

# THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

## Storytelling in the SEND Classroom

The Incredible Journey is the record of a special storytelling project. Students from Swiss Cottage School went on trips outside the classroom and then returned to develop a group story based on their experiences. The words and illustrations tell the finished story and provide hints and suggestions for creating and sharing group stories in a SEND classroom.

Comments from staff who participated in the sessions:

“What I loved about this project is that it has grown. It's like a thing, it grows and changes.”

“The kids have given it a life of its own. It's their story, not yours or mine but theirs. They've even embedded their own comforts within the story that they like to go to and perform in the story.”

“Believe me, these students don't normally find it easy to be together and engaged all at once, but with the story they sit together above and beyond. They are very proud of the story, because it's their story, they own it, it's theirs.”

“They liked the improvisation of the story. They can all contribute to the story as it's going on, that's an important part of it. And it's just fun, that's important too.”

“Sometimes we work on tasks with the students in a set time, but the storytelling is different from that. It can just go on as long as it needs to.”



With illustrations by Sean Victory

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Storytelling in the SEND Classroom

Here we are we're going to start  
Everyone will play their part  
Are you ready to begin?  
Let's see who's here let's see who's in

Here is Kika and she is smiling  
Here is Mark and he is stamping

HINT: Observe the young people in your class and describe what each student is doing e.g. Dancing/ smiling/ clapping/ stamping/ growling/ swaying/ looking/ waiting/ walking/ listening. Use their name with this simple description of their action. Establish that the story session will be a celebration of each young person's contribution, encouraging them to make their own connections to the story as it is told. Use a drum or bell to mark the rhythm



We found a box, what could it hold?  
There's objects here, so I've been told  
Here's a puppet with a big wide smile  
Who wants to use this crocodile?

Here's a mouse that runs around  
Who will take it, make its sound?  
And what's this animal, orange and funky  
It's the one and only big bad monkey!!!!

HINT: Make use of a special box of some kind, with an assortment of motivating or interesting objects. Use a repeated question to encourage learners to take turns to choose puppets and other objects that can be used in the story. The question could be a variation on - What's in the box, what's in the box? Everybody tell me, what's in the box? The emphasis should be on encouraging individual responses within the whole group. Once chosen each object is kept out while selecting more with each turn, maintaining the individual interest within the group.



So now it's time without any fuss  
To get together and get on the bus  
We're going on a journey, let's drive along  
We're going to go far and travel for long

We're driving, we're driving we're driving along  
There's nothing can stop us we're fast, we're strong  
We're driving along for many a mile  
That's our spirit and that's our style

HINT: use steering wheel, music, loud chanting rhythmic singing together – energise, move around to create excitement of travel. Depending on the interests and experiences of the group there could be an alternative method of transport used here with a different rhyme and different object to represent it.

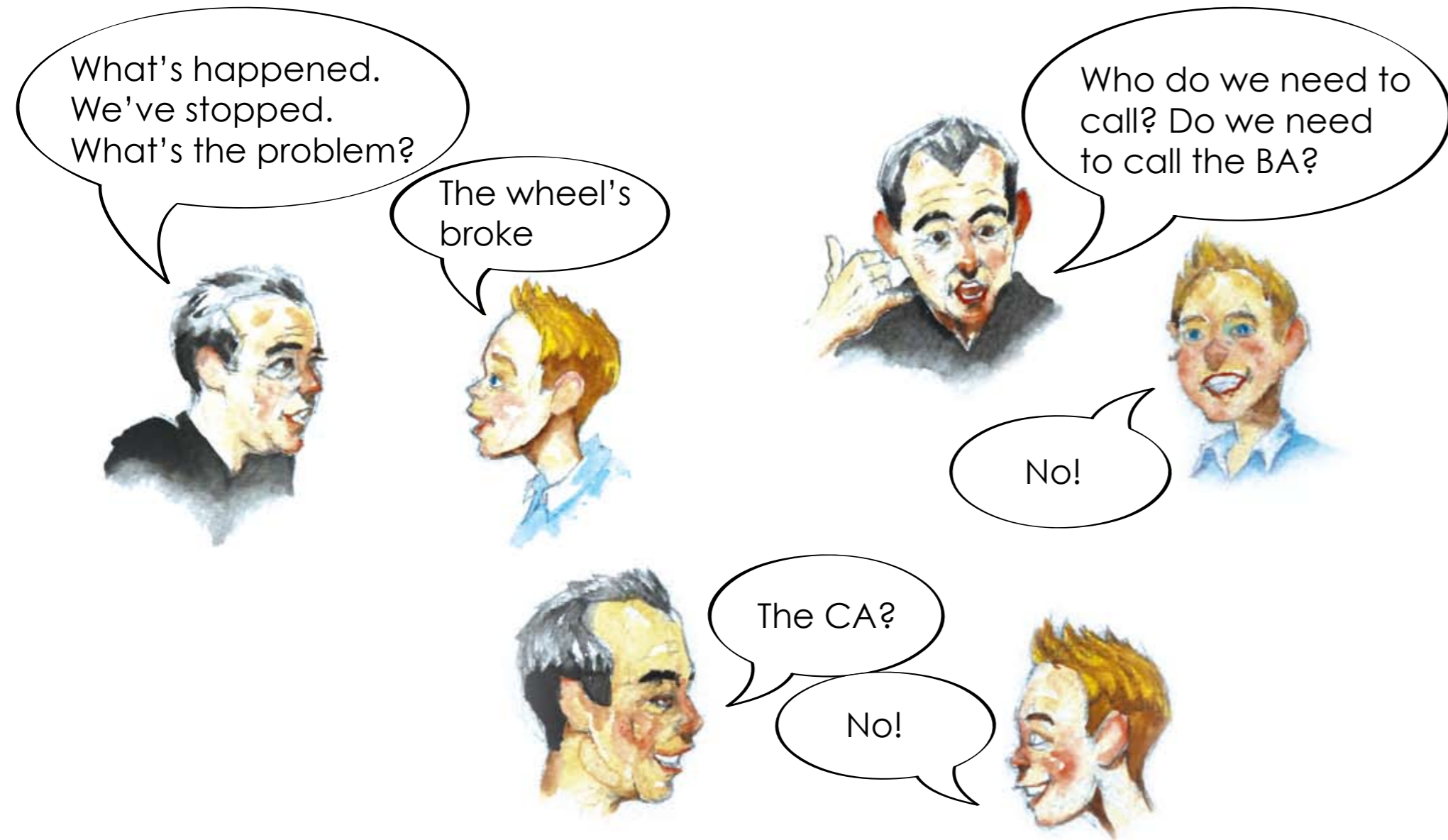


What's this, we've stopped, just look on the ground  
Look at the animal, safe and sound  
Let's make its noise let's sing its song  
I think it wants to come along

It's a mouse! Look, it's a mouse!



HINT Use the journey as an opportunity to introduce the puppets and other objects that were selected from the box at the start. Use this moment as a pause point to refer back to and incorporate any previous parts of the story you have created so far.



HINT: encourage role play using objects such as a telephone or a steering wheel. Draw on developing communication and role play during each telling of the story to incorporate individual comments and interests. These moments become opportunities for individual students to taking centre stage in the story.

Driving, driving, driving along, let's keep going with the driving song  
We're driving along for many a mile, that's the spirit and that's the style  
We've been driving along enjoying the freedom  
But at last, look out, we've reached the MUSEUM!!!!

Hint: find opportunities to change the pace or mood of the story. After the excitement of the travelling sequence use silence, stillness and quiet music to mark a change and to explicitly draw attention to it.





It's a revolving door. Let's see if we can get through it.  
You've got to push it round and round

We're here at last, we're through the door  
We spun around, came back for more  
It got so fast, it's got so whizzy  
It's left us feeling rather dizzy  
We kept on going round and round  
And now we're back on solid ground

Hint: Find movements suggested by students in response to the story and share the movement so that everyone joins in



Now we're in the museum. Watch out. Go carefully. It's dark.

It's dark it's deep, the lights are out  
What was that - did someone shout?

There might be ghosts, listen with fear  
There's mysteries to find right here

No we're safe, there's nothing scary  
There's no need to be frightened, really

Wait a moment, no, I've seen it  
There's ghosts, there's ghouls, I really mean it

This isn't my idea of fun  
Let's move, let's flee, let's run run run

Hint: Use lighting and fabrics to create new moods and atmospheres in the story. By responding to the fabric and change in lighting, students are also exploring and adding to the story.



Where are we now?  
It's a bit of a bungle  
We've ended up  
In the jungle!!!!

There's animals here, look around  
There's a snake that squirms around  
And what's that hanging from the trees  
It's monkey on a wild trapeze



Let's seize the moment, take the chance  
To join the animals and have a dance  
And more than that, let's leap and sing  
And let's watch monkey sway and swing  
Deep in the jungle's dark green light  
We'll dance and dance till past midnight



HINT: enhance the experience of a new location and mood in the story by using percussion instruments

Look it's morning, the sun's delight  
Shining on us warm and bright  
Let's greet the day that's come at last  
The danger's gone, it's in the past  
Enjoy the beauty of this place  
Enjoy the sunshine on your face



Hint: Use fabrics and gentle melodic and percussion instruments to create a change of mood

But now it's time to go to school  
That is the law, that is the rule  
So let's get going without any fuss  
The best way to get there is to get on the bus!

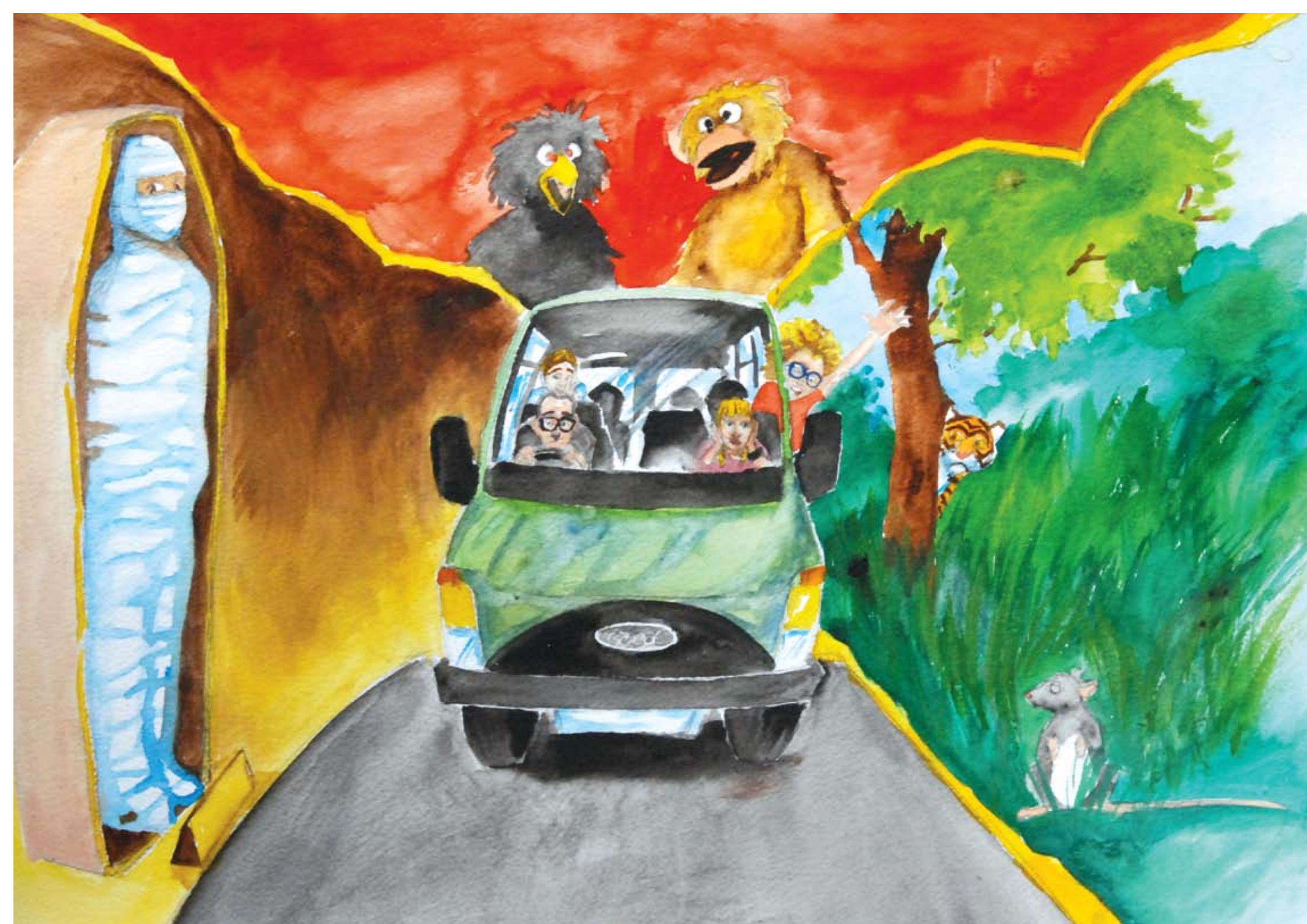
We're driving we're driving we're driving along  
We're going fast we're going strong  
The day is fine the weather's cool  
And now, we've ended up in school



Hint: Return to the repeated refrain and use it to bring the students back to the classroom, sitting down if they have been standing up or returning to their initial positions, recognising the end of the story

The story's over, we did such things  
Incredible really what a journey brings  
Places and people and buses and doors  
Animals with teeth and animals with claws  
And museums and jungles, a ghost and a ghoul  
And trees and roads and now we're in SCHOOL  
Things got broke and things got mended  
And now, at last, our story is ENDED  
But there's no point stopping, let's take the chance  
To have one final story DANCE!!!!

Hint: Create a coda at the end of the story, that enables the students to make use of all the puppets, objects and musical instruments. The coda is a way of indicating that the session has come to an end as well as the story.



This story was created during workshops that took place at Swiss Cottage School in 2015. We worked with the students of Pankhurst Class, a post-16 group of young people, all with SEND, to create a story based on their experiences of going on trips to a London museum. After each trip we went back to class and told a story about it while the students responded and relived their experience through movement, gesture, objects, music and language. We responded to the young people and incorporated all of their suggestions, actions, sounds and movements into the story.

The process of creating and telling this story has confirmed that stories can be used with classes of all abilities. As they share and participate in the story, young people are able to create social connections and form friendships and share in the moment. The storytelling project has brought the whole class together and we hope you will be able to use the ideas contained in this book to do the same with your class, too.

This project has enabled us to go on our own journey during which we have discovered much about the ways in which group storytelling sessions can contribute to the life of a class and draw out new responses and communications. We have titled this story 'The Incredible Journey' because it describes the two journeys, the journey that forms the basis of the story and our own journey in developing the story with the students in our class.

We hope that you will enjoy this book and be helped by it to go on your own incredible storytelling journey.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Incredible Journey was created by Pankhurst Class students at Swiss Cottage School: Chad, Coco, Donjeta, Hadi, Grace, Shahidul, Mizan, Jason and James  
The sessions were led and the text written by Richard Neville and Catherine Shipton  
Sean Victory illustrated the text

Richard is a professional storyteller with a special interest in developing group storytelling sessions with community groups and schools. Richard uses a range of techniques including vocalisation, rhyme and rhythm to encourage the sharing of experience and the exploration of the power of storytelling in group settings.

Catherine is a teacher of children and young people with SEND. Catherine graduated in psychology before training to be a teacher and going on to study the anthropology of children and child development and also observational studies. Catherine is interested in understanding children and young people's perspectives and identities and developing storytelling as a shared and responsive experience.

Sean completed a degree in illustration and afterwards has worked on a number of projects including children's books, educational material, and mural projects and arts workshops. Sean has a background in mentoring and currently works as a teaching assistant with young people with SEND. He is interested in portraiture and using art as a platform to help give students a voice.

With very many thanks to all the TAs of Pankhurst class who supported the sessions and contributed ideas and inspiration to the Incredible Journey:  
Lisa, Catherine, Ruby

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