Year 5/6 Additional text-based unit – Street Child by Berlie Doherty

Street Child by Berlie Doherty

Set in the second half of the nineteenth century, Street child tells the story of a boy called Jim who, after a series of misfortunes, spends time in the workhouse as a child labourer and lives on the streets. The book is based on the true story of an orphan whose plight inspired Doctor Barnardo to try to help street children, and led to the founding of his children's homes.

Exploring the novel enables children to discuss challenging themes including cruelty, injustice, resilience and humanity. It also enables children to develop an understanding of issues such as poverty and child labour.

Teachers should read the book and the teaching sequence before starting work on the unit with the class. Reading the text aloud or rereading sections of it can sometimes take place during teaching sessions but should also take place in separate read aloud times in order to reach particular points in the narrative in preparation for sessions. Where this is important, it has been signalled in the unit. Sessions are for guidance only. The length of time each aspect of the sequence takes depends on the ways they are developed by the teacher, the amount of time allowed for different activities such as discussion and also the prior experience of the class, for example with drama techniques.

Phase 1

Phase 1 of the unit (sessions 1-5) focuses on introducing children to the historical setting of the story, the main character Jim and the dire situation of his family. Discussion, visualisation, drawing, drama and performance reading are the main activities in this phase.

Phase 2

Phase 2 of the unit (sessions 6-9) develops children's understanding of Jim's experiences in the workhouse and after he escapes. The main activities are discussion, drama, poetry writing and writing in role.

Phase 3

Phase 3 of the unit (sessions 10-16) focuses on developing an understanding of the journey the main character has taken during the narrative and his feelings about his experiences through story mapping, story telling and writing in role.

Guided reading

Although the unit is designed for use with the whole class, teachers could also select aspects of it to use with guided reading groups. Alternatively, individual sessions could be followed up during guided reading sessions, taking a closer look at particular sections of the text - looking, for example, at the language or what has been revealed about plot or character.

All children will benefit from regular opportunities for small-group reading, discussion and writing with a teacher or teaching assistant.
Related core learning objectives

The overarching core learning outcomes for the key stage are indicated in italics. Relevant objectives from Years 5 and 6 are indicated under the strands.

Speaking

Speak competently and creatively for different purposes and audiences, reflecting on impact and response

Explore, develop and sustain ideas through talk

Y5 Tell a story using notes to cue techniques, such as repetition, recap and humour

Drama

Use dramatic techniques including working in role to explore ideas and texts

Create, share and evaluate ideas and understanding through drama

Y5 Reflect on how working in role helps to explore complex issues

Y6 Perform a scripted scene making use of dramatic conventions

Y6 Improvise using a range of drama strategies and conventions to explore themes such as hopes, fears and desires

Understanding and interpreting texts

Retrieve, select and describe information, events and ideas

Deduce, infer and interpret information, events and ideas

Y5 Make notes on and use ideas from across a text to explain events or ideas

Y5 Explore how writers use language for comic and dramatic effects

Y6 Understand underlying themes, causes and points of view

Engaging with and responding to texts

Respond imaginatively, using different strategies to engage with texts

Evaluate writers’ purposes and viewpoints and the overall effect of the text on the reader

Y5 Compare the usefulness of techniques such as visualisation, prediction and empathy in exploring the meaning of texts

Y6 Sustain engagement with longer texts using different techniques to make the text come alive

Creating and shaping texts

Use and adapt a range of forms suited to different purposes and readers

Make stylistic choices, including vocabulary, literary features and viewpoints or voice

Y5 Adapt non-narrative forms and styles to write fiction or factual texts, including poems

Teaching sequence phase 1

Session 1

Focus objectives

• To be able to take part in a whole-class or group discussion, contributing ideas
• To be able to use a written text or illustration to collect information

**Key teaching approaches**

• Reading aloud
• Rereading
• Responding to a visual image

During shared reading, read the preface 'Tell me your story, Jim' aloud to the children. Ask them to work with a partner and, giving them a copy of this section of the story, ask them to think about what this tells them about Jim. Who do we think this is? When and where do they think this story is taking place? Model using the text to find inferential evidence to support ideas and responses. Collect the children's ideas together and scribe them on a flipchart/IWB file or onto the first page of a class reading journal. Explain that this extract is from a book set in Victorian Britain.

Organise the children into mixed-ability groups and give each group a copy of an image depicting Victorian Britain, e.g. of the homes of the poor, working-class streets or poor children. Ask them to look closely and discuss the images in groups and make notes about what they can see and what it light have been like to have lived then. This could be done on large sheets of paper with the image in the centre, or on sticky notes, or using an IWB.

During the plenary, ask each group to report back to the class about their image, saying what they noticed.

**Session 2**

**Focus objectives**

• To learn how to make notes to show what has been deduced from a text
• To be able to respond imaginatively to a text

**Key teaching approaches**

• Reading aloud
• Visualisation
• Drawing
• Annotation

Begin the session by reading aloud Chapter 1 'The Shilling Pie'. Ask the children what we have found out so far about the family from this chapter and make notes on a flipchart as children make contributions. Then reread the last section from 'But the pie has grown cold ...'. Ask the children to close their eyes and try to visualise the scene as you read it. Talk with them about the things that Jim could hear and how they think he might have been feeling. Then ask the children to work with a partner and draw a picture of a scene from this chapter. They might choose the last scene of the family at night or perhaps draw Jim running through the streets with his penny pie. When they have drawn their picture, ask them to annotate it to show what is happening and how Jim is feeling. Encourage the children to use the text to support their responses and ideas.

**Session 3**

**Focus objective**

To use drama techniques to explore a key moment in a plot

**Key teaching approaches**

• Reading aloud
• Drama: freeze-frame
Begin the session by reading Chapter 2 ‘The Stick Man’. Have a whole-class discussion about what is happening in this chapter. Is Mr Spink right or wrong to ask the family to leave? Organise the children into groups of five and ask them to choose a scene from this chapter to portray using ‘freeze-frame’ and ask them to think of a caption for their freeze-frame, for example ‘No rent, no room…’ or ‘The Stick Man arrives.’ The children could write their caption on a large sheet of paper and place it in front of their freeze-frame. Ask each group to show their freeze-frame to the rest of the class and discuss the ways they have portrayed how the members of the family are feeling. You may choose to take digital images and annotate these for later use. Then, working in the same groups, ask the children to talk about what the family could do to escape their situation and what they themselves might do in a similar position. End the session by giving each child a sticky note and asking them to write down their idea about what Jim and his family should do next. The sticky notes can be collected and stuck in the class reading journal.

Read Chapter 3 ‘Rosie and Judd’ before the next session (either as a class or independently).

**Session 4**

**Focus objectives**

To learn to use drama techniques to explore feelings

To show that they understand points of view by writing in role

**Key teaching approaches**

- Role-play
- Modelled, shared and supported composition
- Writing in role

Discuss with children the reasons why Jim’s mother left his sisters at the big house. Working collaboratively, ask the children to imagine that they are Emily and Lizzie, left behind at the big house, and role-play an imaginary conversation between the two girls. How would they feel about being left there? What might they be thinking about their mother and brother? Then give each child a piece of notepaper and use modelled, shared and supported composition techniques to support the children in writing a note, in role as one of the sisters, to their mum, showing how they feel about not being able to look after her when she is ill, and their fears for the future.

Read Chapter 4 ‘The Workhouse’ before the next session.

**Session 5**

**Focus objectives**

- To contribute to decisions about ways to perform a text
- To learn to perform a text and make it come alive

**Key teaching approaches**

- Readers theatre/scripting

Give each child a copy of the first three pages of Chapter 3 from ‘Jim and his mother walked for most of that day’ until ‘The boy pushed his cart out and slammed the door shut’.

During shared reading, use an enlarged version of the text displayed on a flipchart or IWB to demonstrate how to mark this up as a script. Give individual children sections of dialogue or narration to read. Ask children to work collaboratively...
to mark their own scripts to show the parts that they will be reading. Rehearse the reading and then discuss with the class ways this could be improved, for example by reading some parts all together, some parts loudly and some softly, or by adding sound effects. Provide guided support as appropriate. Then perform the script again. Discuss with children what they know about how Jim was feeling at this point in the story.

Before the next session, read Chapter 5 ‘Behind Bars’, Chapter 6 ‘Tip’ and Chapter 7 ‘The Wild Thing’.

### Teaching sequence phase 2

**Session 6**

**Focus objectives**

- To be able to work collaboratively collecting information from a visual image
- To be able to demonstrate their understanding of a text through drawing and annotation

**Key teaching approaches**

- Drawing
- Annotation
- Discussion

Have a whole-class discussion about what they have found about Jim's life in the workhouse and note the information they find on a large sheet of paper. Model how to use evidence from across a text to support ideas and retrieve helpful information.

Organise the children into groups of three or four and give each group an illustration showing a scene of life in the workhouse, stuck onto a large sheet of paper. See resources for images of life in the workhouse. Ask the children to talk in their groups about what they can see in the image or how it makes them feel and then ask them to make notes around the image on the paper. Share these as a class. Then ask children to make their own annotated drawing of Jim in the workhouse. Ask them to write a caption for their drawing. Encourage discussion of the finished drawings, focusing on what Jim would have been missing about his life before entering the workhouse. Finish the lesson by asking the children to write on a sticky note one of the things that Jim would be missing about his life before he entered the workhouse. The sticky notes can be collected and stuck into the class reading journal.

In a separate PSHE or philosophy session, you could pose the question 'What is a home?' and encourage the children to explore this idea. In a history session, the children could find out more about life in the workhouse.

**Session 7**

**Focus objective**

- To use drama techniques to explore a character or a key moment in a plot

**Key teaching approaches**

- Conscience alley

Begin the session by reading aloud Chapter 8 ‘The Carpet Beaters’. During the shared part of the lesson, talk with the class about reasons why Jim should try to escape from the workhouse and reasons why he should stay. Then organise the class into two lines facing each other and, with one child in role as Jim walking along the conscience alley, ask the children to call out from one side reasons why he should escape from the workhouse and, from the other, reasons why
he should stay. For example, they might say, 'Stay, you've got a roof over your head!' or 'Go, this is no way to live!' Finish the session by asking the children to write their opinions on sticky notes. Collect the ideas together and keep them in a class journal.

Session 8

Focus objectives

- To recognise the ways that the writer has used language to create atmosphere
- To learn to use the language in a narrative text as a starting point for poetry writing

Key teaching approaches

- Rereading
- Visualisation
- Text marking
- Modelled, shared and guided writing
- Word collections
- Collaborative poetry writing

Reread the last paragraph of Chapter 8 'The Carpet Beaters', which begins 'Jim crept forward', asking the children to close their eyes and visualise the scene while you read. Then ask them which words or phrases helped them picture what was happening. Using an enlarged version of the text displayed on a flipchart or an IWB, highlight these words and phrases as the children identify them. Talk with them about how these word choices help us imagine how Jim is feeling. Ask the children to turn to a partner and think of other words and phrases to add to this list to show what is happening and how Jim is feeling. Note these words and phrases on the flipchart. Model how the words collected can be used to create a list poem, for example:

- Escape
- Invisible
- Gliding
- Weak and panting
- Darting
- Hiding
- Breath bursting

Use shared techniques to explore ways to improve the order of the words and phrases listed. Then ask the children to work collaboratively and, using the word collection to help them, write list poems about Jim's escape. With response partners, the children could work to improve their poems. Use guided writing to support groups of children writing and redrafting poems.

In a separate dance session, the children could explore Jim's feelings of fear and relief as he escapes from the workhouse.

Read on to Chapter 11 'The Spitting Crow' before the next session.

Session 9

Focus objectives

- To use hotseating to explore a character's story
- To think about the ways that drama helps you think about complex ideas
- To understand a character's point of view and infer their motivation
Key teaching approaches

- Hotseating
- Writing in role
- Shared and guided writing

Read Chapter 10 'Lame Betsy' and Chapter 11 'The Spitting Crow'. Talk with the children about Rosie's story: what might have happened after the night Jim's mother arrived? Why did Rosie and Judd lose their jobs? Is Rosie telling the truth about what happened to Emily and Lizzie? Why might she lie?

Model thinking and composing questions that they might want to ask Rosie about that night and then ask the children to work with a partner to compose questions. With one child in the 'hotseat' as Rosie, ask individuals to pose their questions. After this, give each child a small paper-folded book to represent Rosie's diary, and use shared and guided writing to support children to write an entry in role as Rosie, describing what happened to her after Jim's family arrived at the Big House: why she lost her job, what happened to Jim's sisters and how she feels about seeing Jim again.

End the session by discussing with the class the ways that the activity helped them to write in role.

Teaching sequence phase 3

Session 10

Focus objectives

- To use evidence from the text to collect information about a character and infer their feelings

Key teaching approaches

- Rereading
- Text marking
- Drawing and annotation

Ask the children to talk with a partner about what they have found out about Shrimps. Give them a copy of the extract from Chapter 12 which starts 'One of them was a red haired pokey sort of boy' and ends 'I'll talk to him today I'll find out what he's called that's what'. Ask them to reread this section together and highlight the information they find about Shrimps. Then tell them to draw an outline sketch of Shrimps writing, noting what they have found out about him so far around the edge of their sketch. This could include what he looks like and how he tries to earn money. Then ask them to think about what they know about how Shrimps feels about his mother and his wish for a brother, and write comments on his feelings inside the outline sketch. Ensure that the children are able to back up their opinion with inferential and deductive evidence from the text.

Read Chapter 13 'The Lily', Chapter 4 'The Waterman's Arms' and Chapter 15 'Josh' before the next session.

Session 11

Focus objectives

- To use drama techniques to explore a character's feelings
- To show their understanding of a character's situation by writing in role
Key teaching approaches

- Freeze-frame
- Thought tracking
- Book talk
- Writing in role

Talk with the class about what it was like for Jim on board The Lily. Working in pairs, ask the children to freeze-frame a scene from this chapter, perhaps showing Jim shovelling coal. Ask some pairs to voice their thoughts in role. Then write these on thought bubbles. Then ask all the children to write their thoughts in role as Jim on thought bubbles. These could be displayed on the wall or put in a class reading journal.

In an art session, the children could draw charcoal sketches of Jim working for Grimy Nick on board The Lily.

In a history session, the children could find out about child labour. Visit the Spartacus Educational: Child Labour (link opens in new window) website. On these web pages, it is possible to read first-hand accounts and interviews with Victorian working children.

Note: it is important to check the suitability of any extract given to children, because the content is variable.

Before the next session, read on to Chapter 20 ‘The Green Caravan’.

Session 12

Focus objectives

- To learn to retrieve the main locations and events from a text
- To learn the ways that a story map can help track a character’s journey through a narrative

Key teaching approaches

- Story mapping

In shared writing, talk with the class about all the places that Jim has been to during the story. Make a list of these locations and then demonstrate how a character’s journey through a book can be depicted with a map of the story. Ask the children to make their own story maps to show Jim’s journey from his room in the overcrowded house he shared with his mother and sisters, to the circus.

Before the next session, read on to Chapter 26 ‘Goodbye Bruvver’.

Session 13

Focus objective

- To show a character’s feelings by writing in role

Key teaching approaches

- Discussion
- Modelled, shared and guided writing
- Individual writing
Discuss with the class what Jim would have liked to have told Shrimps about what they could do together in the future to be like ‘bruvvers’ and what he could tell him that would ‘make his ears tingle’. Through modelled, shared and guided writing, write the letter to Shrimps that Jim would have written (if he could write!), showing how he feels about him.

Session 14

Focus objectives

- To tell a story using story maps as notes
- To use drama strategies to explore key moments in a plot

Key teaching approaches

- Storytelling
- Role-play
- Freeze-frame

Ask the children to work in pairs, with one in role as Jim and one as Barney, as Jim tells his story during a shared reading session. The children can use their story maps to help them. Discuss with the children how Barney might feel hearing this story. Then, asking the children to work in groups of five or six, ask them to freeze-frame the scene on the rooftops when Barney sees the street boys for the first time. Ask the children, in role as Barney, to voice their thoughts and make a note of these to refer to in the next session. Model this process to the children.

Session 15

Focus objectives

- To infer a character’s feelings at key points in a text
- To show a character’s viewpoint and feelings by writing in role

Key teaching approaches

- Discussion
- Shared and guided writing
- Writing in role

Begin the session by reading the end of the story. Discuss with the children what they know about how Barney feels about hearing Jim’s story and seeing the street children, referring to the drama and storytelling in the last session. Ask them to write Doctor Barnardo’s diary with a full account of the story he heard from Jim, what he saw on the streets and what he thinks he might do about this situation. This could be done through shared writing and when the children work independently, with you focusing on a guided group.

Session 16

Focus objective

- To use information from an information source and from a fiction text to make a poster

Key teaching approaches

- Shared reading
- Collaborative writing
Read the author's note and show the children information about Doctor Barnardo and his work. Give the children copies of information from the following website page, or encyclopaedias and information books, and ask them to work with a partner to make a poster advertising Doctor Barnardo's homes for destitute boys: 'No destitute child ever turned away'.

Opportunities for assessment

*Street Child* is particularly strong in the area of plot and character development, themes and issues. It supports children who are moving from Level 3 to Level 4 in empathising with the main characters and inferring feelings, thoughts and motivation over the course of the narrative. The children are able to explore the main themes and think about the effect of the text on the reader.

In the unit of work, the children are asked to search the text to locate evidence, to read the text closely for implicit meanings and to support their opinions by referring to the text. Some of these discussions take place in whole-class discussions; other discussions take place in pairs and groups. Teachers or TAs can listen in and make discreet notes on the discussions. Assessments can be made during guided reading and writing sessions. The children are also frequently asked to make notes, which are collected in a class journal - this offers a further opportunity for assessment.

Ongoing assessment opportunities

Class and group discussions

During the frequent opportunities for class discussions within the unit, the teacher could make brief notes after the session or a TA, if present, could make notes during a session.

Teachers or TAs could set up guided reading or writing activities, using some of the activities in the unit, to make more closely focused assessments with particular children who are working towards Level 4.

Notes can also be made, for example using the following framework, during group discussions and partner work. See resources for a framework that supports the monitoring of children who are moving from Level 3 to Level 4.

Written work

Children's understandings can also be noted from their written work. In addition to the opportunities listed in the grid on page 10:

- the children's notes recorded in the class reading journal will demonstrate their understanding of characters' motivations and feelings at key moments in the unit
- annotated drawings (sessions 2 and 6) will indicate children's ability to retrieve information from text
- children are asked to write in role at various points throughout the unit (e.g. sessions 9 and 11); this will indicate their ability to make inferences about a character's feelings or motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment opportunities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>With a particular focus on children moving from Level 3 to Level 4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• To begin to make inferences (reading between the lines) and deductions (pulling evidence together) including empathising with characters and their feelings, thoughts, motivations and changes over the course of the narrative</td>
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## Assessment opportunities

*With a particular focus on children moving from Level 3 to Level 4*

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<tr>
<th>Assessment opportunities</th>
<th>Observations and Implications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children's ability to infer the feelings of the main characters will be evident as they write in role. <strong>Note:</strong> additional opportunities for writing in role later in the unit will also indicate the ability to infer characters' feelings and motivations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2 - Session 8</strong></td>
<td>The teacher or TA could listen in on children's discussions about the use of language.</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 2 - Session 10</strong></td>
<td>Children are asked to collect evidence from the text which tells them about Shrimps. The teacher or TA could discuss these drawings with individual children, asking them to explain their ideas.</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 3 - Session 14</strong></td>
<td>Children's storytelling in pairs will indicate their understanding of the main events in the story.</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 3 - Session 15</strong></td>
<td>Children's diary writing in role as Dr Barnardo will indicate their understanding of the main themes and the effect on the reader.</td>
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**Sources:** NC level descriptions

QCA's national test analysis at the end of Key Stage 2, published in Implications for teaching and learning (QCA 2004, 2005, 2006), show key pointers in helping children to move from Level 3 to Level 4 in reading.

## National Curriculum Level descriptions

### Level 3

Pupils read a range of texts fluently and accurately. They read independently, using strategies appropriately to establish meaning. In responding to fiction and non-fiction, they show understanding of the main points and express preferences. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate books and find information.
Level 4

In responding to a range of texts, pupils show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters, beginning to use inference and deduction. They refer to the text when explaining their views. They locate and use ideas and information.