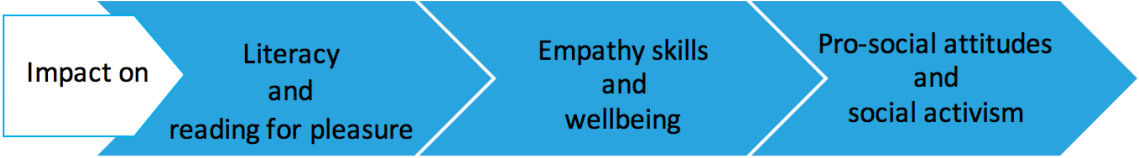
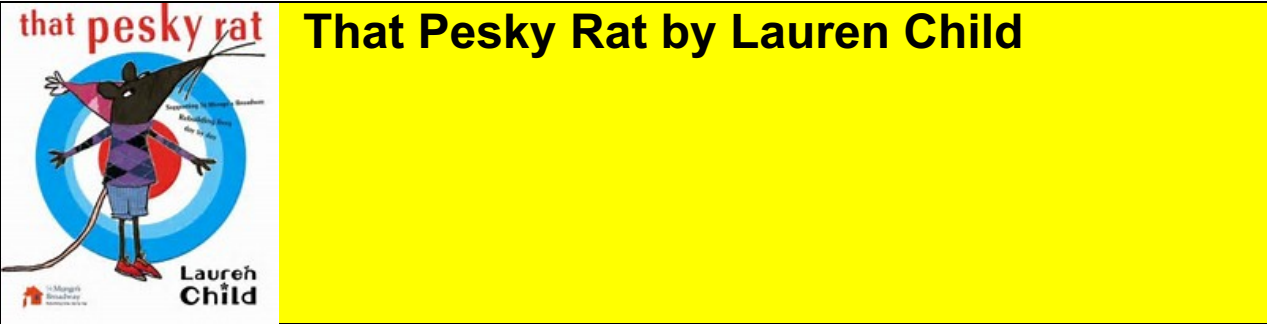


Triple win framework:
Simultaneously developing literacy, empathy and social activism



Storykit: Homelessness



Summary

“That Pesky Rat” is the tale of a street rat who doesn’t have a name other than “That Pesky Rat”. A rat who would like a name and dreams of belonging to somebody, having somewhere to call home and being an “actual pet”. We meet the friends of That Pesky Rat who live very different lives to life on the street, but not as perfect as they might at first seem. That Pesky Rat decides to go in search of his dreams, beginning with a visit to the local pet shop. Mrs Trill, the pet shop owner, is less than encouraging when That Pesky Rat enquires about the possibility of finding an owner, but lets Pesky Rat put a sign in her window. The ensuing case of mistaken identity results in Pesky Rat finding home, sweet home. This is a delightfully funny and touching tale of a “cutesy” rodent’s quest to belong.

The author’s perspective: her website: <http://www.milkmonitor.com>

How Lauren Child became an author: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/oct/04/lauren-child-clarice-children-books> “We were given: Two hands to hold. Two legs to walk. Two eyes to see. Two ears to listen. But why only one heart? Because the other was given to someone else. For us to find.” — [Lauren Child](#)

Themes: Homelessness; Friendship; Caring

Recommended age range: 5-7 years

Orientation

Look at newspaper reports about homelessness.
 Organise a visit from a Night shelter
 Help children understand what homelessness means
 Films: "Homeless" short animation about a crab looking for a home:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsdQnEo6rXU>
 "Lady and the Tramp" selected clips
 "Oliver Twist" selected clips

Activities	Empathy skills practised	Learning approaches
<p>Get to know Pesky Rat</p> <p>Ask the Children to draw Pesky Rat</p> <p>Around the pictures add rectangular label boxes to describe personal Pesky Rat facts e.g. pointy nose, no clothes, beady eyes, long tail etc.</p> <p>Add triangular labels to describe known facts about lifestyle: sleeps in crisp packet, lives at No. 3 Grubby Alley, doesn't like to wash.</p> <p>Add circular labels with others' more subjective impressions of Pesky Rat: pesky, dirty, smelly, pretty</p> <p>Ask children what people in the real world think about Rats</p> <p>Add star labels for any additional words the children might use to describe That Pesky Rat e.g. easily bored, lively, nervous about heights, independent,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •emotion recognition: the vocabulary to recognise and share your own and other people's feelings •strong imagination to enter into others' feelings •the ability to feel, understand and respect other people's feelings and perspectives 	<p>Art</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Research</p>
<p>A feelings diary</p> <p>Create a feelings' diary for Pesky Rat – record his feelings each time he talks about his friends' situations. Imagine he visits each of his friends and describes their homes and his own feelings during his visits.</p> <p>Pierre the chinchilla Oscar the Siamese cat Nibbles the rabbit Andrew the Scottie dog</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •strong imagination to enter into others' feelings •the ability to feel, understand and respect other people's feelings and perspectives •the capacity for reflection, 	<p>Creative writing</p>

<p>Importance of a name</p> <p>Pesky Rat says “most of all I would like to have a name instead of that Pesky Rat”</p> <p>Ask children why it is important to have a name - make a list of the names of all the children in the class and children can draw their faces next to their names</p> <p>Why doesn't Pesky Rat like being called Pesky Rat?</p> <p>Make Pesky Rat masks -In pairs one child wears the mask and the other shouts at them “go away Pesky Rat” - then the children in the mask describe how it feels to be called names and shouted at.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •empathic communication: active listening and deep conversation •strong imagination to enter into others’ feelings •the ability to feel, understand and respect other people’s feelings and perspectives •the capacity for reflection, 	<p>Discussion Immersive experiences</p>
<p>Bring in a dustbin</p> <p>Make the dustbin as the focal point of the classroom. Recreate Pesky Rat’s home in the dustbin with litter – crisp packets etc</p> <p>How would it feel to be Pesky Rat with nowhere to live but a bin? On the outside of the bin, children stick lots of words describing how they think Pesky Rat might feel about living in the bin. They can be about his physical experience – cold, dirty, greasy etc and his emotional experience,- lonely, unhappy, scared etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •emotion recognition: the vocabulary to recognise and share your own and other people’s feelings •strong imagination to enter into others’ feelings •the ability to feel, understand and respect other people’s feelings and perspectives •the capacity for reflection, 	<p>Discussion Objects as stimulus for perspective taking</p>
<p>Belongings</p> <p>Children list the belongings of each character and their own favourite belongings. Do belongings make you happy? – discussion.</p> <p>Bring in favourite belongings for display and write why they are important to them. How do you think Pesky Rat felt losing his belongings on a regular basis?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •emotion recognition: the vocabulary to recognise and share your own and other people’s feelings •empathic communication: active listening and deep conversation •the ability to feel, understand and respect other people’s feelings and perspectives •the capacity for reflection 	<p>Discussion Writing</p>

<p>A wish list</p> <p>If Pesky Rat could write a wish list what would be on it, Invite all the class to write a wish list as if they were Pesky Rat</p> <p>e.g.:</p> <p>A new name A home A friend Less smelly Cleaner Better handwriting More chocolates Cookery lessons A collar with my name on More cheese etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •strong imagination to enter into others’ feelings •the ability to feel, understand and respect other people’s feelings and perspectives 	<p>List writing</p>
<p>A letter to Mr Fortesque</p> <p>Children write to the Pet shop as Mr Fortesque describing his new pet and his feelings on acquiring “Tiddles” and thanking them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •emotion recognition: the vocabulary to recognise and share your own and other people’s feelings •strong imagination to enter into others’ feelings •the ability to feel, understand and respect other people’s feelings and perspectives •the capacity for reflection, 	<p>Letter writing</p>
<p>Make a variety of colourful jumpers for That Pesky Rat – use wallpaper, material, paints, crayons. Display them or use as a background for a display.</p>		<p>Art and design</p>
<p>Social action: Collection of clothes, books for local homeless charities. Christmas shoebox for local homeless charity. Christmas fair/toy/cake sale for local homeless charity:</p> <p>e.g. London - http://www.shp.org.uk SHP http://www.crisis.org.uk Crisis http://www.shelter.org.uk Shelter</p> <p>Loneliness: set up a Friendship bench on the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •the capacity for reflection, •the ability to put empathy into action through pro-social attitudes and behaviour 	<p>Research</p> <p>Social action</p>



playground. Children who are upset or lonely sit on it and designated members of your class (rota basis) sit with them and talk to them during playtime		
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Other books to read on Homelessness

Title	Author	Publisher	Age group	In print
Way Home	Libby Hathorn	Anderson Press	8+ picture book	√
Mr Stink	David Walliams	Harper Collins Children's Books	9+	√
That Pesky Rat	Lauren Child	Orchard Books	5+	√
The Garbage King	Elizabeth Laird	MacMillan Children's Books	9+	√
Shadow	Michael Morpurgo	Harper Collins Children's Books	7+	√

A note about Storykits

Empathy Storykits aim to help children understand other people through a story and characters. The text is used as a springboard for discussion, activities and social action.

Empathy skills supported by Storykits

- Stronger ability to imagine, understand and reflect on other people's perspectives and feelings
- Wider vocabulary to recognise and share own and others' feelings
- Stronger empathic communication skills: deep listening and conversation
- More developed social values which turn feelings of empathy into moral actions in the home, school and community

Note for teachers

- Some books used will deal with sensitive issues, it will be important for teachers to know the book well.



How to use

- Teachers could read the story aloud to the class in suitable sections, with some activities taking place as it progresses and others being completed when the story is read, or each child could read the text on their own.
- Teachers might choose to do all the activities or just those most appropriate for the class/ group.

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