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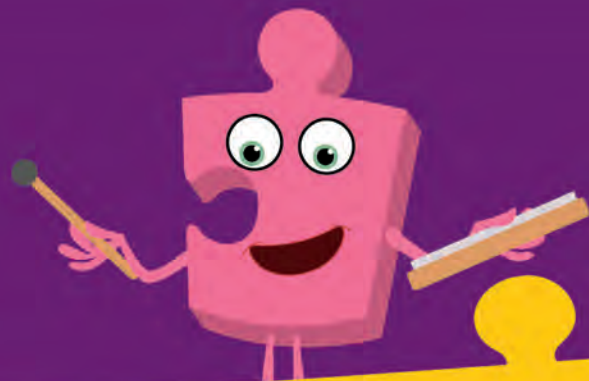
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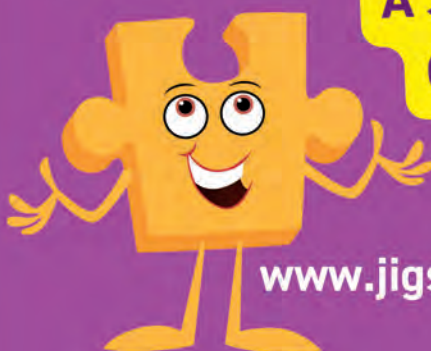
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# Hello!



**T**he question of assessment is one that pervades educational circles year after year, decade after decade. It seems we can never manage to come to an agreement on what assessment is actually for, let alone how to effectively administer it in our primary schools. What isn't in doubt, though, is the one thing all educators do have in common: wanting to know that their pupils are truly learning something in the classroom, as well as developing transferable skills that will set them up in life, no matter what they go on to study.

So why is it so difficult to pin down an effective system? I suspect a lot of it could be to do with the fact that figuring out what any one child has learned is going to vary wildly from pupil to pupil, depending on how they learn. But another aspect could certainly be the seemingly ever-changing goalposts from the powers that be. Case in point is the recent removal of KS1 assessments; something that various cohorts of the education sector have been calling for, for years. Many teachers in England will be cheering at the prospect of not having to administer these tests anymore, but the question remains... what should we be doing instead?

In the case of KS1 maths specifically, teacher, author and podcaster Kieran Mackle thinks that the answer is simply to do... well, nothing. Removing the need for teachers to jump through hoops means they should have more space to focus on teaching children the mathematical concepts they need before advancing into KS2, he argues, and give more agency to educators who know what their pupils need and when. Read his full argument on page 17.

What seems evident is that no matter the policy or pedagogy at hand, there will inevitably be many opinions on what works best. I hope you enjoy considering some of them in this issue.

Until next time...

*Charley*

Charley Rogers, editor  
 @TeachPrimaryEd1

*Don't miss our next  
 issue, available from  
 29th September*

## POWERED BY...



**MICHAEL CHILES**

on why we need to think more closely about the questions we ask of our pupils

*"You might ask a million questions throughout your career; but are they the right ones?"*

p34



**AIDAN SEVERS**

shares his top tips for writing a comprehensive fact file, plus free resources

*"The various elements of informational writing can be quite tricky to get right"*

p52



**NIKKI GAMBLE**

on how to teach idioms by making sure to contextualise language to improve comprehension

*"We take a lot of idiomatic speech for granted, but it provides great learning opportunities"*

p64





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

Headteacher, Dalmain Primary

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**We're all ears!**

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

**teach  
PRIMARY**

***We want to hear from you!***

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



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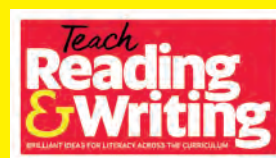
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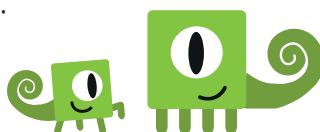
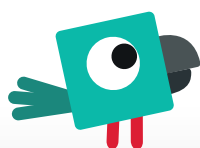
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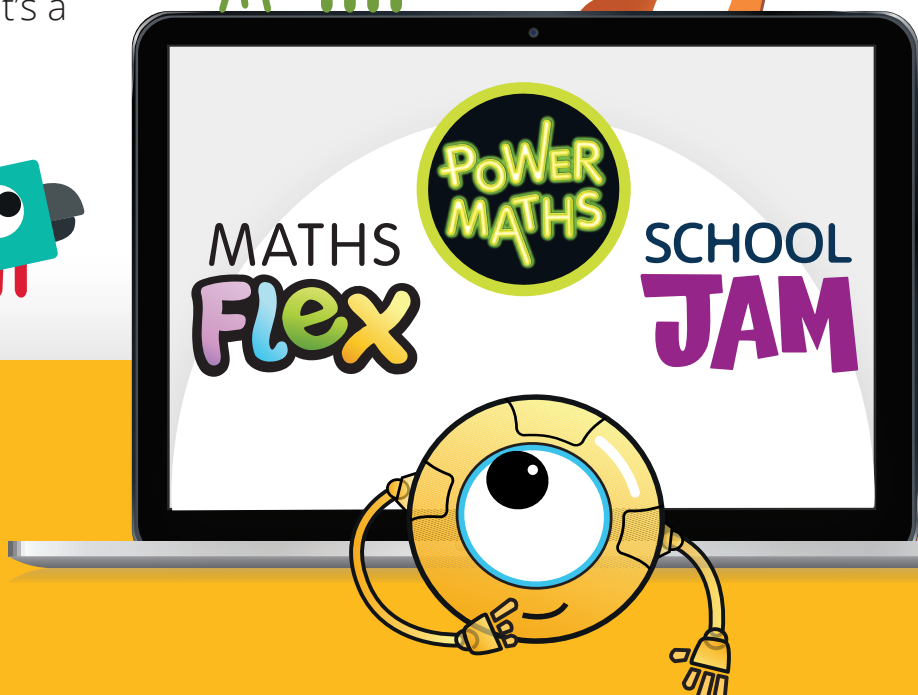
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# Breaktime

News | Interviews | Ideas | Resources | Research



## Heart health

Every state-funded school in England is set to receive a defibrillator, says the Department for Education (DfE). Following the government's £19 million rollout, over 20,000 defibrillators have already been delivered to almost 18,000 schools since January. The rollout comes following a campaign from Mark King of the Oliver King Foundation, who tragically lost his son Oliver (12) after he suffered sudden cardiac arrest at school.

Large schools have been provided with two or more defibrillators so they can be strategically placed around the campus, including in areas where cardiac arrest may be more likely, such as sports halls. The government is also supporting schools in making defibrillators available to the community, with 1,200 external heated defibrillator cabinets being provided to primary and special schools by the end of 2023 in areas of deprivation, where provision is generally lower.

Find out more at [tinyurl.com/tp-DfEdefib](https://tinyurl.com/tp-DfEdefib)

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



### LET'S PLAY!

The National Theatre has made its Let's Play programme free for all primary schools. It includes free online or in-person CPD for teachers, as well as resources and exercises to use in the classroom, plus the best of British theatre on demand. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-NTLetsPlay](https://tinyurl.com/tp-NTLetsPlay)



### SPEECH SOUNDS

Non-profit company Commtap has launched a new set of 60 free resource packs to support teachers and speech and language therapists to meet the needs of children with SLCN. Find Speech Sounds packs, fully aligned with the national curriculum, at [tinyurl.com/tp-Commtap](https://tinyurl.com/tp-Commtap)



### MUSICAL WONDERLAND

Delve into Lewis Carroll's beloved tale, *Alice in Wonderland*, with free KS2 resources from the London Symphony Orchestra. The resources include 10 videos and 34 worksheets on topics spanning art, drama, writing, and music. Find them all at [tinyurl.com/tp-AliceSound](https://tinyurl.com/tp-AliceSound)

## →→→ TODAY'S **TOP** **RESOURCES**



### Get grammar sorted!

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](https://bit.ly/PlazoomGS)



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## Wicked Writers

The winners of the 2023 Wicked Writers: Be the Change competition from the National Literacy Trust and the stage musical *Wicked*,

have been announced. Ten-year-old Amelie Arumugum, from Powell Corderoy School in Dorking, took home the top spot in the 9–11 category, for her essay on deforestation and how humans can change their behaviour to protect the planet. The runner-up title went to Natalia Hrickova, 10, from Thomas Deacon Academy Junior School in Peterborough, whose experience as a deaf student fuelled an essay calling for British Sign Language to become mandatory in schools.

The competition was judged by Sharna Jackson, award-winning author of *High-Rise Mystery*; Mark Curry, *Wicked* cast member and former Blue Peter presenter; Michael McCabe, executive producer of *Wicked UK*; and Jonathan Douglas, CEO of the National Literacy Trust. Learn more at [tinyurl.com/tp-WickedWriters](https://tinyurl.com/tp-WickedWriters)

## Make some noise!

As Anti-Bullying Week 2023 approaches, the team behind the initiative has revealed that the theme for this year will be 'Make a Noise About Bullying'. The week, running from 13–17 November 2023, will kick off with Odd Socks Day, supported by CBBC and CBeebies star Andy Day and his band Andy and the Odd Socks.

The theme was chosen through consultation with teachers and pupils by the Anti-Bullying Alliance, which coordinates Anti-Bullying Week every year in England, Wales and (for the first time) Northern Ireland. As always, schools will be able to download free teaching resources and themed assemblies to mark the week. These will focus on the actions we can take to encourage young people to consider what bullying means to us, how banter can turn into something more hurtful, and what we can do to stop bullying. Find out more at [tinyurl.com/tp-ABW23](https://tinyurl.com/tp-ABW23)



\*Renaissance

**30%** of teachers say they would feel anxious solving a maths problem in front of pupils

## Look ahead | Book ahead



### BOOKFEST

Wimbledon BookFest returns to London from 12-22 October, featuring events for schools from leading authors, and a brand-new patron: Uncle Bulgaria of The Wombles. Learn more at [tinyurl.com/tp-WBF23](https://tinyurl.com/tp-WBF23)

### TOMORROW'S ENGINEERS

Tomorrow's Engineers Week from Engineering UK is back from 6-10 November. Running for the 11th year, the week includes a live broadcast for schools, and a Big Quiz, to inspire future engineers. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-TEweek](https://tinyurl.com/tp-TEweek)



Q &amp; A



## Dermot O'Leary

presenter and author

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

I went to a very sweet local primary school, called St Andrews in Marks Tey, just outside Colchester. It was a really lovely, warm, nurturing environment; a great place to grow up.

### 2. When did your love of history start?

I don't think the syllabus back then was as defined and extensive as it is now, but I remember having very nurturing teachers who were good at fostering curiosity. Also, growing up in Colchester, you're almost spoon-fed Roman history. When I was a kid, I remember they were building a shopping centre or something, and had to stop because they stumbled upon some kind of Roman artefacts. I found it all fascinating!

### 3. How does your new book appeal to your interest in history?

Well, so far, I've written five books about my cat, Toto, who's a member of an international order of Ninja Cats. I love writing from the point of view of animals, and I love history, so I thought for the next book, why not combine them, and consider what it would be like if there were animals fighting on our behalf in the Second World War. So, the book's about a young Swift called Linus, who ends up being recruited for the RBF (Royal Bird Force) to intercept German planes, by pooing on their windscreens. It's a difficult balancing act, because I wanted to make it entertaining for children, while also being faithful to history. But my good friend James Holland, who's a historian, helped me immensely with that. I hope it'll be a fun exploration of WW2 history for kids.

***Wings of Glory*, by Dermot O'Leary, illustrated by Claire Powell (£12.99 HB, Hachette Children's) is published on 14th September, 2023.**

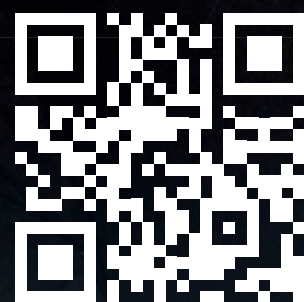


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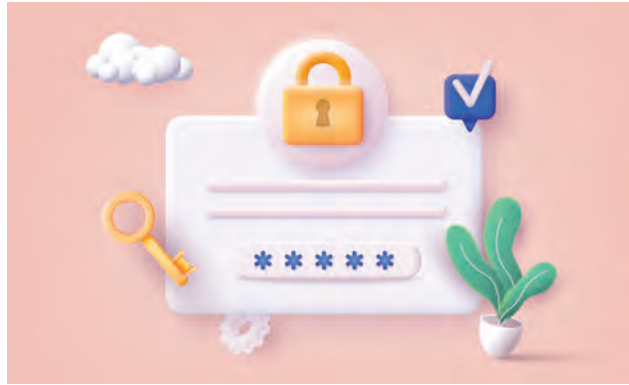
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# 6 ways to keep personal information safe

Smartphones, tablets, laptops, oh my! Learn how to avoid potential data breaches by securing your tech and staying alert to scams

## 1 | HAVE A CLEAR DESK POLICY

Classrooms are often busy environments where it's easy to misplace important documents. But teachers have a responsibility to keep personal information safe and make sure no one has access to it without their authorisation. So whether it is exam results or a parent's phone number, paperwork including any personal information should be stored securely. Schools should ideally have a policy in place to help minimise the risk of personal information being left unattended, which could include always keeping a clear desk (or at least clear of personal info!) and being aware of your surroundings when accessing personal information. For example, try to avoid checking emails while your laptop is connected to the classroom projector.

## 2 | ENCRYPT YOUR TECH

Make sure you use strong passwords on smartphones, laptops, tablets, email accounts and any other devices or accounts where personal information is stored. Also, where possible, consider using multi-factor authentication, a security measure to confirm identity and make sure the right person is accessing the data. As you may work from home in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays, you need to take additional precautions to ensure that personal information is stored securely on devices that are taken off school premises. It is important that school IT policies and procedures are still followed at home.

## 3 | BE WARY OF SUSPICIOUS EMAILS

While anti-virus software can help protect a device against cyber-attacks, we should all be aware that hackers may target our work emails – this is known as phishing. Read up on how to spot suspicious emails (for example, look out for signs such as bad grammar, demands for you to act urgently and requests for payment). New technologies mean that email attacks are becoming more sophisticated than ever, and a phishing email could appear to come from a source you recognise.



**HAFEEZA JOORAWAN**  
is a senior policy officer at the Information Commissioner's Office, specialising in the education sector.

## 4 | STAY ALERT TO SARs

As well as ensuring any personal data is kept safe and secure, it's also important that we understand our wider responsibilities under data protection law. If someone asks you for a copy of their personal information, it's called a subject access request (SAR). It's their legal right to request copies of their information, and by law, you must respond within one month. Since teachers frequently interact with parents and carers, you should know how to recognise any SARs made to the school, so you can spot them early. Often, these requests can be missed if they are received orally at parents' evening, or in the middle of an email with a different subject matter.

## 5 | BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY

The most common data breaches that occur in schools include personal information sent to the wrong party and being discussed in front of other students or their parents/carers. It is important to understand that small actions can still constitute an inappropriate disclosure of personal information. For example, think twice about giving information to childminders and other people who may collect a child from school. Consider what information is put in a child's school bag, particularly if they're being collected by someone other than a parent. Be careful not to talk about personal matters where you can be overheard, or tell a person something they're not entitled to know – including friends and family outside of school.

## 6 | PRIORITISE TRAINING

Schools must ensure that every teacher has the training and support that they need to get data protection right. With a whole host of more pressing concerns, this might be at the bottom of your to-do list, but it's important to make sure data protection training is considered a priority. The ICO offers a wealth of free advice and resources to educate teachers on their responsibilities – you can find guidance, resources and more at [tinyurl.com/tp-ICOSchools](https://tinyurl.com/tp-ICOSchools)



# How boxing can save our at-risk children

Taking vulnerable pupils out of the classroom isn't always a popular choice, but the results speak for themselves...

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

I want you to think about the children in your class. Almost half of them will experience a trauma before they reach adulthood, and two of them will go through at least four adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) ([tinyurl.com/tp-trauma](http://tinyurl.com/tp-trauma)); perhaps abuse, neglect, or a parent going to prison, having mental ill health, or a substance dependency.

They might have started their education at the age of just four having already been through multiple ACEs, and sadly these children are much more likely to end up exploited, in a gang, in prison ([tinyurl.com/TPprisonstats](http://tinyurl.com/TPprisonstats)) or being diagnosed with a mental health condition.

While breaking the law or exhibiting the noticeable symptoms of bipolar, schizophrenia or depression may come much further down the line, you may already be seeing the very early signs that their traumatic home life is impacting the process of developing resilience and appropriate emotional outlets, relationship building, and their ability to engage with education. One day they might reach crisis point. But what if we acted sooner? What if, as soon as you noticed a child struggling to engage, to regulate their emotions, or to act appropriately at school, there was an alternative to which you could refer them?

Suggesting that pupils spend time away from the classroom doesn't

necessarily align with traditional thinking. But those of us who firmly believe in specialist programmes for these at-risk children aren't suggesting that they're not taught anything.

We're saying learning doesn't always have to take place in the classroom. That instead, following assessment by teachers and SENDCos in partnership with other stakeholders, pupils could be spending at least part of the week learning how to positively channel their anger and anxiety into a sport like boxing; being mentored by people who have 'been there and done it' when it comes to childhood trauma, and working towards skills certificates to include English and maths, as well as qualifications in mental health and sports and fitness.

I've been watching transformations in front of my eyes for the past seven years using this approach. I could fill your classroom many times over with fantastic examples of young people whose futures look completely different now. But this isn't just about those two pupils in your classroom; it's

about a wholesale overhaul of how we approach trauma-informed teaching, not only fulfilling the objectives of the education system but also meeting previously unmet needs.

Two of the criteria we focus on through our programmes are improved self-belief and self-confidence, and the marked difference speaks for itself. Seventy-eight per cent of young people report they believe in themselves more after taking part, and 76 per cent have better self-confidence. Add this to self-reported improvements in anger management, mental health, and feeling they have a positive future, and you start to build a picture of the impact boxing can have when combined with mentoring and education. A large-scale study in America even showed a 20 per cent decrease in 'mental health burden' among those who took part in boxing compared to those who didn't.

The release of endorphins and dopamine experienced during boxing is powerful, too. Dopamine is associated with better mood and motivation, meaning when it comes to the mentoring and education parts of the programme, children are more engaged with tasks, and more eager to talk.

A boxing session followed by an open and honest chat about feelings, struggles, and hopes for the future is a powerful juxtaposition. For children who may be at risk of being exploited, drawn into a gang and criminal behaviour, to know they can stand powerful and strong in the ring while also being connected to their emotions and the impact of their traumas on their wellbeing sends them a clear message about what true inner strength is all about, allowing them to discover who they are and (most importantly) who they want to be in the future.

So, imagine your class again. Can you identify children already going through ACEs? Can you see the earliest signs that they're struggling? Are you persisting with trying to teach them in the same way the others in the class are being taught? If the answer to those three questions is yes, then what could you be doing differently? **TP**

*Joe Lockley is the co-founder of BrightStar.*



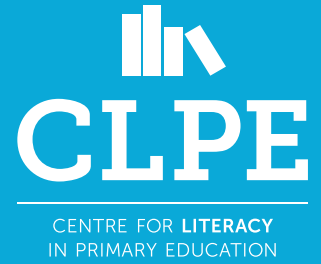




*"...our early years children at King's Cross Academy LOVE reading and writing and we attribute this to the 'Power of Reading' programme with its amazing range of quality books, poems, rhymes and songs."*

HEADTEACHER AT  
KING'S CROSS ACADEMY

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# CLPE's Power of Reading: A Whole School Approach to Literacy

**The Power of Reading empowers teachers and improves attainment and engagement among all children.**

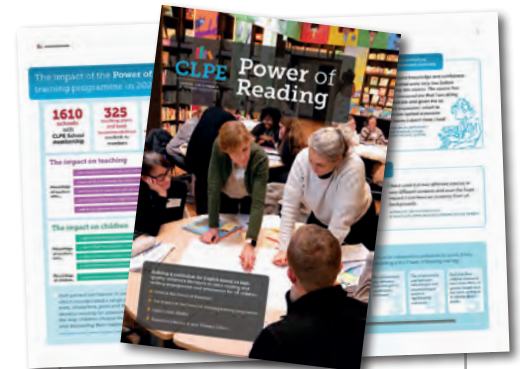
The Power of Reading Programme puts quality children's literature at the heart of learning and is built on years of research and practice.

The programme develops teacher subject knowledge and supports your school to raise engagement and attainment in language, vocabulary, reading and writing and meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum.

The Power of Reading programme includes in-depth training and has excellent teaching resources at its heart which can be accessed through a CLPE School Membership.

- Developed and research-proven over 17 years
- Raised achievement in more than 5000 schools
- 98% of teachers saw improved engagement in children's reading
- 97% saw an improvement in children's writing
- Children who are part of the programme make an additional six months progress compared to their peers.\*

\*Stats taken from CLPE's Power of Reading Impact Report 2023



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the impact of the  
**Power of Reading**  
programme and how  
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on search engines – a worryingly low figure, given the pervasive use of search engines in daily life. The report also highlights the fact that this age group is also less likely to receive direct parental supervision of their online activities compared to younger age groups; the Key Stage 2 age bracket thus appears to be a pivotal moment in which children are branching into independent exploration online. Supporting this age group with the skills to understand the content they are accessing online should be an indispensable part of their education.

Educators need to consider how digital citizenship skills can be enmeshed across the whole curriculum, so as to prepare young people to interact with media in a safe, responsible and informed way. For example, this can be achieved by using technology across a range of subjects and teaching children how to engage with one another, work collaboratively on projects and communicate effectively online. Incorporating the use of online resources in the classroom encourages pupils to engage critically with their sources and question their assumptions in a systematic manner. In particular, it is becoming increasingly important to show impressionable young people how to evaluate news sources.

For instance, showing pupils examples of unreliable sources alongside trustworthy ones (including social media profiles) for comparative purposes can make this a collaborative activity and help them learn to challenge information they see online before accepting it.

Media literacy should be a key component of a Key Stage 2 curriculum. Supporting children to become mindful media consumers will not only help to protect them from disinformation or falsities online, but also promote their critical analysis skills and problem-solving skills from a young age, attributes that will stand them in good stead across all subjects and throughout their educational journeys. Beyond their education, empowering our children with media literacy skills will allow them to be informed digital citizens who are able to discern truth in an increasingly confused and competitive media environment. **TP**

*Al Kingsley is the chair of Hamptons Academy Trust and group CEO of NetSupport.*

 @AlKingsley\_Edu

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## OUR PUPILS ARE MISSING OUT ON DIGITAL SAFETY

The national curriculum needs to change, to ensure we're teaching all Key Stage 2 children about media literacy

**I**t can be all too easy to presume that today's children are 'digital nomads', having had access to almost limitless content and increasingly sophisticated devices at their fingertips from early childhood. However, we risk doing a disservice to the younger generation by mistaking high levels of usage for competence. Whilst children are certainly spending more time using devices and navigating content online, it is also clear that this usage is not always positive, nor does the level of usage correlate with effective engagement or true understanding of the media they are consuming.

Much attention is – rightfully – given to guaranteeing children's online safety. Caregivers and teachers can shield children from certain types of online harm by monitoring their usage, as well as making use of readily available programmes that block potential threats or even detect keywords which can indicate when they may be at risk.

However, these measures only offer protection against some of the dangers that lurk online. To allow children to thrive in a constantly evolving digital

world, we must provide them with the skills to safely navigate the media landscape themselves. In the context of an increasingly digitised environment, we need to set our sights higher than assuring online safety for our pupils; rather, we should ready them to flourish online. We must ensure our children's education equips them with the requisite skills needed to allow them accurately to evaluate and interpret the digital media they encounter.

Although teaching children vital lessons about online safety is required by law, only a small mention is made of being taught to 'explore how the media present information' under the current national curriculum for Key Stage 2. This recommendation, as part of the non-statutory guidance for citizenship lessons, points to the concerning possibility that the teaching of media literacy will be at best scattered, on a national level.

Ofcom's recent report on Media Use and Attitudes among children and parents ([tinyurl.com/TPofcom](http://tinyurl.com/TPofcom)) suggests that only one in three children aged eight –11 surveyed were able to correctly identify sponsored results

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

## A letter to... *Maths leads*

In place of recently removed KS1 maths assessments, the most sensible thing to do, is, well... nothing, says **Kieran Mackle**



**P** primary teachers in England are standing at the precipice of one of the most significant changes to their working practices in almost a decade. Not since the removal of national curriculum levels in September 2014 has the profession faced such a momentous shift in thinking. After multiple delays, the end of the 2022/23 academic year finally marked the end of statutory assessments in KS1, and a chance for schools to make improvements that could have far-reaching ramifications for their teachers and pupils alike.

Since 1991, schools have been required to report on the attainment of pupils at the end of KS1, purportedly via the professional judgement of classroom teachers but supported by an external moderation process and a suite of standardised tests. I'm sure at some point in time this involved discussions of a professional nature, but it has been all too common over the years for pupil assessment to be reduced to performance against a checklist for presentation at moderation, and the structuring of curriculums to conform to arbitrary, sometimes shifting, expectations.

Now, the removal of these standardised assessments presents us with a chance to do the right thing and put pupils at the heart of our decision making. How schools choose to act will be determined by a combination of ideology and how they view the purpose of assessment. The misuse of assessment data is another article entirely, but suffice it to say that some of the most heinous crimes

against statistics have been carried out on the data generated by six-year-olds.

You can prove anything with statistics, but what matters in the classroom is knowing what your pupils know and what they don't, and then deciding what to do about it. When thinking about how your school might replace the departing KS1 maths assessments, consider the possibility that it might be best to just... do nothing.

Now imagine you did just that. Nothing. You collected no summative data and just focused on teaching pupils the right content. What would happen? In some respects, not a lot. In others, a golden age might beckon.

By putting old habits aside, we would, in effect, give ourselves seven years to focus on providing pupils with a rich and meaningful mathematical diet, consisting of the right content at the right time, as judged by us, the teachers. We have known for a long time that maths is a subject which is mastered through the creation of robust connections, meaningful interaction with concepts on the verge of our pupils' understanding, and the provision of sufficient time to reach the point where they can think mathematically with those same concepts.

Yet, how often have we had to shoehorn lessons on fractions, time and multiplication tables (to name just a few) into our teaching sequences in the name of generating sufficient evidence for KS1 moderation? With the freedom to be responsive to our pupils, we are now empowered to restructure our curriculums in such a way that capricious endpoints no longer hold sway. Of course, in many instances, we are



still bound by the national curriculum, and it would be reckless to suggest we cut these concepts altogether (though I wouldn't blame you if you did), but we can still prioritise that which we deem most important to our pupils' success in maths over the longer-term, and if that means pushing some content into the summer term, then so be it.

In many instances we will act at the behest of our leaders, and not all of them will be comfortable with doing nothing. In such instances we need open, honest conversations about the purpose of assessment, informed by the thoughts of great minds such as Daisy Christodoulou and Dylan Wiliam, that might lead us to solutions that prevent us from repeating the mistakes of yesteryear.

We have the rare chance, right now, to start afresh and place our pupils' mathematical journey at the heart of everything we do. If we rush to find replacement sub-standardised assessments, we will, I fear, find ourselves in the same place we did in 2014: surrounded by a thousand different versions of the old model (levels by any other name) but without any semblance of validity or reliability.

So, now is the time to ask yourself, 'What will I do?', 'Why will I do it?', and 'How can I remove the burden on teachers and pupils?' If we take a beat and think before we act, I trust we'll be in a better place this time around.

*From, Kieran*

*Kieran Mackle is a primary teacher, author, maths specialist, and host of the Thinking Deeply About Primary Education podcast*



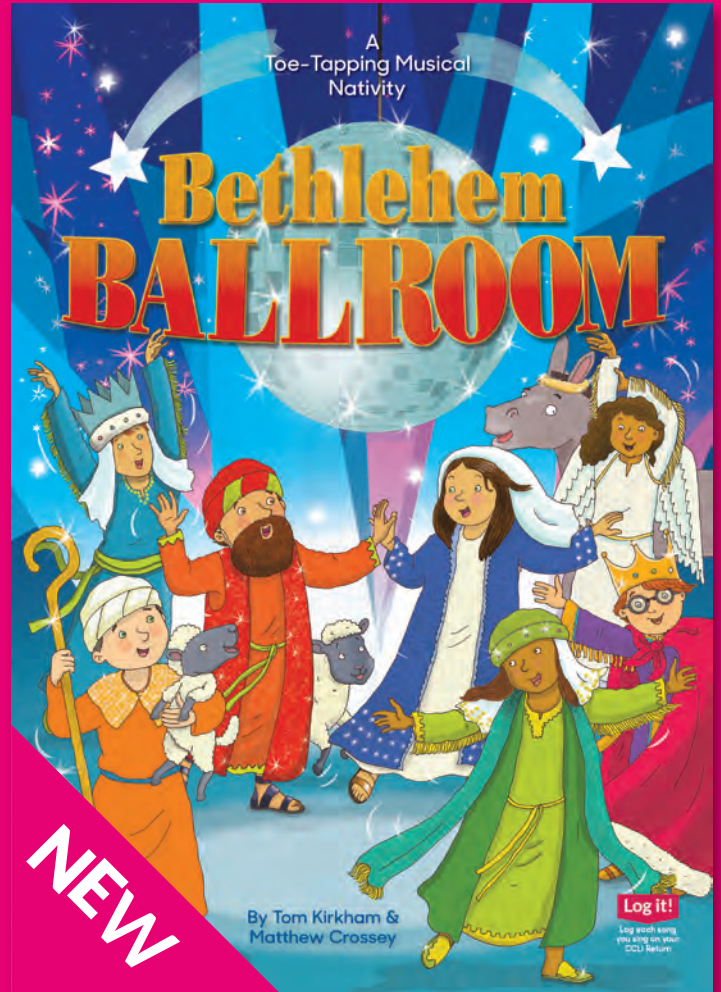
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# How I do it

Develop fine motor skills in KS1 with this intricate cardboard cars project. Beep beep!

**DARRELL WAKELAM**

1

For this lesson, you'll need: cardboard of different thicknesses; corrugated card; scissors; PVA glue; a hole-punch; matchsticks; and paint. To begin, get the children to cut some cardboard into squares and rectangles of different sizes. These will act as the body of the cars (or trucks/coaches if they prefer). Pupils may find this easier if you cut longer strips that they can then chop up into smaller sections, but you can decide what works best for your class.



I created these cardboard cars recently with a group of Y1 children as part of a 'London Landmarks' project. They absolutely loved it and spent a lot longer making them than I'd anticipated; some of them even made more than one! It's a simple but effective idea; you can help by cutting some of the shapes for them if necessary, but it's practice for their cutting skills. You can substitute the materials too. I've used matchsticks and some corrugated card, but could just as easily use straws, or paper with different textures or thicknesses.

Next, glue some of the cardboard pieces together to make the basic shape of your chosen vehicle. Explain to children that they can layer pieces to make the bonnet of the car, the boot, and the cab, for example. Coaches or trucks may have a longer base. Pupils can also modify the shapes once they're glued and dried, by cutting in slightly sloping roofs, drawing in windscreens, or making the edges more rounded.

2

Now guide pupils to use a hole-punch to pop circles out of some thin cardboard. These pieces will become the wheels of the car. Help children cut around these holes to make the wheel shapes – each should end up as a circle of card with a hole in the centre. This is tricky, but it's good practice and the circles don't have to be perfect. Glue these onto the vehicles; coaches or trucks might have more!

3

4

Glue on corrugated card and matchsticks to add some textures (see pictures). I usually pre-cut thin strips of the card to make it easier for the children, and I show them how it's better to 'snap' the matches rather than trying to cut them. If they get frayed at the break, you can use your scissors to clean them up, snipping off the rough bits.



Once the glue is dry, the children can paint their vehicles in whatever colour they choose. Can they think of cars, buses or trucks they've seen on the road to give them ideas about what kind of colour they'd like to use? Generally, any kind of paint is fine for this, but I find regular school water-based paints plus a little metallic silver (if you have it) works well to give a bit of shine.

5



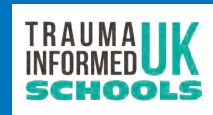
*Darrell Wakelam is an artist, teacher, and trainer with over 30 years' experience of working creatively with children. He is also the author of the recently released book Art Shaped.*

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## UNDERCOVER TEACHER

Our anonymous educator gets something off their chest

After so many disasters across the country, it's about time we finally ditched Ofsted gradings for good

I have taught in primary schools for 25 years. I have managed to survive two toxic academy takeovers, over-the-top marking policies, endless learning walks, excessive scrutiny of display boards, and many other initiatives designed to 'improve teaching'.

I must admit, in some schools, leaders are working hard to reduce unnecessary workload, but with the pressure of Ofsted still breathing down schools' necks, work-life balance still needs addressing. Ofsted gradings do not help.

Following the death of Ruth Perry, headteacher of Caversham Primary School, Ofsted has been the centre of a lot of scrutiny. The one-word judgements that are used to label schools have long been subject to criticism; even more so now.

My personal view is that there needs to be some form of accountability for schools, but without the need to publicly grade them. Just tell schools what they do well and suggest things they need to do to improve. That's it. Simple.

Labelling schools with one-word judgements causes so many problems. I know, I've seen it first-hand. I've experienced eight Ofsted inspections – as a teacher and as a leader. The hardest part of any inspection is trying to sell to the inspectors what your school is all about. There are so many nuances to convey.

There is simply no way an inspection team can fully understand the ebb and flow of pressures and challenges facing every individual organisation. Inspectors arrive and whizz around, holding conversations with staff in corridors as they bump into them, rushing to meetings at break times, quickly finding time to interview pupils, etc. It's very frenetic. Teachers, who should be concentrating on their lessons, are often running around trying to find evidence of this or that. Trying to make accurate and fair judgements about a school, which are usually based on day one, is crazy.

One team of inspectors I met in a primary setting were secondary based. How could this be fair? They said they had been trained in how to inspect primary schools. I was a teacher working in an inner-city

school; a brilliant one in my opinion, with every member of staff working their socks off to nurture and bring out the best in all children, often under difficult circumstances. We were graded 'Requires Improvement'. The inspection team just didn't 'get' it.

The impact of the one-word grading was devastating. Some families took their children out of school, we lost a couple of great teachers because of the stress that later followed the inspection, and several teachers struggled with their mental health. It was horrible. All this could have been avoided with an Ofsted report telling us what we did well and how to improve – no grade.

Two other schools I worked in were graded 'Good' to 'Outstanding'. The feedback from both inspections was strikingly similar: the children are really well behaved, attitudes to learning are excellent, children are able to articulate what they learn, parents are very happy with the school, children hold doors open for people and the atmosphere around the school is positive.

One inspector said: "I could tell this was a good school the moment I walked in." I was told my lessons were excellent because I had the children "eating out of the palm of my hand". They were pretty average lessons! They were nowhere near as good as others I've taught over the years. The children were just very well behaved, and excited about most things we did.

The thing was, in both schools, the majority of parents were very supportive of their children's education. The pupils' behaviour and attitude to learning were largely down to their parents' influences. And the children arrived at school like this, giving us an easier job than more challenging schools.


Stress levels were low, work-life balance was good, and staff were happy. They were lovely places to work. Were they 'good' to 'outstanding' schools? I'm not sure to be honest – no more than the other schools I've worked in, anyway. Just different.

Ultimately, Ofsted gradings are just plain out of date. Tell schools what they do well and suggest things they could do to improve. It might encourage more parents to read the report, too! **TP**



***"Just tell schools what they do well and suggest improvements"***

The writer is a primary headteacher in England.

 @FakeHeadteacher

# Make counting an ADVENTURE!

Play your way to a stronger number sense and get pupils off on the right foot with maths...

MADELEINE FOX

**E**arly years and Y1 are a time for building a love of numbers through counting, number rhymes and playing with the sound of number names. It's where the foundations for maths are laid, and a great opportunity to show pupils just how enjoyable the subject can be! There are various ways to make sure that pupils meet the expected progress while maintaining a sense of fun. We simply need to make counting an adventure!

Here are some ideas to get you started...

## Counting in movement

Make a circle with the class and count from zero to 10. Start by crouching down, then as the numbers get bigger, children grow upwards until they are standing and reaching up

high. When they get to 10, they can jump! You could also incorporate this into daily exercise routines.

Once they've mastered the concept, you can extend by counting from 10 to 20. Then

even counting backwards from 10, 20, or 100.

Build up to starting at different/ random numbers to count on or back – an important skill. You can invite pupils to pick a number

*“There are various ways to make sure that pupils meet the expected progress while maintaining a sense of fun”*

start at 20 and count to 30, repeating in blocks of 10 until you reach 100.

How about counting in 100s – start small again and count in hundreds to 1,000. Then in thousands to 10,000! You can also try counting in fives to 50, in twos to 20, and

– maybe their front door number, the bus number they travel to school on, their big brother's age, etc – and count on from there.

Don't worry if children can't keep up all the time as they will enjoy the jumping and join in where they can, gaining practice and confidence as they go.

## Mix it up

You can also incorporate counting practice into other subjects; you don't have to explicitly teach a maths lesson to develop these skills.

Why not try...

## PE

- Use coloured spots to jump from one to another, tracing different paths while counting.

- Throw bean bags into a bucket, counting at the same time from a given starting point. You could design this as a team game, an individual task or just taking turns as a whole class as part of a guided PE lesson.

- Count with the children as you set up hoops around the hall, then ask them to count as they throw a given number of bean bags or other objects in each hoop.

- Use a tennis ball or similar to throw and catch with a partner, bounce on the floor, bounce against a wall – how many catches or bounces can children do without dropping the ball?

- Count actions such as star jumps, bunny hops, frog hops, rolls, turns, etc.

## Music

- Use clapping patterns to count. Start with everyone clapping individually as you count, then clap and tap knees. Can anyone think of another simple pattern to clap? E.g. tap your head, clap, tap your head, clap, repeat.





- Working in pairs, facing each other, use a simple clap-slap rhythm to start. Clap hands – right meets right – clap hands – left meets left – clap two hands together – then repeat. To extend, make up new rhythms and patterns. These are games that children love to make up in the playground.

- Play ‘pass an instrument’. While in a circle, a child counts four beats on a tambourine before passing it on, keeping the rhythm going. This is a great way to introduce counting ready for multiplication tables, using different amounts of beats. You can count in twos, threes, fours, fives, etc. Repeat with different instruments – can you pass around two instruments together, then more? Work towards each child having an instrument to count with. Practise language skills by asking them to hold the instruments high or low, or to turn around, or swap with their neighbour and keep counting.

#### Cooking

- When baking, count the number of different ingredients you need for your recipe.
- Count using eggs in boxes – if there are six eggs in each box in sets of twos, you can count in twos and sixes.
- How many spoonfuls do you need of each ingredient to make a cake? How many

stirs does each child have as they take turns to mix it? Count the cake cases; how many do you need to fill a tray? Arrange in sets of two, four or six to practise multiples.

- Count the cooking time when using a microwave, counting the seconds in each minute as you wait for the timer to finish.

#### Nursery rhymes and songs

- Nursery rhymes are great for developing a feel for rhythm, recognising rhymes and practising articulation with words. They are also great vehicles for counting – forwards and backwards! Begin with simple rhymes such as *Baa, baa black sheep* (demonstrating the number three); *Round and round the garden* (also showing three), and *This little pig went to market* (demonstrating five). Simple rhymes like this can help build up an understanding of small numbers and counting using fingers.

- There are also lots of accumulative rhymes that start with a larger number and count backwards. Even though they seem tedious (they are quite long) children love them! Try *Five little ducks went swimming one day*, *Ten green bottles*, *Ten fat sausages*, *There were ten in the bed*, *One man went to mow*, etc. These can help pupils develop a good understanding of counting backwards that will really

help them when they are ready for more formal calculations.

#### Sorting and tidying

It goes without saying that counting can be integral to all activities that involve sorting, tidying and collecting. Encourage your class to count while sorting and tidying up at the end of the day, using cars, Lego, home corner objects, books, etc. You can count while collecting items outdoors, too, such as pebbles, conkers, and leaves. The list is endless.

#### The value of counting

Counting confidently is a valuable skill that should not be underestimated. Being able to count forwards and backwards will give a good grounding for all number work. Remember, every time you are counting with your class, you are strengthening their early mathematical development.

How many more ways can you find to count with your children? **TP**



*Madeleine Fox is an educational writer and former SEN teacher.*

## EYFS AND Y1 MATHS GUIDANCE

### Mathematics

- Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically.
- Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers.

### Early learning goals (ELG): numerical patterns

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system.
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds.

### Y1 non-statutory guidance

Children should be able to:

- Count within 100, forwards and backwards, starting with any number.
- Count forwards and backwards in multiples of two, five and 10, up to 10 multiples, beginning with any multiple, and count forwards and backwards through the odd numbers.



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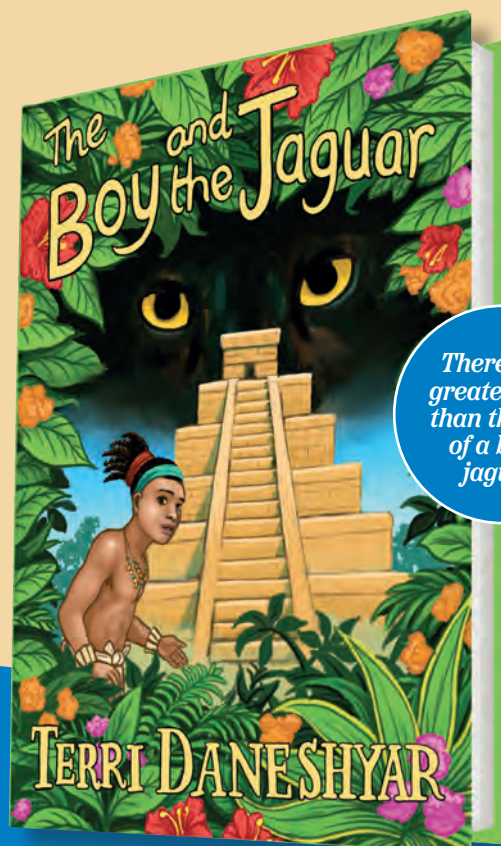
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# The Inside Story

**VICKY COTTRILL-GRAY**

kapowprimary.com

Editor-in-chief and creator of Kapow Primary, Vicky Cottrill-Gray, on providing much-needed resource support for foundation subjects



Vicky Cottrill-Gray is editor-in-chief and creator of Kapow Primary, as well as a former primary teacher

## [ MEET THE TEAM ]



### Caroline Hall

Kapow Primary's head of curriculum. Caroline collaborates with subject specialists to create progressive curriculums aligned with current DfE and Ofsted guidance.



### Adam Sumner

Former teacher and Kapow Primary's D&T specialist. Adam believes that good D&T teaching can shape the future.

Kapow Primary started in 2019 at a time of great change in primary education. Teachers were facing the continuing impact of the updated 2014 national curriculum, as well as a slew of budget cuts, and an increased focus on the broader curriculum outside of the core maths and English.

I realised at that point that there was an opportunity to support teachers in the foundation subjects with a long-term and comprehensive solution. We wanted to upskill teachers, help develop their subject knowledge, and create meaningful lessons. So, the idea of Kapow Primary was born. We surveyed teachers and found that the subject they most needed support with was computing, so that was one of the first schemes we launched.

Now, Kapow Primary is a digital educational resource for all of the foundation subjects. We provide progressive schemes of work covering the national curriculum in 10 subjects plus wellbeing. Each subject includes lesson plans and comprehensive teaching resources, as well as integrated CPD. The company has grown so much faster than I could have imagined. We launched in March 2019, and today we have over 5,500 school subscribers and new schools joining daily. Many educational companies

grow quickly, of course, but what sets us apart is that we offer a blend of support for primary school subject leaders and teachers, including everything needed to deliver high-quality, tried and tested lessons. Our integrated CPD and bite-sized teacher videos help subject leaders to support colleagues with their subject knowledge, and we also provide clear planning documentation showing progression of skills and knowledge and how each subject meets national curriculum requirements. Everything you need!

We've just launched three brand new subjects, too – science, religion & worldviews and Spanish – which is really exciting. We launched science after receiving many requests for support in that area, and our religion & worldviews curriculum is forward-thinking and eye-opening. Spanish is a vibrant scheme that focuses on supporting children with their pronunciation.

But, aside from the fantastic resources, I really am most proud of our amazing, hardworking and passionate team. We wouldn't be where we are without each and every one of them. Every time a customer says something positive, I feel super proud of what we've built together.

At the end of the day, I hope Kapow Primary is remembered for making a genuine difference. Most of the team have been teachers and have such huge respect for our teaching colleagues. I'd like us to be known for having a positive impact on teachers' workload and confidence – something we all need more than ever now, I think.

### Contact:

To find out more, call **0203 873 1326**, email [enquiries@kapowprimary.com](mailto:enquiries@kapowprimary.com) or visit [kapowprimary.com](http://kapowprimary.com)

## Our Journey

**2019**

Launched with art & design, computing, design & technology, French and music

**2020**

Added a new subject, RSE & PSHE

**2022**

Expanded into the humanities with history and geography

**2023**

Added three brand-new subjects: science, religion & worldviews, and Spanish

# MEDIUM TERM PLAN

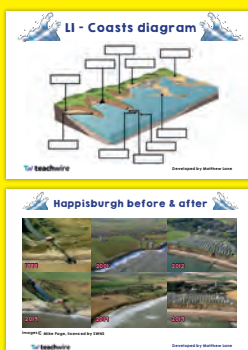
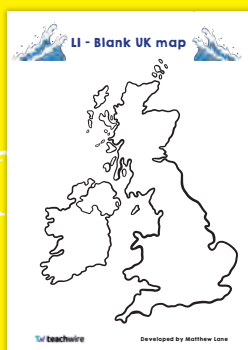
## UKS2 GEOGRAPHY

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MATTHEW LANE

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## WEEK 1

### Learning objective:

- What are the topographical features of our coastline?

In this first lesson, pupils will learn about the key topographical features of our coastline. First, we need to understand what 'topographical features' means before assessing prior knowledge and learning. What is a coastline? What topographical features do you expect to see at the coast? What sort of human activity takes place on the coast? What ones do we see now or would have seen in the past? (See **slides 1-4** in the attached PowerPoint; link

above). This last question may be a good point of discussion, especially on the east coast, where the decline in the fishing industry has shaped many communities.

Depending on where you are in the UK, children may or may not have a good understanding of coastal features already. Discuss the key questions and revise prior learning.

This is now a lesson of two halves. First, pupils should label a diagram of a model coastline, naming and summarising all the different landforms (**slides 5-7**). Children should try and label as many as they can from memory and then use the prompt on the board to help label the rest. Find a blank diagram for them to label in the **L1 resource**



# O

h, we do like to be beside the seaside! As an island nation, Britain has a wealth of diverse coastal landscapes to study. From gently undulating

sand dunes to the stark cliffs of Dover, the physical geography of Britain is as ever-changing as our island's weather. This is a topic that also allows for a little local study, giving children the chance to develop their geographical skills while learning a bit more about their local area.

In this unit on coasts, we will learn the names and locations of coastal features, how erosion shapes our coasts, and how humanity has attempted to tame or been impacted by these forces of erosion. Let's dive in!

**download.** This is a quick revision and vocabulary activity on which to base future learning.

We then move on to learning about and summarising how a bay is formed (**slides 8-13**). Make notes from the slides and videos before summarising learning. There are muddled up sentence prompt sheets to scaffold this activity (**L1 resources**).



## Assessment

Do all children know what a topographical feature is? Can all children name most of the topographical features of a coastline? Can most children explain how a bay and beach are formed?



## WEEK 2

### Learning objective:

- Where do we find coastal features?

Start by recapping last lesson's learning. What were some of the coastal features we looked at? Recall from memory and then allow time to go back in books and revise learning as needed. Use the blank diagram and then the annotated diagram (**slides 18-19**) to revise prior learning. Ensure that children have a secure knowledge of the vocabulary.

Next, you can apply this vocabulary knowledge to develop location and place knowledge (**slides 20-21**). Where do we find these features in the UK? Can you think of any local examples? Answers will vary depending on your location. In Norfolk, our beaches are low lying with few examples of cliffs, but we do have large areas of dunes.



The rest of the lesson is given over to researching where examples of these features can be found in your county and, if not, then in wider Britain. If needed, revise what a county is and what Britain is compared with the United Kingdom. Recap on safe searching online and how to check image sources. Children should complete the research sheet (**L2 resource download**).

These examples can then be mapped onto the blank map of Britain (**slide 23**). Children can use atlases or Google Maps to support their work. This is a mostly independent lesson, so ensure lots of time is given for the research and mapping of features.



### Assessment:

Can all children find examples of the features? Can they recall local examples? Can children correctly plot locations onto a map?



## WEEK 3

### Learning objective:

- What is longshore drift?

Something you may recall from your own GCSE or A-level geography, longshore drift is a key erosion process that children will need to understand to underpin later learning. Begin by recapping what erosion is. Depending on how your school teaches other units, children may have encountered erosion during their learning on rivers.

Watch the BBC video (**slide 27**) and make notes. Discuss new words from the video to create a knowledge base for learning. Read through the key vocabulary, allowing time to summarise these in children's books (**slide 28**). You could have a printout of the words on the table or stick these into books instead. Use pictures to describe and discuss the process of longshore drift (**slides 29-30**) before watching the second video (**slide 31**) and making further notes. This may need a few repetitions so children have a secure knowledge of the process.



Then it is writing time. Pupils should use their notes and knowledge to create a short paragraph explaining the process of longshore drift (**slide 34**). Allow plenty of time for this, as it can be trickier to complete than children may first think. It is a good opportunity to revise the skills of explanation writing, and using sequencing words to open sentences. If time allows, children could also draw a diagram of the process.



### Assessment:

Can all students understand the process of longshore drift? Can they begin to explain the process? Can they draw a diagram of the process?



## WEEK 4

### Learning objective:

- How do we protect and shape our coasts?

In this lesson, we will explore different ways in which we can protect the coastline from the forces of erosion. Depending on your location, children may or may not have seen some of these before. In Norfolk, some parts of the coastline are shaped by longshore drift and numerous hard engineering projects have been undertaken to slow the process.

Discuss the key terms for the lesson: coastal management, hard engineering, soft engineering and

managed retreat (**slide 38**).

As you teach this lesson, ensure that you try and use these terms as much as possible. It will be helpful for you to know a few local examples that children may have seen before.



Watch the video and discuss the terms (**slides 39-40**). Watch the video once for knowledge and then watch it again so children can make notes. The video is four minutes long so this will take some time to complete, allowing for pauses to make notes and discuss terms. If using the video embedded into the PowerPoint, press K on your keyboard to pause the video as needed when the presentation is running. Give time for children to fill in the sheet defining and describing examples of coastal defences (**L4 resource download**). This can be completed on the table or children could make notes in their books. Allow time at the end of the lesson for children to compare their definitions and discuss any differences or misconceptions.



### Assessment:

Do all children know the names of different defences? Do they know the difference between hard and soft approaches? Can they explain a managed retreat?



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## WEEK 5

### Learning objective:

- How has erosion shaped Norfolk?

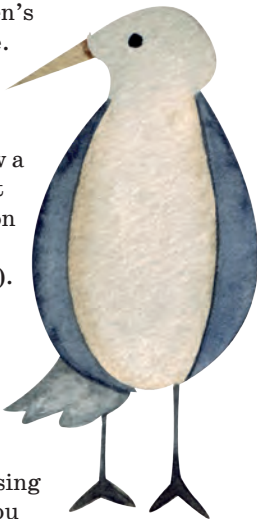
Begin with revising and expanding knowledge of erosion to include weathering. Look at the different types of weathering (physical, chemical and biological) and how these shape the world around us (**slides 45-47**). Discuss these and see if children can think of local examples of where they have seen each type of weathering.

This lesson is a case study that develops children's place knowledge.

We look at the example of Happisburgh, Norfolk and how a managed retreat to coastal erosion is affecting the village (**slide 48**). The name of the village is pronounced Hays-borough (Norfolk place names are their own bemusing exploration if you have time for the tangent; Wymondham (wind-um) and Costessey (Cos-ee) are further confusing examples!). If appropriate, you could use your own local example of how managed retreat is causing the loss of a community. Happisburgh has received national attention, with coverage on BBC News. There are further, small-scale examples with Winterton-On-Sea and Hemsby in Norfolk, too.

Watch the BBC Teach video on Happisburgh (**slide 49**) and discuss children's thoughts. This is a debate lesson where there are no right or wrong answers, just ones that may or may not need more explanation.

Using the sentence prompts (**slide 51**), have pupils explain their own ideas about Happisburgh and the managed retreat. This could be completed as a class discussion with ideas recorded on the board, or in books. Children can stick the collage image of Happisburgh over time under their notes, if you wish (**L5 resource download**).



### Assessment:

Can pupils agree to disagree about a contentious point? Do children understand the impact of a managed retreat on a location?



## WEEK 6

### Learning objective:

- How has deposition shaped our coastline?

In this final lesson, we explore how deposition can shape our coastlines. Discuss what deposition is and assess prior learning on the topic (if applicable). What is deposition? Where have you heard this word before? Think about your local coastline. Ask children to name any famous local coastal landmarks.

Can they think of any created through deposition? (**Slides 54-55**).

This lesson uses Blakeney Point on the North Norfolk coast as an example of a landform created by deposition. You could use one local to your school instead, if you like. If using Blakeney Point, discuss the video (**slide 56**) and then explain what a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and an AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) are (**slide 57**). You could provide local examples of these.

Discuss the photo of Blakeney Point (or your local version) and identify the different physical features you can see (**slide 58**). This is a good opportunity to revise the vocabulary from the start of the unit.

Recap on online research and how to research safely online. Children should research Blakeney Point (or your location) and plan a day out (**slides 59-60**). They should cover the facilities at the site and then describe what can be seen and what there is a to do. This is a concluding lesson that allows children to show if they can apply their learning about coastal features, including tier 3 vocabulary, to independent writing. You may wish to provide scaffolding for this task.



### Assessment:

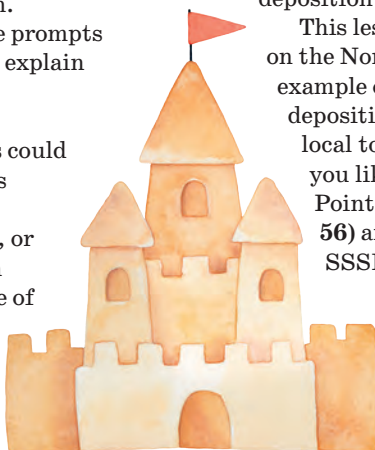
Have all children created a logical report? Can they independently and safely research a location? Can they use geographical vocabulary correctly? **TP**



*Matthew Lane is a teacher from Norfolk.*

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theteachinglane.co.uk



# KCSIE 2023 – *all you need to know*

Get up to date with this year's changes, and ensure your school is continuing to keep children safe, with this handy guide

SARA ALSTON

**I**t's that time again. The DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance has been updated for 2023. This document is essential for educators to read and understand, but filing through 179 pages is a huge undertaking, and picking out what exactly has changed can be tricky.

So, I've put together a breakdown of this year's changes, and how they might impact your setting. I hope it's useful.

## 2023 updates

There are three additional paragraphs in this year's KCSIE document, covering filtering and monitoring, retention of documents, and use of school sites by outside organisations. Here's what they say:

### *Filtering and monitoring*

This is a repeated theme throughout the document, with a focus on the importance of staff having 'an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities' of filtering and monitoring.

The KCSIE 2023 outlines that a school's approach to online safety, including appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and networks, should be reflected in its Child Protection Policy, including awareness of the ease of access to mobile phone

networks. It also reasserts that the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should take responsibility for this. However, paragraph 141 states that 'governing bodies and proprietors should consider the number and age range of their children, those who are potentially at greater risk of harm and how often they access the IT system.' Another important consideration for governing bodies, it says, is cost vs safeguarding risk.

The following paragraph, 142, gives some clarity, linking to the existing DfE filtering and monitoring standards, ([tinyurl.com/tp-DfEfiltering](https://tinyurl.com/tp-DfEfiltering)) and sets out that schools should:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems;
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least once per year;
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning;
- have effective monitoring strategies in place to meet the school's safeguarding needs.

There is also a helpful link to additional guidance on filtering and monitoring from the UK Safer Internet Centre ([tinyurl.com/tp-UKSIC](https://tinyurl.com/tp-UKSIC)), which is well worth looking at, especially if you're a DSL.

### *Retention of documents*

Another addition to KCSIE 2023 is a clarification on what documents schools should keep during recruitment, and for how long.

Paragraph 276 helps to clarify that copies of documents used to verify a successful candidate's identity, right to work, and required qualifications, should be kept on their personnel file. However, it stipulates that should schools choose to retain copies of DBS certificates and records of criminal information disclosed by the candidate, there must be a valid

reason for doing so, and they should not be kept for longer than six months. This is in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 ([tinyurl.com/tp-DPA18](https://tinyurl.com/tp-DPA18)).

When the information itself is destroyed, schools can keep a record of the fact that vetting was carried out, the result, and the recruitment decision if they choose to. But the KCSIE goes on to emphasise that schools don't have to keep copies of DBS certificates.





### Use of school sites

The final additional paragraph to KCSIE 2023 relates to raising concerns and managing allegations when an incident occurs while school premises are being used by outside organisations (such as community groups, sports clubs, or after-school activity providers).

It confirms that the school maintains safeguarding responsibilities, and that the school should follow its safeguarding policies and procedures, as if the incident had occurred during normal school hours, including informing the local authority designated officer (LADO).

### Minor changes

There are several minor changes to the KCSIE 2023, including an extension to part 3 on safer recruitment. The section on the need for

ongoing vigilance (paragraph 343) now explicitly says that schools need to maintain a culture where all staff 'feel comfortable to discuss matters both within, and where it is appropriate, outside of the workplace (including online), which may have implications for the safeguarding of children.' The mention of online spaces is new, here.

There is also a language change from children

'missing from education'. A robust response is needed for persistently absent pupils as they are at risk of safeguarding issues 'including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly county lines'. The links for further support now include the 'Working together to improve school attendance' ([tinyurl.com/tp-DfAttendance](https://tinyurl.com/tp-DfAttendance)) guidance.

## *“There are three additional paragraphs in KCSIE 2023, as well as some smaller changes”*

'missing from education' to children 'who are absent from education'. There is an emphasis on the safeguarding risks for those absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods (paragraphs 99 and 175), without meeting the threshold of

### School impact

So, what does all this mean for teachers? Here are some suggestions for how you can digest the changes, and how they'll affect your setting:

- Check your filtering and monitoring procedures:
  - Who is responsible for the filtering and monitoring?
  - Who checks and responds to any attempted breaches of the filtering systems?
  - How frequently is this done?
  - How is this recorded?
  - Who decides what is inappropriate and harmful content?
  - Who checks the filtering systems are up to date, and are monitoring for appropriate words?

This should not solely be the responsibility of your school's IT provider or server. The DSL needs to have a lead role and there need to be clear procedures to respond to safeguarding concerns and responsibilities under the PREVENT duty.

- Check your cyber security is robust and appropriate.
- Check if you are keeping copies of ID documents for staff and if so, where.
- Check the procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns about other organisations

and individuals using your school's site. Also ensure that these are clearly stated in any lettings policy and hirings contracts.

- Ensure that governors understand their duties under the Equality Act ([tinyurl.com/tp-EqualityAct](https://tinyurl.com/tp-EqualityAct)) including reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities.
- Ensure that your attendance policies are clear about the safeguarding risks for children absent or missing from school, including those absent on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods. This should include how those supporting attendance work with the DSL.
- Ensure that your school's culture of safeguarding is clearly stated and circulated. It should explicitly include all staff and their responsibilities in and outside of school, as well as on and offline.
- Check that your policy on referrals to Channel refers to those *susceptible* to (rather than *vulnerable* to) being drawn into terrorism, and recognises that any referral requires the individual's consent.
- Ensure that the section on forced marriage in your Child Protection policy reflects that any form of marriage for someone under 18 is illegal, even where violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used.

I hope these suggestions are useful in navigating this year's changes. You can see the full document at [tinyurl.com/tp-KCSIE2023](https://tinyurl.com/tp-KCSIE2023) **TP**



*Sara Alston is an independent consultant and trainer with SEA Inclusion*

*and Safeguarding, and a practising SENCo.*



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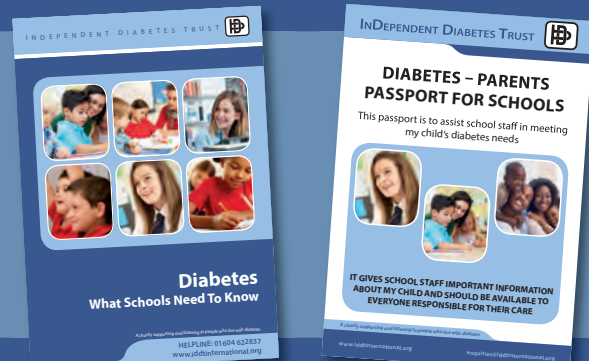
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# 'I'm sorry, I don't understand'

Supporting EAL pupils in all subjects can be tricky, but using these simple strategies in your classroom will make it easier, says **Iva Miteva**...

"How do I teach a class where almost everyone speaks a different language? I'm stuck! I don't know where to start!" I've heard these refrains so often in the staffroom.

Some primary teachers in the UK are faced with teaching in multilingual classrooms where almost everyone speaks English as an additional language (EAL). But even if your school has only one or two EAL pupils, the challenges can be similar. Those EAL learners, however many of them there are, need to learn English both to be able to make friends and socialise in the playground, and to be able to access the curriculum content. So how can we best support them?

## Differentiation and scaffolding

Our EAL children need carefully planned differentiation and scaffolding to give them access to everyday and academic language required for their learning. But how do we do that?

To scaffold learning, we need to provide step-by-step, guided support so that learners can move progressively towards better and stronger understanding of content and vocabulary. We also need to be sure that we have a plan in place to gradually remove

that support, so pupils can become more independent over time. This might mean having structured, temporary assistance to read the same material that their peers with English as a first language are using, such as providing visuals, or highlighting key vocab and giving translations in the learner's home language.

For differentiation, we might swap out the material an EAL learner has for a lesson, to match their current level of proficiency in English. For example, they may first read materials in their home language to increase their understanding and make contextual links with their own cultural background. Or you might provide timelines and graphic organisers to help clarify concepts.

## Collaborative planning

We all know that these approaches are important for EAL learners' success. However, it can often be challenging to differentiate for EAL learners. Developing language-specific resources might pose quite a challenge if you're a maths, geography or history specialist, for example, but not as familiar with EAL. Therefore, a collaborative approach to planning content and supporting language learning is absolutely necessary.

Arranging meetings to share and plan the topics and the content with a specialist EAL teacher (if you have one!) is incredibly useful; they can use their specialist language knowledge and insight to outline what challenges EAL learners might have with certain content, and the strategies that you can use to ensure you're maintaining high expectations along with inclusivity and scaffolded support.

As well as scaffolding and differentiation, I've found that the following strategies can work wonders

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tp-EALplanning**

for EAL pupils in class, no matter what subject you're teaching:

- Seat EAL pupils close to the board and teacher for easy access to support.
- Provide visuals alongside worded materials to support understanding and provide contextual clues.
- Try and maintain positive body language and lots of praise, even for minimal effort.
- Link learning to EAL pupils' cultures.
- Pre-teach key vocabulary and phrases to ensure content understanding and to find out their previous knowledge.
- Translate key vocabulary into EAL learners' home language(s).
- Give enough time for EAL learners to respond to questions, and be patient.
- Provide plenty of speaking opportunities for EAL learners to practise the language before asking them to write it down.
- Provide group work opportunities for EAL learners to collaborate with fellow speakers of the home language so they can discuss the content in a less stressful way, and/or work with more advanced English speakers who can act as good language models. **TP**



*Iva Miteva is an EAL teacher and EAL specialist with Learning Village and Across Cultures.*

learningvillage.net

# HANDS UP!

You might ask millions of questions throughout your teaching career, but are they the right ones? Here's how to find out, says **Michael Chiles**...

**T**ake a moment to consider the last lesson you taught and how many questions you asked.

Teachers are described by many as 'professional question-askers', and the use of questioning in the teaching and learning process dates back to one of the most influential users and developers of questions; the Greek philosopher, Socrates.

Socrates believed that by asking questions we encourage reflection, and their use is most effective when we create a continual loop of dialogue between the asker and the receiver, to allow movement from surface to deeper-level thinking. Questions are the tools that enable teachers to transfer knowledge, leading to the conclusion that effective questioning is effective teaching.

Classroom teachers worldwide spend a large percentage of their time in the questioning-response mode; with several research studies indicating that an estimated 40 per cent of classroom time is given over to it.

With all this time spent asking questions, we might assume that most teachers in most classrooms encourage children to think with the questions they ask. However, all too often the questions we ask haven't been well prepared, and don't serve the purpose of encouraging pupils to really think.

## Quality over quantity

You could end up asking over a million questions over the course of your career. These will vary from lower to higher order questions, promoting surface to deeper level thinking, depending on the type and number of questions asked. But quantity is a poor proxy for quality if we want to ask powerful questions that generate more than surface-level thinking. Getting this balance right is challenging, and it

seems that the research is inconclusive on which types of questions are more effective. However, combining different questions strategically, using a linear approach, is more likely to create the foundations for developing and deepening pupil understanding. It is a bit like constructing a tower: you need a strong base on which to build the columns and to create the stability necessary to add increasing numbers of floors. When asking questions, we need

to start with those that elicit initial recall and then move towards those that prompt deeper thinking, requiring pupils to do some deep excavation from stored memories to articulate their understanding in new or unfamiliar contexts.

All too often the questions we ask don't activate hard thinking and instead prompt surface-level engagement. There is a fine balance to strike here, but with careful planning and deliberate practice, powerful questions can reveal what pupils are thinking.

From bringing together research, discussions with colleagues and my own

***"Quantity is a poor proxy for quality if what we want is to ask powerful questions"***





experience, I've found five core principles that provide a framework for implementing powerful questioning in the classroom. They are:

### 1. Sequencing

- Before asking questions, take time to plan out the low to higher order questions you intend to ask. Work with colleagues in your department to develop these questions during curriculum conversations and practise using them to build the clarity and confidence that will yield the responses you are looking for.
- During a lesson or series of lessons, consider using a mix of questions, both low and higher order, so they address all cognitive demands while keeping in mind the desired learning outcome. For example, begin with a series of recall questions, like "What is...?" before moving on to questions that require a greater degree of thought, such as "Why might...?"
- Consider pupils' prior knowledge before devising questions, taking into account how the questions

you plan to ask will build on foundation knowledge.

### 2. Presenting and framing

- Aim to involve as many pupils as possible during a question-and-response session by using different strategies like cold calling, hands up, choral responses and think, pair, share.
- Frontload questions by explaining what you are expecting from pupils, to build a responsive culture in your classroom. E.g. tell them that you are looking for a hand up/hands down or a class vote before asking the question.
- For higher cognitive questions used with application tasks, spend some time unravelling the command of the question and what success would look like before the pupils begin independent practice.

### 3. Pausing

- Demonstrate what 'wait time' means by live modelling to pupils during class discussions. For example, when a pupil asks a question, pause before giving a response. This will encourage them to appreciate why pausing between asking

and answering a question can help to address non-explanatory responses, and to see the process in action.

- Research indicates that the quality of a response increases when wait time is three seconds or more. With this in mind, try and judge whether the pupil will need a shorter or longer time to respond, based on the type of question. When asking a pupil a more cognitively demanding question, provide a longer wait time in comparison to asking a knowledge recall question.

### 4. Gathering and processing

- Use a mix of questioning strategies to field questions and gather responses from pupils, and be strategic about to whom you ask questions to encourage classroom participation. Remind pupils of the role that oral responses play in the learning process.
- Develop a culture where non-explanatory responses are unacceptable and pupils are encouraged to provide a full answer.

### 5. Redirecting

- If a pupil struggles to answer a question, redirect it to another pupil and then return to the original pupil to either clarify or expand on the initial question. Provide a prompt like, "Take a moment to think back to what we learned last lesson..."
- When using diagnostic quizzes as part of an assessment for learning model, look for common errors across a teaching group and revisit these in subsequent lessons as part of your daily review or for reteaching a component of the curriculum.

Through the careful implementation of these strategies, you can create the conditions that will promote learning and retention over time. **TP**

## 10 COMMON QUESTION ERRORS:

- 1 A large proportion of questions flowing in one direction only, to control the classroom rather than encourage pupils to think.
- 2 Teachers answering their own questions before giving pupils time to respond.
- 3 Asking leading questions.
- 4 Teachers spending a greater proportion of their time asking lower-level cognitive questions.
- 5 Asking challenging questions at the beginning of learning new knowledge, when the foundations of understanding are insecure.
- 6 Accepting non-explanatory responses.
- 7 Asking too many questions at once, overwhelming pupils' working memory and causing cognitive overload.
- 8 Calling on a select few pupils every lesson, who are keen to answer questions.
- 9 Not allowing pupils time to think between asking and answering the question.
- 10 Focusing on what pupils already know, thereby generating a false picture of understanding.



*Michael Chiles is an experienced school leader and principal examiner, with over 15 years' experience. His book, **Powerful Questioning** (£14.99, Crown House Publishing), is out now.*

# Using edtech to REMOVE BARRIERS

Pupils at Cavendish School are using virtual reality to help them become socially and financially independent, says **Stephanie Smith**

**I**n 2016, there were less than 2,000 children diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder in Cambridgeshire. Now there are over 4,000. The idea of The Cavendish School was conceived in 2016 to provide accessible provision for students, aged eight – 18 years, whose needs cannot be catered for within Cambridgeshire's mainstream state provision. Drawing on our team's experience with autistic students in other settings, and learning from successful pilot schemes in other local authorities, we knew that we would harness the power of technology to support our students from the beginning of their learning journey.

At The Cavendish School, we have seen the positive impact of integrating technology into our students' learning and our classrooms. By doing so in conjunction with a multidisciplinary team of support staff, therapists and families, our pupils can access education in a way that meets their social, emotional and physical needs.

Using technology to support students with autism may seem counter intuitive because of the possibility of hyperarousal, dysregulation and overstimulation, but implementing technology in educational contexts has been proven to help autistic children to engage with their learning. Technological interventions

can help students to develop their social skills and remove the barriers that co-current conditions, such as dyspraxia and hypermobility, can pose.

## Removing physical barriers

Dyspraxia and hypermobility can make the physical action of writing painful for autistic students. Challenges with their fine and gross motor skills can also impact many children's ability to write easily and comfortably. Pain and discomfort can

the task is to demonstrate their knowledge, then using an electronic device enables students to focus on creating content and share their understanding of a subject.

Technology can also be used to support students to remain consistently engaged with their learning. Our virtual reality sandpit has proven popular with pupils because kinaesthetic learning encourages movement, providing sensory feedback that helps them to self-regulate and

*“Computer-based interventions help educators to create safe, interactive and therapeutic environments, enabling neurodivergent pupils to thrive”*

divert students' attention from their learning, so supporting the act of writing helps to improve their ability to engage with their learning.

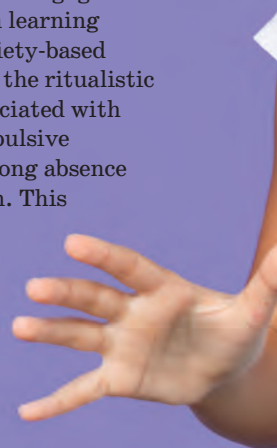
From electronic devices to speech-to-text apps, there are multiple ways in which technology can play a role in removing students' physical barriers to learning. When deciding whether the task should be performed by hand or by computer, it is important to assess the learning objective for the student; if the purpose of

stay focused. We have two dedicated sensory rooms at school that are equipped with virtual reality projectors, which students can access at any time during their day for support with self-regulation. Whether this is used to provide them with the stimulation they need to increase their arousal levels, or to assist with self-regulation or to gain proprioceptive feedback, virtual reality plays an important role in our student's education experience.

## Engaging with learning

Technology can also be used to create an 'irresistible invitation to learn' for autistic students. This is the key principle in Attention Autism, an intervention model designed by Gina Davies, which aims to increase attention, encourage interaction and improve communication. Virtual reality provides interactive simulations of real-world environments, where learners can actively participate, facilitating engagement. Last term, our Year 3 students learned about the water cycle using virtual reality to interact with the topic and to build their world as a team, which gave their teacher the opportunity to model vocabulary back to them.

Unmet autism needs can result in complex mental health needs; there are many students with autism who may be unable to engage with classroom learning because of anxiety-based school refusal, the ritualistic behaviour associated with obsessive-compulsive disorder, or a long absence from education. This is particularly evident following the pandemic. After reading about a successful trial of robots to bridge the gap between attendance





and learning in hub schools, we are now trialling a No Isolation telepresence robot to enable our secondary school-aged students with complex mental health needs to access and engage with their learning alongside their peers.

## Practicing social skills

Virtual reality can also prepare students to feel comfortable in scenarios outside of the classroom and well into adulthood. The Center for Brain Health and the Child Study Center at Yale University's School of Medicine collaborated on a virtual reality project to help children and young people with autism to achieve social and financial independence. The organisations created role-play environments that

enabled participants to practise their social skills and prepare for situations, such as job interviews, which can be stressful and anxiety-inducing.

It can be challenging to successfully help autistic students develop coping mechanisms for anxiety when they struggle to imagine visual scenarios. The University of Newcastle created its Blue Room, in conjunction with a virtual reality company, to help alleviate debilitating anxieties by creating personalised scenarios in a controlled environment, so that students learn to manage their fears in the real world – enabling them to attend lessons.

In our experience, virtual reality not only offers children a way to learn to manage their fears, but it also helps them to prepare for real-world encounters. One of our goals at the school is to help our students to progress in their chosen academic or

career paths, and virtual reality games, such as Job Simulator, enable our students to experience approximations of real-world job roles to develop the life-skills necessary to thrive in the workplace.

There are more than 160,000 students with autism in schools across England, so it is important that we address the challenges they are facing in mainstream and special needs classrooms. During the pandemic, schools quickly pivoted to delivering learning online, using technology to continue to meet students' needs. Now is the time for schools to assess their current capabilities and invest in the infrastructure needed to break down barriers to learning, deliver improved student outcomes, and improve accessibility to education for autistic students moving forward. **TP**

## A collective effort

Our virtual reality sandbox was inspired by a similar piece of technology our business administrator saw while on holiday. It is also important to engage students and their parents in sourcing and sharing potential technological solutions to encourage adoption.

### We recommend:

- Be open. Technology might not be designed for the academic world - it might be designed for the workplace - but could have applications to support students' access to learning and developing the skills they need to prepare them for adult life.
- Assess learning objectives. If the purpose of a task is to demonstrate a student's knowledge, then using an electronic device enables them to focus on creating content and sharing their understanding of a subject.
- Consider accessibility. The needs of primary-age children compared to secondary-age children will differ and students will have different digital literacy levels. It is important that the intended user of a device can physically and mentally manage its demands.
- Diarise time for reflection. Understanding where improvements can be made is as important as demonstrating success.
- Be student-led. Many children will enjoy using technology to support their learning – whether this is an iPad, a virtual reality headset, or a robot. However, virtual reality headsets and other tools are as equally fun as they are useful, so embrace the dual functions.



*Stephanie Smith is head of school at The Cavendish School.*

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Resources and activities to bring fresh inspiration into your classroom

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2



## Diabetes support

The InDependent Diabetes Trust (IDDT) offers support and information to people with diabetes, their families and health professionals. 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. 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](http://iddtinternational.org)



3

## Hiring teachers made simple

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4

## Grimwood, by Nadia Shireen

"Really fresh, very funny and full of energy," says Frank Cottrell-Boyce. The Grimwood resource pack for teachers is full of imaginative and interactive book-based resources for KS2. Based on the award-winning comedy adventure series by bestselling Nadia Shireen, this fantastically funny illustrated series brims with heart, laughs and surprises. Created with an educational specialist, the cross-curricular resources cover key themes including standing up for what's right, understanding trust, and making friends, across literacy, geography, science, drama, PSHE and art, design & technology. Each activity has clear objectives and outcomes, to help with your planning. Download your FREE resource pack at [simonandschuster.co.uk/p/activity-sheets](http://simonandschuster.co.uk/p/activity-sheets)

5



## Boost physical literacy

Wow Active helps primary schools measure the impact of their PE delivery and tracks pupil progress through a series of fun and inclusive challenges. Schools using Wow Active identified on average a 24 per cent increase in performance, with children participating in PE more effectively and being more accountable for their own health and fitness. Teachers can access Ofsted-compatible data, track and monitor individual pupils, compare class average scores against national averages, and identify those requiring support. Sign up now to get 50% off Wow Active until the end of the school year. Visit [premier-education.com/wow-active](http://premier-education.com/wow-active)



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# HOW MUCH DOES lesson planning affect workload?

## STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Planning lessons can be challenging, and as many as 80 per cent of primary teachers admitted to experiencing difficulties with this aspect of their work. A lack of time was the biggest factor, though there are other issues too. One-in-three of even the most experienced teachers said they still needed to plan most of their lessons from scratch, rising to half of newly qualified teachers.

# 61%

Many of the least experienced teachers would like better access to good lesson plans or schemes of work. 61 per cent of primary respondents with less than five years' experience reported needing such support. It's not as simple as just giving them the schools' curriculum documents though, because 39 per cent didn't find them to be useful.

# 47%

Another issue is finding appropriate resources. 47 per cent of primary teachers spend over an hour a week looking online for teaching materials, compared to just 28 per cent of secondary teachers. It suggests more could be done to support primary teachers in finding, or sharing, resources.



## HALF OF TEACHERS

Many primary teachers catch up with planning at weekends. Half of respondents said they spent more than an hour planning a lesson over a recent weekend, with 15 per cent spending in excess of three hours. While this remains a sizeable proportion, two years ago the figure was 71 per cent of staff working on planning for an hour or more on a Saturday or Sunday, suggesting there is slow but steady improvement.

## COLLABORATION

59 per cent of primary teachers said that more collaborative planning time would be beneficial to them. 65 per cent reported that they plan collaboratively with other staff, but just 35 per cent had time specifically allocated for this.

Among teachers who do plan collaboratively it is a popular approach, with almost 90 per cent admitting they find it useful.

Preparation remains a considerable challenge on staff time in primary schools, Teacher Tapp finds

There have been many reasons cited as causes of the recent industrial action. One aspect that has been bubbling along for quite a long time now is workload, an ever-present challenge that never seems to be resolved. As we know, though, 'addressing workload' is not as simple as snapping one's fingers. Workload contains many threads that need to be untangled and tackled individually. One of these is lesson planning, and so with the help of data from Teacher Tapp, we're going to look at how these requirements contribute to teachers' workload.



Iain Ford is senior data and reporting analyst at Teacher Tapp. You can take part in and see the result of regular teacher surveys by signing up to the Teacher Tapp app ([teachertapp.co.uk](https://teachertapp.co.uk))

# How we embedded **ANTI-RACISM** across a Trust

What's the difference between non-racist and anti-racist schools? It's all about proactivity, says **Paul Glover**, but the process takes time...

**I**t is safe to say that most organisations, schools and Trusts claim to embrace diversity and have no tolerance for racism. STEP Academy Trust was no different. We prided ourselves on being open and inclusive, improving the life chances of all our pupils.

STEP is fortunate to work across several local authorities in two geographical areas. We have always worked closely with and supported the communities we serve. However, following the tragic events in America with the killing of George Floyd in 2020, we were forced to take a longer look in the mirror. Was it enough for our Trust to simply not be part of the problem, if we weren't actively contributing to the solution?

This is the core difference between a non-racist and an anti-racist organisation. As a non-racist Trust, our goal was not to perpetuate racism. But now we wanted to hold ourselves to a higher standard, actively eliminating racism and demonstrating to future and current colleagues and our communities what we stood for.

The reason is simple: taking a position of anti-racism is the best way

to improve the life chances of our children, staff, and communities. Pupils both need and deserve role models who genuinely reflect the diverse world we live in. Our job as leaders is to ask why this is not always the case within the sector, to take action, and challenge our systems, recruitment and development.

## **By the people, for the people**

Implementing this kind of culture change across a Multi-Academy Trust requires a strategic approach. There is no one-size-fits-all solution that can be printed out and pinned up in the corridors. Every school is shaped by its community, so its anti-racism strategy must respond to that community's unique culture, beliefs and needs.

As part of a Trust-wide anti-racism roadmap, STEP felt it important to have external experts challenge us and give their opinion. As a result, we engaged an external training provider, Fig Tree International, to review, challenge and thereby improve each academy's policies and practices within their individual settings. These are assessed against an extensive framework that enables schools to identify areas for improvement and develop a unique action plan, independently accredited

by Fig Tree International, setting out clear steps towards anti-racism.

One of the biggest issues to overcome in this process was a lack of staff confidence, particularly for individuals challenging something that doesn't feel right. To address this, STEP developed internal and external training for staff and leaders. Modelling scenarios with different layers of racism at play greatly enhanced the learning, helping staff turn theory into practice and consider how racism manifests in their own schools. As

part of this, academies and the central team appointed 'local champions' to guide the action plan. Another key benefit to this training was to establish a shared language for discussing racism and discrimination. Ongoing CPD and support for staff has given them the confidence they need to reflect and discuss anti-racism confidently.

Building community understanding and engagement with the Trust's anti-racism policy was another challenge. This is a long-term





endeavour, even more so than building understanding within the school, as it depends more heavily on their willingness to engage. School leaders focused on communicating with parents through formal workshops and informal conversations, along with regular newsletters reporting back on the school's progress. This, combined with the eager reports of pupils sharing the day's learning at home, has built a wider understanding of the Trust's anti-racism policy and why it is being pursued.

Time itself felt like the biggest barrier of all – but we needed to give everyone time to understand the direction, take part in training and to hold up that mirror to our own behaviours and actions. Our work in this area should never be seen as a quick fix but an ongoing process; empowering brave members of our own staff to share stories of experiencing racism, along with hearing from guest speakers who

helped the school community understand the need for change, has been central to this.

### Onwards and upwards

Every successful strategy requires clear measures of success. When it comes to culture change, progress

*“There is no one-size-fits-all approach that can be printed out and pinned up”*

can feel nebulous at best. External accreditation and review is extremely helpful in this regard, providing an independent assessment with great expertise. However, STEP has also introduced a range of internal measures to help leaders monitor and improve progress.

First, each academy's anti-racism objectives are built into its yearly plan for ongoing review and impact monitoring. Progress is also reviewed at every executive team

meeting. Second, ongoing

informal training is offered to all staff, while equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training for leaders and trustees will focus on reviewing perceptions and help to shape further actions across each academy.

Annual pupil surveys at each academy now also include key questions

around pupils' understanding of anti-racism, as well as how they perceive the importance of anti-racism in their school, so we can gauge the impact of

policies and attitude changes over time.

But there's nothing quite like simply talking to our pupils and our community. Leaders engage children in conversations about their understanding of anti-racism and its place in the curriculum. Many of STEP's academies have specific curriculums built as part of their PSHE courses to delve deeper into the issues. This also presents valuable opportunities for pupils to share their views and build their understanding through Philosophy for Children lessons.

Whilst we have made much progress there is still a lot to do. It is tempting to chase 'quick wins' with any policy, but this is ultimately not our goal. What we're doing now is, rather, the beginning a long-term re-establishing of culture and priorities, which must permeate our entire organisation. **TP**



**Paul Glover**  
is CEO  
at STEP  
Academy  
Trust.

@thesteptrust

[stepacademytrust.org](http://stepacademytrust.org)

## EMBEDDING ANTI-RACISM ACROSS THE TRUST

The individual anti-racism action plans developed by academies within STEP Academy Trust are tailored to their unique needs. However, Trust-wide policies were also adopted to foster understanding and appreciation for diversity among staff and pupils alike. These include policy and recruitment changes aimed at building a leadership that reflects the diversity of our communities.

- Each part of the organisation has a Race Champion, leading training, thinking, support and reading in each setting – whilst helping to shape the Trust-wide plans each year through the Trust's Anti-Racism Network meetings.
- We've developed a leadership behaviours framework to create a positive culture, led from the top.
- School meal menus have been updated to reflect the diversity and cultures of cuisine within each of our academies and Trust.
- All policies have been amended to reflect diversity statements and practices.
- Recruitment processes were reviewed and updated, including the introduction of blind recruitment, where the shortlister removes all names and protected characteristics.
- We've amended career pathways to increase transparency and include a rich variety of ongoing training and development opportunities.
- We have an ongoing process of de-colonisation of the curriculum, alongside a full review of texts used within reading, to introduce a broader range of voices and influences.



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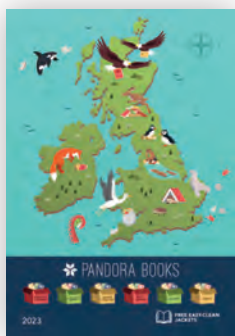
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“

The books are obviously chosen with care and skill and the layout of the catalogue and the year group packs meant that ordering a large amount of books took no time at all. I am delighted with them all! They have already taken pride of place in our library and there is a real buzz as children are choosing not just one book but a whole list that they want to read!

”

Amanda Dakin — Literacy Co-Ordinator





# Life-affirming NATURE

**Dr Sara Collins** tells us why the introduction of a Nature Premium would help schools unlock the many wellbeing benefits to be had from spending time in natural surroundings

**A**s a biologist that regularly works with schools on matters relating to outdoor education, I've often seen how young people react when they're out in nature, and the inspiration it can give them.

You'll frequently see the balance and makeup of classes change. I've seen young people break out of their usual cohorts and friendship groups, and demonstrate a willingness to interact and play with peers they haven't previously spent time with.

It can really help them develop their social skills, and generate some hugely positive outcomes.

## Inequity of access

These benefits can extend to teachers too. When I go into schools, I've sometimes heard teachers tell me at the end of a session, *"Well, I hadn't expected to enjoy that."* I hope that's partly down to something I've done, but it ultimately shows how getting out into the green environment can help you relax, and often see the children you teach in a very different light.

We know from research and interviews carried out by Natural England that spending time in nature can improve young people's happiness, but that there's also a significant inequity of access to nature.

Those of us involved in the Nature Premium campaign argue that children need to get out into nature more – both to realise the benefits, but also so that they can develop a better understanding of their place within the wider natural world.

As such, we're calling for the introduction of a Nature Premium in schools, similar to the existing Sports Premium. A key advantage of having a Nature Premium is that funding would go directly to schools,

enabling staff to decide what natural education priorities are best for their pupils. Above all, it would remove that inequity of access to nature, allowing children from all backgrounds to discover the richness of nature and the chance to explore it further.

## Learning opportunities

I'm based in Portsmouth, and at one of the schools I visit there's no green space at all – but there is a nearby park, and it's just a 15-minute walk to the seashore. The problem the school has is that it's under multiple pressures and has to deal with multiple demands on its time. A Nature Premium would provide that school, and others like it, with the financial capacity to get children into nature; it would almost give them 'permission' to do it.

We know that many staff are interested in taking more classes into nature, but they lack either the time or financial resources they need. We're not suggesting it's an 'either/or' situation – our view is that you can creatively spend time in the natural world, while still delivering fantastic outcomes in writing, mathematics and other areas. Any lesson you can teach in a classroom, you can teach in nature.

By spending time in the green environment, students will not only receive a boost to their mental wellbeing, but will also have many different learning opportunities, from the behaviours of bees inside

their hives, to the natural processes that produce trees.

We know children develop their own ways of managing their mental wellbeing. If they're feeling rough, or down, and know that that they can help themselves by spending time outside in a green environment appreciating their natural surroundings, that can be hugely valuable.

## Looking and seeing

I've previously taken a group into a local Woodland Trust wood, and had a teenager ask me *"Is this a real wood?"* I didn't know how to respond to that question at first, but I took it seriously.

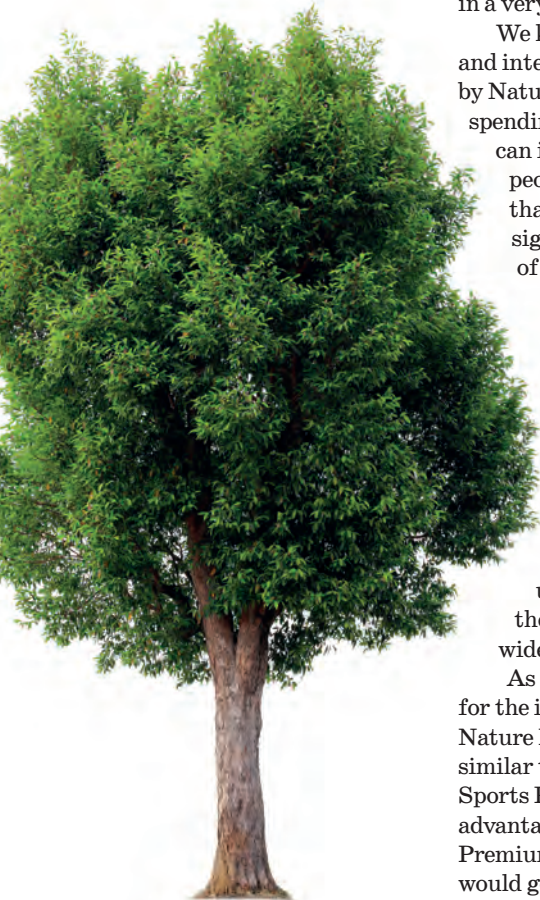
Many of the students hadn't actually been in a wood before, so there was initially some concern among them about getting lost. But just being there helped to give them some important skills in how to navigate maintained woodland, the confidence to explore for themselves, and an awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

It's about getting children used to looking and seeing, so that they start to notice more. And if they can then engage in nature more often, the process can become self-fulfilling. **TP**

*Dr Sara Collins is deputy chair of the Forest School Association and co-lead of the Nature Premium campaign.*

 @NaturePremium1

 [naturepremium.org](http://naturepremium.org)



# DEAR DIARY...

Could keeping a journal be an effective addition to your wellbeing and professional development toolkit? **Dr Lucy Kelly** shares her insights into using one for bespoke reflective practice...

**W**hen I say the word ‘diary’, what comes to mind? Is it something you use to record the various appointments you have over the coming weeks and months? Or perhaps it’s a fluffy notebook with a tiny padlock in which you write down your deepest, darkest secrets?

As I’ve found out in my research over the years – and now documented in my book *Reimagining the Diary: Diary-keeping as a positive tool for teacher wellbeing* – a diary can mean different things to different people, but it’s this flexibility that makes it such a fantastic tool for educators.

A diary can essentially help teachers get to know themselves better – which is gold dust, because the insights they receive as a result can support them in making better decisions both inside and outside the classroom.

In a profession where it can feel as if there’s no end point or off button, we all need some means by which we can process our day, re-establish boundaries, and identify what we need to sustain us in both the short and long term. A diary provides this safe space and, more importantly, can be tailored to the individual using it.

‘Bespoke’ approaches to wellbeing are vital, since one person’s wellbeing essential could be another person’s nightmare. So, here are some ideas...

## Zooming in and out

In the pages of a diary, you can ask questions and start to find answers. If you know that something isn’t working for you, be it personally or professionally, you can use your diary to tease out exactly what that ‘something’ might be and how to rectify it.

Maybe you’ve lost sight of your values over time? Use your diary to find them again. It might be helpful to use it when considering your next steps as a teacher, too; what are your goals and how are you going to meet them?

We can join the dots together and see the bigger picture, but also zoom in on the minutiae and unpick it. In this sense, a diary can be a microscope *and* a telescope – both different, but equally important for our wellbeing and professional practice.

## The abstract made concrete

In terms of your wellbeing, you might well be working late into the evening, which means you’re finding it harder to sleep. You could use your diary to work out how you’re going to rectify that.

participants actually used their diary entries as a springboard for conversations with heads of department, colleagues, friends and family members. They found that rehearsing the conversation in the pages of their diary actually made the conversation itself easier.

We hold so much internally, that unless we regularly ‘download’, we put ourselves at risk of burning out. This process of downloading makes the abstract more concrete, and

*“A diary can help you identify patterns and trends, and make changes where needed”*

At the same time, consider what’s going well. There’s always more we can work on, but it’s important to also recognise and celebrate the positives, however small these might be. Recording the positives in the pages of a diary helps us to keep moving forward, by visibly showing us how we’re evolving and growing as practitioners (which in turn will have a positive impact on our wellbeing).

A diary can help you identify patterns and trends, and make changes where needed. It will allow you to see where your blind spots are, both in terms of your wellbeing and your professional practice.

What can you do to change this pattern? You could commit to no work after 6pm, or take your diary use further and consider what ‘work-free’ time might look like for you in practice.

It could be that you arrange to meet a friend or family member; do some exercise; have a bath or watch your favourite programme or series curled up on the sofa. Again, it’s a case of going with whatever works for you. Your diary isn’t there to berate you, but rather to support you.

Its contents don’t need to be shared with anyone, but can be if you think that might be helpful. Some of our research





thus easier to deal with. Seeing our fears and worries on the page means we can begin to deal with them, and through decluttering our mind in this way, ultimately make better decisions at

home and at work.

'Downloading' also helps us to recharge. By 'parking' the day just gone, we free up mental space and energy for other aspects of our lives, including our

relationships. We're not Duracell bunnies, able to just keep going and going, because if we try, we're just going to burn out.

### The power to press pause

It can be really hard to prioritise ourselves and our needs, but we must. To do so, however, we have to be aware of what those needs are – and that's where keeping a diary can help.

At this point you may be thinking, *'That's all very well and good, but I don't have the time to keep a diary.'* Let me reassure you that your diary practice can take as much or as little time as you have available to you. You don't need to write pages and pages of prose to reap the benefits of diary-keeping – in fact, you don't even need to write at all! (See some alternative ideas in the panel on the right.)

Hopefully, these ideas will help you to begin your own journey, and see how a diary can be a tool to help you thrive. A diary gives teachers the power to press pause, take stock, zoom out (and zoom in), and really think about themselves and their needs for a moment. We're humans, not machines – and keeping a diary can be a great way to remind us of that. **TP**

## 4 WAYS TO KEEP IT FRESH



### Vary your modes of writing

- A diary could involve different types of writing. You might have started keeping a diary with a traditional account of your day, but you don't have stick with that. Writing out lists of bullet points, specific observations and summaries of how you're currently feeling can all be valuable.



### Use different media

- Using a laptop or mobile device, your diary could comprise a mixture of images and/or audio recordings. This is what's so exciting about the diary format – it can be unique to you, your needs and your interests, and change with you over time.



### Build a timeline

- You might want to have a go at capturing your day in a single photograph, and then building up a scrapbook over the following week or month. You can then zoom out to see if there are any patterns that emerge from the photographs – what do they show you?



### Experiment

- The more experimental, playful and creative we can be with our diary-keeping practice, the better we'll get to know ourselves and what we need to flourish, both inside and outside the classroom.



**Dr Lucy Kelly** is an associate professor in education at the

University of Bristol and author of *Reimagining the Diary* (£16, John Catt).

# WAGOLL

## Which Way Round the Galaxy by Cressida Cowell

Peer inside the mind of the author, and help pupils understand how to create a gripping sense of suspense

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

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

**T**he Which Way to Anywhere series is about a blended family with a magical secret: one of the children, K2, can draw maps and jump through 'Which Ways' (shaped like an X) through space. In this book, *Which Way Round the Galaxy*, a tiny and helpless magical creature lost far from home leads the four O'Hero-Smith children on another adventure through the Which Ways and across the galaxies. Their plan is to get 'Bug' back to the ice-encrusted planet where he belongs, and to prove to their parents that they can be trusted with magic along the way; but by setting off on this secret mission, they're heading straight into danger. Not to mention they've accidentally left the baby, Annipeck, on her own. Again.

Can the kids get Bug home safely, escaping venomous snowsnakes, a witch's curse and a gang of murderous robots to find their way back through the Which Ways to protect Annipeck? They're going to need more than K2's magical gift to help them this time. It's a good job another of the O'Hero-Smith children might have a magical gift of their own, because the fate of the galaxy is once again in their hands...

This is a book about space travel, magic, maps, danger and suspense. One of the questions I often get asked is, "How could you put my favourite character in such a terrible situation?!"

The answer is, of course, that I'm going to use everything in my power to get you, the reader, to carry on reading. I don't ever take readers to a dark place and leave them there, but you have to believe that I could. In this extract, the tiny creature (he's adorable, by the way; you can see the illustration at [tinyurl.com/tp-WWTA](https://tinyurl.com/tp-WWTA)) is being chased, and I really want you to get the sense that his future is in question. Spoiler alert: it's going to be OK, but I'm using everything in my writerly power to make you think otherwise. Here's how you can create this gripping sense of suspense in your stories, too... **TP**



*Text © Cressida Cowell. Which Way Round the Galaxy (HB £12.99, Hodder Children's) is published on 28th September, 2023.*

## FIVE WAYS TO BUILD SUSPENSE

### A SPOT OF DANGER

Put someone the reader cares about, or something vulnerable, in a dangerous situation. The more the reader empathises with that character or creature, the more they will be invested in seeing them get out of jeopardy.

### RAISE THE STAKES

Make sure it's clear what the stakes are – i.e., the terrible thing that will happen, – and raise them as the scene continues. So, what

starts off as a little jeopardy grows more and more dangerous as the scene goes on.

### MEASURE TIME

Use the ticking clock to help create those stakes and use time to give a sense of hope running out. If X doesn't happen or isn't achieved by a certain time, what will happen?

### KEEP IT VAGUE

Use mysterious descriptions to create

unease and tantalise the reader. For example, describe a dark setting, or someone (or something!) hiding or lurking in the background. Perhaps your character hears an unusual sound in the dark...

### THE FIVE SENSES

Appeal to your reader's senses. What do you want them to hear, see, smell and feel in this scene? Including these kinds of descriptions will make the scene as visceral as possible and bring it to life.



# Extract from

chapter 2,  
page 10

Here I've used a long sentence, to convey a sense of running. This sets the tone for the scene from the very beginning.

This detail introduces a real sense of danger. I like my books to rattle along with a roller-coaster energy, and this keeps things interesting for the reader, who doesn't yet know what will happen next.

By giving the creature human-like characteristics (personifying it), such as trying to calm itself, I'm helping the reader have an emotional reaction and really make them care. I love books that really make you feel something!

*A pause, and then the creature shot out of the cover of the wheat, on, on, poor little thing, balancing on the crumbling dry mud of the edge of the field, falling over, picking itself up again. It wasn't clear where it was going, and it might have been safer in the wheat. But the dogs would catch up wherever it went.*

There are lots of movement words in this scene, like 'spun'. It helps make the chase feel immediate and pacy.

*Behind the dogs, the humans on foot were gaining.*

*The drone spun around.*

*The little creature was running out of strength.*

*Panting, whispering soft encouragements and endearments to itself, in agitated 'peeping' noises, it staggered on a bit more, but this time it could not dodge the zooming drone.*

I've used repetition here, matching the movement and descriptions from the opening paragraph to indicate just how desperate the creature is.

*PEOW! PEOW! PEOW!*

*Shots rang out, raining around the little creature, and one dart caught it on its shoulder.*

This interjection of noise breaks up the text, and adds to an anarchic mood. They're also fun words to be read aloud with gusto!

*The creature gave a terrible scream of alarm.*

*'They've got it! Over here!' cried a joyful human voice, the excitable barking of the dogs going wild now, straining on their leashes as the humans closed in, plunging through the wheat towards the little creature that was now staggering in drunken circles on the edge of the field, quivering and in pain.*

This small attention to detail implies that the woman doesn't think the creature is worthy of touch without a glove. Adding little details like this helps the scene come alive.

*One of the humans, a woman restraining her snapping, yelping dog with one gloved hand grabbed the creature by its leg.*

*'GOT IT!' she cried.*

*The other humans arrived, their snarling dogs going crazy with excitement.*

*'We got it, Mr Spink!' said the woman again.*

By calling the characters humans, rather than by their names, I'm encouraging the reader to look at them from the creature's point of view. This also discourages readers from forming an emotional attachment to the humans – they're the baddies!

Again, this adds a sense of danger, and keeps things exciting as the reader doesn't know what these dogs might do next. For real suspense, it's great to make your readers think they're in the hands of an author who is prepared to give the story a sad ending if necessary. I learned this from Roald Dahl!

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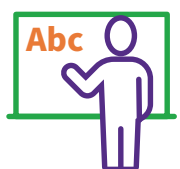
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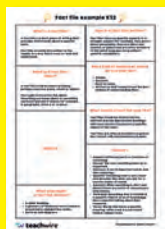
# As a matter OF FACT

Combining elements such as succinct sentences, tier 3 vocab, and content selection, a good fact file can offer numerous learning opportunities for pupils

AIDAN SEVERS

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**A**t first glance, it seems that putting together a fact file on whatever topic you're currently teaching should be a straightforward task for children to tackle; especially if it's a subject full of objective, measurable information.

However, when it comes down to it, the various elements of informational writing can be quite tricky to get right, and require specific teaching. For example, as fact files are so short, writers have to be careful to select the most salient points to include, effectively providing a summary or overview of

the chosen subject. Because of this, the writing is often to the point, and not overly complicated with regards to sentence structure. The main complexity of a fact file lies in the vocabulary that is used – the words that are chosen are often specific to the subject (tier 3 vocabulary).

There's a lot to think about! So, here are some of the key elements to consider for your next informational writing lesson...

## Content selection

As with explanation texts, it is important that children have a good understanding of what they are going to be writing about. This could be something that they have been studying at school, a personal interest, or even something imaginary: a mythical beast of their own creation, for example.

Providing pupils with a series of questions can help direct them towards selecting the most pertinent content, and will give you some parameters within which to teach. If you have opted for children to write fact files about different things, it may be more difficult to provide a set of questions which can direct their thinking, but if the whole class is writing on the same subject, you can formulate a pretty basic list to share. For example, if in geography, children are studying India, you might

ask them to frame their fact file information around the following questions:

- Where in the world is India?
- What's the climate like in India?
- What are the major cities of India?
- What are India's main landmarks?
- Which languages are spoken in India?
- What is India famous for?

## Word-level work

In order for children to write a good fact file, they will need to have done lots of work on the words that they are going to use. We should introduce them to the relevant vocabulary and provide them with definitions, and should show examples of how this vocabulary is used in context. They should also have plenty of spoken and written opportunities to practise using and spelling the words correctly. For example, pupils could keep vocabulary journals in which they store words, their definitions, example sentences and drawings, or you could challenge them to say or write a sentence containing a particular word.

This word-level work can be delivered at the beginning of the learning sequence, but should be continued throughout as well, giving children the opportunity to encounter the words many

times, thus increasing their exposure to them, and improving the chance of these words becoming part of their own vocabulary. Fact files also often have a glossary of terms. Where pupils use technical vocabulary, they may want to create a section dedicated to providing definitions of key terms. This is an exercise in writing like a reader – being mindful of the audience – and ensuring that everything is accessible to a reader who might know nothing about the subject.

## Sentence level

When teaching children to write sentences that are appropriate for a fact file, you may find yourself having to un-teach some of the things you have taught before. The teaching of writing can often focus on composing increasingly complex sentences, whereas the goal of a sentence in a fact file is to communicate full meaning as succinctly as possible.



The focus of your sentence-level teaching, regardless of the year group you teach, should therefore be on making appropriate choices. As with any text, it's important for the writer to be mindful of the audience and purpose of the piece. Children may know how to

write multi-clause sentences, but in a fact file they may not be appropriate. Carry out exercises where you give pupils choices about which sentences they would and wouldn't use in a fact file; or provide them with long, complex sentences

and challenge them to edit them into shorter ones.

Once children have carried out such exercises, they should have a go at writing the sentences that they want to include in their own fact file. It is at this point in any writing teaching sequence that teachers must prioritise giving feedback on what pupils have written. If children are not given feedback (and the chance to respond to it) at this stage in the process, the next drafts of their work will contain any errors and misconceptions that have not been picked up on.

Upper Key Stage 2 teachers may want to take this opportunity to teach children to write in bullet-pointed lists, too.

### Text level

For a fact file, children will need to think about how the sentences they have written will be organised on the page so that the reader can very easily access the information and learn about the subject quickly. Again, remind pupils to be mindful of their audience and purpose for writing.

Examples of fact files will come in very useful when teaching children to arrange the information on the page. There are many ways this can be done – portrait, landscape, as a folded booklet or leaflet, using a grid or boxes, and so on.

In order for children to find the desired layout, you could ask them to write out their information in the sections of a grid, cut them out, then move the

pieces around like a jigsaw puzzle until they find the arrangement they want. Find a grid example in the download linked on the left.

Some of these 'jigsaw pieces' may be images and headings. They may choose to use colour to highlight some sections or to differentiate one section from another. When children find the arrangement they think helps to communicate the information most effectively, they could carry out a peer-assessment activity to ensure that a new reader's understanding is supported by the layout. Once it has been peer-assessed, pupils can glue their final arrangement onto another piece of paper, ready to inform a final draft.

### Images

Drawing pictures and creating diagrams doesn't really fall within the remit of the writing lesson, so it may be the case that you choose to provide children with a selection of relevant pictures and diagrams printed out to an appropriate size, from which they can then select the images that best support their fact file (the photo printing options in Microsoft gallery are very useful for this). Again, the emphasis here is on making good choices about which images will be useful to the reader, and how they support the purpose of the text. **TP**



**Aidan Severs** is an education consultant and former primary

teacher and leader. He now supports schools with curriculum and pedagogy.

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# STOP!

## Punctuation time

Give these wordy games a go and sharpen up pupils' placement skills. . .

SARAH FARRELL

**W**hen you go about teaching anything as technical as punctuation, there's a risk that it can be quite dry. But it doesn't need to be! In fact, there's a wealth of high-quality punctuation games that children can use to practise basic sentence skills.

The main writing barrier I've found with the classes I've taught is a lack of a clear understanding about what constitutes a sentence. The purpose of the following games and activities is to help children understand the key parts of a sentence (the subject and the predicate), and then how to combine or extend the sentences that they write, to produce a coherent and flowing piece of writing.

For the majority of the below activities, you simply need a whiteboard or screen to display sentences on, and scrap paper, mini whiteboards or notebooks for children to work on. Enjoy!

### KS1 games

#### Punctuation paddles

For this game, each child will need three pieces of paper with either an exclamation mark, question mark or full stop drawn on it.

Display a statement, command, question or exclamation without the end punctuation on the board, and ask children to hold up their paper 'paddle' with the correct punctuation mark.

You can also play this

game using Plickers ([tinyurl.com/tp-Plickers](http://tinyurl.com/tp-Plickers)) – children hold up a code similar to a QR code and orient it to a certain position to answer multiple choice questions. You then scan the cards using an iPad or other device to record pupils' answers.

#### Spot the mistake

If there's one thing that children enjoy, it's correcting their teacher when they make a mistake. This game doesn't need any preparation except for having sentences pre-written or ready to display on the board.

The most successful way I've done this is to choose a range of common misconceptions that have featured in pupils' writing, but also to recap basic sentence structure – such as missing a subject in a sentence. As a way of scaffolding this, you may want to provide the number of mistakes to look out for, or what type of mistakes. For example:

*We cant wait for tea.*

(One piece of missing punctuation and one spelling error.)

#### Silly sentences

With all SPaG games, having a chance to be silly and creative is important (as long as the sentences that the pupils create are grammatically correct!).

When introducing children to a grammatical technique, provide a chance for them to experiment and

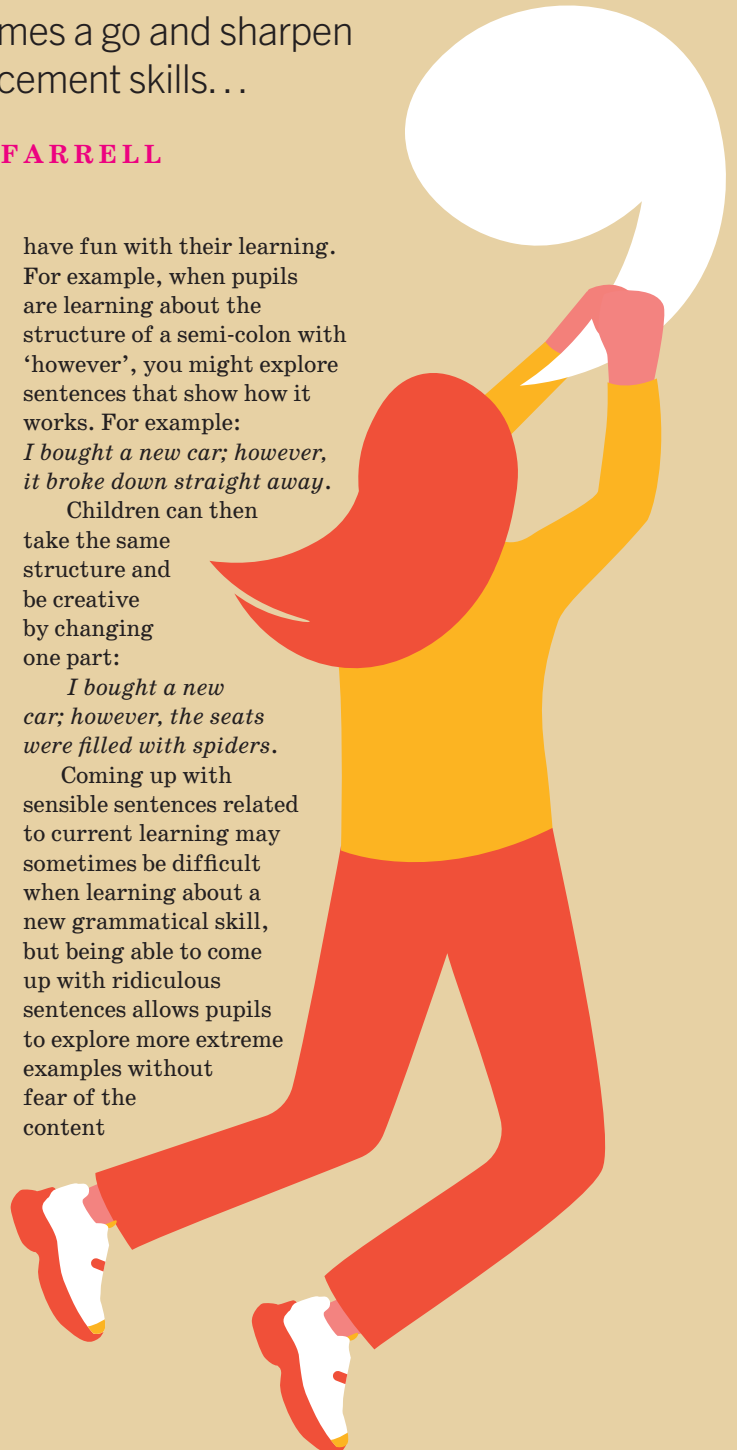
have fun with their learning.

For example, when pupils are learning about the structure of a semi-colon with 'however', you might explore sentences that show how it works. For example:  
*I bought a new car; however, it broke down straight away.*

Children can then take the same structure and be creative by changing one part:

*I bought a new car; however, the seats were filled with spiders.*

Coming up with sensible sentences related to current learning may sometimes be difficult when learning about a new grammatical skill, but being able to come up with ridiculous sentences allows pupils to explore more extreme examples without fear of the content



*“These games will help your pupils to understand the key parts of a sentence”*

having to be accurate. Children with strong interests in a certain topic (Nissan GTRs, Ronaldo or narwhals are some examples that spring to mind from my own classroom!) enjoy having this opportunity to include those passions in their SPaG work.

### Sentence matching

This is another game that can be played in several different ways. At word level, you can jumble up the words in a sentence for children to unscramble (download our example sentences using the URL in the panel on the right). To support this, start by keeping a capital letter on the word that should be at the start of the sentence. You can then remove this scaffold later on.

Extend this activity by providing a set of sentences that you've split up into parts (ideally separating the subject and the predicate, e.g. *The children ate / the delicious cakes*). Find cards for this game in the attached download.

Ask the children to mix up the cards until they create sentences that make sense. Alternatively, turn over a card from a deck and take it in turns to lay cards until a sentence is created. For an added challenge, include a mixture of statements and questions, along with the relevant punctuation.

## KS2 games

### Pick-up sticks

Write a selection of different nouns on lolly sticks and put them in a pot, then add a selection of different adjectives in a different pot, followed by grammatical skills (relative clause, apostrophe for contraction, etc) in a third. Children take it in turns to pick out a selection of sticks from different pots, then have the challenge of writing a sentence

containing, for example:

- rowing boat
- chicken
- angry
- a relative clause

At the start it's best to play this game in groups or without the grammatical terms, to allow children to explore the creativity of using the given words. You can then add in extra criteria as they become more confident.

### Change a word

This game can work in several different ways, and the aim is to get children to play around with word class and sentence structure. One way to play involves all children having a piece of paper and writing a simple sentence at the top.

For example:

*The cat climbed the tree.*

Now pass the paper onto the next person, with the sentence still visible at the top. The child who receives it changes one word in the sentence and writes it below the first one:  
*The boy climbed the tree.*

Now fold back the top of the paper with the first sentence so only the second sentence is visible, and pass the paper on to the next child. Repeat the process, changing one word in the currently visible sentence:  
*The boy climbed the mountain.*

After a few turns, extend this activity by asking children to add an adverbial phrase or another grammatical skill.

The purpose here is to help children to see the different elements that make up a sentence, and how they can be exchanged for another group of words that work in the same way.

### Improving sentences

This game is best used to help children to edit writing. Display a set of different things that children can add or change about a sentence.

For example:

- change the subject
- add an adjective
- add a subordinating conjunction
- add a relative clause

It's best if these are things that you've recently

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

covered in class to ensure that children know how to apply the skills. Accompany each item on the list with a number and provide children (either individually or in pairs) with a die. With either pre-prepared simple sentences or with their own, get children to roll the die and follow the instruction of the number rolled. After a few alterations, change the sentence for a different one and continue.

I hope these games will bring a bit of sparkle to your punctuation lessons, and help children to remember the rules more easily. Find more games for both KS1 and KS2 at [tinyurl.com/tp-PunctuationGames TP](https://tinyurl.com/tp-PunctuationGamesTP)



**Sarah Farrell is a KS2 teacher in Bristol who makes and shares resources**

online.

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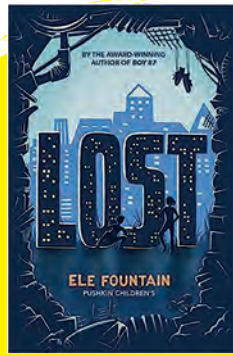


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Published by Pushkin  
Children's, 2020

# Lost

Encourage empathy and explore the power of the first-person narrative with this stunning novel from the award-winning author of *Boy 87*, Ele Fountain...

KAREN HART

**L**ola lives in an unnamed Indian city with her father, and brother Amit. They share a nice apartment, and although they are not rich like some of the girls at Lola's school, they have enough money to be comfortable. Lola spends much of her time thinking about her school friends, and trying to fit in with them, until one day, suddenly, everything in her life changes.

After taking a work trip away, Lola's father mysteriously doesn't come

home. Lola and Amit have no one to turn to for help, and as they wait day after day, Lola wonders what will become of them until, finally, they are evicted from their flat, and Lola and her brother find themselves forced to live on the streets.

Things go from bad to worse for Lola and Amit. Life on the streets is extremely tough – and then Lola loses Amit in a busy market. Although she looks for him everywhere, her brother is nowhere to be found. Where can he

be? And what has happened to Lola's father?

Writing in the first person throughout, narrating events from thirteen-year-old Lola's perspective, the author manages to weave adventure and mystery into a story of class divisions, friendship and the importance of family, with a powerful message – that you should never lose hope, and that kindness and loyalty are to be held more precious than any material possessions.

Lost is a great book for reading with



your class and using as inspiration for a class topic. It's a good idea to read through the whole story first, then revisit each section as needed, with the short chapters making this an easy book to break down for class activities.

## Talking about the book

The preface to the story, 'Street', gives the reader a snapshot of what is to follow for Lola later in the book. After reading this to your class, ask for suggestions of good ways to describe Lola's feelings during this scene. Some ideas could be: *heart thumping in her chest, in a cold sweat, shaking with fear*, etc. Write suggestions on the board. Go on to read the first chapter, 'Home'. As before, ask pupils to think of descriptive ways to describe Lola's life in this chapter. Ideas could include: *carefree, taken good care of, and privileged*. Ask the class to think about one thing, apart from family members, they would miss the most if they suddenly had everything taken away from them – gather contributions and write these on the board. Keep a note of all suggestions given here to use later.

## Activities

### Writing in the first person

Remind pupils what is meant by writing in the first person – that you are writing as if your character is telling the story to the reader, like writing a diary.

In *Lost*, we see how Lola's character, and her beliefs and feelings towards other people, change as the story progresses. In the early chapters we get a good look into her life before things went wrong for her family, and we are shown a snapshot of her day –

getting up, having breakfast, going to school, etc.

Using first person narrative, ask pupils to write their own brief rundown of their typical school day morning, from waking up to arriving at school. They could include: Who wakes them up in the morning, what they ate for breakfast, getting their school bag ready, how they get to school – do they meet up with their friends along the way? etc. Ask for volunteers to share their work with the class.

### What makes a home?

Lola and Amit are used to a comfortable life. In the chapter, 'Night', when Lola and Amit are faced with sleeping on the streets, Lola says:

'I close my eyes and try to picture my bedroom; my wardrobe with a mirror on it, my desk covered in jewellery boxes and moisturisers and all my favourite things, my bookcase.'

Ask pupils to close their eyes for a couple of minutes and, without any talking, think about their home and why it feels special to them. This could be because it contains special things, like a much-loved cuddly toy, or maybe they have a favourite spot in their home, such as a comfy chair with a special cushion.



## Take it further → → →

### CITYSCAPE COLLAGES

Thinking of the gritty, urban landscapes of *Lost*, try these striking cityscape pictures that give great results using very few resources. Start by collecting a good supply of old magazines and newspapers, which pupils can use to cut out simple block shapes to represent high rise buildings – this is easy if you use the print columns as a guide. You could also use coloured pens to colour over some of the collage shapes, adding windows, graffiti etc., to bring more depth to the pictures. Try using black backing card for some pictures and white for others to create

both day and night scenes. Finish cityscape pictures with a card frame – white for black-backed collages and black for those using white card.

### MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Before starting this activity, ask pupils to each bring in a clean, plain plastic water bottle.

*Lost* looks at themes of separation – from friends and family and the life you have become used to living. Ask pupils to imagine they have found themselves washed up on a desert island after a shipwreck. Although there is clean water to drink, lots of

fruit to eat and possibly fish to catch, they appear to be alone. They find a bottle and some scraps of paper washed up from the wreck, and they have a pen in their pocket, so they decide to float a message in a bottle out to sea in the hope that someone finds it, and, realising they must have survived the shipwreck, sends a search party to look for them. Instruct children to write messages for their bottles. If they are finding it difficult to get started, you could give them the first line, such as: 'I think I am the only survivor of the HMS Victoria...'

### THE URBAN ANIMAL

To further develop the theme of living on the streets, think about animals who have made



Ask pupils to write a short description of what they like best about living in their home.

## What makes a good friend?

Early in the story we already see Lola starting to question her friendship with Bella. We see evidence of this in the chapter titled 'Bella'. Ask pupils to re-read to the end of this chapter from, 'I'm grateful when Asha says dramatically, "It's the boy with the green eyes. Twelve o'clock. Don't all look at once."'

What do pupils feel this part of the story tells them about Bella as a person? Either working individually in books, or as a class, ask pupils to

make notes of attributes that make a good friend. Some ideas here could be: *loyalty, kindness, honesty, doesn't hurt your feelings, is always ready to listen to your troubles* etc. Extend this activity by thinking about Lola – asking if she should be considered a good friend, and why? Thinking about Lola's story, can the class think of examples where she was shown to be a good friend to Amit and those she meets while living on the street?

## Poetry exercise

Start this exercise by talking about what is meant by poetry. One simple definition could be: a type of verse using language carefully chosen to evoke emotions in the reader.

Go on to work as a class, thinking of words that might conjure the feelings, emotions, sights, sounds and smells of living on the street. Contribute your own ideas here too – helping to extend vocabulary with words such as *isolated, invisible, abandoned, and deserted*.

Ask pupils to write their own short poems on the theme of homelessness, thinking back to the definition of poetry. Remind them that they don't need to be constrained by looking for rhyming words, and that they can use the words on the board, collected earlier, for inspiration. Use the following example as a model if pupils need extra scaffolding:

Every day is the same, time goes on forever.

Passers-by look straight through me, an invisible child.

Walking, walking, walking, then looking for a place to sleep.

I look through the windows of the houses I pass,

Happy families watching TV.

## Loved this? Try these...

- ❖ *Boy 87* – Ele Fountain
- ❖ *The Boy at the Back of the Class* – Onjali Rauf
- ❖ *The Girl of Ink and Stars* – Kiran Millwood Hargrave
- ❖ *The Last Bear* – Hannah Gold
- ❖ *Ella on the Outside* – Cath Howe

## Lola's diary

The end of the book sees Lola, Amit and their father reunited. Read this last chapter again. Lola has changed a lot as a person since the start of the book. Encourage your class to think about the end of the story – in particular, the paragraph that starts, 'That night, I lie in a real bed. The mattress feels so incredibly soft.' What does this tell us about how Lola has changed?

Ask pupils to imagine they are Lola at the end of the story, then get them each to write their own diary entry for this day – when she finally returns home and gets to sleep in her own bed once again. Have a starter sentence available for pupils finding it difficult to get off the mark, e.g. 'Things are so different now – so clean! The first thing I do is...' **TP**



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

@KarenStevie23



the urban landscape their home. Talk about urban foxes – there are some great photos and information on the Natural History Museum website ([tinyurl.com/tp-UrbanFoxes](http://tinyurl.com/tp-UrbanFoxes)). Talk about how life differs for people and foxes living on the streets, such as foxes being able to climb into people's back gardens to sleep under decking, and how they are happy to eat old, dirty food out of wheely bins.

The urban fox is a great theme for poetry and pupils might like to try their hand at an acrostic-style poem. This can be simply differentiated by increasing the length of the word used – e.g. FOX or FOXES. These make interesting titles to use for acrostics as they contain the letter x – obviously making the

activity trickier. Start by asking for some words or phrases that could be used to describe the appearance and life of the urban fox. Some examples could be: *bony, scruffy, cunning, crafty, thief*. Go on to suggest some words beginning with x that could be incorporated here, such as: *xylophone, x-ray, and xanthous* – probably a new word for children, meaning to have yellowish, red, auburn or brown hair. Also highlight words starting with f and o, as these will be needed for the other lines.

An example of an acrostic on the theme of an urban fox could be:  
Foraging in the wheely bins, looking for last night's dinner.  
Olives, trifle, and stale bread, all washed

down with puddle water,  
Xylophone rib cage, sticking out from his scruffy fur coat.

Explain how making the first letter of each line bigger and bolder makes the acrostic word pattern stand out. Also point out examples of word play that could be used here, such as swapping 'xylophone rib cage' for 'x-ray ribs'. Encourage the children to use their own imaginations, but allow them to use your suggestions too, as this is a great way to extend vocabulary. Pupils can illustrate their acrostic if time allows. If you're looking for some inspiration to get you going, a good poem on the theme of animals adapting to an urban environment is Michael Rosen's *The Seagulls* ([poetryarchive.org/poem/seagulls](http://poetryarchive.org/poem/seagulls)).

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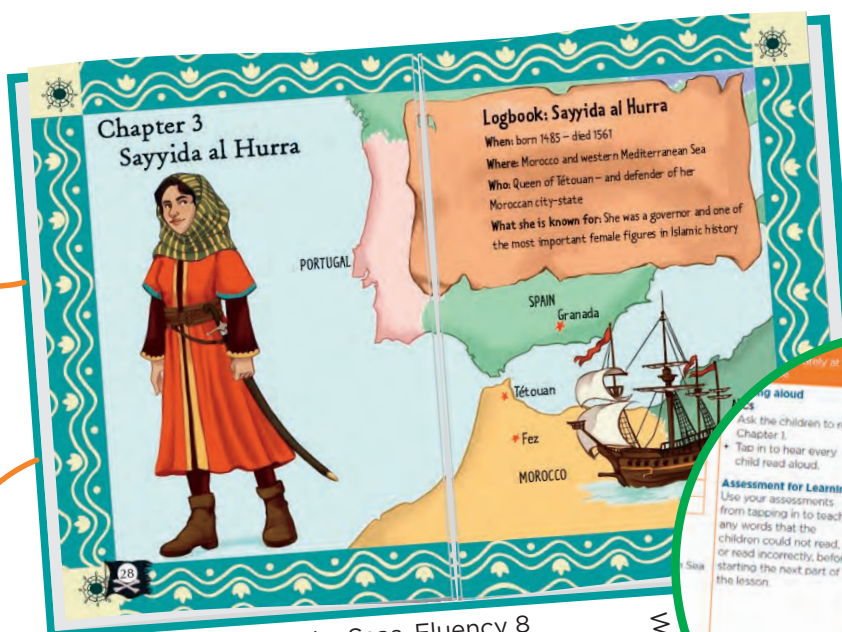
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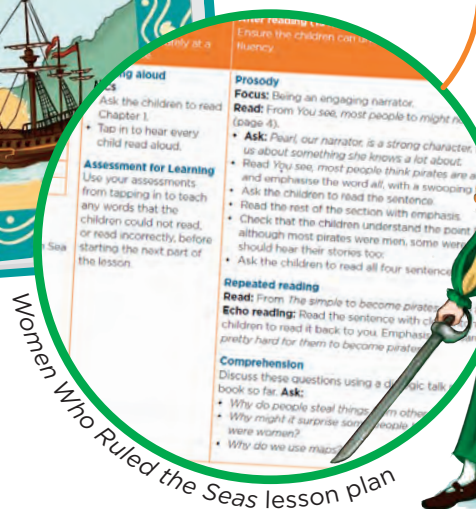
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# Explore story structure WITH FAIRYTALES

What can kids learn from the Big Bad Wolf?  
Much more than not to talk to strangers, says **Mio Debnam...**

**W**hat do *Star Wars*, *Die Hard* and *Little Red Riding Hood* have in common?

Apart from the themes 'good triumphs over evil' and 'actions have consequences', they also share a critical detail: they are all told in a three-act structure.

Of course, this is not the only way to tell a story, but if you look around, you'll see that the three-act structure (which dates back to Aristotle's time) is used in everything from movies, to adverts, to fairytales. It makes for a simple, straightforward yet satisfying narrative arc.

It's also a good thing to teach pupils – because learning how to structure a story with a solid beginning, middle and end is a skill which will be helpful beyond essay writing at school. Even businesses use narrative storytelling to increase engagement with their staff and customers.

So, what's the three-act structure?

## Act 1 (first quarter): The Hook

We meet the characters and learn their needs and wants. The 'inciting incident' launches them irreversibly into the story: In *Little Red Riding Hood*, we discover Red's granny is sick. Her mum gives Red Riding Hood a basket of goodies and warns her to go directly to Granny's, and not stray from the path. But when Red Riding Hood meets the wolf, she stops to tell him about her gran, then she decides to pick flowers for Granny as he suggests...

## Act 2 (next half): The Meat

The story unfolds, and our characters head towards almost certain disaster. The tension builds until, near the end, we have what seems like an insurmountable problem: the wolf, on learning about Granny, decides he wants to eat her. Having distracted Red Riding Hood, he runs to Granny's cottage where he swallows her whole.

Then, dressed as her, he tries to lure Red Riding Hood close enough to eat her too, while we readers bite our nails and wonder if our protagonist will figure things out. In the traditional fairytale, he manages to swallow her – but luckily, a brave woodcutter enters the scene.

## Act 3 (last quarter): Closure

The problem is resolved, and our characters are changed from the experience. The aftermath: the woodcutter kills the wolf, splitting him in two so that Red Riding Hood and her gran can escape. Red Riding Hood resolves to always listen to her mum in future and they live happily ever after.

Fairytales are ideal for teaching the three-act structure as they are short, easy to summarise and analyse. They're also broadly familiar, and comfortable – even the most anxious child knows that they always end 'happily ever after'. However, content-wise, many traditional fairytales rely on two-dimensional, stereotypical characters: the villain is always 100% evil with no chance of redemption; girls are compliant, don't have much agency and need rescuing; and the male characters are always sure of themselves, and heroic. This is why it's good to discuss modern, twisted fairytales too, in tandem, as they often have all the things that make a traditional fairytale the ideal vehicle to teach storytelling, but also feature more complex characters, facing issues and simply existing in a way that ensures all children feel represented in the books they read. They also often have an unexpected twist at the end, which is fun! **TP**

## STORYTELLING IN THREE ACTS

### 1. Summarising

Set a 10-minute challenge – each group has to work out how to summarise their story, then present it in one minute. Most will get bogged down in the details and barely make it past Act 1! Swap stories and try again, until each group is able to summarise their story into the main story beats.

### 2. Analysing

Do story beats belong in Act 1, 2 or 3? What did we learn about the characters? The inciting incident? The problem? What do we think will happen? What did happen? How was it resolved? What did the character learn and how did this change them?

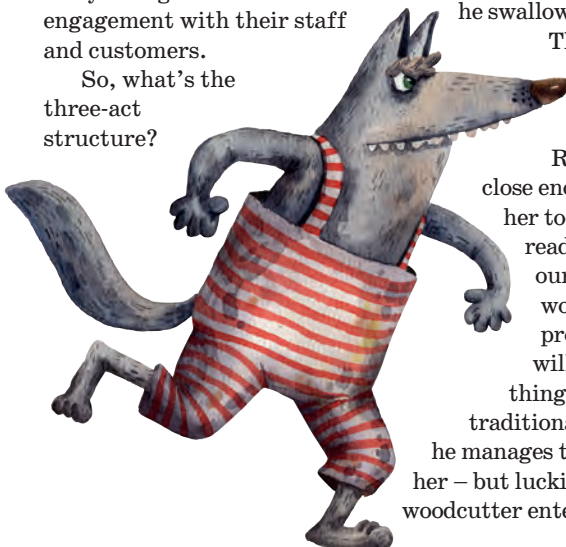
### 3. Planning & writing

Get pupils to plan their own stories following the structure and beats from their analysis. Once they've figured out what to write and in which order, they can flesh it out with more details and create their own masterpiece. Bonus points for adding a modern twist!



**Mio Debnam** is the author of *Adam and Little Red*, one of 11 new twisted

fairytales from Collins Big Cat, out now.



# How to teach IDIOMS

Crying your eyes out or crocodile tears? Contextualising language will help develop children's comprehension and fluency, and give you a smile or two at the same time, says **Nikki Gamble**

**R**ecently, I was visiting a primary school in Birmingham to work with some Y2 children. The headteacher looked in to check that we had everything we needed. "I'll pop my head around the door later," she said.

One of the boys sitting next to me paled and looked aghast. He'd understood that the head would be coming on its own without the rest of the body. I am sure we can all see the funny side to this story, but it revealed to me how much we take idiomatic speech for granted. And, as in this case, the particular challenges to understanding for additional language learners, who may not have the background of extensive conversations in English, which is how we mainly acquire our common figurative expressions.

Idioms are expressions where the implied meaning is different from the literal meaning, and our language is awash with them. There are lots of justifications for us taking time to teach idioms – they are essential for comprehension, knowing common idioms will increase reading fluency, and it's also a lot of fun. But what's the best way to go about it?

There are some principles to keep in mind. First, it is always most productive to teach language in context – either during

conversation or reading – and avoid decontextualised exercises. Secondly, it's best to teach idioms in groups. So, for example, we can teach idioms about emotions or plants together. Choose those in common usage rather than obscure examples. Once the meaning of an idiom has been defined and understood, provide opportunities for the children to apply their knowledge.

Here are some approaches I have used recently. Both lessons were part of an extended teaching sequence, but the focus here is specifically on teaching idioms.

***"It's most productive to teach language in context, avoiding decontextualised exercises"***

## **Cry me a river**

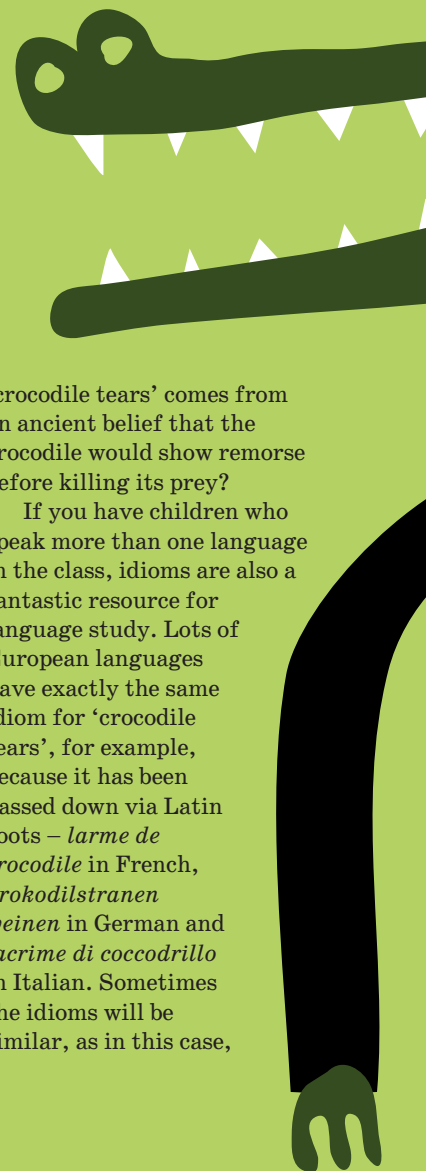
For one Y4 class, I based our idiom lessons around their reading of Carol Ann Duffy's *The Tear Thief*. After reading and discussing initial responses, the children returned to the text to look more closely at the language. For instance, the text includes the sentence, "The Tear Thief could tell that just one of these tears was worth a hundred cried over spilt milk or a thousand crocodile tears."

First, we focused on the phrase 'crocodile tears'. As a class, we discussed the difference between tears that showed genuine emotion and tears that were just for show, and pupils shared their experiences of both. For instance, one girl talked about footballers feigning tears when trying to get a player from the opposing team into trouble for a rough tackle. We then talked about other common idioms on the theme of crying, using images to show their literal meaning and then talking about the intended meaning. These included 'cry your eyes out', 'cry for the moon', 'floods of tears', and 'cry a river'.

Telling origin stories can help the meaning of an idiom to stick in pupils' minds, but more importantly, it shows that language arises out of real contexts, even if the context may not be immediately obvious to us anymore. For example, did you know that the phrase

'crocodile tears' comes from an ancient belief that the crocodile would show remorse before killing its prey?

If you have children who speak more than one language in the class, idioms are also a fantastic resource for language study. Lots of European languages have exactly the same idiom for 'crocodile tears', for example, because it has been passed down via Latin roots – *lar me de crocodile* in French, *krokodilstranen weinen* in German and *lacrime di cocodrillo* in Italian. Sometimes the idioms will be similar, as in this case,





and in other instances, the idioms will be culturally specific. In France and Spain, for instance, they use the expression *pleurer comme une Madeleine* – no it doesn't mean that you are crying like a cake! It comes from a religious reference to the tears of Mary Magdalene. This isn't something we hear in the UK. When you explore children's languages, you also explore their cultures – and they become experts in the class, too. Try this as an extension activity if you have pupils who speak multiple languages, or to link to an MFL lesson.

## A practical approach

In *The Tear Thief* lesson, the crying idioms were directly quoted from the book; in my next example, we used idioms related to the story, but not taken from the text. After reading and an initial exploration of Levi Pinfold's *Greenling*, a Y5 class returned to the text to review the themes. They were given cards with idioms or definitions on the theme of growing and nature. Half the pupils were given an idiom, the other half were given a definition. You can tailor these to individual needs by selecting easier or more challenging examples, but

here is a sample of some of the idioms I gave out:

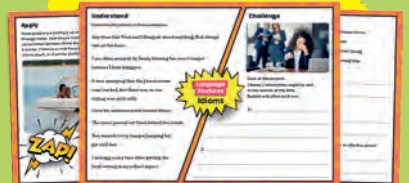
- gone to seed (def. become run down, unattractive);
- reap what you sow (def. good or bad actions lead to good or bad outcomes);
- nip it in the bud (def. stop something before it develops);
- sow seeds of suspicion (def. deliberately put a bad idea in someone's mind);
- let the grass grow under your feet (def. wait or do something very slowly).

To begin, the children moved around the space, trying to find an idiom – definition match, sitting down when they found the correct pairing. This involved a problem-solving approach and required more effort than had they been told the idiom meanings at the outset. This was followed by a discussion – we talked about the literal meanings of the idioms, and which was the correct definition.

The next step was to return to the book. In their idiom-definition pairs, children had to locate an episode in the story to which their idiom could apply.

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For example, the pair that had 'nip it in the bud' chose the page where Mrs Barleycorn is urging her husband to get rid of the Greenling before he destroys their lives. The pair with 'sow seeds of suspicion' located a page where the local people are gathered around the Greenling. A preacher-type character appears to be telling the crowd why the Greenling should be destroyed. This application stage proved to be particularly powerful, not only in learning these idiomatic phrases but also in encouraging a reflective reading of the story.

There are lots of groups of idioms for you to explore with your classes – sport, weather, clothing, animals and time work well. Enjoy! **TP**



**Nikki Gamble**  
is director of  
*Just Imagine*  
and runs  
*the Take  
One Book*  
programme.

She is the author of *Exploring Children's Literature* and co-author of *Guiding Readers*.

# Working class HEROES

Opening children up to authors' diverse backgrounds can improve both their enjoyment and understanding of books, says **Chris Callaghan**...

**B**oil-in-the-bag mince with a hefty dollop of Smash was considered a proper fancy tea when I was young. Smash (instant mashed potato) isn't easy to get right, but my mam often complimented my cooking with a wink, saying, "nice and crunchy". I grew up in a shipyard town on the banks of the Tyne. No central heating, a patchwork of overlapping second-hand carpets and ever-present candles for the frequent 1970s power cuts and those times we hadn't paid the electricity bill. Please spare me your violins, though: we were poor, but we were happy.

I didn't read much back then; books were not part of my world. I couldn't relate to the characters, who always seemed to be quite posh. The authors themselves appeared to be a different breed, too. They spoke differently, studied at fancy universities and lived in that far-off utopia known as 'doon sooth'. But all my life I was scribbling down ideas and stories, and after decades of writing purely for the

enjoyment of it, I found myself thrust into an extremely middle-class world. I didn't believe that it could happen to someone like me. But it did!

## Real connection

I soon realised that it doesn't have to be only the well-off who can have all the fun. There is an escapist element to reading and we all love experiencing exploits from someone else's perspective; you don't need to be short with big hairy feet to enjoy a story about hobbits! We do, though, all need to be able to occasionally connect on a personal level for these stories to be important to us. My recent series of books and graphic novels called *Shinoy and the Chaos Crew* has a working-class family at its heart and is aimed at getting children reading. They're not stories about the hardships of that kind of life, but rather about their extraordinary adventures. I hope kids with backgrounds like mine who are reading this series can feel seen and represented by Shinoy and his family. But what else can we do to get pupils connected with stories like these?

First of all, children enjoy hearing directly from writers: what do they look like? What do they talk like? What is on the shelves behind them? Consider contacting local authors or publishers to see if any would be willing to organise a visit – most authors love to engage with schools. Or perhaps they could send over a bespoke resource for you to share with your class – I have videos introducing myself and my books, and often make short, personalised 'hello' versions for classes reading my stories ([tinyurl.com/tp-Shinoy](http://tinyurl.com/tp-Shinoy)). If you wanted, you could even turn this into a writing project for your pupils – can they write a letter to an author and ask them about their book?

## Personal experience

If you can't contact an author directly, you could ask children to research them. You could also try resources like the Author in Your Classroom podcast, each episode of which comes with an in-depth interview and related resource pack. Check it out for free at [plazoom.com/podcasts](http://plazoom.com/podcasts)

I always find that classes who have researched the author connect much more with their reading. When a child finds a character or scene that fits with the author's background, it increases their understanding of the story and why it was written, which will also encourage them to write from their own point of view.

Now that I'm a 'proper fancy' author (and make my Smash and mince with petit pois and crème fraîche) I often wonder if I'm no longer working-class – even if rather by a technicality than by design. The definitions and movements between classes will inevitably vary from one person to another, as will the details – remember, not *all* working-class folk live in high-rises in cities! But it is vital that children from all upbringings should be able to see themselves represented in books. Those children should also get the same opportunities to become writers, creating windows to their own underrepresented backgrounds. It shouldn't matter where you are from; it should only matter where your imagination can take you. **TP**



**Chris Callaghan's book series, *Shinoy and the Chaos Crew* (starting at £6.25, *Collins Big Cat*) is available now.**

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# How to run an effective WRITING LESSON

Mix and match sessions and goals to find the perfect setup for your class, say **Doug Kauffman** and **Ross Young**

**W**hen it comes to developing an effective writing lesson, there are many approaches you could take. Sometimes it can be tricky to delve through all the advice available, but we've found that the Writing for Pleasure approach has been a great model on which to structure daily writing lessons. Experimental and random control trials, systematic reviews, meta-analyses and case studies, together with research into what the most effective schools do, all point to its efficacy.

But what does it look like in practice?

## Sort a system

The components of an effective writing lesson typically involve a reassuringly consistent (though adaptable) routine of mini lesson, writing time, and class sharing. What is innovative with this particular approach is that, after a mini lesson, children are invited to practise and apply what's just been taught in a way that is relevant to their own writing. For example:

### Section 1

*Mini lesson (instruction):* A period of direct and explicit instruction.

*Trying it out (practice):* An opportunity to try the mini lesson out by having a brief practice.

*Research and case study*

*findings to support:* Children need regular and explicit strategy instruction and time to practise if they are to develop their writing craft.

### Section 2

*Writing time (applying and crafting):* A sustained period for children to work on their writing and to apply the mini lesson to their composition.

*Research and case study findings to support:* Children need ample, sustained, and daily time in which to enact the processes involved in writing and to develop their writing craft.

*Pupil conferencing (feedback):* During writing

on and receive feedback from their teacher and peers.

*Research and case study findings to support:* Children need regular feedback, an opportunity to read and discuss their writing with others, and additional bespoke instruction if they are to become better writers.

An excellent foundation and a good rule of thumb when you're first setting up a routine for writing lessons is to follow this kind of order and timings:

1. Mini lesson (1-15 mins)
2. Trying it out (1-5 mins)
3. Writing time (20-40 mins)
4. Class sharing (5-15 mins)

*silent writing, social writing, conferencing time and class sharing.*

There are endless ways to play around with these key combinations. Here are just a few examples:

### Routine 1

Occasionally, your instruction needs a bit more time, for example when you want to read and discuss a variety of mentor texts with the class. In this instance, you can switch around the mini lesson and writing time lengths as follows:

Bigger lesson (20-40 mins)  
Writing time (3-10 mins)  
Class sharing (5-10 mins)

### Routine 2

Sometimes you'll want to get on and pupil-conference with your children during their writing time. This can allow you to stop writing time if you notice a key misconception through your pupil conferencing and want to address it with the whole class. You can stop the writing time and deliver the mini lesson before asking the children to work on the issue or misconception together during class sharing. E.g.:

Writing time (20-30 mins)  
Mini lesson (5-15 mins)  
Class sharing (5-10 mins)

### Routine 3

Now and again, you just need your class to carry on from where you left off yesterday, and no mini lesson is required:

*"A good routine always has a component of flexible response"*

time, the teacher provides verbal feedback and responsive individualised instruction through pupil conferencing.

*Research and case study findings to support:* Children need regular feedback and responsive teaching based on formative assessment if they are to become better writers.

### Section 3

*Class sharing (feedback):* Time for children to read what they've been working

## Trial and error

Once you and your pupils are comfortable with this kind of routine, you can begin to play around with it. Routine doesn't mean rigidity – a good routine always has a component of flexible response. What's important is knowing *what* a good writing lesson typically involves, and having a shared vocabulary you can use with your class. Your pupils will soon get used to language like *workshop time*, *mini lesson*, *writing time*,



Writing time (30-50 mins)  
Class sharing (5-10 mins)

#### Routine 4

Occasionally, during pupil conferencing, you pick up on something you want to teach to the whole class.

This requires an additional, responsive mini lesson to be delivered in the middle of writing time, like this:

Mini lesson (3-10 mins)  
Writing time (10-20 mins)  
Responsive mini lesson (3-10 mins)

Writing time (10-20 mins)  
Class sharing (5-10 mins)

#### Routine 5

Sometimes having a sharing session in the middle of writing time gives children the opportunity to reflect on how they're getting on with applying learning from the mini lesson. For example:

Mini lesson (3-10 mins)  
Writing time (10-20 mins)  
Class sharing (5-10 mins)  
Writing time (10-20 mins)  
Class sharing (5-10 mins)

#### Routine 6

You may also, now and again, want your pupils to review what they wrote yesterday with their peers, before continuing. In this case, you can teach a mini lesson based on what you're seeing during pupil conferencing, like this:

Class sharing (5-10 mins)  
Writing time (10-20 mins)  
Mini lesson (3-10 mins)  
Writing time (10-20 mins)  
Class sharing (5-10 mins)

#### Routine 7

Finally, sometimes you simply want your class to continue with their writing. You can then use the whole lesson for writing time and pupil conferencing.

### Set goals

It's vital that we think carefully about the process goals we set for writing time, too. A process goal is something we would like children to achieve or get done by the end of a session.

It's important to say that by *writing time* we don't necessarily mean *drafting*, but simply time

engaged in the processes of writing. E.g.: making front covers; working on plans; drafting a picturebook page; drafting a single paragraph of writing; reading; conducting research; discussing and revising some already-crafted writing; proofreading for spellings; or publishing.

Like the main writing lesson, there are a variety of ways you can organise your goals. For instance, you might switch between drawing illustrations and writing about them. You might also want to give the children some time to draft, and then ask them to proofread what they've just written. For some lessons, you might set a specific goal you want your pupils to achieve during writing time. For example, proofreading their manuscript for spelling and grammar, or reviewing their writing against the product goals established for the class writing project. Finally, you may need to take into consideration energy levels, and split writing time up into chunks of 'silent writing' and 'social writing' to keep everyone on track.

The reason these components are so brilliant is because they offer the potential for explicit instruction, meaningful practice and formative assessment every single day. These are the absolute bedrocks of all teaching and learning. **TP**



*Ross Young is the founder of The Writing for Pleasure Centre and co-author of Writing for Pleasure: Theory, Research & Practice and others. Doug*



*Kaufman is university teaching fellow at the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education.*



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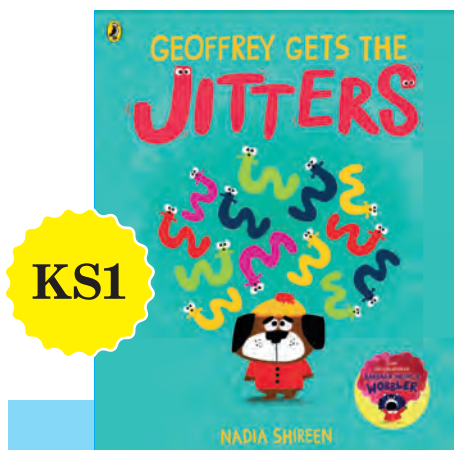
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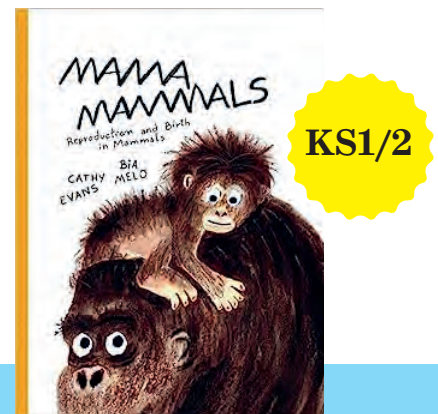
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***Mama Mammals***  
**by Cathy Evans, ill. Bia Melo**

**(£12.99 HB, Cicada Books)**

We've all had that feeling when a worry creeps up on us and suddenly it's as though our tummy is filled with worms. Well, that's exactly what happens when Geoffrey starts to worry about his upcoming playdate with his friend Barbara. What if Barbara has decided she no longer likes him? Or if he loses his beloved teddy, Big Dave? Or, worst of all, what if giant laser-shooting dinosaurs come out of nowhere and chase them all down? Geoffrey's jitters vary in severity (and likelihood), but they all feel so real. It's only when he gets a hold of each individual jitter and starts to question them, that he makes progress towards feeling better. This gorgeously illustrated book is the perfect introduction to helping children cope with their wobbles, big or small.

Welcome to Mrs Owl's Forest School, where Mouse, Squirrel, Fox and Rabbit are learning all about the great outdoors. Focusing on play and exploration, this title encourages little ones to get outside, try something new, and be creative. Mouse, Squirrel, Fox and Rabbit are tasked with working together to build a very big den, and learn lots along the way, including the right kinds of branches to use, and how to tie secure knots. Alongside the engaging story are sets of instructions on how your little ones can embark on their own forest school adventures, whether you're in the countryside or the heart of the city. Activity ideas include making a bug hotel from toilet rolls, and a guide to tying reef knots. Add this to your collection if you're keen to encourage your little ones to explore outside.

Learning about the facts of life is one of the major milestones of childhood, but there's a lot to take in. Enter *Mama Mammals*, a beautifully illustrated exploration of reproduction and birth in mammals. Full of information about a selection of the 5,000 mammal species on Earth, it covers everything from gestation timelines (did you know hamsters are only pregnant for around 16 days, whereas elephants have the longest pregnancy of any mammal at 22 months?) to surprising details such as the fact that whales are born with hair. A great way to start conversations around reproduction, the book contains plenty of science from author-vet Cathy Evans, while the colourful layout ensures children won't be overwhelmed. Suitable for both KS1 and KS2 pupils.



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## Meet the author

### JOE HADDOW ON ENCOURAGING THE ARTS IN SCHOOL, AND DANCING LIKE NOBODY'S WATCHING



What do you wish you'd been taught about art in primary school?

As I remember, we did a lot of gluing

and sticking at primary school – and that was a lot of fun! But I wish I'd been taught that 'art' means more than just visual art. I wish I'd learned that writing short stories was art, and that colouring in a picture was art. I wish music had been played in classes, and that we'd had a chance to appreciate it as an art form. And I wish as well as doing gymnastics, we'd been encouraged to dance like no one was watching – and that those moves were also art!

### Why do you think creativity is sometimes pushed out in favour of skills like STEM?

I think the arts, and creative endeavours in general, are seen by some people (especially people with power and no imagination) as 'fluffy' subjects; skills that you can't make money from and that don't help the economy. Well, I think they're wrong. I also don't think creativity should be looked at through the lens of money or careers or economies. Being creative is good for you! It's a release, it's meditative and it's joyful. We need STEM to help save our planet, to keep us healthy and cure us from diseases, and so many other things. But the arts should be in there too. These things go hand in hand.

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

Just the thought that my book might be in schools brings me so much joy! And if it does make it into a classroom or two, I hope that it can help broaden children's minds a little, to think about what art is, and why they enjoy particular art forms. I'd love for the book to be a springboard for exploring different genres of art and encouraging kids to be creative, in their own way.

**Art is Everywhere (£7.99, Uclan Publishing) is out now.**

KS2



### The House Trap by Emma Read

(£7.99, Chicken House)

Delilah and Claude have been friends for years, but now that Claude and his family are relocating to Cornwall, Delilah is starting to feel left out. Delilah's planning to try and have a proper goodbye (without Claude's new friend Sam poking his nose in), but when Claude's 10-year-old sister Amity runs off into the forbidden Badewell Woods, their plans change. The woods are where children disappear, so it's up to Claude, Delilah and Sam to get Amity back before she meets the same fate. But upon following Amity into a mysterious mansion, the trio's plans change drastically again... the house is somehow twisting and turning, rearranging itself beneath their feet. Can they solve the puzzle of the house in time, and return to safety? *The House Trap* would be perfect for a lesson on creating a scary atmosphere.



KS2

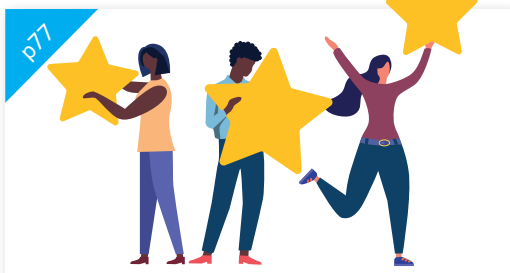
### Art is Everywhere by Joe Haddow, ill. Ellie Hawes

(£7.99, Uclan Publishing)

What is art? This seemingly innocuous, yet surprisingly philosophical question is how Joe Haddow kicks off his exploration of creative forms. Spanning music, writing, acting, comedy, dance and more, Haddow delves into what it really means to create a piece of art, and who we can call 'artist'. Writing in the manner of a conversation between reader and author, with each chapter starting with questions from an imagined audience, Haddow seamlessly imparts his point of view on the subject, as well as a plethora of information on different artforms, citing towering authorities and those who have paved the way within their disciplines, such as Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho, giant of literature Michael Rosen, and *Strictly Come Dancing* star Oti Mabuse. Perfect for inspiring kids.

# Assessment SPECIAL

## INSIDE THIS SECTION



Is your school's approach to evaluation feeling convoluted and cumbersome? A shared assessment framework could be just what you need...



Dump 'teaching to the test' and stoke the fire of creativity for an assessment pupils will remember far beyond primary school...



School data is more pervasive now than ever, but what have we learned over the last 10 years to support primary assessment?



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# The six jobs of ASSESSMENT

Like a builder choosing the right tools, we need to be more careful with our choices about assessment, argues **Clare Sealy**...

**W**e all know that assessment is important. But in some schools it's too important, with curriculum – the decisions about what to teach – subservient to decisions about assessment. Such schools believe that the curriculum exists to yield data to populate spreadsheets; and that learning hasn't happened until those spreadsheets are filled in.

But assessment isn't a window into children's heads! Unless we have an informed understanding of the limitations of assessment, we will waste time trying to gain a certainty that just isn't possible. Assessment only enables us to make *tentative inferences* about what has been learned.

Too often, assessment is undertaken performatively, as if as long as we do certain assessment rituals, this will result in better learning by magic. But if we are going to use assessment in an intelligent way, we need to ask ourselves two questions: what are we trying to find out, and what will we do differently as a result? Because if we aren't going to take action on what we find, then the whole enterprise has been a waste of valuable learning time. Another important thing to grasp is that assessment isn't one thing. It is (at least) six different things. Mixing these up undermines the reliability and validity of the inferences we *can* make. So, here's how they should work...

## Diagnostic assessment

Most important is diagnostic assessment. This is the kind of assessment that you as a teacher are carrying out all the time, as you ask questions and look at pupils' work to find out what they understand. Diagnostic

assessment is powerful. However, it only has power if you use what you find out to flex your teaching in the moment to address misunderstandings. Don't carry on teaching regardless, delivering a conveyor belt curriculum that takes no account of whether children are actually learning. Diagnostic assessment is for the teacher, not the learner. It guides professional decision making about where to go next. Its go-to tools are all-learner response systems, such as mini whiteboards and inclusive questioning routines, that expect all children to actively participate, not just the usual arm-waving suspects. When Ofsted gives assessment as an area for development in a report, it is almost always the lack of diagnostic assessment that it is referring to.

## School improvement

Diagnostic assessment happens in the lesson – leading to immediate changes to teaching – or shortly after, when you look at pupils' work to help you plan the next lesson. But you will also want to use assessment for some longer-term planning by finding out what your pupils have learned at the end of a unit of study. This is assessment for school improvement and is focused more on finding out how successful the cohort as a whole has been than pinpointing the strengths and weaknesses of individual children. It



involves looking back at what has been learned over a topic. Where elements have been less successfully learned, this enables you to plan to address this at some later point. For example, imagine that you've just taught a unit on states of matter, but many in your class are still confused about the difference between evaporation and condensation. You can reteach it very briefly, then make sure that you drop in references to condensation and evaporation in everyday conversations, e.g. "Oh look at the water that has condensed on the window", or "That puddle won't take long to evaporate in this sun." You can then use retrieval practice quizzes to revisit these concepts. Finally, you can tweak your curriculum so that next time you teach this unit the misconception is less likely to happen. Once again, this kind of assessment is for the teacher rather than for the pupil.

### Motivational assessment

You can also use assessment to motivate pupils by giving them information about what they need to work on or how they should change their behaviour to achieve a goal. However, for motivational assessment to be effective in improving future learning, it must tell the pupil something that is within their power

to change. Because assessment has been sold to the profession as some sort of silver bullet, too often teachers give feedback to children when they would be much better off reteaching content. Telling a child to 'include more detail' when they do not know more detail is demotivating and counterproductive. If you have ever given children targets that tell them their next step is to do X, when X relies on you teaching them this, you will appreciate that this is neither motivating nor helpful! Next-step

*"Too often, assessment is undertaken performatively, as though it'll work magic"*

targets are useful for you as a teacher, to help you to identify what to teach next; but much less so for pupils, who first need teaching.

### Informative assessment

Feedback can only be truly motivating when the gap between actual and desired performance is small enough for the pupil to address it with no more than a small nudge. On the other hand, feedback about effort, attendance, behaviour or homework could provide information that may have the potential to motivate pupils to make different choices. And it is information about these aspects of learning that are most useful for parents and carers, alongside an indication of whether a pupil's

learning is typical for a child of their age. Informative assessment needs to be easy to understand, unlike the present system that changes nomenclature at every key stage!

### Self-assessment

We should also give children self-assessment tools to help them improve their own work. You can build pupil agency, resilience and independence by teaching subject-specific metacognitive self-assessment strategies. For example, you can teach your class to use checking strategies to monitor their work for errors – whether that's transcription errors when writing, calculation errors in maths, monitoring their understanding when reading, or process errors (failing to read the whole question for example). You can teach them about how their memory works and why retrieval practice is a powerful tool for them to have in their self-assessment repertoire.

### Evaluative assessment

Finally, there is the kind of evaluative assessment used by leaders – whether in a school, MAT or government – to make inferences about how well a school or system is doing. This is a perfectly legitimate activity for leaders to undertake. However, the inferences made by such assessments are much more reliable at the cohort level than they are for individual children. In any one-off assessment, some children do slightly better, and some do slightly worse than expected. On average, these cancel each other out. So evaluative assessments work well as tools of aggregate, collective performance and less well as summative assessment of individual children.

All six of these tools have their place. But what is important is to know *why* you are doing any assessment and *what you will do differently* as a result. Evaluative assessments make poor diagnostic assessments and vice versa. Use the right tool for the right job. **TP**



Clare Sealy is head of education improvement for the States of Guernsey.

@ClareSealy



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SCHOOL ADVENTURES



# ‘Why are we DOING THIS?’

Is your school’s approach to evaluation and feedback feeling convoluted and cumbersome? A shared assessment framework could be just what you need...

ANDREW RHODES

**W**hen levels were removed in September 2014, I, alongside the rest of the teaching profession breathed a sigh of relief, as finally the future of assessment was filled with possibilities and a freedom to create something simple, something owned at school level, and something that would allow teachers to make decisions about how best to help their pupils flourish in the classroom. Fast forward to 2023 and the question we need to ask ourselves is, has our approach at school level achieved this and truly made assessment simple?

Throughout the last decade I have supported

schools and trusts to reflect on their approaches to assessment, and I often find that methods haven’t radically changed in years. Across the last year, I have worked with a range of schools who are now starting to question why they do certain things, such as having three or more assessment points which typically happen in December, April and June, or creating targets and predictions that are inevitably unrealistic, but fill a box on some kind of grid for somebody else! The shift in these schools, is that they have begun the process of redefinition, where they

are actively re-examining and re-evaluating their approach, with a view to transform it into something much more impactful. This has been possible with the development of a shared assessment framework.

## A clear vision

A shared assessment framework is a powerful tool devised at school level that offers a single primary school or a group of schools within a Trust the opportunity to create a clear vision for stripping back assessment. It works by guiding the schools to reflect on what they do and why, rethinking what approaches are needed, and

transforming the way the school or Trust understands the decisions about how assessment functions as part of the school system. The starting point is auditing the current approach and gathering stakeholder views to gain an understanding of what is working, and what needs to change or be redefined through holding a range of learning conversations. As a single document, it details and streamlines the approach taken, allowing schools to focus on what is essential, while removing unnecessary processes, which in turns frees up time to focus on classroom practice. Crucially, when created collectively, it allows schools to identify the aligned processes which will take place across the academic year. In a nutshell, an effective framework should be based around six core aspects:

- 1 A defined and thoughtfully curated assessment calendar that sets out the tasks/activities for each month in the academic year and who is involved.
- 2 An overview of data capture, in terms of what will be gathered, when it will take place, and who is responsible.
- 3 A clear description of what the assessment points are within the year and the rationale behind when these happen.
- 4 An explanation of how cohort learning



conversations (often called pupil progress meetings) are conducted, and their impact.

- 5 An outline of the cross school/trust collaboration opportunities that have been devised to support the development of professional creativity.
- 6 A clearly understood outline of the reporting arrangements to stakeholders that provides the right information to the right people at the right time.

Through working together on each of the six aspects, teachers, leaders and those responsible for governance are able to create a framework that:

- Provides a common language which is used and understood by all staff and the schools it is designed for.
- Outlines clear and consistent protocols around what assessments are conducted and when.
- Provides all stakeholders with relevant information at identified points across the year, which aligns with the assessment information that has been collected and collated.
- Enables all staff to understand the different processes involved in data collection, cohort learning conversations and reporting arrangements.
- Utilises opportunities for collaboration both within and beyond the school or Trust to develop best practice and share expertise such as the development of in-house writing portfolios, instructional coaching around strategies/ techniques, or year group or subject specific networks to share expertise.

## Question everything

When school leaders take a critical look at their systems and structures, while taking time to have conversations with staff, pupils and

stakeholders at all levels, they can build up a realistic understanding of the whole assessment experience. As leaders we need to walk in the shoes of our teachers to truly experience and appreciate their reality. Then we need to ask ourselves, is what we are doing right? Is what we are doing making a difference? Simple questions such as, “How do you use the data you generate or are provided with?”, or “What are your views on the way we collect attainment data?” are a great starting point for reflection. These basic queries start to build a picture of the lived experience of assessment in school. Just reflect on how often you take the time to stop and ask why.

Remember that a shared assessment framework aims to make it clear what the school approach is, and should be a coproduced document that enables all stakeholders to understand their roles/responsibilities. At its heart, it aims to support teachers to spend more time teaching, and allowing pupils to focus more on the art of learning,

by releasing them from unnecessary paperwork, unproductive tasks, unhelpful meetings and the need to capture or discuss information that makes no difference to learning. In addition, it enables leaders and governors/trustees to support and challenge the quality of education through offering the opportunity to spend more time looking at a wider evidence base, rather than just attainment or progress data, as can often be the case.

To get started, all it takes is a conversation and someone to take the initiative to get going. Maybe today is the day to begin redefining assessment in your school? **TP**



*Andrew Rhodes is an ex primary headteacher, former SLE and director of Redefining Education Ltd.*



## 8 STEPS TO A SHARED ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

**1** Audit the current systems and structures that are in place for assessment through a range of conversations with teachers, leaders, parents, pupils and governors/trustees. The goal is to understand their experiences of what already exists.

**2** Map out what happens for assessment between September and August, and reflect as colleagues on why these activities take place and what impact they have – whether positive or negative.

**3** Reflect on how many assessment points exist, and if it's three or more, consider what the thinking behind this is. Is there merit in just having one or two instead?

**4** Decide what assessment information is needed (e.g. raw scores, contextual information, teacher annotations, or percentages of particular items/groups), who is responsible for it and how it will be stored.

**5** Make decisions about what assessment information needs to be shared, with whom, and when.

**6** Design cohort learning conversations that support teachers to understand their classes, enable the right provisions to be put in place for pupils, and highlight the professional development adults within the cohort need to enable success.

**7** Collate all this information together into a simple document, divided into the six clear sections outlined above.

**8** Communicate the framework to all stakeholders by ensuring that there is a shared understanding of its purpose and through a thorough reviewing process.





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# A new way to CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Dump ‘teaching to the test’ and stoke the fire of creativity for an assessment pupils will remember far beyond primary school (for all the right reasons...)

ALIX ROBERTSON

**T**he best thing I did at primary school was take part in a production of *Oliver!* I was enchanted from the first mention of the idea – furiously learning lines for an audition and practising my wistful urchin impression in the bathroom mirror. I was given a lead part and could not have been more excited.

My teachers approached the play as a learning opportunity. I practised speaking skills: how to project my voice and hold an audience’s attention; reading skills: working my way through Dickens’ novel and memorising a script; and teamwork: rehearsing with other children and sharing ideas about the best ways to bring scenes to life. I learned how to manage time with after-school practices, and reflected on the challenges and achievements when it was all over. I wasn’t tested on what I had learned, but received helpful feedback throughout from teachers, peers and parents.

It was a transformative experience for me at the time; I went on to sign up

for Saturday morning drama classes, which I attended for the rest of my school days. I read everything else from Dickens and eventually completed an English degree.

## **SATs stresses**

Creative, exploratory and enjoyable experiences are vital for all learners, but especially at primary age. They can be the deciding factor in whether we feel excited about trying new

particular are well known and widely discussed. There is definitely a worry amongst some educators that direct links between test results and school performance measures lead to too much ‘teaching to the test’, at the expense of broader learning opportunities. Others have also suggested that the narrow focus on literacy and

*“Learning experiences like the PEPA are vital in helping young people find their place in the wider world”*

things, or daunted and disillusioned. But as a teacher, you’re up against pressures that jeopardise the chance to learn in this way. Designing creative learning experiences is tough when you also have to prepare and guide pupils through the curriculum, reception baseline check, phonics check, multiplication table check, end of Key Stage 1 assessments, and Key Stage 2 SATs.

Concerns about the pressures of SATs in

numeracy leads to increased stress for teachers and families, while neglecting pupils’ wider strengths.

Post-Covid, the wider curriculum has suffered as schools have struggled to maintain consistency, support wellbeing, and meet ambitious ‘catch-up’ targets in literacy and numeracy. While summative assessments like SATs have their place in helping pupils





to develop in core subjects and providing a picture of progress, teachers and pupils working during tough times need other opportunities to celebrate success.

## Learning your way

In my current work at think and action-tank The Centre for Education and Youth (CfEY), I've been involved in a really exciting project over the last year, creating a new assessment for 10 and 11-year-olds. The Primary Extended Project Award (PEPA) aims to respond to some of the challenges of the current primary assessment system, building new ways for pupils to be creative and take control of their own learning.

The PEPA allows pupils to carry out an extended project that addresses a real-world challenge they feel passionate about, presenting their work to the local community through a medium of their choice, such as performance, artwork, video or podcast. Designed in partnership with MAT Big Education, and with support from the NCFE Assessment Innovation Fund, it can be used by any primary school across the UK (or beyond) to complement existing practice.

We created the award with seven primary schools, working together to design a clear and consistent structure, assessment criteria and pedagogical approach. The assessment process is largely formative, focusing on research and presentation skills, imagination, inquisitiveness, and persistence. We shaped the programme to allow children to learn skills for life, including metacognition, self-regulation, how to select reliable sources of information, and ways to drive their learning independently and present it to others with confidence.

Throughout the PEPA, pupils receive feedback from peers, parents, and teachers, culminating in Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. CfEY and Big Education will also help to safely connect pupils with expert mentors, who can share their knowledge of chosen topics, support learning, and connect it to the real world.

Teachers made it clear that time and resources are tight, so lots of guidance and supporting materials are included to help along the way.

## For posterity...

We wanted to make sure pupils had something tangible to take away after completing the PEPA, to show a rounded picture of their interests, talents and goals. When my school play finished at the end of Year 6, I treasured an album made by my teachers, with pictures from rehearsals and the performance, and comments from all involved on what I had achieved by taking part. I still have it today. Similarly, with the PEPA, pupils are able to record expectations for their work, evidence of progress, feedback, and self-reflection in a customisable online Project Record, that they can take with them when they leave primary school. They can fill it with photos, videos and comments, and we hope it will give them the same feeling of pride and excitement that I felt for what that future might hold.

The PEPA is really important to me because it will remind children that they are more than just a number on a test paper. This form of assessment is about finding a passion and making something tangible from it that you get to share with others in a meaningful way. By creating these kinds of powerful experiences at primary level, we have a chance to offset the stress of testing and inspire children early on. Creative and exploratory learning experiences like the PEPA are vital in helping young people find their place in the wider world, whether that's behind a desk, in a lab, or on a stage.

TP



*Alix Robertson is head of engagement at The Centre for Education and Youth.*

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

## HOW DOES THE PEPA WORK IN PRACTICE?



### Autumn Term Y5

Introduce pupils to the PEPA and teach them about the research and presentation skills they will need for the project.



### Spring Term Y5

More teaching of skills; pupils explore some completed examples of PEPA projects and agree on success criteria; pupils identify their research questions, then plan and begin working on a 'mini' version of a PEPA project.



### Summer Term Y5

Teach pupils about imagination, inquisitiveness, and persistence; term ends with presentations of completed mini PEPAs; pupils receive feedback and set targets for the full Y6 PEPA.



### Autumn Term Y6

Pupils identify new research questions and choose how they will present their final project; pupils map out prior knowledge, write a research plan and set targets, and are connected with a mentor who has expertise in their chosen topic; further teaching takes place targeting gaps in skills and dispositions.



### Spring Term Y6

Pupils are taught and practise how to use their PEPA Project Record and continue to work on their project with the support of their expert mentor.



### Summer Term Y6

Pupils finish their project work and prepare for their presentation; term ends with presentations at a celebration event and final feedback from peers, parents and carers, and expert mentors; pupils are given the chance to create a Year 7 entry profile, with the PEPA forming one section.

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Years  
1-6

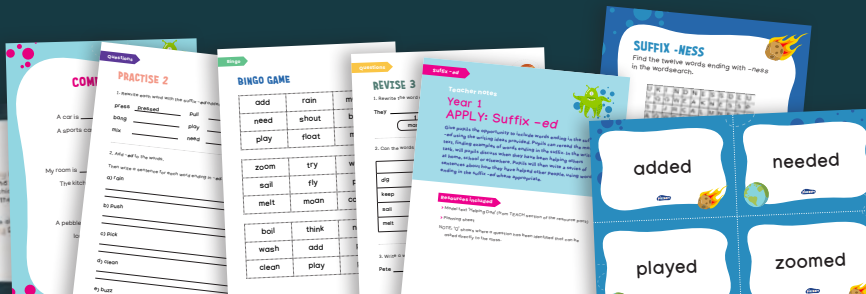
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# Made to MEASURE

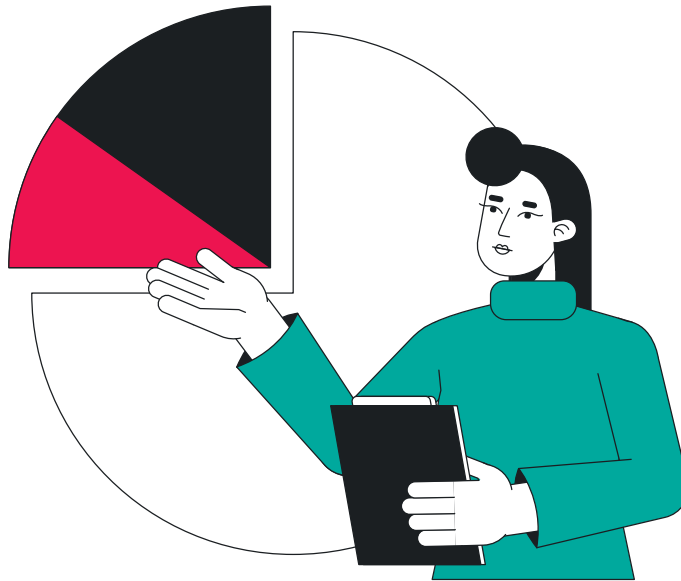
School data is more pervasive now than ever, but what have we learned over the last 10 years to support assessment, asks **Joshua Perry**

**I**n October 2013, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that levels would be removed from the national curriculum. But what have we learned about assessment since then, and are we in a better place than we were a decade ago?

Well, the removal of levels has helped to expose some of the more bonkers things that used to happen in the name of tracking student progress. It's much less common these days, for instance, to find a school tracking 'progress points', as if progress were a perfectly linear and divisible commodity. Mercifully, we've also learned that measuring progress cannot be achieved by 'taking what they got last term and adding two'. Of course, we all want children to make progress, but when we attempt to measure it we may contort our data to breaking point.

## Quality over quantity

A decade ago, the default approach of many schools was to have a half-termly data drop, with leaders and governors staring blankly at reports in the hope that meaningful insights would jump out, like those 3D stereogram pictures from the 90s. The DfE's 2018 *Making Data Work* report was helpful in moving on our thinking, stating clearly that a school need have no more than two or three attainment milestones a year. Nowadays we collect less data, and (hopefully) think more about



the purpose of that collection and how it will inform meaningful actions.

## Strategic questions

There are, of course, some circumstances where teacher judgments are vital. In EYFS, for example, you may want to track concepts like curiosity or risk-taking, and that requires recording teacher observations.

That said, authors like Daisy Christodoulou have helped us to understand the limitations of teacher judgment. Tracking systems historically included tons of descriptors like 'recognise and name common 2D shapes', and teachers would decide if the child reached the 'expected' standard in that area. But surely it is more meaningful to set a test which asks them to identify a square, a triangle, and so on? That way, if there's a gap in knowledge, you can pinpoint and correct it.

What's more, teacher

judgments can be skewed by subconscious bias. Research from the Institute of Education in 2015 found that children from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to be perceived by teachers as less able than their more advantaged classmates. So increasingly, schools have moved towards question-led forms of assessment to provide more precise and objective feedback.

## Where to start?

Another hot topic is how the DfE should calculate a baseline for its progress measures. Until recently the answer has been to use KS1 outcomes, but this has been unpopular because: (a) it's not the start of the primary phase; (b) the data relies on teacher judgments; and (c) the system cannot distinguish between the different trajectories of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) as opposed to, say, children with

Special Educational Needs (SEN). So the government went searching for a better approach, and settled on a Reception baseline.

The problem is, nobody seems to care much for that either. Infant and junior schools point out that a measure running from Reception to Y6 doesn't help them, and others fret about how meaningful it is to track a change between four- and five-year-olds and their 11-year-old selves. Seven teachers could have contributed to this development, overseen by different school leaders; and that's before you start to factor in externals such as the home environment, student mobility, month of birth, etc.

So, over a decade we've learned plenty of positive things, like how to collect less data of better quality. But as we understand school data better we also become more aware of its limitations. And when it comes to progress measures, we've perhaps learned more about why we should be wary of them than we have about how to make them work! **TP**



**Joshua Perry** is co-founder of *Smartgrade and Carousel Learning*, and will

be speaking at the *Data In Schools Conference (DISCo) series*. Search 'Data In Schools Conference' online for details.

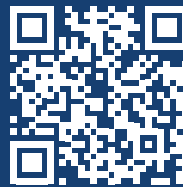
# Pet Education Partnership

**FREE  
resources**



- Lesson planning made easy
- Free curriculum-linked resources
- Trusted by educators

Supporting Animal Welfare: Teach your class the importance of responsible pet ownership and animal welfare.



Sign up now or scan the QR code to unlock a world of pet education for your classroom!



Visit: [peteducationpartnership.org](https://peteducationpartnership.org)

Join Us for a Special Zoom Event:

## World Animal Day & Me



Explore animal sentience, interactive learning and responsible pet ownership. Let's celebrate World Animal Day together!  
#WorldAnimalDay&Me #PetPromise

Date: **4th October 2023**

**FREE EVENT**



### Did you know?

Goldfish can remember things they've been taught for years!

Chickens love to sunbathe!

Some spiders hide from danger





## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

The Pet Education Partnership (PEP) is a collaboration between eight of the leading animal welfare charities in the UK: Blue Cross, Cats Protection, Dogs Trust, PDSA, RSPCA, SSPCA, USPCA and Woodgreen. It collates a number of educational resources, whether you're exploring animal welfare with your class, or working on a project to help foster skills like responsibility and empathy.

# 5 REASONS TO TRY... The Pet Education Partnership (PEP)

Check out this new programme that supports the teaching of animal welfare topics in schools

## 1 TRUSTED RESOURCES

Introducing the Pet Education Partnership's one-stop-shop – a revolutionary platform designed for you and your class. It's more than just an educational resources website; it's a holistic approach to instilling compassion and empathy in children, while exploring the fascinating world of animal welfare. But that's not all. The partnership understands the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance, and this platform is tailored to support you in achieving just that. Engage your children with captivating content, and foster their sense of responsibility with the free tools.



## 4 TACKLE RELEVANT TOPICS

Timely, comprehensive PSHE resources will assist you in effectively addressing current issues in schools. With the rise in dog bites recently making the headlines, PEP will work to provide schools with valuable insights regarding responsible pet ownership and child safety. Additionally, it will offer sensitive and thoughtful resources to support you when teaching children about difficult topics, such as bereavement, offering them a supportive environment to express their feelings and learn coping strategies. Empower your teaching with the empathetic and practical tools that promote emotional intelligence, resilience, and understanding.

## 2 INTERACTIVE CONTENT

PEP is hosting its first-ever virtual Zoom event for primary schools on 4 October, 2023. Celebrating World Animal Day, this exciting educational experience, led by passionate experts from the animal welfare sector, will delve into the captivating world of animal sentience. The free event will promote responsible pet ownership and encourage children to show empathy and respect towards all living beings – including spiders! With downloadable resources and a secure platform, World Animal Day and Me promises to be an unforgettable experience for young minds.

## 3 INSIGHTFUL RESEARCH

Exciting research is on the horizon. The partnership is delving into the pet population to gain a deeper understanding of how children perceive and care for their furry friends, shedding light on the knowledge and attitudes children have about animals and responsible pet ownership. By uncovering these insights, PEP will be equipped to develop tailored educational resources that foster empathy and responsible behaviour towards animals. Stay tuned for this ground-breaking research that will empower you to nurture informed and compassionate pet owners.

### Contact:

Visit:  
[peteducationpartnership.org](https://peteducationpartnership.org)  
Email:  
[contactus@peteducationpartnership.org](mailto:contactus@peteducationpartnership.org)

## 5 SUPPORT THE UK'S LEADING CHARITIES IN ANIMAL WELFARE

By engaging with PEP and using the resources, you'll be making a significant impact on promoting positive animal welfare to the next generation. The partnership members all believe that building a community of young advocates who will champion the wellbeing of animals and the environment is an important and achievable goal. Thank you for supporting this journey towards a better and more compassionate world!

## KEY POINTS

Discover PEP's one-stop shop: a treasure trove of holistic resources for teaching animal welfare in school and instilling compassion and empathy in children.

Don't miss the upcoming World Animal Day event on 4th October. Immerse children in the world of animal sentience through interactive activities and presentations.

Join the UK's leading animal welfare charities to make a positive impact, fostering children's empathy and enhancing their understanding of animals through the use of the free resources.

The partnership has a long-term goal to have animal welfare taught on the curriculum. In the meantime, all the resources are curriculum linked across the UK.





# FOR THE THRILL OF LEARNING



023 8081 4442  
[education@paultons.co.uk](mailto:education@paultons.co.uk)



@paultonseducate  
[paultonspark.co.uk/education](http://paultonspark.co.uk/education)



# 5 REASONS TO TRY... The Grimwood series, by Nadia Shireen

An hilarious comedy-adventure series, perfect for reluctant readers, from an award-winning author



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

Perfect for readers aged 7+, this bestselling series is ideal for fans of *Dog Man*, David Walliams and *Bunny vs Monkey*. The latest instalment, *Grimwood: Attack of the Stink Monster!* is available from 31 August 2023.

### 1 GRIPPING ANIMAL ADVENTURE

'Really fresh, very funny and full of energy.' – **Frank Cottrell-Boyce**

Fox cub siblings Ted and Nancy escape the Big City, on the run from Princess Buttons, the scariest street cat in town. They flee for Grimwood, expecting to find refuge in the peaceful countryside. Instead, they meet thieving eagles, dramatic ducks, riotous rabbits and a whole host of *unusual* characters. Grimwood is... well, weird.

But they grow to love their new life in Grimwood – the forest where *anything* can happen. And, with their new friends, they face the toughest challenges, have the maddest adventures, learn the biggest life lessons and have the most fun two fox cubs can have.

### 2 IDEAL FOR HUMOUR FANS

'So funny it needs a health warning.' – **Rob Biddulph**

It's no surprise that *Grimwood* has been shortlisted for the Lollies (The Laugh Out Loud Book Award, 2023). This comedy adventure series is fantastically funny and brims with laughs and surprises.

### 3 PERFECT FOR RELUCTANT READERS

'Comic gold, tinged with such tenderness.' – **Kiran Millwood Hargrave**

Bursting with exciting, funny and completely unique illustrations, the Grimwood series is accessible for all readers, including those who need more support with their reading. With



spacious pages and lots of detail to explore on every page, children of all reading abilities will be excited to turn the pages to find out what happens next, in this unforgettable and warm-hearted series.

### 4 BY AWARD-WINNER NADIA SHIREEN

'Funny, anarchic, original and gloriously silly.' – **Richard Osman**

Grimwood, Nadia Shireen's first series for older readers, has been shortlisted for the Lollies (Laugh Out Loud Book Award 2023), Children's Book of the Year (Younger Fiction), The Week Junior Book Awards 2023, and the Books Are My Bag Readers Awards.

Nadia has also won awards for her picture books, including the UKLA Book Award – and been shortlisted for the Roald Dahl Funny

**Contact:**  
Visit: [youtu.be/JZiCWp93Vr8](https://youtu.be/JZiCWp93Vr8)

**Twitter:**  
[@NadiaShireen](https://twitter.com/NadiaShireen) / [@simonkids\\_UK](https://twitter.com/simonkids_UK)

**Instagram:**  
[@nadiashireen](https://www.instagram.com/nadiashireen)  
[draws / @simonkidsuk](https://www.instagram.com/simonkidsuk)

Prize and the Waterstones Children's Book Prize.

### 5 FREE TEACHING RESOURCES

'The inside of Nadia Shireen's brain must be a fun place... there are SO MANY funny jokes and hilarious moments... Go read it now!' –

**Maisie Chan**

The Grimwood KS2 resource pack is imaginative and interactive, based on the full series. Created by an educational specialist, the cross-curricular resources cover key themes, including *standing up for what's right*, *understanding trust* and *making friends*, across literacy, geography, science, drama, PSHE and art, design & technology. Each activity has clear objectives and outcomes. Download a FREE resource pack at [bit.ly/3saZxBW](https://bit.ly/3saZxBW)

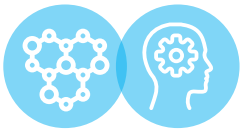
## KEY POINTS

Comedy adventure series created by award-winning author/illustrator of *Barbara Throws a Wobbler*, Nadia Shireen

This is an anarchic animal adventure full of laughs, friendship, heart and surprises, perfect for engaging reluctant readers

Highly illustrated with fabulous black-and-white illustrations throughout, the latest installment in the series is sure to be a hit!

Ideal for KS2 children to read in school and share at home. Available from 31 August, order your copy at <https://amzn.to/3M9jEbb>



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Where ingredients such as flour come from
- Why kneading dough is important
- What dishes we can make with flour
- How plants such as wheat and chickpeas grow

# 'Chews' your own tasty adventure!



Get pupils excited about the science behind cooking and baking with these ideas by **Dr Sai Pathmanathan**

@sai\_path

saipathmanathan.com

*Chews Your Own Tasty Adventure*, by Dr Sai Pathmanathan and illustrated by Lucia Vinti, is a celebration of delicious vegetarian dishes from all over the world, combining science, history, culture and puns! The book contains information about using leftovers, growing food, cultural celebrations, and sharing meals with loved ones. And it's all about experimenting; i.e. there's no need to stick to a recipe once you know the science. Here are some activities to get your pupils excited about trying different approaches to cooking, and learning some science and D&T skills at the same time.



## START HERE

Begin by asking children what their favourite meals are. They'll likely mention enjoyable treats such as sweets and chocolates, but answers generally also include bread, pizza, pasta and cake. Ask them what a common ingredient of these dishes is (flour).

Find out where children think their food comes from. Is it the supermarket, food delivery services, the fridge, or a grown up making it using magic in the kitchen? Explain that ingredients such as flour come from plants, and that plants are important for us as a food source, but also for providing us with the oxygen in the air that we breathe.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1| FLOUR POWER

First, explain to the children that you're going to explore the properties of the flour you talked about in the starter activity. Give pairs or groups of children a couple of teaspoons of flour in a small bowl and ask them how it looks, feels and smells. Are they familiar with flour? Have they used it before at home? Explain that the plain flour we use for baking is made from wheat, which is grown in fields by farmers. So, flour comes from a plant. Much of what we eat can be traced back to plants. You could discuss food chains at this point, too, and ask pupils for examples of producers, consumers and predators.

Next, explain that wheat

is a type of grass, and its flowers are wind-pollinated, after which they produce grains. This all dries out in the sun, and the grain is harvested, cleaned and ground down, or *milled*. In the past, windmills with huge sails used wind power to rotate heavy, rough millstones that ground wheat grains into flour. Now we have huge factories running on fuel to mill flour, as there are many more people to feed. Talk about the fact that corn is another grain from a wind-pollinated grass plant. Ask children if they can think of a different way that other plants are pollinated.

### 2| ALL YOU KNEAD IS...

Ask pupils to add a couple of teaspoons of water into their bowls of flour. Each pair or group can take turns to bring the mix together with their





***“Much of what we eat can be traced back to plants – a great ‘in’ for science”***

fingers until it’s a dough. They may need a little more water if too dry, or flour if too wet. Children can then take turns kneading the dough: pressing and pushing it continuously with their hands until it’s strong, smooth and stretchy. This is important for the texture of breads and pasta. Ask pupils how the flour feels now, compared to when it was dry.

As they knead it they’ll notice how stretchy the dough becomes. Mention that this is because of a protein in wheat known as gluten. Ask children if they know of anyone who can’t eat gluten, and what sorts of flours they might use for baking instead (for example corn flour and rice flour)?

Using their dough, ask children to take a small pea-sized piece and make a pasta shape. Can they use all

the dough to make as many pasta shapes as they can? (If children have been using clean hands and surfaces, their pasta can be boiled and tasted, too). Ask them to imagine what it would be like if they had to make enough pasta this way to feed their whole family. Explain that many families around the world do this every day. However, for those of us lucky enough to have access, the convenience of supermarkets allows us to buy bags of dried factory-made pasta instead.

### **3| HAP-PEA PLANTING!**

Explain that the word ‘flour’ is used to describe any fine powder made from grinding grain, nuts or seeds, and that people all over the world use flour of some kind to create many tasty dishes.

Remind children that

some people can’t digest the gluten found in wheat flour, and that they therefore need to find other sources for flour. For example, chickpeas, which are also fun to grow. Add some natural science to your lesson by growing some with the class. First, explain that chickpeas are from the legume family of plants, just like garden peas and runner beans. Ask children to place a few dried chickpeas loosely wrapped in kitchen roll into small bowls or jars on a sunny windowsill, and to sprinkle a few tablespoons of water on the kitchen roll. Over the next few days, children can sprinkle more water and check for roots. Once roots appear, these chickpeas can be planted outside or into pots of compost.

Ask pupils to keep an eye on the plants as they grow, watering them when needed and watching what happens when the shoots finally appear. What do children notice about the leaves? (Chickpea plants have compound leaves – split up into smaller ‘leaflets’ – which improve water retention.) In time, green pods will grow, with soft green, edible chickpeas inside. And if the plants are left over the holidays, children may return in the next term to find dried pods with the more familiar dried chickpeas inside! To extend the lesson a bit further, you could use the chickpeas you grow to create a tasty meal, such as spinach and chickpea curry, and invite other classes or families to share it.

***Dr Sai Pathmanathan has over 20 years of experience in science education. She develops activities and resources for all ages and abilities, and runs science clubs and community engagement events.***

## **EXTENDING THE LESSON**

- Explain to children that yeast can be added to flour and water to create a bread dough. Show them what happens when dried active yeast is added to warm water and sugar. Do they know what gas the yeast produces to help bread rise? (Answer: carbon dioxide.)
- Looking at celebratory foods eaten on special occasions around the world, ask children what they think about ‘everything in moderation’. In the past, people would only eat rich foods at celebrations, but these days the foods we eat every day are high in sugars, fats and salts. Why can this be a problem?
- Discuss seasonality: how plants grow well and produce fruit during certain times of the year. What do children think about only being able to eat strawberries in the summer? Should we import strawberries from abroad, or force them to grow indoors, simply so we can have strawberries in the winter? Can they reason why?

## **USEFUL QUESTIONS**

- Where does our food come from?
- What is flour?
- Why are plants so important for us?



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- To understand that individuals and groups had differing experiences as a result of the war
- To be able to identify some of the sources providing evidence of the impact of the war
- To begin to understand that communities chose to remember the casualties of war in a variety of ways

# Remember the fallen of the First World War



Help children gain a better understanding of WW1 through a study of local people, with **Bev Forrest** and **Rachel Bruce**

@HistoryPrimary @Rachelthebruce1

Most primary schools commemorate Remembrance Day, but it is often difficult through a traditional assembly for children to truly make sense of the scale and impact of the World Wars.

This lesson is designed to support pupils in gaining a better understanding of WW1 and WW2 by considering the impact on their own locality, and focusing on the lives of individuals or groups affected by the wars. The examples highlighted here are taken from a unit studied by an UKS2 class in a school near the centre of York.

## START HERE

First of all, use the A Street Near You website ([astreetnearyou.org](http://astreetnearyou.org)) to look at the local area with your class. Type in your school's postcode in the top right-hand search bar, and then zoom in on the map to find your street, or one nearby. The amount of names will vary depending on where you are. Ask the children who they think the people featured there were. They will all be individuals from the area around the school that lost their lives during the war. What do they notice about them from the information provided? There may be links between them relating to the dates or places where they died. Are there any from the same street or family?



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | PICTURE THIS

Present pupils with a range of photographs dating from the First World War. The Lives of the First World War website ([livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk](http://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk)) is an excellent source of photographs and information about individuals. Type in the name of a person you've found via A Street Near You in the starter activity, and then navigate to the 'media' tab to see pictures and news clippings. Following an initial look, tell the children that the pictures they're seeing are all people from their local area whose lives

were impacted by the war in some way. The selection will depend on where your school is located, but we chose to include images representing women's role in the war through a local munitions worker and a nurse. You could also choose a soldier whose life was significantly changed through the injuries they received, for example. In groups, get pupils to spend some time investigating the photographs for anything they can deduce about the person that could lead to ideas on how they might have been impacted by the war. The most obvious way is through loss of life on the battlefield, but the pupils will also begin to appreciate that people lost their lives in other ways. They will also





***“Consider how your pupils might share the information that they have gathered with their local community”***



begin to understand how the death of an individual would have impacted on members of their family and friends.

## 2 | TELL ME MORE

Support children to use a range of websites including A Street Near You to obtain further information on where and when the soldiers died, and how they are commemorated. To do this, click on a name that has come up for the area you're looking at, and then click the magnifying glass symbol to expand the information card. You will need to provide the pupils with a template to record their information. The contents will vary but you could have a place for name, address, date of birth/death, cause of death, etc. Make

sure they record exactly where they have obtained the information. They could also unearth more about individual soldiers, such as their regiment, employment before the war, family members, etc. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) website ([cwgc.org](http://cwgc.org)), local newspaper archives or census returns are a great place to start for this info. The CWGC's 'Who lived on your street?' website ([tinyurl.com/tp-WhoLived](http://tinyurl.com/tp-WhoLived)) also contains recent photographs of the homes of casualties in various localities. Gradually, the children will begin to understand how the death of one soldier impacted on so many other members of the community, and how

the war had a huge impact beyond the battlefield. For example, thinking about how a teacher from their school was fighting in the war led pupils in York to consider who would be taking the men's jobs while they were away, and the changing role of women in the community.

## 3 | IN MEMORIAM

Depending on the time available, you could walk around the local area to see where some of these people lived and possibly the locations where they worked. Your class could also visit the local war memorial, which will help reinforce the number of people that died during the conflict. You can also contrast the number that died in WW1 with those in WW2. Task pupils to look for where the names of women are included. These have probably been added later and will appear at the end of the list. The York pupils found a group of women – Mary Carter, Lillian Eva Ellis and Gertrude Reed – on their memorial. They then used the websites mentioned above to find out that they were part of a group known as the 'Barnbow Ladies'. This provided the pupils with a valuable opportunity to think about the role of women and how their contributions to the war effort are now valued and remembered.

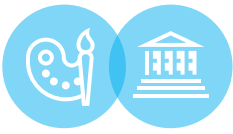
*Rachel Bruce is a primary teacher and history leader. Bev Forrest is a primary teacher trainer, and author of Rising Stars History.*

## EXTENDING THE LESSON

- Visit a local cemetery to see where some of the people the children have studied are buried or commemorated. The York pupils found the graves of the victims of the Zeppelin raid of 1916.
- Look for other memorials in your area. There may be plaques in the local church or in the village hall or the park. The Historic England website ([historicengland.org.uk](http://historicengland.org.uk)) contains information about these, including the more unusual; for example, a memorial water trough.
- Consider how your pupils might share the information they have gathered about local figures with the community. For example, they could design a local leaflet trail or an information board. There are many opportunities for them to engage in cross curricular work here, too, particularly with informational writing in English.

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Can you think of any ways in which the First World War had a positive impact on our community?
- In what ways did the war have a long-term impact on people's lives in our area?
- Why do you think women were originally excluded from most war memorials?



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- About the life of Jean-Michel Basquiat
- To draw from observation and imagination
- To practise abstract techniques
- To experiment using a range of materials
- To describe and evaluate art

# Create a striking Basquiat-style masterpiece



Harness pupils' passion and celebrate Black History Month with an expressive art project, says **Kezia McInroy**

 planetkez.com

Art is a great way to express emotions and tell a story. Through teaching children about Black artists and the stories they tell, we can help them appreciate the beauty, resilience, and strength of the Black community. In this session we will look at the life and work of Jean-Michel Basquiat, arguably the most influential Black artist of all time. Basquiat told stories of his experiences through his paintings and continues to inspire people today. Children can access his art because it feels familiar, as his drawing style is very childlike, and his work has a sense of freedom.



## START HERE

Prepare for the lesson by creating a slideshow about Jean-Michel Basquiat. You can find a lot of info at [tinyurl.com/tp-JMB](https://tinyurl.com/tp-JMB)

Try and include facts about his life, key questions and pictures of his work, including his collaboration with Andy Warhol. This will help to show his art from a different perspective than his solo output. You could also read the *Little People, Big Dreams* book about Jean-Michel Basquiat by Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara with your class. Gather a range of materials including oil pastels, crayons, acrylic paint, watercolours, marker pens and colouring pencils, ready to get creating. It is important to give children different options so they can experiment and see what materials work best for them.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | RESEARCH

Start by talking through your slideshow on the life of Basquiat. It is important for the children to know about his background, as it was the source of inspiration for the majority of his work. His drawings often told a story and represented his life experiences.

Have some printed examples of Basquiat's work laid out on tables (you can find some at [tinyurl.com/tp-JMBpaintings](https://tinyurl.com/tp-JMBpaintings)). Pez Dispenser (1984) is always a popular one.

Ask the children to discuss their initial reaction to the paintings in groups. Guiding questions can

include: What do you like/dislike about it? How does it make you feel? What interests you about this piece of art? What materials do you think he used? What picture stands out the most? What questions would you ask the artist about their work if they were here? Share answers as a whole class.

Basquiat was determined to make an impression, especially when it came to Andy Warhol, one of the leading figures in the pop art movement. He looked up to Warhol and was later mentored by him. Ask the children what inspires them, and whom they look up to.

The aim here, like a lot of art discussions with children, is to build students' critical thinking skills and develop their ability to make meaningful artistic choices.





*“Children can access Basquiat’s work as his drawing style is very childlike, and has a sense of freedom”*

the paint. We use our brush gently, holding it at the metal band for precise, controlled brush strokes, or towards the opposite end of the brush for loose, free marks. Oil pastels are great for blending and layering colours, stippling (creating small dots or specks) and scumbling (loose circular strokes.) Make this into a discussion to see how much the children remember about the vocabulary and techniques from using these materials in past lessons .

On A4 or A3 paper, pupils can now create their own work in Basquiat’s style. Remind the children to look at their initial design ideas when drawing out their final piece. They may want to combine a few of them.

I always try to encourage children to make their work unique and to use their imagination. However, if some pupils are struggling or lacking confidence, they can copy a piece of Basquiat’s work. This will help with their observational drawing skills and build their confidence.

At the end of the lesson, arrange the finished work on tables so children can view each other’s final pieces. Ask each pupil to say something positive about a peer’s work. You can provide structural questions like “What do you think is good about this piece of artwork?” and “What do you think this artwork is about?”

*Kezia McInroy is an artist in residence at St Jude’s C of E Primary School in South East London. She is also a freelance illustrator specialising in portraits.*

## 2 | INITIAL IDEAS

Basquiat’s work was very personal to him and often focused on his experiences with racism, the Black community, and wealth versus poverty.

Encourage the children to think about something personal to them or something they believe in strongly as the focus for their own art piece. For example, they could consider family and friends, religion, changes they want to see in school, the local area or the world, or something they’ve seen on the news recently. Then support them to think about how could they express this in a painting or drawing.

Next, hand out sketchbooks and ask the children to split their next blank page into four equal sections using a ruler. They

will use this page to draw out some initial ideas for their final piece. These can just be quick, simple pencil sketches, shapes, symbols, words or even just a colour scheme. The idea of this time is to get their imagination flowing. No idea is a bad idea.

Basquiat loved to listen to jazz and classical music with his father. Perhaps you could play some for the class to create a calm atmosphere.

## 3 | FINAL PIECE

Gather the children together and demonstrate how to use the range of art materials. Show them different techniques and remind them of the rules of using and taking care of resources. For example, when we are using watercolours we must use enough water to activate

## EXTENDING THE LESSON

- Research other Black artists. These can include Kehinde Wiley, Chris Ofili, Bisa Butler, and Njideka Akunyili Crosby. How is their work different from Basquiat’s? What materials have they used? What story are they trying to tell?
- Ask the children to write a poem or a story that links to their final piece. Display them alongside each other in a small exhibition that parents and/or other classes can attend. You could even add a spoken-word element, reading them aloud to an audience.
- Create a mural in the playground using chalk. Come up with a theme as a class and get each child to contribute. This could even be extended to a whole-school project!
- In your history lesson, ask the children to make a fact file about Basquiat using the internet to research further.

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

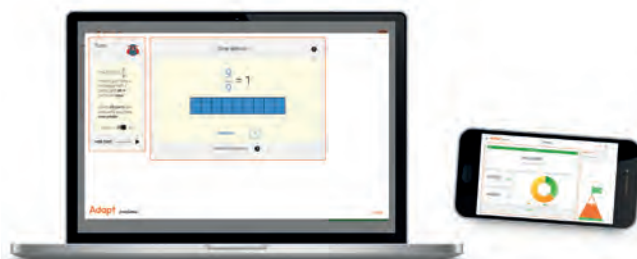
- What inspires you to create art?
- How can we use art to positively influence others or tell a story?
- What issues are important to you?
- What are some changes you would like to see in the world?

MATHS ➔

# Adapt Primary Maths

An adaptive learning platform that uses metacognition to give each pupil a uniquely tailored learning experience

**Adapt** from Collins



## AT A GLANCE

- Developed by Collins, in partnership with Area9 Lyceum
- Uses adaptive software to tailor the learning journey to each pupil's needs
- Aligned with White Rose Maths and follows the national curriculum
- Reports progress to pupils and rewards resilience and achievement

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



Is it just me? If I scrape the bottom of my memory barrel, I can recall maths classes and struggling to understand them. Sometimes, the light came on and I suddenly got it. Other times I winged it and produced the right answer without really knowing how. Now and again, I just gave the wrong answer and moved on. Far too often, I copied my mate Rob, who was much better at maths than me.

The point is, back in those days there was scant opportunity to revisit my learning or for the teacher to assess my confidence levels and give me targeted support, perhaps by breaking tasks into smaller steps that my brain could handle. I'm sure that my teacher would have if he could have. But which teacher has time to do that for a class of 30 or so?

How much easier my life (and I wager, my teacher's) would have been with Adapt Primary Maths. Developed by Collins, in partnership with Area9 Lyceum, Adapt is a powerful platform using globally tested cognitive science, that tracks not only each child's progress, but also how they think and feel about their learning (metacognition, for all you fans of buzzwords). This is important because it allows the algorithms within the package to gauge pupils' confidence about their performance and, thereby, tailor next steps to their individual needs.

Aligned with White Rose Maths (what isn't?), Adapt Primary Maths follows the national curriculum and guides pupils towards mastery of each topic. Each time they answer a

question, children are required to indicate their confidence in their answer. Combined with the accuracy of their responses, this adapts their learning journey through each module of work so that no two classmates will have the same experience. Meanwhile, progress is reported back and resilience, reflection and effort are rewarded, typically by allowing users to fiddle around with their avatar – well, they seem to enjoy it.

As for the teacher, the platform is simple to use and provides a wealth of information about how each of their pupils is getting on. So, as well as assigning whole-class tasks, they can target specific groups or even individuals with intervention or extension activities with a few clicks. And, of course, it can be conveniently used for assessment, revision, homework and even SATs preparation.

At the end of the day, Adapt Primary Maths is all about using powerful algorithms to help pupils achieve, gain confidence and feel positively inspired to learn more (or develop a 'growth mindset', if you like your jargon). And if you're still not sure? The platform has been shortlisted for a Bett Award 2023 – a surefire seal of approval.

I was lucky at school because I was naturally fairly good at maths (despite my frequent struggles to understand), had reasonable levels of self-motivation and had easy access to friendly support. For today's learners, Adapt could be an effective way to streamline maths progress.

**teach  
PRIMARY**

## VERDICT

- ✓ Appealingly designed
- ✓ User friendly (for teachers and pupils)
- ✓ Works towards mastery
- ✓ Smart and insightful
- ✓ Meets every pupil's needs
- ✓ Provides teachers with valuable information for targeting support
- ✓ Finalist for the Bett Awards 2023

## UPGRADE IF...

You want to support your pupils' journeys towards maths mastery in a way that adapts to their individual needs and increases their confidence and motivation.

Learn more at [collinsadapt.co.uk/primary](https://collinsadapt.co.uk/primary)



MUSIC ➔

# The Twinkly Nativity

Sprinkle some extra sparkle on your Christmas production with Out of the Ark Music's latest showstopper



## AT A GLANCE

- A first-class nativity production for children aged 3-6 years
- Written by gifted songwriters with professional pedigrees second to none
- 7 cute and quirky songs with original words
- Full of catchy melodies and memorable choruses
- A full suite of supporting materials including Words on Screen and Makaton

REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL



It won't be long before it's 'that time of the year' again, and you may have been charged with the awesome responsibility of staging one of our most cherished traditions – the school nativity. This is a rite of passage like no other and the pressure is on teachers and children.

Fortunately, Out of the Ark Music has a whole stable of nativities to choose from, and their latest showstopper matches the very high production values and platinum standards of their previous offerings.

The nativity is a story that everyone knows, but there are lots of ways of doing it. Even the traditional versions need to be imbued with a sense of freshness, originality, charm, fun and wit.

The Twinkly Nativity does exactly that and this highly enjoyable take on the traditional play is simply bursting with creativity and of course lots of sparkly bits.

Singing, speaking and performing in front of an audience for the first time is a big deal for young children and so a structured production can help calm those nerves and give them the confidence they need.

This is what Out of the Ark does so well. They provide everything you need so that you get the most out of your practice time and you can build a successful production to be proud of. And no, you don't need to be an experienced musician, singer or the musical lead, this resource works for all, including the inexperienced.

What you get with Out of the Ark is a multi-layered experience of content and support. The resource is available as a digital eSongbook

online and is very easy to access and start using via a simple but sophisticated website so that you are fully 'singchronised' and synchronised.

The Twinkly Nativity contains a plethora of resources including the production script, an editable script, character list, staging, props and costume suggestions, curriculum links, all the audio MP3s, all the lyrics and scores as PDFs, as well as licensing information. It's no mean feat to write a brand-new and original nativity resource, but Out of the Ark has done it again with all the trimmings.

The quality of the writing, the music and the supporting materials is excellent, and a special mention must go out to the children who sing beautifully on the tracks, they are angelic!

The Out of the Ark Words on Screen innovation – the unique software that displays the lyrics and synchronising with the music – is always a welcome feature. Out of the Ark always goes the extra mile and there is also a Makaton video by Singing Hands for each of the songs included in the resource.

School nativities, with their tea towels and tinsel, are iconic and probably the most attended of any school production. The Twinkly Nativity won't let you down – this is a community enabler and memory maker that everyone will prize and remember.

The Twinkly Nativity makes a magnificent job of telling the story of Christmas and reminds us of the reason we celebrate. This production will ensure that the nativity is a positive, life-affirming and communal experience that you'll want to stage again.

**teach  
PRIMARY**

## VERDICT

- ✓ A short, shining nativity with bags of energy, fun and humour
- ✓ Authentic, accessible and action-packed
- ✓ Creates a real sense of togetherness
- ✓ A musical resource that oozes quality and attention to detail
- ✓ User-friendly, dynamic and a whole-school nativity solution ready to go!

## UPGRADE IF...

You are the nativity director looking to put some extra sparkles and twinkles into your classic production this year.

Prices range from £24.95 to £59.85 depending on the combination of resources (eSongbook, book & CD and performance licence available). See [outoftheark.com](http://outoftheark.com) for details

## MATHS

# Maths mastery bundles

A comprehensive collection of digital resources offering a whole-school solution for achieving maths mastery



### AT A GLANCE

- Centred on Power Maths – the only whole-class mastery programme fully aligned with the new White Rose Maths schemes of learning
- Includes Maths Flex for KS2, a digital adult-free intervention programme
- Also includes School Jam, a digital homework programme for Reception and KS1



REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES

We've heard a lot recently about our nation's alleged 'anti-maths mindset'. Perhaps, part of the problem is that it can take so much work for teachers to plan and prepare lessons. For some, there might also have been the issue of converting to the wildly popular White Rose Maths model. What they need, then, is a complete package that takes a lot of the time and legwork out of creating inspirational maths lessons. And, look! Here's one!

Noted educational publisher, Pearson, has created a bundle of digital resources that could seriously reduce the headache-count for primary teachers. The range of materials is breathtaking, from planning, to professional development, to online pupil practice books and digital teaching tools and games. It is consistent with the concrete, pictorial, abstract (CPA) approach and, because the bundle follows the White Rose Maths small steps (and Power Maths is created in partnership with WRM) you get the sense that teachers would not have to look anywhere else.

The most important thing is that it should free up their headspace enough to improve their teaching practice. One of my biggest bugbears about the profession has been the way that it demands so much of its practitioners before they even enter the classroom. It's a wonder that teachers have any energy left to teach. This maths mastery bundle, however, looks like it could help to return some of that vim and vigour to the teacher's day.

It is immediately apparent how closely Tony Staneff, founder of White Rose Education, has been involved in this product. One look inside any of the Power Maths practice books will reveal the familiar techniques and illustrations that

have proved so popular in helping pupils develop an in-depth understanding of mathematical concepts at White Rose Maths.

Apart from the planning and practice materials, the packed online toolkit also includes teacher guides, starter activities, arcade-style games and training videos. I particularly liked the interactive teacher tools that will no doubt support the explanation of ideas very effectively. There are also e-textbooks and digital versions of the various practice books, which I can see coming in very handy, especially if you have limited storage facilities for all manner of workbooks, etc.

Beyond the routine classroom materials, the bundle offers Maths Flex, an intelligent maths practice service for KS2 that uses AI software (don't panic!) from Pearson partners Century Tech, to provide useful data for the teacher and personalised activities and interventions for the pupil. Essentially, the AI constantly adapts to a child's strengths and weaknesses while moving through the activities, thereby saving you time figuring out personalised differentiation for each pupil. There is also School Jam, which allows teachers to provide Reception and KS1 pupils with fun practice activities they can complete at home, thereby increasing confidence and, hopefully, parental engagement.

The whole package is hosted on Pearson's ActiveLearn platform which is easy enough to navigate so teachers should be able to find what they are looking for without difficulty. It's just another way that this offer helps to smooth the path to maths mastery. Altogether it looks like a powerful antidote to any lingering anti-maths mindset that might be clouding your class.

## teach PRIMARY

### VERDICT

- ✓ An extensive range of digital teaching and learning materials
- ✓ Personalised intelligent practice to support and stretch every child
- ✓ A wide variety of supporting resources
- ✓ Attractively designed
- ✓ Thoughtfully compiled
- ✓ Hosted on a user-friendly platform
- ✓ Different elements can be bought separately
- ✓ Print options such as Power Maths textbooks and practice books can be bought alongside the bundle

### UPGRADE IF...

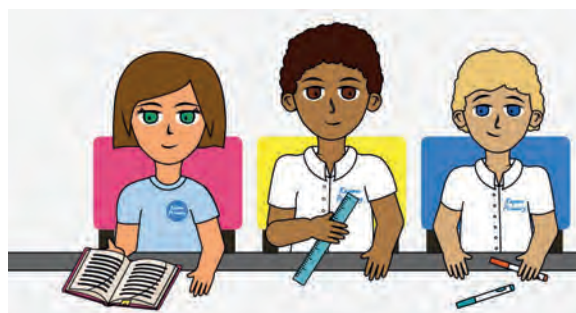
You want to support the teaching of maths mastery with an extensive array of planning, teaching and assessment materials all in one place.



WELLBEING Kapow  
Primary

# Kapow Primary wellbeing scheme

A comprehensive scheme of learning to support pupil wellbeing across the curriculum



## AT A GLANCE

- A web-based wellbeing resource library
- Designed to help pupils progress, and support teacher workload and development
- Developed by field specialists
- Huge range of content ranging from EYFS–Y6
- Rooted in successful pedagogy

REVIEWED BY: ADAM RICHES



Wellbeing is, quite rightly, something that is increasingly being emphasised in schools. Teaching young people to cope with the demands of modern life is one of our obligations as educators; however, too often wellbeing content becomes a tag-along. With the demands of curriculum content, teaching pupils about wellbeing can quickly become overshadowed, even with the best intentions. Luckily, Kapow Primary has developed a comprehensive scheme of learning that showcases the importance of wellbeing. It's planned, prepped and thoroughly thought out with a clear emphasis on quality; something that is evident in both the lesson resources and the high-quality video content.

The Kapow Primary resources guide your class through five wellbeing strands: Discover, Take notice, Connect, Give and Move. Each strand is progressive, building on knowledge and skills gained from previous learning. Kapow Primary has produced resources that are age-appropriate, providing lesson coverage from EYFS to Y6. Interwoven throughout the core content is the inclusion of statutory RSE objectives. In addition to the explicit wellbeing lessons, teachers are provided with additional activities, which can be utilised throughout the week to support the application of wellbeing knowledge and skills. The Kapow Primary resources give pupils the full works and, as always, are underpinned with precise and efficient pedagogical principles.

What is instantly evident when you work through the content of the wellbeing modules is that Kapow Primary has really simmered down the white noise often associated with wellbeing and focused the objectives and activities on key constituent parts; the parts that will actually benefit children, and don't

just tick boxes. Young people learn how new skills and interests can improve mental wellbeing, not through whimsical reference, but through clever use of case studies and self-reflection. Activities aim to enhance confidence, resilience and self-esteem, encouraging pupils to pay attention to the present moment. In addition to this, there is a huge emphasis on others. The units foster a sense of awareness in terms of others' wellbeing, and build on knowledge and understanding of the complexities of mental health and what that looks like in the modern age.

An overwhelming sense of positivity shines through with the Kapow Primary wellbeing schemes. The message is clear throughout the content: look after yourself, look after others and the world will be a better place. The wider social impact of resources like this cannot be overlooked. With a clear focus on oracy, speaking and listening, young people are encouraged to express themselves and are supported fully through discussions. With this at the forefront, young people really get to explore themselves and they're shown how to have a voice around topics they may not usually be confident talking about.

As a teacher you are fully supported. Along with the plans and knowledge organisers, you get full access to a plethora of videos and (what I like the most) a series of blogs specific to the subject content. It's like having a mentor there to show you how you can deliver the lessons and messages effectively and efficiently. Given that wellbeing isn't exactly a subject specialism a lot of teachers have, and the fact that some topics around wellbeing can be difficult to deliver, these interactive and engaging resources are worth their weight in gold.

teach  
PRIMARY

## VERDICT

- ✓ Content is well mapped and easy to navigate
- ✓ Resources are all incredibly well prepared
- ✓ Online functionality and usability is second to none
- ✓ You get access to a full package of planning from start to finish
- ✓ Includes statutory RSE objectives from the primary curriculum

## UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for exceptionally well designed and written wellbeing content that is adaptable and versatile. Also consider if you have teachers who have not taught wellbeing before and may need additional support.

The wellbeing scheme is free, and comes with all Kapow Primary subscriptions, which start from £205

# Q & A

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

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

**Lee:** Having an education system that trusts staff so their workload is actually manageable, and they can have a decent work/life balance.

**Adam:** Being valued in your work. Lee and I are very lucky to work in supportive settings, but we know many out there don't share the same experience.

## 2 What is your greatest fear at work?

**L:** Take your pick... Ofsted, wet play followed by an immediate heat wave, 'that' parent, a cake baked by the child that's so snotty they have snail trails all up their sleeves...

**A:** Probably falling in the staff teacher race at sports day (again) or ripping my pants (again) in the daytime football game.

## 3 What is your current state of mind?

**L:** At the time of writing, we are on the brink of summer break, so my current state of mind is one of exhaustion, relief and a little excitement. I always remember on one training day I asked teachers to share the 'why' behind choosing teaching and one teacher put a single word... 'AUGUST'.

**A:** Tired! Roll on the holidays... although teaching a class of 30 can sometimes be easier than managing my own two cherubs at home!

## 4 What do you consider the most overrated teacher virtue?

**L:** The idea that to be a good teacher you need to sacrifice your own health and wellbeing. The worst quote I have ever seen about teaching is 'A great teacher is like a candle, it consumes itself to light the way for others!' What a load of tosh. Unfortunately, too many teachers buy into that.

**A:** Silence. There is a place for quiet and concentration, but I suffer with ADD, so as long as the work is being done, I don't mind a bit of peaceful music in the background or quiet, sensible chats.

## 5 On what occasion do you lie to your class?

**L:** Saying, "This is your own time you're wasting". It is literally MY time they're wasting. I am the one who then has to catch up, adjust plans and re-teach.

**A:** About my age on my birthday! The children don't need to know I'm in my mid-30s. Never ask "How old do you think I am?" I've had children say I'm 70!

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

**L:** I'm a sucker for the short but sweet "Erm...Excuse me!?" Imagine a scale of 1-10 based on how shocked and appalled you are at what you've just seen. Take the number on that scale – that is how long you're going to drag out the 'erm' in seconds before hitting the 'excuse me'. Your eyebrow game needs to be on point, too – eyebrows need to be as high as possible to demonstrate your shock. And pull that chin in... you want turkey neck!

**A:** "Put a wet paper towel on it." Any sort

of classroom or playground injury needs a wet paper towel. It performs miracles.

## 7 What do you consider your greatest teaching achievement?

**L:** I'm extremely proud of the platform I've created through my social media and the podcast, that helps so many teachers and school staff.

**A:** I always love seeing children from past years who come back to visit, and they still have the memories you helped create for them. It's lovely to know they've taken bits of what we tried to teach them and are growing into great adults.

## 8 What is your most treasured teaching possession?

**L:** As a teacher who adores tech, I have to say the iPad. It was the tech tool that transformed the way I taught and was the catalyst that started this whole journey into training, touring, podcasting and the rest.

**A:** I'd have to say my whistle, it's the closest to Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Kindergarten Cop* I will ever be! TP

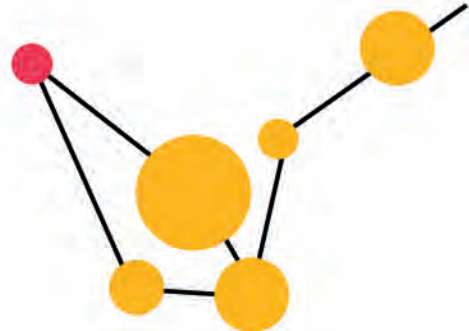


**NAME:** Lee and Adam Parkinson  
**JOB ROLE:** Primary teachers and podcast hosts

**EXTRA INFO:** Catch Two Mr Ps on their *Show and Tell* theatre tour, from 15th October – 5th November. Tickets at [2mrpspodcast.com](http://2mrpspodcast.com)



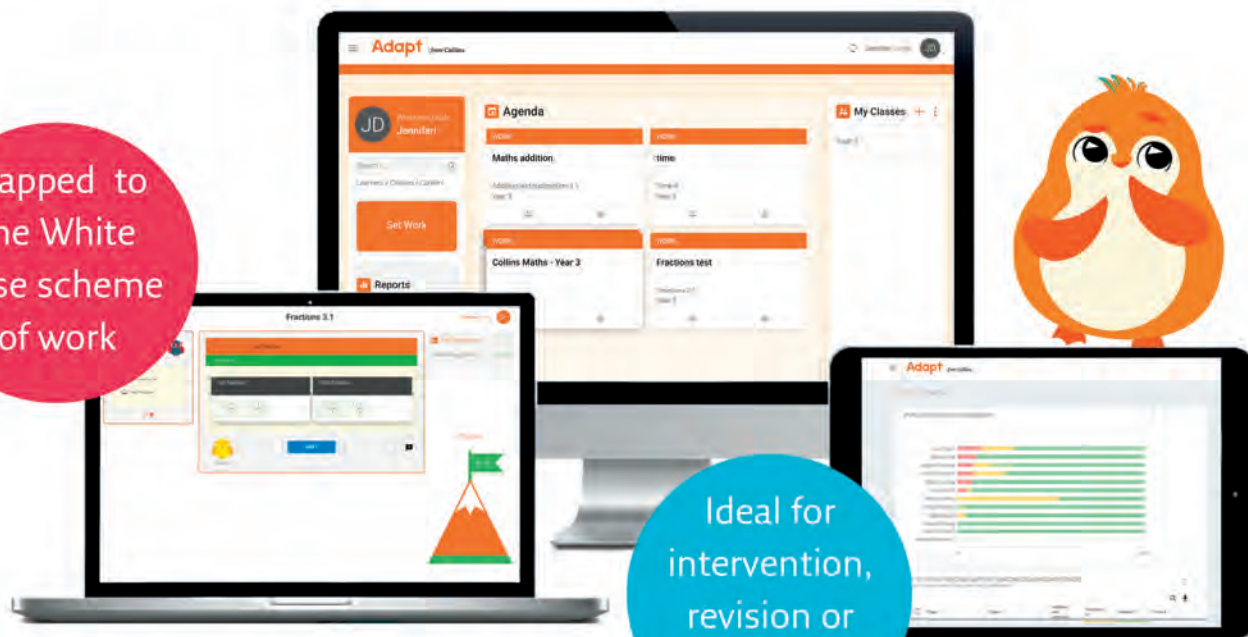
# Adapt *from Collins*



## Smart digital learning for Primary Maths that delivers

Harnessing globally tested cognitive science, used by over 30 million learners worldwide.

Mapped to the White Rose scheme of work

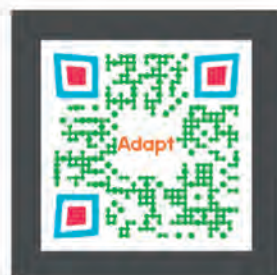


Ideal for intervention, revision or homework



Shortlisted in the Primary Digital Learning - Numeracy and Maths category

Visit [collinsadapt.co.uk](https://collinsadapt.co.uk) to see Adapt in action, and request a demo and free trial



Written by RE specialist teachers in the Jigsaw Team and trialled by 100 schools, the weekly lesson plans have all the resources needed to deliver them. An integral assessment process and accompanying assemblies (acts of collective worship) make Jigsaw RE the first of its kind, transforming statutory RE in the primary school.

Jigsaw RE is compatible with most agreed syllabi across the UK. Our mapping documents transparently share how we see Jigsaw RE supporting each agreed syllabus and flag up gaps if there are any.

## What does Jigsaw RE include?

- 80+ enquiries
- Integral assessment process
- Training, webinars, mentoring, the online Community Area and our School Support Team
- Assemblies (acts of collective worship)
- The Jigsaw RE Owl Crew
- Teacher background knowledge prompt sheets
- Knowledge Organisers, editable sample policy documents etc.

## What is an enquiry?

In Jigsaw RE, an enquiry is a unit of work based on a Big Enquiry Question e.g. What is good about Good Friday for Christians? Each enquiry consists of 6 lesson plans in the format of an easy-to-use slideshow with teacher notes.

Each of the 3 age-phases spanning Key Stages 1 and 2 has enquiries on all of the following worldviews:

- Baha'i • Buddhism • Humanism • Islam • Judaism
- Sanatana Dharma (formerly referred to as Hinduism)
- Sikhi (formerly referred to as Sikhism) and • Christianity, which includes enquiries for every year group.



**NEW for September 2023**

Find out more about Jigsaw RE

