

***Lulu Gets a Cat* by Anna McQuinn, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw (Alanna Max)**

In the fifth book about Lulu, she and her family adopt a cat from the cat shelter. When Lulu first expresses a wish to get a cat, her mother encourages her to find out about the work involved in looking after it as well as the pleasure. They find out information from library books and the internet and Lulu practises using her toy cat before bringing a real little cat home, settling her in and naming her Makeda after an African Queen. The final picture shows Lulu sharing a story with her new pet.

Overall Aims of the Sequence:

- To think and talk confidently about responses to a book, using prediction, asking questions, making connections with their own experience
- To think about the story meanings conveyed in the illustrations
- To enjoy listening to, responding to and using spoken and written language in play and learning
- To explore the story through collaborative play, critical thinking, role-play and storytelling
- To use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences
- To deepen understanding of the world through a fictional text
- To develop sustained story making and storytelling
- To write for meaning and purpose in a variety of narrative and non-narrative forms

This is a Power of Reading teaching sequence for Nursery and Reception. It was originally produced to accompany CLPE's Planning the Curriculum Around a Text in EYFS training.

Overview of this Teaching Sequence

This teaching sequence is approximately 2-3 weeks long if spread over a series of sessions. This book is perfect for exploring how to create and develop a sense of self with children in the Early Years and would therefore be a good book to explore at transitional times between home and school or Nursery and school or between Nursery and Reception. The key themes revolve around personal needs, recognising our own emotions and the emotions of others, behaving and reacting to the needs of others appropriately in a range of situations and learning to take responsibility for themselves, others and their environment within the familiar and engaging context of getting a new pet. It is an ideal text to support a range of learning in Personal, Social and Emotional Development and encourages children to talk about themselves, their likes and interests, their personal needs and how to interact appropriately with others, empathising with and responding to their needs and emotions.

Development Matters (2021) and Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2023)

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Communication and Language:

- Enjoy listening to longer stories and can remember much of what happens.
- Articulate their ideas and thoughts in well-formed sentences.
- Connect one idea or action to another using a range of connectives.
- Describe events in some detail.
- Engage in storytimes.
- Listen to and talk about stories to build familiarity and understanding.
- Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text, some as exact repetition and some in their own words.
- Listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions.
- Develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.
- Engage in non-fiction books.
- Listen to and talk about selected non-fiction to develop a deep familiarity with new knowledge and vocabulary.

Physical Development:

- Use one-handed tools and equipment, for example, making snips in paper with scissors.
- Use a comfortable grip with good control when holding pens and pencils.
- Show a preference for a dominant hand.
- Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Suggested tools: pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons.
- Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient.
- Handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

Literacy:

- Understand the five key concepts about print:
 - print has meaning
 - print can have different purposes
 - we read English text from left to right and from top to bottom
 - the names of the different parts of a book
 - page sequencing
- Blend sounds into words, so that they can read short words made up of known letter– sound correspondences.
- Read and understand simple sentences.
- Use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately.
- Read some common irregular words.
- Demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.
- Use some of their print and letter knowledge in their early writing.
- Write some letters accurately.
- Write short sentences with words with known sound-letter correspondences using a capital letter and full stop.
- Re-read what they have written to check that it makes sense.
- Use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds.
- Write some irregular common words.
- Write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

Other ideas for Continuous and Cross-curricular Provision:

PSED:

This book is perfect for exploring how to create and develop a sense of self with children in the Early Years. Create time for talk and activities that allow children to develop self-confidence in talking about themselves, their likes, families, things of immediate interest to them and significant personal memories and experiences.

The book is also a wonderful vehicle for talking about and sharing how to express, recognise and manage emotions, both our own and recognising and responding to the emotional needs of others, sharing experiences through this text and reading related texts focussing on emotions so that children have the safety of using a story experience to talk about and explore their own feelings. Support children in enriching and increasing their stock of words to express their feelings, needs and opinions and develop their sense of self and awareness of the needs of others.

Reading area:

Discuss, with children and their families, favourite stories that they like to read together. If a child has a moment where they are feeling sad, upset or angry, this will be invaluable knowledge as a trusted adult can take them somewhere quiet to read and share these. It's a wonderful idea to create a display of photos of the children and their loved ones with the books, reading together or sharing the front covers, which also helps to reinforce with families the importance of reading at home.

Create a display of Anna McQuinn's other books, featuring her key characters of Lulu and Zeki as well as other texts which focus on representing children's real and familiar everyday experiences as well as those that focus on sharing and responding to emotions, and the familiar theme of pets and other animals as listed in the linked texts section of the sequence.

Understanding the World:

The activities planned around this text support many areas of the curriculum for Understanding of the World. Children will be encouraged, through the sharing of personal narratives, to talk about past and present events in their own lives and through group discussions around the text they will be able to explore the fact that other children do not always enjoy the same things, and will be encouraged to be sensitive to this. They will also be encouraged to explore the similarities and differences between themselves and others, through sharing likes and reactions to different experiences.

They will also explore the needs of themselves, plants and animals, the similarities and differences between living things and gain an understanding of how essential needs are met through self-care, care of others and taking responsibility for our own needs and the needs of others.

Mark making and writing:

Events which take place in the story will encourage children to recall and record personal narratives and memories of personal experiences as well as making lists and charts to record key responsibilities which can be used as a springboard to incorporate this into the setting, for example in making record charts to show that plants have been watered, class pets have been fed, watered, looked after and

cleaned, equipment is looked after etc. Practitioners should share how to use different kinds of writing to engage in writing for personal and managerial purposes, making lists, labels and charts to support everyday experiences and writing to record personal and everyday experiences, supporting children in recounting events from the past and present, in and out of the setting.

Small world and role play:

Children should have access to resources and materials that support them in exploring the theme of taking care of other things, this could include a variety of baby dolls and supporting equipment, a variety of animal toys and supporting resources or plants, bulbs, seeds and supporting resources. Adults should support children in creating role-play areas in the indoor and outdoor environments that support children in exploring areas of interest more deeply, such as a baby clinic, home corner, vets, animal shelter, garden centre. Children should have access to loose parts and other resources that allow them to build these areas themselves with the support of enabling adults and real life trips to and/or video experiences of such places to help them experience what such a place is like and what would be needed to build a role-play representation of such an environment. Adults should support in finding resources that encourage children to read and write in everyday scenarios, such as posters, labels, list making paper, forms, clipboards and a variety of mark making equipment as well as playing alongside the children to model and support the use of specific language as part of their play.

Expressive Arts:

Through close reading of the illustrations in the text, the children should begin to notice that the central character, Lulu, likes to draw representations of herself and her favourite things. Provide a variety of art materials in the creative areas, ensuring access to a range of skin tone crayons, pencils and paints alongside mirrors and photographs of things that children love to enable children to engage in creating representations of their own for display and celebration throughout the environment.

Teaching Approaches:

- Response to illustration
- Role on the Wall
- Telling of personal narratives
- Reading aloud and re-reading
- Looking at language
- Writing in role
- Shared writing
- Book making

Writing Outcomes:

- Responses to illustrations shared
- Personal Narratives
- Responsive sentences
- Lists
- Informational sentences
- Informational texts
- Writing in role
- Letters
- Word collections
- Comparison charts
- Thoughts about a story

Links to other texts and resources

Supporting Texts:

Core Linked Text:

We're Getting a Cat! by Vivian French and Salvatore Rubbino (Walker)

Other books by Anna McQuinn:

Lulu Loves the Library, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw (Alanna Max)

Lulu Loves Stories, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw (Alanna Max)

Lulu Reads to Zeki, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw (Alanna Max)

Lulu Loves Flowers, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw (Alanna Max)

Zeki Gets a Checkup, illustrated by Ruth Hearson (Alanna Max)

Zeki Can Swim! illustrated by Ruth Hearson (Alanna Max)

Zeki Loves Baby Club, illustrated by Ruth Hearson (Alanna Max)

If You're Happy and You Know It! illustrated by Sophie Fatus (Barefoot Books)

Books that help children to recognise and explore emotions:

Sweep, Louise Greig and Júlia Sardà (Egmont)

Silly Billy, Anthony Browne (Walker)

Owl Babies, Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson (Walker)

Dogger, Shirley Hughes (Red Fox)

A Book of Feelings, Amanda McCardie and Salvatore Rubbino (Walker)

Happy, Mies Van Hout (Leminscaat)

Feelings: Inside my heart and in my head, Libby Walden and Richard Jones (Caterpillar Books)

Lost and Found, Oliver Jeffers (HarperCollins)

The Girl With a Parrot on her Head, Daisy Hirst (Walker)

Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears, Emily Gravett (Macmillan)

Grumpy Frog, Ed Vere (Puffin)

Glad Monster, Sad Monster, Ed Emberley (Little, Brown)

Pom Pom Gets the Grumps, Sophy Henn (Puffin)

The New Small Person, Lauren Child (Puffin)

A Great Big Cuddle, Michael Rosen and Chris Riddell (Walker)

Books that link to the theme of cats and other animals:

There are cats in this book by Viviane Schwarz (Walker)

There are no cats in this book by Viviane Schwarz (Walker)

Is there a dog in this book? by Viviane Schwarz (Walker)

The King Cat by Marta Altés (Macmillan)

Matilda's Cat by Emily Gravett (Two Hoots)

A Dog Called Rod by Tim Hopgood (Macmillan)

Thank You for Looking After Our Pets by Tim Hopgood (Simon and Schuster)

A Dog with Nice Ears by Lauren Child (Orchard Books)

That Pesky Rat by Lauren Child (Orchard Books)

I Want a Pet by Lauren Child (Frances Lincoln)

Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell (Puffin)

Weblinks:

CBeebies My Pet and Me (Shorts): Choosing a Pet - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETIWYbuNijA>

CBeebies My Pet and Me (Shorts): Siamese Cat - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSo5UHPm76Q>

Charlie and Lola – I can train your dog: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSd9AGgKhQM>

Cats Protection League materials for teachers and children: <https://education.cats.org.uk/>

Happy Cats song, linked to *Lulu Gets a Cat*: <https://education.cats.org.uk/for-teachers/>

Teaching sessions

Before beginning the book:

- In preparation for starting work on the text, you will need to gather together a good selection of loose parts in order for the children to construct role play areas of their choice. An excellent list of suitable resources, and the theory behind the Loose Parts approach can be found as part of the Inspiring Scotland Loose Parts Toolkit at: <http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/media/58451/Loose-Parts-Play-web.pdf>
- You will also need a selection of props for the children to care for, such as toy animals and animal equipment, e.g. feeding bowls, collars, leads, brushes, toys etc.
- You will need to cover the front cover of the text before beginning the sessions, so that the children don't see the title or cover art. This can easily be done by folding sugar paper or brown paper around the cover.
- Prepare a Working Wall display space and/or shared journal where you can keep records of class discussions, art work, photographs and writing that are produced as you work through the book.

Response to Illustration

The children's books featured on Core Books Online have been chosen because of the quality of the illustrations they contain and the ways in which the illustrations work with the text to create meaning for the reader. Children will need time and opportunities to enjoy and respond to the pictures, and to talk together about what the illustrations contribute to their understanding of the text.

- Share the first double page spread in the book, in which we see Lulu sitting on her bed in her pyjamas, covering the text on the page so that the children can focus solely on the illustration. How does this image make them feel? What makes them feel like this?
- Ask the children to talk about the character they can see in the illustration. What do they think they might know about this girl? You may wish to prompt them with some more specific questions, such as:

- *What can you say about her?*
- *What do you want to know about her?*
- *Do you think she would make a good friend?*
- Make notes of the children's responses around a large scale copy of this illustration, which can be added to the working display or in the shared journal.
- Prompt the children to consider what tells them how the girl is feeling by drawing attention to her body position, gaze and facial expression, using further questions, such as:
 - *How do you think the girl is feeling?*
 - *How do you know?*
 - *What tells you this?*

Support them in tuning in to body position, gaze and facial expression and annotate the illustration with children's responses. *How do they think the character might be feeling? Why do they think that?*

- Now ask the children what they think they know about the little girl in the picture and prompt them to point to and talk about clues in the illustration that shape their thinking. Draw their attention to larger, more obvious details such as the toy cats – how many are there? What does this tell us? – as well as looking closely for the small details such as the pattern on her pyjamas, her hair clip, the bookend on the bookshelf, the tape she has used to put her drawing on the wall etc.
- Scribe children's observations and ideas on speech bubbles around a copy of the illustration on a classroom display or in the shared journal.
- Go on to explore children's personal connections with the text, by asking:
 - *What do you think she really loves?*
 - *How do you know this?*
 - *Is there something that you really love as much as she loves cats?*
- Encourage children to talk about this question at home with their parents and carers and come back with a note, prop or photograph ready to talk about something they really love in the next session, this could be a person, a place or a thing like a toy, cartoon, animal etc.

Shared writing: Sharing personal narratives

Shared writing is one of the most important ways a teacher can show children how writing works and what it's like to be a writer.

Acting as scribe, the teacher works with a small or large group of children to create a text together, enabling them to concentrate on their ideas and composition. Teacher and children work as active partners, talking together to share ideas and while the teacher guides the children through all the decisions that writers need to make and helps them shape their thoughts on paper.

Shared writing gives children a model for their own independent writing and can introduce them to unfamiliar genres or styles of writing. Children can then present their written work in a range of literary outcomes such as a poster, big book or poem for everyone to enjoy.

- In preparation for this session, gather together photos of each of the children to prompt their talk and thinking throughout the session. Picking photos where they are engaged in activities they particularly enjoy will help extend their thinking beyond basic descriptions.
- Come back to the illustration of the girl on the page. Share with the children that this character is named Lulu. Prepare the children to talk about Lulu by asking them, *If we were going to write something about Lulu, what might we say about her?* They may draw on describing her by her physical features or they may talk about what they know she likes from the illustration. Allow them to talk about and try out a number of ideas, saying the sentences out loud, ready for writing. Recast, modelling the sentence structure for writing where necessary. Some may choose very direct observations, some may begin to look at closer details to make inferences about the character, based on things they see, e.g.:
 - Lulu is a girl.
 - She has curly hair.
 - Lulu likes cats.
 - She has lots of cat toys.
 - Lulu likes drawing.
 - She likes reading.
 - Lulu is happy.
 - She is ready for bed.
- Scribe the sentences on sentence strips as the children share these and place them on display, next to the image from the text. Discuss with the children how they know these things are true, encouraging them to go back to the illustration for evidence and supporting them to do so, e.g. 'I think she likes reading too. She has lots of books on the bookshelf above her bed.'
- Now look at some of the different photos of the children in the group. Invite children to share how they would describe themselves to someone else in the way we described Lulu when they see their picture. They may talk about themselves generally or they may recall and recount the memory they have of when the picture was taken. Encourage them to think and talk about things we can't see in the photo, such as something they particularly like, in the way Lulu likes cats, as they discussed at home. Children may also want to say things to describe their friends, when they see photos of them. You should also include yourself and other adults in the setting, modelling the kinds of things you might say about yourself and sharing things you like that the children might not already know about.
- Place all the photos in the writing area, and invite the children to visit the table and talk about themselves or each other to an enabling adult in the area as part of the extended provision. The adult can then scribe the children's thoughts in sentences on paper or inside speech bubbles to make an 'All about us' display. Adults can then draw on this information to plan for the needs and interests of the children more specifically.
- Come back to the picture of Lulu and encourage the children to think about the story this character may be part of. You can use specific questions, such as:
 - *Does this illustration remind you of any songs or stories you already know?*

- *What could her story be about?*
- *What might have happened just beforehand?*
- *What might happen next?*
- Scribe significant responses on post-it notes or in speech bubbles to add to the display.

Reading Aloud and exploring story concepts

Reading aloud slows written language down so that children can hear and absorb the words, tunes and patterns. It enables children to experience and enjoy stories they might otherwise not meet, enlarging their reading interests and providing access to texts beyond their level of independence as readers. Reading aloud helps children to broaden their repertoire as readers, becoming familiar with a wider range of genres and the work and voice of particular authors. By reading well-chosen books aloud, teachers also help classes to become communities of readers, sharing in the rich experience of a growing range of books they enjoy, get to know well and talk about. Conversations about books help children to explore and reflect on texts in ways that are made meaningful, personal and pleasurable.

- Without sharing the front cover of the text, or the title page, read aloud the first double page spread, from *Lulu loves cats*. to *Mummy says looking after a cat is a lot of work*.
- Ask the children what they already know about cats and open up questions that allow them to share their thinking more deeply, e.g.:
 - *Do any of them have a cat or another pet of their own?*
 - *What do they have to do to look after their pet?*
 - *Why might Mummy think that looking after a cat is a lot of work?*
- Ask the children to think about what the differences between Lulu's toy cats and a real cat might be. Having a stuffed cat toy available will help the children to focus their attention on this, you could also prompt them with facilitative questions such as:
 - *What do real cats do that this cat can't?*
 - *What does a real cat need that this cat doesn't?*
 - *What would I have to do if I owned a real cat?*
- Scribe children's thoughts and ideas around a photograph of a real cat on the display or in the shared journal to validate their contributions and share their thinking more widely.
- Now come back to the children and their own personal interests and experiences. Talk about the kinds of animals we could have as pets. Support this by reading aloud other texts in the extended provision with groups and individuals which focus on the theme of pets, real and fantasy from the recommended text lists above. You could come back to the drawing that Lulu did on the wall of her bedroom, showing her with the cat she desperately wants and encourage the children to create representations of themselves with their dream pet in a drawing or painting or build their dream pet as a model in the creative area.

Information Reading and Writing

Narrative texts often give excellent opportunities to work across genres, providing purpose, audience and context for such writing. As part of non-fiction writing, children will need to hear and see lots of high-quality examples of

non-fiction writing as an example of what they will be writing to pick up on the differing structure, organisation and use of language, before writing in the style themselves.

- Now re-read the first spread again and on to *She learns that cats are super at smelling and hearing*. Did the children know this about cats already? Is there anything they would like to find out about looking after a cat? Support children in composing and recasting their ideas into appropriate questions where necessary and scribe these down to reflect on at the end of the session.
- Ask the children where Lulu went to find out more information about cats. Have they ever been to the library before? What was it like? What did they do there? It would also be good to read aloud *Lulu Loves the Library*, the first book in the Lulu series, to provide more context around this.
- Discuss the fact that as well as containing stories, some books can give us information about things in the world around them. Read aloud *We're Getting a Cat!* by Vivian French and Salvatore Rubbino. Read so that they can hear the more informational tone of this text, in comparison to the more story like language of *Lulu Gets a Cat*. At key stopping points throughout, allow time for the children to reflect on what they have learnt from what they have read and vocalise this for an adult to recast, if necessary in sentences that can be recorded in writing in a more informational style by an adult scribing. Have any of the questions they had about owning a cat been answered by reading this book?
- You may also wish to allow time for children to gain extra information in other ways such as inviting a vet into the setting to talk about cats, watching age appropriate videos such as those from CBeebies *My Pet and Me* series (see weblinks) or invite in a parent or carer from one of the families who owns a cat, to whom they can pose some of the questions they have composed.
- Invite children to come back to the questions they started with and see if they now have the answers to these. Scribe children's responses next to each question to share what has been learnt from reading and any other research you chose to undertake, again modelling and drawing on the more informative style of *We're Getting a Cat!*
- In the extended provision, children could be supported in talking about, drawing and writing factual statements about things of interest to them, possibly the things they talked about with their parents and carers at home, taking on the voice of information. These could be scribed by the children or the adults and displayed in a shared area for others to see. Children may wish to make their own handmade books about significant topics of personal interest.

Writing in Role: Empathising with a character and their situation

When children have explored a fictional situation through talk or role-play, they may be ready to write in role as a character in the story. Taking the role of a particular character enables young writers to see events from a different viewpoint and involves them writing in a different voice. In role, children can often access feelings and language that are not available to them when they write as themselves.

- Re-read the text from the beginning and up until *She pretends Dinah is a real cat and practises looking after her*.
- Study the illustration closely; what can we tell that Lulu has learnt about looking after cats? How can we tell that she really does want a cat? What do you think she is trying to show her Mummy?
- Look carefully at the chart Lulu has made on the wall. Why do they think she has made this? Talk with the children about what it means to be responsible and to look after things. What do we need to look after? What are our responsibilities in the setting? And at home? Children might talk about routines and jobs if these are well established in the setting, such as tidying up, putting lids on pens and glue sticks, watering plants, feeding the birds or class pets, cutting up and sharing fruit at snack time, composting peelings and other food waste, recycling etc. Why is it important that we all take responsibility for looking after things in the setting? What would happen if we didn't take responsibility for things?
- Come back to the illustration of Lulu. Why do you think she is trying so hard to show her Mummy that she can be responsible? What do you think she thinks will happen if she ticks everything on her chart?
- Tell the children that we are going to help Lulu try to persuade her Mummy to let her have a cat. What do we think Lulu needs to say to her Mummy to tell her that she is responsible enough to have a cat?
- Model the kinds of things that Lulu might say to convince her Mummy that she should be allowed to have a real cat. Talk through the children's ideas, recasting and encouraging the children to expand on their ideas to make these more convincing using conjunctions in their speech to add detail or explanation. Scribe these in speech bubbles around the illustration, e.g.
 - I have learnt lots about cats in the books I have read so I really know how to look after them.
 - I have given Dinah fresh water every day so she won't be thirsty.
 - Dinah really loves the bed I made her because it has a soft, fluffy blanket to sleep on.
 - I have played with Dinah every day so that she doesn't get bored.
- You could then work up these ideas into a letter to Mummy from the class or Lulu to try and convince her, e.g.

Dear Lulu's Mummy,

We really think that Lulu is ready to have a real cat of her own.

She has learnt lots about how to look after a cat from books in the library. She has practised looking after Dinah like she is a real cat and has remembered to feed her, give her fresh water and play with her every day.

Lulu loves cats so much. Please can you let her have a real one? We think she is responsible enough to look after it properly.

Love from,

Nursery

- Re-read the letter as you scribe and as a whole when it is complete so that the children hear what an informal letter sounds like.
- You could then take a group to the post box to post the letter and prepare a written reply from Lulu's Mummy ready for the next session to introduce the idea that Mummy has been convinced by all the things Lulu has done and is ready to let her have a cat.
- You could set up a message centre or a class post box in the setting to allow the children to be able to write letters and messages to each other, using the voice they have experienced in the shared writing session.

Looking at Language

Making word collections is a way of focussing on the language of a text. Children can make collections of words that describe a particular character, their feelings, a place, an event or a situation.

NB: In this session, the children will see how Lulu investigates how to adopt a cat and will explore the meaning of this work. Be aware of any children in the setting who may be in foster care or adopted. This could be a supportive link to share and discuss their own experiences in the context of the story. However, some children may be sensitive to discussing issues around adoption and going to live with a new family. Teachers will need to use their discretion to adapt the session accordingly to the needs of their pupils.

- Re-read the story so far and up until *Mummy and Lulu find out how to adopt one*.
- Talk to the children about what they have heard. Why do you think Mummy agreed to let Lulu have a cat?
- Explore the word *adopt*. What does this mean? Why might there be animals that need adopting? You could watch a video, such as Kozal's Story on the Cats Protection League website: <https://education.cats.org.uk/for-teachers/> Why is it a good thing to adopt an animal?
- Now read on to *He shows them three perfect cats*. Discuss the cat shelter. What is this place? Why do you think it is called a shelter? What does this word mean? Now explore the character of Jeremy, what is his job? What do you think he does when he goes to work? Why is his job important?
- Allow time and space for the children to read this illustration closely. Do they think there is a cat who is particularly perfect for Lulu? Why do they think this? Guide the children into

focussing on the body positions and facial expressions of the three cats. How do we think each of the cats is feeling?

- Now turn the page and compare the body language and facial expressions of Lulu and the cat. What might we be able to tell about their relationship from what we can see? What do the children think will happen next in the story?
- Now read aloud the next page, up to *Lulu will be back as soon as everything at home is ready*. Why do you think Jeremy doesn't just let Lulu take the cat home straight away? What do you think Lulu might need to do to get ready to bring the cat home? What might be on Jeremy's list?
- Take a long sheet of paper and support the children to think about the things Lulu might need to have ready for the cat, drawing on what they have learnt from this book, *We're Getting a Cat!* and other shared experiences. Through shared writing, model and demonstrate how to compose a list, with one item under each previous item. Depending on the children's age and experience, you could show them how to use and apply their growing phonic knowledge by sounding out the words and using this knowledge to write the words. Explore variations in spelling where these arise.
- Explore opportunities for children to make other lists throughout the extended provision, such as lists of ingredients for making playdough, lists of equipment in different areas of the indoor and outdoor provision, lists of names to support turn taking in activities etc.

Drawing Comparison Charts: Links to Understanding the World

All kinds of graphic representations help to make stories more accessible to children, especially to less experienced readers or bilingual learners. A comparison grid is a visual way of recording similarities or differences.

- Re-read the story so far and on until *Lulu and Daddy make a special corner where her cat will settle in*.
- Spend time closely reading the illustrations to see what Lulu and Mummy bought from the shops. What do these things tell us about the needs of the cat?:
 - Food bowl
 - Water bowl
 - Litter tray and litter
 - Bed
 - Scratching post with ball
 - Cat carrier
- It would be useful if you had physical representations of these objects for the children to handle and think about. You could then use these to enhance play with the toy cat in the setting.
- Spend time thinking about the cat's needs, food, water, to go to the toilet, to play, to go to the vet if they are unwell. How do these compare with our own needs? What is similar and

different about cats and people? Support the children to organise their ideas in a comparison chart that makes the similarities and differences obvious, for example creating a pie chart using sorting rings and post-it note labels.

- You could then go on to compare the needs of other living things, such as plants. Are there needs that living things all have in common?
- Finish by re-reading the final spread, *Lulu and Daddy make a special corner where her cat will settle in*. Allow time for the children to share personal narratives about places that are special to them? Why is that place special, what things in the space make them feel settled? You might start by thinking about what makes them feel settled in your setting. Allow time, space and resources in the extended provision to continue to explore these ideas, through drawing, painting or creating or talking about this to an adult who can scribe their ideas if they want to share these.

Responding to illustration: Links to Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Re-read the story so far and on to *Lulu tells her not to worry*.
- Spend time closely reading the two illustrations on the two spreads. Look first at the spread where Mummy and Lulu are bringing the cat carrier to the shelter to collect the cat. How do you think they are both feeling about collecting the cat? How do you know this? As well as discussing that they both look happy, look closer at the body positioning, first of Lulu. Encourage the children to replicate this pose, smiling with their heads held high. Are there any other words we could think of to describe how she is feeling now? Support the children with exploring and extending vocabulary, introducing words like proud, or grown up if the children don't already mention these.
- Link this back to the children's personal experiences. Has there ever been a time they have looked and felt like this? Allow time and space for children to discuss personal stories. They may have received an award for something, completed a challenge, overcome adversity and be able to relate to the sense of achievement Lulu has in finally reaching her goal of getting a cat. Scribe these moments around a copy of the illustration to share on the display or in the shared journal.
- Now focus on Mummy, what can we tell about how she feels about her decision to let Lulu have a cat? How do you think she feels about all the things Lulu has done to prove she is responsible enough?
- Now look at the spread on the opposite page. Does the cat feel the same way as Mummy or Lulu? How is its facial expression or body position different to Mummy and Lulu's? What words might describe the way the cat is feeling at this moment in the story? Scribe children's ideas around the copy of the illustration. Sensitively link this back to the children's personal experiences. Has there ever been a time they have looked and felt like this? Have they ever had to do something new or go somewhere they've never been before that made them feel worried, like the cat? What made them feel better? What do they think Lulu and Mummy should do to make the cat feel safe? What helps you when you are feeling scared or worried?

Encourage the children to also think about what might not be helpful for the cat. Can they think of anything that might make the cat feel more afraid?

- Read aloud the next page and look at what Lulu does to help the cat get used to being in its new home. Do they think this is easy or hard for Lulu? What do you think she really wants to do now? Talk around the concept of self-regulation, and the difference between Lulu wanting to play with the cat but also understanding that the cat isn't ready yet, look at the illustration showing she is giving space to the cat by being a good distance away– the page gutter is literally separating them – but how she is still curious about the cat, peeping over the top of the high back chair on tiptoes. Link this to children's own experiences of having to hold back their actions, or recognising when someone would rather be left alone when they want to play. Why is it important that we recognise and respect other people's feelings?
- Link this learning back to the children's wider experience of recognising and managing emotions. How can we use this to help our friends when we can see they might be sad, worried or lonely? What would be helpful things to do or say and what might not be helpful to them? Talk with the children about who they might feel most comfortable in sharing any worries they might have with and make a note of this to ensure that everyone in the setting knows who each child thinks their trusted adults or friends are if they ever have a moment when this information might be useful.
- Lead this on to a wider discussion about the importance of looking at and recognising feelings in each other. Arrange the children in a semi-circle, and in role, you or another adult should model how to use your body and face to show a clear feeling from those that have been explored throughout the sequence. Allow the children to discuss and decide what the emotion might be by looking at you and then to decide what they might do in response. Explore how you might respond to someone who is angry in a different way to someone who is happy or sad. If the children are confident with this, you could allow volunteers to come and share different emotions for the group to recognise and respond to or work in pairs taking turns to show and respond to different emotions.

Bookmaking: Sharing and publishing our own stories

Publishing their work for an audience helps children to write more purposefully. Bookmaking provides a motivating context within which children can bring together their developing understanding of what written language is like; making written language meaningful as they construct their own texts.

- Re-read the book so far and on until *Tayo and Lulu play with Makeda all afternoon*. Talk about the things Lulu does to build up her relationship with the cat, to make her feel safe and secure and to become friends with her. What do you think is special about the name she chose for the cat? What do you think this tells us about how important the cat is to her?
- Now look at her own friend Tayo. How do you think he feels about the cat? Explore his facial expression and body position. Why do you think she waits until she introduces anyone else to Makeda? How would you describe this scene to someone else? What are they all doing? How

are they feeling? How can you tell the cat's emotions are changing? Scribe children's responses around a copy of this illustration, on the display or in the shared journal.

- Bring this back to the children talking about things they like to do, by themselves, with their families or with their friends in or out of the setting.
- Make a large format home-made book that will become a collection of the children's own stories of the things they love. You could title the book, *Nursery love...* or *Reception love...* and then allow each page to have a personal anecdote written by the children. Involve enabling adults who can share experiences, memories and photographs to support the children with their ideas and to support children's own writing. The children could draw pictures, select from photos available in the setting or bring in photos from home alongside their talk and writing to accompany their anecdotes.
- Display the book prominently in the reading area in the setting and allow the children and their families to see and share the book.

Booktalk: Sharing responses to stories read

Discussion about books forms the foundations for working with books. Children need frequent, regular and sustained opportunities to talk together about the books that they are reading as a whole class. The more experience they have of talking together like this the better they get at making explicit the meaning that a text holds for them.

- At this point, uncover the front cover of the text. Discuss the title and the front cover illustration. Then re-read the whole story from start to finish, allowing the children to relish the whole narrative from start to finish.
- Was the ending as they expected? Did they expect everything to work out for Lulu and Makeda at the end, or did they worry that Makeda might get scared again or not settle in?
- Talk about the book as a whole. Engage the children in book talk, discussing how the book made them feel, allowing them time and space to tell you their likes and dislikes, referring to different parts of the text or particular illustrations. Look at the front cover image – do you think this is a good image for the front cover? Look at the difference between the front and endpapers – why do you think Makeda only appears in the end ones?
- Do they have any questions about the story after reading? Is there anything else they want to know about Lulu or Makeda or any of the themes involved in the story?
- Do they connect with the text on a personal experience? Has anything like this ever happened to them? Does it remind them of any other stories, TV shows, their friends?
- Asking these questions will lead children inevitably into a fuller discussion using more general questions.

- Come back to look at the final spread of the story, where Lulu reads to Makeda. Why do you think she does this? How do you think it makes Makeda feel? Do they like to listen to stories? Do they have favourite stories, books, songs or rhymes of their own? Make a note of these and, if possible, have these readily available in the reading area for children to revisit, share and enjoy. You could make a display sharing children's responses to different texts.
- Consider arranging a Bedtime Story Night at school where, at the end of the day or in the early evening, children change into their pyjamas and come back to school with their parents and carers and a soft toy for warm milk, biscuits and stories read aloud. This shares the fundamental importance of reading aloud with the wider community and is a perfect opportunity for allowing children and parents access to a range of books and stories they haven't seen before and a different experience of reading.
- Take photographs and obtain views from the parents and children on the experience to display in a prominent area of the school or to report on the school website or in the school newsletter. Share the publication with the children to showcase another means of writing as recording.