

**CELEBRATE** 

EARTH DAY!

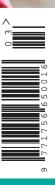
#### ADVICE SQUEAMISH ABOUT RHE? Free expert resources

USE STEM SENTENCES IN MATHS "Why I'm not aiming for headship" READ IT ON PIS

EXPANDED NOUN PHRASE KNOW-HOW

> Six-week portraits art plan

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# RISING STARS and RS ASSESSMENT

FROM HODDER EDUCATION

# Hello!



ow are you feeling? The last year and a bit has been a tumultuous time, but I hope that you can sense a creep back to some sort of normality in your classroom. There's no doubt that among the chaos and turbulence, schools have continued to provide wonderful opportunities for children, and it's brilliant to be able to

celebrate these this issue.

Primary schools in Norwich worked together with an opera company on a transformative six-month singing project to help children share their thoughts and feelings about the pandemic. I challenge you not to have a lump in your throat when you watch the lovely final performance. Read about it on p26.

Parent volunteer Michelle Jones (p39) has brought her school community closer with a virtual lockdown gardening club – yes, it's possible! – and Tor Bridge Primary in Devon set up a book vending machine and hosted exciting live book raffles on Facebook (p61).

This issue we're focusing on children's health and wellbeing – more important now than ever before, I'm sure you'll agree. Turn to page 74 for the start of our special section and read about the new statutory RHE guidance, mentally healthy movement and how to use the Recovery Premium to boost children's wellbeing.

If you're eager to get down to the business of actually teaching, don't miss Rebecca Jakes' excellent expanded noun phrase activity ideas and resources (p56) and Adam Jevons-Newman's fun material investigation lesson (p86) – although beware, you will get wet!

Elaine

Elaine Bennett, Editor

Don't miss our next issue, on sale 27et May

#### POWERED BY...



GENEVIEVE RAGHU ran a six-month singing project across six schools that helped pupils to dig deep emotionally

*"We saw children's strength, bravery and resilience shine through"* <sup>p26</sup>

#### MICHELLE JONES



explains how a parent-led gardening project bloomed during the pandemic

"We set up a WhatsApp group and exchanged ideas such as growing cress in toilet rolls" <sup>p39</sup>



#### **OLIVIA BARTLETT**

shares how her school used several strategies to keep children excited about reading during lockdown

"During school closures we created a virtual library, offering a range of online books" p61



#### 9 For the specialist and non-specialist teacher

The easy-to-follow lessons include plans, images, diagrams and videos to support the specialist and non-specialist teachers in your school. For PE leads there is an integrated school planner, enabling units to be assigned to different classes and groups.

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Created by Sharon Doughty, a former Sky News presenter, Dot Com Digital is an enhanced digital version of the Dot Com safeguarding programme which has been developed by children and safeguarding leads with input from Essex Police, the National Police Chief Council and Internet Intelligence & Investigations.

Dot Com Digital provides a unique safeguarding programme that supports children's personal, social and emotional development and helps provide a safe space for them to learn the skills to lead a safe and happy life. Deliver a rich PSHE curriculum whilst fulfilling the requirements of the 2020 RSE framework.



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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

we host a reader feedback panel

about what they

improve. That's why

every issue to hear from real teachers

liked and what they would change. Got

feedback? Contact us via the details in

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#### We want to hear from you!

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

- teachwire.net
- f facebook.com/teachwire
  - twitter.com/teachprimary
- elaine.bennett@theteachco.com

#### EDITOR: Elaine Bennett, elaine.bennett@ theteachco.com, 01206 505994

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

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

theteachco.com ADVERTISING MANAGER: Hayley Rackham, bayley rackham@

hayley.rackham@ theteachco.com, 01206 505988 DEPUTY ADVERTISING

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

SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGERS:

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

Katie Harvey-Jones, katie.jones@ theteachco.com, 01206 505477

ART EDITOR: Richard Allen

DESIGNERS: Luke Rogers, Adam Barford & Fiona Palmer

PHOTOGRAPHY: CliQQ Photography, cliqq.co.uk

01206 505995 DESIGN &

REPROGRAPHICS: Ace Pre-Press 01206 508608

SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT: Andrea Turner

CUSTOMER SERVICES: aceville@dctmedia.co.uk 0800 904 7000

PUBLISHER: Helen Tudor

**DISTRIBUTED BY:** Distributed by Frontline Ltd., Peterborough. Tel: 01733 555161

PUBLISHED BY: Maze Media (2000) Ltd, 25 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Rd, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY. Tel: 01206 505900



The views in this magazine are not necessarily those of the publisher. Every effort is made to ensure the veracity and integrity of the companies, persons, products and services mentioned in this publication, and the details given are believed to be accurate at the time of going to press. However, no responsibility or liability whatsoever can be accepted for any consequence or repercussion of responding to information or advice given or inferred. Copyright Maze Media (2000) Ltd.



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# Get free downloadable KS1 and KS2 SPaG lesson plans

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APR/MAY

# Breakting News Interviews Ideas Resources Research

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#### Learn from experts

Oak National Academy, the online classroom set up in response to Covid-19, has launched a new range of videos designed to support trainee teachers who may have had reduced opportunities to observe and learn from experienced colleagues. The videos feature Oak teachers reflecting on lessons they've created for the platform, what methods they've chosen and why. They explain how each lesson has been structured and share the pedagogical decisions behind them. The videos exemplify key elements of the ITT Core Content Framework, which was developed by the DfE in collaboration with sector experts. Watch the videos at oaknat.uk/itt

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



#### GET GROWING

The Royal Horticultural Society has published a new series of gardening activities. The 'pick-and-mix' resources have been designed for small groups to work on for 10-20 minutes, before rotating to the next activity. Find the resources at schoolgardening .rhs.org.uk



#### MENTAL HEALTH

Children's theatre Polka has created a series of free digital mental health and wellbeing workshops, suitable for Reception to Y6. The videos use drama activities to bring an interactive, practical approach to talking about mental health. Download accompanying activity sheets too. Visit tinvurl.com/ tp-polka



#### **GOING FAST**

Find out how teamwork and engineering come together to create a winning race team with this STEM lesson about the science of going fast. It covers speed, thrust, drag, resistance and gravity and features a full plan and teacher's notes. Visit tinyurl.com/ tp-goingfast



Plazoom's Real Writing programme for KS2 makes it easy to identify and fill gaps in children's knowledge and skills,



with 100 stunning model texts, carefully curriculum-mapped and minutely annotated, plus individually resourced lessons for teaching and revision of key grammar objectives. And even better, children love them! See for yourself at **plazoom.com/model-texts** 

#### Win science equipment!

Harley Hitch & the Iron Forest is the new middle-grade series by award-winning author Vashti Hardy. Get ready to join Harley Hitch and her robot dog Sprocket for problem-solving adventures in a world where science rules and technology grows in the forest. To celebrate the new book, Scholastic and Teach Primary are on a mission to find the



best robot pet designer. The winner's school will receive £200 of science equipment and a set of Vashti Hardy books. To be in with a chance of winning, submit pupils' drawings of their best robot pet design to publicity@scholastic.co.uk with the subject line 'Teach Primary robot'. Entries should include: entrant's name; age; school address; teacher/parent contact details. The deadline is 21st May 2021. For T&Cs visit scholastic.co.uk/competition-terms.



## Working 9-5?

A new report by the National Foundation for Educational Research has shown that during the autumn term, in which schools were fully open to pupils, full-time teachers' working hours rose to around 46 hours per week, up five hours on the same period last year. The report makes the recommendation that reducing teacher workload and supporting wellbeing should remain a priority for the government in the post-pandemic recovery phase. Read more at tinyurl.com/tp-hours

26%

THE AMOUNT THAT POST-GRADUATE ITT **ENROLMENTS ARE UP IN** 2021, COMPARED TO THE SAME TIME LAST YEAR\*

# Look ahead Book ahead

#### **30 DAYS WILD**

30 Days Wild is The Wildlife Trusts' annual nature challenge. Do one 'wild' thing every day in June, from litter picking to puddle splashing. Sign

up to receive a free goodie pack. wildlifetrusts. org/30dayswild

#### LITTLE TROOPERS

Military children's charity Little Troopers is running a free virtual workshop this June for primary-age service children featuring littletroopersatschool



storytelling, movement, discussion and drama. Book at littletroopers.net/



#### **Ed Stafford Explorer and presenter**

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

I hated it. I remember the feeling of dread as I drew up to school in my Mum's Fiat. Back in my village I was confident and happy, yet in a classroom environment I was nervous and shy. I suppose I've always felt more comfortable outdoors. getting my hands dirty.

#### Why are camping experiences vital for children?

Life is normally laid on a plate for many children: wake up; eat this; learn this; go to bed. There's something about this organised world that inhibits personal development. For me, camping presents children with challenges that are totally new. They therefore can't fail to grow as individuals, come up with new solutions and adapt to solve problems. I've never felt more alive as a child then when I was outside doing fun stuff in the dirt.

#### How can the outdoors help children to cope?

The lockdowns exacerbated the worrying trend of mental health issues in children. One in five children don't play outside at all and many of those that do have very limited access to wild spaces. Getting outdoors and playing in nature is mentally and spiritually restorative and enriches children's lives immeasurably. Our Camp Wilderness trips are designed to immerse participants in activities which require them not just to be outdoors, but to really start interacting with nature so that they can reap all the possible rewards that that being outside has to offer.

Ed Stafford was the first person to walk the length of the Amazon River. He works with Camp Wilderness to create residential camps for children. Find out more at campwilderness.co.uk

The webinar was logically sequenced and this helped clarity. The presenters were excellent – engaging and clear and highly knowledgeable. It was appropriately interactive and any questions asked were addressed. It was a brilliant session.

PARTICIPANT ON THE PHONICS IN EYFS WEBINAR FEBRUARY 2021



# **Online Learning** to Strengthen your Literacy Teaching

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) is an independent UK charity dedicated to raising the literacy achievement of children by putting quality literature at the heart of all learning. All CLPE training is designed to help you develop practical approaches to literacy learning that inspire a love of reading and writing for all children.

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Start dates available for September, November and January. Book your place now!

→ www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreadingonline

www.clpe.org.uk





We've all had to embrace technology this year, but what deserves to endure even now children are back in the classroom? Daisy Christodoulou investigates...

#### 1 FLASHCARDS

Flashcards are an old idea that's been given a new lease of life by technology. It's now much easier to create or download sets of flashcards that you can share with pupils, and reuse with different classes. There are also plenty of platforms that let you copy and adapt flashcards created by other teachers. It's obvious how flashcards can work for subjects like MFL and history, but they can really help in other subjects too. You can download art decks that have beautiful examples of different techniques, or summary decks of popular class readers.

#### **2 | SPACED REPETITION**

Online flashcards also make it easier to use one of the most powerful of all learning techniques: spaced repetition. Research shows that the best time to revise material is when you are just about to forget it, and that the effort of recalling something from memory actually helps to improve the memory. Hence the term 'spaced repetition', because it's best to space out your repetitions of the material, rather than cram it all into one revision session. Flashcard platforms like Quizlet do this automatically, serving up particular flashcards on an ideal, spaced-out schedule.

#### **3 DUMBER DEVICES**

We are accustomed to always wanting more powerful and smarter computers, laptops and phones. But there are increasing suggestions that we should try to limit some of the functionality of our devices. That's because a lot of modern websites and apps are designed to be distracting, and to steal our attention. Attention is the currency of learning, and anything that makes it harder to focus makes it harder to learn. There are a number of app-blockers and timers that block certain websites or set time limits for them and can be useful in the classroom. And we should also think carefully about the role of mobile phones, which research shows are particularly distracting.



Daisy Christodoulou is director of education at No More Marking and author of three books about education: Teachers Vs Tech; Making Good Progress; Seven Myths about Education.

#### **4 | ADAPTIVE LEARNING**

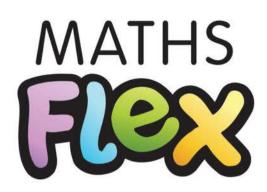
Adaptive learning platforms personalise the content a student sees based on their understanding of previous content. For example, language learning apps like Duolingo and Memrise give students more practise on the items they find difficult. Some of the insights from these apps are useful for teachers, too, as they can tell you the types of questions that all pupils find particularly difficult.

#### **5 MULTIMEDIA LEARNING**

Technology makes it easier for us to create resources that use words, images and videos. Combining media like this helps us to learn better but only when it is done in the right way. The go-to research on this is by Richard Mayer, a psychology professor who's written entire books about it. But if that's too overwhelming, you can download resources that already employ these principles. One of the best examples is the online course 'Learning how to learn: powerful mental tools to help you master tough subjects.' The adult course is one of the world's most popular online courses, and there's a newer children's version too. As well as teaching the principles of how we learn, it's also designed to embody the principles of good multimedia learning.

#### **6 | COMPARATIVE JUDGEMENT**

Traditionally, when we assess extended writing, we mark each piece against a mark scheme. Comparative judgement is different: you look at two pieces of writing, and decide which is better. You make a series of decisions like this, as do your colleagues. All the decisions are then combined together to provide a measurement scale for every piece of writing. Comparative judgement is quicker and more reliable than traditional marking. It allows for more holistic judgements too, which can improve the way that writing is taught.



Maths Flex uses White Rose Maths<sup>\*</sup> small-steps approach as the basis for setting highly personalised, individual practice. Learn how Maths Flex can help your pupils with recovering lost learning following school closures.

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Register for one of our convenient and informative webinars here: www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/TPMFwebinar



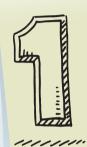
\*Maths Flex follows the White Rose Maths scheme of work but is not endorsed by White Rose Maths.

#### FEATURES WRITING

How I do it 2

Get children writing music from the age of four and reap the associated benefits

#### PETER SIMONS



To begin with, show Foundation Stage children how to draw a crotchet. Get them to practise drawing small circles and colouring them in. Next,

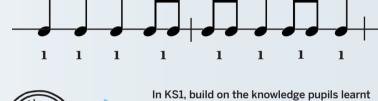
add a stick on the right-hand side and relate this to a 'd' sound. Once the children have mastered this, move onto a pair of quavers. For this, explain to pupils that they need to draw two wheels on a bus, colour them in, turn them both into 'd's, then join them at the top with a line (because they love each other!). After a few weeks of drawing these, move on to a percussion line. t my school I use composition a great deal. Pupils start writing music in Foundation Stage at the age of four and some children are able to read and write music before they can even write their name. Learning to write music at such a young age helps develop children's fine motor skills, handwriting and pen grip and because the children are having so much fun, they don't even realise they're doing it.



- Next, show the children how to draw a horizontal line – the stave. Practise drawing circles so the stave is in the middle. Pupils may find this difficult at first, but with practise and patient tuition, they'll get there. Once they have this mastered, they can draw crotchets and
  - quavers on a single stave and can then play
- these on hand drums.

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In KS1, build on the knowledge pupils learnt in Foundation Stage. Have a reminder lesson and practise drawing the stave with crotchets and quavers. Then move on to introducing bar lines. Under each crotchet and pair of quavers, ask children to write a small '1' (for one beat), then show pupils how to separate the music into bars by introducing the concept of a time signature. Count four beats then put in a bar line – the musical equivalent of a full stop. Once the children can draw this, they can explore more notes such as minims and rests.

In KS2 classrooms, children can work on more complex compositions.

1

1

By the time they reach Y6, pupils at my school can draw

notes up to and including semiquavers and their respected rests, and play these accurately on a hand drum with different time signatures. Here's what a typical Y6 composition might look like, in a 5/4 time signature. Give children the power to start writing their own compositions and you'll be amazed at how easily they absorb this and start writing and playing their own impressive pieces. If you show children how much you love music, they can't help but love it too. I hope this has inspired you to keep going with your music sessions, despite the turmoil we're currently living through.



Peter Simons is a Silver Pearson National Teaching Award winner and works at Thornhill Junior and Infant School in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire.





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I was on track to become a headteacher by 30, but I've decided that I don't need to rush any more

@mrhtheteacher

#### er 📃 mrhtheteacher.wordpress.com

hen I came out of my teacher training, all bright eyed and bushy tailed, I felt like I was

ready to change the world. I tackled my work ferociously and made reasonably quick progress – phase lead as an RQT, assistant headteacher in my third year and deputy in my fourth. I was on track for headship by 30 and even stepped up as acting head in one school. I was so hungry for it, then things changed.

My journey has been challenging and I've waded through my fair share of muck and bullets - as so many of us in this profession have. I've learnt a lot about my chosen career and myself. When I look back at some of the storms I've weathered. I realise I am tougher than I thought, vet I know that I'm also far more vulnerable and fragile than I thought I was when I took my first steps into the teaching world. Ultimately I made the decision to step back from deputyship and into assistant headship, rather than progressing 'upward'.

This decision was not taken lightly. Shocking examples of leadership and abuse of power changed my mindset and led to me wanting to grow myself more carefully over time. I also wanted to better protect myself. This meant stepping back and rebuilding, in the way that a long jumper rocks back before they start to sprint forward.

I've been asked a number of times if I'll ever return to my ambitions of headship. I get occasional emails and phone calls asking me to consider applying for headship roles with past colleagues and friends. At one time, it was a logical career move, but my answer to the headship question now? Well, to be honest, it's a no. I don't want to be a headteacher any more.

Approaching this decision has been a really emotional journey, filled with self-doubt, crushing anxiety and fear, alongside new-found feelings of trust and happiness. I've finally found a school that values me for who I am. I'm learning a huge amount and my sense of loyalty has found a great place to grow and repair. I've started to see myself as a decent teacher and leader again, after years of doubt and struggle, and that feels wonderful. I haven't arrived with a three- or five-year plan; I'm in it for the long-term.

While chatting to my amazing headteacher in my performance management session, I decided that I don't need to rush any more. I'd like my career to grow and change naturally as I follow what makes me happiest and healthiest. Earlier in my career, climbing the ladder was how I defined growth. Now I can see that learning as much as I can and growing within my current role can be just as rewarding - if not more so. At present, I'd rather be a damn good assistant head and class teacher than a head. This is a big part of the reason why I always challenge people who say "just" before stating their role: "I'm just a class teacher/TA/lunchtime supervisor." There's no "just": everyone shines in their own wonderful way, so keep being you and keep being awesome.

Another reason I have diverted away from my headship mission is that, to be completely honest, I don't think I have the skills, guts or resilience to do it. That's not my impostor syndrome kicking in; it's simple fact. I couldn't handle the pressure that heads face on a daily basis. I couldn't bear the accountability lumped on my shoulders. I have so much to learn within my current role that I'd be building my headship castle on sand.

This feeling has been further reinforced by recent Covid-related events, where headteachers around the world have carried unimaginable burdens in these unprecedented times. I've seen both sides of the headship coin on my journey: those that

abuse their power, or simply aren't ready or in possession of the right skills for their position, and those community leaders that enable everyone around themselves to thrive, despite the challenges thrown their way. While I don't want to chase headship anymore, I want to do everything in my power to keep awesome headteachers – like my school's – feeling supported and cared for while I continue to enjoy what I do. Maybe I can even begin to like myself again as I discover who I really am as a teacher and leader in the right environment. TP

Chris Harrison is assistant head at Grove Road Community Primary in Harrogate.



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VOICES

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

# A letter to... an early career teacher

When it comes to confidence, fake it until you make it...



ow's the start of your fourth year in this brilliant profession going? Congratulations on successfully reaching this stage.

I remember you saying, at the start of your third year, that if things weren't any better by Christmas you were going to give up on teaching. Well, you didn't! You're still very much here.

Now, first things first, have you ever wondered why the profession so often says things like, "He's moved up to KS2" or "She's moved down to Y1", as though being in KS2 somehow makes you more senior? Don't be fooled by it. There's no seniority in teaching the older children. I was always petrified of the 'ankle biters'. Give me older children that you can share a joke with and who can sit down to a task and spend 30 minutes or more on it without any distractions. It's not a promotion – it's just different. Horses for courses, as the saying goes.

I'm so glad you've accepted the advice to observe teachers you admire and absorb positive qualities into your own practice, although please remember that that doesn't mean you have to dye your hair purple if that's their preferred colour! I'm a huge believer in 'shoulders back, chin held high, make eye contact.' When you exude confidence, people believe you

#### "How can any educator plan for falling out of the window backwards, mid-sentence?"

are confident. And then, one day, you'll realise you're no longer emulating that demeanour; it's become a natural part of your teaching repertoire.

If your next class has a reputation for being a bit challenging at times, see that as a compliment. SLT must think you're the person best suited to calming them down and challenging them in their work. Despite what you might think, they haven't done it just to make you finally flip and resign. You'll be perfect for the job. Just remember those basic rules for the first few weeks with a new class: clear and firm bottom lines (in classroom behaviour - not fashion); make eye contact and smile; plan brain breaks, debates and discussions; be creative and exciting and - if in doubt - use appropriate incentives and rewards.

I recently wrote a book to help teachers as they move through the first five years of their career. I wrote to admired colleagues and their recollections were so reassuringly similar. Dame Alison Peacock had me in stitches with a story about leeches. Another story about a creepy puppet with an awful Sheffield accent was hilarious. I was so struck by the similarities in the stories I heard that I sought out more experiences on Twitter. Again, teachers all had comparable stories to tell. How can any educator plan for falling out of the window backwards, mid-sentence, or being told by the police to 'fetch a teacher' when in the middle of trying to organise pupils when the school bus breaks down and the children are running riot? The message you should take from these anecdotes is this you are not alone. We all started knowing little and making mistakes, and we all persisted to do this job we love.

So, as you move forward, be assured that despite the fact that college lecturers rarely cover it, almost every teacher in the country met the same dilemmas, difficulties and disasters as you, and we all overcame them. Keep watching people you admire among the staff in school and model your demeanour and behaviour on them, in confidence, stance and communication. Remember, every step back is three steps forward towards becoming that articulate, engaging and sought-after teacher that new recruits to the profession will watch, admire and emulate in years to come.

From Ros

Ros Wilson is an education consultant and the author of It Takes Five Years to Become a Teacher (P & R Education).



# AWARDS 2020

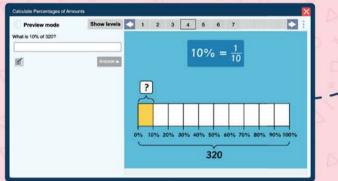


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1

Show levels

Answer +

Incorrect.

hamster.

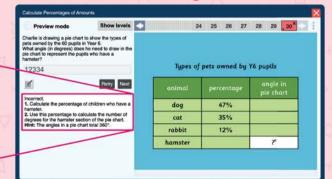
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 $1\% \text{ of } 50 = 50 \div 100$  $2\% \text{ of } 50 = 50 \div 200$ 

1. Calculate the percentage of children who have a

2. Use this percentage to calculate the number of

degrees for the hamster section of the pie chart.

Hint: The angles in a pie chart total 360°.

Name: Brooke

I've written hundreds of letters to parents in my role as headteacher, but here's what happened when one went viral...

# **Colin Dowland**

@colindowland 🛄 colindowland.co.uk

here's some pretty basic primary school internet safety advice that I've heard myself saying to the children countless times: "Anything you send out via the internet could go anywhere, to anyone. So watch what you email, post on social media or message via your Playstation." I didn't listen to my own advice. Schoolboy error, big time.

Here's how it happened. During lockdown I wrote a letter to parents, sympathising with them about the frustrations of home learning for families. I meant every word. I'm a parent too and it was really tough. However, in the last paragraph, I also made a wry suggestion that some of them should consider enrolling for teacher training if they felt they could do a better job than my teachers. This paragraph was aimed at a small number of parents whose recent messages and emails had crossed the line from helpfully constructive to just plain rude.

Contrary to what some people imagined, I didn't write the letter in haste and press 'send'. I wrote it, put it aside, came back to it later and re-wrote that last paragraph again and again. It was written in the tongue-in-cheek house style that parents at my school are familiar with. I was hoping they would take it in the spirit I intended. But, ahem, it went viral.

I sent it to parents at 5.26pm on Monday 25th January with the cheery subject line 'Home learning and teacher training.' Within an hour I began to receive messages from parents, apologising on behalf of their peers and thanking me and the teachers for the amazing work we had been doing over lockdown. Within two hours, I started receiving messages from complete strangers across the country, saying I was a 'legend,' a 'hero,' and a 'badass head' for simply supporting my staff.

And then someone uploaded the letter to Facebook and Twitter – the whole thing, including the school office email address and phone number. Emails began pouring in overnight and the likes, retweets and messages on social media started going through the cyberspace roof.

At 9.30am the next morning, The Sun newspaper phoned. They wanted to know if the letter was genuine. Other press organisations followed. The social media likes continued to rise, with the messages



remaining overwhelmingly supportive from educators around the world.

Piers, Susanna, Phillip and Holly from the telly wanted to speak to me; so did Vanessa and Nick from the radio, and all the major newspapers. I had two proposals of marriage on Twitter, an offer of free accommodation in California and, to the delight of my mum, #MrDowlandforPrimeMinister started trending. The letter had 2.8 million online views.

I liaised with my slightly anxious governors and local authority advisors. They were all supportive of the letter, but we were also getting twitchy that the story would be spun around somehow and that there might be a backlash. I decided that since it was running as a positive story, supportive of the hellish new job teachers were trying to get their heads around, I would leave things as they were. The last thing I needed was to go on TV, make an arse of myself and provide quotable morsels that would deflect from the key message of the letter. I turned down all media requests. My kids were gutted. Throughout two hectic days, my office team were amazing at the art of telephone deflection. I was 'in a meeting' for several days and didn't need to take a single call. Holly Willoughby kept ringing, but they told her I was already married.

The outpouring of emotional messages from frustrated heads, brow-beaten teachers, retired and ex-educators, parents of teachers, exhausted NQTs and older teachers struggling with the new technology of remote learning was overwhelming. The last paragraph of my letter had touched a nerve and I had said out loud what they were all thinking. Unfortunately, it needed saying.

It was an extraordinarily crazy and illuminating few days. I learnt a lot about the power of a few well-chosen words and the unstoppable force of social media. I was asked recently if, with the wisdom of hindsight, I would still have sent the letter out, including that last paragraph. Absolutely. Sometimes, schoolboy errors are worth making. **TP** 

Colin Dowland is a primary headteacher in north London.

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# WATCHOUT, SHOWS ARE ABOUT!







Now more than ever, the government can't afford to squander funds by allowing pupil premium to remain unaccountable

ven at the best of times, teachers have to make the most of a limited budget, but with extra expenditures to protect students and staff from coronavirus, some schools are struggling to make ends meet. By re-focusing the programmes that these funds are supposed to go toward, the government can ensure that every child receives the best possible education.

The pupil premium was established in 2011 as a way for schools to close the attainment gap among students eligible for free school meals. The programme provided support in maths and English up to GCSE level, and the success of the first several years of investment was cause for significant optimism. However, by 2019 the Education Select Committee noted that the funds earmarked for targeted tutoring were instead being used to "plug holes in schools' budgets", due to a lack of accountability for how they were spent. Instead of catching up with their peers, DfE statistics show that the same pupils eligible for the premium were receiving fixed-term exclusions at a higher rate than before.

Unfortunately, the programme's precarious state is corroborated by the Education Policy Institute's 2019 study of the 2017-18 academic year, which found that while primary schools have continued to close the attainment gap, it has actually widened in secondary schools. The Sutton Trust's annual poll of teachers offers yet more evidence, finding that just 55% believed that their school was using the pupil premium effectively. Since then, the number of schools focusing their pupil premium appropriately has improved somewhat, but there is still room for improvement.

To understand where pupil premium went amiss, we must look to a parallel programme. Pupil premium plus is a similar fund which provides financial support for looked-after children and has managed to maintain its per-pupil attainment focus due to close government oversight. Unlike the standard pupil premium, attainment is quantitatively assessed, and data is collected on metrics such as reading age, fluency and comprehension. Greater accountability for student attainment has resulted in a more successful, precise programme and – most importantly – better outcomes for children.

Another facet of the pupil premium plus that we must acknowledge is its focus on one-to-one tuition. As the founder of a tutoring company, I have a vested interest in this, but I'm confident that whatever qualified party delivers the tuition, it's a resource without parallel when it comes to closing attainment gaps. A 2018 study by the Education Endowment Foundation demonstrated that low-cost tutoring can improve struggling maths students' results by three months.

Last year my company delivered more than 29,000 hours of online tuition to looked-after children. All made progress, and some demonstrated incredible rates of improvement – as much as a month's progress per lesson. Beside the numerical gains, direct tutoring also increases a child's confidence and improves their communication skills. Pupil premium plus offers examples of both the benefits of one-to-one interventions and the importance of meaningful, quantitative oversight. The programme's focus on literacy and numeracy, also helps it to remain focused and effective.

The EEF chief executive, Sir Kevan Collins, emphasised in the foundation's report on the pupil premium that educational attainment is the single best predictor of lifelong success. At a time when pupils have faced the additional challenges of learning at a distance, the government can't afford to squander funds by allowing the pupil premium programme to remain so lacklustre.

While schools remain relatively free to allocate the pupil premium as they see fit, the government has recently introduced one high-value way to spend it. The National Tutoring Programme currently provides 75% subsidies on tutoring for disadvantaged pupils, with more than 30 certified providers on board. Given the significant discount, I'm hopeful that we'll see a greater number of schools using the services of qualified tutors to close attainment gaps. Greater oversight of the pupil premium remains a pressing concern, but I welcome any effort to provide disadvantaged students with the support they deserve. **TP** 

Simon Barnes is a former teacher and founder of teacher-run tuition company TLC LIVE.

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#### UNDERCOVER TEACHER

Our anonymous educator gets something off their chest

# "Beware the mood hoovers they'll suck the positive energy out of your school"

ver the last year or so there's certainly been a lot of anxiety within schools. We've had to adapt to an unprecedented amount of change. The last-minute announcements of government decisions and changes in policy have only added to the stress for leaders and those working in education. There's certainly been a lot to moan about.

During the last 12 months I've felt very grateful that I no longer work in a couple of my previous schools. They were tough gigs under normal circumstances but friends who still work at these schools have commented on how hard it's been recently: increased online lesson observations; formal feedback from recorded PowerPoints; virtual learning walks; additional planning; increased staff meetings. In short, there are a lot of anxious leaders and stressed teachers out there.

However, I want to talk about the mood hoovers at your school: the people who suck the positive energy out of you. I'm sure you know who I mean. I'm not talking about the colleague who lets off steam about something or the teacher who often gets involved in heated discussions regarding school policy. I'm not talking about the staff member having a moan about a parent or difficult child. This is all healthy –

after all, it's good to talk and share our problems. In many cases, talking about your problems can help to iron them out or can make you feel better about a particular situation. Instead, I'm talking about the person who constantly and relentlessly moans about everything and anything, all of the time.

Every school I've worked in has had one. You can almost predict the exact words this person will say when an idea is suggested in a staff meeting. You know full well that they'll be straight on WhatsApp groups after school to moan about something.

They demand respect from their leaders and colleagues but don't help themselves at times, with

comments such as, "But we've always done it this way". The slightest change or new idea is immediately attacked; especially if it might require a little bit of thought and attention or mean taking a risk. The mood hoover doesn't like that. I've seen teachers in tears because a colleague refuses to try out something or simply dismisses their ideas in planning meetings.

This particular teacher seems to have a daily impromptu appointment with SLT, where they tell them how disgruntled they feel about a particular decision. Leaders see them coming and try to hide, I imagine. Every sentence starts with, "The problem is" or "I don't think you've

thought this through" or "I'm not doing that". Alternatively, they simply play the game and do their own thing anyway. I've often planned for my team, only to find the mood hoover did it all completely differently, if at all.

Yes, it has been tough for everyone adapting to the new virtual world of schooling, but constantly moaning about it isn't helpful. I've been teaching online lessons and yes, it was hard at first, but you give it a go; try it out; learn; adapt. It's not ideal, but it's trying to make the best of a bad situation. The mood hoover will text people and moan about their day. The mood hoover will send regular negative emails and complain to SLT.

Teaching is incredibly hard and relentless at times. You need to be careful around mood hoovers. It's easy to be drawn into their depressive world of 'the glass is always half empty' (or completely empty, in fact). There will always be colleagues who like a good moan, but they're a laugh to work with too. They'll cheer you up when you're down. They'll ask you how you feel and listen. The mood hoover doesn't do this.

Be polite, professional and supportive, but do what you need to do to protect your own mental health at the moment – it's taken a bit of a battering recently. If that means keeping your distance from the mood hoover for a while, then do so. **TP** 

The writer has taught in five schools across a 20 year career.

@fakeheadteacher 🛄 headteacher-newsletter.com

"The slightest

change or

new idea is

immediately

attacked"

# Aiming for ARROGANCE

Build the professional confidence of staff by discussing the weaknesses in your provision and giving teachers the power to change them

#### HANNAH TUDOR

ave you ever worked with a teacher who wanted to be bad at their job? One who woke up in the morning and looked forward to a day where the children in their class learnt nothing? No, me neither. We all get up in the morning to do the best job we can, and all development in schools must start with this basic, yet fundamental, principle.

'Professional arrogance' was a term coined by SLT members at the school I lead back in 2014, when the school had been judged to have 'serious weaknesses'. It's worth noting that professional arrogance is more noticeable by its absence than its presence and it was definitely absent in our school at that time. We knew this because teachers were very unsure of how to teach. They doubted themselves constantly, even when children in their classes were making progress. They were fearful of taking

would automatically mean failure. They were, perhaps understandably, fearful of any kind of monitoring.

Of striking interest to me was that, on top of this, the work-life balance of most of these teachers was woeful. They appeared to hold the belief that the harder they worked, the better the school would be and the more the children would learn. Not only did they constantly doubt themselves, they were working themselves into the ground while doing so. What sort of culture creates teachers who think and feel like this?

### Accountability and agency

I started looking at policies that drive teaching and learning and found that these often included statements that started with "the teacher will". Let's overlook for a moment the lack of focus on what the learners will be doing and assume that such policies were written to provide clarity of understanding and approach for all staff. Despite this being the intention, it had partly led to teachers never questioning if what they were doing was the most effective way of teaching the children in their classes. There was little accountability or agency – they did what the policy told them, often without question.

We all know that the language we use shapes the culture that we work in. Language is very powerful - it can include or exclude, strengthen or weaken. At my school we now focus on the word 'teaching' and use it instead of 'teacher'. This has created a very powerful shift in culture. Schools that talk about the 'quality of the teacher' imply that provision is the result of an individual. A leader might say that provision is outstanding because the teacher is outstanding. How wonderful for that member of staff - they're held up as the school's pedagogical shining light and others flock to observe and be like them.

is that other staff are not as good as this individual and need to 'be more like them'. This reduces the professional arrogance of the staff, who now know that they are not quite good enough and that to be outstanding, they must all teach like this one shining example of how to do it.

However, just as significant here is that the professional arrogance of the 'shining light teacher' isn't necessarily strong either. They might become fearful that monitoring may show that they're not as strong in the classroom as someone first suggested. They might feel like they can't discuss a lesson that went terribly with anyone on the staff because their colleagues might then feel that they are not as good at their job after all.

By adapting this scenario to look at the quality of the teaching, we start to feel a collective responsibility towards areas of the curriculum



#### "They appeared to hold the belief that the harder they worked, the better the school would be"

that we can all work together to improve and develop. Asking the question "How do we improve the teaching of reading across the school?" means that everyone is included and can contribute. This builds professional arrogance based on robust professional dialogue and thorough evaluation of the current provision.

#### Exposing weaknesses

When it comes to monitoring, it is of course important – the job that we do is too important for it not to be monitored at all. However, monitoring is about understanding the provision in a school, not judging it. It is what it is, and whether the staff are told that it's rubbish or it's outstanding, both messages are unlikely to promote the necessary motivation to improve it further.

We need to shrug off grades and keep them for our SEF and Ofsted. Monitoring is about finding out if the provision is good enough or not. If we want to promote arrogance in our staff, we need to own

> our weaknesses as a school and be able to bring them to a staff meeting and stick

them at the top of the agenda. It's uncomfortable and can sometimes be painful, but professional arrogance can only grow by staff knowing what those weaknesses are and working together to play their part in improving them. If true professional arrogance is to thrive, all staff need to be engaged and empowered to change the parts of your provision that are not working as well as they could be.

This is so important for many reasons but firstly, it stops leaders painting a 'we know it all' picture of pedagogy. I hate to break it to you, but no one knows it all, and no leader should ever put themselves in the dangerous position of thinking that they do. This weakens staff confidence and creates a culture of dependency. Furthermore, it has a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of leaders - how can one person possibly have all of the answers?

Exposing weaknesses in a school's provision to your team and posing thoughtful and sometimes naive questions is central to

#### HOW TO BUILD TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL ARROGANCE

• Take a fresh look at the policies in your school. Do they use the phrase "The teacher will" and are your teachers actually doing that?

• Language is powerful. Start to talk about 'teaching' and avoid talking about the 'teacher'.

 Keep grades away from staff. They do not help to improve anything – keep them for your SEF and conversations with Ofsted and governors.

 Plan a staff meeting to discuss a particular area of provision. Bring books along and allow staff to share findings.

 If you are a senior or middle leader, do not profess to have all the answers. Leadership is about having enough answers to remain credible. Talk to others and learn from them just as they learn from you.

building the professional confidence of teachers. Leaders are a vital component in this if you're a leader, you're the person that can make this happen. Give your staff agency and the power to change the elements of your school's practice that are not as strong. This will lead to shared ownership and everyone being clear about why certain things are taught as they are. Teachers will understand it because they've been involved in creating it. It's not rocket

science, but it's powerful stuff. Every teacher deserves to feel confident about what they do and every pupil deserves to be taught by someone who feels this way. **TP** 



Hannah Tudor is headteacher at St Mary of Charity Primary in Faversham, Kent.

🥑 @tudor\_hannah



# "Won't hold me back"

Our transformative six-month singing project helped pupils to dig deep emotionally and share their thoughts about the pandemic

#### **GENEVIEVE RAGHU**

e haven't heard much from children during the pandemic, have we? It was this gap in narrative that drove me to launch a six-month project with Into Opera for primary schools in Norwich in 2020. The public response to the pandemic felt as though it was being dominated by adults; by politicians. Where were children's voices? I felt that it was about time that we reminded children that their voices and stories really mattered.

My starting point was to take these concerns and questions to a number of teachers and headteachers to find out if they shared any of my worries. What followed were a series of exceptionally honest, eye-opening and emotional discussions. In short, they strongly shared my concerns and raised even more. They openly shared their fears about the possible long-term mental health and wellbeing implications of this pandemic on their pupils.

These conversations were a powerful and important starting point. It highlighted that a creative, cultural intervention which would empower children to dig deep emotionally and share their thoughts, feelings and stories would be truly beneficial. It was also evident that schools were aching for some form of 'project' to help their school communities reconnect a positive achievement that could be celebrated by, and nourishing for, the wider school community.

#### **Major project**

What followed was the creation of a project which would become a major artistic response from six primary schools in Norwich to the Covid-19 pandemic. First,



we developed resources to inspire children to express their feelings by writing poetry or letters, producing artwork or engaging in practical activities. To supplement this, I ran 24 virtual workshops alongside performance poet Adisa the Verbalizer. Together, we brought children together online to play interactive games and engage in group discussions about the pandemic and what it felt like to be a child in 2020. Some children participated in school, but large numbers of pupils joined in from home.

We ended up receiving approximately 10,000 pieces of work in response to our resources. Some contributions were emotionally challenging - it soon became clear just how much pupils had been bottling up. Many children were frightened and confused about the pandemic and its repercussions. Others had lots of questions. We also received a lot of inspirational responses from children. They told us about their families and personal heroes in lockdown. They recounted the little things that had kept them smiling. We saw children's strength, bravery and resilience shine through as they talked about what they'd learnt over the year and how they wanted to approach 2021.

We provided personal feedback to each school, offering all the support and insight we could, based on what we'd learnt from the children. This helped teachers to meet the wellbeing and mental health needs of their pupils. Families of participating children got involved too, sending photos

and videos to help us build a deeper understanding of what families had been experiencing since March 2020.

#### Song cycle

Drawing on all of this material, Into Opera produced a song cycle with the widely renowned composer, Will Todd. This collection of six songs charted key phases of the pandemic chronologically from March 2020, from the perspective of children. We went on to record professional learning tracks, enabling children to access the music in school or at home it was important to cover all bases. We also arranged virtual workshops with the composer for all of the schools and produced video resources to support teachers to explore the lyrics of the songs with their pupils, as a way of opening up conversations about the pandemic.

This project was not about covering over cracks, but looking at the pandemic and its repercussions head on. Children were actively encouraged to talk about their experiences; to share openly and honestly. This has only strengthened the relationship between teachers and pupils, helping schools significantly with their journey towards recovery.

The lyrics of this song cycle all came from the work submitted by the children in response to our resources, or from their remarks in our virtual workshops. The title came from a piece of work one child produced which had the inspirational line, "2020: you won't hold me back!".

#### FEATURES ARTS



"We saw children's strength, bravery and resilience shine through as they talked about what they'd learnt over the year"

This 'motto' helped to bond school communities – one school even had this uplifting lyric inscribed onto mugs as Christmas presents for parents and teachers. This struck me as such a thoughtful, creative gesture; a reminder when taking that moment for a cuppa in the staffroom of the strength of your school community.

# Following guidelines

Schools kept singing and fully embraced the project from start to finish, while meticulously following government guidelines. Creativity underpinned this, with headteachers transforming their offices into mini recording studios and even wheeling pianos outside to enable larger groups to sing and rehearse together. The children recorded the song cycle at school in November 2020 and a film was produced to accompany the music, which premiered on YouTube in December (watch it at **into-opera.org. uk/2020**). We also released an accompanying Q&A about the project, where artists and teachers offered more insight about how this project had been delivered and its impact.

The Durham Commission Report on Creativity and Education, published in October 2019, reminded us of the utmost importance of creativity. It highlighted how creativity was now one of the most important skills sought by employers. The Covid-19 pandemic abruptly demonstrated to a global audience the power and necessity of this skill across all areas of our lives – particularly so in education. It has demonstrated so clearly that teaching is not static and that teachers can thrive under the most extreme circumstances, especially when creative thinking and adaptability are in their toolbox.

HOW TO DEVELOP A

and encourage staff to dream big.

listen to their ideas.

SUCCESSFUL ARTS PROJECT

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 Involve children fully in the creative process – they must feel ownership of their achievements. Review progress with pupils and teachers and

This project set out to ask children to 'dig deep', but funnily enough, it ended up encouraging teachers to do the same. Teachers reflected on their practice, priorities, creativity and identity. I've been in awe of the creative brilliance, resilience and positivity of the educators I've worked with during the pandemic – you're all so inspiring.

I urge you to keep music and the arts alive in schools. Covid-19 has had a deep-rooted impact on our lives. Our mental health, lifestyles, relationships and wellbeing have been challenged as never before. We will all need tools to help us heal. Music can help. Access to arts and culture and opportunities to make, create, reflect and express ourselves will help. Please try and make space for this in your school – in my opinion, it can be transformative. **TP** 



Genevieve Raghu is the artistic director and chief executive of Into Opera.

🎔 @into\_opera 🛄 into-opera.org.uk







# Do you need help teaching primary computing?

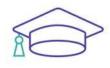
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#### ASK THE EXPERT

# "Designed with pupils in mind"

Three experts explain why Barefoot computing's new free resources are an invaluable tool for primary teachers

arefoot computing from BT and Computing at School aims to empower primary teachers to deliver the computing curriculum brilliantly. Through a unique partnership with the National Crime Agency (NCA), Barefoot has brought together the teaching and cyber security worlds to create a suite of free classroom and home learning resources. The resources cover tough-to-teach topics such as permission and ownership, legal and illegal use of computers and password protection. Here, Barefoot asks three experts how their new resources help primary pupils stay one step ahead online...

### How do #BeCyberSmart resources help bring the cyber world to life?

"As with all Barefoot resources, the #BeCyberSmart lessons are ready-made, curriculum-aligned and fun to teach. Through collaboration with the NCA, they have been designed with pupils in mind and offer exciting learning experiences. Children get the chance to turn their classroom into a courtroom in one lesson and accept challenges from a real cyber security expert in another. There's even an opportunity to save an underwater village from 'phishing attacks' in 'The Phisherman' online game. The resources are bound to ignite the imagination of pupils while helping them learn."

Neil Rickus, Barefoot content author and senior lecturer in computing education

## Why is it important for primary pupils to learn about the cyber world?

"Children use technology at a very young age, and it can be difficult to monitor how they spend their time online. The NCA has identified that children as young as eight have engaged in online activity which has breached the Computer Misuse Act. Children can become so skilled; they use their computer to cause serious disruption and have been known to launch cyber attacks against schools. Education is a key foundation for an effective crime prevention programme. The new Barefoot resources will help pupils understand their cyber responsibilities in a fun and informative way."

Emily, cyber security expert, National Crime Agency

#### How do Barefoot lessons set children up for success in the digital world?

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Louise Patterson, cyber security expert, BT

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As the curriculum continues to adapt to advancements in technology, it's critical that teachers are equipped with the right resources. With links to PSHE and digital literacy, through the Barefoot #BeCyberSmart resources teachers can be sure they are covering the right things to keep their pupils one step ahead online. To download Barefoot's free cyber resources, head to barefootcomputing.org

Support system

A good TA is worth their weight in gold, but we shouldn't rely on friendships between TAs and teachers to make the role a success

#### SARA ALSTON

universally acknowledged truth of primary teaching is that a good TA is worth their weight in gold. Yet this doesn't tell the whole story, because what makes an outstanding TA is more complex than their innate good qualities.

The role of the TA developed gradually from parent helpers and ancillary staff who largely supported with practical tasks, to today's 'paraprofessionals' who often lead whole-class learning. This organic growth means that the role has developed in different ways in different places, with no standardisation in approach to the expectations of TAs, or the teachers working with them. This is exacerbated by a lack of training for either TAs or teachers on how to work together.

The DISS (2009) and MITA (2015) projects identified three key difficulties with TA effectiveness, related to their preparedness, deployment and practice. This meant that although TAs were highly valued by teachers, they had little positive, and often a negative, impact on children's learning. The research placed the responsibility for this with school leaders. However, the effectiveness of many TAs' practice is dependent on their relationship with the classroom teacher.

Last December I asked teachers and TAs on Twitter about their working relationships. Several key themes emerged. Most confirmed the view that a good TA acts as 'a safety net, sounding board and sanity saver', though the underlying difficulties of making this relationship work to support children's learning, rather than just the teacher, were highlighted.

#### **Common goals**

Many respondents spoke about the importance of partnership and friendship. TAs want teachers to share the load, so they can support them. At the same time, they want to be treated as equals and not as a dogsbody or slave. Both teachers and TAs spoke of friendships established in the classroom that have lasted over many years.

The teacher and TA working relationship was also described to me as learning to dance. You have to learn to complement each other. Sometimes it's a polished American smooth; other times it's freestyle. It's a partnership with common goals and if that's not in place, it becomes hard work for both parties, with toes regularly stood on. One TA summed up the issues of sharing planning, saying, "We didn't plan it. It's not as obvious to us!" This was a recurring theme. As the MITA and DISS projects identified, a lack of preparedness impacts the effectiveness of TAs' work. For a TA to follow planning, they need to be able to see, share and understand it. However, few are given time to read it in advance, and some do not see it at all.

Teachers often complained that TAs arrived with the children, so accessed the lessons alongside them and were then expected to respond and differentiate without preparation. This isn't an effective way to work. Time to share planning often depended on a willingness to find time outside of the TA's directed hours. This was often rooted in friendship, not time identified by the school.

### Playing to strengths

Many respondents spoke of the importance of TAs feeling valued and respected. This included teachers asking TAs' opinions, giving them feedback and listening to their views. Where teachers fail to acknowledge and understand TAs' roles – recognising when they give time beyond their hours, rather than just expecting it, for example – there is a reduction in cooperation and engagement.

Both TAs and teachers spoke of the importance of TAs using their initiative and being given opportunities to do so. In a successful relationship,

TAs are able to play to their strengths, often taking responsibility for particular areas. This allows teachers time to observe and work with individuals, while enabling TAs to develop their skills and feel valued. Several TAs spoke of their frustration at watching a teacher deliver badly something they felt that they could do better. Equally, teachers spoke of their exasperation at TAs 'taking over' and even spoiling their lessons when they offered views or engaged inappropriately.

Both TAs and teachers are concerned about where the responsibility for the planning and delivery of differentiation lies. This is interlinked with the recurring issue of finding time to share planning, give feedback and develop understanding of individual children and their needs. This, in turn, reduces the impact and effectiveness of differentiation.

Some TAs feel isolated working one-to-one, particularly with a high needs child. They feel responsibility for the child's education and that making the curriculum accessible has been devolved to them. Many do not feel confident, equipped, or supported to do this, and say that the

#### "Teachers spoke of their exasperation at TAs 'taking over' and even spoiling their lessons"

teachers don't know or engage with these children.

Equally, several TAs commented that they spend longer with the children, so know them and their motivations better than the teachers. They want this expertise to be acknowledged and to share it with teachers. However, several teachers referred to TAs 'taking over' and 'dominating' children; making it difficult for the teacher to work with and get to know those pupils. There is a significant tension around effective support for children with special needs.

### Renegotiating relationships

Several issues were raised concerning age gaps between teachers and TAs. Many saw this as an advantage: younger TAs can help teachers to understand children's interests and concerns. However, several NQTs and younger teachers spoke of their difficulties around directing older and more experienced TAs.

Several TAs also spoke of the impact of a lack of job security and being moved around the school, often at short notice. This means that they are constantly trying to renegotiate their relationships with children and teachers. This reduces their effectiveness, willingness and commitment to engage in the school.

Both teachers and TAs voiced concerns about TAs being used as cheap cover. In particular, TAs are sometimes held to the same standards as teachers, but without the training or time to prepare the lessons they are expected to deliver. Further, TAs often have a lower level of support when delivering lessons –

> they can't support themselves and are not replaced when they become the primary deliverer of teaching.

#### **Mutual trust**

The issues surrounding time to communicate and build relationships threaded through almost every response. The lack of time and breakdown of relationships are the biggest barriers to TAs and teachers working together successfully. As one respondent put it, "The key is clarity of communication and mutual trust."

For TAs to have a positive impact, the issues of preparedness, deployment and practice have to be circumvented by good personal relationships between teacher and TA. This then supports communication and creates a willingness and ability to make time for it. However, we shouldn't expect this to be the underlying basis for the provision of effective support in the classroom. As one respondent commented, being a TA is "low paid, so the job needs to be rewarding in other ways." A good relationship is one way, but it's not enough. TAs need time, respect and training, and teachers need help and support to utilise TAs effectively. We shouldn't depend on friendships to make this key classroom relationship work to support learning. TP



Sara Alston is an independent consultant, trainer and practising SENCo. Her

new book, co-authored with Daniel Sobel, is called The Inclusive Classroom: A New Approach to Differentiation (Bloomsbury).





# AUTHOR IN YOUR SSROOM

#### Bring author and poet Benjamin Zephaniah directly into your classroom - via a free podcast and downloadable resources

Benjamin

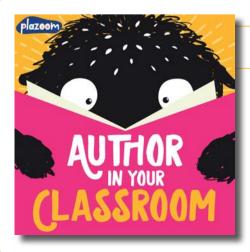
Zephanial

aancy a virtual visit from a real author? Luckily for you, Benjamin Zephaniah, author of Windrush Child, is ready and waiting to share his thoughts, ideas and inspirations with your budding wordsmiths, via our free literacy podcast. The experience doesn't end there either; we've created some amazing free teaching resources to download at plazoom.com, so you can continue your reading adventure in the classroom.

Sometimes a book can be a sliding door, allowing us to travel into a world and share experiences with the characters as if we were there. It takes skill to write like this, but although tricky to master, it can be a hugely

motivating and rewarding skill to explore in the classroom with young writers. In this episode, Benjamin explains how and why he writes, discusses the historical truth behind his latest novel, and has some powerful advice for children struggling to find their voice.





#### HOW TO USE THE PODCAST







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Pause the podcast to talk about the points being raised, using our teaching notes

#### RESOURCES



# FOUR THINGS KIDS WILL

#### **1 GROWING UP WITHOUT BOOKS**

"I grew up in a house where there were absolutely no books. I remember once I was trying to read a book and my father told me off and slapped the book out of my hand. Oddly, however, there was a lot of poetry in my house, mainly from my mother who was just full of Caribbean poems. They were poems with a reason – so there'd be a recipe or a message for naughty boys, all in rhyme. When I saw boys and girls sitting down and reading I felt that it looked so intelligent so I wanted to be a part of that world, but there was absolutely nobody around me that was a good example."

#### 2 BECOMING A POET

"I can remember being eight years old and sitting down and imagining my future. It was, "I'm going to do these poems and they're going to talk about the world." I didn't understand what the word 'politics' meant, but I wanted to write about wars and famines and at the same time make people happy. I also wanted to write stories and plays. I didn't see anyone else doing it, but I just imagined this world; this job that I would have. As I became older I got involved in the wrong crowd and began to get in trouble. One day I said, "You know what, when I was eight years old I had a dream and I want to go back to that dream and make it a reality.""

#### 3 ON DYSLEXIA

"Some really clever person said to me one day, "You'll never be a real poet until you publish. You have to have a book." I am very dyslexic; all my poems are in my head. So I got my friend to write down the poems for me and I managed to get a publisher. That book was the first independent book in Britain to make it onto the bestseller list."

#### 4 THE POWER OF A GOOD EDITOR

"What people don't realise is you never get it right first time. Writing is not about *writing* – it's about *rewriting*. Even when you've done that you need a good editor. The best writers in the world have the best editors in the world. A good editor can read one of my publications like they're seven years old, then like they're 50 years old. It's an amazing talent and one that I don't have."

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#### PROFESSOR ROBERT WINSTON,

scientist, broadcaster and author of Inventors, shared inspiring and motivating ideas about how to research, plan and write a piece of engaging non-fiction. Download our accompanying resources to help pupils plan their own text while keeping their audience in mind at all times.



"You never get it right the first time; you always have to rewrite" BENJAMIN ZEPHANIA

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subordinate clause as she saw Baba yaga for the first time, Blanka trembled. use of synonyms She was a gruesome sight. ambitious adiectives warts covered her chin and • her teeth were black as night a starless sky. editing to improve a simile Oliver, Year 3

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MathsBeat gives children opportunities to interact with one another and have great maths conversations. Through practical discussion-based learning, pupils develop their mathematical vocabulary and work together to become confident maths learners. The tasks encourage children to use a range of strategies to solve problems, develop reasoning skills and reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies they have used.

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Designed to be accessible for all children, MathsBeat features real-life contexts within each unit to bring maths to life. Based on a clear progression, a sequence of weekly tasks develops children's knowledge, fluency and understanding with suggested prompts, actions and questions for teachers to support all learners. Each task includes a going deeper prompt for challenge.

#### 3 ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

At the start of each week, launch tasks give you a snapshot of children's current understanding and any gaps. At the end of each learning task, conversation prompts help you to identify which children are 'on track' and 'look and listen for' prompts include suggestions for intervention when there are common misconceptions.



#### 4 SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

MathsBeat supports teachers at any stage in their career. The 'how to' videos describe the key maths ideas children will meet, deepening teacher subject knowledge. Explicit modelling equips teachers with high-quality guided practice. There are also teacher handbooks that include real examples of children using the materials. The resource

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**KEY POINTS** 

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library includes detailed curriculum and planning support, such as plans for mixed-aged teaching and guides on using MathsBeat alongside other resources like White Rose Maths or MyMaths.

#### **5** CREATED BY EXPERTS

The teaching sequence has been carefully organised by an experienced author team, including expert series editor Mike Askew and a community of teachers. The carefully planned progression allows you to make links with prior and future learning, and track back or forwards as necessary.

MathsBeat is a coherent teaching and assessment spine which makes links explicitly with prior and future learning, so you can track back or forwards. Vocabulary, representations and hands-on apparatus are introduced gradually and used regularly to equip children with language and tools to reason and problem-solve. Supports teachers and TAs through 'On track/ Look and listen for' features which highlight common misconceptions and suggest next steps. Time-saving digital planners combine IWB software, slides and pupil practice activities in one place. A whole-school subscription is only £750 per year.



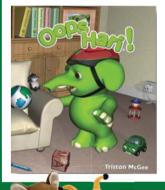
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# Use stem sentences **IN MATHS**

#### They're not just for English lessons, says John Bee

stem sentence is nothing new in primary schools. They support children (and teachers) to start sentences, rather than staring at a blank page. In English, stem sentences can be an effective strategy to structure writing. In maths they can be used in dynamic ways to support teaching and learning.

Maths lessons which include carefully chosen representations expose mathematical structures. A stem sentence can work alongside a mathematical representation by complementing it and revealing the structure. For example, the structure of fractions being part of a whole can be explored using part-whole or bar model representations (see illustration, bottom left).

Stem sentence: If the UK is the whole, is a part of the whole.

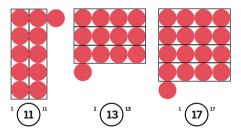
This stem sentence supports the representation below by deepening the structure of fractions being part of a whole. It exposes the relative size of fractions and can lead to rich discussions.

Maths has a highly specialised and technical language which needs to be explicitly taught. How many of us have asked children to explain their reasoning to be met with "Erm, well..." or other vague responses? Stem sentences can scaffold children to develop their reasoning and explanations by using the language of mathematics.

Put simply, mathematics requires children to talk like a mathematician. Just as we use the words 'split digraphs' and 'phonemes' in KS1, maths has its own semantics and culture. An effective stem sentence allows children to practise reasoning by changing variables and

using precise and technical vocabulary.

Stem sentences can also be used to arrive at a generalisation or general rule. For example, when children in UKS2 build on their understanding of 'factor x factor = product', they explore how many factors a number has. Children may notice particular features of some numbers (11, 13, 17, for example) and wonder why they only have two factors each. They can then be guided towards a generalisation: numbers that have exactly two factors are called prime numbers.



Test this key structure by using counters or factor wheels to show examples of prime numbers. Children may ask if all prime numbers are odd or always one more/less than a composite number (therefore, there aren't any consecutive prime numbers, apart from two and three, which are prime factors).

Strategies and pedagogical choices are important when developing stem sentences. An 'I say, you say, we say' approach can be effective: firstly, model the stem sentence so that pupils can hear mathematical vocabulary used accurately and correctly, then invite a selection of children to say the stem sentence, allowing them to rehearse reasoning. Finally, invite the whole class to

say the stem sentence together. In doing so, you're explicitly teaching children to reason, deepening their understanding of mathematical structures and avoiding vague responses.

Of course, there's still a place for children to construct their understanding, think out loud and offer unstructured responses to make sense and meaning of new concepts. Stem sentences aim to support fundamental mathematical structures which can be built on as children progress through their education.

To deepen children's conceptual understanding of mathematical structures, change the variables in a stem sentence, or its context. Look at the examples below:

If the UK is the whole, \_\_\_\_\_ is a part of the whole.

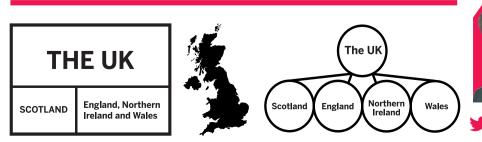
is the whole, England is part of If the whole.

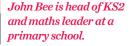
If the bus is the whole, \_\_\_\_ \_ is a part of the whole.

is the whole, the windows are a part If of the whole

I'm often asked for a 'bank' of sentence stems which cover the curriculum. I feel this is the wrong approach: it limits teacher agency; limits lesson design; discourages teachers from engaging in discussions and planning around key concepts in maths.

Instead, coherent lesson design, representations through carefully selected models and images, mathematical thinking and vocabulary, fluency and variation can all be supported by the inclusion of stem sentences to draw attention to essential concepts in maths. TP





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# **Power of PLANTS**

Our parent-led school gardening project has bloomed during the pandemic and brought our community closer

shmount Primary is in Crouch End, Islington. It's located alongside a beautiful strip of urban woodland and is also close to a built-up area of estates and busy roads. Some pupils have gardening space at home but a lot live in flats without access to their own outside space.

My own very inquisitive children wanted to learn about where their food came from and this sparked my interest in giving grow-your-own a try. We started with windowsill herbs and lettuce inside our little London flat but with space limited, we contacted our local council to find out if we could put the disused community gardening space within our block to good use. Making the most of donated and skipped materials, we upcycled an old wardrobe into raised beds and grew crops including strawberries, tomatoes and the best sweetcorn I've ever tasted, developing our gardening skills as we went. This was a huge success. Almost all the neighbours got involved and the transformed plot became a space for everyone to enjoy.



#### **Open to all**

Inspired by this initial project, Reece, my eldest son, decided that his school would really benefit from a gardening club. He organised a meeting with Ashmount's headteacher, taking along some of the fruit and vegetables we'd grown together. He readily agreed and we discussed the practicalities.

#### **MICHELLE JONES**

In October 2018, the gardening club was born. I joined forces with two other enthusiastic parent volunteers and two teaching staff to create an after-school gardening club open to all. This included parents and carers. We started small, using a few disused planters and approaching local businesses and farms further afield for support to get things up and running. One farm in Norfolk provided 50 rhubarb crowns and we got unusual varieties of seeds from the Heritage Seed Library, as well as saving seeds from supermarket tomatoes. Quick-growing crops such as peas, beans and herbs that could be harvested before the summer holidays also worked well.

To map out and structure each session, we got ideas from the RHS Campaign for School Gardening website which has advice on seasonal tasks and activities for each month. Before long, over 50 families were on board and passion for the project bloomed. I saw so many benefits – for both the children and the adults – from improved wellbeing to new friendships.

I'll never forget one wonderful boy, Nathan, who has SEN. To begin with he was very shy and wouldn't speak to many people, but at gardening club he came alive and was in his element among the worms, mud and seeds. Nathan's mother sent us a lovely message about how he was really enjoying the sessions and wanted to try lots of different fruit and vegetables at home because he knew exactly where they'd come from.

#### **Going virtual**

The pandemic stopped us gardening together in person but our community went virtual. During the first lockdown, we set up a WhatsApp group and exchanged ideas such as growing cress in toilet rolls, watching garlic cloves regrow and making homemade fat balls for the birds. There was still so much children could achieve at home, even if they had no outdoor space.

Gardening over lockdown was so important for children's mental health



and also kept the adults well-balanced and hopeful. We were even joined by more families, keen to find out what gardening they could do at home or what to spot when exercising in the park as the seasons change.

We have big plans now that restrictions are easing. We want to 'rewild' around the school's perimeter fence with wildflowers, dig a wildlife pond so children can pond dip for minibeasts, and hopefully hatch chickens. We'll also continue to grow lots of varieties of fruit, flowers, vegetables and herbs.

Parents love to be involved in school life and communities can be strengthened through the power of plants. It might seem like a daunting task but gardening truly helps build confidence, teaches patience and encourages everyone to think about the world around them. As my son always says, when you have a "mum on a mission", you really can achieve a lot. **TP** 



Michelle Jones is a parent volunteer at Ashmount Primary in London, and winner of the Royal Horticultural Society's School Gardening Champion of the Year

award. Sign up for free resources and advice from the RHS Campaign for School Gardening at the below website.

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#### Online Therapy For SEN Pupils

Covid disrupted the provision of SEN support, but could digital options ensure children get the help they need?

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#### Focus on TA Training

Good TAs are a vital asset, but we shouldn't rely on goodwill to make the role a success.

Read it at tinyurl.com/tpgoodwill



#### Is Your School Attachment Aware?

Explicitly putting the relational approach at the heart of all you do is vital, says Karen Pilling.

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# Pooling KNOWLEDGE?

Our new SENCo network helps us to share best practice and support each other in this challenging role

#### **REBECCA KAYLL**

he past few months have reinforced the value of networks, especially when it comes to the support of our SEND pupils here in Warrington. The SENCo role can be an isolating one, especially within primary schools. There is often just one SENCo in the school and, although the staffroom will be supportive, sometimes you need the opportunity to talk to a colleague who is familiar with the ins and outs and challenges of the role.

In our multi-academy trust – Warrington Primary Academy Trust (WPAT) – SENCos are not alone. With a SENCo in each of our six trust schools – five in Warrington and one in nearby Widnes – there was a supportive network already there. It just needed to happen. We began our SENCo network in autumn 2019, with the aim of using it to share best practice, develop consistent policies together and provide a support network for SENCos across our trust schools.

The meetings are held once every half term. Before the pandemic these were face to face, rotating around our schools, but since then we've decided to shift the meetings onto Microsoft Teams. The network has a chair and the agenda for each meeting reflects the current needs and priorities of our schools. For example, we identified the monitoring and assessment of pupils with SEND as a development point across all of the MAT schools. The network meeting gave us the opportunity to share best practice across the schools and develop a shared approach to monitoring the progress of pupils.

This coming together of professionals, each with lots of experience-based insights into their practice, is what makes our network so powerful on so many levels. As well as monitoring, we've shared our views on the best SENCo CPD and our experiences of SEND reviews and Ofsted inspections.



#### **In-house CPD**

But it's not simply a forum for sharing views and advice. As the network develops it will play an increasingly important role in leading the development of our SEND provision across WPAT. We're looking at how we enhance the processes we use to identify SEND across the trust and we've started developing in-house CPD to offer across the MAT schools.

Each of our schools has specialist knowledge in key SEND areas and their insights and experiences should be shared with our other schools. For example, one school employs a qualified play therapist who works with the children, while another focuses on dyslexia-friendly strategies. A third SENCo is delivering ADHD training and a parenting workshop for children with neuro-developmental conditions. We need to be sharing the knowledge and

"Our policies are more robust because they are scrutinised and quality checked by six SENCos" the insights each school gains from working in these areas across the network. If we can do that then our SEND provision will be even stronger.

Since the pandemic started, the network has been a valuable forum for the sharing of government and local authority guidance on SEND, which has changed significantly over the past few months. The transition of SEND children back to school has been a major topic for us during our virtual network meetings. Again, we've been able to discuss our individual experiences and advice on how best to work with CAMHS during this process. There is wider support and advice out there and if there is a network of people sharing their tips and advice we are all far less likely to miss something that will be valuable to our work in this area.

#### Latest research

The agenda of our next half-termly network meeting provides a good idea of the scope of topics that are discussed. Items on the agenda include reviewing our SEND information report to include the impact of Covid on SEND pupils, working with outside agencies during the pandemic and reviewing the latest research and guidance on remote learning for SEND pupils, should it be needed again.

Good SEND practice runs on sound policies that are regularly updated to reflect



#### **"IT'S REALLY USEFUL"**

Staci Cooper, SENCo at Evelyn Street Primary, shares her experience of being part of the SEND network...

"There is such a range of experience and if you have a question or a concern there is always somebody who knows and who can help. At Evelyn Street we use an excellent literacy specialist who works with our SEND children and we have recommended her to another MAT school who is now using her. That's a great example of how we use the network to share our knowledge.

"It's also really useful when it comes to developing SEND policies and information reports. These are complex documents that we have to get right. The approach we've taken is to create core documents which are then tailored by the individual schools.

"We took a similar collaborative approach with EHC plans for some of our SEND children and these have been well received. For me the network gives me the assurance that there are colleagues who face exactly the same challenges as me."

current rules and expectations. This is a big job if you are doing it on your own, but with our network this is now a shared effort. It also means that our policies are more robust because they are scrutinised and quality checked by six SENCos.

The network is also playing a key role in the professional development of new SENCos. When one of our schools welcomed a new member of staff we appointed a network member to mentor them and make sure that they never feel isolated in their role. It was another example of why we set the network up in the first place.



Rebecca Kayll is headteacher at Penketh Primary School, part of Warrington Primary Academy Trust (WPAT), a multi-academy trust of six primary schools

and a teaching school.

upat.warrington.sch.uk

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Brake's Kids Walk is a great way for our school to raise awareness among the community of how we can create a safe environment to enable children to walk, while also raising money for a worthwhile cause.

Iris Smith, HLTA, Penshurst Primary School



Aardman

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# Life's a BEACH

Our themed nurture room has helped to support pupils through emotionally difficult times, and all without a desk in sight

#### **ELLIE BALLINGER**

ur staff had been noticing a steady decline in our pupils' mental health, which appeared to be worsening year on year. While we pride ourselves on good relationships with parents and are heavily engaged in raising awareness among our students around issues such as social media usage and cyber-bullying, we felt that there was still more that we could do to help support all of our children, especially those with specific emotional needs.

Following discussions within the school and ascertaining the extent of the issue, we decided to create a 'nurture room'. We felt that the investment would yield great results in the form of more resilient, well-balanced children who would be more ably equipped to deal with their emotional issues. A dedicated nurture room, distinct in design from classrooms, would provide a welcoming and relaxed space within the school for us to work with our pupils in a productive and structured way.

#### **Transporting children**

We worked closely with a design agency on how our nurture room should look and feel. From the start, the company understood exactly what we were trying to achieve, and having discussed our objectives, helped to bring our ideas to life. Themed around a beach hut, the room features a realistic beachside scene, flanked by colourful bunting, sunny postcards and holiday photographs, all aimed at transporting children away from the classroom environment. There's not a desk in sight – just child-friendly furnishings. Blue beanbags, relaxed chairs, soft seaside-themed cushions and small tables for carrying out activities help to deliver the relaxed feel we were after.

We are fortunate enough to have emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) trained teachers, who support the emotional needs of pupils within school. These specialist skills help allow for one-to-one sessions with children where specific and measurable targets are discussed. This process can be difficult, but the nurture room, with its calm and secure environment, really helps children to feel safe and able to talk more freely. This allows us, as teachers, to substantially build on our nurturing ethos. Only once this first critical stage is complete can we decide upon the right course of action for each individual child.

#### **Calm and positive**

Strategies might include Lego-based therapy – a collaborative, play-based social skills intervention designed to improve social competence in children with social difficulties. Likewise, art therapy is a strategy used within the nurture room, with the opportunity for children to produce work that is both meaningful and personal while encouraging them to think about the message of the session – the 'nurture focus' –



This article first featured in our sister title The Headteacher. Find out more at primaryleaders.com

such as developing positive self-talk.

Our ELSA-trained staff have noted that, as a result of these types of sessions, children become much more aware of how to communicate with each other and what behaviour is acceptable within the session. Confidence has increased and behaviour is far calmer, with the children having grown and developed in a positive manner.

The nurture room environment helps children to relax and feel special while focusing on their tasks. Overall, it's been a great success. During its first year, 47 children received some form of nurture session – that's 23% of the whole school. My teaching colleagues have seen an increased love of school, confidence, attainment and self-esteem and talk of pupils' excitement and desire to work in the nurture room. In addition, several parents have approached me asking whether their child might benefit from nurture provision, such is the need for this kind of support. **TP** 







Ellie Ballinger is headteacher at Greysbrooke Primary in Lichfield, Staffordshire.



#### **JULIANNE BRITTON**

#### his six lesson topic o Pupils range

his six-week series of art lessons is focused around the topic of self-portraits. Pupils will find out about a range of famous artists and will

learn how to draw faces using correct proportions. Throughout the lesson series, children will create a number of artworks, including a 'split face' portrait, transient portraits from objects and a Picasso-style face focused on colour. They'll also get to grips with shading and the symbolism of portraiture. We've provided everything you need to get started straight away, so why not give it a go?

#### **FREE RESOURCES!**

Download FREE accompanying resources and worksheets for this plan at teachwire.net/teaching-resources/ks2-art-ideas



#### WEEK 1 Learning objectives:

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• Draw a portrait using the correct proportions

Introduce your class to the topic of portraits. Discuss what a portrait is. This may also be a good time to talk to children about portrait and landscape in terms of the orientation of paper. Do children know of any famous portraits?

Share a selection of portrait images on each table. Children can work in groups to discuss which ones they like or dislike and why. Provide them with sentence starters (**Resource 1**) to help them discuss the artworks. Can they rank the pictures in order of their favourite to least favourite?

Explain to pupils that they will begin the

topic by learning about the correct proportions of the face when drawing a portrait. Model the step-by-step process of drawing somebody's face accurately. Download a free PowerPoint from **tinyurl.com/tp-portrait** to assist you. Print the slides

as handouts for the children to refer to when drawing portraits of their partners. Ensure children are sitting opposite their partners before they begin drawing their portraits.

#### Assessment

Look at how well pupils have followed the guidelines in order to draw a portrait of their partner with accurate proportions. At the end of the lesson, show children some example portraits that have incorrect proportions. Can they spot that the eyes are too high or the mouth is too wide, for example?

WEEK 2 Learning objectives: • Complete a 'split face' self-portrait using a photo

Prior to this lesson, ensure you have photographs of every child in your class. Print these photos in black and white and cut them in half vertically before starting the lesson.

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What can pupils remember from last week's lesson? Do they remember any of the guidelines for drawing a face? Explain that this week, pupils will be drawing self-portraits. Share examples of famous self-portraits. This is a good opportunity for children to broaden their knowledge of well-known artists such as Vicent Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso and Frida Kahlo.

Explain to the children that they will be using the halved photographs to help them create a 'split face' portrait, completing the other side in pencil. View examples of split face portraits at **tinyurl.com/tp-split**. When children have finished, they can then complete a coloured patterned background to contrast with and complement their monochrome portrait.





At the end of the lesson, collect up children's work then choose some to show to the class. Before you show each image, cover the photograph part of the image with a piece of card. Can the children identify who each portrait is of?

Looking at pupils' self-portraits, assess how well they've remembered the proportions of a face from last week's lesson. You can also see how well they have managed to complete their own portraits using the photograph provided.

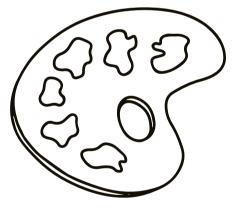
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#### WEEK 3 Learning objectives:

• Create a portrait from a range of unusual objects

Ask children what they have learnt about portraits so far. Can they remember any particular artists or their work? Show examples of 16th century Italian artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo's work. He painted portraits where the faces are made up of objects such as flowers, fruit, vegetables or books. Explain to children that they are

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going to create portraits out of different materials as well. Show portrait images by current American designer Justina Blakeney for extra inspiration.

Next, give each child a piece of white card and a name tag. On each table, set up a basket of different objects. These could include haberdashery (fabric, thread, sequins, buttons), natural items (twigs, leaves, flowers, shells), food stuffs (fruit, vegetables, nuts, pasta) and stationery (paperclips, rubbers, sharpeners, rubber bands).

Children can now complete a carousel activity, going from table to table and using the different objects and materials to create their own portraits on the white card. Don't stick the objects down – this way they

#### FEATURES PLANNING



can be reused. Instead, ask pupils to place their name tag by their creation so that their masterpieces can be photographed as evidence.

#### Assessment

Look at how successfully the children have been able to use a range of materials to create portrait-like images. As a plenary, children can work together in a large space to create a bigger portrait, similar to the 'Big Art Attacks' from the children's television series.

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#### WEEK 4 Learning objectives:

• Use different pencils to create a range of tones

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Show Arcimboldo's portraits from last week. Explain to the children that they will be creating artworks based around his work. This time they will be returning to sketching.

Introduce a variety of sketching pencils. Explain that they are graded based on their hardness ('H' means hard, 'B' means soft). The higher the number, the more hard or soft the pencil. Ask why you might choose to use a 6B or 2H pencil. What kind of lines would they give you? Give children time to practise using different pencils, shading from light to dark and creating 3D effects (**Resource 2**).

Give children a simple outline of a picture based on the work of Arcimboldo (**Resource 3**). Ask children to shade in the different shapes using different grades of pencil to try and achieve a 3D effect on each. Experiment to see how different pencils change the appearance of the artwork.

## Assessment

Looking at children's shaded images, assess how well they have managed to use different pencils to shade from light to dark and achieve 3D effects..

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www.teachwire.net | 45

#### WEEK 5 Learning objectives:

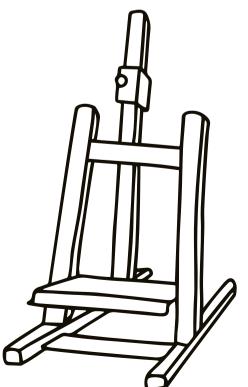
Create a portrait inspired by PicassoUse colour to portray emotions

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Ask children to place their sketchbook inside a black bin liner so they can't see it. Next, ask them to position their pencil on the paper then draw the person sitting opposite them. They shouldn't take their pencil off the paper at all. Remind them not to be tempted to look at their artwork. This method is called 'contouring' and will create some very unusual yet interesting portraits. It makes children really think about where the pencil is on the paper. Model the method to them first.

When they reveal their drawings, the children might be shocked at what they've drawn. Explain that it's fine if their artwork doesn't look like a portrait. Show the children some of Picasso's later portraits. Discuss the 'cubist' style of artwork and explain that art doesn't always have to be realistic. Instead, it can give an impression of what something looks like or create a feeling. The facial features of Picasso's portraits do not always follow the realistic proportions that you discussed in the first lesson.

Show some of Picasso's work from his blue period. How do these images make children feel? Jot down words on the board. Explain that the colours that artists use can affect how you feel when looking at an image. Artists use different colours for different feelings. Think about the different colours associated with different emotions. Give children a spectrum of colours to stick in their sketchbooks (**Resource 4**). They can then label each colour with the different emotions they think they represent.



Show children a portrait based on the work of Picasso at **tinyurl.com/tp-face.** What do the children think of the image? What do they think the colours represent? Explain that they'll be creating their own pieces of art, similar to this one. Their Picasso-style portrait will be split into two halves, each half representing different emotions.

Model how to use oil pastels then children can use them to draw their own Picasso-style portrait. Hand out a basic outline of a face (**Resource 5**) as a guide. Children can choose how to split the face in half and add in facial features. Using appropriate colours of oil pastels, portray different emotions on the two halves.



#### Assessment

How well do children's portraits convey different emotions? Have they successfully achieved an abstract/cubist style? As a plenary, children can work in groups to match emotion words to different portraits. They can discuss the reasons why they think each portrait represents each feeling.

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#### WEEK 6 Learning objectives:

• Recognise symbolism in portraits

Display various paintings of past kings and queens. Do the children recognise any of the rulers? Explain that before cameras were invented, painted portraits were very important, especially to royalty. Kings and queens would employ a royal portraitist who would come to paint them. The king or queen would choose everything about the portrait - what clothes they would wear, how they would stand, what objects would be in the painting. Why do children think they did this? Why do they think portraits were so important to them? Explain that portraits were their way of showing the public what they wanted them to see. They would want to look powerful and strong.

Show children the Armada Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I (tinyurl.com/ tp-armada). What questions do children have about the painting? What can they see? Who do they think it is? Print out the image and give one on each table of children. Ask pupils to work in groups to write questions and words around the image. Establish that it is Queen Elizabeth I. Discuss the objects in the paintings. Why might she have chosen to have these different objects with her? Explain that in the painting, a battle can be seen taking place behind the queen. This was painted just after Queen Elizabeth had defeated the Spanish Armada. She is brightly lit, signifying her victory. She is also angled



towards the calmer scene and away from the stormy battle. This shows she is the bringer of peace. Her hand is rested on a globe, specifically on America, to show her power and conquests. Just a few years before this painting, English people had first settled in America. The queen's dress is embroidered with pearls and suns to show her purity and royalty. The crown on her right also represents power and royalty.

Ask children to write about the symbolism in this portrait of Queen Elizabeth I. Provide question prompts to help them write about the items and what they represent (**Resource 6**). To end the lesson, ask pupils to think about what they might include in their own portraits to symbolise them and the things they like. What would they wear and why? Would they be holding specific items? What would be seen in the background? Fill out the worksheet (**Resource 7**).

#### Assessment

By reading the children's work, decide whether they have been able to successfully interpret symbolism in different items. Have they been able to think about items that would symbolise them?



Julianne Britton is a qualified teacher with eight years' experience, author of educational resources and a private tutor.



#### PARTNER CONTENT

# *"Awaken children's enthusiasm for science"*

Chloe Francis from the Royal Society of Chemistry explains how a new website can boost confidence

#### 30 SECOND BRIEFING

Designed to help teachers simplify science, Steps into Science from the RSC can help build confidence in teaching science with high-quality resources, primaryspecific information and ideas for making science engaging – whether you're in the classroom or online.

#### What is Steps into Science?

It's the brand-new website from the Royal Society of Chemistry – somewhere that teachers can see all our primary science resources in one place. Teachers will be able to easily and quickly find high-quality, primary-specific information and ideas for making science engaging and accessible to all their students, whether they're in the classroom or teaching remotely.

#### Why have you produced a primary science website?

At the RSC we believe that engaging young learners with scientific concepts at an early stage in their education can help spark a lifelong enthusiasm for science, and that by inspiring voung minds, we can help ensure that STEM higher education and careers opportunities are available to everyone. Secondary schools may have labs and technicians, but there are lots of fun investigations that can be easily done in primary classrooms to really engage younger children and awaken their enthusiasm for science.

#### What does the website offer that can't be found elsewhere?

Feedback from our members has shown us that many primary teachers feel a lack of confidence in teaching science. There's a misconception that investigations are complicated and time-consuming to set up and that scientific concepts aren't engaging for primary-age children. We want to debunk those ideas; our resources are designed to boost teachers' confidence and help them feel comfortable and enthusiastic about their science lessons.

## What kind of investigations are featured?

One great example is an investigation to find



#### ABOUT CHLOE: Chloe is an education executive and works with colleagues from across the RSC to support primary teachers to teach science confidently.



**Contact:** edu.rsc.org/primary-science education@rsc.org

#### Need to know

+ Steps into Science links science teaching to numeracy and literacy and engages young learners with fun, simple investigations.

+ The resources help teachers inspire a future generation of scientists with ideas for careers in science.

+ All resources are inclusive and versatile, to open up science to students of all abilities.



and food colouring. It's really simple, visually engaging and works on two levels: the children enjoy watching the fun patterns and swirling colours, so they very naturally engage with and remember the 'learning' part - what surface tension is and how it can be broken. The great thing about this and our other investigations is that they use equipment that's very easy to get hold of - there's enough kit to make it feel exciting, and a change from other lessons, but not enough that teachers will struggle to find what they need. There's also a section of the website that focuses on ideas for cross-curricular activities, so that you can bring science learning into literacy, numeracy, history, geography and sustainability.

# Moving ON UP

How can we make the transition to secondary smooth after such a turbulent year? Transition specialist **Emily Weston** shares her thoughts...

ransition from Y6 to secondary is a rite of passage which, last year, many children missed out on. By June 2020 we were still finding our feet with online learning, which meant that many of the transition activities we usually run didn't translate into virtual learning or were done in a way which didn't quite have the desired outcome or prepare children as well as they might have done. It was something which I know a lot of educators felt disappointed in; everyone had done their absolute best under the circumstances, but it was clear that a lot of pupils found the move a difficult one.

Although this year we've been given a roadmap out of lockdown to guide us towards the summer, it's by no means set in stone. We expect our Y6 students will be able to transition to secondary in the traditional way, but this is still a tentative guideline. We're going to have to be flexible, while still providing a transition which allows children to understand their next educational step, feel comfortable taking it and remain fully engaged throughout the process.

As a transition teacher at a secondary school, the move from Y6 to Y7 is something I'm really passionate about as I think it's important that all children feel prepared, academically, emotionally and socially. Transition

#### "Many of the transition activities we usually run didn't translate into virtual learning"

shouldn't be something that is only a focus in the summer term either. If we begin the process at the start of Y6, children will settle quicker when they enter Y7. Rules and routines should start shifting to those of their next classrooms in order to allow familiarity. In a recent transition talk I had with a Y6 class, they couldn't believe that they would need to prepare their own equipment for each lesson!

Of course, there are lots of ways that both primary and secondary schools can ease this process for children. However, I find there are three overarching themes to remember: communication, collaboration and creativity.



#### Communication

This year, communication needs to be even more key than ever before. Usually there's a focus on SEN register children or those with SEMH. Understandably, *all* children this year will benefit from a stronger focus on their wellbeing and mental health needs. Children who would usually find transition an easy process may be feeling more anxious. It's really important that we transfer information about all children effectively, but also that secondaries trust and use the information that has been provided.

Providing additional activities is also really important. Relying solely on 'move up' days this year is not likely to make children feel secure or ready for the next step in their schooling. After a year where they've had constant change, it's likely that moving to a new school setting needs to be introduced before the summer term. Communication with children's new schools and between teachers is important, but communication with pupils themselves needs to be open so they can feel confident.

One way of doing this is with a secondary-style lesson which introduces pupils to what high school will be like. A 'frequently asked questions' session is always useful. If possible, inviting a Y7 pupil in to talk to Y6 about how they found the move can also be very reassuring. This needn't be done in person – it adapts excellently to a virtual lesson if necessary. If your local secondary isn't providing a session like this yet, it's the perfect way to start building stronger links with them. Most high schools will be pleased to accommodate

#### FEATURES TRANSITION

sessions which not only help Y6 pupils transition, but market their school to Y5 too!



#### Collaboration

While teaching Y6, one of the most valuable things I did was go to my local secondary for two mornings and observe Y7 lessons. Often I was talking to Y6 about the next step of transition without entirely knowing myself what they were going into – it had been a while since I'd been in secondary school! I focused on English and maths lessons as I wanted to see how they fitted in with SATs knowledge and understanding. Not only did I get to see secondary lessons in action, but I also got to see behaviour expectations, speak to teachers and even look over schemes of work. It meant I was much more confident in making my classroom a perfect overlap of primary and secondary.

Alongside this, I worked with the school to find out what personal qualities they felt Y7 needed to start school with in order to be 'secondary ready'. From this, we collaborated on a series of lessons that focused on skills such as respect, independence and organisation. It's just as important to prepare children for these challenges, as well as ensuring they're academically on track.

Now I've moved to secondary teaching I can also see that secondaries are very willing to work with local primaries, but unless there are established links this can be tricky. There's also a focus on larger feeder schools, which shouldn't always be the case. Reach out to your local secondary schools and ask what they can provide, not only in June and July, but in the months leading up to the summer too.



#### Creativity

There are so many fantastic activities children can take part in leading up to their secondary 'move up' days. I love asking children to create a 'this is me' pack. This involves writing a letter introducing themselves to their new tutor, a 'quick glance' outline filled with their likes and dislikes and finally, a self-portrait to show their art skills. These packs really allowed children to present to their new schools what they are like as individuals; not just through their teacher's eyes.

There are some other really creative ways you can introduce transition to Y6 children. Why not try a 'secondary week', where children are on a secondary-style timetable? Ask different teachers or TAs to take classes. This is also another fantastic way to collaborate with your local secondary – why not ask them to take one or more of the sessions as an extra taster?

By combining these three areas effectively, you can ensure that, even after a confusing year of in-school learning and remote teaching, children are given a smooth transition and feel confident, safe and, most importantly of all, happy. **TP** 



Emily Weston worked in KS2 for six years and is now an English and transition teacher at a

secondary school in Swindon.

@primaryteachew
teachingisntbw.home.blog

#### PARTNER CONTENT



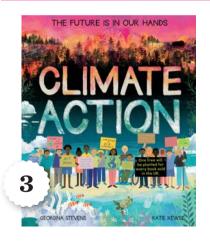
Resources and activities to bring fresh inspiration to your classroom...

#### Identify gaps

Within six months of Maths.co.uk going live, 600 schools have signed up, 20,000 children have logged in and three million questions have already been answered. Carol Hughes, deputy headteacher of Lumley Junior. said, "Thank you! Maths.co.uk is really helpful for



our return to school and identifying gaps in pupil knowledge. We really like the tracking facility and analysis of objectives. Thanks for providing such a great resource!". With whole-school licences heavily discounted, now is a great time to sign up. For more information contact Elaine on **020 8432 9529** or email **support@maths.co.uk** 



#### **Protect the planet**

Celebrate Earth Day with stunning new book Climate Action by Georgina Stevens and Katie Rewse. Empower children to be galvanised with creative ideas for tackling the climate crisis. Learn about the causes of climate change and how it's affecting our world. Explore the human impact and what it means to have a carbon footprint. Be inspired by positive stories from young changemakers around the globe. One tree will be planted with TreeSisters for every book sold in the UK. Download your free copy and teaching resources at **littletiger.co.uk** 

#### Money heroes

Money Heroes is an exciting new programme from Young Money that seeks to transform financial education for children. Recognising that parents and teachers are key influencers in a child's development, Money Heroes

has been designed to enable a collaborative, child-centred approach to teaching financial education. Over the next two years, Money Heroes is offering free training to 500 primary schools to equip teachers to deliver high-quality and impactful financial education. Visit **moneyheroes.org. uk** or register your interest in teacher training at **bit.ly/moneyheroes** 





#### **Inspiring lessons**

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



#### So simple

2Simple has been creating simple powerful educational software for schools since 1999. Its mission is to develop technology that improves learning opportunities of young people of all backgrounds and abilities; employing creativity to simplify difficult concepts to inspire children, making learning fun and accessible right across the curriculum. 2Simple's award-winning product suite covers: primary and secondary; assessment and observation; wellbeing and PE; RSHE and school improvement. For more information about 2Simple and to trial a platform visit 2simple.com/trials

# Wobbly Girls Club

We invited mums to our after-school maths booster group and it made all the difference

MARY FRASER & KATE NUTTALL

aths lessons at our school, Cherry Tree Primary in Bolton, are no doubt very similar to those all over the country, especially when you take a look at many of the girls. They're engaged; they have magnificent work ethic; some even double underline everything in different coloured biro. But time and time again, we find that underneath the veneer of 'perfection' they are sensitive children who won't ask questions and are afraid to make mistakes. They believe that by getting something wrong, they're really rubbish at the subject and their confidence takes a nosedive.

We decided to do a bit of research. On the surface, the girls' work rate was amazing, but there was something lacking when it came to their self belief and self confidence. When we looked more closely, we realised that there was a connection between these children and the amount of home engagement and support they received. What we actually discovered was that a lot of mums were worried about maths. They felt as though they weren't very good at maths themselves, and this was coming across through the girls in school. We decided to start an after-school booster group. We invited the mums of our 'wobbly girls' (as we had begun to affectionately call them) and used the teaching tool Learning by Questions which has online question sets that are scaffolded and guide learners through, building them up from basic understanding to full mastery. It also gives helpful feedback for every answer, so learners feel like they can have another go and get better.

It was brilliant to see parents getting involved. At first they were saying things like, "I can't do these questions", "this is really difficult", "how are we going to do this?". But then the girls started to show their mums how to work out the maths and before long, mums were saying, "I could never have done this when I was at school!".

One of our 'wobbly girls' said, "Our mums came into school because they wanted to know how we do things and how hard it was. My mum isn't really good at maths but I think her confidence grew. As the weeks went by she was shouting out the answers and everything! I was like, "I thought this was *my* maths group, not the *parents*' maths group!". Another added, "The boys show off because they think they can do everything. Now, because we've had a boost of confidence, the girls are like them. We can now say, "Well, we can do it too – it's not just you!"."

Another aspect of maths that we found was affecting home support was that many parents were not sure if they were helping their children the right way, or contradicting methods being taught in school. For these mums to have a go and see exactly what we do in a way that was really accessible

#### HOW TO HELP YOUR 'WOBBLY' PUPILS

• Pre-teach topics with 'wobbly children' before class. Having a grasp of a concept before a lesson increases confidence in those children who tend to panic.

• Provide opportunities for girls to work in small groups. Creating a safe space where girls can make mistakes and learn the power of a wrong answer is crucial.

• Involve parents in their child's maths through joint boosters and workshops. You might be surprised at how popular this is!

• Make it personal. By using cross-curricular approaches and telling young women about famous female mathematicians, girls can see how maths is relevant to them and not just something for boys.

broke down a few barriers. What's more, that class achieved the best results we'd had in four years.

Since the pandemic our Wobbly Girls Club has expanded to cover everyone and other subjects. It's never been more necessary to involve and include parents in learning and sometimes that means bringing them along too. An injection of confidence can go a long, long way. **TP** 



Mary Fraser is headteacher and Kate Nuttall is Y6 teacher and maths lead at Cherry Tree Primary in Bolton. They are ambassadors for Learning by Questions.



Letters from

Celebrate Earth Day with this engaging KS1 Dr. Seuss themed project about environmental awareness...

THE LORAX

Thursday 22nd April marks this year's Earth Day, a global day of environmental action that has been taking place annually for over 50 years. There's no better way to mark the occasion in the classroom than with Dr. Seuss's The Lorax. In the book, Dr. Seuss challenges young readers to be knowledgeable, curious, and thoughtful about the world around them, and his message has never been more relevant: "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." We've put together an exciting free pack to help you discuss and celebrate the environment in your KS1 classroom.

project pack includes

HAT CAN

OU DO?

#### YOUR PROJECT PACK INCLUDES:

- Eight teaching units
- Downloadable wall chart
  Two information sheets
- Six letters written by the Lorax

#### WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Respond critically and creatively to a picturebook
- Explore real-world problems through fiction
- Develop in-role oracy skills
- Learn about the role that trees play
- Develop a greater understanding of why our environment needs help

am the Lorax, and I speak for the res. They are my family.

ike you, I love my family with all my bear nd do my beat to care for them.

- Be motivated to act and understand
- the need to do so collectively

plazoom

Download your resources from plazoom.com/the\_lorax

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#### PARTNER CONTENT

# Read Write Inc. Phonics Fast Track Tutoring

A simple but powerful solution to accelerate the reading progress of pupils in Reception to Y4

#### **30 SECOND** BRIEFING

Read Write Inc. Phonics Fast Track Tutoring provides a simple but powerful solution to accelerate reading progress for Reception to Y4, whether you're using the Read Write Inc. Phonics programme or not. It features online training packs to help you get children reading, fast.

## ACCELERATED READING PROGRESS

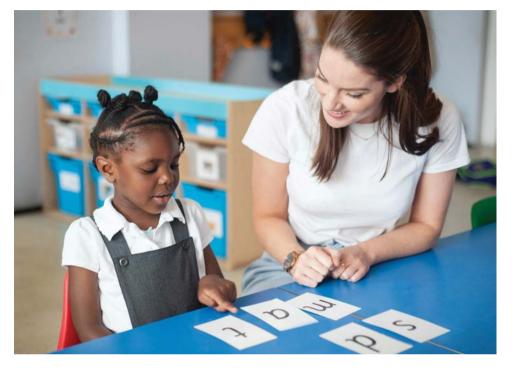
Fast Track Tutoring breaks down the phonics and reading strands of Read Write Inc. Phonics into smaller steps to provide intensive, targeted support to address specific gaps in a child's reading. Tutors learn how to teach pupils to read letters, blend sounds into words and read matched decodable stories, so that they can offer focused catch-up support to children who have fallen behind with their reading, as well as extra support for children with SEND.

#### 2 EXPERT TRAINING

Ensuring that the teaching of phonics is the best it can be is the most effective way to speed up children's reading progress. That's why an essential component of Fast Track Tutoring is its online training subscription, provided by Ruth Miskin Training. A year's training subscription includes a bespoke two-hour remote training session, delivered by an expert trainer from Ruth Miskin Training, to help you get started. You'll also receive unlimited access to a wealth of online training resources and films.

#### 3 ONLINE SUPPORT

The Fast Track Tutoring online subscription includes more than 50 films to guide you through every part of the tutoring process. These consist of explanatory films, practice films (where trainers show you how to practise the steps) and in-action films



(where the trainers walk through using the steps with pupils).

#### 4 STEP-BY-STEP GUIDANCE

Inside the Tutor Pack you'll find a comprehensive Fast Track Tutoring Handbook. This includes an explanation of how to organise your setting, quick assessments for placing children at their challenge point, and step-by-step lesson plans. It contains

#### Find out more: 01536 452620 oxfordprimary@oup.com

Contact your local Oxford Educational Consultant for more information at oxfordprimary.co.uk/ fasttracktutoring everything you need for your sessions. If you are already using Read Write Inc. Phonics, you can access the Fast Track Handbook via your Read Write Inc. Phonics online subscription.

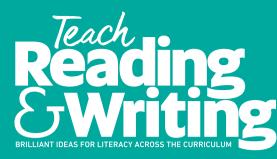
#### **5** PARENT-FRIENDLY

Take-home Pupil Packs help reinforce what children have learnt in their sessions, each containing sets of Speed Sounds Cards for learning the letters and sounds, plus Phonics Storybooks. To help engage and support parents with their children's learning at home, Flashcards and Storybooks contain simple notes for parents on how to use the resources.

Fast Track Tutoring provides expert, targeted support for your best phonics teaching, written and developed by Ruth Miskin, with training delivered by her expert trainers. If you teach Read Write Inc. Phonics, you already have the resources needed for Fast Track Tutoring and simply need a training subscription to get started.

**KEY POINTS** 

Fast Track Tutoring offers focused catch-up support, which means that schools in England can use their catch-up premium funding to purchase it. Fresh Start Fast Track Tutoring, providing age-appropriate support for children aged nine to 13, is also available.



#### **INSIDE THIS SECTION**



Use our downloadable resources to help pupils get to grips with expanded noun phrases



Boost pupils' reading skills by considering how you explicitly teach the strategies that children need to be successful



From vending machines to live online raffles. here's how one school has kept children excited about stories...



We review a range of new titles that primary-age children will love, including The Perfect Shot by Eve Ainsworth

#### RESOURCES

Give children a safe framework for talking about what's happening

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help pupils formulate and articulate their own opinions about it. Visit plazoom.com/ collections/ topical-tuesdays

# Meet the **MANHO**



Abi Elphinstone on dyslexia, imagination and being branded 'unteachable' at school

he word 'dyslexic' doesn't exist in the Unmapped Kingdoms, a location in my book Everdark. The Lofty Husks probably took one look at it and decided it was far too difficult to spell or bother remembering. But if it had existed, it would probably have been used to describe 11-year-old Smudge. Late for everything, not much good at spelling, constantly daydreaming and always finishing bottom of the class, Smudge is an overlooked and largely forgettable girl - at the start of the book, anyway. But then she sets off on an adventure to save the Unmapped Kingdoms aboard a magical boat called The Coddiwomple, and she discovers that if she dares to believe in herself (and in magic) she might, in fact, be capable of extraordinary things.

The inspiration for Smudge came from my own childhood. At school I was branded 'unteachable'. Yes, I was a bit naughty (I see, in hindsight, that setting traps for your French teacher is unacceptable and stealing out of maths lessons to run wild in the forest is unwise). but at the heart of this wayward behaviour was another issue. In class I was struggling to process information, structure my writing and concentrate, but I didn't know how to talk to my teachers about this or ask for help. I only discovered after school that I'm dyslexic.

#### **Character forming**

I can't pin all of my childhood naughtiness on my dyslexia, but I do think that it explains a few of the problems I had at school. I wish I'd known how to ask for help; I wish I'd learnt ways to make things a little easier; I wish I hadn't doubted my abilities so often. That said, I think coping with dyslexia at school - and finding my own methods to navigate it – has helped shape some of the strongest aspects of my character.

It took me seven years, three failed books and 96 rejection letters before I got my first book published. Although that journey was painful and embarrassing, it also taught me far more about joy and determination (not just in writing, but in life) than any of my good fortune ever has. Inside every person who faces rejection there grows a quiet grit and a sense of joy at every little thing that does go right. Disappointing days stay firmly in perspective and I'd take that hard-won grit and joy over an easy book deal any day.

Since becoming an author, I've worked out various 'strategies' to make the writing process a little easier. Before I write a single word, I spend time gathering ideas. I read picture books,

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browse photography books, sketch maps and travel to new places to have adventures. I wander into antiques shops and inspect their treasures, such as grandfather clocks, glittering gemstones, leather-bound books and unusual keys. I pinch character names from everyday things, like shower gel (cue the surname 'Pecksniff' for the heroine in The Dreamsnatcher) and street signs (cue 'Erkenwald' – the name of the magical

kingdom in Sky Song, which came from a road in London).

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#### **Fictional sketches**

When I've seen enough to inspire a story, I draw a map of the world I want to write about, because it's only when I start imagining my characters moving from place to place that a plot

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unfolds. Sometimes I sketch my fictional world directly onto an Ordnance Survey map to make sure the geography works, and other times I draw on a blank sheet of paper using memories of interesting places I've discovered. Often I get stuck when writing – days when the words sit stubbornly out of reach – but I've never found myself stuck when doodling an imagined world.

I don't draw well. Nothing is to scale and often the sprawling lines make no sense to anyone but me, but I'm bold in my decisions. I'll have Wildhorn here (an island in Crackledawn, complete with waterfalls that flow in figures of eight and feather-tailed monkeys that jump through the trees); I'll have Lonecrag there (home to ghastly ogre eels). Maps tip me into my stories.

Once I've mapped a journey, I break my story down into bullet-pointed chapters (and sometimes sketches of key scenes), then I feel confident enough to take the plunge and start writing. I used to think that the people who were lucky enough to become authors were the people who scored the highest marks in class. But all you need to write a story, really, is an idea that nobody else has stumbled across yet and the determination to turn that idea into a book. And that is just as well for dyslexic people, because we notice things other people miss and we know that if we dare to believe in ourselves, we can be capable of extraordinary things. TP



@moontrug

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Abi Elphinstone is the author of Everdark. It is now available as a dyslexic friendly edition (£7.99, Simon & Schuster Children's).

"I think coping with dyslexia at school has helped shape some of the strongest aspects of my character"

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# *How to teach* EXPANDED NOUN PHRASES

Use our downloadable resources to help pupils get to grips with this area of the grammar curriculum

#### **REBECCA JAKES**

t's been years since there were changes to grammar, punctuation and spelling in the curriculum, yet the teaching of specific grammar terminology is still the cause of many Twitter spats, lively debates and teachers pulling their hair out in the staffroom. So why after so long, is grammar terminology still an issue – and does it need to be? My answer is no.

For me, the answer is keep it simple and fun, learn it in context and practise with daily drip-feeding of terminology. As teachers we plan immersion into new vocabulary with every unit we teach, so teaching expanded noun phrases should go hand in hand with this. Here I share my favourite strategies and activities for teaching expanded noun phrases.

#### **Activity one**

This activity is called 'Say six things' and really is as simple as it sounds. Add a picture stimulus to the centre box in **Resource 1** (below, left), or use our examples. To begin with, ask children individually or in pairs to write six nouns that they can see in the picture. For example, for this picture they might write 'trees', 'leaves', 'branches', 'elephant', 'grass' and 'river'.

Now move on to expanding the ideas. Give each child or pair some small sticky notes and ask them to choose an adjective to describe each noun,

"For some reason, when the sticky notes come out, even the most reluctant writers want to join in"



then write them on the sticky notes. I always paraphrase when using terminology – I have no problem at all with reminding children that adjectives are describing words if it helps them remember it.

Place the notes over the boxes they have written the nouns in. Repeat two or three times until each box is covered with several layers of notes. For some reason, when the sticky notes come out, even the most reluctant writers want to join in. It never fails to get great outcomes.

This is a lesson in itself and it's important not to rush the teaching and generation of vocabulary. By gathering responses each time by asking for nouns and adjectives you are revising pupils' prior knowledge of this terminology. It's also the perfect opportunity to address any misconceptions about word meaning.

The following lesson can then be dedicated to turning these ideas into expanded noun phrases. Modelling is the key here, with explicit labelling of terminology every time. This activity is an easy and adaptable activity and a great way to teach thesaurus skills. It's also a perfect opportunity to discuss the 'appropriateness' of a word.

#### **Activity two**

A character slinky is a fun way to teach expanded noun phrases. It's particularly effective with SEND pupils and supports EAL pupils with learning adjectives. Fold a narrow length of card concertina style (see example, below). Open out the card to create a character body. Ask children to attach a head, arms and legs to their card before adding a different adjective in each space created by the concertina.

To extend this activity, prompt children to focus on specific nouns related to their character as they add them – nose, eyes, legs, for example. This helps encourage children to look deeper into a character rather than think of the most basic adjectives. Once the



#### TEACH READING & WRITING

	Synonym 1	Synonym 2	Synonym 3
•			
happy			
sad			
••			
angry			
••			
excited			
upset			
scared			

character slinkies are filled up, model turning the ideas into expanded noun phrases, then move to using these in full sentences.

#### **Activity three**

The great thing about teaching grammar in context, rather than as a stand-alone lesson, is that you can kill two birds with one stone. Expanded noun phrases are a great way to revise commas in a list at the same time. This activity works particularly well as a morning starter and can be completed as a thesaurus/synonym activity. The best thing about it is it teaches 'feelings' vocabulary, which pupils invariably find difficult. I can't be the only teacher who despairs when they hear the words 'joyful' and 'forlorn' as a synonym for happy and sad. Where do they get this from? It's not me!

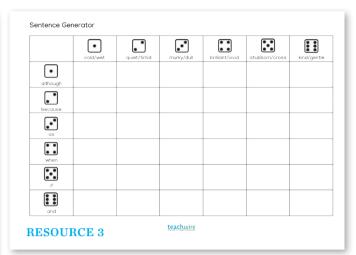
Using **Resource 2** (above), let children fill in six adjectives in the first column, or use our examples. Children must first roll a dice to see which adjective they need to find a synonym for. For example, if a child rolls a one they must then find synonyms for the word 'happy' and fill them in in the three boxes along the row – 'cheerful', 'jolly' and 'smiling', for example. Continue the activity until the table is complete.

Next, looking at a picture you have provided or their own character or setting, pupils must choose two appropriate adjectives to turn into an expanded noun phrase in a full sentence. For example, if their image is of the BFG, they might write, "The jolly, smiling giant grinned fondly at Sophie."

#### **Activity four**

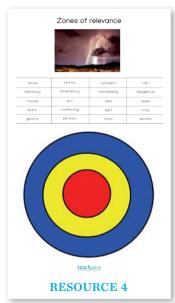
Children working at greater depth are likely to grasp the use of expanded noun phrases quickly. To enable them to work at greater depth from a grammar point of view, the following two resources can be adapted and used again and again.

A sentence generator (**Resource 3**, above right) enables pupils to generate adjectives and conjunctions with the roll of a dice. The challenge here is that children must build a sentence around



these given words by selecting an appropriate noun. For example, if a child rolls a one then a three, they must include the words 'although', 'murky' and 'dull' in a sentence. The challenge here is that all the other words they use must be appropriate too. So a child working at greater depth might come up with an expanded noun phrase in a sentence like this: "Although the sun was out, it was murky and dull in the forest." Get children to record the words they've used by putting an 'X' in the box. They can then roll the dice again and repeat the activity a number of times. Be sure to model the activity carefully first to ensure children fully understand what they need to do.

Once pupils become confident with a thesaurus, they can also be challenged with a 'zones of relevance' board (**Resource 4**, below)



#### Free online resources

Download all these resources for free, including



blank versions, from teachwire. net/teachingresources/ expandednoum-phrases

to make their expanded noun phrases even more effective. Give children a stimulus and words to accompany it. They must decide how relevant the words are in the context of the stimulus. If a word is irrelevant, put it outside the circle. If it is relevant, decide how relevant the more relevant it is, the closer it must be to the centre. Once pupils have decided, they can then use the relevant vocabulary to create sentences containing expanded noun phrases.

All of these strategies are tried and tested methods to teach expanded noun phrases in a fun and meaningful way. It's unlikely that the debate over grammar terminology is likely to go away any time soon but does teaching terminology have to suck the life out of learning? Absolutely not! **TP** 



Rebecca Jakes is a Y2 teacher at Preston Manor Lower School in London. She has

worked previously as an associate English advisor.

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# Creating good READERS

Boost pupils' post-pandemic skills by considering how you explicitly teach the strategies that children need to be successful

eading is the key to learning. However, if you're a child who finds reading tricky, loving it can be a real challenge. Right now this is even more important, given that according to the DfE, pupils are on average two months behind in their reading learning as a result of the pandemic. How can we reverse this trend and ensure every child becomes a good reader?

The first step is to identify the exact level at which pupils are reading. A diagnostic assessment and gap analysis will give you the information you need. Try to get a snapshot of each child's reading attainment, including decoding, fluency and comprehension. Once your assessments are complete, look for patterns in your gap analysis and plan how to address these.

#### Widening repertoires

When teaching reading, choice of text is very important. Think about the complexity of decoding, vocabulary and content, and of course, engagement. Try not to just use familiar books, but instead focus on widening children's reading repertoire. This is where your knowledge of children's literature comes in. You could even explore paired texts, such as Beetle Boy and The Beetle Collector's Handbook by MG Leonard so that pupils can make connections in their reading.

## Cultural capital

Pupils who struggle to read sometimes need to build their background knowledge and vocabulary. A child with good cultural capital will often have more of the

#### **JO GRAY & LAURA LODGE**

prerequisite knowledge needed to understand what they are reading than a disadvantaged child. Try exploring key concepts and vocabulary before reading. For example, with Beetle Boy, you might discuss mystery stories, insects and museums first. Then you could teach key vocabulary such as 'specimen' and 'archaeologist', giving them strategies to unpick unknown vocabulary. With 'archaeologist', for instance, explain that '-ist' means 'somebody who does or makes' and gather as many examples as you can, discussing their shared meaning.

#### Cognitive processes

Every good reader has a range of skills they use to make meaning. By explicitly teaching these, we can support all children to become resilient readers and give them the knowledge needed to comprehend any text. But which skills and strategies need to be taught? The most important skills of a reader are to retrieve information, define vocabulary in context and make inferences. A good reader will also sequence events, summarise content and predict what comes next. They will consider the effect of language, make comparisons and explore relationships. These aspects of reading need to be taught progressively and

regularly. Skills need to

be explicitly taught and modelled, including the metacognitive processes we use when reading. For example, when teaching inference, introduce the idea of "What I read' + 'What I know' + 'What I think' = my inference". By breaking down the cognitive processes behind reading, you can show children what a good reader does and give them the strategies they need to create meaning, before they practise and apply them.

Teaching reading strategies is a complex process and can be daunting. Reflecting on your subject knowledge is really important and getting to grips with research such as the EEF Literacy Guidance Reports is a great start.

#### **Reading journey**

Reading for pleasure has a profound effect on children's ability to understand what they read. We need to encourage a love of reading whenever we can: children need daily time to read books they want to read, and need to see reading role models. By encouraging children to read for pleasure, we help them read more, and the more they read, the better readers they become. For children to achieve their potential, you must consider your whole-school reading curriculum and whether it teaches the skills needed. Supporting a child on their reading journey is about so much more than just academic success. The benefits of reading go far beyond this. When we support every child to be a good reader, the

Jo Gray and Laura Lodge are authors of Schafield & Sims' Complete Comprehension and education consultants for One Education,

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# Wrapped up in READING

From book vending machines to live online raffles, here's how we kept children excited about stories during lockdown...

ur school community has transformed over the last 18 months. We've established a reading culture where every child has the opportunity to accelerate their skills and discover the joy of becoming absorbed in a book.

During lockdown, staff thoroughly enjoyed the experience of recording daily lessons for pupils to take part in from home. It also gave the team a fantastic opportunity to develop our parents' and carers' understanding of our curriculum and the way in which our lessons are delivered. As many of our families showed a keen interest in learning from their children we set up an online grammar course, led by an external provider, which introduced parents to the grammar content expected of primary-age pupils in a friendly, non-threatening way.

In addition to this, we also led virtual phonics workshops so that the families of our youngest children were fully equipped to support their children during their daily phonics lessons. This is something we'd usually carry out in school at the beginning of the year, but this was a great alternative. Being able to watch their children's daily phonics lessons supported parents with their understanding. One parent said that she'd never been an avid reader, yet after being in the same room as her son's daily whole-class reading sessions, she stole his book and read it overnight! It was great to see lessons having an impact on whole families. We plan to continue providing community workshops to help families immerse themselves in their children's learning.

#### Virtual library

During the school closures we created a virtual library, offering a range of online books. The titles were chosen by our English leader to support our wider curriculum but also our pupils' mental health and wellbeing. We reached out to our local councillor,

#### **OLIVIA BARTLETT**



Maddi Bridgeman, who had supported us with previous reading initiatives, and she was able to provide financial support to help us purchase digital copies of these texts. Marine Academy Primary in Plymouth kindly shared their virtual library template with us and staff also filmed themselves reading some of the texts.

The whole library was contained within a PDF document that was sent to families, posted on Facebook and added to our school website. It was set out to look similar to our actual school library, and we even included avatars of staff members for that personal touch. We're going to continue to update and use the virtual library - it's reassuring to know that our children have access to a huge variety of texts that they can then listen to as audiobooks from home at any time.

#### **Book raffle**

Another way we combatted the problem of children having a limited amount of books in their homes was to introduce a book vending machine. We reached out to local councillors and companies to see if they

would be willing to support the idea, so that all our children could have access to a wide variety of high-quality texts. We were successful with this and we now use the books as part of our reading reward system. When pupils meet a reading target - anything from reading a certain number of times a week to more personal goals such as confidently reading aloud to the class - they get entered into a half-termly raffle. While school was closed we drew the raffle live on Facebook. Winners were then able to come to school and select their book from the vending machine. Children were so excited to hear their names called out on Facebook that sometimes they arrived to pick up their prize within ten minutes! The books come at no cost to children's families but add excitement and give each child a sense of achievement on their reading journey. As we navigate the school return, we're

pleased to be able to offer children a wider range of books to read than they had access to at home. This variety makes a huge difference to children's levels of engagement. We were thrilled to be recognised in the Renaissance Lockdown Learning Awards for our staff's commitment to maintaining children's love of reading during lockdown. We're so pleased to have the children back in the classroom, continuing their reading journey, and will be looking at how we can build our reading culture even further. TP



Olivia Bartlett is an SLE and assistant headteacher at Tor Bridge Primary in Plymouth, Devon. The school won the Wrapped Up in Reading Award at the Renaissance Lockdown Learning Awards 2020.

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Creative

CONNECTIVES

Ensure children's writing holds firm by building a deep understanding of how ideas can be joined together

#### SUE DRURY

magine a brick wall without mortar. It might stand up for a while, but as soon as someone leans against it you know exactly what's going to happen. Now think about a written composition. You can arrange your beautifully worded sentences as skilfully as you like but, without connectives, they just don't hold together. So, how do you get your pupils to use them in their work?

A few years ago, it felt as if the thought police had turned teachers' world upside down when they were ordered to refer to 'conjunctions' instead of 'connectives'. However, there is a difference: all conjunctions are connectives but not all connectives are conjunctions. In short, conjunctions are words that join clauses within a sentence. Coordinating conjunctions, such as 'and', 'so' and 'but', connect main clauses. Subordinating conjunctions, such as 'because', connect a main clause to a subordinate clause.

'Connective', on the other hand, is the term used to describe any word or phrase that connects ideas, be it within a sentence, between sentences or even between paragraphs.

#### Joined-up thinking

Connectives can be used for adding or listing ('furthermore'); they can help to sequence ideas or indicate time ('earlier'); they can express cause and effect ('therefore'); they can also help to convey a contrast ('although').

It's perhaps not surprising that adverbs and adverbials (groups of words that perform the same function as an adverb) are often used as connectives. After all, if the job of an adverbial is to modify the verb in order to indicate how, when or where the action took place, this will often create a link with other ideas in the text. For example, so-called 'time adverbials' such as 'first' and 'later' link ideas because they create a connected chain of events. Meanwhile, adverbials such as 'next door' establish one place in relation to another.

Prepositions are words that connect a noun to a verb or adjective. For example, "You can go out to play after tea." This makes them connectives almost by definition. Words which can be used as prepositions often act as adverbs or key words in adverbial phrases. If you're brave, you might like to try to explain that prepositions need objects whereas adverbs do not and that a preposition with its object can form an adverbial.

#### In practice

The most important thing with connectives is getting your pupils to use them in their writing.

#### LET'S CATCH UP

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At this stage, there is absolutely nothing wrong with giving them a word bank to work from. For those who are getting the hang of connectives, introduce some stylistic pointers. The most obvious one is to avoid using the same connective time and time again. Another good tip is to ensure that pupils' writing includes a variety of sentence lengths and styles. Finally, remind children that there are other ways of creating cohesion within writing, *but* that is probably a whole new discussion. **TP** 



Sue Drury is a content creator for Plazoom, the specialist literacy resources website for primary schools.

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# Book CIUB

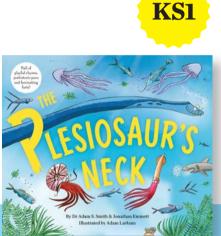
#### We review five brand new titles that your class will love



#### Shu Lin's Grandpa by Matt Goodfellow (£12.99, Otter-Barry Books)

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Shu Lin, a Chinese immigrant, is finding it hard to gain acceptance in her new school. She doesn't speak English very well, doesn't seem to want to join in with playground games and eats brightly coloured food with chopsticks at lunch. "What's up with her?" ask her classmates. But when Shu Lin's grandpa comes to school and shows the class his amazing Chinese paintings, everything changes. This uplifting picturebook shows the transformative power of art and imagination. The touching story is perfect for helping pupils develop cultural understanding and empathy. It's a vivid depiction of starting school in a new country - an experience that may chime with your pupils. Author Matt Goodfellow is a former primary school teacher. Chinese illustrator Yu Rong's artwork is full of detail and comes to life on the stunning double-gatefold spread revealing Grandpa's beautiful picture.



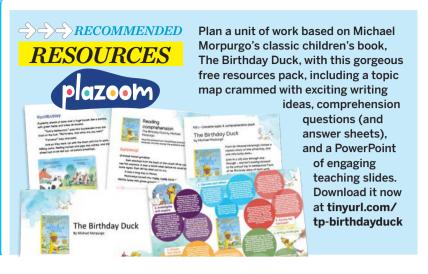
The Plesiosaur's Neck by Dr Adam S Smith & Jonathan Emmett (£7.99, UCLan Publishing)

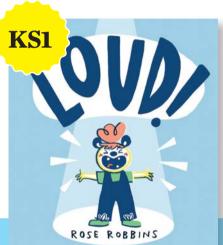
Poppy is a plesiosaur with an extraordinary seven-metre neck - but what is it for? Did she use it to pluck off pesky parasites, to zap predators with electricity or to ambush unlucky fish? Children can explore these and other entertaining hypotheses scientists have suggested to explain this prehistoric puzzle in this new picturebook from plesiosaur expert Dr Adam S Smith and award-winning author Jonathan Emmett. Playful rhyming text outlines each hypothesis and is supplemented by fact-filled information boxes exploring some of the science behind each suggestion, while a pair of cheeky cephalopods - Alfie Ammonite and Bella Belemnite - make humorous observations alongside. With beautiful and scientifically accurate illustrations from Adam Larkum, this book is perfect for fact-guzzling fans of dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures.



#### **This Wonderful Thing** by Adam Baron (£7.99, HarperCollins Children's Books)

Adam Baron, author of Carnegienominated Boy Underwater brings Cymbeline Igloo and familiar friends back to life in a third fantastic adventure. Middle grade readers will enjoy the playful narrative form as alternate chapters tell the stories of Cymbeline and a new character, Jessica. Their parallel plotlines become intriguingly entangled in a mystery involving a lost teddy bear, inexplicable burglaries and an enigmatic historic medal. Both children must also navigate complex family problems which Baron treats lightly, and at times humorously, but always with great sensitivity. Short, snappy chapters and whole pages dedicated to one tiny phrase or a repeated scream in different fonts make this a fast-paced page turner which keeps you guessing right to the end. **Recommended by ReadForGood.org** 





#### Loud! by Rose Robins (£12.99, Scallywag Press)

Abigail is frustrated. She can't focus on writing at school. Instead, she scribbles, fiddles and fools around instead, often getting sent to the calming down room. When it's time for a music class and Abigail discovers that she can't make any of the instruments work, things are about to go wrong again, until a special teacher discovers exactly what to do to help Abigail find a special voice of her own. Written by Rose Robins, the Waterstones Prize shortlisted author of Me and My Sister, this is a sensitive book that celebrates neurodiversity - specifically ADHD. Reading this book in class is the perfect way to start a conversation about how children work better when they're engaged with their learning. The author has an autistic brother and teaches autistic young people, and the authenticity of her experience and knowledge clearly shines through.

#### *The Perfect Shot by Eve Ainsworth* (£7.99, UCLan Publishing)

**EVE AINSWORTH** 

KS2

With the end of the first world war being declared, Freddie should be feeling relieved, but his personal war has only just begun. He's still crippled by nightmares and guilt about a mistake that led to a man's death during the war. He tries to distract himself by becoming the unofficial photographer for a female Preston football team. As the girls embark on their first tour, Freddie's on a journey of his own, facing up to his mistakes and taking steps to correct them. The Perfect Shot, the second book in the series, is a coming-of-age retelling of the historical events leading up the formation of the real-life Dick Kerr Ladies football team. This is an inspiring story for KS2 pupils about a group of women who found the courage to play the game they loved at a time when they weren't allowed to join in with professional football.

#### Meet the **CULTON** EVE AINSWORTH ON THE REAL-LIFE STORY OF A FEMALE FOOTBALL TEAM



How did you come across the story of the Dick, Kerr women's football team?

I'd heard about the Dick Kerr Girls before, having watched a news report some years ago. I remember being totally blown away by their achievement and the fact they were working class women who had come together in the first world war to form a football team. However, it wasn't until writing the books that I realised just how successful they were and how much they'd been held back (and let down by the powers that be).

#### What sort of research did you do?

I did a fair amount of research, swotting up on the first world war and what life was like for working class communities during that time. The majority of my research came through working with Gail Newsham. a Dick Kerr historian, who was able to guide and advise me throughout the writing process to ensure I got details correct. The books are based on the true stories and experiences of the Dick Kerr Girls, but my main characters are completely fictionalised - so I have a blend of truth and fiction.

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

It can be used as a historical text as there are many references to the horrors of the first world war and the sacrifices that individuals had to make to survive in those times. It can also be used as a discussion starter about equality and female empowerment, especially when children discover that women's football was banned by the FA because it was deemed too successful! The book could also be used to inspire young people to follow their dreams and fight for their beliefs, no matter what their background is.



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#### **TEACH READING & WRITING**



Vi Spry: Licence to Chill

Merge spy skills and reading skills then embark on a top-secret mission with **Maz Evans'** new novel...

#### JENNY BALDWIN

his new book from Maz Evans is like gold dust for the classroom. It has it all: comedy, mystery, spies, gadgets, villains – and bucketloads of emotion. It's full of important, deeply-felt themes, woven together with heart and humour – so funny, at times, that children (and adults) won't be able to stop laughing. Not only that, but the unique, spy-inspired hook will challenge pupils to hone their comprehension and inference skills, and read like a spy on a secret mission.

Book topic

> Vi Spy is the story of Valentine Day – Vi for short – who is desperate to follow in her family's footsteps and become a spy. But her overprotective mum, retired super spy Easter Day, has other ideas. Easter is about to marry Mr Sprout, giving Vi an unwanted stepbrother, Russell. But things don't quite go as expected on mum's wedding day. Vi's father Robert (who happens to be the second most evil villain on the planet, and long-presumed to be dead) makes a surprise appearance. But why is he back? And can Vi and Easter really

believe him when he says he's given up his life of crime? With a host of no-good characters, including evil overlord Umbra, not to mention a pair of warring parents, it's down to Vi to save the world.

This book is hilarious and gripping, but it also tackles issues that many children experience – divorce, friendship, bullying. It's perfect for sharing in the classroom and there are lots of fun, spy-themed ideas that will prompt students to develop their reading skills and inspire their creative writing. It's time to begin their secret mission...

Illustrations © Jez Tuya

#### Book topic

#### Sharing the book

There are many links between good spies and good readers. Pupils might even be able to guess what these links are. For example, spies have excellent observation skills; they look closely, they notice small details. Similarly, good readers look closely at text to find clues, both at 'big-picture' level and at sentence level.

A good reader might notice what object a character is holding, or the impact of a specific adjective to describe someone. Spies are also brilliant at making inferences. They read between the lines and uncover the clues that are not always obvious. This is a great skill to encourage in readers. Asking pupils to become 'reading spies' provides a nice challenge, encouraging them to actively read for clues, particularly those who are usually more reluctant to do so.

Before they begin reading, ask pupils to look at the title and cover of the book and record their first impressions. For example, they might consider the clues provided by the words in the title or the colours on the cover to speculate about the book's genre, themes and storyline.

They can activate their super-spy observation skills by zooming in on the cover a bit further. Pupils might consider what the main character, Vi, is doing, or what surrounds her. What is she caught between? Can they come up with words that describe her and how she might be feeling? Can they spot what is written on the mug in one of the characters' hands? Do they notice the spyhole in the top right-hand corner?

As a group, create three 'thought bubbles' – one for each of the characters pictured – and write down ideas for what each of them might be thinking, giving reasons for choices. Then, predict the possible relationships between these characters. How might they develop?

#### Practical activities Spy ranking

Vi Spy is bursting with adventure, chaos and a whole lot of comedy, but at the heart of it is the touching and tender story of a family blending together. Vi is caught between her divorcing parents, but she also has a wonderful new stepfamily to embrace. There are many conflicting emotions to balance here - and Maz Evans handles them with artistry and skill, moderating them with beautifully timed laughs and reassuring words. She presents real and deep family issues surrounded by humour, creating a safe space for children to access and talk about them.

This provides an opportunity to discuss family relationships while reading, to celebrate many different types of family, and also to show children that they are not alone in dealing with any upheaval and change that they may have experienced.

Importantly, Vi's mum and nan are both ex-spies that descend from a long line of female secret agents. Ask your pupils to think about abilities that are passed down through generations – what are the special skills that spies possess? What is a spy, anyway? What does spying *really* involve and can pupils name any spies?

In pairs, pupils can discuss the following things that a spy (and a reading spy!) needs to be good at, rating themselves from one to five (where one is not good and five is excellent), for each of them. Can pupils give themselves a 'spy ranking'? What is their extra special spy skill?



#### Close observation

- Finding out secrets
- Gathering information
- Making inferences
- Connecting the dots
- Remembering important facts and clues

#### **Evil villains**

There is a great scene at the beginning of the book where Vi's mum is about to marry Mr Sprout, only to be interrupted by her long-lost husband, Robert, seemingly back from the dead. This is also the scene where the evil villain Umbra is introduced – she ominously watches the wedding with interest via satellite.

Maz explains that she chose the name 'Umbra' because it means 'the darkest part of the shadow' – which is where Umbra has been hiding. Taking inspiration from Maz's choice, ask pupils to consider what evil name they would give to their villain.

All good villains have something recognisable in them – they have biographies and life stories just like their heroic counterparts. To create a good villain, pupils might start by thinking about their own biographies,

### **Take it further** $\Rightarrow \Rightarrow$

#### WATCH MAZ'S VIDEOS

Maz has created a series of fun short videos to explore some of the themes in her book, including family, villains and secret spy identities. The videos are hilarious, enjoyable and engaging – perfect for sharing in lessons to introduce pupils to different ideas in the story. They come with a set of classroom resources, free extracts and discussion questions. Chapter-by-chapter resources and ideas for the book are also available. Visit chickenhousebooks.com/schools.

#### FAMOUS SPIES DOSSIER

Throughout history, spies have led dangerous lives. The information spies stole was often so valuable that they



#### **TEACH READING & WRITING**



exaggerating various elements of them to create their evil alter-egos.

#### Secret agents

Secret Extract

The secret agents in Vi Spy all work for an agency called SPIDER and, as such, they are all named after spiders. Give pupils the chance to come up with some spider-themed identities of their own – to create their own code names, secret missions, and special undercover disguises.

All great spies need to have a special spy gadget. Ask pupils to write down all the spy gadgets they can think of, such as night vision goggles or hidden cameras. Explore how spies often use ordinary

's Mission: Spy Families

objects as surprise gadgets. For example, a normal-looking umbrella might also have a poisoned spike; a lipstick tube might transform into a pen with special powers. Ask pupils to consider what gadget they could make with:

- A pencil
- A glove
- A bike

Can pupils create their own spy gadgets? They might want to use Vi's Eye-Spy in the book as inspiration – an amazing spy watch with special powers. They should imagine they are sending

faced death if found out. Some spies worked like burglars to collect information. Others had access to information because people trusted them. Spies could win or lose wars, and even change the course of history. Ask pupils to carry out some research into famous spies through history, creating a top secret dossier of their findings.

#### SPY MEMORY TEST

In groups, test spy skills by getting

#### Loved this? Try these...

Who Let the Gods Out? - Maz Evans
Millions - Frank Cottrell Boyce
The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates - Jenny Pearson
Uma and the Answer to Absolutely Everything - Sam Copeland
My Brother is a Superhero -David Solomons

their gadget to be designed by a special spy agency, like SPIDER, so their design should be as clear as possible, with lots of labels and annotations about how it will work.

#### Design a spy file

Encourage your young reading spies to get creative and design their own spy files - these are top secret, classified files in which pupils need to store all of their work on this very important reading case. Encourage pupils to design their files according to their own style and interests. What colours will they use? What images, shapes and fonts? Perhaps they might want to cleverly disguise their files, to throw any nasty villains off the scent? They should carefully consider whether they want to include their name on their spy files, or whether they want to use an alias. There is also a Vi Spy-themed spy kit available for download at chickenhousebooks.com/schools. TP



Jenny Baldwin is a former English teacher and founder of SHAPES for Schools. Visit Chicken House's website for more resources and ideas for the classroom.

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chickenhousebooks.com/schools

together 10 to 15 objects on a tray, such as a spoon, pencil, rubber, etc. Put one classmate in charge of the tray. The rest of the group has one minute to look at everything on the tray and try to fix the objects in their memory. Now the person in charge covers the objects. Pupils should write down a list of as many objects as they can remember. The winner is the one who remembers the most. Try again, putting someone else in charge of a new set of objects. RIBE • SUBSCRIBE • SUBSCRIBE • SUBSCRIBE • SUBSCRIBE • SUBSCRIBE

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Explore health and wellbeing issues with these useful resources

### Post-lockdown support

As the Covid pandemic continues globally, never before has the health and wellbeing of our children and their relationships with others been so important. Covering the complete set of relationships and health education objectives for primary schools, Discovery Education Health and Relationships provides a suite of ready-to-use lessons and tools. The programme helps schools not only deliver on the new RHE requirements, but also provides resources to help them to address concerns and anxieties.



Discover how the spiral curriculum builds upon lesson topics each year, see how child-led videos help pupils relate more deeply to the content and explore comprehensive teacher guidance that allows all educators to confidently deliver RHE. Discovery Education Health and Relationships is currently available at no cost until October 2021. Visit **discoveryeducation.co.uk/pshe** 



### **Beating stress**

Teachers are at the forefront of the collective response to Covid-19, working hard to provide children with continuity of education, care and support. However, levels of work-related stress among teachers are soaring. The Do-BeMindful Initiative comprises a suite of whole-school, resilience-based recovery programmes. The team has experience of working with over 2,500 educators in 400 schools and the programme has been proven to deliver measurable, quantifiable outcomes and positive impacts for the mental and emotional wellbeing of teachers, children and families. Call 0800 197 8804 or email enquiries@do-bemindful.com

### Sun safety

As of September 2020, all English primary schools must teach pupils about safe and unsafe exposure to UV and how to reduce the risk of sun damage. The Sun Safe Schools National Accreditation Programme provides schools with an extensive range of free resources to help them safeguard children against the dangers of UV during school hours and prevent skin cancer through education. Over 4,500 schools have registered with the programme, which has received thousands of five-star testimonials. To register or find out more visit sunsafeschools.co.uk





### Trauma training

Trauma Informed Schools UK provides part-time diploma training to ensure your school truly supports the mental health and emotional wellbeing of staff and students. The training empowers key staff to respond effectively to children with mild to moderate mental health problems and also provides whole-school strategies. You'll receive a wealth of practical intervention ideas, informed by 1000+ up-to-date research studies. During the Covid-19 crisis, TISUK has delivered training to over 20,000 staff in UK schools. Receive a free Zoom briefing by visiting traumainformedschools.co.uk



### Get dancing

Concerned about your EYFS pupils adapting to school life and expressing their feelings? diddi dance is passionate about dancing as a way for EYFS pupils to express themselves. With the use of trained specialists, its network can provide sessions for nursery and Reception classes with engaging content to help children settle back into school life. Dance helps both children's physical and mental health and being active to music helps release 'happy hormones'. Discuss your school's requirements by emailing info@diddidance.com

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HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS



Feel a little squeamish about delivering RHE? Use a free programme to get back on track...



How to use the Recovery Premium this summer to help boost children's physical and mental health



Unless your whole school community prioritises wellbeing, catch-up won't be possible...



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## *Getting* **PSHE RIGHT**

Creating an inclusive PSHE curriculum shouldn't feel daunting and needs to be a team effort...

#### **VICTORIA PUGH**

ith the introduction of statutory relationships and health education, many PSHE coordinators have been thrust into policy changes, curriculum writing and the joys of writing action plans. But what do you need to create high-quality, inclusive PSHE provision in your school?

Unsurprisingly, I've found a whole-school approach is essential to implementing a high-quality PSHE curriculum. Although, in the past, PSHE lessons have often been 'one offs' or a quick ten minutes in between lessons, 2019 DfE guidance advises that "core knowledge is broken down into units of manageable size and communicated clearly to pupils, in a carefully sequenced way, within a planned programme or lessons".

It's important, therefore, that you consider a spiral curriculum, which builds on both content knowledge and skills. This doesn't mean you need to throw the baby out with the bath water, however. Complete an audit with teachers and staff about what they think works for their individual year groups and any topics that might need to be swapped or moved to a different stage. This allows your PSHE coordinator to ensure that there is a progression of learning, coverage of skills and content, and that transitions from EYFS and into Y7 are considered.

Considering the needs of the pupils and your local community is also important. Using a range of national and local data, such as Public Health England, the NHS and the National Child and Maternal Health Observatory (ChiMat), for example, you can create a bespoke curriculum to meet every child's needs and ensure inclusion for every pupil.

### **Training for all**

In my experience, many teachers lack confidence when teaching topics which may be sensitive in nature, and the worry that they will say something wrong or not know the answer can be an issue. This is where training is key. Teachers may not have covered any PSHE education training in their initial teacher education courses or indeed had any in-service training, which makes it even more important to provide quality training for all staff.

I encourage my own student teachers to practise saying the scientific names for body parts if they find this difficult, although I do remind them that the supermarket or public spaces may not be the best time for this! Training should also include senior leaders and governors, so that decisions around provision can be made as a team. High-quality training ensures consistency, understanding and an ability to question current practice. It also gives an opportunity for discussion, whereby the whole team can play a part in decision making and sharing of ideas. Decisions might include questions such as:

- How will we carry out a consultation regarding RSE with families?
- When will we introduce the

teaching of scientific names for body parts?

- How will we ensure that our curriculum is representative of all pupils and families within the school?
- How can we include the community in our curriculum and incorporate the skills or work of others to enhance the curriculum?
- Does the curriculum build on skills and knowledge in an age-appropriate way?

### **Inclusive PSHE**

As teachers, inclusion is at the heart of everything we do, but it's not always easy. The nature of PSHE lends itself well to creative teaching and learning, and needs to be viewed as more than just circle time. Creating a safe space for discussion and debate is a key factor in high-quality PSHE provision. For some pupils, the classroom will be the only place that they experience varying perspectives on a range of life issues. Therefore, our teaching needs to be culturally responsive and

### "I encourage my own student teachers to practise saying the scientific names for body parts if they find this difficult"

inclusive for all.

Using picturebooks to explore a range of issues within PSHE can be an effective and inclusive tool. They allow for an element of distancing where pupils can discuss situations and scenarios without needing to apply them personally. As teachers, we might not know what is really going on in a child's life; distancing techniques and stories can often give the child something to relate to. Picturebooks are also vital in ensuring that pupils can see themselves represented within stories, so making sure that stories have diverse main characters and families in them can support pupils' feelings on inclusion. Once, when I was

observing a lesson, the teacher

gave out some resources and worksheets to support her Y1 pupils. A girl sighed loudly and told me that she was never on the worksheets. When I asked her what she meant, she said all of the children on the worksheets had blonde or brown hair and white skin and didn't look like her. Pictures, and images in general, form a powerful tool for inclusion with classroom and school displays, giving an opportunity to celebrate diversity and inclusion. Taking a walk around your school with a critical eye can be a useful activity to assess the inclusivity of the pictures or images displayed. Do your displays show diversity of ethnicities, homes, family structures? Although not intentional, the lack of representation on these worksheets affected the girl's

feeling of inclusion within

the class and led me to challenge how inclusive my own practice was.

### Watch your language

Your use of language can also play an important part in an inclusive curriculum. For example, you might often use a phrase such as, "Let vour mum and dad know about ...". However, part of relationships education is for pupils to recognise that families may look different to their own and this has to step beyond PSHE education into the language used across the whole curriculum. Phrases such as these need to be adapted to become more inclusive and representative of the diversity of families and homes.

Creating an inclusive PSHE curriculum shouldn't feel daunting and should definitely be a team effort. Thinking about what your pupils need to know, the skills they need to develop and the culturally responsive and inclusive tools you use to enable this will help you to create the very best PSHE provision in your school. **TP** 



Victoria Pugh is a senior lecturer in primary PSHE and RSE at the

University of Worcester. She is the series editor of Collins' My Life PSHE scheme of work.

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### HEALTH & WELLBEING SPECIAL

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# Just words

Feel a little squeamish about delivering RHE? Use the summer term, and a free programme, to get back on track...

#### LUCY MARCOVITCH

ecently, I asked around 50 adults how they got through lockdown. A pattern emerged which could be generally grouped into categories related to food, exercise and the comfort of family and friends. But there were also other, less wholesome responses - 'not coping' behaviours including crying, overeating, drinking and insomnia. None of these strategies were 'right' or 'wrong'. Taylor Swift might have used lockdown to record two albums, but that doesn't mean she coped any better than the rest of us. We all had our ways of working through it.

At a basic level, people's solutions were all about health and relationships; our ability to manage life is down to how we manage our health - mental and physical - and our relationships with others. But as adults there was a context for our structures - an understanding of why lockdown was necessary and previous experience of managing challenging situations to draw upon. Children didn't have that context, and sadly for many, not even the support and safety by which to develop one. In school we teach children how to read, write and count but until now, we have never had to teach them the knowledge and skills to navigate their own lives.

#### **Ready for RHE**

Health and relationships education for primary schools became statutory in September 2020, with advice from the DfE that schools had until the beginning of this summer term to have it in place after the pressures of the first lockdown. In February the DfE issued a further statement, acknowledging the difficulty in delivering a comprehensive RHE programme in the current climate and 'encouraging' schools to prioritise content based on their pupils' need, with a 'particular focus' on positive relationships and mental and physical health.

You may feel confident that your RHE curriculum is planned and ready to deliver; many of you will be delivering it already, but if you still think there are gaps, the summer term is a good time to address these. At the very least, you should ensure that you are following current legislation: that you are providing some relationships and health education, that you have published your RHE (and sex education if provided) policy and that parents have been consulted.

Despite its necessity for navigating life, there might also be aspects of RHE that you feel unsure about or nervous of. This won't necessarily be down to experience. Some of you will have been teaching a long time and still feel anxious about teaching sex education to Y6 or might never have taught younger children the proper names of body parts. You may not feel prepared for the questions children might ask, or clear about what is age-appropriate language or content. However, fear not - help is at hand.

### Surrogate siblings

Having a good curriculum programme, where these worries have been taken into account, can help. Discovery Education's digital 'Health and Relationships' programme covers the complete set of DfE

www.teachwire.net | 77

objectives and is being made available to all schools free of charge until October. The programme is divided into six main topics, each containing a set of developmental lesson plans for each year group which build on and extend previous learning. The lesson plans provide a clear structure for learning but are also flexible enough to adapt or extend to suit individual circumstances. There are opportunities given for recording learning and progression, and suggestions for further challenge or extension.

As well as the lesson plans, videos for each topic and age group develop learning through animation and real-life scenarios. The videos can be used alongside activities to introduce, enhance or extend learning, or separately as a way to discuss concepts further. Led and voiced by young people acting like a surrogate older brother or sister for pupils, and revisiting the same characters to develop a familiarity, the videos are entertaining, unthreatening and often funny, offering an engaging way into sensitive topics.

#### Example lesson

Here's an example of how you can lead a Y1 lesson about private body parts. This lesson is the second of three from the programme about 'My amazing body', with the first lesson encouraging pupils to be proud of their bodies by identifying the amazing things it can do.

Included in the digital programme is an animated

video featuring a class learning the names for private body parts with their teacher - you can use it as a way to introduce and explain these words or introduce the words yourself before showing the video to reinforce them. The video has children sharing their 'at home' words for private body parts and having a bit of a laugh about these, normalising the range of words we use and the feelings around them. It reinforces the safety messages that the correct names should be used at school, and that private body parts should only be shown to a trusted adult with a child's permission.

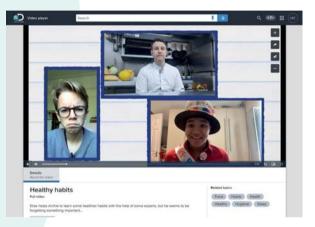
These safety messages run throughout the lesson activities, with pupils sharing their own understandings of the word 'private' before discussing how this relates to our bodies. The words are introduced and definitions clarified within the lesson plan, then reinforced through activities matching words and pictures to body outlines. There are clothed and unclothed versions of this worksheet to choose between, depending on what is most appropriate for your setting.

You can then move on to discussing appropriate and safe behaviour and other ways in which people's bodies are different, encouraging pupils to view these differences with pride. As with all the lessons in the programme, the outcomes are measurable ('We will be able to: use the correct words to describe the private parts of our bodies; describe some of the ways our bodies are similar and different') and the activities provide a way

"Some of you will have been teaching a long time and still feel anxious about teaching sex education to Y6"

#### FREE EXPERT RHE PROGRAMME

Discovery Education's digital 'Health and Relationships' programme covers the complete set of DfE objectives and is available to all schools free of charge until 31st October 2021. Find it at **discoveryeducation.co.uk/rse** 



Schools that do not wish to continue after this date should notify Discovery Education by emailing discoveryeducationuk@discoveryed. com by 30th September 2021.

to demonstrate and evidence these outcomes.

### Demystifying vocabulary

This lesson takes a straightforward approach, emphasising simple safety messages relating to children's bodies, but also treating the names of body parts as what they are - just words. Children's associations with words come from our perceptions as adults and the way we communicate those words. If we convey the correct words for genitalia in the same way as we do for any other part of the body the words become demystified and unthreatening, allowing children to use them without shame when they need to.

You'll find clear guidance on safeguarding in the lesson plan and there is separate information on creating a safe teaching and learning environment for the resource as a whole. There's also advice on how to communicate with parents, along with an explanation of why learning the words is important. Children can build on their understanding as they progress through school, thanks to the programme's spiral curriculum approach.

You may feel a little squeamish about delivering some of the more sensitive parts of RHE. However, remember that if you don't give children this information, they will find it out somehow. At best what they discover might just be wrong, but at worst it could be untrue or unsafe, and could have a lasting impact on their future. **TP** 



Lucy Marcovitch is series editor of Discovery Education Health and

Relationships, a whole-school digital PSHE programme for primary schools.



discoveryeducation. co.uk/rse

### PARTNER CONTENT



Teacher Andrea Taylor explains the benefits of Discovery Education's Health and Relationships programme

### **ABOUT ME:**

Andrea Taylor is a nursery teacher and PSHE coordinator at Newland House School in Twickenham, southwest London.

### How did you find out about the programme?

We'd been researching resources to help us refresh our PSHE curriculum and were very pleased to discover the Health and Relationships programme from Discovery Education. It's simple to use, accessible and has everything that we need to deliver RHE in one convenient place. Not only does the programme do the planning for us, but it also demonstrates what the learning objectives are. So far, we've found the resources incredibly comprehensive.

We initially launched the programme last September for pupils in Y1-6. We found that some of the resources were even suitable for teaching our Early Years pupils. We are now in a position to teach the new RHE curriculum in full, despite the impact of the pandemic.

### **66** How has the programme supported RHE lessons?

One of the unique things about the Health and Relationships programme is that it uses children to present topics within the videos. This has helped pupils relate to the content by reinforcing messages and creating a deeper impact than if the information had been delivered by an adult. Health and Relationships also provides targeted explanatory content which has proved helpful when teaching topics, for example, around different types of families. The programme has been invaluable in teaching our pupils how to understand and accept these differences.

Recently, one of our classes had a friendship issue. Their teacher was very quickly able to use one of the Health and Relationships videos to manage the issue in a sensitive and understanding way. The film helped the children work through their concerns and when the rest of the class watched the video it prompted enough conversation to last the rest of the lesson.



CONTACT Visit discovery education.co.uk/pshe **How has it supported your teachers?** As the RHE curriculum is new, some teachers are understandably a little apprehensive about the best way to deliver the content. Using Health and Relationships has given our teachers greater confidence as it sets out the curriculum very clearly and ensures that the curriculum is age appropriate.

The programme has also provided very useful materials to help us communicate with parents. It's very important, especially with a more sensitive subject such as RHE, to have transparency in our approach.

Health and Relationships makes it easy for teachers to ensure they are covering all aspects of the new RHE curriculum. It takes away much of the hard work of researching and planning and clearly sets out what pupils will achieve from each lesson. The programme provides a complete package, but also offers flexibility to add on our own resources, so it becomes a continually evolving reference point for teachers.

### WILL IT WORK FOR YOUR SCHOOL?

• The Health and Relationships programme provides an all-in-one digital programme to help primary schools deliver the new RHE curriculum. • Written by subject-expert teachers and includes a variety of activity types, age-appropriate resources and comprehensive support for teachers.

• Practical support provided to assist parental engagement, including communication templates and materials explaining the resources. • Until October 2021, your primary school can claim free access to the Discovery Education Health and Relationships programme.

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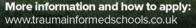
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T R A U M A U

SKCU

CCMH 🙎



CPD one day conferences: The Centre for Child Mental Health www.childmentalhealthcentre.org Trauma Informed Schools UK have provided Mental Health and Trauma Informed Schools training to over 3500 schools in the UK



### HEALTH & WELLBEING SPECIAL

in association with EDUCATION HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS

## Let kids BE KIDS

How to use the Recovery Premium this summer to help boost children's social, emotional, physical and mental health

#### JON WHITE

was standing in the winter sun talking to a Y4 teacher and watching the kids finish their lunchtime footie session. This was during the third lockdown so there were only 12 children in the group. Alongside the game, the teacher also took time to listen to the children and offer advice. "Tm shattered from this term", she told me, "but I love watching them play. Some of the children who are better at football aren't in so it's allowed the others to join in, get some confidence and feel part of it."

As Y4's PE teacher and as a former school sport coordinator, I could have given the teacher lots of ideas about creating an active and inclusive playground, but there was no need. Here was an example of fantastic social health in action.

We made a pact with the children that we would extend the football session until they got bored, then they could grab a basketball. In a relaxed way we'd then move into the basketball 'lesson'. Over the following weeks, and at their own speed, they learnt to dribble and have fun with the ball.

In the last week before half term I left 12 hoops on the ground. You can guess what happened next. Quick as a flash they were all hula-hooping, laughing and helping the ones who couldn't do it. Soon they'd organised themselves into little trains, chugging along and following imaginary tracks, all without arguments – a perfect combination of social, emotional,

physical and mental health.

### "Approach your local authority to see what other funding you can draw down to match your government funding"

### Lost childhood

Watching the Y4 children play without a care in the world reminded me of my own childhood. It was both wonderful and poignant to glimpse a world that is, in some cases, being lost. In 1985, Neil Postman said in his book The Disappearance of Childhood:

"The world of the known and the not yet known is bridged by wonderment. But wonderment happens largely in a situation where the child's world is separate from the adult world, where children must seek entry, through their questions, into the adult world. As media merges the two worlds, as the tension created by secrets to be unraveled is diminished, the calculus of wonderment changes. Curiosity is replaced by cynicism or, even worse, arrogance. We are left with children who rely not on authoritative adults but on news from nowhere. We are left with children who are given answers to questions they never asked. We are left, in short, without children."

I thought a lot about this Y4 'lesson' on my way home each week. I came to realise that their teacher had given them a space:

> one without pop-up adverts; without social media; without academic rigour; without loneliness. How can we make a similar space for all children to be children?

### Work harder

The government has allocated £700 million for the Recovery Premium. Each primary school will receive £6,000 of funding for 'laying on additional clubs and activities' as well as 'interventions'. This money is to be welcomed. The Guardian reported in January 2020 that local councils have cut their spend on youth services from £1.4bn in 2011 to just £429m in 2019, with 750 youth centres closing. Here are some ideas to make some of this £6,000 funding work harder and stretch further this summer:

- Link in with local universities and colleges to recruit students who will offer their time for free to gain experience in a school to build their profile.
- Join up with partner secondary schools or local special schools to recruit sport leaders or young people with aspirations to work in the care sector.
- Approach your local authority to see what other funding you can draw down to match your government funding. Use it to pay staff a market rate wage for something they can offer. Audit all interested staff's skills after putting this offer to them.
- Work with other providers with similar aims, such as football foundations or community interest companies to offer activities alongside you for free.

Mostly though, I hope you can try to create a summer space which will help pupils' social health to flourish and allow children to be, well, children. **TP** 



Jon White is a PE teacher, lead inclusion school manager and inclusion development coach for the Youth Sport Trust. He won the nasen Teacher of the Year award in 2020. Find

out more about the awards at nasen.org.uk/ nasen-awards2020

### 66 Trauma creates change you don't choose. Healing creates change you do choose.?



### eaching - learning - living

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### HEALTH & WELLBEING SPECIAL

in association with EDUCATION HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS

## First things FIRST

Unless your whole school community prioritises wellbeing, catch-up won't be possible...

#### SARAH BERMAN

here's much concern about children being anxious about schools reopening and how their mental wellbeing may have been affected by Covid-19. At the same time. there's rhetoric around the pressure to catch up on learning. One thing I want to make clear is that by not prioritising wellbeing, much of the catch-up that everyone is concerned about won't be possible. As we all know, children need to feel calm, safe and secure in order to learn to the best of their ability. Emotional wellbeing, recreating a sense of community and allowing relationships to rebuild have to be the primary concern now that schools have reopened.

### **Getting it wrong**

You might, understandably, feel worried about getting it wrong or making things worse when supporting pupils and discussing emotions. Although the drive to encourage people to talk about mental health and reduce stigma has been hugely impactful in recent years, you might be concerned about the use of medicalised language and apparent self-diagnosis. Terms like 'anxiety' and 'depression' may be used by pupils, parents and teachers when they've not necessarily been diagnosed. It's not up to teachers to diagnose, but I'd always encourage conversations and curiosity. Ask questions such as:

- Do you know what you're worried about?
- How long have you felt like this?
- Have you had feelings like this before?
- Has it affected your eating or sleeping patterns?

This mirrors how you'd respond to a physical health issue. If a child came to you with tummy ache, you'd ask where it hurt and how long it had been sore, for example. The very process of having conversation with a child will help both you and them to understand and process what they might be feeling and provide a safe space to talk. While you won't have all the answers and may be unable to fix the problem, validation such as "I can imagine that feels difficult" or "I can understand why you are upset about that" go a long way to show that you've truly listened.

It's important to understand that not every intense or upsetting emotion is a sign of mental ill health. The last 12 months have been incredibly stressful for many people, so feeling worried, miserable or confused at times are all normal, appropriate and very human responses. In terms of understanding warning signs of a more persistent problem, when the cause of a worry (an impending exam, for example) disappears, then so should the heightened emotion.

### Significant relationships

Behaviour is a form of communication. When faced with certain behaviours from pupils, try to explore what's driving it and why. To this end, some schools have removed their behaviour policies and replaced them with 'relationship policies'. We know that what children have missed more than anything during this time has been significant relationships outside of their family setting. Rebuilding these external , influential relationships will be key to children feeling safe and ready to learn again. Anything we can do as teachers to support this is incredibly valuable.

Making sure that your whole school community is involved in prioritising wellbeing is key. Every member of staff – SLT, teachers, TAs, lunchtime supervisors and office managers – should be given training and share the same approach. There are many good online courses that all staff can access to increase their confidence in the support that they provide. Emotional and wellbeing education should be embedded across all aspects of school life to maintain an ethos of genuine compassion, understanding, listening and support.

Remember that there are many organisations out there that can support you and your school on this. It's easy to think that CAMHS is the only resource, but that's not true. Find out what other organisations and services are available in your area. It might be a good idea to signpost these on your website, so both pupils and parents can also have access to good, reliable information too. **TP** 



Sarah Berman is part of the YoungMinds training consultancy team, delivering training on a range of mental health issues. View Tes EduCare's

online children's mental health training course, developed in association with YoungMinds, at the below website.

- 🥑 @sarahfrasber
- tinyurl.com/tp-educare

### PARTNER CONTENT



Anne-Marie Martin, founder of diddi dance, on why she adores teaching EYFS children

### **ABOUT ME:**

NAME: Anne-Marie Martin

#### JOB ROLE: EYFS dance teacher and founder of diddi dance

**FAVOURITE FEATURE:** diddi dance encourages a love of movement that can last a lifetime

### Where it began

After graduating with a degree in dance and retiring from a career as a professional dancer, I began teaching dance classes. I gave weekday lessons in a local play centre, working with babies and toddlers. This is where I discovered the joy of working with this age group.

**Platform for expression** Dance is great as a platform for expression. It's especially useful for children in Nursery and Reception whose communication abilities may not be fully developed yet. Children can express themselves freely and start to gain confidence and develop their social skills through moving to music.

**Building up strength** We teach diddi dancers to move with confidence and imagination by using lots of different free movement methods in every session, including



galloping, jumping and twirling. We use large and small props to help children build their strength and develop their fine and gross motor skills. These are fundamental to a child's development.

**Expert syllabus** We've been delivering diddi dance sessions in EYFS settings for 17 years. During that time our syllabus has been tailored to cover the prime areas of learning. We work with child development experts to ensure we deliver classes that are full of fun and meet the developmental needs of under-fives. Contact: Enquire about having diddi dance in your school by finding your local contact at diddidance. com/contact or email info@ diddidance.com

## **ACTIVE KIDS DO BETTER!**



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

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### HEALTH & WELLBEING SPECIAL

in association with EDUCATION HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIPS

# Get a MOVE ON

What is mentally healthy movement and how can it help children express themselves? **Clare Williams** provides some classroom ideas...

fter lockdown and all the social isolation and disruption that came with it, the need for children to feel hopeful and optimistic about the future has never been more important. Pupils need opportunities to express themselves and share their worries and concerns, but also their hopes and dreams.

We know that when children feel anxious this can show itself through behaviours which can be challenging, such as withdrawal, anger, or disengagement. It's important that we encourage pupils to feel safe enough to express how they're feeling.

You'll have seen for yourself that when children feel uncomfortable feelings they fidget, wriggle and can also become poor at managing their emotional responses. Movement can help with this by soothing, regulating and calming children, helping them to release feel-good hormones that bring them back to a more settled state.

### **Powerful tool**

Talking about how we feel is vitally important, and circle time, check-in time and PSHE are essential elements of this. However, mentally healthy movement can be powerful in allowing children opportunities to express themselves physically, verbally and mentally. It involves

encouraging children to express themselves through physical activity and to have conversations with trusted adults who are able to notice, listen and respond in ways that are validating and thoughtful, all while engaging in movement.

Mentally healthy movement isn't about exercise. It's about creating freedom to express ourselves physically; being able to show our mood and feelings. More importantly, it gives children the opportunity to notice and talk about how they're feeling and make connections with others, while moving in activities that may be mindful, energising or gentle.

Movement can involve walking, playing, stretching or moving from one space to another, as well as more active forms of movement like running, jumping and travelling distances. Creating opportunities to engage children in movement while talking about how they're feeling with trusted adults releases higher levels of positive hormones – serotonin, dopamine and endorphins – which enhance their sense of wellbeing, alleviate stress and allow a sense of hope and optimism.

### Try it yourself

Fancy giving it a go? Watch the three-minute stormbreak video at **tinyurl.com**/ **tp-moodshift** to see a 'mood shift' activity in action. It involves creating movements to reflect a word shown on the screen, like 'angry', 'confused' or 'kind'. This short activity can be done in the classroom or outside. It's an example of mentally healthy movement that encourages safe conversations about mental health in a non-threatening yet purposeful way. It aims to help children understand how things can change and that our feelings can also change. We can be active in shifting the feelings we have. After you've tried the activity, encourage children to write about their hopes and dreams or draw what this might look like.

Another activity that you can try is called 'moon and stars'. Watch the nine-minute video at **tinyurl.com/ tp-moonstars**. This idea helps children to visualise their experiences in a positive way. It involves copying movements to represent the moon and stars, then a quiet period of guided meditation.

After the activity, encourage pupils to think about and express how they're feeling. They can then draw, write about and create their own movement sequences to express their feelings. This activity lends itself to writing a poem or creative piece and can energise pupils' imaginations as well as their physical selves.

It's vital to encourage children to express how they are feeling, but this can seem overwhelming or daunting. Mentally healthy movement offers a powerful and engaging range of opportunities that can uplift and shift our mood, help us feel happier and more hopeful and enhance our ability to engage in the world around us and enjoy life. **TP** 



Clare Williams is a former primary teacher and a qualified educational

psychotherapist. She is mental health lead for stormbreak. Find out more about mentally healthy movement at the below website.

Øhellostormbreak



Science & D&T





• How to design and carry out investigations to answer questions

• About the properties of materials

• How to make reasoned, comparative judgements

• Recognise the rationale behind uses of materials in everyday objects



### t mot

**KS2 LESSON PLAN** 

### Get wet investigating materials



Use the hook of the chance to squirt teachers with water in this fun lesson from **Adam Jevons-Newman** 

#### 🥑 @3edmigos

Ever considered what makes a really great coat? This is an engaging and memorable investigative lesson to explore exactly that, and strikes a delicate balance between helping pupils practise some crucial scientific reasoning and investigation skills and giving them the chance to temporarily forget it all in the pursuit of some rather soggy revenge on you, the teacher! In this lesson, children will investigate the properties of materials against a criteria, including waterproofing, before carrying out a potentially hilarious investigation which they're sure to savour. Hairdryer optional!

### START HERE

Ask pupils to go and grab their coats from their pegs and check out their labels. What are their coats made from? There's a strong chance it'll reveal their coats are made from polyester. So, what do children



think about their coats? What, for instance, is the point of a coat, particularly on a rainy day? Discuss with pupils what polyester is – for instance, do pupils know it is man-made? But is polyester the best material for a jacket in the first place? It's time to establish if we're wrong about our coats!

### MAIN LESSON

### 1 MATERIAL WORLD

Prepare a selection of materials in advance that pupils can investigate. For a really effective investigation and discussion, get samples of wool, denim, polyester, cotton, viscose (or silk) and lace. You can buy swatches of various fabrics on sites such as eBay. Ensure you have a range of different materials as this will lead to the most effective investigation. As well as coats needing to be waterproof, they also have a range of other purposes. What are these? And do any materials besides polyester offer those properties?

Begin by asking children



to devise a criteria against which they can 'analyse' a material. What are the key properties we're looking for and for what reason? You may need to introduce some key vocabulary here such as 'malleability', 'waterproof', 'insulation' and 'durability'. To extend this concept further, it's useful to discuss ranking the properties pupils have suggested in terms of the purpose of the material.

#### **2** EXPERIMENT TIME

Once pupils have identified their criteria, their next job is to consider ways to 'score' the material swatches on offer. How can they investigate these properties? How, for instance, can pupils investigate, score and compare malleability?



Challenge pupils to design tests for each of the properties they intend to analyse their coats against.

If pupils require guidance to establish their investigations, refer them back to the coat concept. How do they know if a coat keeps them warm? How do they know if a coat's easy to move in? What could we do to test that? It's important to scaffold and foster pupils' investigative skills – guiding them to design their own methods, where possible, is effective.

Provide equipment for pupils to choose from – such as tweezers, pipettes, petri dishes, clips, beakers, thermometers, timers, scissors and scouring pads (useful for testing durability) – but try to steer away from stipulating how they should be used.

Before letting pupils loose on the fabrics, bring children together and ask them to share their ideas. Ask them to 'pitch' their experiments. This is effective in several ways: it guides pupils to articulate their investigative skills, but also supports other children to reflect on their own ideas and whether they're effective. Follow this with some probing questions which guide (and sometimes scaffold) pupils' plans, encouraging children to review their plans if necessary.

"Challenge pupils to design tests for each of the properties they intend to analyse their coats against"

#### 3 REASONING OR REVENGE?

After the class has conducted their investigations, bring pupils back together and remind them that they need to be prepared to present their findings. Specifically, have we got it wrong about coats? Is there a material we've been overlooking all along?

Children can then take it in turns to share their scientific conclusions, ranking their materials based on their properties. Guide pupils to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the materials they've evaluated. Before asking pupils to submit their 'best' material, explain that there is one final stage left – an extra layer of investigation, just to be super sure.

Ask pupils to submit their chosen material for an additional waterproof testing. Explain that the final test involves the material being held up to your face while pupils take aim with a water gun. It's at this point that pupils may sometimes suddenly shift their recommendations to lace or the wool...

Once this final test is over, discuss the conclusions. Despite a little bit of teacher-soaking, the best material is probably polyester. Ask pupils to articulate the reasons for this. The ensuing discussions about materials, their properties and, in particular, the subjectivity of this, will encourage children to use scientific language.

Adam Jevons-Newman is KS2 and curriculum leader at Farmilo Primary School and Nursery in Nottinghamshire.



• This lesson can be extended into a wider project which involves pupils running their own fashion line. Investigate the properties of different materials before choosing the best material for a fashion product.

• Study items of clothing linked to a period of history then lead pupils to choose a material and manufacture their product. This gives a fun slant on studying a particular period in history.

Make your own material-themed 'Top Trumps' style cards. Taking the concept of scoring materials, pupils can create their own set of cards, scoring materials on the properties they choose. Can pupils report on their findings in the style of a magazine article, opinion piece or sensationalist report? "Coats - we've got it all wrong!". This provides a fun way for pupils to report their scientific inquiry creatively and with a different audience in mind.



What do we look for in a successful coat and why?
How would you be able to investigate that property?
What criteria would you use to score the effectiveness?
What are your

recommendations and conclusions?

#### KS2 LESSON PLAN

**63** 



### • A bout different types of flour

• Difference between wholemeal and white flour

Benefits of
using wholemeal

 White and wholemeal flour can be used in many recipes

### START HERE

\_

Give children two types of flour in small containers – plain and wholemeal. Encourage them to feel it, look at it and smell it. Discuss what differences they can see between



the two flours. Do they know what each one is called? After discussion, reveal the names of both types of flour and see if pupils can guess which one is which. Wholemeal is the name given to wholegrains that have been ground down to form flour. Children should notice that the wholemeal flour feels slightly more coarse and has visible grains (brown bits). The white flour feels softer and lighter and looks white.

### Taste test two different muffin recipes



Learn about white and wholemeal flour and then do a taste comparison, says **Michelle Casey** 

Learning how to cook is a vital skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others well, now and in later life. In this lesson, pupils will learn that simple ingredient substitutions can make a big difference, nutrionally-speaking, and that we have a choice. Children will discover that, in some recipes, more nutritious wholemeal flour can be used instead of white flour. As there is cooking involved, the practical part of this lesson might be better suited to working in small groups, depending on your class, space and facilities.

### **MAIN LESSON**

### 1 SPOTTING DIFFERENCES

What is flour? Explain to pupils that it's usually made from grinding wheat, maize, rye, barley or rice. As the main ingredient in bread, it's one of the most widely used ingredients in the world.

Explain to the children that there are many different types of flour, but they will be examining two of them today. Talk to the children about the properties of both types of flour. One of the main differences is fibre content. White flour (or all-purpose flour) contains only the endosperm (a tissue produced inside seeds) and is made by

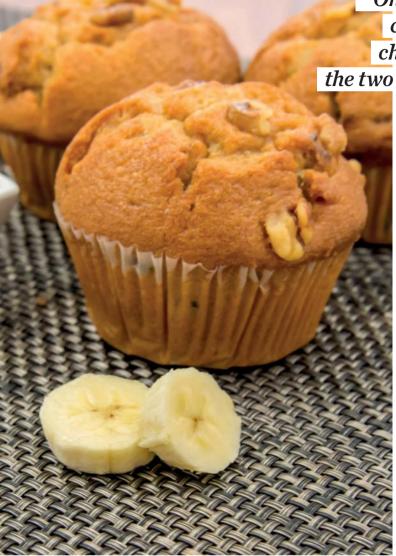


sieving out the coarser wheat particles, which includes bran and wheat germ. The fineness of white flour makes it ideal for cakes, pastries and biscuits.

Wholemeal or whole-wheat flour is made from milling the 'whole wheat', meaning that all three parts of the wheat are ground to create the flour. As it's milled from the whole grain, it keeps its natural nutrients, most of which are found in the germ and the bran, making it higher in fibre and nuttier in taste than white flour. Wholemeal flour is also higher in vitamins such as calcium and iron. Using all wholemeal flour in a recipe can make the finished product a bit heavy or dense, so often

D&T

"Once the muffins are cooked and cooled. children can sample the two different batches"



wholemeal flour is used along with white flour to make the bake lighter.

#### 2 MAKING MUFFINS

The children can now make two batches of muffins, one using white flour and one using wholemeal. Before starting this section of the lesson, gather the following Alongside baking essentials, ingredients and equipment. Per group of ten (to make between ten to 12 muffins) you will need:

• 190g white flour or wholemeal flour (the variable)

• One tsp each of baking powder, baking soda, ground cinnamon, vanilla extract

- Half tsp of salt
- Three large ripe bananas, mashed
- 85g unsalted butter, melted
- 135g light or dark brown sugar
- One large egg, room temperature
- 30ml milk

you'll also need a muffin tray, cupcake cases and a few toothpicks.

Lead the children through the following instructions or give them the instructions to follow.

• Preheat the oven to 220°C.

• Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon together in a

medium bowl. Set aside. • In a large bowl mash the bananas. Whisk in the melted butter, brown sugar. egg, vanilla extract and milk. • Pour the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients, then beat until combined. • Spoon the batter into cupcake cases and bake for five minutes at 220°C.

• Keeping the muffins in the oven, reduce the oven temperature to 180°C. Bake for an additional 16-18 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.

#### **3** TASTE TEST

Once the muffins are cooked and cooled, children can sample the two different batches. Operate this as a blind taste test to see if pupils can identify the two different flours. Typically, because of all the flavours and ingredients included, children generally can't taste the difference.

Michelle Casey is a primary school teacher based in Surrey.



Look more closely at the benefits of fibre, calcium and iron.

Are there any other ingredients which could be substituted for a healthier alternative? For example, you can use medjool dates for sugar and rapeseed oil instead of sunflower oil. Find a recipe and substitute one ingredient for a healthy alternative. Look at the reasons why people don't always use the healthier alternative. This could be that it's too expensive, people aren't aware of it or they like the taste of the original

recipe better. Substitute wholemeal flour into a recipe that usually requires white flour to see if it is better, worse or no different.



- Do you know any other different types of flour?
- What does using a different flour do to
- a recipe? What differences
- can you see between the white and wholemeal flour?
- Do you think the white or the wholemeal
- flour is healthier? • What does fibre do?

Computing





- Understand that a spreadsheet is made up of cells and that each cell has a reference
- Select a specific area of cells
- Adjust the colour and outline of a cell
- Find the correct cell reference when asked
  - Type letters into cells

### Try out spreadsheet battleships

**KS2 LESSON PLAN** 



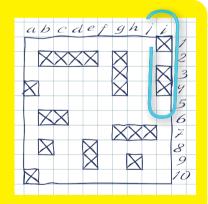
Introduce the concept of spreadsheets and data handling by playing a round of battleships, says **Adam Foster** 

🍠 @ilearn2primary 🛛 🛄 ilearn2.co.uk

Data handling in computing can often be overlooked, but it's an important part of the KS1 and 2 curriculum. Furthermore, data handling skills provide so many cross-curricular links, the obvious example being numeracy (coordinates, for example). This lesson is a fun way to introduce spreadsheet modelling skills to KS2 pupils before they progress to adding data and creating charts.

### START HERE

To begin, introduce the concept of the game battleships. Explain that it's a two-player game where each player guesses where the ships are on the other player's grid,



using coordinates to make their guess. Give pupils the opportunity to play the game in pairs, using a small five-by-five grid. Write A-E along the top and 1-5 down the side. Children must draw one small boat (contained inside one square) and a larger boat spanning three squares. They can now take it in turns to call out a coordinate to find their opponent's ships. Pupils will need to mark their own hits and misses on their grid. The first player to sink all of the enemy ships wins.

### **MAIN LESSON**

#### 1 USING SPREADSHEETS

Explain that pupils are now going to transfer the game they played on paper to the computer using spreadsheet software. Show pupils a blank spreadsheet in a program such as Microsoft Excel, Apple Numbers or Google Sheets. Ask the children why the spreadsheet looks like a grid. Explain that a spreadsheet is used to organise numbers and the grid helps us do this. It's similar to maths books having squares in them it would be harder to set out maths on plain paper.



Demonstrate that a spreadsheet is divided into rectangles called 'cells' and that each cell has a reference to help identify it. These references can be found by looking at which column the cell is in (A, B, C etc) and then the number of the row. Point to or select different cells for the pupils to try and identify. Discuss uses for spreadsheets, such as a football league table, a shop's stock levels or the budget for planning a party. Find and show some examples of these to pupils.

Next, discuss how a spreadsheet is different to a word processor such

### "Pupils need to take it in turns to guess the location of their partner's ships by calling out the



as Word or presentation software such PowerPoint. These have very different uses. For example, you wouldn't use Excel to write a letter.

#### **2** DRAWING THE GRID

Demonstrate to pupils how to select an area of cells (eight-by-eight cells is a good size for this game). Explain that each player will have to select the same size area of cells. Next. demonstrate using the fill bucket in your spreadsheet software to change the colour of the selected grid to blue to look like

cell reference"

the sea. Next, while the cells are still selected, change the border settings so that all the borders are shown. This makes it easier to identify the cells. Finally, choose five different cells on the grid that will represent ships and colour these in a different colour.

#### **3** PLAYING THE GAME

To play their own game of battleships, pairs of children need to be sat opposite each other so they can't see each other's screens. This is straightforward enough if you're using laptops or tablets, but if you're using desktop computers, ask pupils to tilt the monitors so that they are not facing each other.

Children can now create their own spreadsheet, following the version that you modelled. Once they've filled in five different cells they're ready to play battleships. In their pairs, pupils need to take it in turns to guess the location of their partner's ships by calling out the cell reference. If a guess is made correctly, the player gets another go. Pupils will need to mark on their own spreadsheet their hits and misses. This can be done by typing 'H' or 'M' into the different cells. Remind children that the winner is the first player to hit all five of their opponent's ships.

#### Adam Foster is an

experienced primary school computing teacher and education author. He launched iLearn2.co.uk in 2016 to help teachers and pupils with primary computing skills.



Ask pupils to resize the width of their cells to make them squares by adjusting the line between the column letters.

Encourage pupils to use the area under their grid to type player names and keep a score of how many games they have won. Create a literacy link by asking pupils to write instructions for the game of battleships. For **UKS2** pupils, introduce conditional formatting. meaning that the cell will change colour automatically when a letter is typed. This works well with the 'H' and 'M' for hit and miss



• Why is spreadsheet software different from other software, such as word processing software?

- Why is a spreadsheet set out in a grid?
- Why do cells have references?
- Can you think of examples of how people use spreadsheets in real life?

MFL

P

### WHAT THEY'LL LEARN



• Vocabulary associated with immediate family members

• Say what relationship someone has to them; and give their name

• How to say he/ she, and begin to understand the difference between masculine and feminine nouns



### Explore your family tree in German



Learn the vocabulary for describing relatives and introduce masculine and feminine nouns with **Lauren Fields'** ideas

Children love the opportunity to talk about themselves, and things that are important to them. They also love to discover snippets of information about their teachers' 'real' lives. Combine both these interests – and help pupils to develop their conversational skills – by giving them the language tools to talk about their families in this lesson. Make pupils' learning really meaningful by inviting them to bring in photographs from home of their family members in advance of the lesson, and prepare some of your own family, too. This lesson is in German, but can be adapted to suit other languages.

### START Here

Show pictures of your own parents and siblings (or images of people found online, if you prefer) and talk about who they are – saying very clearly, "Sie



ist meine Mutter; er ist mein Bruder", for example. Point to the photo each time you say er or sie, and to yourself when saying *mein/meine*. Pause to check understanding – can children work out who this person is to you? Ask pupils to repeat the key vocabulary as a group, shuffling the pictures and then showing them again for immediate formative assessment of their recall. Remember to remain sensitive to pupils' particular family set-ups during this activity.

### **MAIN LESSON**

#### 1 ER AND SIE

In advance of the lesson, record yourself saying *er* and *sie* onto two sound buttons, or write the words on the board if you don't have recording equipment. However, this is more effective as a listening task than a reading one, so recorded is better.

Ask the class why you sometimes said *er* and sometimes *sie*. Did children notice that when you said *er* you also said *mein*, and when you said *sie*, you said *meine*? Why might this be?

Briefly describe how German nouns always have one of three genders – masculine, feminine and neuter – but today you'll only be looking at masculine and



feminine words. Explain that in today's lesson, this means that male family members have a 'masculine' pronoun (he), and female family members have a 'feminine' one (she).

Play your recorded *er* and *sie* sounds to the class, then demonstrate placing your family members next to the correct sound button. Provide each table with their own set of pre-recorded sound buttons, and allow pupils time to sort their own photographs in this way.

#### 2 BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Return to your own family members' pictures. Show the picture of your brother (or the one you are using to represent a brother), and tell the class,

## *"Use hand gestures and pointing at photographs to make your meaning clear"*



"Er ist mein Bruder. Er *heist* Paul." Repeat, and then clarify that the children have understood the word heist. Ask in English, "What is my brother's name?"

Ask the whole class to repeat your phrase as a group to increase their confidence, then invite some children to tell the class the same information about their own brother. Repeat the activity with photographs of sisters. When some children have modelled the key phrase in front of the class, allow everyone to have a go in small groups, or in pairs with a talk partner. Children who do not have a brother or sister can 'borrow' a

sibling from

a friend to practise this speaking activity.

#### **3** FAMILY QUESTIONS

Come back together as a whole class, and, using your photographs, model how to say, for example, "Ich habe eine Schwester. Ich habe ein Bruder." As in activity one, use gestures and mime to make the meaning of *ich* clear to the class. Show two sisters (borrow from a child in the class if needed), and say, "Ich habe zwei Schwestern." Repeat for two brothers.

Briefly discuss in English with the class the pronunciation difference if they have only one brother or sister, and if they have more than one. Remove a photograph, then say, "Ich habe keine Brüder/Schwestern", shaking your head to emphasise that keine means you have none. Allow children some time to decide which of the phrases they have just learnt are relevant to them, allowing them to discuss with a neighbour or in small groups in order to clarify their thinking.

Returning to whole-group work, ask a volunteer, "Hast du Brüder oder Schwestern?". Again, use hand gestures and pointing at photographs to make your meaning clear. Invite several children to answer your question. Do be mindful of half- or step- siblings – encourage children to simply say brother/sister, but be willing to introduce this extra language if relevant for some members of your class.

Lauren Fields is a primary MFL specialist at an independent school in Lincolnshire.



If your class already knows larger numbers, ask them to extend their sentences about their siblings by adding "Er/sie ist \_\_\_\_\_jahre alt".

• Ask questions as well as answering them. Allow children to move around the classroom, asking each other if they have brothers and sisters, and answering the question when posed by others.

• Provide printed labels using new vocabulary (Mutter, Vater, Bruder Schwester), and ask children to match their pictures to the correct words.

• Pupils can create an imaginary family and describe the members of it (this is especially useful for providing only children with more speaking opportunities).

 Introduce the vocabulary of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Draw a family tree then match some pre-printed labels to each family member.



What does mein/ meine mean? Ensure children understand that it means 'my', not 'me.' Why do we sometimes say one, and sometimes the other?
How could you say, "My brother is called Paul" rather than "He is called Paul?"

### REVIEWS

PE AND WELLBEING

### **Striver by 2Simple**

Comprehensive units of work for PE and wellbeing

### AT A GLANCE

Hundreds of detailed lessons written by specialists
Unique 'Skill Development Activities' to fuel a growth mindset
Whole school calendar function for improved organisation
A classy platform to manage your PE provision

#### **REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL**

Striver has been created to improve primary aged pupils' long-term physical and mental wellbeing. The Striver platform includes comprehensive units of work all in one convenient place.

An impressive collection of expert-created lesson plans go into terrific detail, with simple-to-follow steps, supporting diagrams and photos, brilliant demo videos and other teaching resources.

The lessons are comprehensive and come with teaching tips, objectives, success criteria, key vocabulary, warm-up activities, main activities and cool downs. They have all been tried and tested and written by experienced professionals who know their stuff. Key teaching points and teaching notes are clearly indicated and opportunities to develop and extend pupil talk are flagged up alongside ideas for further challenges.

Striver contains a whopping 71 PE units with over 400 lessons covering a range of sports and activities. But it goes further by also including 36 wellbeing units that cover mindfulness, yoga, nutrition, sleep, personal care and teamwork.

Every PE unit includes 'Skill Development Activities', which enable children to experience a meaningful sense of improvement, so they can join the dots and feel good about PE and themselves. Its philosophy is about teaching children to better themselves rather than





worry about what others are doing. It focuses on children being triers and grafters by setting and beating their personal best scores, and rewards improvements by giving a Hard Worker Award.

For assessing pupils, Striver is configured so you can use your tablet to make judgements with just one touch, and the system is all geared up for generating impressive reports for instant overviews. This quick-entry capability means you can track and compare pupil types easily and you can select your own assessment terminology.

This is therefore an assessment system par excellence that can be used for planning, teaching, analysing, and reflecting on meaningful participation, strengths and development points.

This is an entire PE curriculum that goes all out to improve physical and mental literacy and it really sets the bar high to help children become expert learners. It starts with the child and ends with the child and puts the 'E' in PE.

For PE coordinators, this resource has everything you need to support and develop activity and wellbeing across the whole school community. It is very easy for non-specialists to use and ideal for getting their confidence up. The platform is uncluttered, self-directing and simple to navigate, with bags of ideas and teaching tips.

### teach PRIMARY

#### VERDICT

 Supports inclusive practice
 Ensures children of all abilities feel motivated and engaged

 Powerfully feeds into pupil health, happiness, resilience, identity and

- self-worth
- ✓ Assign units with ease
- Empowers assessment of learning
- Encourages a motivational culture

✓ Promotes a lifelong engagement in physical and mental activity

#### **UPGRADE IF...**

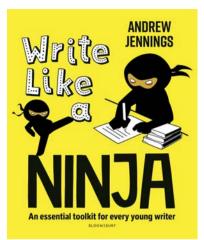
You are looking for a lively PE scheme of work crammed with rigorous resources with active assessment at its heart to optimise children's physical health and wellbeing.

Whole-school licence, £350 + VAT per annum, 2simple.com

### LITERACY

## Write Like a Ninja

Pocket-sized grammar and vocabulary toolkit, fully aligned to the KS2 writing curriculum



### AT A GLANCE

- Essential toolkit for KS2 writers to use as a quick reference for writing tips
- Must-have writing workbox full of exciting vocabulary, grammar explanations and example sentences
- Includes a selection of sentences and a method
- for categorising sentence types with catchy names • Fun, handy and highly accessible writing

resource

**REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL** 

While real ninjas were once famed swordsmen, writing ninjas focus on something mightier – the pen. Write Like a Ninja has a snappy title and its contents are snappier still. Its aim is a simple one: to get children to take ownership of their own writing and take on the world.

This book might be little but don't let its stature deceive you - it packs plenty of punches. The core ninja skills this mastery manual focuses on include grammar essentials, exciting sentences, word choice alternatives, setting vocabulary tips, character vocabulary and general vocabulary. The style, design and layout of this book has been carefully crafted to appeal to a wide audience. The text is user-friendly and there are plenty of fun splats, scribbles and decoration on each page, but not to the point of distraction. The content is king though. Each chapter has been cleverly constructed to help get children out of sticky writing situations.

Where an explanation needs to be given or a definition is required, these are written clearly and concisely, with no complicated thorny bits to confuse. Part thesaurus, part training manual, part inspiration guide, Write Like a Ninja is a collection of writing tips, nudges and prods to get children thinking of rich alternatives and how to build on their own ideas. Pupils will love the ninja tips dotted throughout for varying their language use.

TRACTION

There is so much crammed into this book that it acts like an emergency literacy curriculum, yet it doesn't feel overwhelming or overpowering. Instead, it's enabling. It might be aimed at children but teachers will want a sneaky look at this book too, especially if you need nuggets of inspiration during brain fog moments. You could spend your evenings looking for writing ideas, falling down booby-trapped rabbit holes, or you could just get a copy of this book so you can rest like a ninja.

The skill of a ninja is the art of winning and this book teaches children how to win at writing. Just as ninjas need a wide range of skills to help them succeed in their mission, this book equips children with what they need for their next writing challenge. One thing you might want to get children writing about is, of course, being a ninja. This cracking little book has a big heart and is very affordably priced at £4.99.



#### VERDICT

✓ A powerhouse of clever tips and catchy pointers

 Empowers children to be creative, perseverant and write independently
 Practical, engaging and immensely

supportive

 Gives children plenty of ideas for great writing

### UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for a high-quality vocabulary and writing essentials book that injects writing mojo and promotes writing mastery.



### **Mathematics Mastery Primary**

Mastery programme from Ark Curriculum Plus featuring a full curriculum, CPD and resources for planning, classroom delivery and assessment



### AT A GLANCE

- Complete maths package for teaching key concepts at primary level
- Well-sequenced, interlinked Reception, KS1 and KS2 curriculum
- Focused on ensuring pupils develop fluency and a deep understanding
- Integrated training and CPD materials
- Full suite of planning, delivery, assessment and intervention resources

**REVIEWED BY: ADAM RICHES** 

The Mathematics Mastery Primary programme is the whole package when it comes to planning, teaching and assessing maths. Not only is it comprehensive in terms of teaching and training resources, but it's also proven to positively impact progress and attainment, giving pupils on average one month's additional progress after one year. The programme was created by Dr Helen Drury, a pioneer of teaching and learning for mastery in UK schools, and has grown out of Ark, one of the highest performing MATs in the UK. This pedigree is certainly reflected in the programme and resources.

What's instantly apparent is that the content of the programme is based on the latest cognitive and educational research. Lessons are chunked and scaffolded brilliantly to promote learner confidence, with ample opportunity for independent practice. Coupled with the training resources, the pre-planned but flexible lessons are an exceptional resource for less confident mathematicians, meaning that teachers are significantly empowered by having access to the plans and resources that can be customised to the particular needs of their class.

It's the attention to detail in the planning resources that impressed me most. Features such as references to possible misconceptions in the weekly overview documents give teachers an awareness of what to look for when teaching, a tool that is useful for experienced and inexperienced maths educators alike.

The key to success in the use of a mastery





programme is the engagement with the training materials provided. Here, the content systematically builds teachers' subject knowledge and mastery teaching skills through high-quality CPD. The sessions are in the form of pre-recorded videos, plans, overviews and commentaries, meaning you can train at your leisure, picking and choosing the areas which you need to develop in your own practice.

The training materials dovetail with the comprehensive suite of lesson materials, integrated assessment tools and intervention resources, meaning that the training can directly impact classroom teaching.

MyMastery, the online platform on which the resources and training materials are hosted, is easy to navigate. Download units of work and lesson plans in seconds. The resources are well grouped and sequentially ordered, so it's very user-friendly.

The Mathematics Mastery Primary programme is available in three flexible tiers, meaning you can select the most appropriate package for your school. The entry-level tier includes access to the curriculum, resources and CPD content on the MyMastery platform. If you're looking for a more bespoke package, consider the subject leadership or tailored tiers which offer more personalised support, including live induction training and a school development lead who will assist with implementation of the programme.

### teach PRIMARY

### VERDICT

 Exceptional content in terms of resources and training
 Simple, streamlined and intuitive interface for access of MyMastery
 Designed with teachers in mind

✓ A great way to overhaul your maths offer and provide support to your staff in the process

### **UPGRADE IF...**

You're looking to support staff with planning and assessing or want a full curriculum rewrite. Also consider if you're looking to build collective efficacy and consistency around maths in your school.



### Phonic Books Dragon Eggs series

Ten decodable reading quest titles for younger readers with an accompanying workbook

### AT A GLANCE

- Portfolio of highly structured and decodable phonic story books
- Step-by-step progression for successful outcomes
- Reading practice with a laser-sharp phonic focus
- Synthetic phonics resources that sparkle
- Top quality, colourful books packed

with excitement

Phonics knowledge is considered one of the key predictors of reading success. Getting the right resources is therefore crucial. To comprehend what is being read, children must be able to decode words and join the parts quickly and accurately so they can interpret and analyse words while reading.

**REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL** 

That is what Phonic Books is all about. This new Dragon Eggs collection of books introduces words and word structures in a carefully planned scope and sequence to support reading accuracy, speed and expression. A common criticism of decodable books is that their inherent language constraints make them boring and stilted. Well, Phonic Books certainly aren't; these are exciting, adventurous and multi-dimensional.

Constructing meaning from written language requires making a connection to oral language and must be connected to an individual's phonological memory. One of the most powerful ways to make this connection is through stories, explicit instruction on learning to read and relentless practice – this is where Phonic Books excels.

The series is a daring decodable reading quest that breathes quality throughout. This delightful new collection of ten books is one splash of colour after another, with outstanding artwork that will turn children's heads. With appealing characters and a really reader-friendly layout, these books are ones that pupils won't want to let go of.

The back of the books feature a clearly flagged target phoneme alongside a brief description of the story. Inside there is a page showing the words that make up the specific reading practice, chapter contents and a vocabulary page explaining some of the story words. Within each chapter there are also some multi-syllable words that are helpfully split up for readers.

The story chapters are short and sweet, making them ideal for keeping children's attention. What I like most is that these books expose pupils to highly consistent and prolific patterns in the text. They get practice with letter-sound correspondences that they can apply to other texts. These books are the perfect partner for helping children to segment individual sounds in words and show how these sounds are represented by letters and how to blend the sounds/letters into words.

The books also make sense as mini stories and build knowledge. You can have rich conversations about the chapters, asking comprehension questions to demonstrate that reading is about meaning.

To support this series is a wonderful workbook containing a wide range of reading, spelling and comprehension activities and games linked to the stories. The Dragon Eggs series clearly has the potential to narrow the gap in reading achievement.



### VERDICT

 Purposeful and playful phonics for explicit and systematic instruction
 Builds automaticity in bottom-up skills so that words fly off the page
 Improves decoding, word reading, comprehension, reading stamina and spelling

 Equips children with reading strategies
 Helps develop reading fluency and comprehension in tandem

### UPGRADE IF...

You want a fast-track decodable approach to teaching reading fluency and encouraging reading independence.

Dragon Eggs series, £39; workbook, £25, 01666 822543, phonicbooks.co.uk





### FEATURES BACK PAGE



A one-day diary from first alarm to lights out

I wake at 6.15am and check my weather app to see if I need my walking boots for the walk across the fields to my little rural school. The beautiful walk sets me up mentally for the day.

### WAKING UP

NICOLE WINTER IS A Y2/3 TEACHER AND ENGLISH LEAD IN WANTAGE, OXFORDSHIRE.

@winterimagines

### **MY MORNING**

I get to school at 7.50am. When the children get in, we do a short critical thinking activity -I love their imaginations. After phonics and handwriting we do ten minutes of physical activity, usually to a bit of Earth, Wind and Fire!

### **MY AFTERNOON**

We do group or whole-class reading before our main afternoon lesson then I try and squeeze a quick burst of something like Court of King Caractacus in too - we love a bit of singing.

### LUNCHTIME

Lunchtime is pretty busy – it's a little school so there are loads of things that need doing. I usually have something quick like crackers and hummus while looking enviously at the nice lunches that more organised people have brought in.

### **MY EVENING**

I leave school at 5.30pm. In the summer I walk up to the local nature reserve on my way home. It's great me-time and helps me get my steps in. I normally work for two hours on my laptop then chill out with a film.

1100



### BEDTIME

I relax before bed by reading a children's book from my toppling to-read pile and usually turn the light off at 10.30pm.

### **QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS**

Podcast rec? | love 'David Tennant Does a Podcast With ... I find things like that fascinating as I'm really quite nosey.

Must-watch? I'm currently a bit addicted to the Foxes Afloat narrowboat vlogs on YouTube. I have a little dream to buy one and cruise the canals.

Must-read? I've just finished the fantastic fantasy book Wundersmith by Jessica Townsend, and am currently reading The Case of the Missing Moonstone by Jordan Stratford.

Twitter hero? Edutwitter is really important to me as it connects me to a really diverse range of teachers. I admire Gemma Bagnall (@missbprimary) – she does wonderful, memorable activities with her class.



### Reasons to love

 Build connection and communication skills one brick at a time.

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£25.99 HE1773657



Talking Tower is a tactile game to **support** and **build self-esteem**. It supports co-operative play and encourages children to connect and **explore their emotional well-being**. It has two play options. You can choose to build or remove blocks from your talking tower by answering questions and carrying out actions that promote self-esteem. The perfect ice-breaker game to **encourage emotional well-being and resilience**.

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## Online maths tests to rapidly identify gaps in children's learning

- 200 online tests covering all NC objectives for Y1-Y6
- All tests instantly marked saving teachers time
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D MATHS.co.uk	Overview			Set a Test		Asse	ssmen	ts	s Tracking		
SPECIFIC AREA	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	
Find fractions of a shape				-							
Sequence intervals of time											
Identify 2D shapes											
Interpret simple pictograms											
Order numbers to 100											
Count is 3s from 0											
Find fractions of a length											
Sequence intervals of time										E	

A typical school licence is just £289. Email support@maths.co.uk or call 02084329529 for more info.