



Deafblind UK

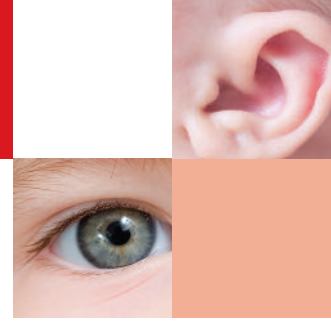
Be My Eyes and Ears

TEACHING NOTES



Be My Eyes and Ears

The Story of Lucy and Ben



The children in Class 6 at St Thomas's Primary school are a sensible lot who work hard. Their teacher, Miss Lewis, describes them as a 'good bunch' but she secretly thinks they are one of the nicest classes she has ever taught. So, when she heard about her two new pupils, she knew that her class would welcome them warmly and do everything they could to help.

She told the class one morning, after assembly, that they would be getting two new class members very soon. She explains that Lucy has been born blind and is unable to see anything at all. Although Lucy cannot see, she is able to hear what is going on and she will have clear speech since she can hear language. However, she will not be able to see the whiteboard, pictures or maps and when the bell goes she will not be able to rush outside like everybody else can.

Miss Lewis also explains that, although Ben was born able to hear, he became deaf after a serious illness when he was a toddler. Ben would be able to rush outside as he can see where he is going, however, you wouldn't be able to have a conversation in the same way that you could with Lucy because Ben communicates through British Sign Language. She explains that he is able to talk a little because he had learned to do this before his illness but he sometimes becomes frustrated, as his speech is unclear. Ben would have to follow lessons through reading words and seeing images and diagrams.

Find out more

After talking about the new pupils and how their individual needs would be very different, Miss Lewis realises that the class doesn't really understand much about how their eyes and ears work so she decides to introduce a project on eyes and ears.

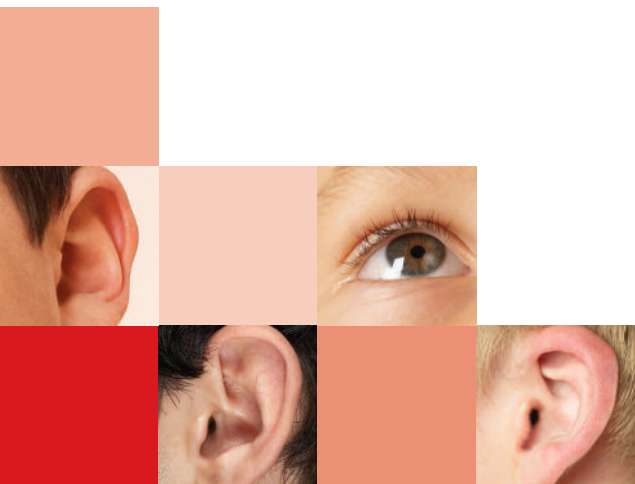
First, she asks everyone to talk about deafness and blindness at home, that evening, to see what they can find out.

The next day one pupil, Sam, tells the class about her Grandad who has cataracts which means that he can't see very well. She says that he is hoping to have an operation soon which will help him be able to read again.

Another pupil, Saidul, explains that his grandma is finding it harder to hear things so she always turns the TV up very loud when her favourite programmes are on.

Miss Lewis explains that as we get older sometimes our bodies don't work as well as they used to and that 'getting worn out' is another reason why people become deaf or blind later in life although it is sometimes easier to treat these causes. She teaches them about the eye and ear, explaining how they work. She also explains that sometimes people are born deaf, blind or deafblind but other events such as being ill or having an accident can cause a person to become deaf, blind or deafblind.

Next Miss Lewis shows the class lots of experiments with optical illusions and vibrations. She encourages everyone to explore things as much as possible so they learn to understand how eyes and ears work with our brains to enable us to see and hear things.



Be My Eyes and Ears **The Story of Lucy and Ben**

How to be in touch

Once the class has learned more about what it is like to be deaf, blind or deafblind, they are keen to learn how to communicate with their new classmates.

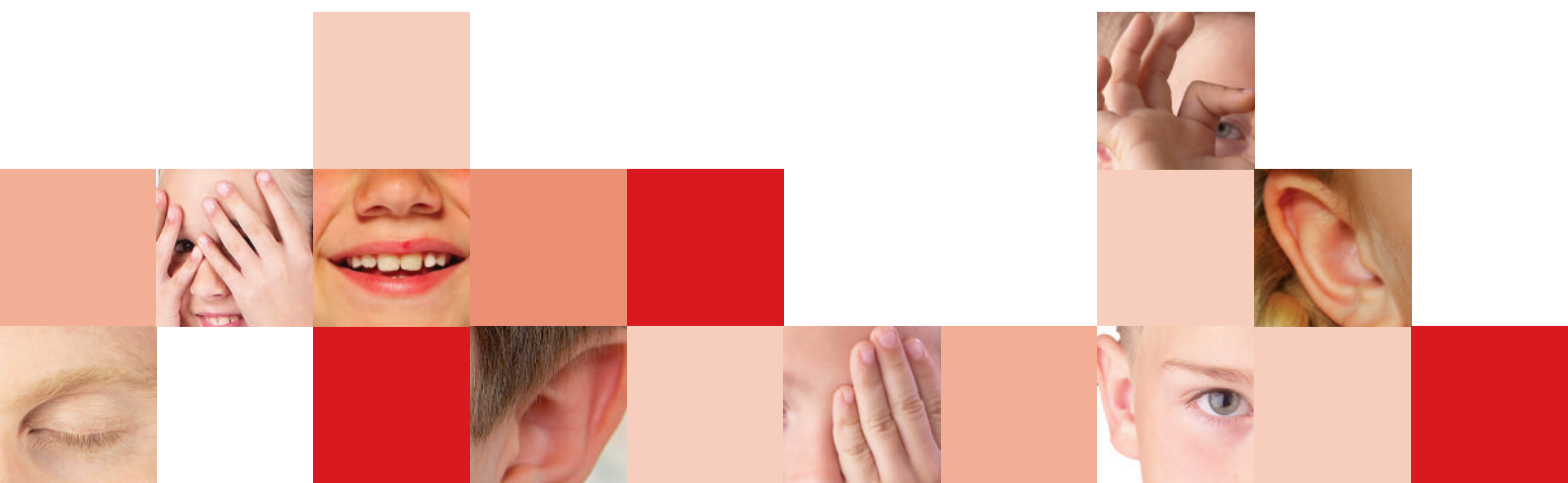
Lucy, Miss Lewis explains, will need to use a special computer with a Braille display so that she can complete her work in Braille. She says that Lucy's support worker also understands Braille, a system of raised dots, which Lucy is able to read through touch, using her fingers

Lucy's support worker, Mr Dunn, is invited to visit and teach the children more about Braille. Mr Dunn shows the children some activity sheets he had made with the letters of the alphabet in Braille.

He shows the class what each letter is then they have a speed-reading competition to see who can read some words he translated into Braille the fastest. Finally he shows everyone how to use the special Braille computer and helps everyone make a label for their tray with their name in Braille so that Lucy will know who each tray belongs to and which one is hers.

Ben uses British Sign Language also he can lipread very well which helps him to follow what is going on. Miss Lewis says that everyone can help Ben by speaking a little more slowly and trying not to over-emphasise what they are saying as this makes the mouth shapes difficult to follow. Then she says that she hopes no one is planning to grow a beard as this would hide your mouth and make it difficult for someone who is deaf to read lips! Everyone laughs.

Everyone in Miss Lewis' class is keen to learn more about sign language so Miss Lewis shows them some of the basic signs like 'Hello' 'Please', 'Thank You' and 'Goodbye'. She also teaches them how to sign the BSL alphabet so that they can introduce themselves once Ben arrives.



Be My Eyes and Ears **The Story of Lucy and Ben**

Prepare the classroom

Miss Lewis is keen to involve the children in preparing the classroom for Lucy and Ben's arrival so that they learn how they can help without making either of the new classmates feel uncomfortable or fussed over.

The children look very carefully around the classroom to spot anything that might need to be changed.

Everyone decides that they will make an extra effort to keep things very tidy, including packing away equipment after they have used it and making sure that their bags and coats are neatly hung up and put away. They are worried that Lucy might not be able to find her coat for herself so Tim is chosen to visit the school caretaker, Mr Fixit, to ask if he could put up some tactile name tags for each coat peg so everyone has their own peg for their bag and coat. While Mr Fixit is fixing the coat pegs Aisha asks him if he can do anything about the fire alarm as Ben wouldn't be able to hear it if it went off.

Sometimes it is possible to connect bells and alarms to the lighting system, says Mr Fixit, so that when an alarm goes off, the lights flash a warning at the same time. He explains that he can't do that job himself as it needs a specialist electrician but he promises to ask the headteacher about it.

By the time the class had looked at the classroom and the school corridors carefully, they had a long list of things to think about.

Would Ben be able to read everyone's lips with the furniture placed this way?

How will Lucy know when she is at the top of the steps when she leaves the dining room?

How can they help Lucy find her way round the maze of corridors on her own?

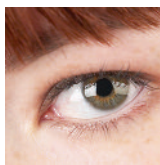
How can they help Ben understand what was happening in assembly?

How can they make the school car park safer for Lucy and Ben?

By now the class is thinking about other risks. They remind Miss Lewis that she will need to think carefully when she plans to take the class out on trips next term as there might be extra dangers and hazards for Lucy and Ben while they are out and about.

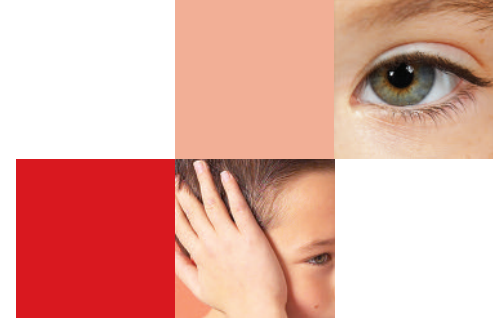
Miss Lewis is very impressed with how hard the children have worked. She agrees their plans and they all work together to prepare the classroom in time for the new arrivals. She is also very pleased that the children have learned about many of the issues that would affect all areas of life for anyone who is deaf or blind or both.

When Ben and Lucy join the class they find it very easy to settle in, making new friends who watch out for them.



Lesson 1

Look at the Eye



In this lesson pupils are introduced to the *Be My Eyes and Ears* story and, first, look at the eye and begin to understand how it works and what it would be like to have a visual impairment.

Learning Objectives

- To know that our eyes are made up of different parts and name these parts
- To understand that each part has its own function

Preparation

Photocopy the activity sheet for every pupil.

Prepare an enlarged copy of an eye diagram or locate a model of an eye.

Lesson

Read the *Be My Eyes and Ears* story to the class. Ask them to think about how they would react if Lucy was joining their class. What do they know about adapting to blindness?

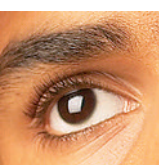
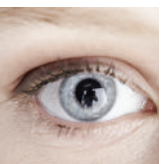
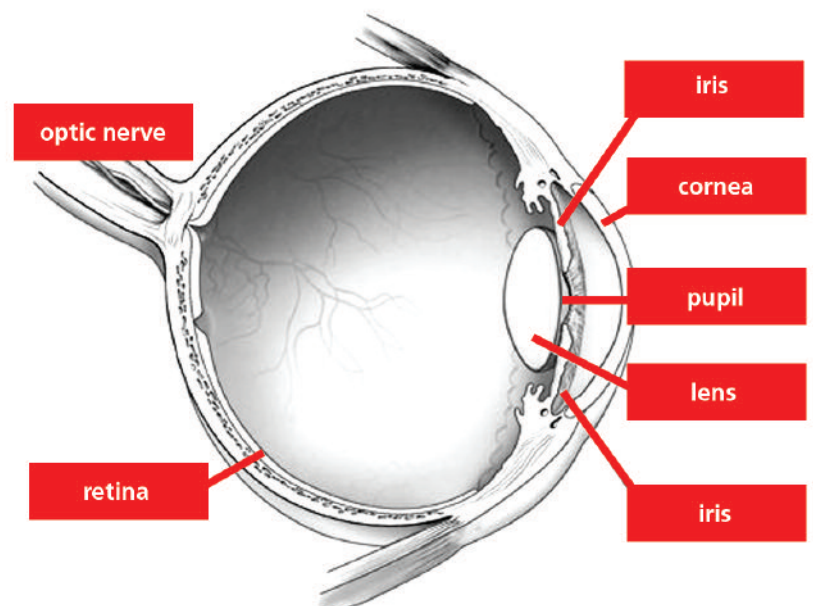
Explain to the class that they are going to start by looking closely at the eye and how it works. Ask children to work with partners and look closely at each other's eyes. Do they know what each of the

parts is called? Do all eyes look the same? Does anyone in the class wear glasses? If they do, why is this, and how do the glasses help them see better?

Hand out the activity sheet to the class. Show children the model or diagram of the eye and discuss the different parts of the eye and what their functions are. Ask pupils to fill in the first task on the activity sheet. Individually ask pupils to complete the activity sheet. Once everyone has finished, discuss what facts pupils identified on their activity sheets that they had learnt about the eye.

Plenary

Discuss how old age, illnesses and injuries can affect eyesight eg cataracts make the lens cloudy impairing the vision and in some cases can cause blindness and if the macula stops working someone can lose their central vision.



Lesson 2

Hear it for the Ear

In this lesson pupils begin to explore the ear and its functions, learning how it works and what it would be like if they did not have their hearing.

Learning Objectives

- To know that our ears are made up of different parts and name these parts
- To understand that each part has its own function

Preparation

Photocopy the activity sheet for every pupil.

Prepare an enlarged copy of a diagram of an ear or locate a model.

Lesson

Remind the class that they are thinking about the *Be My Eyes and Ears* story. Ask them to think about how they would react if Ben were joining their class. What do they know about adapting to deafness?

Remind the class that in the story Ben was Deaf due to an illness as a child. Can they imagine what it would be like not to be able to hear? Have they ever seen British Sign Language before? Do they know any? Hand out the activity sheet. Allow the children to look closely at the model or diagram of an ear you prepared.

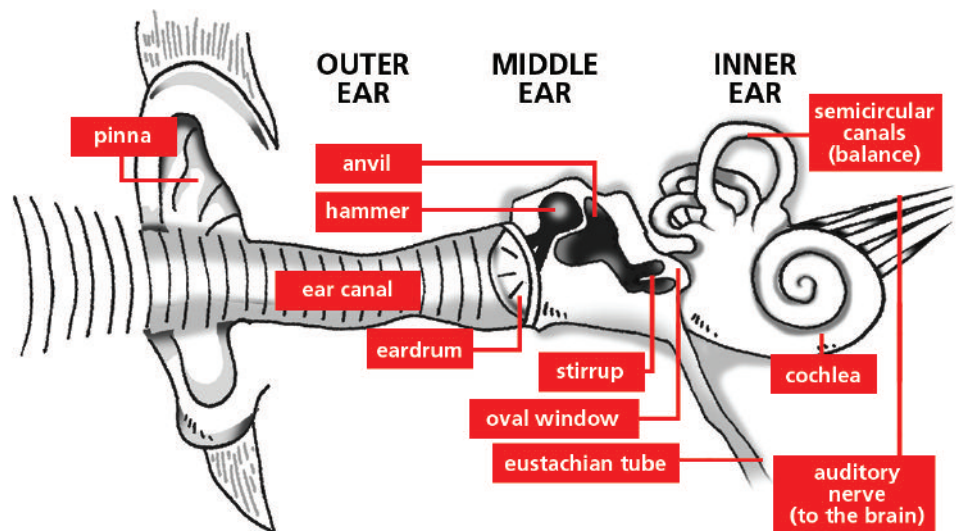
How many different parts are there? Do they know the names of any of these parts? On their activity sheets ask pupils to label the parts of the ear on their own.

Now look at the passage on the activity sheet together and discuss how the ear works. Ask pupils to write, at the bottom of the activity sheet, the five facts they have discovered about the ear and how it works.

Ask your class to sit quietly for a few minutes and listen to what is going on around them. Note on the board all the different things they can hear and discuss each one. What did those sounds tell them about what is going on in their environment? For example, the sound of the rain lets us know what the weather is like, voices from the next classroom tells us a lesson is going on etc.

Plenary

Discuss how illness or injury could affect hearing. It would also be useful to introduce the idea that long-term exposure to loud or excessive noise, such as an MP3 player, which is turned up loud can also affect hearing.



Lesson 3

Vision Investigation



In this lesson pupils use the knowledge they learnt about the eye and apply it in an investigation into how visual impairments impact everyday life.

Learning Objectives

- To make careful observations
- To investigate different levels of sight and how these effect daily tasks

Preparation

Photocopy the activity sheet for each pupil.

Prepare a selection of thick blindfolds.

Prepare a selection of tracing paper or bubble wrap.

Lesson

Remind children of the lesson on the eye and recap what they learnt. Explain that blindness does not necessarily mean being completely sightless, there are varying degrees of blindness.

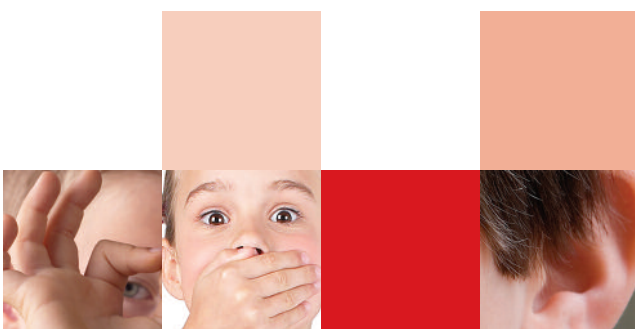
Explain to the class that they are going to investigate what it is like to have a visual impairment. Hand out the activity sheet to each pupil. Ask pupils to get into pairs and explain that one of the pupils should be blindfolded. Tell them not to move anywhere. How does it feel not to be able to see? Do they feel disorientated? Have they started to be more aware of what they can hear or feel around them? Now swap over so the other pupil is blindfolded. Now ask pupils to move around blindfolded and charge their partner with making sure they are safe. Once both partners have had a go ask them to sit down and discuss how it felt to move around. How do they think this would be dealt with in everyday life?

Now hand out the bubble wrap and/or tracing paper to each pair. Explain that visual impairment does not always mean being completely blind. Ask pupils to hold up the bubble wrap or tracing paper to their eyes. If they can, affix it round their heads and see how it feels to move around. Again remind them to make sure that everyone is safe.

Explain that each pair should use their activity sheet to note down how it feels to experience the two different forms of visual impairments and to discuss ideas of what would make it easier to adapt to everyday life.

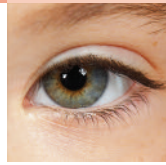
Plenary

Ask each pair to present their findings to the class and to explain their own ideas of how everyday life could be made easier for those who have a visual impairment or who are blind.



Lesson 4

Hearing Investigation



Pupils use their knowledge about the ear and apply it to an investigation into understanding types of deafness.

Learning Objectives

- To make careful observations
- To draw conclusions about types of deafness from their investigation

Preparation

Photocopy the activity sheet for each pupil.

Prepare a radio for use during the class.
You will need a manual tuning radio.

Lesson

Discuss with your class what has been learned so far. Remind them specifically of lesson 2, *Hear it for the Ear*, and what they learnt about how the ear works. Explain to the class that there are different types of deafness that can occur and they are going to be investigating these types in this lesson. Hand out the activity sheet to each pupil and ask them to note their findings, from the investigation, on it.

Ask pupils if they know what the types of deafness are, do any of them have friends or family who are deaf? Explain that being *profoundly deaf* means that you can hear nothing at all. What do they think this feels like? What issues does this raise in

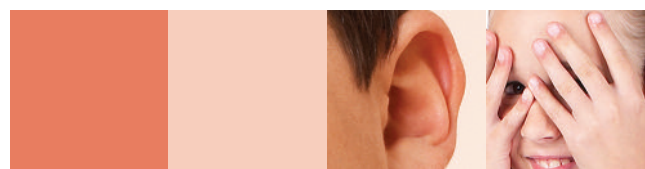
everyday life? Ask pupils to discuss, in groups, these issues and write their ideas down on their activity sheet.

Now ask pupils to sit with their hands over their ears whilst you continue to talk, change the pace and volume of your voice throughout. Explain that another type of deafness is *conductive deafness* and this is to do with how loudly someone can hear sounds. Did they still understand what you were saying to them when they had their ears covered? Why do they think they could or couldn't understand you? Explain that it is very important for someone who is deaf to be able to see your lips as you talk to them so they can understand you. Ask pupils, in groups, to discuss these issues and write their ideas down on their activity sheet.

A third type of deafness is *perceptive deafness*, which is to do with how someone hears sounds. They hear the sounds but cannot decipher exactly what is being said. Demonstrate this by tuning a radio in and out of radio stations; what do pupils think this would be like if it was constant? What issues would it raise for everyday life? Ask pupils, in their groups, to discuss these issues and write their ideas down on their activity sheet.

Plenary

Pupils can work in groups to create an awareness poster. Ask them to think about the things you should remember to do when communicating with a person who is deaf. Remind them of all the things they discussed in their investigation into hearing impairments. Display the posters on the classroom wall.



Lesson 5

Communication



In this lesson pupils look at, and begin to learn about, some of the various methods for communicating with people who are deaf, blind or deafblind.

Learning Objectives

- To understand that there are many ways of communicating
- To begin to understand Braille, BSL and other forms of communication, such as the Deafblind Manual Alphabet, which are used by people who are deaf, blind or deafblind.

Preparation

Photocopy the activity sheet for each pupil.

Collect buttons, card and string or wool.

Lesson

Introduce the lesson by asking children to contribute to a list of ways in which we communicate with each other. Encourage them to expand the list as widely as possible, even if some methods are not used very often. Which of these communication methods could be used by a person who is deaf, blind or deafblind? Are there any other methods of communication which they don't use themselves but are useful to people who are deaf or blind? For example if someone signals by putting fingers on lips, pupils understand what is meant without the person having to speak. What happens if you cannot see these verbal signs?

Explain that the children are going to be given a chance to investigate communication methods used by people who are deaf, blind or deafblind.

Braille and Moon are both forms of tactile writing. British Sign Language can be used by a deaf person as they can see the signs being used, or a deafblind person who has some useful sight. If someone cannot see or hear sufficiently, then communication has to become tactile and that is when the Deafblind Manual Alphabet is used.

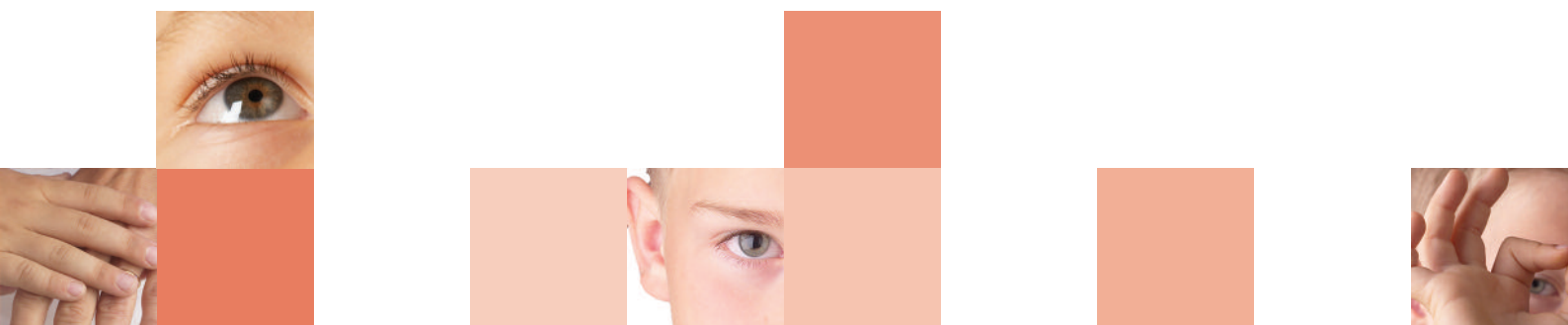
Hand out the activity sheet to each pupil and talk them through each of the alphabets. Explain that they are going to try some basic British Sign Language as well as using the Deafblind Manual Alphabet with a partner. Pick some pairs of pupils to demonstrate what they have accomplished. Can any others work out what they are saying?

Next hand out the string and card to each pupil and ask them to write their names and some other words in moon writing using that activity sheet for reference.

Next explain that they are going to explore Braille as a written communication method. Hand out a handful of buttons to each pupil and ask them to create letters from Braille and ask their classmates to try and read the letter they have made.

Plenary

Discuss as a class how easy or difficult the four methods of communication are and the pros and cons of each. Ask pupils to think about how much information you can get across in each? And how quickly each enables communication to take place.





Lesson 6

How to adapt to lack of sight and sound

In this lesson pupils focus on how daily activities need to be thought about and adapted for someone who is deafblind.

Learning Objectives

- To understand that some things may need to be adapted in order to promote equal opportunities
- To identify features which may present difficulties for a deafblind person and consider ways in which these can be adapted.

Preparation

There are two activity sheets. The first is *How to adapt to lack of sight and sound*. The second is *Picture of the Classroom*. Photocopy the activity sheets for each pupil.

Lesson

Remind the class of the story *Be My Eyes and Ears* and how the class in the story had to adapt their thinking about the classroom to make sure everything was safe for Lucy and Ben. Explain that there are many things which someone who is deaf and/or blind might find difficult within a classroom environment.

Ask pupils to imagine that Lucy and Ben were one person, think of all the things they rely on seeing or hearing in order to be able to get on with their daily tasks. Encourage them to think about how this might make it difficult for someone who is deafblind.

Begin a discussion on how those who are deafblind communicate. Refer back to the lesson on *Communication*. How would they make friends? How would they do their shopping?

Make a list on the board of class ideas under a heading 'Communication'. Now ask them to think about how a deafblind person might find out information when there's no point in watching TV or reading newspapers. How does a deafblind

person access this information? How do they know what is in their kitchen cupboards? Note down the class ideas on the board under the heading 'Information'. Finally discuss how a deafblind person gets around safely. Have children ever seen a guide dog? Do they know what the red and white cane stands for and how it works? Write all their ideas under the heading 'Mobility'.

Hand out both activity sheets and focus attention on the *Picture of the Classroom*. As a class, talk through the picture and encourage pupils to spot the hazards or difficulties which might be faced by Lucy and Ben in their new class. Ask pupils to complete the first activity sheet identifying the difficulties and suggesting solutions.

Next ask them to think about which other public buildings and areas might also need to be adapted. Have they noticed any examples eg the edge of steps being painted white, bumpy paving stones next to road crossings, induction loops available in shops; Braille labelling on items in the supermarket; TV programmes that use signing.

Extension

Discuss with children ways in which the local theatre might adapt a performance to help someone who is deaf and/or blind enjoy it, for example by use of a hearing loop, signed performances, descriptions of what's going on/how the scene looks etc.

Split the class into two groups and challenge them to adapt a familiar story or fairy tale such as *The Three Little Pigs* so that one group performs for a blind person while the other performs for a deaf person. What changes or adaptations do they need to make to their performances?



Extension Task & Fundraising

Show children pictures of artwork that is three-dimensional or involves the use of collage materials or ceramics. Explain that blind or visually impaired people are able to look at and enjoy this type of artwork using their sense of touch.

Explain that they are going to create their own artwork and that they will be using a variety of materials to create a tactile piece of art that could be enjoyed by someone who is blind or deafblind. Tell children that their work will be used in a special display to raise awareness about the work of Deafblind UK and that once they have finished with their display their work will be sold to raise funds for the charity.

Encourage children to collect a wide variety of materials to use in their artwork to create a range of different textures and shapes. Ask them to plan their work carefully, sketching their ideas and discussing their plans as they revise and improve their designs. Remind children that they will need to think carefully about how they will join their materials together as it will need to withstand many pairs of hands exploring their work.

Once the display is complete give children and visitors a chance to explore the work blindfolded (with the help of a sighted guide) so that they can truly appreciate their artwork.

An alternative to this would be to ask teachers, children, their family and friends to sponsor parts of a large scale mural which could become a more permanent reminder of the project. Ceramic or cork tiles work well for this as they can have different materials added to them and it's easy to separate the mural into smaller pieces to sponsor. The mural could have a specific design or everyone could simply decorate their own tile to create a tactile explosion of modern art.



Deafblind UK

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