outcomes. If reading results are down, senior leaders may decide to address this on an INSET day at the start of the following term. This retrospective approach does little to address real-time practice and can overload teachers.

Then, there is the lesson observation – another traditional CPD favourite. Anyone who has ever been observed by a leader in their classroom will tell you that the overriding feeling leading up to these events is fear. You can almost taste the trepidation in classrooms as senior leaders stride purposefully down the corridor, clipboards or iPads in hand.

It is virtually impossible to act naturally when someone else is in your classroom.

And then comes the dreaded feedback. Even in schools where the culture is one of openness and trust, this process can make teachers feel incredibly vulnerable.

So, what's the alternative? Lasting change relies on people having control over their own development, so we need to hand over the reins to teachers. When people feel they are in charge and have a voice, they are far more likely to buy into and effect change in the long term.

A 'bottom-up' approach puts teachers front and centre and allows them the autonomy to decide areas for development themselves. These can be identified through a reflective practice, for example by videoing and reviewing their own lessons, so they can analyse their own qualities and consider potential steps towards improvement.

These reflections may only take a matter of minutes but will have lasting impact further down the line. By taking small but purposeful steps towards agreed goals within clearly set out parameters, teachers gain an increased sense of value and confidence.

Matt Tiplin is vice president of ONVU Learning, and is a former senior leader in a MAT and an Ofsted inspector.

experts sharing their wisdom daily, usually for free, and will know who to follow on X. For starters, I would recommend Neil Almond (history/ geography), Tom Brassington (geography), Adam Smith (religious education), Lekha Sharma (curriculum), Shannen Doherty (mathematics) and Emma Turner (curriculum), but there are countless others who will, no doubt, be engaged in regular conversations with those listed here.

Combine this with the audiovisual content provided through education podcasts, the Complete Mathematics CPD College and at Myatt and Co., and you have a CPD treasure chest with the capacity to drive meaningful improvement at a fraction of the typical cost.

One thing that the teachers listed do so well, and that's worthy of emulation, is connect classroom teachers with education research.

Providing our middle leaders with the tools to engage with research will not only help them develop their understanding of the wider conversation at an academic level, but also encourage them to think critically about their whole-school responsibilities and develop their own opinions on some of the most important debates and themes in education discourse.

Close the loop

Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of empowering middle leaders is a closed strategic decision-making loop. We must avoid creating an inner circle within the hierarchy, for they are guaranteed to eat away at our schools in the long run. An effective school has leaders throughout, moving things forward or holding them in place, ready to move forward when called upon.

When something new is introduced, it's common to survey the thoughts of our middle leaders, but where are they when the plans are finalised?

We should look to extend the opportunities we give for reflection, discussion and planning – opening the door, perhaps, to our senior leadership meetings, so that our middle leaders might be both present and able to contribute. We should touch base regularly, have systems in place for doing so, and routines that are refined to the extent that they make the process of leadership seamless.



Kieran Mackle is a maths consultant and the creator of the weekly Thinking Deeply about Primary Education podcast. New

episodes are released every Saturday at 9am, wherever you get your podcasts from.



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...

What is your idea of perfect happiness in your job?

I don't work in the classroom anymore, but I do support schools as a neurodiversity specialist. I want to make an impact, so I like to work with people who share my passion for neurodiversity and are looking for simple solutions to improve things for neurodivergent pupils and staff. I love my work and I'm really passionate about my mission, so I'm very lucky!

2 What is your greatest fear at work?

As a neurodivergent person, I have incredible imposter syndrome – there's this constant voice in my head that tells me I'm no good and that people are going to think that I'm talking utter rubbish, or that they won't like me. It's an inner monologue I battle with all the time. I talk about it on my social media channels a lot because I find that sunlight is the best disinfectant. Through sharing my experiences, I hope that other people will feel the psychological safety to be able to be honest about how their neurodivergence affects their own life.

3 What is your current state of mind?

In spite of the ridiculously high exclusion figures released in April and the huge number of anxious non-attenders we have in schools in Britain, I'm optimistic! The neurodiversity movement is gathering momentum. Most people hadn't heard of it around five years ago, yet, this week alone, I've heard important conversations about burnout and masking on mainstream radio, television and in the press. And also, perhaps things have to hit rock bottom before we can start to build them back up again?

4 What do you consider the most overrated teacher virtue?

'Professionalism.' It's too broad a term. What does it even mean? To me, it's just getting on with the job of teaching the children; not all the paperwork that goes along with it. But teachers get measured by spreadsheets and policies, not the happiness or ability to learn of their pupils.

5 On what occasion do your class?

When I worked at an international school in Cologne, Germany, my Year 5 class asked me what I used to do before I was a teacher. I spontaneously told them that I used to be in the band 'Steps' before they got famous, but that I'd had an argument with Fay about borrowing her nail varnish, so left the band. For a while I would show the children dance moves every day after lunch. I'm certain that most of them believed that I was actually a former pop star.

"I find that sunlight is the best disinfectant"

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

I no longer work with a class, but with the delegates at my training sessions I do have certain catchphrases and have often thought about creating some kind of Catrina Lowri bingo card. I use words like 'identity', 'belonging' and 'inclusion' a lot. I also say "I'm not a doctor, but as a qualified teacher..." quite often, because the people who attend my courses tend to talk about the neurological workings of the brain.

7 What do you consider your greatest teaching achievement?

When I worked in a special school, a girl with tuberous sclerosis learned to drink from a straw. This life skill was far more important to her than any A* at A-level would have been to a child who was academically able.

8 What is your most treasured teaching possession?

Probably my memory stick. It contains so many presentations and materials I've built up over the years. **TP**



NAME: Catrina Lowri JOB ROLE: Founder and director of Neuroteachers EXTRA INFO: neuroteachers.com/training



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