Storyboard Science Teacher's Notes

Traditionally throughout schools in the UK, science is taught based on the published material provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). These units are structured in order to teach a particular area of science at the same time, for example unit 7A – Cells, 7B – Reproduction, 7C – Environment & Feeding Relationship. These topics are also aimed at pupils who are working at an ability appropriate to their age; hence attaining National Curriculum level 1-5 at Key Stage 2 and 3-8 at Key Stage 3 (QCA, 2007). Although these units can and should be adapted to suit all abilities it is sometimes not in the best interests of the pupils to teach the units in this structured manner.

It is well documented that children with social and communicational difficulties, especially autistic pupils, struggle in everyday classroom situations, (Whitaker, 2003). One approach which has been introduced to help children make sense of these situations is a social story. This story based method was developed by Carol Gray, an American teacher of Autistic Spectrum Conditions in the early 1990's. The stories aid SEN pupils to acquire understanding and information that they may find difficult to infer (Frederickson, 2009). Research has initially been based around the learning and development of social skills with many studies suggesting this to be a beneficial approach.

Storyboard Science is a series of science schemes which include teacher guides and resources. The activities incorporate social skills along side developing scientific knowledge based around a story. This approach towards science will enable pupils to gain an understanding of how science can influence our lives and the world around us. All activities will be mapped to QCA topics in order to identify areas of the National Curriculum. Additionally learning and progression will be monitored and assessed for both formative and summative assessment ranging from P scale 1 — national curriculum level 5.

The stories will provide links between science concepts and how they are used in every day life; ideas that most SEN pupils struggle with; thus simultaneously addressing the psychological theory of weak central coherence, (Howley, 2005). The use of the story will also provided continuity within the lessons, by using the same characters and providing structure throughout the lessons that the pupils can connect with. An additional focus underpinning the series will be fundamental scientific skills; each teacher guide will identify the traditional science skill focused on during a particular session. Collectively these activities will provide the opportunity for pupils to develop confidence through practical enquiry, contributions in class discussions and undertaking investigations in order to aid both scientific understanding and social communication.

Storyboard science aims to impact on learning through greater enjoyment and understanding of science whilst motivating and challenging pupils.

Structure of Each Section

First page — Story page. This will set the scene. It will allow the pupils to engage in real life situations and aid in the progression of basic social and communication skills through discussion.

Second page — The Science Content. Incorporating numerous tasks which aim to develop scientific knowledge whilst simultaneously providing opportunities for pupils to engage in scientific investigations and skills.

Third page – The teacher guide. This will provide support for the person leading the session, providing suggestions for learning activities and continued assessment opportunities for pupils at all levels.

Gail Blair Illustrated by Keith Blair

Contents

Title	Page
Lesson 1 -The Run Home Exercise and Breathing	1 2 3
Lesson 2 – Hearing the Siren The Human Ear	4 5 6
Lesson 3 – Looking for Evidence The Eye	7 8 9
Lesson 4 – Fingerprinting Taking Fingerprints	10 11 12
Lesson 5 – In Need of Petrol Types of Fuel	13 14 15
Lesson 6 – Drive to the Lab Pollution	16 17
Lesson 7 – Looking at the Samples The Microscope	18 19 20
Lesson 8 – Catching the Thief Finding Patterns	21 22 23
Additional information and answers	24 25

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Gail Blair Illustrated by Keith Blair

Contents

Title	Page
Lesson 1 – Making the Lists Magnets	1 2 3
Lesson 2 – Shopping for the Food Food Groups	5 4 5 6
Lesson 3 – Making the Jelly Dissolving	6 7 8 9
Lesson 4 – Getting Ready for the Party Electricity	10 11 12
Lesson 5 – The Disco Lights Simple Electrical Circuits	13 14
Lesson 6 – Eating the Food The Digestive System	15 16 17
Lesson 7 – Is it Too Loud? How to Protect our Ears	18 19 20
Lesson 8 – The Clean Up Microbes	21 22 23
Additional information and answers	24 25

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Gail Blair Illustrated by Keith Blair

Contents

Title	Page
Lesson 1 – Aeroplanes Air Resistance	1 2 3 4
Lesson 2 – Egypt Animal Adaptations	4 5 6
Lesson 3 – The Archaeologists Fossils	7 8 9
Lesson 4 – Australia Day and Night	10 11 12
Lesson 5 – The Rainforest Plant Classification	13 14 15
Lesson 6 – Cruise to Italy Floating and Sinking	16 17 18
Lesson 7 – Mount Etna Volcanoes	19 20 21
Lesson 8 – Beyond the Earth The Solar System	21 22 23 24
Additional information and answers	25

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Gail Blair Illustrated by Keith Blair

Contents

Title	Page
Lesson 1 – Breakfast Food for energy	1 2 3
Lesson 2 – The Warm Up Healthy Lifestyle	4 5 6
Lesson 3 – The First Race Speed	7 8 9
Lesson 4 – The Egg and Spoon Race Reversible and Irreversible Reactions	10 11 12
Lesson 5 – The Ice Lolly Melting and Freezing	13 14 15
Lesson 6 – The Javelin Basic forces	16 17
Lesson 7 – The Milk Break The Skeleton	18 19 20
Lesson 8 – The Medal Ceremony Metals and Non-metals	21 22 23
Additional information and answers	24 25

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Gail Blair Illustrated by Keith Blair

Contents

Title	Page
Lesson 1 – Getting Ready Teeth	1 2 3
Lesson 2 – Arriving at the Park Keeping Warm	4 5
Lesson 3 – The First Clue Habitats	6 7 8
Lesson 4 – Starting to Rain The Water Cycle	9 10 11
Lesson 5 – The Second Clue Friction	12 13 14
Lesson 6 – The Rainbow What Colour is Sunlight?	15 16 17
Lesson 7 – The Final Clue Food Chains	18 19 20
Lesson 8 – Finding the Treasure Gravity	21 22 23
Additional information and answers	24 25

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Gail Blair Illustrated by Keith Blair

Contents

Title	Page
Lesson 1 – Bacon and Eggs Diffusion	1 2 3
Lesson 2 – Cleaning the Oven Acids and Alkalis	4 5 6
Lesson 3 – Lighting the Fire The Fire Triangle	7 8 9
Lesson 4 – Preparing the Casserole The Compost Heap	10 11 12
Lesson 5 – Watering the Plants What Do Plants Need To Grow?	12 13 14 15
Lesson 6 – Making a Hot Drink Solids, Liquids and Gases	16 17
Lesson 7 – The Spider Vertebrates and Invertebrates	18 19 20
Lesson 8 – Getting Ready for Bed Saving Energy	21 22 23
Additional information and answers	24 25

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