

## Bring on the World

### Day 3 Morning session: Girls, boys and playtime

#### Activity 3: Recreation at school

**Time required: 1 hour 30 mins**

#### You will need

- Large sheets of paper
- 5 different coloured scarves (preferably football ones, though this is not necessary)
- Slips of paper saying what type of thinking each 'scarf' group should do (optional – below)

#### Aim

- To develop pupils' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- To enable pupils to identify some of the problems which occur during school playtime.

#### Note

This activity uses a fictional scenario. However, you might want to adapt the activity and use a different scenario that relates more closely to a current playtime issue in your own school.

#### What to do

Present the scenario below to the class. (It might be useful to have printed copies ready to give each group for reference later in the activity.)

Anya is in Year 5 at a primary school in Birmingham. Her school has one playground and a small garden area. The school has about 120 juniors, who use this playground at playtimes and lunchtimes. This is what Anya had to say about playtime at her school:

'As soon as the bell goes and classes are dismissed, the same Year 5 and Year 6 boys always rush out to play football. Because we only have one playground, it can sometimes be difficult for other people to play chasing or skipping games – the boys get really annoyed if we get in their way! Some younger boys and even some of the girls would love to join in with their football matches, but the boys never let us because they don't think we're good enough to play with them.'

Our playground is not very big – it's about the size of a tennis court. There are benches around the sides. It's mostly girls who sit on them, but some boys do too. There are a few trees too. Our playtime is 20 minutes long, but lunchtime is longer, especially if you bring sandwiches. It would be nice if we had some other things to play with, like hoops or small balls.'

Divide the class into five groups, each with a 'leader'. (This pupil should be an able one, possibly gifted and talented, as this activity provides a good opportunity for G&T pupils to exercise and develop their skills in facilitating useful discussion.) Provide each leader with a large A1 or A2 piece of paper and a marker pen, and explain that they will be acting as both facilitator for the discussion (ensuring every member of the group has a chance to contribute) and as scribe.

Explain to the class that each group is going to think about the playground problem in a different way, as a means of solving the problem. Make it clear to the class that all thoughts and ideas are welcome if they fit in with the type of thinking this group has been asked to do. Other members of the group should aim to be positive about others' ideas; criticism should be kept to a minimum at this stage. Leaders should work to ensure that the kind of thinking is in line with the original brief (see below) and only write down ideas which fit in with this.

Give out a scarf to each leader in turn, explaining to the whole class how this group will be thinking about the problem. Ask the leader to put the scarf on and to write down the type of thinking at the top of their sheet.

### **Scarf 1 – Think about the facts**

This group should make a list of as many facts as possible which are relevant to the problem, for example:

There is one playground.

### **Scarf 2 – Think about opinions and feelings**

This group should list as many opinions and feelings associated with the problem, for example:

The boys get annoyed with the girls.

### **Scarf 3 – Think about the problem critically**

This group should list logical and critical points about the problem, being prepared to challenge ideas in a realistic way, for example:

Certain groups find it very difficult to play together.

### **Scarf 4 – Think positively and optimistically**

This group should list best-case scenarios, for example:

Children can learn to wait their turn and share.

### **Scarf 5 – Think creatively**

This group should list as many new and innovative ways of solving the problem as possible, even if some appear impossible to implement, for example:

Ask 10 parents or teachers to come and play with us.

Build a new playground.

After 15 – 20 minutes, bring the pupils together as a class, and ask each leader to present their group's ideas to the class, finishing by fixing their sheet of paper to the board for all to see.

In conclusion, ask each pupil to evaluate these findings and write down a sentence or two about how they think the problem should be solved. Share some of these ideas with the class, prompting pupils to give reasons for their choices.

Adapted from the ideas in *Six Thinking Hats* by Edward de Bono (Penguin Books, 2000).

### **Further work**

#### *Role-play*

Use the playground problem as a basis for role play. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to create a short role-play around the scenario. Explore how characters feel by using freeze-frame as groups present their work to the rest of the class.

#### *Creative writing*

1) Write a poem entitled 'Problems at playtime!' (Use Scarf 2's list of opinions and feelings to help.)

2) Write a letter to the headteacher listing ideas for improving playtime. Encourage pupils to give reasons for their opinions as much as possible.

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## Worksheet: Recreation at school

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