

3 Calamity at the Allotments

The time for the annual Flower and Vegetable Show was drawing near and the gardeners at the allotments were anxious. The reason: it had not rained for weeks.

For the gardeners on the city allotments this was a disaster. They prided themselves on being the best gardeners in the district. Their flowers and vegetables always won prizes at the Flower and Vegetable Show but if it didn't rain soon, this year would be different. Mr Willis stood with his grandchildren looking at his cabbages in despair. When he had taken the young plants from his greenhouse in the spring they had been strong and green. Looking at them now you would think he had neglected them terribly. Instead of being strong and round and full of life, they were small and spindly with brown edging to the leaves.

"What are you going to do?" the grandchildren asked. "I don't know," he said as he looked across the other allotments with sadness. "Everyone is suffering in the same way. There is a hose-pipe ban at the moment so nobody can use tap water for their watering."

"Oh dear!" said the children. "Are your plants going to die, Grandad?"

"Yes, unless we can find some water soon." He looked up to the hot, blue sky. "It certainly won't rain today," he said glumly.

As he looked around, he began to remember that, long ago when he was a boy, he and his friends played in a stream that ran through this plot of land. "I wonder," he said.

He told the children about the stream where he had played and, taking a spade and a sickle, they set off across the allotments down to the hedge in the far corner. It was very overgrown with brambles and nettles more than waist high. "Stand back," said Mr Willis to the children, as he began to hack his way through the undergrowth. He went deep into the bushes and disappeared from sight. The children grew excited and followed him along the path he'd made. "There's a frog," one of the children called. "That must mean there's water close by." Sure enough there was. A spring bubbled up to the surface and trickled away into a small pool. "How are we going to get the water all the way back to your garden, Grandpa?" the youngest grandchild asked.

"We'll have to carry it," Mr Willis said triumphantly.

Several other allotment gardeners were beginning to appear to look at the state of their plants when Mr Willis and the children arrived back. "Come on everyone, I have found water," he said. With great excitement everyone scurried around looking for buckets and plastic containers – anything that would hold water – and they set off for the pool. All afternoon they worked. They made a long chain of people who passed the buckets and containers from hand to hand, bringing the water up from the spring. It was hot work and it was late in the afternoon when they had finished. Everyone had managed to put some water on their plants but they knew it was not enough. They would have to come again tomorrow and the next day and do it all over again.

"I'm not sure this is going to work," said one of the gardeners. "We'll all be exhausted." "What we need are some large containers up here on the allotments that we can keep filled."

"There is one," said one of the children helpfully. "Where?" asked the gardeners.

"Down near the spring. It's an old bath which was thrown into the undergrowth."

"Just the thing!" said Mr Willis. Arming themselves with spades and ropes, the gardeners set off in search of the bath. Sure enough, there it was, tipped on its side on the far bank. Several of the gardeners pushed it upright and put some ropes round it and tied them securely.

Throwing the ropes to the others, they said, "Pull." The gardeners pulled and the bath began to move. Some of the gardeners pulled and some of them pushed and very soon they had dragged the bath free. They looked inside to see if it had any holes. "Looks all right to me," said Mr Willis. "Let's take it up to the allotments."

After much tugging and straining, shoving and nudging, the bath was finally hauled up the hill into the allotments. They found some old bricks to prop it up and cleaned out the mud and twigs that had fallen to the bottom. Someone found a stone and some clay to use to fill the plug-hole and it soon was ready to fill with water.

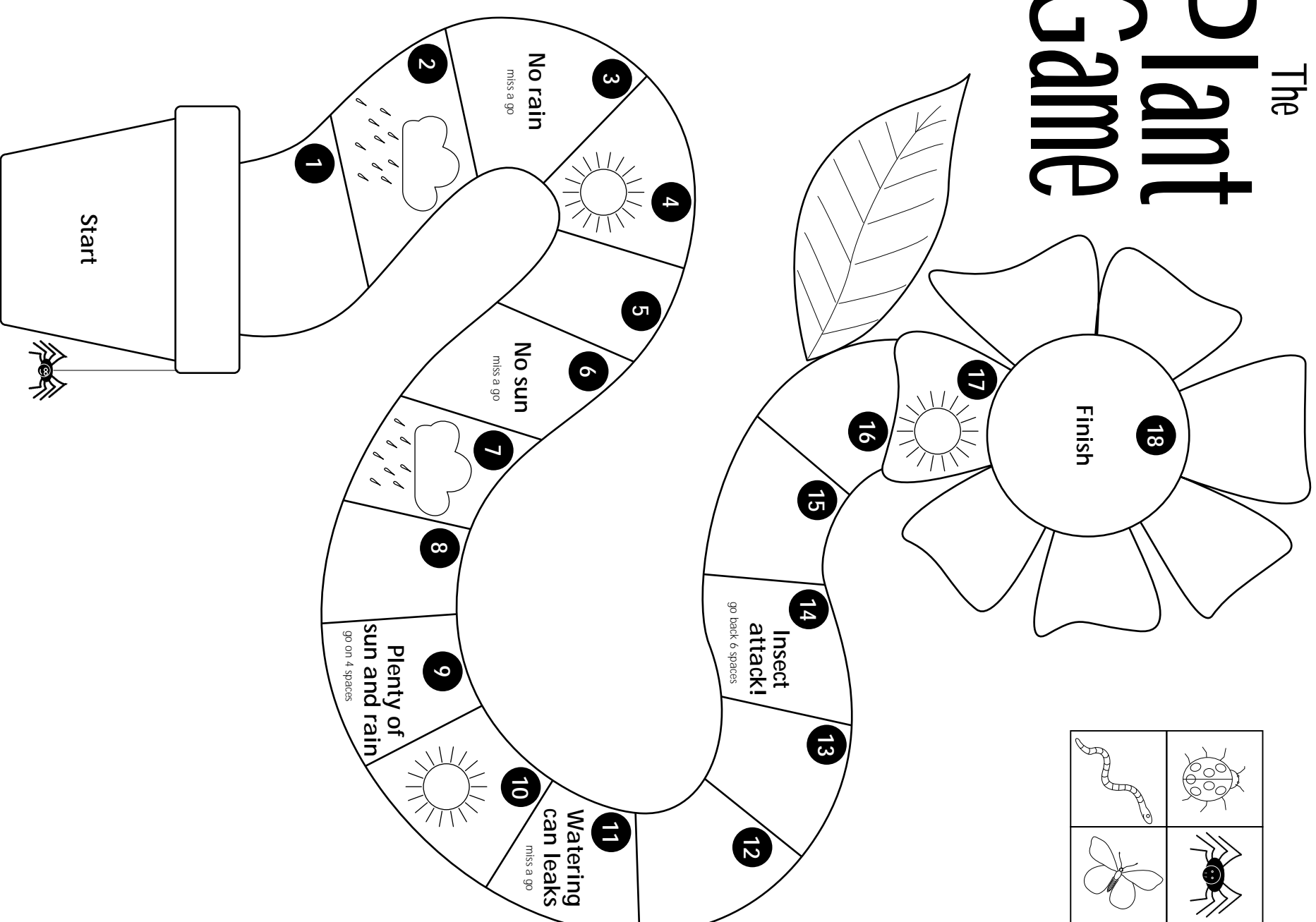
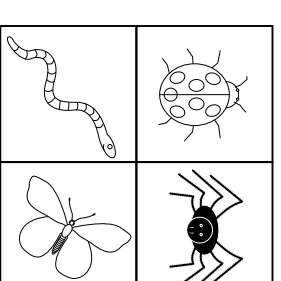
By now the sun was beginning to set but the gardeners did not give up. They were determined to fill the bath before they went home. Again they made a human chain and the buckets were filled from the spring. Everyone worked very hard. Soon the bath was full and everyone cheered.

"We've done a good day's work," said Mr Willis. "Now we can all enjoy our allotments."

"Will your cabbages grow big and strong now, Grandad?" asked the children.

"Not these," said Mr Willis shining his torch on his parched plants. "But," he said smiling, "I thought this might happen so I kept some plants back in my greenhouse. I'll come tomorrow and plant them. Now I can keep them watered, I might just win the prize for the best cabbages at this year's show after all."

The Plant Game



KS1 Science through Stories: 3 Calamity at the Allotments

Science: Life Processes and Living Things

Key concept: Lack of light or water can alter plant growth

Key skills: Observation, fair testing

Order of approach: It is suggested that the Drama component is completed before the Science.

Activities

- 1 Place six cress seeds in yogurt pots lined with cotton wool.

Keep the pots in the following conditions:

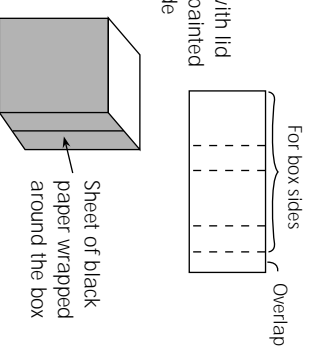
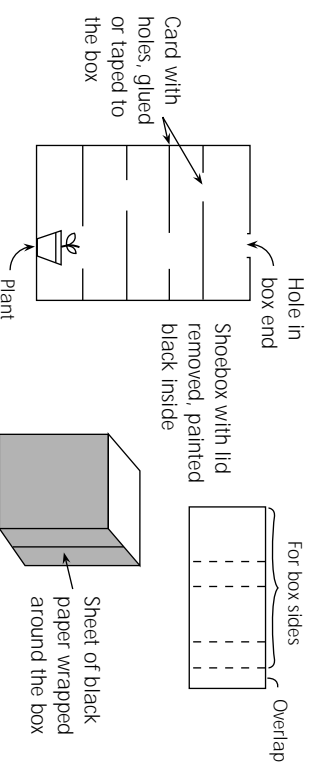
- a Dry in the dark
- b Dry in daylight
- c Wet in the dark
- d Wet in the daylight

Observe the pots each day. Ensure the 'wet pots' are always moist. Children should note:

- Which seeds sprout first?
- In which pot does the cress grow tallest?
- Are all the cress leaves similar sizes/colours?

- 2 Take four similar-sized carrot or radish tops which have started to sprout. Place on saucers and maintain in the conditions outlined in Activity 1. Observe the tops each day. How are the plants affected?
- 3 Grow cress in damp soil. Place the growing cress under an upside-down plant pot. Will the cress search for the light?

- 4 Grow a plant from a broad bean. Inside a shoebox make a maze (see diagram below). Place the bean plant in the box and observe it each week. Does the plant search for the light?



- 5 Plant a small onion or a broad bean in a pot of soil. Have a competition to see who can grow the tallest plant and who can produce the plant which looks the healthiest. Keep a diary to show how the plant grows and what is done to the plant eg Is it kept in the sun or shade? Is it watered every day? Is it fed with plant food/cold tea? Pupils should be encouraged to discuss with parents/gardeners what they think is the best way to produce healthy plants.

- 6 Play The Plant Game. The rules are for 2-4 players:

- 1 Place counters at the start.
- 2 In turn, throw a die and move on the number of places shown.
- 3 If you land on a rain cloud or sun you get an extra go.
- 4 The winner is the first to land on the flower.

To win you must throw the exact number. If the number is too large move back one space. Note that the board for The Plant Game could be enlarged to A3, stuck onto card and coloured in by the children before playing the game.

Extension activity

Design experiments to see whether plants grow towards the light.

Drama

Activities

- Move the children into a sitting circle. Place a dead plant in the middle of the circle. Ask them to say why they think the plant has died. Ask questions about where plants are grown and who looks after plants.

- Tell them they are going to be in a story about gardeners. Tell them their story is going to be about some special gardens called allotments – pieces of land that can be rented by people who have no garden of their own. Ask them to tell you the sort of things the allotment gardeners would be doing in their allotments.

- Ask each child in turn to move into the drama space and take up a still position showing what they are doing. When the still-image is completed, tell them you are going to give a signal to start the action when they must begin miming the actions of what they are doing. Let them mime for a minute or so and then freeze the action.

- Tell them when you start the action again they are going to be able to talk to each other about what they are doing. Tell them you will come into the story as a new person who has just been given an allotment.
- Start the action. Give them a few minutes to establish their scene and then enter with imaginary tools and a wheelbarrow. Ask them to direct you to your allotment. As experts, ask them to tell you how to prepare the ground and

what seeds to sow etc. Explain to them that you want to grow excellent vegetables just like theirs so you can enter them for the local Flower and Vegetable Show. Freeze the action when you think this part of the story is finished.

- Move them back into the sitting circle. Ask them to work with the person next to them and to talk about their day at the allotments. Let them talk for a few minutes.

- Ask them to stand by their allotment and take up a frozen position. As they stand the teacher narrates: "The gardeners returned to their allotments to find the taps had been turned off and there was no water. Their plants were beginning to die in the hot sun...". Start the action by telling each other about the damage done in each allotment. Go round looking at each other's plants. As teacher-in-role as new gardener ask for ideas about what you might do. You can ask children to work in small groups and bring back their ideas, or they can work as a whole group with you.

- Act on ideas by miming them, such as bringing water in buckets from someone's house, looking for a spring somewhere on the allotments, digging trenches to hold water when it rains etc. Freeze action.
- In a sitting circle out-of-role discuss ideas. If there were things that children knew about such as making a well but they did not know how they worked, these ideas can become part of some useful scientific research.

Cross-curricular links

Geography

Draw a plan/map of the allotments showing the different places mentioned in the story.

Design and Technology

Design a watering system for the allotments.



10 The Sad Puppet

The toystop door closed with a bang. The toys waited until they heard Mr McGregor's footsteps going down the street. As soon as the footsteps died away, they knew that they could come out to play.

The dolls always came down first. They jumped from their shelf and ran round the shop. The teddy bears tumbled onto the floor in a big heap. They rolled about laughing as the train set began to go round and round the track at great speed.

Some of the dolls liked to play with the cars and push them along to make them go fast. Others liked the dogs on wheels that they could pull along. The dogs barked to show what fun they were having.

Soon the toystop was full of movement – toys playing and laughing. All that is except the dancing puppet. She lay high on her shelf, forgotten and sad. She had been in the shop longer than all the other toys. None of them knew she was there. It was dark and high where she lived. Every night she looked down at all the other toys enjoying themselves and she wished she could join them. But her strings had broken long ago and she could not move any more. She remembered when her strings were new and shiny and children played with her. They pulled her strings to make her dance. Now her pink dress was faded and her dancing shoes were dirty. She wanted to be able to dance again. Oh, how she wanted to dance.

As she remembered the past, she began to hear music. Lovely music. Music to make you dance. Someone had turned on the musical box. She looked over the edge of her shelf and saw the fun and heard the music. Large tears filled her eyes and trickled down her painted wooden face. As the tears splashed onto the shelf, the water trickled down and plopped onto the neck of a doll below.

"Goodness," said the doll looking up. "It's raining!"

"Don't be silly," said her friend. "It can't rain inside."

"Where's the water coming from then?" asked the doll.

"Up there," said a bear pointing to the shelf where the sad puppet lived. "It's coming from up there."

"I'll go and have a look," said the Spiderman doll. "I can climb up there, no trouble."

In a flash he had climbed the shelves and found the sad puppet lying on the shelf.

"Hello," he said. "Who are you?"

The puppet said nothing. She was afraid. It was a long time since she had spoken to anyone. She curled into a ball and sobbed.

"Don't cry," said the Spiderman doll. "I won't hurt you. What are you doing up here all by yourself?"

Through her tears, the sad puppet told him her story of how she had lost her strings and how she wanted to dance again.

"My friends will help you," said the Spiderman doll.

He went back to his friends and told them the sad puppet's story. "We must help her down," he said.

They sat down to think of a plan. If they pulled her down they might break her.

"I know," said the smallest teddy bear. "If we all held a large cloth we could gently push her off the shelf and we could catch her in the cloth. Then she won't break."

"Good idea," said all the toys.

They hunted about and found a large checked tablecloth in the playhouse. The Spiderman doll climbed up to the sad puppet and told her what they would do. His friends held onto the tablecloth to catch her as she fell.

The Spiderman puppet pushed her very gently. She moved a little nearer to the edge every time he pushed. Soon she was resting on the edge. "Just one more push and you'll be over," said the Spiderman doll. He pushed and over she went. Falling, falling into the tablecloth. The toys caught her and lowered her gently to the floor. They pulled her along on the tablecloth to the centre of the shop.

The sad puppet looked up and saw all the faces smiling at her.

"Thank you," she said softly. "Thank you very much."

"Come on everyone," said the Spiderman doll. "We must give her some new strings."

They found some string in Mr McGregor's drawer and before long they had given the sad puppet lots of new strings.

"Come on, dance for us," said all the toys.

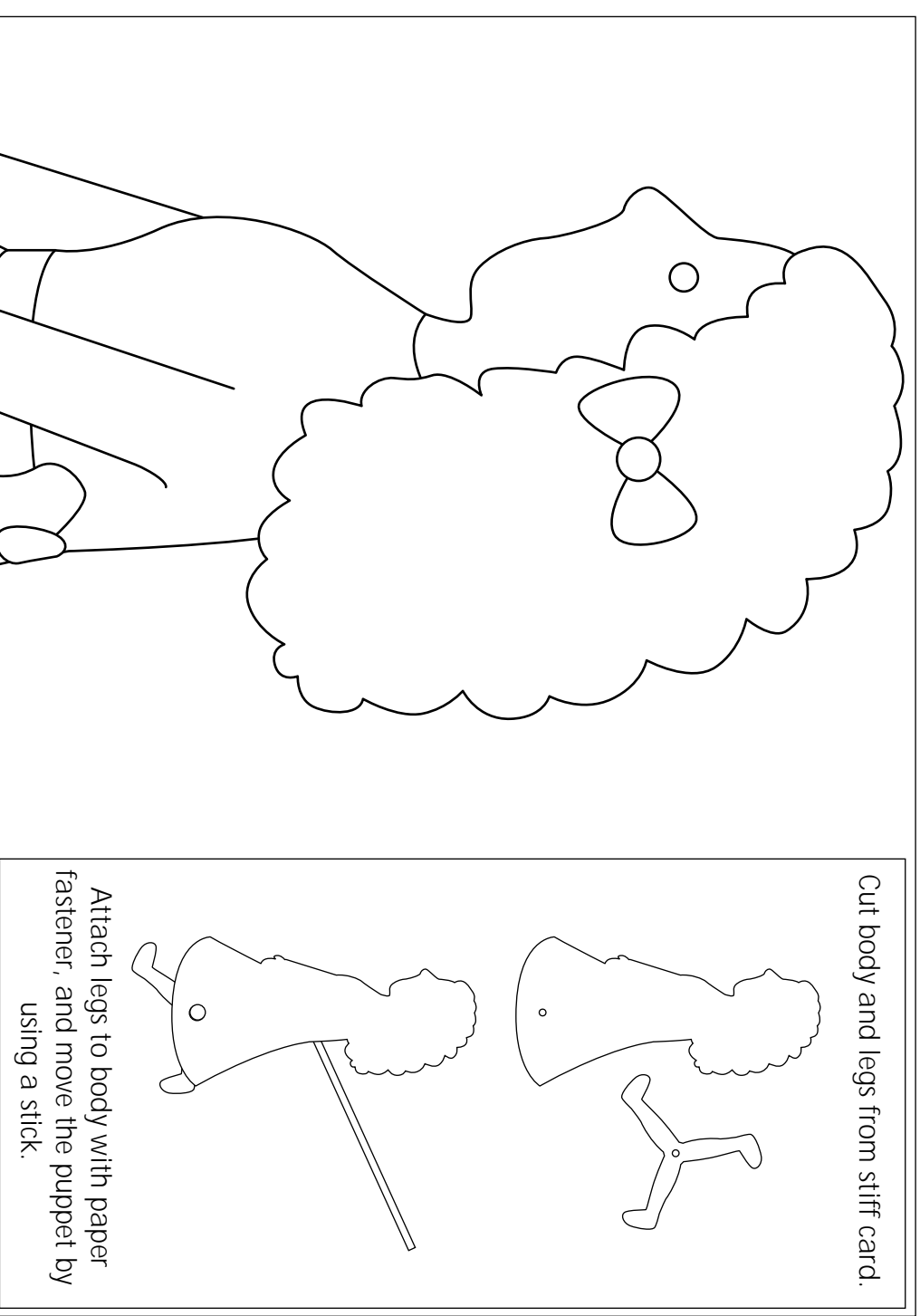
"You'll have to pull the strings," said the puppet. The toys climbed onto the shelves and pulled up the sad puppet's strings. Very slowly she rose to her feet. "Turn on the music," called the smallest bear.

As the music played, the puppet began to dance. The other toys loved how she danced. Some joined in and danced with her. Soon she was tired and sat down for a rest.

"You will dance for us again, won't you?" they all pleaded.

"Yes, please," said the sad puppet.

So every day the Spiderman doll would climb to her shelf and help her down and every day she danced for the toys.



KS1 Science through Stories: 10 The Sad Puppet

Science: Physical Processes

Key skill: Observation of movement

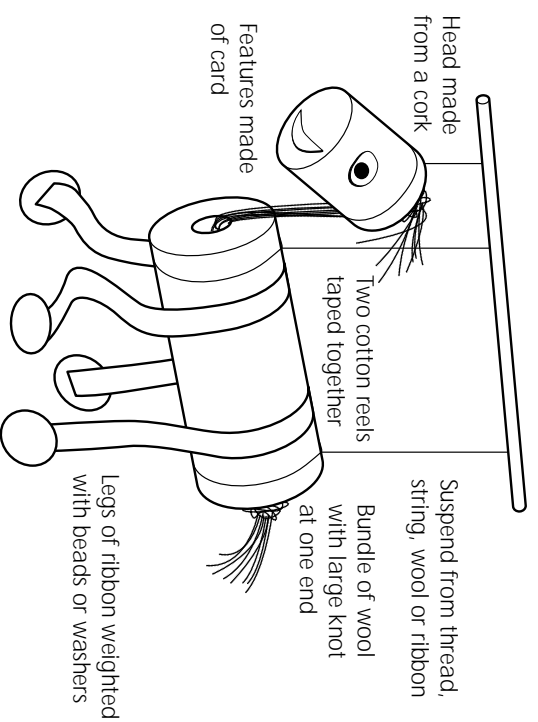
Order of approach: It is suggested that the Drama component be completed before the Science.

Activities

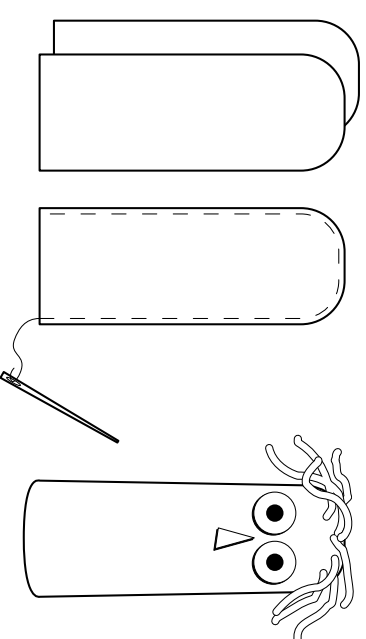
- 1 Copy the picture of the Sad Puppet for the class. Ask the children to colour in their pictures and stick them onto stiff card. Draw on a mouth to make her sad or happy. The children should let their puppet run along the floor or along the top of a table. Can they get her to run backwards?
- 2 Collect a variety of toys with moving parts such as dolls, cars, puppets, clockwork toys. Sort the toys into categories according to how they move.
- 3 The Sad Puppet worked by pulling strings. Make a variety of puppets which might have been found in the toyshop. Discuss how they move.

Although the making of the puppets is Design and Technology rather than Science, the language used to describe how the puppets move will be useful for future work on forces. More complicated puppets can be made to demonstrate levers etc, or puppets can simply consist of a decorated wooden spoon. The type of puppet to be made will inevitably depend on the manipulative skills of the child, available help and time. Examples of puppets which could be made are shown below and on the right:

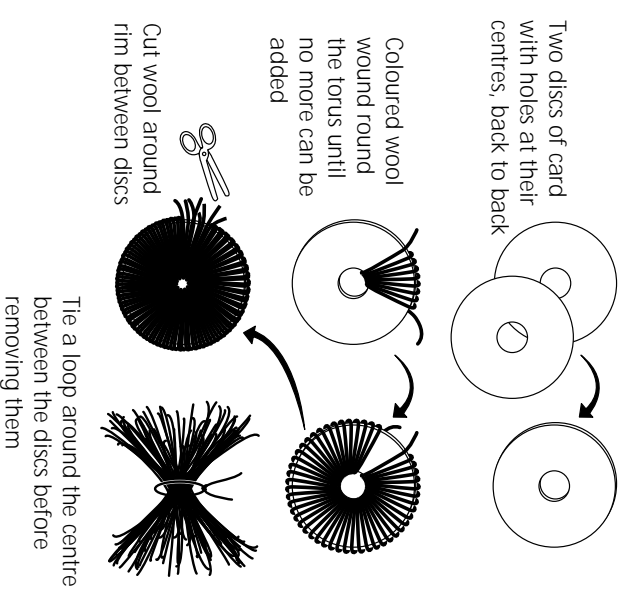
String horse



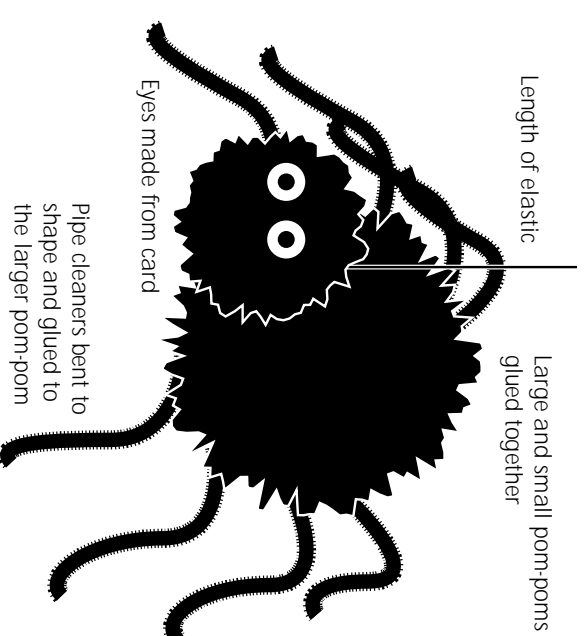
Felt finger puppet



To make a pom-pom



Pom-pom puppet



Drama

Activities

- Gather children into a sitting circle. Place some toys in the centre of the circle. Have toys that can be pushed and pulled including (if possible) a string puppet. Ask the children about the toys and how they move. Tell the children you are going to make a story about toys. Ask them to go into the space and move as if they were a toy. Try to guess which toy they are. Freeze the action.
- Tell them the story starts with everyone very quiet waiting for the shopkeeper to go home. When the shopkeeper goes home they come out to play. Give a signal to show the shopkeeper has gone home and bring the toys to life. Go in as a toy (teacher-in-role) yourself and play games with the toys. Play with toys that you can push and pull. Stop the action and tell the children you can hear someone crying.
- Gather children in a sitting circle and sit in the centre of the circle yourself. Tell the children you are a sad puppet who cannot play. Encourage them to ask you questions (hot-seating) to find out your story. Be sure they know you have no strings and without strings to pull you cannot move. Freeze the action.
- Stay in the sitting circle and ask the toys how you are going to help the puppet.
- When you have had some good suggestions, ask the children to show you how the toys mended the doll. Encourage individual mime (mime activities).
- Finish the story with the children moving as if they were puppets and you were pulling their strings.
- Finish with all the toys dancing. (You could play some dance music to help them.)

Cross-curricular links

History

Look at the history of puppets.

