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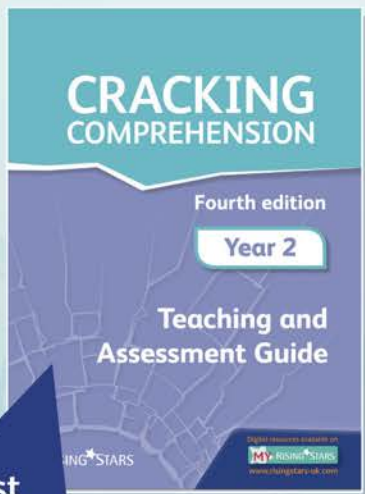
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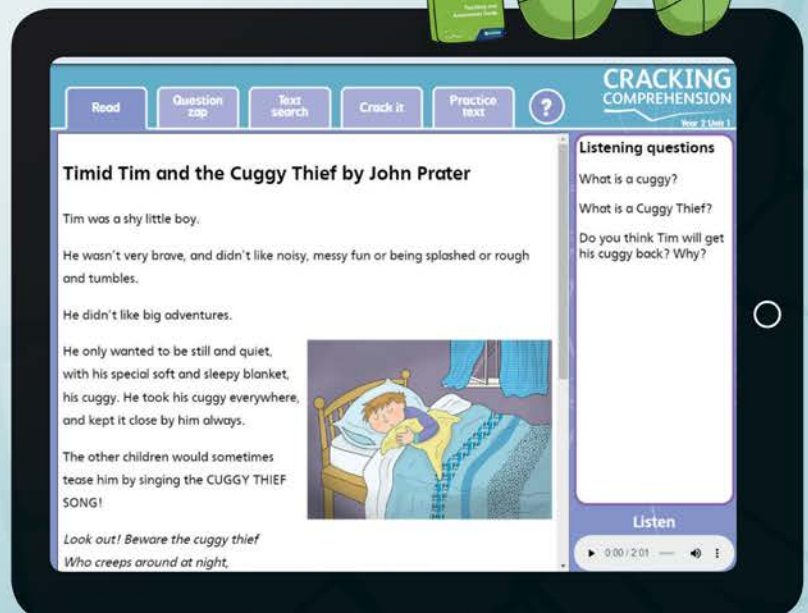


Image taken from the digital software for Cracking Comprehension Fourth Edition Year 2

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Hello!



There's an old expression that says 'May you live in interesting times.' The moment we're living through right now is perhaps a little *too* interesting for many of us, but I know that teachers will be doing what they always do when an unexpected situation arises – digging deep, looking to colleagues for support and concentrating on the one thing that truly matters; the children.

One silver lining of this whole coronavirus situation is the spotlight it has put on teachers and the wonderful job you do. While parents nationwide attempt to homeschool their children, it's rapidly dawning on us all what an incredible amount of skill and patience our educators possess to do this job week in, week out.

Naturally a lot of the articles in this issue were commissioned before all this drama unfolded, but I hope they still prove pertinent and provide inspiration and a little light relief. Andrew Jennings has got ideas for turning your pupils into vocabulary ninjas on page 11; read about the wonderful visit I had to Ardleigh Green Juniors on page 21 and delve into our maths special, starting on page 62.

Over the next few months we'll be working hard to bring you content that fits with the climate we find ourselves in. In the meantime, head over to our website – teachwire.net – for all the latest on how colleagues across the country are dealing with this 'interesting' time.

Until next time,

Elaine

Elaine Bennett, Editor

 @editorteach

*Don't miss our
next issue, on sale
22nd May*

POWERED BY...



BEN BROWN
shares his experience
of leaving the teaching
profession because
of stress

“Many people have been broken by a system that, in its current form, consumes them”

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LIBBY SCOTT
writes to her teacher,
explaining how her
autism affects her
in the classroom

“I have learnt to cover my real feelings at school as I want to fit in”

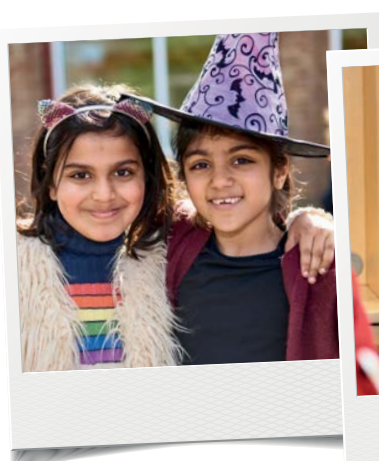
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investigates the
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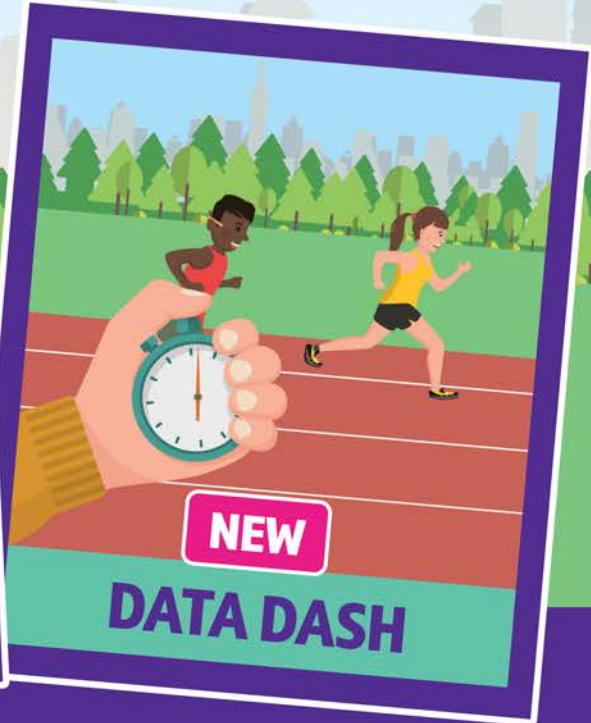
“It seems many teachers have a strong preference for directly showing pupils what to do”

p62



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We're all ears!

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We want to hear from you!

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



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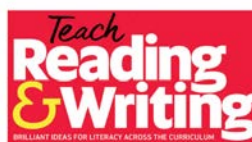
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Vital CPD

A new study from the Education Policy Institute looking at the impact of teacher professional development has found that high-quality CPD has a significant effect on pupils' learning outcomes. In fact, the impact of CPD on pupil outcomes compares to the impact of having a teacher with ten years' experience rather than a new graduate. The evidence also suggests that quality CPD has a greater effect on pupil attainment than other interventions such as performance-related pay for teachers or lengthening the school day. Read the full report at tinyurl.com/tpcpdeffects

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



BE KIND

Recycle Now has new curriculum-linked resources for KS1/2 pupils focusing on recycling and sustainability. Children can take part in a range of activities, including creating animals from recyclable materials. schools.recyclenow.com



LET TOYS BE TOYS

Schools are an important place to tackle gender stereotypes. Toys and marketing are a great way to get pupils thinking. Download curriculum-matched lesson plans and resources at lettoysbetoys.org.uk



TEACH VE DAY

The Royal British Legion's KS2 assembly resources, created in partnership with the National Literacy Trust, will help pupils commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day on 8th May. Download from rbl.org.uk/teaching-remembrance

→ → → YOUR **FREE** **RESOURCES**



We've put together a selection of amazing packs that you can send to parents to help keep children learning while they're at home. Each bundle contains enough literacy work to cover five mornings, with minimal adult supervision, and all resources have been created by our team of expert teachers. Find them all at plazoom.com/collections/home-learning





Konnie Huq

**British Science Week
2020 ambassador
and TV presenter**

What's your abiding memory of primary school?

I remember school assemblies the most, especially the ones that made me laugh and were interesting. Learning needs to be a pleasure and not a chore. Fun teachers definitely got me interested in what they were teaching.

What was your experience of science like at school?

I really don't remember doing it at all in primary school, which I think is part of the problem with getting kids excited about science. Some primary schools hardly touch on it. If kids only experience science at secondary school, it can feel alien, almost like a foreign language. The earlier we get our kids into science, the better.

How would you like to see primary teachers approaching the subject?

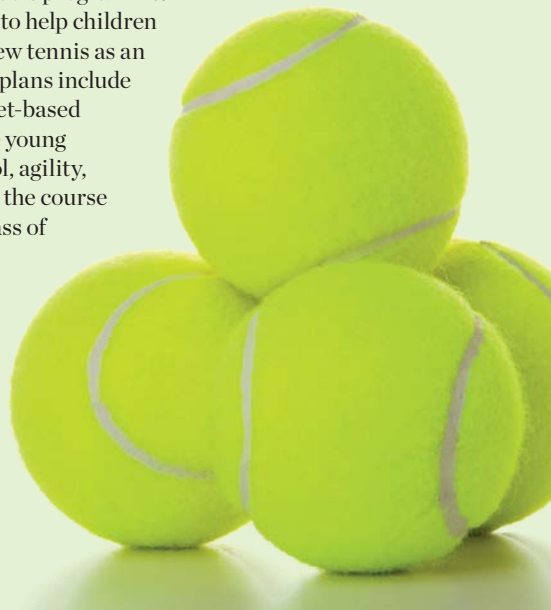
The subject needs to be related to everyday life, with tangible and fun examples to get kids enthused. Girls also need to feel science is for them too by being given examples of female role models and teachers.

FIND OUT MORE

Konnie is an ambassador for the British Science Association's British Science Week – a ten-day celebration of STEM. She is also a key supporter for BSA's 'Smashing Stereotypes' campaign. Check out the campaign hashtag #EverydayScientist on social media.

Game, set and match

LTA – the governing body of tennis in Britain – is offering free training for its Youth Schools programme. The core aim of the scheme is to help children develop personal skills and view tennis as an enjoyable activity. The lesson plans include a range of fun tennis and racket-based activities that help to enhance young people's physical skills, control, agility, balance and coordination and the course can be delivered to a whole class of children in a small space like the school hall. Every teacher who signs up will receive a free pack of resources and once you've completed the training you'll also receive a £250 voucher to spend on support from an LTA-accredited coach or equipment for your school. Sign up at lta.org.uk/schools



Build maths confidence

Pearson has recently announced that its online maths tutoring programme, The Maths Factor, is now free. Created by Carol Vorderman in 2010, it aims to build both children's and parents' maths confidence through short video tutorials, interactive games, revision clubs, tips and challenges. Carol says, "We cannot expect parents and carers to take on their children's education alone, and we must also ensure teachers are fully supported to provide the best provision for their students during this period of at-home learning." To find out more visit themathsfactor.com



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Look ahead | Book ahead

LEARN & GROW

27th April to 3rd May is National Gardening Week – encourage pupils to get outside and plant seeds or grow herbs at home. rhs.org.uk

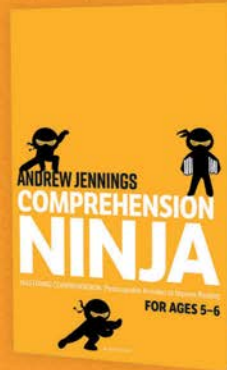
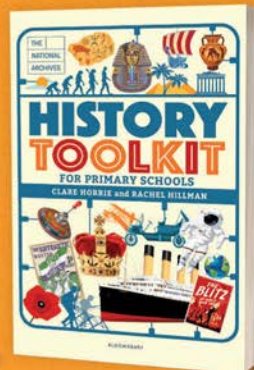
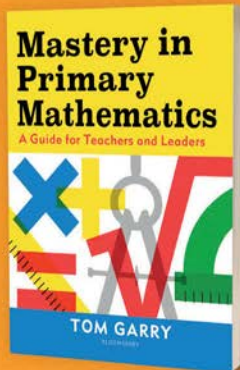


WATER WISE

11th May sees the start of Water Saving Week. Ask pupils to explore how they can reduce their consumption. waterwise.org.uk

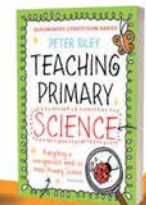
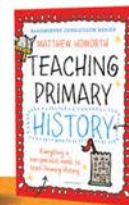
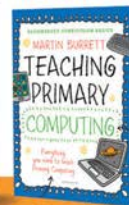
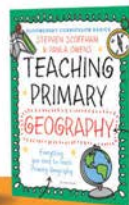
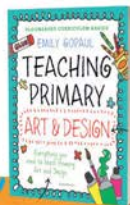


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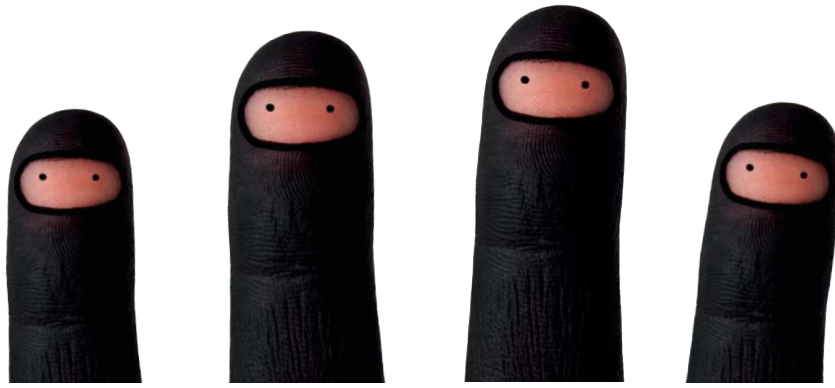
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8 WAYS to create comprehension ninjas

Use **Andrew Jennings'** ideas to help pupils effectively skim, scan and retrieve information

1 | EFFECTIVE PRE-READING

Prompt children to read with their pencil, meaning that their pencil moves across the page underneath each line as they read it. The benefit of training pupils to do this is that when it comes to underlining a key piece of information, their pencil is already in the correct location – it's efficient.

2 | UNDERLINE KEY INFORMATION

If you want pupils to underline key information as they read, they need to know what this means. Consider the following categories: names of people, places, companies, events, locations, etc; dates including days, months, years, times; statistics and numbers including percentages, fractions, amounts, figures, etc; words that pupils don't understand (identifying them may still help pupils answer a question); headings, sub-headings, images and punctuation. These areas can all help direct readers to the correct area of the text when answering a question.

3 | SPOT KEY QUESTION WORDS

Teach pupils to spot the key word or phrase in a question. This is a word or phrase that will signpost the pupil where to look in the text to find the answer. In the following question, the key phrase is 'morse code': 'How did soldiers effectively use morse code during the second world war?' If pupils have pre-read the text effectively, 'morse code' should be underlined, or they may even remember where it is mentioned.

4 | SKIM THE TEXT

Skimming a text is like looking at the chapters of a DVD and deciding which section or chapter of the film to start at. We won't necessarily find the answer, but we hope to locate the correct area of the text and, ideally, the correct paragraph or section. Ask pupils to first remember whether the information was at the beginning, middle or end. Is there an image or subheading that can signpost us to the correct area?



ANDREW JENNINGS

is an assistant headteacher. He launched Vocabulary Ninja in 2017 and has recently published Comprehension Ninja handbooks for Y1-6 (£24.99 each, Bloomsbury).

5 | SCAN FOR DETAIL

Teaching pupils how to 'scan' is a vital tool for aiding comprehension. Scanning is when pupils look at the specific section they've identified while skimming (see point four) with a greater level of scrutiny, possibly looking for a key word or phrase. Going back to the DVD analogy I mentioned earlier, this is like watching that specific section or chapter of the film to locate the information we require. Ideally, pupils will be looking for a specific sentence, phrase or word.

6 | REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

Introduce your pupils to the idea of skimming and scanning by using everyday examples such as magazine images, bus timetables, TV schedules, poems, shopping lists and visual instructions. Another good idea is to search online for 'hidden word pictures'. Print a range off and ask pupils to locate specific items, objects or information within them. Add a time limit to the activity increase the fun factor.

7 | IN, BEFORE AND AFTER

Once pupils have found a key word or phrase in a text, train them to read the sentence before, the one containing the key word and the sentence that follows after. Doing this will give children a much greater chance of answering comprehension questions successfully because it reminds them of the context of the wider piece.

8 | SIMPLIFY SEQUENCING

Teach pupils to allocate a symbol (square, triangle, rectangle, star, cross, for example) to five different statements. Pupils should then find these statements in the text and draw the corresponding symbol next to them. Once they've done this, it is extremely easy to look at the text and see which symbol comes first, second, third and so on. This is a very effective strategy to help pupils effectively sequence information.

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Even the most ardent fans of Ofsted's new framework must surely admit that it's causing stress and increasing workloads

Sue Cowley

 @sue_cowley  suecowley.co.uk



Way back in 1992, the year I began my teacher training, a new organisation was formed to inspect schools.

In the nearly 30 years that have followed, there have been many changes to Ofsted, but one question remains constant: what does Ofsted want? While the answer has changed over the years, the question itself still drives teacher workload, dictates teaching styles, causes stress and creates unintended consequences.

Back in the heady first years of Ofsted, schools had two months to prepare for a week-long inspection. You can guess what happened. By the time the inspectors arrived, schools were prepped to within an inch of their lives, with freshly minted handbooks, newly created displays, and lesson plans full of expansive detail.

In 2012 yet another new framework aimed to change the focus, but the 'what does Ofsted want?' problem remained. Schools mined Ofsted reports, trying to discover the magic approach to teaching that would lead to an 'outstanding' verdict. While the 'correct' answer to the Ofsted question changes over time – group work, not too much teacher talk, progress every twenty minutes, lots of marking, not too much marking, direct instruction – the problem remains the same. Whatever gets written in Ofsted inspection reports, frameworks and blogs is translated into practice on the ground.

In the new framework, in an attempt to ensure a broad curriculum, Ofsted has created the 'deep dive' – a detailed look into subjects. Unfortunately for teachers in small primaries, who may be responsible for several subjects, this has (unsurprisingly) generated excessive workload.

Ofsted has repeatedly stated that it 'will not tell teachers how to teach'. In 2013, then HMCI Sir Michael Wilshaw said that inspectors wanted to see "teaching which is part of the normal pattern of school life" and that "inspectors do not visit lessons with a preconceived view of teaching style." But no one really believed him. In the new framework, the schools handbook states that "Ofsted will not ... advocate a particular method of planning (including lesson planning), teaching or assessment."



But, yet again, all is not as it appears.

Because the problem with this latest proclamation is that it takes only a few minutes of searching to discover that Ofsted is planning to tell you exactly how to teach, particularly when it comes to the teaching of reading. A recent blog from Gill Jones, deputy director for early education, states that schools must teach "direct focused phonics" (SSP) every day, they must only let children read from books with sounds they know, they must provide extra practice for a specific cohort ("the lowest 20%") and they must use "the best" books.

When challenged, Ofsted representatives will tell you that SSP is a 'body of knowledge', rather than an approach to teaching, yet their own published materials make it plain that this is a nonsense. Ofsted wants to see daily, adult-directed SSP sessions in Reception. If that's not telling teachers how to teach, then I don't know what is.

Already, stories are being shared on social media of Reception classes with desks in rows; with large swathes of time given over to direct instruction in phonics; where all books only contain sounds that children have already been taught – including in the book corner. Where once there were picture books in continuous provision, now

there are phonics reading scheme books only. Where once children would have been given time to settle and form attachments at the start of the year, the demand that the teaching of phonics must begin 'right from the start' of Reception has led to some schools starting adult-directed SSP sessions from day one.

Over the years, many of the problems with Ofsted have occurred because it has an overly rosy view of itself, seeking to place blame on settings, and on the interpretations of others, rather than accepting its own failings. The ever-present threat of academisation and the fear of losing your job should your school go into a category are powerful motivators for headteachers to play the Ofsted game. But even the most ardent fan of Spielman's new regime must surely admit that the latest changes have not worked, and that we're now in the situation where Ofsted says "Leap" and too many simply ask wearily, "How high?". **TP**

*Sue Cowley is an author, presenter and teacher educator. She has helped to run her local EY setting for ten years. Her latest book is **The Ultimate Guide to Mark Making in the Early Years** (Bloomsbury).*

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I DIDN'T STOP CRYING FOR THREE MONTHS

Too many teachers are being broken by an all-consuming system. I should know, it happened to me...

[@edroundtables](#)

“**S**o now I sit here quite alone blinded with tears; nor grieve for that, for nought is left worth looking at since my delightful land is gone.” I’m borrowing part of Christina Rossetti’s *Shut Out* for the simple reason that it encapsulates perfectly how I felt when I left the world of teaching.

My journey out of teaching started when I became the deputy head of a primary school. It was my first SLT role and I was looking forward to taking on new challenges. I was replacing a full-time DHT in a 0.6 capacity with two days in the classroom and a mixed Y5/6 class. Perhaps this should have set alarm bells ringing, but it didn’t. I was optimistic and convinced that I would be making a difference. Aren’t we all invincible when we take on something new?

My responsibilities were varied, but my main task was to work on the data in the

tracking system – it had been left behind as a series of Excel spreadsheets.

I quickly recognised that this data handling and processing task was huge and wanted to move it to an information management system. Unfortunately the head vetoed this idea.

This one task became a huge burden. It drained the time I had to manage all my other responsibilities and resulted in me coming in earlier and leaving later. I often had the school to myself.

Ofsted was looming (it always seemed to be looming) and anxiety about this took shape in the form of non-negotiables (two-sided A4, colour coded, bolded and italicised in a small font), book looks, learning walks, drop-ins, observations, mocksteds, levelling moderation meetings... Marked evidence in books was demanded for every lesson, every day. My hours increased again.

I began drinking more. After all, everyone deserves something nice after a long, hard day at work, don’t they? Predictably, my work suffered. I was told that the school couldn’t afford to reduce my teaching hours and that I needed to manage my time more efficiently.

Pupil progress meetings came around, as they do. Over three weeks I ran more than ten meetings, each lasting two to three hours. I attended staff and SLT meetings. I slept less.

I barely remember those three weeks. As you can imagine, I fell behind in some of the other duties that were required. I dreaded the journey to school. On several occasions I had to pull over to the side of the road to be sick. But I made it, wore a smile for the children and my colleagues and tried to carry on as normal, though I am not sure I knew what normal was anymore.

I became ill. I think I had been sick for quite a while, but just hadn’t realised. While I was off the school office rang. The headteacher needed information from a spreadsheet. The headteacher never rang me personally.

When I returned, earlier than I should have done, I had been left a message to see the chair of governors. The headteacher wasn’t in school and it was the Friday before half term. At the meeting I was told I was being put on capability. I was numb. I returned to my class to finish my marking and cried. I couldn’t stop. In fact, I didn’t stop crying for nearly three months. I was broken.

I left the school. I left teaching. I went from being a confident, outstanding practitioner to a shell of a person who couldn’t leave the house.

I sit, three years later, looking through the gates into the garden that I once loved, unable to enter it because of a wall in my mind. It’s a wall of fear; fear that if I do return, it will all happen again.

I know that I am not alone, that this story is not unique. In fact, it is all too common. Many people have been broken by a system that, in its current form, consumes them, leaving them in limbo.

Despite my experience, I don’t blame the head. I was angry for a long time, but I also understand why they were like that. The pressure that they were under to get results was huge. They were probably ill too. Stress at the top of an organisation is infectious. So many of our teachers are sick because their schools are sick; the schools are sick because the system is sick.

Ben Brown is a former primary deputy with 17 years’ experience. He now facilitates educational conversations that make a difference.

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A letter to... *my teacher about my autism*

Here's ten things I wish you knew about how my diagnosis affects me at school



1 Please understand that I often cover up my anxiety, and although I may appear calm and fine on the outside, this does not mean I am

actually feeling it inside. I have learnt to cover my real feelings at school as I want to fit in and not get into trouble. It's hard to hold your real feelings in and pretend to be something you aren't all day. Home is the only place where I feel I can let my real feelings out.

2 Building a good relationship with me is the best way to help me feel calm and be able to behave and be my best. Show me that you like me by smiling and connecting with me positively when you see me. I respond really well to feeling liked. Please try not to criticise me or say negative things to me as I will feel that you don't like me.

3 Tone of voice and facial expression are really important to me as I read a lot more into them than other people do. If you have to tell me off, please do it in a calm way, rather than in a cross or harsh voice. Please don't make sudden loud noises like shouting at me, as this makes

me anxious. Sarcasm and criticism make my anxiety levels go sky high. Using nice language puts me at ease and will help me to focus on what you are actually saying rather than how it's making me feel.

4 Please, please, please, I beg of you, don't punish me by doing anything that shames me in front of other people like detentions, making me stand up in front of others or telling me off in public. This is my worst nightmare and my biggest fear in school. It doesn't make me learn to behave better as I will be so anxious that I'm bound to do more things wrong. Please just speak quietly to me on a one-to-one basis. I absolutely promise I will take in what you are saying better that way.

5 Ask me to do things calmly and pleasantly and try not to make it sound like a command as this instantly escalates my anxiety. For example, you could say, "Would you mind coming up with a good way to make sure you remember your pencil tomorrow?". This is a good way to phrase things for me.

6 Don't ask me lots of direct questions as these feel like demands and the pressure can be really stressful. Say things like: "Would you be happy to share your thoughts?"; "I'm wondering whether you..."; "I notice that..."; "I was thinking you could..."

7 Give me time when asking me questions or when giving me instructions. Don't get impatient with me or I will sense it and will be flooded with stress which makes it even harder to think straight.

8 Don't ask me to make eye contact as a way of showing I am listening – it makes it harder for me to listen. If you really want me to be listening carefully to what you are saying, let me look wherever I need to so I can concentrate.

9 Please don't force me into anything I do not feel ready or comfortable doing. I'm always pushing myself out of my comfort zone, but I can only do it when I feel in control. I will usually give most things a try when I feel ready to. Give me some control by offering choices; this always makes me feel more relaxed and motivated.

10 Most of all, please try to put yourself in my shoes and know that I don't choose to be this much work – this might be annoying for you but believe me, it is ten squillion times harder for me.

From Libby

*Libby Scott is 12 years old and co-wrote her second novel, *Do You Know Me?* (£6.99, Scholastic), alongside author and teacher Rebecca Westcott.*

 @bloglibby  @westcottwriter



A £10 million behaviour taskforce oversimplifies one of the most complex issues facing all schools

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A little while ago, Gavin Williamson, the secretary of state for education, stirred the pot by saying that ‘silent corridors’ should be the ‘norm’ in every school. His comments followed his pledge to spend £10 million on a taskforce to tackle disruptive behaviour. I was quite excited when I heard the term ‘taskforce’.

It conjured up images of latex-clad superheroes bursting into school corridors whenever an unruly seven-year-old dared to skip down a corridor in a bid to be the first one out to play. Perhaps we’d all be given a special red phone that we could ring whenever a child repeatedly swings on their chair. “Holy low-level disruption, Batman!”

Sadly, it’s not quite as exciting as that. It’s six advisors who are going to select 20 schools across the UK to become a behaviour hub. I’m not sure what a ‘behaviour hub’ is, but it seems as good a place as any to hide away ten million quid.

When announcing his big plan, the secretary of state described some behaviour expectations of a few schools – no slouching, line up quietly, hand in your mobile phones, wear this GPS ankle-tag during PE. (I may have made that last one up.) Now, I can’t disagree with what some schools have done to tackle behaviour. Why? Not because I’m a draconian monster, but because I don’t know the school. I don’t know it now and I certainly didn’t know it back when behaviour was, apparently, a problem. So, I am therefore unqualified to pass judgement on any successful strategies that they used.

I also completely agree with the secretary of state for education when he says that if you visit some of the best schools you’ll often ‘notice that many of them have one thing in common: discipline’. He’s right. But this is hardly news. They also have teachers in them, and leaders, and breathable air. But, effective schools do, also, run on effective behaviour management systems.

What I disagree with the secretary of state on is his decision

to not only name specific schools, but to list specific strategies that some schools have used to improve behaviour.

I think that was misguided because it gives the impression that these are the only types of strategies that work or are right for all school settings. I fear that he has inadvertently attempted to over-simplify one of the most complex and dynamic issues facing every school in the country.

Schools can demand silent corridors if they want to. They can remove children’s phones. They can demerit a kid for doing whatever they’ve decided they shouldn’t be doing. Schools can insist on all of these things if that’s what they want to do, but don’t mistake these rules for a positive school culture. That would be like presuming a kid can write properly just because their handwriting is joined up. Unfortunately, there’s more to it than that. Creating a positive school culture where learning is respected and everyone within the school community respects each other is a very difficult thing to pull off.

“Don’t mistake these rules for a positive school culture”

Demanding that children don’t slouch in their chairs is only going to be a tiny part of the puzzle.

Now, we all know that because we’re educators. And I’m sure the six advisors know that as well. But the minister’s rhetoric doesn’t quite inspire the same confidence.

If I was cynical then I would say that he deliberately listed these behaviour strategies because that is what he wants every school to put in place. If I was naïve, I’d think that he really does think that these tactics are all it takes and if we see them in a school it must therefore mean that the school is good. If I were cruel, I’d say that the minister wants schools to be silent because it reduces the risk of any young person talking to him while he’s on a ministerial visit.

But I am sure the minister was just misguided in his words and that we will all look back at his decision to spaff £10 million on some behaviour hubs and agree that it was the right thing to do. **TP**





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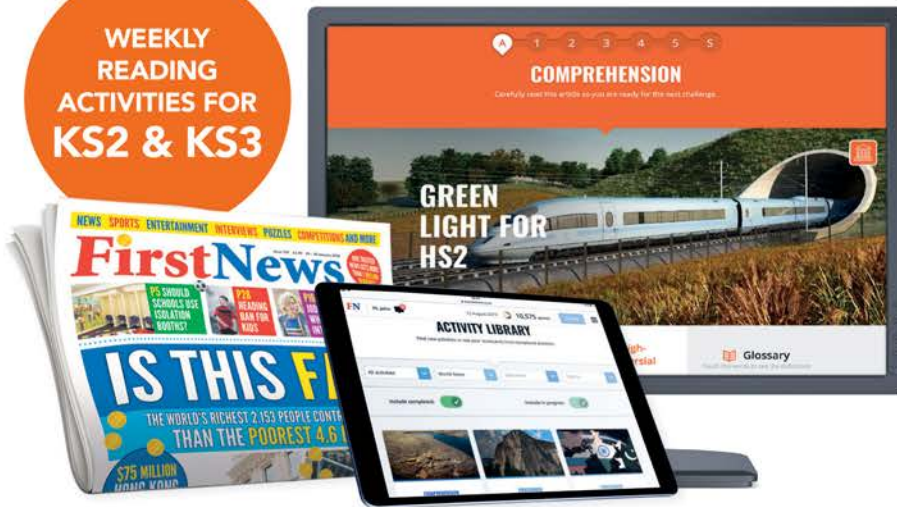
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**School
profile**



Name: Ardleigh Green Junior
Headteacher: John Morris OBE
Location: Hornchurch, East London
Ofsted rating: Outstanding
Size: 360 pupils
Extra info: the school federated with
 Ardleigh Green Infants in 2019



John Morris OBE, Headteacher

**“To be outstanding
you have to stand out”**

Come with us on a visit to the school doing
marvellous things through music

Words by Elaine Bennett



There's a saying that you often hear in education: 'Stand still, because everything comes back full circle.' This seems particularly relevant if you're in your 30th year of headship. John Morris OBE has been steering the ship at Ardleigh Green Juniors in Hornchurch all that time, and it's fair to say he's seen a good few initiatives come back around during his tenure. "When I was a deputy head in the 80s, the government produced a whole series of 'Curriculum Matters' documents," he says. "I vividly remember the maroon covers of the various booklets. What they were asking us to consider back then regarding curriculum development is exactly what Ofsted is asking us to do now!"

There's no doubt that teaching is in the blood of the Morris family. John's wife Val was head of the adjacent infants school for eight years until retirement, and three of his four daughters have also followed him into the profession, working as a primary head, head of drama in a secondary school and head of early years in an infant school, respectively. "You can imagine the conversations we have around the kitchen table, can't you?", laughs John.

Being in post so long has also given John a healthy scepticism about the new Ofsted framework. "The whole focus now seems to be on 'deep dives'," he says. "If the current framework is based on a deep dive, then I don't know how you'd describe my first inspection in 1994. We hosted five inspectors for five days. They took away two carloads of policy statements and watched every teacher teach three to five times. I don't agree with the notion of selected deep dives to judge a school's effectiveness, but compared to my first inspection, it's more like a shallow paddle!"

Ardleigh Green Juniors was rated as 'satisfactory' after that particular inspection, but has now been 'outstanding' for more than 20 years. The infant school, which federated with the juniors in September 2019, has also been 'outstanding' for a decade. Up until recently, outstanding schools were exempt from routine Ofsted inspections, meaning that Ardleigh Green Juniors has not been inspected for over a decade. "I do feel that it is unfair that our school has not been inspected for such a long time while many of my colleagues have had numerous inspections," explains John, "But it has given us the autonomy to focus on the job in hand and the things that we consider to be important. Ofsted frameworks have come and gone and we've not even noticed and that's been great. What's ironic for me is I am 100% convinced that both the infants and juniors

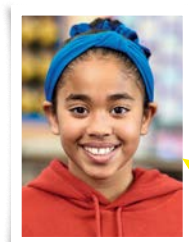


are better schools than they were at the last inspection. For me, to be outstanding you have to stand out, and there are many exciting things going on throughout the federation which really make us stand out."

Musical therapy

When I arrived for my visit I was swiftly ushered into the hall to witness the school's legendary Friday morning assembly. John has taken the unusual decision of hiring a musician in residence, Andrew Linham, who works in school four days a week. I was treated to renditions of a number of original contemporary songs – think the musical Hamilton for a flavour – composed

Pupil Voice



Olivia

Our music teacher, Mr Linham, always makes jokes in the middle of lessons. Some people don't get them, but I always seem to. I really love dancing, singing and acting and have performed at Wembley.



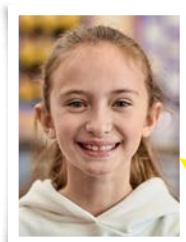
Chloe

I play the flute and I'm doing my grade one. It's nice to play an instrument because you can learn to play songs without having to sing them. Our teachers say never give up and give us lots of opportunities.



Ruby B

My parents are deaf and when I was in Y5, Mr Morris asked me to start a sign language club. It's been running for a year now. Mr Linham is the best music teacher. He's very energetic and writes good songs.



Ruby W

Every Friday morning we have an assembly. Mr Linham and Mr Morris teach us about music or Mrs Johnson teaches us about being kind. Sometimes our teachers are strict but they boost our confidence too.



“Being a true part of the team here facilitates me to do so much more”

by Andrew and the pupils. Despite there only being a couple of teachers in the room, all 360 pupils behaved impeccably, bobbing along to the beat and spontaneously adding actions to the uplifting words they were singing.

It’s no surprise that John’s passion for music comes from personal experience. “From an early age I’ve seen the benefits of music in my life,” he says. “Just like the Heineken advert, singing and music touch the parts that other things don’t reach.

I want to make sure that these children get that same experience. What I love about music is the engagement – that’s why we can have 360 children in one room with just me and Andrew. The children are always totally engaged and enjoying every moment.”

Musician Andrew, who has a masters in jazz performance from the renowned Guildhall School of Music and Drama, teaches four 45-minute whole-class lessons a day, using his self-penned Lyricland curriculum. “Before working here I’d often do PPA cover in schools,” Andrew explains. “It was 180 kids in the hall on a Friday afternoon and you had to deliver the whole curriculum without any instruments available. So I wrote

a curriculum that allowed me to teach all elements of music through singing. Now I’m at Ardsleigh Green I can unpack it and use all the resources I have available to me to get the kids playing instruments.”

Andrew isn’t a qualified teacher, but headteacher John classes him as an outstanding educator. “He is totally focused on music and is one of the most gifted musicians I’ve ever seen,” he says. “I think this job gives him some stability in his creative life. He comes to work but can also gig in the evenings. The children absolutely love him.” For Andrew, being part of the fabric of the school has brought massive benefits. “In a lot of schools I’ve worked in I was never part of the family. Being a true part of the team here facilitates me to do so much more. If I was just coming in for half a day a week, I wouldn’t be able to get the level of performance and improvisation that I get out of the children.”

Andrew has seen first-hand the effect that music can have on his pupils. “Some kids come into school not really speaking or taking part. A couple of years later they’re standing up the front performing. There’s a trust there – they know they’re not going to be set up to fail. It’s not just about teaching music here; it’s about wellbeing and growth mindset. My songs focus on becoming a better person and valuing yourself. In fact, it’s therapy for me too – I always feel better in school than I do in the summer holidays! I’ve had some of the greatest moments of my life here, let alone in my teaching career. Seeing children be inspired is worth so much more to me than doing a jazz gig somewhere on a Tuesday night. In some ways, the kids here won’t ever really realise quite how lucky they are, but I know that I’m very lucky to work here.”

If Ofsted showed up next week, John says he would demand that music was chosen for a ‘deep dive’. “It’s at the heart of what we do,” he adds. “It expresses what we’re about and it’s what makes us stand out.”

2 Community cohesion

Another important element of Ardsleigh Green’s offering is its family centre, which celebrated its ten year anniversary last year. Tragically, in 2006 a parent of a pupil at the school was murdered. “I obviously knew the family,” said John, “and what was interesting was that they came here, to school, for help. I thought, ‘My goodness, how can we support this?’ Increasingly, the role of headteacher is not just about teaching, it’s about community, so I thought it would be good if we had our own family centre so that we could provide support and advice when needed.” John spotted an unused church a few minutes away from the school. After making enquiries he found out that the Baptist Union was putting it on the market for half a million pounds. “I asked them if they could give us some time to try and find the money, and that’s when they realised I was serious,” explains John. The two parties struck a deal

Recruiting the right people

“We’re very careful to pick the right staff to work at our school,” explains deputy head Janelle Johnson. “It’s about finding someone who’s going to understand our ethos and the way that we work. I know it sounds really corny, but it really is all about making a difference to every child and we need to feel that the interviewee wants that too. When it’s right, you can see that passion in their letter of application and when you watch them teach. It’s easy to brush up on certain things, but you can’t teach someone that passion, so that’s what we look for.”

When Y5 teacher Melissa Ponter came to look round the school, it left a lasting impression. “John apologised for wearing casual clothes and said he’d just been outside doing a campfire for the children. I could instantly see the love he had for this school. When I saw the way the teachers responded to each other, the high standard of work and the love that staff had put into their classrooms and corridors I was amazed. I’m proud to say that I’m part of an incredible school!”

which involved the school renovating the building and using it for five years. By the end of this period, 200 people were using the centre on a weekly basis. “I spoke to the council,” adds John, “and said, ‘We’re running services that you should be providing. What are you going to do?’ Long story short, I persuaded the council to sell our schoolkeeper’s house and use the money to buy the church.”

The family centre is run as an independent charity, overseen by the school’s governors, and now helps 400 people a week. “We have prenatal and postnatal sessions, a bereavement service, a community choir, mental health support, a food bank, a toy library” lists John. The centre partners with other organisations to help provide this support. “We’ve joined with the Lighthouse Furniture Project so that we can furnish a house for families in need. Working with Moses Basket we can equip new parents with a cot, nappies and food. Anyone, with any problem, can come in and get support. Because it’s off the school premises there’s no embarrassment. I’m currently teaching one of our parents to read there. Sadly, we receive no government funding to provide what many believe to be an essential service for our local community.”

3 Full of fun

The autonomy that a lack of Ofsted visits have afforded the school is also extended to the staff of Arleigh Green, as Y5 teacher Melissa Ponter explains: “There’s no sense of someone watching us here; just a love for sharing ideas and good practice. John and Janelle, our deputy head, will pop in because they like to see what we’re doing, but it’s because they care and are interested, not for the sake of completing tick boxes and setting targets. It’s all about sharing the good news.”

On the day I visit, governor Peter Easy is also spending the morning in school, chatting to teachers and visiting classrooms. “They know I’m not here to see what they’re doing and report back,” he explains. “When I’ve met governors from other schools, they’ve said, ‘We don’t go into



Meet the staff



MELISSA PONTER,
Y5 TEACHER

The best thing I ever did was to change my school. It transformed my life. I had fallen out of love with teaching because I didn’t have any support. I had lots of lovely children but they needed a lot of assistance. As a 21-year-old NQT, there was nowhere to turn. Here there are so many people who care.



JANE LOMAS,
Y4 TEACHER

This is a very joyful, happy place. The staff are full of love and care and the parents are very, very grateful. When I came for an interview here five years ago one of the TAs said it was like a Disney school, and it is. You get the help, love and care that you need and that filters through to the children.



JANELLE JOHNSON,
DEPUTY HEAD

We try not to bombard staff with things that need to be done. We think, ‘Do we need to bog our teachers down with this or shall we wait a little while and see how it all pans out?’ The most important thing for our teachers to do is teach – that’s really what we want them to do.



JO COOK,
Y4 TEACHER

I’ve got a pupil with quite significant needs and the family centre has really supported his mum. At Christmas I took him to see Santa and both his mum and I were nearly in tears because he wouldn’t have been able to cope with that in the past. It was lovely that I was given that time to do that with him.

class. That wouldn’t be allowed. The staff might think we’re checking up on them.’ But what about recognising, encouraging and celebrating the successes of those teachers? I couldn’t do this role if it simply meant looking at spreadsheets and challenging people on why they’ve overspent. That would be like being back in the office again.”

If John’s OBE, awarded in 2015 for services to education, doesn’t make it obvious, it’s clear that he is held in very high regard by everyone at his school. “I think John is an incredible leader,” says music teacher Andrew. “He knows exactly what he wants to achieve and how to get there.” Teacher Melissa agrees: “We feel very protected by John. He always has our best interests at heart, as well as the children’s.” Deputy head Janelle Johnson sums it up: “John is full of fun. For him, there’s no job too big, no job too small. He takes an interest in everybody, from the deputy head to the caretaker. We all matter. He looks after us and we look after him – it’s like a family. To be the deputy head for John Morris at Arleigh Green Junior School is one of my proudest achievements.”

For John and his devoted team, the focus is now on building on the past while looking to the future.

“I want us to keep on doing what we’re doing and not get drawn into the Ofsted cloud,” he says. “We know we’re going to be inspected soon and in fact, I welcome it – not the stress that comes with it of course, but I want to celebrate what is going on here.” **TP**

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Building BRIDGES

Six key thinking points for improving the outcomes of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

SARAH WATKINS

When considering students of marginalised ethnic groups, how quickly would Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils come to mind? GRT students are statistically the most vulnerable of any identified group of pupils in the UK. They have the highest temporary exclusion rates and the lowest attendance.

The DfE highlighted GRT pupils as a vulnerable group in Ofsted's inspection framework. In the 2018 update, Sean Harford wrote: "Despite the setting up of a ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by the Gypsy and Traveller communities, outcomes over the last three years have continued to decline."

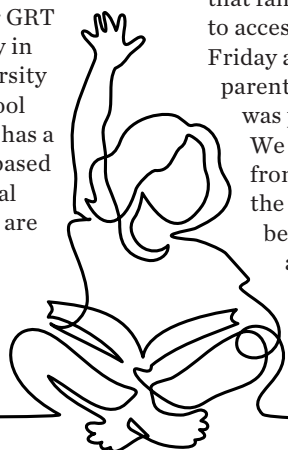
Researchers who contributed to a government report called 'Improving the Outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils,' identified six conditions that could lead to improved outcomes for GRT pupils:

Safety and trust

Schools that proactively tackle discrimination and bullying will be more trusted by GRT communities. Many schools have anti-bullying policies that explicitly refer to Gypsies and Travellers, reinforcing the message that GRT ethnicity is a protected characteristic.

Access and inclusion

Culturally responsive schools secure better results for GRT pupils. Ledbury Primary in Herefordshire sees diversity as a positive for the school community. The school has a strong focus on values-based education, and emotional literacy and social skills are prioritised. Assemblies and workshops on Traveller culture dispel myths and improve inclusivity.



Flexibility

Schools need to pursue a 'problem-solving approach' to policies, based on dialogue with parents. Kerry Brennan, who is a Traveller and a mum, comments: "Traveller children often have reasons behind their bad behaviour. We are very much adults before our time and often we have been through serious traumas."

High expectations

Flexibility needs to be combined with high expectations of attainment, attendance and behaviour. The report promotes the use of joint 'scripts' between schools and communities such as: 'Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils do well at this school.' In a recent ITV documentary, boxer Tyson Fury, nicknamed the Gypsy King, challenged his wife, Paris, who said that she wanted her children "brought up as Travellers," leaving school at 11. Tyson disagreed, labelling parents who limit their children's aspirations as "dream killers".

Partnership

Sarah Holmes comments on partnership work at Bankside Primary in Leeds, a school with an excellent reputation for positive engagement with the Traveller community. "We made it our priority to ensure that the GRT community

felt included and just as much as part of the school community as everyone else. We noticed during nursery home visits that families were unsure about how to access basic services so we created a Friday afternoon family group where parents could learn key skills. A creche was provided for young children.

We shared cooking, music and stories from both our cultures, resulting in the most wonderful relationships being built and increased school attendance. The Traveller community brings so much joy and life to our school."

Partnerships between Travellers themselves can

also be powerful. "I do as much as I can from home," says Kerry Brennan. "I help mums with filling in forms, appointments with schools, helping them read reports and explaining what they mean. We have to stick together and support each other. I seem to be the missing link to build this bridge in my community. People need to understand the issues we are facing. The LA has no funds for us. It's all been cut."

Respect

This needs to be promoted as a two-way process. Teacher Sarah Brombley at St Nicholas School in East Challow, Oxfordshire, says: "As a school, we are conscious of the culture and differing needs of the Traveller community. When Traveller families are working with us, we work positively too. There is mutual respect and the Traveller community knows that we take their concerns seriously."

The attainment of GRT pupils is influenced by many complex factors and there is much work to be done on tackling the inequalities facing these communities. However, many schools prioritise the relationships with GRT families, leading to benefits for the school too. Claire Martin-O'Donoghue, headteacher at Polegate School in East Sussex says: "We have celebrated GRT culture through different events, which drew in our local GRT community to share skills and traditions. This work contributed to our very recent 'outstanding' judgement from Ofsted in all areas. Our relationships are built on trust and understanding. We have now had generations of the same families come through the school. We recognise that we won't always agree but we have very open communication which is based on mutual respect. This enables us to find a compromise and solutions together." **TP**



Sarah Watkins has taught every year group and was previously head of school. She is an SLE (English) and currently teaches Reception.



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PARTNER CONTENT

ASK THE EXPERT

“Let’s build positivity”

Professor Clare Wood on new wellbeing profiling tool
Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning: Survey and Strategies

How does wellbeing relate to children’s academic achievements?

In many cases it is helpful to think of wellbeing in terms of children’s relationships with others and how they feel about themselves. Pupils with low levels of wellbeing struggle to cope with school-based stresses and are more likely to experience difficulties fitting in at school, whereas feeling settled at school and being able to maintain a positive state of mind is often associated with the achievement of mastery goals.

What can teachers do to support children’s wellbeing and attitudes to learning?

Being aware of the relationships going on in the classroom is a good first step. However, it can be difficult to be fully aware of all the dynamics and difficulties being experienced by children. Using a resource like Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning: Survey and Strategies can help to reveal where difficulties are starting to emerge and what practical steps can be taken to tackle them.

How does this resource assess how children are feeling?

The survey we have developed focuses on four critical aspects of wellbeing for children: positivity, sense of self-efficacy, what motivates them and how resilient they are. Pupils take a 20-minute online survey where they answer questions about how they feel about school, and this creates a profile showing the areas of wellbeing they need the most support with. Follow-up evidence-based strategies for reengaging children with their learning are also provided.



OUR EXPERT

Name: Clare Wood

Job title:
Professor at
Nottingham Trent
University

Area of expertise:
Understanding the
factors that impact
on educational
achievement

**Best part of
my job:** Trying out
new approaches to
support children’s
development

How can the survey be used as a whole-KS2 strategy?

You can use Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning to track children’s wellbeing profiles as they move through KS2 and put strategies in place to support wellbeing across the whole school if required. Crucially, it can be used to identify children who may struggle with the transition to KS3 before Y6 and allow teachers to build positivity and resilience in those pupils who need it most.

What can parents/carers do to help support children’s wellbeing?

It is important to centre discussions about school and homework on what is going well, and what positive actions can be taken to improve further, rather than commenting on failure and pointing out errors.

Be positive about children’s approaches to learning and take an interest in what they enjoy about school. When supporting your child with homework, try using phrases such as ‘Try this...’ and avoid starting sentences with ‘Don’t’.

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At face VALUE

How you can create an inclusive environment that values and respects pupils with visible differences

ALEXIS CAMBLE

When we ask young people with a visible difference what they want their teachers to know, a common answer is: “Ask me – don’t make assumptions.” Millions of people across the UK identify as having a visible difference, mark, scar or condition that affects their appearance (see tinyurl.com/cf-report-19). However, many teachers we speak to at Changing Faces feel unskilled and unprepared for supporting pupils who look different.

As the UK’s leading charity for people with a visible difference, we know how important it is that teachers have access to advice and guidance that can help their classes recognise and challenge appearance-related stereotypes. We know that if we can get in early and get it right for children and young people, we can change lives.

Visible difference

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools in England and Wales to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, which covers ‘severe disfigurements’ within the protected

characteristic of disability. Schools must therefore be mindful that their policies and procedures don’t inadvertently disadvantage pupils with a visible difference, and be prepared to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of those children. This could include supporting a pupil to catch up with missed work due to absence for medical treatment, or talking to staff about the unconscious bias that can lead to teachers having lower behavioural or attainment expectations of pupils with a visible difference.

Teachers working within SEN provision will be used to taking a pupil-centred approach to inclusion, so ensuring that visible difference forms part of this practice should be a straightforward step to take. Changing Faces has developed age- and stage-appropriate ‘Supporting your pupils’ guides (see tinyurl.com/cf-supportpupils) to help school staff support pupils in developing the social skills and confidence needed to thrive at school, as well as guidance on key areas such as transition and working in partnership with parents/guardians and other professionals.



creating an inclusive learning environment that encourages everyone to respect and value difference. Incorporating images that reflect a wide range of appearances in lessons and assemblies is a great way of challenging the idea that there's a 'right' way to look. Unfortunately, persistent negative stereotypes of visible difference in popular culture work to reinforce the idea that looking different is somehow 'wrong'. Films and TV shows that rely on the stereotype of the 'scarred baddie' in particular can often be a child's only experience of seeing someone with a visible difference.

Studying books or films that represent visible difference in a positive, realistic way can help challenge negative associations of visible difference that pupils may have unconsciously developed. The novel *Wonder*, by RJ Palacio, tells the story of a boy with a craniofacial condition starting a new school, and has been used successfully in many KS2 classes alongside a 2017 film adaptation.

For younger pupils, the illustrated book *Something Else* by Kathryn Cave explores similar themes of belonging, tolerance and understanding in an accessible way. Children and young people are under immense amounts of pressure to look a certain way; talking about visible difference in schools will help ensure that the next generation truly values difference and understands the importance of treating people equally and fairly.

Providing the right support at the right time for pupils who have a visible difference is vital if we're to ensure that such children are able to thrive at school and go on to lead successful and happy lives. Teachers, SENCOs and other school staff all have vital roles to play in supporting both individual pupils and the wider school community. When we get it right, it can truly be transformative. **TP**

Alexis Camble is education project leader and Susan Ross is head of education at Changing Faces. For advice and support call 0345 450 0275.

 @faceequality

 changingfaces.org.uk

Another issue that can have a significant impact on a pupil's experience of school is appearance-related bullying. Sadly, over half of children and young people with a visible difference experience negative or nasty comments, with 59% of these comments made by people in school (see tinyurl.com/cf-equal-18).

Unfortunately, appearance-related bullying can sometimes be overlooked or written off as 'playground banter'. Our advice to schools is to ensure that staff are vigilant and sensitive to signs of bullying behaviour targeting a pupil's appearance. Staff should support pupils in understanding the impact that appearance-related bullying has on their classmates, and ensure that any instances of it are addressed in the same way as any other bullying incident.

Inclusive environments

As well as tackling appearance-related bullying, teachers have a key role to play in encouraging all pupils to develop positive and respectful attitudes towards visible difference. Our research with young people shows that fewer than a third would be friends with someone with a disfigurement, which is why we'd encourage teachers to not shy away from talking about appearance in the classroom, and to demonstrate the use of appropriate,

respectful language.

By using matter-of-fact language to describe aspects of someone's appearance – such as 'burns survivor' or 'a large scar' – it's possible to clearly convey how someone looks without attaching a judgement, as terms such as 'horribly scarred' might do. This approach also works when responding to questions from other pupils about a classmate's appearance: "Mo has a scar from an operation, but he's fine now. Why don't you see if he wants to play with you at break?" That's an example of how to provide enough information to answer a pupil's question, while moving the conversation on and bringing it to a natural end. Encouraging pupils to identify and discuss similarities and differences within the class is another way of facilitating discussion around the need to respect difference while treating everyone equally and fairly. If you require support in doing this, Changing Faces has produced a range of 15- to 35-minute classroom activities (see tinyurl.com/cf-class-act) to help children to get to know their classmates better, discuss what makes them unique as people and together identify ways in which they can help tackle appearance-related bullying.

Challenging stereotypes

The images pupils see in school will play an important role when it comes to

MEDIUM TERM PLAN

**Y3 SCI
& GEOG**

ROCK STARS

ABBY KING

This cross-curricular unit of work encompasses the science objectives for rocks and soils and the geography objectives for volcanoes and earthquakes. Children will investigate an imaginary collapsed building, getting up close to the rocks, soil and fossils surrounding the site via a range of attention-grabbing practical activities. They will then work together to create exhibits for a new museum, showcasing their findings.

FREE RESOURCES!

Download FREE accompanying worksheets and Powerpoints for this plan at teachwire.net/teaching-resources/rock-stars



Once the children have completed the activity, ask them to discuss their findings. Ensure they have used scientific language to describe their observations and model this where necessary. Next, ask pupils to find any similarities and differences in the rocks. How would they group them together? Are there different ways in which they can be grouped?

Assessment

Can the children use accurate language for their observations? Can they suggest ways of grouping the rocks and give reasons for their ideas?

WEEK 2

Learning objectives:

- Compare and group together different kinds of rocks on the basis of their appearance and simple physical properties
- Set up simple practical enquiries and comparative and fair tests
- Make systematic and careful observations
- Use results to draw simple conclusions

This session is quite equipment heavy, so you'll need to prepare before the lesson. You'll need enough rock samples (sandstone, limestone, chalk, slate, marble and granite) for each group – teams of three are ideal for this experiment. You will also need: vinegar, pipettes, plastic beakers, water, gloves, and a range of items to test the hardness of the rocks, such as

WEEK 1

Learning objectives:

- Compare and group together different kinds of rocks on the basis of their appearance and simple physical properties
- Record findings using simple scientific language, drawings and diagrams
- Make systematic and careful observations, using a range of equipment

Hook the children's attention and introduce the topic by setting up a 'black hole' with six different kinds of rock (sandstone, limestone, chalk, slate, marble and granite) strewn around the edges. This can be achieved by using a black cloth and some safety hazard tape with signs warning people to keep out.

Explain to the children that a building in the local area has collapsed and we've been asked

to investigate. Hand out safety gloves, helmets and white coats to the children (use first aid gloves and raid the KS1 dressing up box if need be). Then explain that the pupils will need to look at the rocks very closely. Ask them to suggest some equipment that would help with this. If your school has an electronic microscope, this would be a great time to use it. However, simple magnifying glasses will also do the trick.

Hand out clipboards and resource 1, and explain to the children that they

will need to carefully observe and sketch their rock samples. Use pastels so the children can blend the shades they need to achieve the required effect. Point out the word bank on the resource and tell the children they will need to label their samples with the appropriate words.



sandpaper, nails and plastic spoons.

Remind the children that they are part of a scientific team investigating the collapse of a local building. Tell them that they have been invited to a conference to learn more about rocks and develop their skills.

Hand out resource 2 and explain that we are going to take notes on what we learn today. Show the children the Powerpoint (resource 3) which explains how the three main types of rock (sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous) are formed and what some of their properties are.

Next, show pupils the equipment and discuss how we can identify which kinds of rock we have found. Does it fizz when vinegar is dripped on it? Does water soak into it? How easy is it to dig something into it, or chip bits off? Talk about how we will make it a fair test. When they have finished testing, ask pupils to use resource 4 to identify their different kinds of rock.



Assessment

Look for evidence of children suggesting ways of using the equipment and creating a fair test. You'll also want to note whether children are able to draw simple conclusions from their experiments.

WEEK 3

Learning objectives:

- Describe in simple terms how fossils are formed when things that have lived are trapped within rock.
- Record findings using simple scientific language, drawings and diagrams.

Before this session you'll need to prepare a 'jelly rock' demonstration (originally from stem.org.uk). Mix up different colours of jelly to create layers in a clear container.

As you pour in each layer, add something to act as the fossils. This could be sweets or small plastic models of things like leaves or dinosaurs. Leave the previous layer to set before adding in the next one, ensuring that you create several distinct layers.

Start the lesson by receiving a letter (resource 5) from the council. Fossils have been found at the bottom of the black hole, and we must stop our work and investigate before we can go any further. Ask the children to share what they already know about fossils and clarify any misconceptions.



Show the jelly model and talk about how the layers of 'rock' at the top are the most recent, while the ones at the bottom are the oldest. Help the children to understand that this is how scientists and palaeontologists work out how old things are. Ask pupils to suggest things which might have been fossilised a long time ago and things which might have been fossilised more recently.

Give the children the word bank (resource 6) and ask them to create their own labelled diagram of fossils in layers of rock, explaining in their own words how rock is formed.



Assessment

Use the children's annotated drawings and explanations to evidence their understanding of how fossils are formed and dated.

WEEK 4

Learning objectives:

- Recognise that soils are made from rocks and organic matter
- Ask relevant questions and use different types of scientific enquiries to answer them
- Set up simple practical enquiries, comparative and fair tests

For this lesson you will need the following for each group: five or six clear plastic containers with lids (takeaway containers are ideal), sticky labels, weighing scales, measuring jugs and a selection of

compostable and non-compostable materials, such as fruit/vegetable peelings, leaves, newspaper, glossy magazines/junk mail, plastic and glass. It would also be helpful to include some cooked foods if possible, such as pasta.

Explain that now the council has found fossils, it has decided to create a museum of rocks and soils to help people understand how to care for the environment around them. Use resource 7 to explain that there are different types of soil, and that soil is created when rocks and organic matter decompose over thousands of years.

Help the children understand that we can support the environment and reduce the amount of waste we produce by creating a special kind of soil. This is known as composting. Explain that compost is created when things rot down. Many people have a compost bin in their garden because it helps give more nutrients into the soil. Could we create a compost bin for our school? How can we find out which materials rot best?

Support the children to set up an experiment by placing different materials inside the containers and labelling them. Add a small amount of water to each container and poke some holes in the lid to enable decomposition to happen. Help the children understand that to constitute a fair test, we'll need the same amount of material in each box, and the same amount of water and air holes. How can we ensure this happens? Which equipment will we need to measure our materials? Explain



that we will come back next week to check on the progress of our materials.



Assessment

Can the children explain in simple terms, how soil is formed? Can they recognise that it makes the test fair to use the same amount of each material?

WEEK 5 Learning objectives

- Use results to draw simple conclusions, make predictions for new values, suggest improvements and raise further questions
- Report on findings from enquiries, including oral and written explanations, displays or presentations of results and conclusions

Return to the experiment you set up in the previous session and ask the children to recap on what they were trying to find out. Can we sort our materials into things that rotted and things that didn't? In the interests of health and safety, you'll want to remind the children not to touch things or take them out of their containers.

Use the magnifiers or microscopes to look closely at the different matter. How can we tell which ones have rotted and which ones haven't? Are there any that have rotted more than others? Do our findings leave us with any further questions?

Discuss the children's findings and support them to draw some simple conclusions about which things might be suitable to go in a compost bin. As a class, generate a list of reasons that composting is good for the environment and five top tips for successful compost bins.

Ask the children to create a leaflet about composting for our rocks and soils museum, using the template in resource 8 and the information gathered by the class. Model how to use scientific vocabulary and persuasive language alongside labelled diagrams to explain both the benefits of composting and some top tips on how to get started.



Assessment

Use the children's leaflets to elicit their understanding of which matter is most suitable for composting, based on the results of their previous experiment.



WEEK 6 Learning objectives:

- Report on findings from enquiries, including oral and written explanations, displays or presentations of results and conclusions

Begin the final session by telling the children that we're going to create some exhibits to go in our museum. Set up the classroom for three different activities: making a wormery, creating fossils and writing labels for the rock collection.

To create their exhibits, it'll be easiest for the children to work in groups of three. For the first activity, each group will need a two litre plastic bottle with the top cut off, a water spray bottle, several layers of sand/soil/compost, and of course, some worms. Send some children out to collect these at break if you don't fancy doing it yourself. Give the children resource 9 with the instructions for how to create their mini wormery.

For the second activity each group will need a small amount of plaster of paris ready mixed with water, a yogurt pot, a wooden stirrer and some small shells. Give the children resource 10 with the

instructions for how to make their own fossils. Be aware that they will need at least a day to dry out before you'll be able to 'excavate' them for display.

For the final activity, provide some rock samples and soils for the children, as well as some plastic containers, and ask the children to choose how they might sort and label them. Give out a word bank (resource six) to support the children with this activity.



Assessment

Ask each group of children to arrange all their 'artefacts' and work from previous lessons on their desks and label their exhibits. Invite people to come and look around the museum. This could be either parents, or children from a different class. Have your children act as tour guides around the museum. Can they explain their learning from this topic?



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

@abbykingwrites

medium.com/abby-king-writes

Q&A

“Essential skills matter more than ever”

Tom Ravenscroft talks about how we can ensure every young person is set up for success



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Everyone needs eight essential skills to succeed, whatever their life path. The Skills Builder Partnership has developed a comprehensive approach to building them, with resources for teachers, a schools programme and a new Home Learning Hub for parents.

What is the Skills Builder Partnership?

The Skills Builder Partnership brings together educators, employers and youth organisations around a collective mission: to ensure that one day, everyone will build the essential skills they need to succeed. There are more than 500 schools and colleges, and 200 employers and organisations across the Partnership. We're supporting them to embed a common, systematic and rigorous approach to explicitly building eight essential skills: Listening; Speaking; Problem Solving; Creativity; Staying Positive; Aiming High; Leadership; and Teamwork.

Why those skills, and what makes them essential now?

These are the skills that bridge the gap between the classroom and the wider world. The same skills that are essential for effective learning make for successful employment in the future; joining up the journey from education through to employment is key. Jobs will change but we will always need effective communicators who can creatively solve problems, lead change and collaborate.

How can these skills be built?

Too often we neglect these skills in education, perhaps because we think that they're innate. What we've seen over a decade, though, is that everyone can build these skills. We just need to break them down into learnable chunks, and that's what the Skills Builder Framework does.



Schools and colleges are being asked to do a lot at the moment. What support are you providing to teachers and parents?

This is a particularly challenging and unprecedented period for schools and colleges. To support parents and carers we have set up a Home Learning Hub, where they can freely and easily access a suite of resources for building essential skills at home (skillsbuilder.org/homelearning).



ABOUT TOM:
Tom is the founder and CEO of the Skills Builder Partnership



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[@Skills_Builder](https://twitter.com/Skills_Builder)
skillsbuilder.org

For teachers, the Skills Builder Hub remains the best place to find teaching resources and see the impact of this learning across students of all ages (skillsbuilder.org/hub).

You've just launched the Skills Builder Accelerator 2020 – what's that?

The Skills Builder Accelerator is our year-long programme for schools and colleges. It's delivered by our team of qualified teachers, and we work really closely with every school and college involved. Together, we develop a complete implementation strategy, train teaching staff and equip everyone with the tools and resources to build essential skills effectively. You can find out more, and when the next application rounds are, at skillsbuilder.org/accelerator.

Need to know

- + Everyone needs eight essential skills to succeed, whatever their path in life
- + Skills Builder breaks down these eight essential skills into teachable chunks
- + Freely accessible resources help to build these essential skills in school or at home

A listening EAR

Investing in mentoring may seem like a luxury, but it might well be the best staff development money you ever spend

CATHERINE CARDEN

Early career teachers are leaving our profession in droves. The 2018 Workforce Census identified that 15% of 2017-18 NQTs left within a year of qualifying and 32% of teachers are leaving within the first five years. Such attrition carries significant consequences for the profession and, most importantly, for ensuring children access the best possible education.

The DfE's Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2019 is a cohesive attempt to address such retention issues alongside the challenge of recruitment into the profession in the first place. This can only be good news for schools and the DfE must be applauded for this move. It is, however, still in development, and the strategy that includes an Early Career Framework will not be rolled out until September 2021. Let's hope it has the anticipated impact.

In the meantime, and beyond such a central strategy, leaders must consider how best to support and develop their early career teachers to avoid seeing this alarming attrition trend within their own schools. Mentoring is a proactive way to invest in teachers' development and brings significant benefits to both the teacher and the wider school community.

Honest conversations

Mentoring and coaching provides an opportunity for staff members to reflect upon their practice and grow and develop as a professional through guided and honest conversations – a key element of the mentoring and coaching process. Providing a mentor who is external to the school community offers a safe and confidential space that allows teachers to explore differing perspectives, share ideas and thoughts as well as offload issues and concerns. Mentoring and coaching also supports the professional learning and development of teachers through building self-awareness, as well as improving specific skills and areas of practice. Moreover, the teacher feels that they, and their career, are being invested in. Such

feelings increase motivation and drive, which often leads to teachers performing more effectively and reduces the chances of them leaving your school or, indeed, the profession.

In 2006, Hook et al produced a summary identifying the benefits of mentoring for teachers. They found that it helped teachers to:

- Think more clearly about things
- Feel valued and listened to
- Recognise and appreciate their skills and resources
- Increase their range of options
- Clarify how they'd like things to be as they get even better and understand what they need to do to get there

- Become more creative and optimistic
- Feel more positive and confident about change

Element of trust

Realising the benefits that mentoring has on teachers, a two-form entry primary in Kent decided to invest in the benefits of mentoring and coaching by offering one-to-one external mentoring to its four early career teachers for an academic year. This offer consisted of an entitlement to a monthly meeting with a mentor and relevant support and guidance in between. The mentor shared opportunities, articles and literature that related to the teachers' interests and professional goals and also



“I leave each of our meetings feeling that my confidence in my own ability has been boosted”



WHAT BEING MENTORED DID FOR ME

identified areas for professional and personal development. The mentoring was confidential, with the mentor only reporting generic progress to the headteacher, rather than anything relating to individual teachers. This undoubtedly requires an element of trust on behalf of the headteacher, who needs to believe equally in the process, mentor and mentees.

The scheme began in July 2019 and the impact is already being realised by the teachers involved (see panel, right). Investing in mentoring may seem like a luxury, yet it could well be the best staff development money you ever spend. In fact, investing in a mentor for a member of staff will not cost much more than sending the same staff member on one or two day courses that have little impact on their practice or professional perspective.

It is the sustained relationship across an academic year that enables such significant impact and results in tangible professional growth. Such investment also makes mentees feel highly valued and invested in, which in turn is likely to encourage them to commit to the school community and, most importantly, remain in the teaching profession.



Catherine Carden is an experienced teacher educator who specialises in teacher development and leadership. To access one-to-one mentoring

and coaching visit bowdeneducation.org and follow [@bowdeneducation](https://twitter.com/bowdeneducation) on Twitter.

@catiscar



Harriet Smith
THIRD YEAR Y4 TEACHER
AND RE LEAD

Being afforded the opportunity to have a mentor has made me feel that I am being invested in by my school. It is amazing to have someone who is taking time to communicate with me about my personal and professional development and career. Through our regular conversations I have become extremely excited about my future. I leave each of our meetings feeling that my confidence in my own ability has been boosted.

My mentor has given me impartial advice as well as signposting me to various opportunities that I would have otherwise not have had access to. We also discuss contemporary research and issues affecting education and my mentor often sends articles to me. These conversations and articles enable me to stay up-to-date with current debates and discourse in the teaching world.

Having someone with a wealth of expertise and experience guiding me in my career has had a real impact on me which, in turn, is positively impacting the children I teach and the wider school community.



Rosie Bransfield
THIRD YEAR Y3 TEACHER
AND PSHE LEAD

I have found my mentor meetings extremely useful both professionally and personally and value having access to an experienced professional who is external to the school. My mentor uses questioning that encourages me to look at a variety of situations, from everyday gripes through to how to improve my practice from perspectives that I have not, or would not, have considered before.

Having time to meet with my mentor has supported me in putting myself first in terms of my wellbeing and professional development. I have been encouraged to ask myself when working out how to prioritise my work, 'How will this benefit the children?'. I feel grateful to have been afforded the opportunity to have a mentor at this stage in my career.



Mitchell Woollcott
SECOND YEAR RECEPTION TEACHER
AND COMPUTING LEAD

The mentoring process has helped me to look at situations from a different perspective. I now feel that when difficult issues arise I have someone to talk to who understands. This has helped my wellbeing on a day-to-day basis.

Having the time to sit down and discuss issues and problems that I have faced in school with a more knowledgeable person has also helped me to develop as a professional. The sessions have given me newfound confidence and I now feel ready to explore career choices that I would have never considered before.

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Thinking about THINKING

How one trust's focus on metacognition is leading to great results

STUART GARDNER & ANNA WEBB

When it comes to driving school improvement, it is important that two key elements are achieved – strong academic performance and the wider development of the young people we serve.

At the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, school improvement is built around a unique ethos focused on metacognition, or 'thinking about thinking', which ensures we strike this balance and achieve compelling results and a demonstrable impact across all our 17 schools.

Cognitive education is all about understanding how the brain works and teaching pupils techniques to help them harness its power most effectively. We recognise that thinking is a core skill which pupils must master to succeed in their education and as such, it needs to be explicitly taught early on in their educational journey – at the primary level.

Learning communities

In all our schools, we develop highly effective thinking and learning communities where 'thinking about thinking' is ingrained into school life and reflected in every aspect – both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils take ownership of their own learning, think independently and creatively and ultimately fulfil their potential and thrive

in the next steps of their education and beyond.

Our approach is underpinned by the theory of cognitive load. We seek to reduce the load on their brain by teaching pupils to focus on learning rather than the specific task at hand. We give them the purposeful thinking tools to unpick a problem and tackle anything that comes their way, meaning they can focus on taking in the new

information. This in turn promotes deeper learning and understanding.

Exeter University's Thinking School accreditation programme drives the development of metacognition and cognitive education in our schools. This gives our schools a clear framework for success and an ambition to work towards and has been shown to be highly successful in improving pupil outcomes more widely. Its impact has been highlighted by researchers, including at the Education Endowment Foundation.

Ethos into action

One of our primary schools, Newbridge Junior School, in Portsmouth was recently accredited as an 'advanced thinking school', recognising its success in putting this ethos into action. Newbridge is one of just three primary schools in the country to achieve this prestigious accreditation and has done so by taking a whole-school approach to deliver real impact.

We begin by organising a

Hyerle's 'thinking maps' – eight maps, each representing a different thinking process and used to tackle different problems and questions; The de Bono Group's 'six thinking hats', which give pupils different ways to come at a question; and Tony Ryan's 'thinking keys', which help deepen learners' thinking in different contexts and encourage students to think outside the box.

We also use Ryan's 'habits of minds' principles to help pupils create thinking habits that will stay with them and develop a disposition for life – helping them to succeed in the next steps of their education and, we hope, throughout their lives.

"We seek to reduce the load on their brain by teaching pupils to focus on learning rather than the specific task at hand"

Fortnight thinks

'Thinking about thinking' is reflected not just in teaching and learning at our schools, but also in our wider approach to behaviour management and attendance. For example, we take a restorative approach to behavioural issues, helping children think though why they did something, understand the consequences of their actions and learn from their mistake. This is just one example of how this approach is truly ingrained into all school life.

Every term our teachers also teach an attendance lesson where pupils are asked to unpick the importance of attendance using the key thinking techniques, to ensure that they really understand the value of school and learning.

'thinking day' for Y3, where they are introduced to the tools which we will ask them to use throughout their time with us. We then begin using these in lessons and show pupils how to apply them. As they progress through the school and become more familiar with these, they work towards self-selecting the right one that they need to tackle a question.

Every teacher uses the same devices so that pupils develop familiarity with these and are confident using them – whatever the subject matter and in any situation. These include

Newbridge also holds assemblies where we introduce ‘think of the fortnight’. Pupils are set a question designed to start debate and put their brains to the test over the course of the week, by looking at it from every angle using the thinking tools and playing devil’s advocate.

The positive impact of our approach is clear to see. Our pupils are reflective, analytical learners, who demonstrate resilience and the ability to face

problems head on – skills they can apply to their lives beyond the school gates. They also develop a love of learning, which we hope will encourage them to engage in lifelong learning.

Getting staff onboard

Encouraging staff to embrace this approach has, of course, been fundamental to our success:

metacognition has become an intrinsic part of our CPD. We also dedicate time in staff meetings to sharing best practice. Teaching staff are encouraged to think reflectively about their own practice and to understand a range of thinking methods that can be used to support student motivation and progress.

To secure parent buy-in, we also hold open mornings and run ‘topic express’ events where we run through the latest topic their children are learning so parents can see the benefits of our approach.

We know that parents see a tangible difference in their children, with many telling us that they are asking tricky questions and showing greater insight, which is fantastic.

Positive impact

More broadly across our schools, we see positive impact on results, behaviour and attendance as a direct result of this approach. Newbridge Junior School, which joined the Thinking School family in 2014, is in a deprived area in Portsmouth and at any one time has 45-50% pupil premium children, well above the national average. Since

introducing our metacognition approach, we have seen a significant and ongoing improvement in the school’s KS2 results and it has consistently ranked as one of the best in Portsmouth. In 2018/19, among a challenging cohort, the proportion of pupils who achieved at least the expected standard in reading, writing and maths was well above the national average. Attendance at Newbridge, a five-form entry school, has also improved year on year.

Newbridge leads Thinking Schools’ Portsmouth primary thinking hub – a group of schools within the trust which meet regularly to share best practice and expertise on embedding thinking skills. This group is helping to drive improvement across the trust’s primary and secondary schools and improve outcomes across the board.

Embedding metacognition in schools requires dedication and the support of the whole school community, to deliver a real shift in how teachers teach and think about pupils’ learning and how pupils engage with their education and harness their own abilities. However, the rewards are well worth it. Once in place, it has the potential to drive significant school improvement and transform the life chances of the children we serve.



Stuart Gardner is CEO of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust. Anna Webb is headteacher at Newbridge Junior School, Portsmouth.

INTO
FILM



BIG

DREAMS

ON SCREEN

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STEP 2

Draw your dream as a storyboard. A storyboard is like a comic strip that tells the director what's happening in your film. You could use the boxes to draw the beginning, middle and end of your film. Think about where your dream is taking place and what might happen. You don't have to use all the boxes – the judges will be looking for ideas with lots of imagination!

STEP 3

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YOUR
BIG
DREAM!

?



Notes	Notes	Notes
Notes	Notes	Notes

Your information

Entrants must be residents of the UK or the Republic of Ireland

Full name: _____

Date of birth: _____

School: _____

Adult's information

Name: _____

Relationship to entrant: Parent Guardian Teacher

Phone number: _____ Email address: _____

Signature: _____

To enter

Send your Big Dream to puffinschools@penguinrandomhouse.co.uk or via post to Big Dreams On Screen, Penguin Random House Children's, 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL. Competition closes on 3 August 2020. Entrants must be 12 or under on 30.08.2020. Full Terms and Condition at intofilm.org/DreamCompetition

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HOME LEARNING

→→→ RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Our team of teachers has created new learning packs, especially designed to be used at home. With versions for children in Y1-2 and 3-6, they include activities designed to hit key curriculum targets, as well as feed children's creativity and curiosity. The first set focuses on the weather. Find it at plazoom.com/collections/home-learning



Unlocking the UNIVERSE

When your dad is Stephen Hawking, being surrounded by science feels extremely normal

LUCY HAWKING

When I was a very young child – just in my first year of school – my brother and I used to sneak into my father's office at Cambridge University and draw in chalk on the big blackboard which covered half the wall. It was used by the scientists my father, Stephen Hawking, worked with. They would get together in his office to talk and argue about whatever they were working on, which could be what happens inside a black hole, how to build a great experiment to test Einstein's theories or what happened just after the Big Bang.

To work out their theories, the scientists wrote all over the chalkboard in what looked like funny squiggles. In fact, it was very complex mathematics which can, amazingly, describe what happens far away in the universe. The language of maths is also the language of nature – although no one quite knows why.

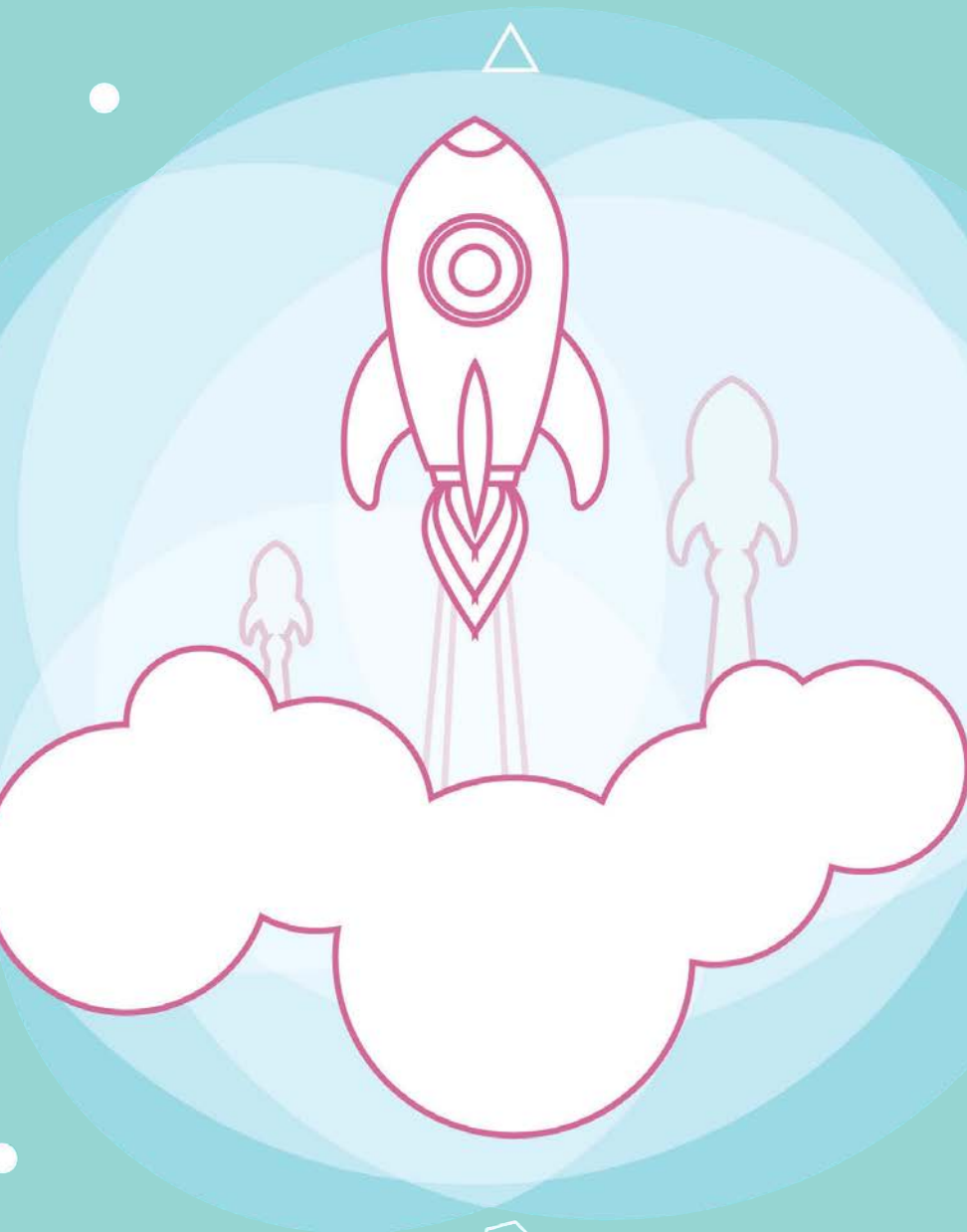
My brother and I liked to come up with our own equations to add at the bottom of the board. I have sometimes wondered whether we accidentally stumbled across the answers to the universe when no one was looking – but I don't think we did. To us, it was just a fun thing to do after school. And then we'd join the scientists for their all-important teabreak in the communal sitting room. The tea ladies would save the orange chocolate Penguin biscuits for me because they knew I liked them best.

Silly scientists

Science seemed very normal to me, and so did scientists. They were cool, funny, clever people who never stopped talking, made lots of silly jokes and got very excited when they had a chance to explain their work to anyone who wanted to listen. It wasn't until I was much older that I realised that this wasn't how many other people thought about scientists. Some saw them as dangerous or weird or thought they didn't have friends and families. This seemed sad to me because I knew it wasn't true.

I also realised that lots of people didn't have a way to understand the kind of work my father and his friends did. This seemed a great shame because their work on understanding the universe in which we live is fascinating and touches us all. It's about asking questions. Where did we come from? How did life begin? Is there anyone else out there? Can we live on another planet? If you've ever asked why the sky is blue, why the stars shine or what happens in a thunderstorm, then you've asked a big question.

One day, at my son's birthday party, a nine-year-old boy asked my father what would happen to him if he fell into a black hole. My father replied, quick as a flash, "You would be turned into spaghetti". It was such a great answer, both true (you would be shredded by



Throughout all these books, friendly scientists contributed essays on their work, writing for young readers about all the funny and cool things I heard them talk about over my lifetime.

The last book, *Unlocking the Universe*, is a treasure trove which tells you everything you need to know to travel through space and time. Reading it makes me feel as though I am back in the old tea room at my father's office in Cambridge University, crunching on a Penguin while scientists explain cool stuff to kids.

If your pupils have ever wanted to know what we might be eating in the future, whether it's OK to be mean to a robot, what the multiverse means, whether life came from Mars, what to do about climate change or why they look like their parents, this is definitely the book for them. I hope they enjoy it and I wish them luck on all their cosmic adventures. But remember, don't fly too close to a black hole... **TP**

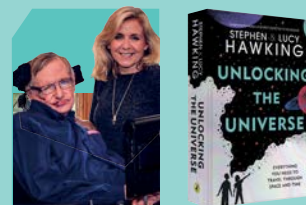
the force of gravity) but also relatable, because everyone knows what spaghetti is. That's when I decided that my father and I should write a book about his work for young readers.

Black holes

Because of the boy's question we wrote our first book, *George's Secret Key to the Universe*. It's about two young friends, Annie and George, who find a way to slip out into the universe through a computerised portal and have a whole range of adventures based on

real science. My father wrote an essay for the book which is like a recipe, telling you how to make a black hole, what to do if you fall in and whether we would ever see you again if you did.

After that book, we wrote a whole series of adventure fantasy novels about George and Annie, each time covering an exciting and fascinating science topic such as black holes, the possibility of alien life, how computers work and what they might do in the future, the importance of water for life and how our world might look in the future.



*Lucy Hawking is the author of **Unlocking the Universe** (£14.99, Puffin).*

Ditch your READING RECORDS

They're a pain for everyone, so let's do something more useful instead

SAMANTHA POPE

When my daughter Amy was at primary school, I used to dread the appearance of a reading record. At their worst, they were small notebooks with a single narrow column on the left to record the date and a wider column on the right to write down the book title and page number(s) that we had read together. When the school staff added to this, what resulted was a boring list that read something like this:

One year, I remember the new reading record having an exciting jungle scene on the cover. I thought that this would herald a new year of imaginative recording. It didn't. It just had wider pages, wider margins and more lines. Did the teacher think that this would make writing a meaningless list of dates and numbers more interesting?

At the end of the day, these lists are meaningless. I know you want to check that your children are reading regularly but this kind of activity is no better than ticking a checklist. It doesn't show what the child gained from their reading – how Amy laughed at Ben's characterisation because he actually hated football and just played to try to be popular, for instance.

We encourage children to read for pleasure because it helps develop them into skillful writers, yet we don't develop a conversation with them about their reading. If we can't be bothered to do more than berate them for not logging a date and comment then why should they be bothered about writing in their diaries?

I've seen the situation countless times in schools since. I've seen staff approach checking the records with tedium and frustration when the children have either forgotten their diaries or not written in them. Those who have get a tick, a 'well done' and perhaps a sticker. For writing page numbers and dates. How is that increasing their vocabulary? How is that developing them as readers?

Eventually, everyone becomes so disheartened by them that they are conveniently forgotten, rendering the entire exercise futile. The sad thing is – it needn't be!

Be creative

Here's a novel idea – if you pardon the pun. Why not remove the dreaded 'record' from the equation and replace

it with 'journal'? Or 'diary'? Something that refers to these notebooks as something that can be creative, fun, imaginative – that pupils will want to write in and staff will want to read?

Instead of investing in official reading records with fancy covers, use a simple, lined exercise book and ask pupils to personalise it themselves. In my experience, this act of freedom engages most children and that will get them on side from the start.

Next, explain that while you still want them to date each entry, you really want to know more about their reading choices. Encourage them to be creative. You could give them a list of ideas like this that would be suitable for a reading diary:

- Write a blurb about what your book is about. Sell it to me –

make me want to read it!

- Draw a picture of a character and tell me about them.
- Have you found any difficult or interesting words? Write them down and tell me what they mean. Try putting them into sentences of your own.
- Write a short summary of what's happened in the book so far. What should I know?
- What's good about the book you're reading? What don't you like so much?
- If you were the author, how would you change the story?
- When you've finished, write a review of the book. Tell me your honest opinion!

You might want to try this out in class first, giving the children the same activity so

Date	Book title	Pages	Comment
12.3.12	Ben Plays Football	1	Ben went outside.
13.3.12	Ben Plays Football	2	Ben met his friends at the park.
14.3.12	Ben Plays Football	3	Ben and his friends played football. Ben scored a goal.

“Eventually, everyone becomes so disheartened by them that they are conveniently forgotten”

you can help them get the hang of using the book. If you want to be a little more prescriptive in your approach, set specific tasks each week, similar to the ones above. This might work better with some of your children who worry if things are left too much to personal choice.

Reward good work

When you collect the diaries, read through them and turn the work into an ongoing conversation. If a child has written about a character or expressed a view about a storyline, write back to them. Make observations and show interest. Remember: if you can't be bothered to do this, then why should they?

Here's an example based on a lovely book I've just read called *The Secret of Nightingale Wood* by Lucy Strange (a fantastic novel for Y5 and 6, if you're looking for one). I'll play the part of the pupil and the teacher...

14th February, 2020:

*Today, I started reading *The Secret of Nightingale Wood*. The main character is called Hen and she has moved with her Mother, Father, Piglet – she's the babysister – and Nanny, to a big house in the countryside called Hope House. She sees smoke coming from the woods and thinks there might be something secret there.*

Teacher's comment:

This sounds intriguing! Do you like Hen as a character? What's she like? Is Hen a nickname for a longer name? What do you think is the mystery behind the smoke? I can't wait to read more about what happens to her as you read on.

15th February, 2020:

Hen is short for Henrietta – I think that's a strange name!

She's an interesting character because she likes to explore and have adventures. Something is wrong with her mother, and a horrible doctor keeps coming to the house called Dr Hardy. Every time he is mentioned there is something disgusting about him, like his breath smells of kippers.

Teacher's comment:

Dr Hardy does sound unpleasant. Do you think there is a reason why the author has written horrible things about him? What is the author trying to say? Here's a challenge – could you draw me a picture of him based on the descriptions?

As you can see, the exchange between the pupil and the teacher has set up a reading

'relationship'. The pupil isn't just a passive reader anymore – they are being encouraged to give their own thoughts on the text. Adding this sort of communication also doesn't take much extra time than nagging a pupil about forgetting their record or not writing in it.

This approach works well in KS2. For younger pupils, who still aren't writing more fluently, you could use an adapted version. For example, ask them to say what the book they read is about (with the help of their parents or carers). They could draw pictures of what happens. I've had some fantastic reviews from children in Y2, so they are capable of a more simplified version. Treat a reading record as something special, rather than something boringly ordinary – and you may get something amazing as a result. **TP**



Samantha Pope is librarian at St Michael's CE Primary in Oxford.

 @childtastic

 childtasticbooks.com





Grammar IN THE WILD

Budding writers must act like zoologists, studying language in its natural habitat

LAURA DOBSON

There are two approaches when learning about grammar: prescriptive and descriptive. The first of these follows a set of rules for language use and choices are either right or wrong. Prescriptive grammar could be taught through worksheets and tested through multiple-choice answers.

Descriptive grammar is the study of how a language is actually used in order to make sense of it. The English language is continually changing and while there are some hard and fast rules relating to grammar, much of the

structure of our language can be manipulated and experimented with to create certain effects.

A prime example of this came with the 2016 interim framework for KS1. A child working at the expected standard had to use sentences with different forms in their writing, including an exclamation sentence – introduced with a ‘what’ or ‘how’ phrase and followed by subject + verb + any other elements. When

Y2 teachers started to explore this concept with their classes, they realised that some of the best examples – ‘What a beautiful day!’

from Rosen’s *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt*, for example – were

not technically sentences as there was no verb: a prerequisite of a sentence. If we teach grammar as right or wrong, then Rosen is grammatically inaccurate and therefore wrong. How ludicrous!

When a zoologist wants to learn more about an animal, they study them in their natural habitat and make conclusions about their behaviour, drawing on what they already know and what they witness. This is far more fascinating than just reading about the animal in a book.

For our budding writers we must treat grammar in just the same way: with interest and an element of exploration.

In order for children to understand why different structures are chosen by authors, and how, as a writer, they can use grammar to shape a reader’s

view, it must be studied in context. A pupil could complete ten worksheets on semicolons but, without seeing them in action and considering the effect they can create, how will the child really know how best to use them?

Here are three examples of how excellent books can be used to teach grammar from the KS2 curriculum (right). When using great texts to teach grammar, start by asking yourself how the extract makes you feel, followed by how the author makes you feel like that.

Most importantly, remember that grammar is so much more than a set of rules. Grammar and punctuation, like vocabulary and ideas, are tools to help writers create effects to suit different purposes and audiences.

“Grammar is so much more than a set of rules”

3

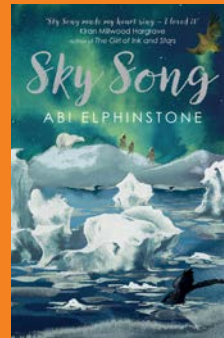
Secrets of a Sun King
BY EMMA CARROLL

This story is set in 1922. Lilian Kaye finds an Egyptian jar on her grandfather’s doorstep which she believes is cursed. The more she finds out about the jar, the more she realises that

2

Sky Song

BY ABI ELPHINSTONE



In the snowy kingdom of Erkenwald, Eska has been trapped by the evil Ice Queen. When she breaks free, with the help of Flint, Blu, Pebble and Balapan, she must quest to find the sky song and remove the Ice Queen from power before it is too late for Erkenwald.

Look at pages 168–169 for this activity. How does it make your readers feel? It's full of suspense so they may say that they feel excited and want to read on.

Hopefully they will be interested in what the characters have to say. Elphinstone is writing to engage by using interesting sentence structures. She reveals things carefully to the reader and integrates dialogue and action.

This book models most of the KS2 grammar curriculum. Ask an UKS2 class to summarise what happens across these two pages in just three sentences. Study some less well-written dialogue, which does not move a story forward, and discuss how you feel reading it (bored!). Consider why we don't feel bored reading Elphinstone's dialogue and annotate why it maintains the reader's interest. After a discussion around this, the children can include dialogue in their next story, using the ideas gained from discussing Elphinstone's writing.



L

Leon and the Place Between

BY ANGELA MCALLISTER

Leon visits the circus and when he is chosen to be in Abdul Kazam's magic show, he discovers what lies hidden in the place between. Concentrate on the below two spreads. How do they make the children feel? They may feel excited – like something is about to happen. The reader holds their breath then the 'bang' makes them jump. Suddenly it is busy – so much is happening. At the end you're holding your breath again.

The author achieves this by her use of ellipses (Y6 objective) to create suspense. Stretching one sentence across a two-page

spread builds anticipation. The sentence structure creates a busy rhythm. There are lots of adverbials but not the usual words that end in '-ly' (Y3+ objective; using '-er' to turn adjectives into adverbs is in the Y2 curriculum). The author also describes noise and movement and utilises some alliteration.

The grammatical devices and structures detailed above can all be explored through this book. With a Y3 class discuss why McAllister has chosen to list adverbials ('back and forth', 'up and over') and explore what happens if those adverbials are taken out or changed for adverbs ending in '-ly'. Create your own busy scenes in the style of McAllister, using similar grammatical devices and structures. Also consider other ways to create hustle and bustle and discuss why McAllister may have decided not to use these devices or structures.

through and are interested and intrigued about what the next sentence will say. The author has used clever sentence structures and a wide range of punctuation to add variety and create the complexities that come from a character's train of thought.

Similar to *Sky Song*, you can use this book to teach most elements of the KS2 grammar curriculum. Something that really stands out in Carroll's writing is the excellent range of punctuation she utilises to add variety and construct sentences. UKS2 pupils can explore the use of punctuation in this extract, consider why it is being used and how else Carroll could have constructed her sentences. Use

these sentences as examples to create definitions regarding how punctuation should be used. Discuss why Carroll has made the decision to construct her sentences like this and not in another way, always referring to the effect she is trying to create. Next, have a go at writing in the first person as a character, creating a complex train of thought which is mirrored through sentence structure and punctuation choice.



her and her friends must take an incredible journey to return the jar to its rightful resting place.

First read pages 16–17, shortly after Lilian finds the package. How does it make your class feel? We can hear Lil's voice coming



Laura Dobson worked for many years as a teaching and learning adviser for a large company and local authority. She now runs *Inspire Primary English*, providing consultancy and training in all areas of English.



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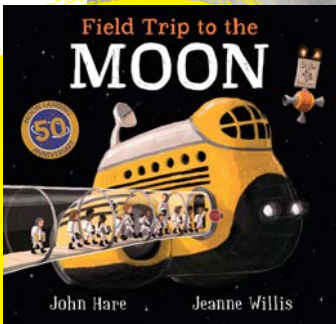
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Published by
Macmillan, 2019

Field Trip to the Moon

Rich in rhyme and figurative language, this otherworldly tale by Jeanne Willis and John Hare will enthral young readers

JOHANNA HOWARD & JONATHAN ROOKE

Most children look forward to a school trip, so who would say no to a field trip to the moon? And yet, the main character in this story is seemingly uninspired by this event. While the other children explore, guided by their teacher, our independent protagonist wanders off and records his findings in his notebook. Other than taking place on the moon, it seems like an ordinary school visit – until the aliens appear!

Jeanne Willis and John Hare's story

will delight and entertain children, while introducing sophisticated themes such as isolation, acceptance and difference. Only we, the readers, and the little boy in the story, meet the excitable aliens. They hijack the little boy's crayons and draw rainbow images all over their grey moon landscape, before leaving him alone with a grey crayon.

When the frazzled teacher returns to the moon to rescue the boy, he assumes that it is he who has defaced the environment

with colourful doodles. On the journey home, we see the boy happily drawing the aliens with his one remaining grey crayon.

Picture books are a fantastic literary resource and this captivating lunar adventure is thoughtfully illustrated and brought to life with a sensitive voice. Young children will laugh out loud at the antics of the naughty aliens. Don't be surprised if your class notices the pantomime qualities of the text and start calling out "Behind you!" as you read it aloud.



Practical activities

Lunar language

This seemingly simple story is abundant in figurative language. When the school spacebus lands, the ‘earthlings’ are described as ‘all sealed in silver suits’ and we read that ‘they parked their tiny spaceship, bright and shiny as the sun’. Pace is achieved by using rhyming couplets such as, ‘All alone and far from home, it sat down in despair. It looked so sad, we didn’t like to leave it sitting there’.

Get the children to experiment with alliteration, similes, metaphors and rhyming, just like the author. Use images from the text or other pictures of space to inspire pupils. Write descriptive sentences including these features.

Alien emotions

When the aliens watch the boy drawing, the illustration shows their different expressions. Can the children infer what each alien is feeling? How do they know? Which part of their faces give us this understanding? Their eyebrows? Mouths?

Ask the children to draw one of the aliens and write synonyms they find in a thesaurus for the emotion they have inferred (eg ‘worried’, ‘anxious’, ‘distressed’, ‘perturbed’) around their drawing, creating a word bank of vocabulary.

Feelings chart

The little boy has an unexpected adventure on the field trip to the Moon. He starts his day on the cover of the book. How is he feeling? Ask the children to identify the key feeling moments in the book and make a list of them (eg landing at the bottom of the spaceship stairs, seeing the world, realising he has been left behind, seeing the aliens for the first time, sharing his crayons and sketchbook, etc).

Make a feelings chart for the wall with these episodes listed along the horizontal



axis and a simple feelings scale running from one to ten along the vertical axis, with ‘very sad’ at the bottom and ‘very happy’ at the top. Plot a graph. Pupils can write more precise words describing the boy’s feelings at key points on the graph. These can come from the text (eg ‘shock’, ‘sighed’, ‘shed a tear’, ‘so happy’) and other vocabulary.

Rainbow colours

The universe has changed for the aliens since the arrival of the little boy. They have made a major new discovery: the ‘coloured sticks’ (crayons). No longer do aliens on the

Moon need to “live their lives in shades of grey”. They have discovered that they can make colourful artwork. They have never been able to do this before.

Ask children to write an explosive ‘breaking news’ front page article for the aliens’ school newspaper, reporting their discovery of coloured sticks. Organise the paragraphs as follows: headline; who; what; where; when. What will this revolutionary new technology from a distant world mean for the lives and wellbeing of moon aliens? Include excited quotes from eyewitness aliens

Take it further → → →

BLAST OFF!

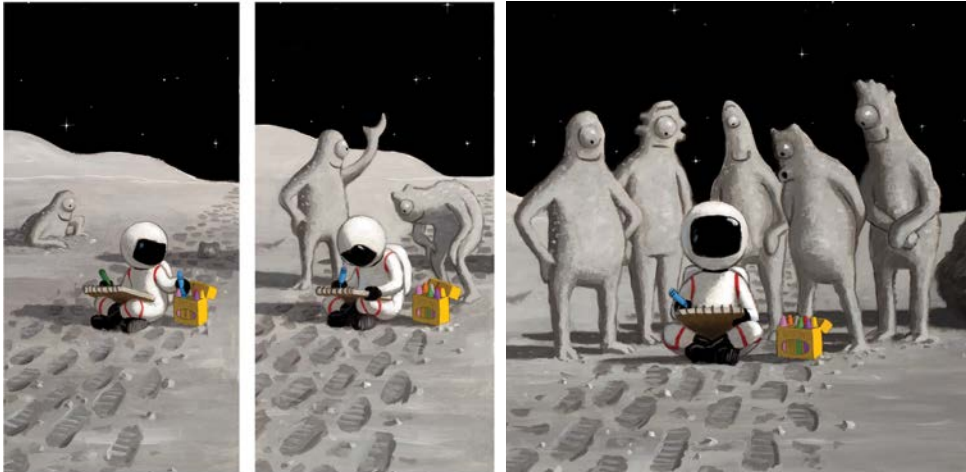
Recreate the experience of taking a field trip to the moon. Turn your classroom into a spaceship school bus with rows of chairs. Play blast-off sound effects, turn the lights off and light up the room with stars.

Turn your school hall into a distant planet by making cardboard craters. Once the children have ‘landed’, they can leave their spacecraft and explore their new surroundings. Try space food at lunchtime.

ALIEN ART GALLERY

The aliens draw on the sketchpad what they see. Show the children images of space and some artwork of human and alien spaceships. Talk about what habitat the aliens may live in under the surface of the moon. Discuss what Zeekie and his alien friends can see from their home (alien and human spaceships, colourful star systems, fantastic planets). Give the children some paper and crayons and let them draw their imagined view, then make an alien art gallery.





Loved this? Try these...

- ❖ *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- ❖ *Dr Xargle's Book of Earthlets* by Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross
- ❖ *Man on the Moon* by Simon Bartrum
- ❖ *Beegu* by Alexis Deacon

images the humans are wearing helmets. Why is this? Use these pictures to lead into scientific enquiry about space.

Digital age

Computing skills are more important and prevalent in the curriculum than ever. Digital literacy can be embedded in exciting activities linked to topics the children are studying. When the boy realises he is being watched, the illustration shows his helmet facing forward. What do the children think his facial expression is like underneath the helmet at this point? Using inference to support their choice, let children take selfies of their chosen expression, upload the pictures and superimpose their faces onto the illustration.

Roleplay in pairs an interview with Zeekie the alien and his alien friends about the strange little boy. Use this understanding to make a picture story on iPads with the easy-to-use 'Our Story' app from the Open University. Drag photos of some of John Hare's panels into the story. Children can type what is happening and can then record what the little boy is thinking and feeling using the voice record facility. **TP**

Johanna Howard is LKS2 Y3/4 lead at Weeke Primary in Winchester. Jonathan Rooke is a senior lecturer in education at the University of Winchester.

or a cautionary sentence from an older alien who is concerned about the harmful effect coloured sticks may have on young aliens. Gather and display adventurous vocabulary from the book and encourage children to use it.

Field trip

Imagine the little boy managed to convince his teachers to invite his new alien friends to his school on Earth. How might Zeekie and his four alien friends behave? How would they react to different school experiences eg science lessons, PE, a cooking lesson, the school pets, a music lesson?

Ask children to create a double page illustration of a lesson with the aliens. Imitate the colours, techniques and shapes John Hare uses. He opts for acrylic paint on hardboard but children can use a range of resources.

Write a rhyme for the illustration in the style of Jeanne Willis. Gather the illustrations into a book and call it Field Trip to the Earth. Photograph the book and send a file to John Hare at the contact address on his website. Children could write a letter to him about the book too.

Man on the moon

Space and the moon are covered in many mediums. John Lewis' 2016 Christmas advert, *Man On The Moon*, tells the story of a young girl desperately trying to reach a man living on the moon, eventually doing so by sending a telescope attached to balloons. This would be an excellent comparative text.

Explore the concepts of isolation, loneliness, innocence of youth and seeking connections in P4C enquiries. Discuss these themes and select which one is most significant in the story. Children can then discuss a question that they have generated, eg can you be lonely when you are surrounded by people?

Space science

This book provides many fantastic cross-curricular opportunities – in particular with science. Several year groups cover space in the primary curriculum. Use the illustration of children jumping as an initial concept cartoon and elicit what children already know. Can they see that gravity is being illustrated here? What is gravity? How does it differ on Earth and on the moon? In all of these

ALIEN DESIGNER

Ask the children to make plasticine or clay aliens. Discuss how they might look – proportions, distinctive features. Pupils can sketch some designs, discuss them with their peers and choose the best one to make.

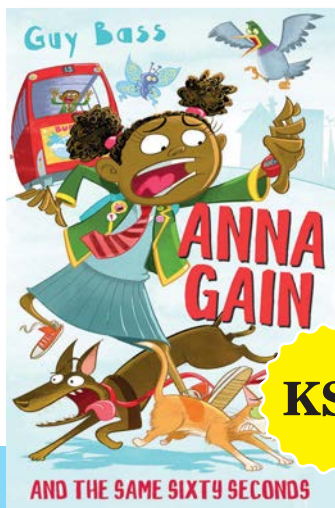
Give the new aliens names and write character profiles for them, detailing their age, favourite food, hobbies, sleeping habits, special abilities, etc.

Make a tabletop moon scene out of cardboard and display the aliens on it. Make a NASA 'alien spotter' book or a social media profile for the aliens.



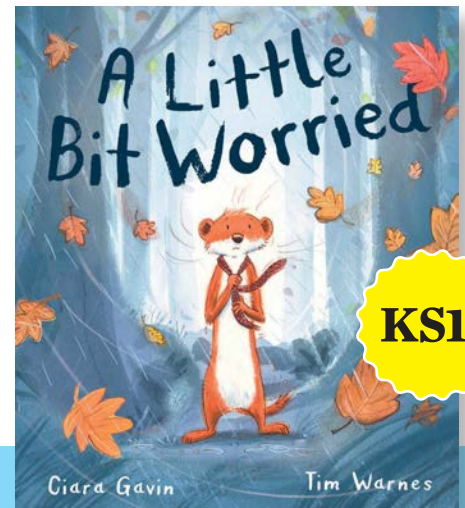
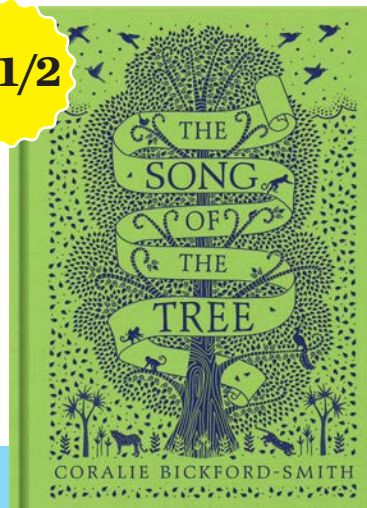
Book CLUB

We review five brand new titles that your class will love



KS2

KS1/2



KS1

Anna Gain and the Same Sixty Seconds

by Guy Bass
(£6.99, Barrington Stoke)

In this Groundhog-esque tale from Blue Peter Book Award winner Guy Bass, our protagonist Anna Gain – daughter of a clockmaker – finds herself trapped in a never-ending loop of the same infuriating minute before the school bus arrives. Is fate trying to teach her a lesson? Will she ever escape? The book has been designed by publisher Barrington Stoke to be ‘super readable’. Targeting those with a reading age of eight, it features a dyslexia-friendly font, an accessible, clutter-free layout and gently tinted paper to reduce visual stress. Energetic illustrations keep the story ticking along and the language has been carefully selected to ensure unnecessary words won’t hinder young readers. At 66 pages, this title is a manageable length, great for building reading stamina. The story is funny, unpatronising and will hold the attention of developing readers.

The Song of the Tree

by Coralie Bickford-Smith
(£14.99, Particular Books)

When your debut children’s book makes Time Out’s 100 Best Children’s Books list, you know you’re onto a winner. This is the third in Bickford-Smith’s nature-themed series and follows the ponderings of a little red bird who wants to find out who keeps her favourite tree company when her flock flies south for winter. Each page of this exquisite book features striking William Morris-style illustrations in a palette of greens, blues and reds that would be the perfect jumping-off point for a pattern-based art project. The minimalist, poetic language weaves through each scene, enticing readers to turn the page, and there’s plenty of interesting vocabulary to get your teeth into – ‘cosmic parade’, ‘rowdy chorus’. Children will enjoy the moments where they need to turn the book sideways to marvel at the full-length images.

A Little Bit Worried

by Ciara Gavin
(£11.99, Little Tiger)

Coping with new experiences and dealing with anxious thoughts can be tricky for small people. Sharing a picturebook is the perfect way to encourage children to think and talk about their emotions and help them learn they’re not alone. When Weasel gets caught in a scary storm he builds himself a fort to hide in. He’s happy hunkering down alone, but soon a mischievous mole with a different perspective comes to visit and teaches Weasel that by looking at things a different way, he can learn to find joy – especially when he has his new friend by his side. Gavin’s charming text encourages a mindful approach to things that are out of our control. The story will be comforting for nervous pupils, but can also be used to encourage empathy in the more confident and outgoing members of your class.

HOME LEARNING

Our teacher-made home learning packs contain enough literacy work to cover five mornings, with minimal adult supervision. Differentiated by year group, each pack contains a reading comprehension task, using extracts from classic books such as Robin Hood and The Sword in the Stone. Download them for free at plazoom.com/collections/home-learning

→→→ RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



Meet the author

MATT GOODFELLOW ON SWITCHING TEACHING FOR POETRY



How did you make the leap from teacher to full-time poet?

I went into teaching when I failed as a rock star in my mid-twenties. The first couple of years were so all-consuming that I had no time to think of writing anything other than lesson plans. Gradually, as we had visiting poets and authors into school, I remembered that I was supposed to be a writer, not a teacher. After three years I ended up in Y6 where I stayed full-time for another five or six years. In the meantime, I'd begun to get poems published and my headteacher allowed me to go into other schools to practise performances and workshops. I went part-time and over three years it became clear to me that my teaching days were over. The difficulty was really only a financial one – teaching is a regular wage whereas poetry certainly isn't. My wife was extremely supportive of the decision as she knew it was where my soul lay. I'm eternally grateful to her for that.

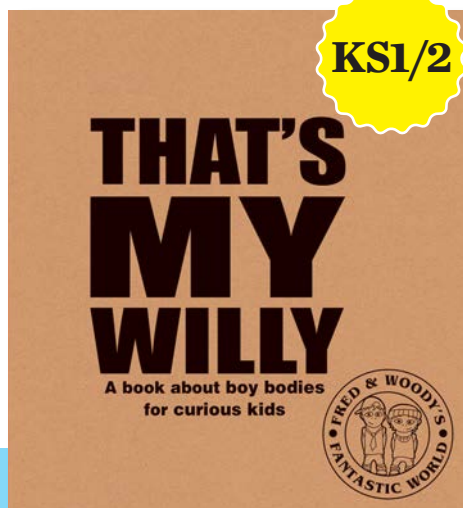
Did you draw on your teaching days for the book?

Absolutely. Many of the poems are versions of the lives I saw unfolding in front of me. I loved the daily interaction with the children, and the whole spectrum of things that happened. I hated the paperwork though.

How would you like teachers to share the book?

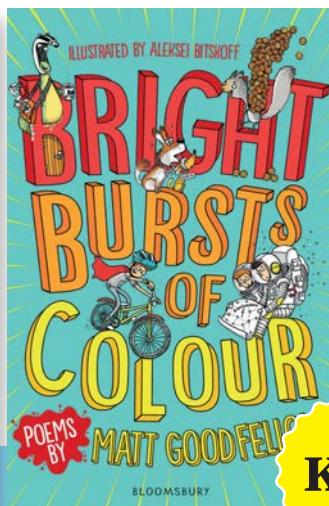
Read it. Discuss it. In order to be vital, poetry must be heard every day in class. I hope this book finds its way into many classrooms.

KS1/2



That's My Willy
Edited by Ruth Owen & Mark J. Sachner
(£7.99, Ruby Tuesday Books)

Initiating honest, realistic and age-appropriate conversations with pupils about their private parts can feel daunting. This new title – and the accompanying version for girls, What's Down There? – has been carefully written in consultation with Mandy Lancaster, RSE trainer for Public Health Cornwall, to give you lots of opportunities to talk with your class about their bodies. The repeating refrain – “That’s my willy and it belongs to me” – aims to make talking about this body part normal. The book’s humorous tone is a great way to deflect embarrassment – for both you and your pupils, while still taking the subject seriously. Other topics covered include the idea that exploring our bodies is natural but needs to be done alone in a safe and private space. Positive body image and consent are also explained.



KS2

Bright Bursts of Colour
by Matt Goodfellow
(£5.99, Bloomsbury)

One of the beautiful things about poetry books is that if one verse doesn't grab you, the next just might. There are over 60 to choose from in this new title, covering topics as diverse as grief, blended families, absent parents, SATs stress and refugees. There's plenty of light relief too, from a slug who thinks it's a badger to a cat with flavoured fur. Author Matt Goodfellow spent ten years in the primary classroom before becoming a full-time writer, and it shows. There are powerfully recognisable slices of school life here – from the ‘Chameleon Kids’ who keep their feelings quiet to avoid ridicule, to Charlie, who didn't cry when he broke his wrist or when his nan died, but is finally brought to his knees by the reading paper: “And he knew he couldn't do what they wanted him to do do, however hard he tried.”



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Should all learning take place online?

-  Write a set of instructions for reducing the spread of coronavirus.
-  Send a letter to an imaginary penpal about having to stay home.





Should we spend money trying to contact aliens?

-  Pen an alien's first message to the people of planet Earth.
-  Create an advert persuading aliens to come to Planet Earth on holiday.





Will robots ever take over the world?

-  Write instructions to teach a robot to do a forward roll.
-  Imagine you are a robot and write a diary entry.



Should we reintroduce beavers to the UK?

-  Write an imaginary advert inviting European beavers to the UK.
-  Rewrite 'Row, row, row your boat' with beaver-themed lyrics.



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AUTHOR IN YOUR CLASSROOM

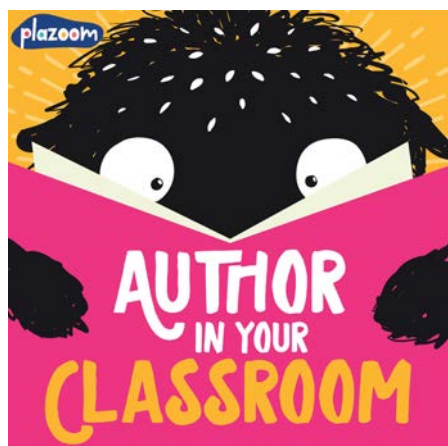


We've teamed up with Puffin to bring author Sam Copeland directly to your pupils – via a free podcast and downloadable resources



Fancy a virtual visit from a bestselling children's writer? Luckily for you, funny man Sam Copeland is ready and waiting to share his thoughts, ideas and inspirations with your budding wordsmiths, via our new 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.

Writing stories with believable, three-dimensional characters can be a tricky thing for children to master – especially when there's the constant temptation to slip your favourite footballers or YouTubers into your story. Filling a tale with flawed heroes or baddies the reader can relate to helps to bring the story to life. In this episode, Sam focuses on how he created characters for his new novel, *Charlie Morphs into a Mammoth*.



HOW TO USE THE PODCAST

- ✓ Search for 'Author in your Classroom' podcast wherever you listen to podcasts
- ✓ Play it in your classroom in one go, or in seven to ten minutes chunks
- ✓ Pause the recording to talk about the points being raised

FOUR THINGS KIDS WILL LEARN FROM THE PODCAST

1 NOT EVERYONE IS BORN A WRITER

"I think I was ordinary at writing at school. I had a love-hate with my English teacher. This whole experience of being an author is a total surprise to me. If you'd told me when I was 20 that I'd be a published author, I would not have believed you."

2 MAKE YOURSELF LAUGH

"One of the frustrating things about writing a funny book is that you've got to think of jokes. I envy writers who don't have to write funny books because they can just get on with the plot! The number one person you need to make laugh is yourself. If it doesn't make you laugh, why is it going to make others laugh?"

3 DREAM UP FRIENDS

"I set out to write characters that I would want to be friends with. This is a weird thing to say, but I do feel like I've become friends with them – I like them very much! Writing naughty characters is also really fun."

4 LEARN THE RULES

"It's important to know the rules of writing before you go about breaking them. Learn all the boring rules so you understand the game, then you can stray outside the boundaries."

LISTEN TO SAM'S ANSWERS IN FULL BY DOWNLOADING THE PODCAST

SECRETS OF A 'NAUGHTY' KID

Author Sam Copeland wrote for us last year about his experience of primary school...

"I faced many serious problems as a child, such as parental divorce and slow terminal illness in my very close family, which I masked by messing about and acting up. Teachers could never have known what was going on for me. I never spoke about it – I felt too embarrassed and like I was the only one with these problems, so I hid them behind a veil of mischief, I was always in detention, which increased the stress I felt."

Read the full article at tinyurl.com/tpcopeland



How to download the resources



To accompany the podcast, teaching experts at Plazoom have created free resources that you can use to develop your pupils' writing. The teaching pack includes lesson plans, a Powerpoint, teacher notes and activity sheets.

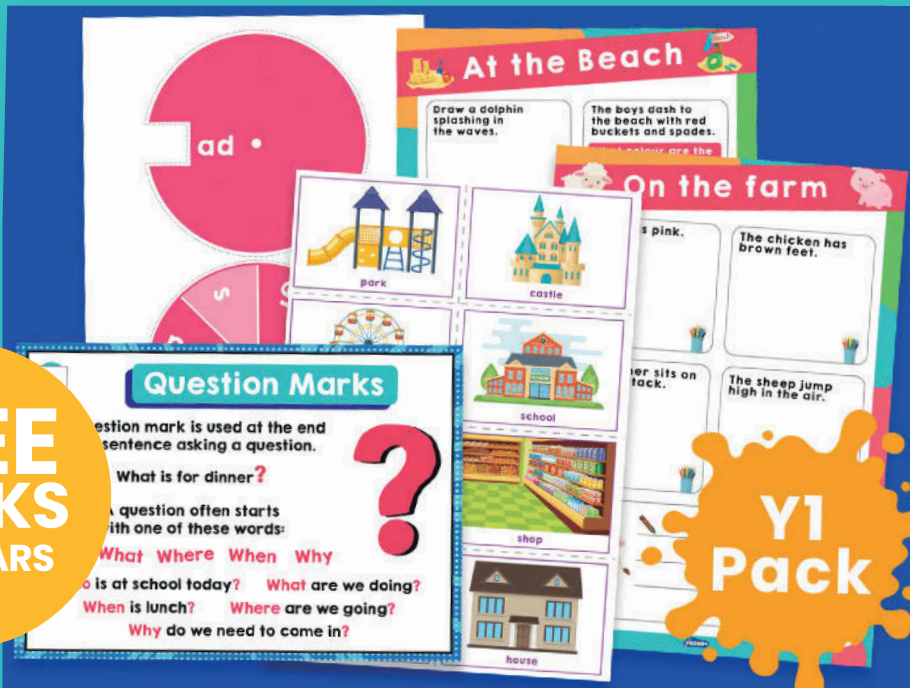
In this teaching sequence, children will have the chance to create a hero, a villain and plan their own story, while learning to 'show, not tell' what a character is like.

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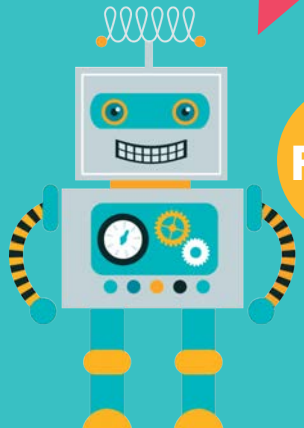
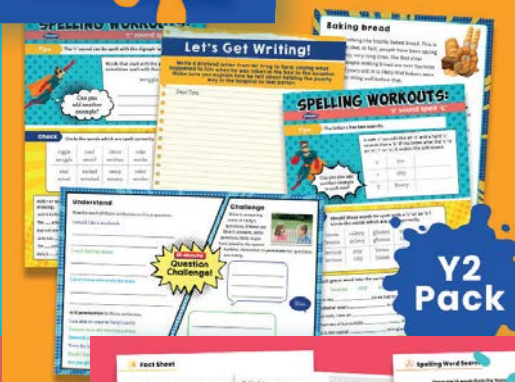


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Read Mike Davies' Clicker 8 review on page 79

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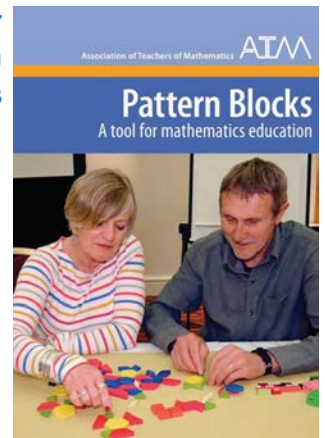
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View the full collection of Primary resources on the ATM website

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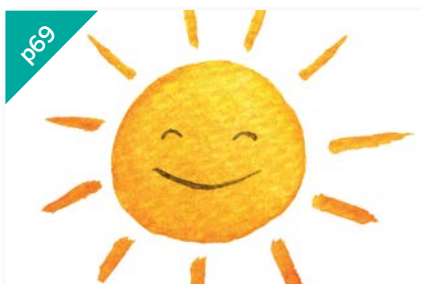
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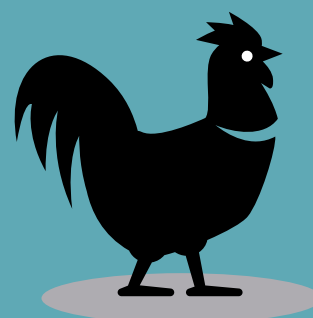
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Chicken OR EGG?

Instruction then problem-solving or the other way round? It depends what sort of maths we want our pupils to learn...

MIKE ASKEW



When I started teaching back in the pre-national curriculum stone age, if you asked a teacher about what theory most influenced their teaching, then Piaget and his theory of stages of development would often be mentioned. In summary, his theory was that how we think goes through distinct, different stages as we get older, with young children's thinking being tied to actions on concrete objects; actions that over time come to be imagined rather than actually needing to be carried out. That internalisation, so Piaget argued, led to the ability to reason formally only arising in the early teen years.

While many writers now consider this 'stages' theory to be flawed – that it underestimates not only the reasoning abilities of young children but also the extent to which adults still rely on concrete images – the theory was commonly assumed to have shaped teaching practices,

particularly the use of practical material in the early years of primary school and the delaying of ideas like ratio and proportion to the early secondary years.

Looking back later at the evidence for the influence of Piaget's theory, Valerie Walkerdine argued that, in fact, the teaching practices and curriculum ordering that were attributed to this theory were actually already in place prior to the English education system 'discovering' Piaget. His theories, it seems, did not lead to the introduction of particular styles of teaching, but were used to justify what was already being done.

Architecture of thinking

Roll forward to 2020 and a theory that now seems highly influential is cognitive load theory, and the associated calls for it implying the need for direct instruction. Cognitive load theory, to oversimplify it, is grounded in the 'architecture' of



“It seems many teachers have a strong preference for directly showing pupils what to do”

our thinking having two main components: working memory and long-term memory. Given the evidence that working memory is limited and can only process around three to five units of information at a time (and then not hold onto them for long), the argument follows that direct instruction, wherein teachers model working through examples, lightens the cognitive load for pupils. After seeing examples worked through, similar problems are presented that pupils then work through on their own, recreating what they have seen the teacher do. The general model of teaching is thus one of instruction followed by problem solving: I-PS.

An alternative approach flips this sequence – PS-I. Here, pupils are first given a problem to solve followed by an explicit teaching phase. This rests on the expectation that pupils will find informal solutions to the problem posed and then the teacher, by comparing

and contrasting different pupil solutions, draws out the mathematics, leading the class to the desired solution and approach.

Advocates of the PS-I approach argue that this works because being posed a problem means pupils activate their prior knowledge, that they ‘tune in’ to what is being taught, and that it can make them aware of gaps in their knowledge and so be more receptive to the subsequent teaching. The ‘productive struggle’ that arises from PS-I means, it is argued, that pupils come to identify and learn the ‘deep’ features of the mathematics being worked on.

Which to choose

So, which is better? I-PS or PS-I? Is there evidence for the effectiveness of one of these approaches over the other? Well, there is no consistent finding. Many studies demonstrate the superiority of I-PS over PS-I but, equally, there are several studies

demonstrating that PS-I is the more effective approach.

Given that both approaches appear to have merit, maybe the answer as to which style to adapt simply comes down to an individual teacher’s preference. I’m reminded of when the national numeracy strategy was introduced and a style of teaching advocated that had the teacher modelling what to do, followed by pupils working on similar examples. More than once, teachers told me something along the lines of, ‘Now I can teach maths the way I always thought it should be taught’. It seems many teachers have a strong preference for directly showing pupils what to do, although whether that is based in a view of pupils being mathematically ‘empty vessels’ or the result of how most of us were taught mathematics ourselves is open to debate. It may be the case that the current popularity of cognitive load theory and direct instruction is like my experience

of Piaget; it is being used to justify existing practices.

Drilling down into the research on I-PS v PS-I suggests, however, that it is not as simple as taking your pick. A major review of studies into the effectiveness of each approach by the writers Chen and Kalyuga (2019) shows that there are differences in the sort of learning outcomes arising from each approach. Their meta-analysis of several undefended studies confirms the view that both instruction followed by problem solving (I-PS) and problem solving then instruction (PS-I), can be effective. But over and above this, they found that PS-I was more effective in bringing about learning of conceptual knowledge and understanding principles’ underlying procedures, whereas I-PS was better for teaching how to carry out procedures. So, a key question to ask is what sort of mathematics we actually want our pupils to learn. The answer



to the ‘effectiveness’ questions cannot be addressed without being clear about these aims. In other words, if we want pupils to go beyond being able to carry out procedures and to develop conceptual understanding of the mathematics, then PS-I looks to be the better approach.

Layla’s bracelets

What this difference might look like in practice can be illustrated by looking at the sort of questions from our national tests. As always, a health warning – I do not advocate ‘teaching to the test’ but do think looking closely at the sorts of questions posed on the tests can help us think about the sort of mathematics we want our pupils to be engaging with.

One of the 2019 reasoning questions gave the following information about making bracelets and necklaces:

Each bracelet has 53 beads
Layla makes 68 bracelets
Each necklace has 105 beads
Layla makes 34 necklaces

The question posed was to work out the number of beads Layla used altogether. At first glance this looks like a fairly standard two-step word problem: calculate the number of beads used for the bracelets (53×68) and the number for the necklaces (105×34) and add the two products together. As such, the solution method can be demonstrated, and then further similar problems be set to practise these two steps.

But a closer look at the set-up of the problem suggests that there might be more behind its design than simply setting up a two-step problem. The inclusion of 68 followed by 34 looks not to be unintentional. Spotting that 34



“Now I can teach maths the way I always thought it should be taught”

is half of 68 might lead to the realisation that 53×68 can be transformed into the equivalent calculation of 106×34 , using the associative rule:

$$53 \times 68 = 53 \times (2 \times 34) = (53 \times 2) \times 34 = 106 \times 34$$

The two products can then be combined:

$$106 \times 34 + 105 \times 34 = 211 \times 34$$

Now it may be that this reorganisation of the two products into one product is, in the end, not much quicker than simply carrying out the two-step approach. But being alert to, attuned to and looking for patterns in the calculation, and seeking out a more elegant way of finding the solution, is precisely what makes mathematics appealing to those who go on to study it. Helping pupils develop such a sensibility, an attunement

to looking beyond the surface features of a problem, is, I think, only possible through a PS-I approach. Setting a problem like this, giving pupils time to work on it and looking out for anyone who spots the connection between 68 and 34, can lead to a rich discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.

We do not have to wait until the end of KS2 to encourage pupils to look beyond the immediate features of the problem. The 2019 KS1 assessment presented this series of calculations:

$$\begin{aligned} 1 + 2 + 3 &= 6 \\ 2 + 3 + 4 &= 9 \\ 3 + 4 + 5 &= 12 \\ 4 + 5 + 6 &= 15 \end{aligned}$$

Pupils had to complete the next number sentence in the pattern. I would expect that many children would

have seen the pattern in the column of addends, to arrive at the next number sentence of:

$$5 + 6 + 7 = [\quad]$$

I wonder how many of them then went on to calculate the answer to this from scratch? Here, before actually posing the question to be answered I might simply put up on the board the four completed calculations, and ask pupils to talk to a partner about what they notice. I would be listening out for anyone not just noticing the pattern in the addends, but also the differences of threes in the totals. Can anyone articulate why those answers are going up by three each time? That could lead into exploring:

$$\begin{aligned} 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 &= 10 \\ 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 &= 14 \end{aligned}$$

Again, posing such questions to a class and then having a conversation about the different things they notice takes us into exploring mathematical generalities, into doing mathematics rather than merely ‘finding the answer’.

Of course, I am not suggesting that the result of such discussions will mean everyone in the class immediately falling in love with mathematics. I do believe, however, that such conversations help those pupils who might have an appetite for mathematics come to taste some of the joy that has driven this discipline over the centuries.



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



@mikeaskew26

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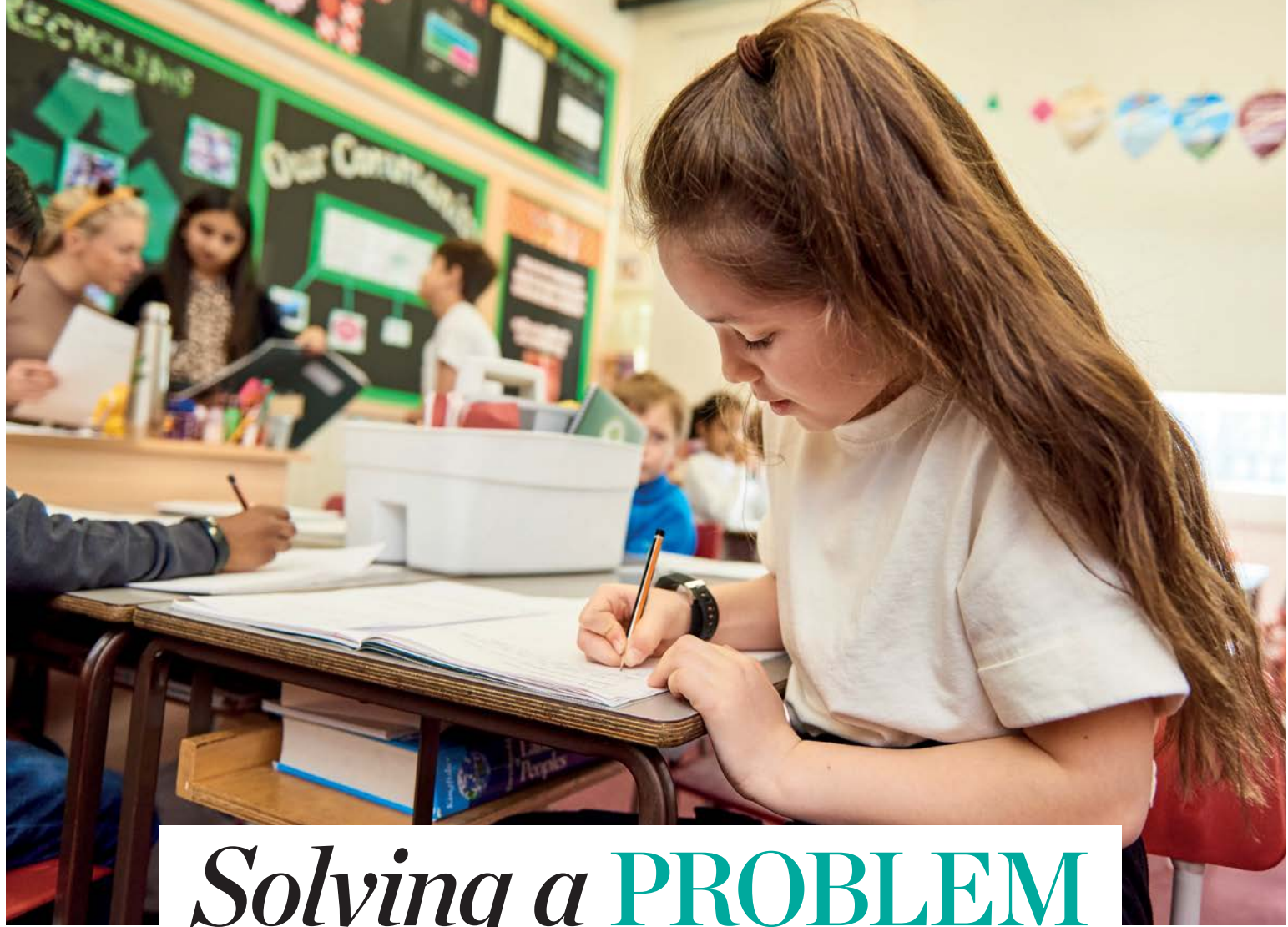
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Solving a PROBLEM

Use previous SATs questions to help pupils consider links and patterns between numbers

BETH SMITH

As a Maths SLE, I have the opportunity to work with classes across a number of primary schools. One of the most common requests I have is how to help children to answer problem-solving questions. In the EEF’s research into improving mathematics in KS2 and KS3 (2018), one of its eight recommendations is to teach pupils strategies for solving problems. It then provides the following suggestions:

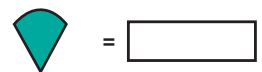
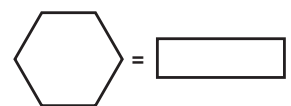
- If pupils lack a well-rehearsed and readily available method to solve a problem, they need to draw on problem-solving strategies to make sense of the unfamiliar situation.
- Select problem-solving tasks for which pupils do not have ready-made solutions.
- Teach them to use and compare different approaches.
- Show them how to interrogate and use their existing knowledge to solve problems.
- Use worked examples to

enable pupils to analyse the use of different strategies.

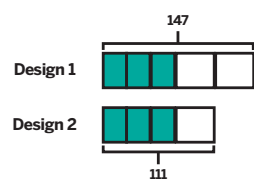
- Require pupils to monitor, reflect on, and communicate their problem solving.

Let’s consider some of these suggestions in relation to questions taken from recent SATs and White Rose Maths assessments. Firstly, bar modelling can be a brilliant tool to help children make sense of the information they are given. Take this question from the 2018 SATs:

Calculate the value of each shape.



Encourage children to use a bar model to draw out what they know.



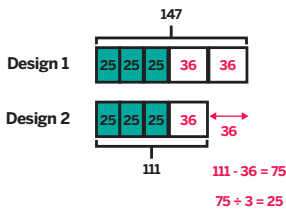
“Highlighting different methods can lead to mathematical discussion and the chance to unpick the structure of a problem”

Amina is making designs with two different shapes. She gives each shape a value.



Notice the way the different colours of shapes are grouped together, helping children to see what is the same and what is different about the bars. Once

the starting bar model has been drawn, children can start to consider what else they can find out. The first step in this model is to consider what the difference between the designs is and therefore what the value of the larger shape is. The annotated bar model below shows how this can be modelled:



An important aspect of teaching problem-solving is to then provide children with another problem with a similar structure to practise their skills. Providing the same problem with different numbers takes the problem-solving elements away and moves the question more towards fluency. However, another problem with a similar structure but a different context allows children to refine their thinking. Take this question from the Y6 White Rose Maths spring assessment:

The mass of a box containing 6 tins of beans is 7.5kg. When 2 tins of beans are removed, the mass of the box is 5.1kg. What is the mass of one tin of beans?

The situation is completely different. However, when placed into a bar model children can use similar skills to solve the problem.

Applying knowledge

Next, let's consider how we can use problem-solving questions to support children to apply their knowledge and skills. Many questions require children to calculate both mentally and through written methods, practising the skills they have acquired. In the question below, children add and subtract to find change in a money problem:

John buys one toy car (£1.49)

and one pack of stickers (£1.64). How much change does John get?

Most commonly, children will use the following method:

$$£1.49 + £1.64 = £3.13$$

$$£10 - £3.13 = £6.87$$

Some pupils will be able to attempt this mentally. However, others will rely on written methods and this can bring the possibility of errors, especially when calculating $£10.00 - £3.13$. Children have to complete multiple exchanges, which may lead to errors. A second method, shown below, addresses this issue head on. When subtracting, we can apply the idea of constant difference. If we add or subtract the same amount to both numbers in the subtraction, the difference will remain the same. Subtracting one penny off both amounts ($£10$ and $£3.13$) leads to a much easier subtraction without any exchanging.

$$£1.49 + £1.64 = £3.13$$

$$£9.99 - £3.12 = £6.87$$

Consider how this method can be applied to the following questions:

Ken is playing a game. He has 4,289 points. Then he scores another 355 points. Ken's target is 6,000 points. How many more points does Ken need to reach his target? (2019 KS2 SATs)

Morgan is running a 10km race. So far, she has run 1,340 metres. How far does she have left to run? (White Rose Maths Y6 summer)

Finally, let's consider how we can use and compare different approaches. The below question from the 2019 SATs test is, on the surface, a problem requiring a number of steps involving multiplication and addition:

Layla makes jewellery to sell at a school fair. Each bracelet has 53



beads. She makes 68 bracelets. Each necklace has 105 beads. She makes 34 necklaces. How many beads does Layla use altogether?

Many children would approach this problem by using the numbers they are given and calculating in three steps:

$$\begin{array}{r} 53 \\ \times 68 \\ \hline 424 \\ 3180 \\ \hline 3604 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 105 \\ \times 34 \\ \hline 420 \\ 3150 \\ \hline 3570 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 3604 \\ + 3570 \\ \hline 7174 \end{array}$$

The second method, below, shows a link between the calculations. If we notice the relationship between 34 and 68 in the question, we can use that to help us with our calculations. Remember, when multiplying, if we half one number and double the other number, the product remains the same:

$$\begin{array}{r} 105 \\ \times 34 \\ \hline 420 \\ 3150 \\ \hline 3570 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 53 \times 68 = 106 \times 34 \\ 106 \times 34 = 3570 + 34 \\ 106 \times 34 = 3604 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 3604 \\ + 3570 \\ \hline 7174 \end{array}$$

A third method uses the idea from method two but takes it a step further, using the idea that $105 \times 34 + 106 \times 34$ is equal to 211×34 . Interestingly, this is the simplest multiplication to complete, with the least exchanges:

$$\begin{array}{r} 211 \\ \times 34 \\ \hline 844 \\ 6330 \\ \hline 7174 \end{array}$$

Number sense

Comparing the methods highlights the need for number sense. Instead of diving straight into written methods, children should look at the numbers they are using and consider if they can see any links or patterns. Sometimes there won't be any there, but when the links are there, it can support with calculating more efficiently. Consider how you could use this idea when answering the question below, taken from the 2018 SATs:

Ken buys 3 large boxes and 2 small boxes of chocolates. Each large box has 48 chocolates. Each small box has 24 chocolates. How many chocolates did Ken buy altogether?

In conclusion, it's vital that we consider how we teach problem-solving strategies. Highlighting different methods can lead to mathematical discussion and the chance to unpick the structure of a problem. Bar modelling can represent the problem and support children with what operations they need to use to solve the problem, giving them the starting point they need. The first step, as with anything, is to give it a go. Hopefully, problem-solving will become a little less daunting and a little more engaging and enjoyable. **TP**



Beth Smith is senior primary maths specialist for White Rose Maths.



@beth_89



whiterosemaths.com

Collins

Busy Ant Maths

CONFIDENCE FROM THE START

SECURE MASTERY OF THE MULTIPLICATION TABLES



Collins



Fluency in Times Tables

$$5 \times 3 = 15$$

$$4 \times 7 =$$



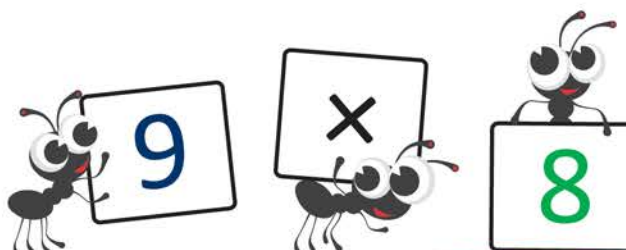
Securing mastery of the multiplication tables

PETER CLARKE
SERIES EDITOR

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'Can do' CLIMATE

How to use shikaku puzzles to help pupils develop a secure understanding of multiplication facts

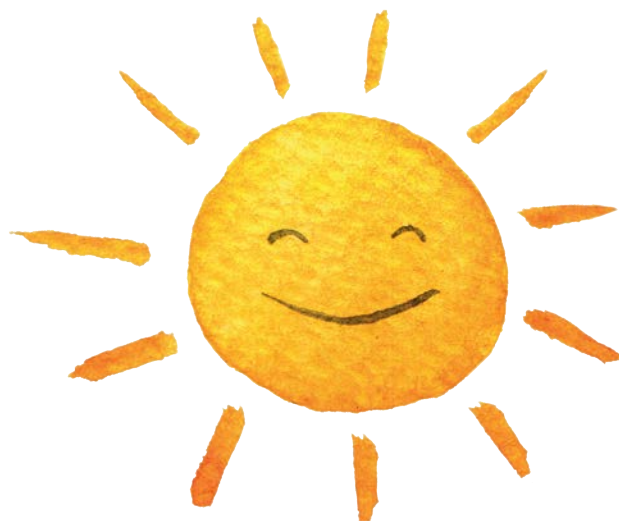
STEVE LOMAX

Here's a question for you: is 7×8 a seven times table question or an eight times table question? The DfE's multiplication tables check assessment framework states that 'when constructing tests, the first number in the question will denote the multiplication table the question is part of. For example, 4×12 would be considered part of the four multiplication table.'

Following this then, when considering 7×8 , seven is the multiplicand (group size) and eight is the multiplier – it is a 'seven times table' question.

This is a downside of the multiplication tables check assessing multiplication facts in such a rigid fashion. We really want pupils and teachers to have the flexibility to explore and understand the underlying structures represented by 7×8 – for example, 'seven multiplied by eight', 'seven eight times' and also 'seven groups of eight' – as well as understanding that 7×8 can be applied to represent contextual situations, such as the fact that a rectangle with dimensions of seven units and eight units has an area of 56 square units.

Shikaku is a wonderful mathematical puzzle which brings together factor/factor/product relationships,



"It's time to start embracing a culture of 'the answer is only the beginning'"

the commutative nature of multiplication and relating area to arrays and multiplication. Shikaku is played on a rectangular grid, with some of the squares containing a number (see below left). Pupils must solve the puzzle by dividing the grid into rectangles containing only one number. The number must represent the area of the rectangle. Try a tutorial then play online at maths-resources.com/shikaku.

While the 25 questions in the multiplication tables check assess only multiplication facts,

solving a shikaku puzzle supports all pupils to develop a secure understanding of multiplication and division facts that are essential for future success in maths.

The DfE's multiplication tables check notes state that the test 'should not be detrimental to pupils' self-esteem or confidence.' Activities like shikaku help to put a stop to a 'can do/can't do' attitude to mathematics that has been a problem in the UK for decades, as well as empowering pupils to say goodbye to learning 144 isolated facts and hello to learning just 30 factor/factor/product relationships.

In fact, once children know their two, five and ten times tables, there are only 21 more factor/factor/product relationships to learn up to 10×10 . These 21 relationships are essential knowledge for all pupils and usually the ones that are referred to when a child (or adult!) says that they don't know their times tables. They also play a significant role in the multiplication tables check, with the 25 questions

having an emphasis on the six, seven, eight, nine and 12 multiplication tables, because these have been determined to be 'the most difficult'.

This 'can do/can't do' climate in UK mathematics has been cultivated by the dominance of electronic times tables tests that rank pupils' speeds on a leaderboard. If we are serious about ensuring that pupils can recall and use their times tables fluently, now is the perfect time to stop using strategies that foster a climate of being scared of 'getting it wrong'. It's time to start embracing a culture of 'the answer is only the beginning', and teaching for relational understanding to support all pupils to have a secure, sustainable and flexible understanding of mathematical ideas. **TP**

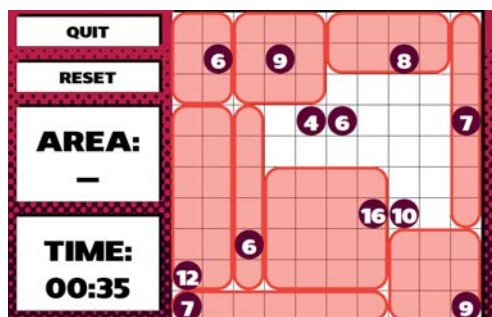
Download a poster displaying the 21 essential factor/factor/product relationships for free, along with accompanying mats to explore each relationship in more detail, at candomaths.org/#linksandresources



Steve Lomax is the strategic mathematics lead of the Balcarras Teaching

School, a nationally accredited NCEM professional development lead and teaching for mastery lead. He is the co-founder of Kangaroomaths and CanDoMaths.

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



1

Child-size city

KidZania London is an indoor child-size city which allows kids to let their aspirations and inspiration soar through experiential, hands-on learning. Located in Westfield, Shepherd's Bush, pupils aged 4-14 can explore a wide range of careers, sponsored by real life brands, all within one safe and inclusive environment. With activities designed around the national curriculum, KidZania is the perfect environment for children to utilise skills beyond those they'd normally use in the classroom, including entrepreneurship, financial literacy, teamwork and citizenship. With pre- and post-visit classroom resources for KS1-3, free teacher planning tours, risk assessments and prices from only £10pp, KidZania is the perfect place for lessons you can't teach. Email schools@kidzania.co.uk or call **0330 131 3333** to book your visit.

2



Pattern blocks

Pattern blocks are mathematically structured loose parts that can be used to kickstart accessible and powerful mathematical reasoning. Use the accompanying book, written from the point of view of a primary practitioner, to run carefully structured and accessible activities with clear curriculum links. The book, available from the Association of Teachers of Mathematics, covers area and perimeter, angles, fractions, ratio, scaling, graphing, mirror and rotational symmetry, and sequences. atm.org.uk/shop/pattern-blocks

3



Personalised programme

DoodleMaths is an award-winning programme that builds the confidence of four to 14-year-olds by providing a personalised work programme tailored to children's individual strengths and weaknesses. Aimed to be used for just ten minutes a day, DoodleMaths is the perfect app-based tool for catching up or getting ahead in maths. Motivational features ensure pupils come back every day feeling more and more confident about their maths. doodlemaths.com

Helping Hand

Juniper Education, formerly the EES for Schools division of Essex County Council, provides software, support and professional services to over 4,300 primary and secondary schools. Its software products include Target Tracker, the market-leading pupil assessment and progress tracking tool (currently used in over 1 in 4 English primary schools) and the SE+ self-evaluation tool. Its support services span HR, finance, clerking and governance and educational visits, complementing the professional development services and staff/teacher training that Juniper Education can also offer. junipereducation.org



4

5



Reduce stress

IDL Numeracy is a brand new resource designed for those with dyscalculia and for low-attaining learners. It includes a fully graded course to support the national curriculum for numeracy at KS1 and KS2. Lessons are designed to reduce the stress those with dyscalculia would ordinarily feel when faced with mathematical problems. IDLS has been part of the Ascentis family since 2013. Ascentis is an educational charity with a mission to enable learners to realise their full potential and achieve their lifelong aspirations. ascentis.co.uk

Door to success

How to design maths activities that get your pupils where you need them to be

TOM GARRY

Most maths activities should have a mixture of fluency, reasoning and problem-solving questions, although this doesn't need to be the case in every single activity. A higher proportion of questions aimed at developing fluency may be appropriate earlier on in an instructional sequence, while the proportion of problem-solving activities may increase later, but all three elements should be present throughout an instructional sequence.

Questions of the same sort don't necessarily need to be grouped together in an activity, so there is no problem in mixing up question types. Bearing in mind that pupils need to practise not only new learning but also prior learning, it's important to include questions from previous learning steps and instructional sequences from time to time. Mixing these in with your new learning questions will ensure that pupils are regularly having to think about and practise their prior learning.

Progressive questioning

Something that I strongly recommend is using progressive questioning. Progressive



questions are simply questions that get incrementally more difficult as they go along. This is common practice: most assessments start with easier questions and leave the hardest ones to the end. Planning your activities in this way is very useful as it allows all pupils to get started with an easier question

which questions pupils will find harder – indeed, it often depends on the student. Having said this, it's a powerful way of making sure your pupils are all able to access the activity independently through having a low threshold to start with before ramping up the difficulty. Remember that each activity you design should

then refer to this when circulating during the lesson and use it to note down questions that are proving particularly problematic by means of a simple tally.

Each learning step that you plan should have an activity, and this should indicate whether your pupils are ready to move on to the next learning step. We can think of the activity as the door that our pupils walk through to get to the next learning step. The activity that you design for a particular learning step helps to guide you in your teaching, prompting you to think about what you'll need to teach your pupils to enable them to successfully complete the questions contained in your activity. While you want to be sure that you get a high degree of success from your pupils, it's important to bear in mind that not all pupils will be able to access the most difficult questions aimed at deepening their understanding, but this does not mean they've failed to grasp the core learning of the step. **TP**

“We can think of the activity as the door that our pupils walk through to get to the next learning step”

or two before the difficulty increases. It also means that you can gather information on how your pupils are getting on with their learning by seeing what they find difficult.

Designing questions so they get progressively more difficult takes some practice, as it's sometimes hard to work out

have meaty, non-standard questions (probably towards the end) that are your 'deepening understanding' questions.

Take the test

It's important that you work through and answer any questions yourself before you give them to your pupils (even if you already have the answers available to you). Going through this process allows you to see the questions from the point of view of your pupils, which helps in the process of anticipating and understanding their errors and misconceptions. This in turn will help you to notice and correct these errors more swiftly. I use a copy of the pupils' activity that I've completed myself before the lesson starts as a tracker – I can



Tom Garry is a deputy head and NCETM maths mastery specialist teacher. This is an extract

from his new book *Mastery in Primary Mathematics* (£24.99, Bloomsbury).

 @tjggarry

English



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Use verbs and adverbs in a range of sentence structures
- Explore spelling rules for past and progressive tense verbs
- Begin to use fronted adverbials
- Add '-ing' and '-ed' suffixes correctly
- Find synonyms and up-level vocabulary

Get outside for an adverb assault course



Use a pulse-raising activity to inspire pupils to generate sentences back in class, says **Julianne Britton**

[@juliannebritton](#) missbritton.co.uk

Get children active while improving their understanding of verbs and adverbs. This lesson is most suitable for LKS2 and focuses on generating verbs and adverbs to be used in different ways within an extended piece of writing. Depending on your timetable and the structure of your lessons, you may need to teach this over two sessions. Originally this lesson was delivered as part of a scheme of work based on *Cliffhanger* by Jacqueline Wilson, but it can easily be used alongside other texts or as a stand-alone lesson.



START HERE

Give each child a sticky note with a verb on it. Some children will have the past tense version, some will have the imperative and others will



have the '-ing' form of the verb (eg 'jumped/jump/jumping'). Give pupils a limited amount of time to find the other two children with matching verbs. Once children have correctly identified the different forms of their verbs, display the answers on the board. This will give you the opportunity to discuss some of the different spelling strategies, eg double letter ('hop/hopped/hopping'), 'y' to 'i' ('carry/carried'), removal of 'e' ('move/moving/moved/') and irregular verbs ('made/ran/sang' etc).

MAIN LESSON

1 | OBSTACLE COURSE

Prior to the lesson, set up a number of identical obstacle courses, either outside or in the hall. Next, ask children what type of words they were looking at during the start of the lesson. Recap what verbs are and explain that pupils will be generating and using more verbs today. Split the class into teams and tell the children that they are going to complete an obstacle course using a range of different actions and movements.

At the end of the course, before the next member of the team starts, ask each child to write a verb on a whiteboard or flipchart. This

will create a bank of words for the class to use. Take photographs during the race as evidence for books and to use later in the lesson.

When all teams have finished, discuss the verbs generated and see if children can come up with any adverbs. Explain that adverbs describe how actions are done and often end in '-ly'.

2 | SENTENCE PRACTICE

Return to the classroom and ask children to mind-map verbs and adverbs that they could use to describe the race. They may use words generated during the activity, but can also use word banks and thesauruses to up-level their vocabulary and find synonyms.



“Task the children with writing a recount of the race using the verbs and adverbs they have generated”

adverbs they have previously generated. They should practise using the different sentence structures discussed earlier in the lesson. Share a model text as an example. Provide support to children in the form of word banks, images and sentence starters. Challenge more able pupils to include further details about thoughts and emotions.

To end the lesson, play a game of verb/adverb charades. Pairs of pupils can take it in turns to pick a verb and an adverb and act them out. The rest of the class will try and guess both the verb and the adverb. When making their guess, they must say, “Is the verb ...?” or “Is the adverb...?” This is a fun way to solidify children’s understanding of what verbs and adverbs are. The two children who guess both words correctly can then take their turn.

Demonstrate how to use these verbs and adverbs in sentences. Start by using the adverb within the main sentence, eg ‘I quickly jumped in and out of the hoop’. Next, discuss using an adverb to start the sentence, eg ‘Loudly, the other children cheered for me as I crossed the finish line.’ Finally, discuss starting sentences with the ‘-ing’ form of a verb, eg ‘Zig-zagging between the cones, I began to think we could win’. After you discuss each sentence structure, ask the children to come up with their own example. They should say it out loud to their partner before writing it down.

If possible, display photographs on the board as a reminder. Task the children with writing a recount of the race using the verbs and

Julianne Britton is a qualified teacher with eight years’ experience. She is an author of educational resources and also offers private tuition services.



3 | RACE RECOUNT

Now, recap the various parts of the obstacle course.

EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Having already started to discuss sentence structures, this is a good opportunity to discuss fronted adverbials in more detail in further literacy lessons.
- To secure pupils’ understanding of verbs and adverbs, refer to them during PE lessons and ask children to identify them.
- To look at verbs and adverbs in a different context, discuss them during a cooking or technology lesson. Children could use the imperative form of the verb to write a recipe or set of instructions.
- After completing the obstacle course, ask children to create a ‘get fit’ leaflet encouraging people to exercise and explaining the benefits. This is another great opportunity to use verbs and adverbs in another type of text.

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Can you find a synonym for that verb?
- What activities did you do in the obstacle race?
- Can you start a sentence with an ‘-ing’ verb or an adverb?
- How can you turn this verb into its past tense form?

Maths



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Practise addition and knowledge of place value of numbers
- Use multiples, square numbers and prime numbers
- Convert between different units of measure
- Spot connections between fractions, percentages and decimals

Use football cards in the classroom



Utilise free resources from the Premier League to enhance soccer-mad students' maths skills, says **Sue Skyrme**

[@plcommunities](https://twitter.com/plcommunities) [plprimarystars.com/stick-with-maths](https://www.plprimarystars.com/stick-with-maths)

Stick with Maths is a curriculum-linked active learning resource from the Premier League Primary Stars programme. It's free for primary teachers – you just need to register online. The resource features high-quality videos, Panini card imagery and teachers' notes and uses pupils' passion for football to engage them in meaningful mathematical discussions. Students are encouraged to think about and solve different teacher-designed scenarios, while also getting active. The movement element will increase children's enjoyment and provide a visual support to understanding, plus it contributes to pupils being active for 30 minutes a day.



START HERE

All pupils should be involved in mathematical discussion. Using fun, engaging bite-size puzzles that encourage physical activity



will support the thinking process. The following ideas can be used individually as a reasoning and thinking element of a taught lesson, or as a set of puzzles to form a carousel of problem-solving activities. To begin, explore pupils' knowledge of Premier League football and the problems managers might face. This embeds maths in real sports scenarios and alleviates anxiety around the sums involved. It's crucial that children see maths as an essential everyday tool, rather than simply a classroom subject.

MAIN LESSON

1 | USING THE CARDS

Stick with Maths problems are available for different year groups. In preparation for the lesson, check the skills and knowledge needed to solve each puzzle. The activities have been designed to help pupils apply knowledge in a problem-solving context.

Display the example Panini sticker in the Powerpoint and discuss the statistics shown for the player. Ensure the key vocabulary is understood and that pupils are confident to extrapolate details from the cards. Ask quick-fire questions that practise the required skills, such as identifying a multiple or converting units of measurement. Use mini whiteboards to

enable assessment of any misconceptions.

Next, model how to work systematically to solve a problem – a fun way in is to use a group of pupil heights to demonstrate how to approach the 'Team Photo' puzzle (Y3/4).

Choose one puzzle to complement your lesson or use all of them to provide a carousel of activities. The individual puzzles can be used flexibly to meet pupil needs. For example, the Y5/6 puzzle 'Car Share' can be used to enhance a Y5 lesson about using addition and subtraction to solve problems involving measurements. In Y6, the same puzzle can be used as a teaching tool to express missing number problems algebraically – let the children solve the problem using trial and error, then demonstrate how algebra could be usefully deployed.



“Working in carefully planned groups will facilitate, support and challenge”

Give pupils time to read through the puzzle, then ask key questions as they work to ensure they can identify a starting point and are working logically. Working in carefully planned groups will facilitate, support and challenge. Suggest pupils devise a way to secretly record their solutions so other teams don't see. Rotate groups – you may wish to duplicate puzzles with smaller groups if more time is needed.

If a group finishes quickly, encourage them to reflect and identify any challenges and the skills they used. How did they support each other? Did everyone think and contribute? This could be linked to the Premier League values: be ambitious; be inspiring; be connected; be fair.

3 SHARE YOUR FINDINGS

Once the activities are finished, ask the groups to share their working and the solution of the puzzle they finished on. Other groups can join in by discussing if they found the same solution and any difficulties they came across.

It is important for pupils to consider the skills they've applied to the tasks. Emphasise the fun aspect of solving real-life problems. Do your pupils think real football managers would have these problems? How would maths help them? How did talking about the problem and acting it out physically help them to work through it?

Sue Skyrme is a retired headteacher and now works in schools as an adviser, teacher training tutor and governor. She is a maths consultant and contributor to PL Primary Stars. The Stick with Maths resource is part of a broad range of free, easy-to-use, curriculum-linked resources which support PE, PSHE, English and maths.

EXTENDING THE LESSON



Developing an enjoyment of maths and providing a purpose for learning contributes to high-quality attainment, and the confidence to apply these skills in any situation. Encourage pupils to talk about the puzzles and devise their own to challenge their peers, parents or teacher.

The two 'Home' activities in the pack will encourage children to engage in home learning and involve their families in doing maths together, increasing their enjoyment and confidence. For example, families can create their own fun five-a-side football team using the new player profile templates.

2 | GROUP CHALLENGE

As a carousel using some or all of the puzzles, organise pupils into groups to match individual needs and available support. Next, display the puzzles on laptops or print them out. Decide the timescale for each puzzle and challenge each group to find solutions.

All the activities have an active learning option to support pupils' thinking. For example, in the 'Missing Shirt' puzzle (Y3/4), pupils can take a number each and jog on the spot until they've been eliminated. You may find it easier to print off resources so children can refer to them when they are away from their desks.



USEFUL QUESTIONS

- How did you find the starting point for each puzzle?
- Why is it important to work systematically?
- How did you check your solution?
- Which skills helped you solve the puzzle?
- How did you display the Premier League values?



Learn about 'los planetas' in Spanish



Make curriculum links by learning how to describe planets in another language, says **Clare Seccombe**

@valleseco lightbulblanguages.co.uk

WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Say the names of the planets in the right order
- Say and write sentences describing the planets
- Say and write how near or far planets are from the sun

The inclusion of 'Earth and Space' in the Y5 Science curriculum provides an ideal opportunity for some cross-curricular learning within language lessons. It works best if you teach the language unit at the same time as the science or after it, so that children can use their scientific knowledge to help them with the language work. Approaching the subject matter in two different ways helps to reinforce and embed the knowledge, and languages are given an extra relevance by linking them to another area of the curriculum.



START HERE

In order to describe the planets accurately, children need to know their names in Spanish and refresh their knowledge about the planets' size,



temperature, speed of orbit and distance from the sun. Introduce the topic by showing pupils a Spanish poem about the planets (find one at tinyurl.com/tpplanets). Ask pupils which words they recognise because of their similarity to English. They will notice that the names of the planets in Spanish are very similar to those in English, and this can provoke some useful discussions about the origins of the planet names, and, indeed, their similarity to the days of the week in Spanish.

MAIN LESSON

1 | VOCAB ACTIONS

Practise the Spanish planet names with the children. Use a 'listen and repeat' method, using the Spanish instruction 'Escuchad y repetid'. Accompany each planet name with an action that tells the children something about the planet. For example:

Mercurio – make rapid circles in the air with the forefinger of one hand

Venus – fan yourself as though you are very hot

La Tierra – point to the ground at your feet

Marte – pretend to bite a Mars bar

Júpiter – draw a huge circle in

the air in front of you with both hands

Saturno – make large, slow circles in the air with one hand

Urano – make smaller slow circles in the air with the other hand

Neptuno – point to something far away

Plutón – shiver like you are cold. Although this is a dwarf planet, you may still want to include it, as it opens up more possibilities when it comes to the descriptions.

Once the children are happy saying the new words, ask them to say them and perform the actions in sequence with you, to reinforce the order of the planets.

At this stage it is helpful for the children to label in Spanish a



“Accompany each planet name with an action that tells the children something about the planet”

Ask the children which planet they think should go in the space. They should agree on Júpiter. Read the completed sentence out using the actions, then ask the children to repeat it. Repeat this for the adjectives ‘minúsculo’ (tiny), ‘rápido’ (fast), ‘lento’ (slow), ‘caliente’ (hot) and ‘frío’ (cold). The challenge is for the children to find a different planet for each sentence. Practise description with colours in the same way, and later introduce ‘grande’ (big) and ‘pequeño’ (small) so that the children have more ways of describing a planet’s size.

3 ADDING DETAIL

Show a diagram of the solar system and introduce the phrases ‘cerca del sol’ (near the sun) and ‘lejos del sol’ (far from the sun). Say a planet name and ask the children which one they would say for it. They will find the middle planets, such as Jupiter, tricky. Introduce the intensifiers ‘muy’ (very) and ‘bastante’ (quite) to help pupils be more exact. The children can now add this to the end of their description of a planet, so that they can talk about a planet’s size, speed, temperature, colour and distance from the sun. Here’s an example: ‘Venus es un planeta pequeño, muy caliente, rápido y rojo cerca del sol’.

Clare Secombe is a primary languages teacher and consultant who teaches Spanish in three Sunderland primary schools. She wrote the 2018 Teach Primary Awards winning MFL resource and runs the website Light Bulb Languages.

diagram of the solar system, as this will help them when working out their descriptions later on.

2 | BLANKETY BLANK

Show the children a simple sentence describing one of the

planets, but with the planet name missing. For example: ‘_____ es un planeta enorme’. Read it out to the children using actions. For ‘es’ draw a big ‘S’ in the air; for ‘planeta’ draw a circle in front of you; for ‘enorme’ stretch your arms.



EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Ask children to create descriptive sentences, leaving out the planet name. It’s their partner’s job to work out what goes in the gap. Give pupils a word mat and a diagram of the solar system to help them (download examples from tinyurl.com/tpwordmat and tinyurl.com/tpsystem).
- Get creative by making simple concertina books containing your planetary sentences. See an example at the bottom of the post at tinyurl.com/tpconcertina
- Children can practise their big numbers in Spanish by looking at a table of data about the planets like the one at tinyurl.com/tpdata.
- Use a bilingual dictionary, reference book or appropriate website to find the Spanish for other space-related words.

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Is it acceptable for the resulting sentences to be just linguistically correct, or do they need to be scientifically correct too?
- Can this language unit be taught as part of the science, to save time, rather than additionally to it?
- Are there any other aspects of the science curriculum that would lend themselves to a cross-curricular approach with languages?



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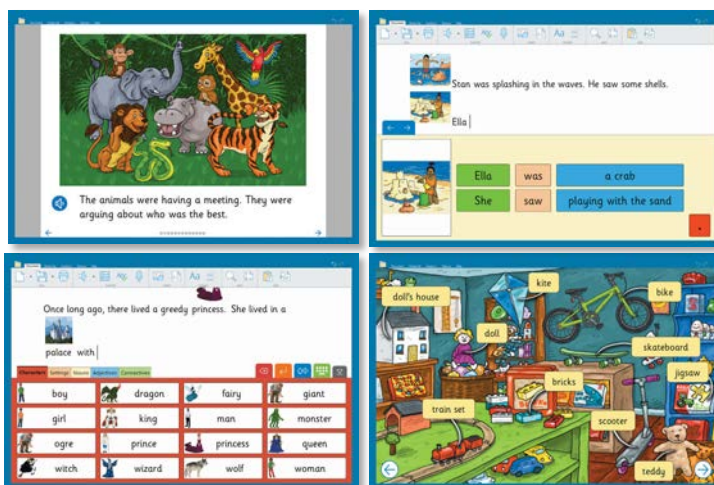
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LITERACY

Clicker 8

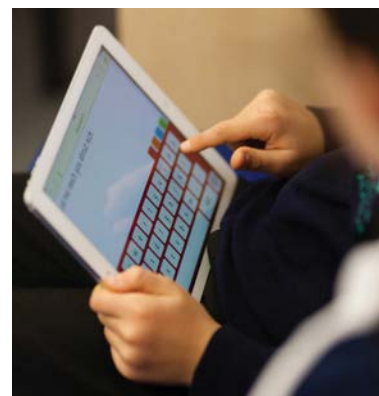
The latest version of the popular literacy support tool for primary and SEN classrooms



AT A GLANCE

- New version of popular literacy support resource
- Expanded library of curriculum support materials
- Enhanced functionality for users
- New features for teachers
- New analytics function to monitor pupil performance

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



Clicker 8 for Windows/Mac is the latest incarnation of the highly popular literacy support tool, created by multi-award-winning Crick Software. For iPad and Chromebook users, Crick has also launched the Clicker Writer app.

For those who are not familiar with Clicker, it is essentially a word processor designed to make reading and writing more appealing to pupils. It is especially good for building confidence and promoting engagement with those with special needs or who simply find literacy harder than others.

Among its many strengths is the way it can incorporate visuals, predict words and read back what you have written. It also allows teachers to create word banks and other devices to provide scaffolded support to those who find writing more of a struggle. Existing fans will be pleased, but probably not surprised, to find that Clicker 8 adds to Clicker's already impressive array of ready-made resources, covering pretty much every corner of the curriculum.

As you might expect, it also comes with an interesting range of new bells and whistles. One that caught my eye is the Cloze resource generator. On the face of it, it's a fairly simple idea:

just enter the text and it will help you to pull out whatever words you want for the children to add in to demonstrate their understanding. Of course, we can all do this ourselves on any other word processor, but doesn't it always take you that little longer than you thought? Not with Clicker 8.

I also liked the voice recording function. This enables the user to rehearse each sentence and store it as a little speech bubble beside their composition. They can then keep listening to it to check it until they have transcribed it accurately.

For those who really like to drill down into their data, Clicker 8 comes with a new analytics function. This allows you to see how much of any given task the pupils have generated themselves and how much came from the various support resources provided by the package.

While not only aimed at struggling writers, you can really see how Clicker 8 can provide valuable support to pupils who fall into this category, as well as those with accessibility issues or for whom English is not their first language. Overall, it is well worth investigating to see how it could meet the needs of your pupils.



VERDICT

- ✓ Builds on a winning formula
- ✓ Enhances pupil engagement with reading and writing
- ✓ Comes with a range of ready-made resources
- ✓ Versions for Windows/Mac and iPad/Chromebook

UPGRADE IF...

You want a more supportive, engaging and convenient writing support tool.

"It is essentially a word processor designed to make reading and writing more appealing to pupils"

1+1 licence, £350 for a three-year subscription; 40% upgrade discount for Clicker 7 customers in 2020, cricksoft.com

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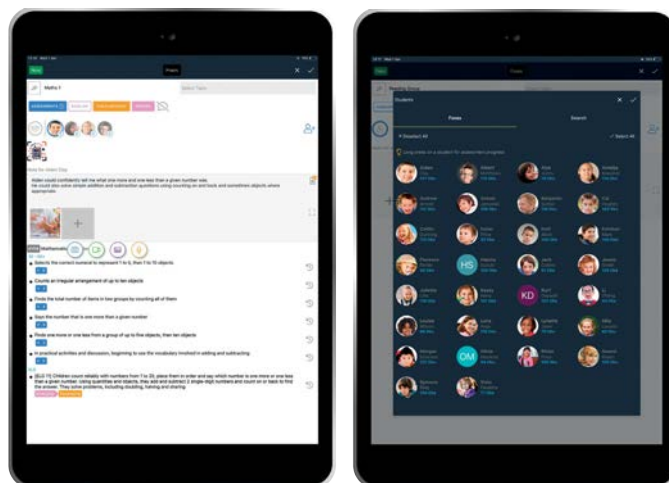
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Schools

ASSESSMENT 

ReallySchool

A tablet app designed to help teachers and TAs capture observations in the classroom



AT A GLANCE

- Simple-to-use tablet app which allows for easy and flexible capturing of observations
- Capture and record assessments from an in-built list of assessment points
- Identify child-initiated activities and capture photos to support evidence
- Generate journals and reports to ensure staff can see who is on track

REVIEWED BY: ADAM RICHES



ReallySchool allows teachers, TAs and parents to track progress of children using video, picture and sound recording. The app also allows staff to add notes and explanations, helping parents better understand their child's learning journey. Aimed specifically at Early Years and primary settings, ReallySchool comes preloaded with all current UK assessment criteria.

Downloading the app is quick and easy. It's designed to work with pre-existing databases so you can import students and staff from your school's MIS system via a CSV file or Wonde integration. If you need to add them manually, simple-to-use tabs allow you to input information and assign individuals to groups or classes.

The primary feature of the app is the easy and effective recording of students' activity. You can create observations from an iPad or Android tablet, or with a Windows PC or Mac. What is particularly special is that you can support your observations and reporting with visual evidence. Attach pre-existing photos or capture new ones straight from your device as activities are being completed. You can also add voice notes to an observation. These work as a brilliant training resource or can be shared with parents to encourage engagement.

The app is a good way of breaking down barriers between school and

home by including the parent in what their child is doing at school. In addition, commentaries are helpful for those who are less accustomed to primary schooling, as well as those with English as an additional language.

ReallySchool also lets you record video files to add to an observation. This is helpful for clearly evidencing your assessment judgements. The app also allows staff to share achievements and progress of selected items with parents – all with a single click. In addition, parents can keep track of their child's progress via the observations timeline. Families can also print their child's journal or share with family and friends straight from the app.

The streamlined reporting interface allows staff to gain a clear overview of pupils' progress via the Class Report grid. This shows the number of observations captured per assessment point for each child in the class, so you can see where more attention is required. Navigating the content is simple and intuitive. You can simply select the view you need by filtering by subject or categorising by assessment area – or view assessment coverage as an easy-to-visualise heatmap. In conclusion, ReallySchool allows you to be more informed about the pupils in front of you.



VERDICT

- ✓ Designed with simplicity and functionality in mind
- ✓ Quickly and effectively report to parents
- ✓ A well-designed interface and intuitive displays make the app easy to use
- ✓ Variety of evidence recording options to suit a plethora of scenarios
- ✓ Compatible with a variety of hardware and school MIS

UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for a way to track student progress, collect evidence of successes and engage with parents.

From £75-£650, depending on pupil numbers, reallyschool.com

12 STRANGE BUT TRUE

primary school facts

JONNY WALKER

@jonnywalker_edu



1

There are always five names in your class that you struggle to remember

Staff nepotism manifests mostly in terms of access to new gluesticks



4



5

The children who field during rounders also forget their lines in school productions

Colleagues pretend not to be competitive about sports day, but tear ligaments in order to win



2

Every school has an IKEA leaf canopy in at least one book corner



6

3



The more embarrassing the contents of your shopping basket, the more likely you'll encounter a parent

7



The phrase 'down in the dumps', once taught, is the most addictive phrase in a child's vocabulary

8

Every year group has one child who knows every single bus route in the town



9

Every teacher has a catchphrase; if you think you don't have one, ask the kids



On every school trip, you'll get the head count wrong and die inside at least once

10

11

You will encounter a pupil roughly every six years who believes they are a cat



Children inexplicably know the flag of Brazil, but no other South American country

12

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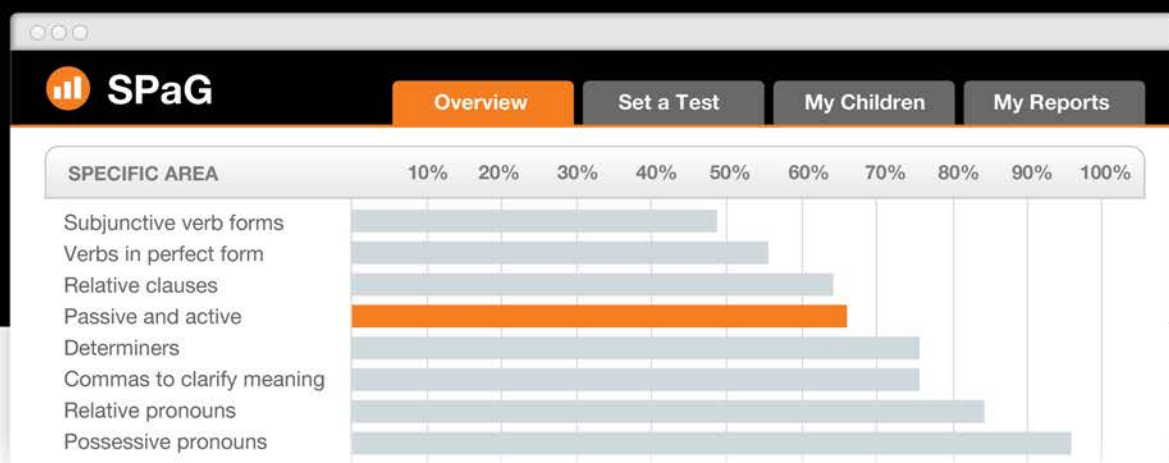
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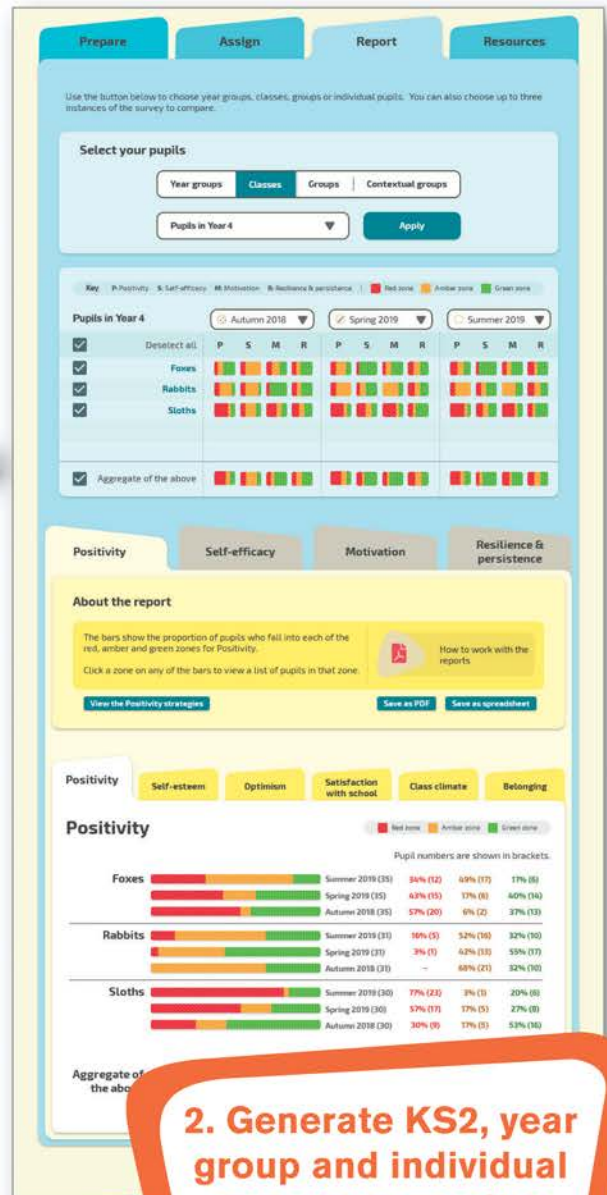
Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning

Survey and Strategies

Support the wellbeing and academic development of your KS2 pupils



1. Pupils take a 20-minute online survey



2. Generate KS2, year group and individual reports to monitor progress over time

Game-based learning

Dimension: Motivation
Sub-dimension(s): Task value / Support / Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
Strategy type: Pupil / Class
Description: Reconstruct learning activities as game-based learning.
Outcome: Increases motivation and achievement in pupils.

Objective
 To increase pupil engagement with key topics and improve motivation and learning.

Resources needed
 Depending on the nature of the activity designed, but may include items such as cards and rule cards or similar.

Game-based learning can positively impact academic outcomes. Research has shown that pupils learn more material over time than using more traditional methods. This is believed to be because the design features of games, such as immediate feedback, which increases learner motivation (Garris, Ahlers and Driskell, 2003). Game-based learning is characterised by the following elements:
 - It is a simulation that is not possible in real life, or without the same resources.
 - It is a safe environment in which to fail and learn from mistakes.
 - It provides a challenge that encourages progress towards them.

Game-based learning can be used to enhance learning experiences, although there may be an element of competition. When used in learning games, these can be conceptualised as:
 - Strategic knowledge
 - Emotional outcomes (attitudes towards ...)

3. Implement evidence-based follow-up strategies

View samples at risingstars-uk.com/wellbeing-ks2