

# Cast your spell

Bruce Potts shows you how to add a little magic and mystery to life in the classroom...



I can hardly think of a child I've met who isn't fascinated by all aspects of magic and mystery. That's

why children believe in Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy, and why stories and films such as *Harry Potter* and the *Lord of the Rings* are so immensely popular with young people of all ages. But we don't have to send our pupils to the cinema or the library to experience magic and fantasy – we can provide it for them right here in our classrooms.



## **SPELL 1** **Abducted by Aliens**

**To launch your 'space' topic, try really getting into character...**

Liaise with your next door colleague/teaching assistant first because she has to be in on the plan for it to work. Then, on the day you launch your space topic, dress up in a spacesuit (use

your imagination) but don't go into the classroom. You will also need to put on some alien make-up, ready for your grand entrance.

Get your colleague to go into the classroom, take the register and set the children off on some mundane task until you arrive, explaining that no one knows where you are but you've obviously been delayed on the way to school. Once the children have settled to their task, you enter the room without saying a word – your appearance will be quite enough to cause a stir amongst your children. Once the excitement has died down you can tell them how you were abducted by aliens on your way to school. Explain that the extra terrestrials took you away for five years (space time is not the same as Earth time). Then ensues a question and answer session about what you did during your time away – prepare some really good answers for the anticipated questions but lead the discussion in the direction you need it to go for the launch of your topic.

Perhaps at some point in the module of work the children can all come to school for a day dressed as aliens.

## **SPELL 2** **Mary Poppins' Snow Globe**



**Look into the future and instil positive messages...**

Mary Poppins was able to look into her snow globe and predict the future. Your snow globe works in the same way. You produce the globe at the start of every week, shake it up in front of the class and tell them what you can see.

Choose three different children each week, so that during the course of the year - in a class of 30 children - each child will have been chosen approximately four times. After shaking up the globe, say something like:

*"Snow globe, snow globe, what can I see?  
Which three children will appear to me?"*

You will already have decided which three children to choose and what you're going to see from them. For example:

*"I can see Aisha, who is going to try really hard to do her forward roll in PE on Thursday. I can see Darryl, who's going to do some amazing maths throughout the*



week. And I can see Leroy, who is going to be really kind in the playground. Well class, let's all work together to help these three children achieve these things."

Instilling positive messages like this into children's minds can be a powerful motivator – you know your own children better than anyone, so you can decide what kinds of messages you want to instil. Make sure you follow up your prediction at end of the week to see how the three children did and whether they deserve any recognition or reward for their achievement.



### SPELL 3

#### The Yellow Brick Road

Help children grant their own wishes...

Everyone knows the story of how Dorothy and her companions travelled along the Yellow Brick Road to meet The Wizard of Oz, who would grant their greatest wish. However, at the end of their journey the ragtag group makes an important discovery; they need only believe in themselves to achieve their heart's desire.

Create your own Yellow Brick Road in the classroom by preparing a set of yellow bricks, no larger than 15cms x 10cms each. Cut these from sugar paper and produce enough to complete a circle, two or three bricks deep, around the whole classroom above the level of the display boards. You

should also cut out a red brick for every child in the class.

At the start of the year, spend some time with the children and identify one major goal that each pupil would like to achieve before the end of the final term; it could be related to reading, times tables, PE, music etc.

Every time a child does something that brings them closer to their goal, either you or they write it down on one of the yellow bricks, which then goes up on the wall. The idea is to try to complete the full circle around the classroom by the specified time.

When a child reaches their goal they are allowed to write down their achievement on a red brick. As their teacher, you will ensure that every child succeeds during (and definitely by the end of) the allotted time.

### SPELL 4

#### Who Am I?

Play a guessing game with the class...

Choose a particular character from history, a favourite class story, the movies or from anywhere else you like. For one week, wear an item of clothing identical to that which your character would have worn (hat, wig, glove, jacket etc, but nothing that's too obvious and may give the game away too soon). Each day give your children one clue as to who you might be (clues may be given in any form you wish at any time). By

the end of the week the class will have five clues, but they are not allowed to try and guess the answer until all the clues have been given. Children work in table groups to try and guess the answer. The group (or groups) that get it right receive a small prize or reward.

#### Example 1

If you decide that your character is going to be Cinderella you could carry a duster in your pocket.

- Clue 1** I lived with a family that wasn't my own
- Clue 2** I was a rose between two thorns
- Clue 3** I wasn't invited
- Clue 4** Don't be late
- Clue 5** It's hard to walk with only one shoe

#### Example 2

If you decide that your character is going to be Harry Potter you could wear something that's too big and baggy for you (Harry Potter always wore hand-me-downs).

- Clue 1** I've lost many loved ones
- Clue 2** I had an enemy from birth
- Clue 3** Under my hair lies my fame
- Clue 4** I live in a tower of a lion
- Clue 5** I received lots of letters that I wasn't allowed to read

Use your own imagination and pick characters that have meaning to your children.

