**Mantle of the Expert: Habitat Biologists (The Minpins) Autumn Term Part 1 – Year 2 and Year 3.**

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| **Step 1: Theme**  **Woodland habitats and creatures.**  **Curriculum focus:** Science and geography | **Step 2: Overview of learning**   * **Knowledge**: Identifying and classifying plants and animals in the local woodland habitats. Food chains and animal needs for survival. Identifying plants and trees in the local area and understanding how they grow, what they need and labelling different parts of the plants. * **Skills:** Map reading and making. Tree and plant identification. Animal tracking and identification. Recognition of habitats and micro-habitats. * **Understanding:** Descriptions of and report writing on plant life/habitats. Awareness of animals’ needs and the dependency of habitats. Know how different plants and animals are suited to different habitats. How people affect habitats and our responsibility to look after creatures and their habitats. | | | **Step 3: List of things that make the theme interesting**   * Outdoor Learning, especially visits to local woodlands * Tension of helping the Minpins and defending their habitat from threats * Woodlands and animals in the woodland * Plant identification using books and apps * ‘Micro’ adventures around the local area applying forest school knowledge and mapping/tracking | | | **Step 4: Generate questions for inquiry**  *Social, political, historical, environmental, critical, ethical, philosophical, spiritual*     * Do we have a duty to help others? * Should we believe everything we hear/read? * What responsibilities do we have to the local environment and creatures? * Should habitats be destroyed so that people can have what they want? * Who has a greater claim on the local environment? Local people, animals or plants and trees? * Is it ever right to relocate living things for the purpose of building/human gain? | | |
| **Step 5: Invent a narrative – include tension, location and time**  **Tensions:** The Minpins have reached out to a group of local biologists. Their habitat is under threat once again, though they are not sure on what kind of monster it is this time. A building company have been told to create a vital new infrastructure through the forest – they cannot help the destruction of the habitat. The biologists must survey the local habitat in an attempt to redirect the building works.  **Time:** Present day when the Minpins reach out to the team. Past: the council makes the decision to sacrifice the forest habitat in favour of putting in vital new infrastructure. Past: the team learning about the Minpins’ forest and previous monster battles.  **Location:** Local Whaddon countryside and woods (Kirby’s woods), forest school and surrounding village area. | | | **Step 6: Select the expert team and list powers, responsibilities and values**  **Team:** Natural Biologists / Scientists.  **Powers:** To study, understand and care for the local environment; to take action to help trees, plants and animals when necessary; to educate others on trees, plants and animals and the local environment.  **Responsibilities:** To maintain the natural balance of the eco-system; to ensure all living things within the environment are able to thrive; to take action to ensure the environment is maintained and the eco-system can continue; to educate others about the woodland and creatures.    **Values:** To prioritise the needs of the environment and those who need it to survive; to take care of and treat every creature and living thing with respect; to help the environment and animals flourish. | | | **Step 7: Decide on the client and their role, purpose and authority**  **Client:** The Minpins  **Role:** To reach out for help when their habitat is threatened by a new ‘monster’. To request a survey of the habitat to help persuade local developers of the habitat’s value. To ask the team to relocate them to a new habitat if their current one cannot remain.  **Authority:** Low – is asking the team for help and relying on them to save them from danger and threat. They are relying on the team’s compassion and morals to continue to help them and keep them safe. | | **Step 8: Devise the commission**  To find out about the new ‘monster’ threat to the Minpins and their forest. To survey the forest to try and persuade developers to relocate their works. To find/create a new habitat to relocate the Minpins to in case the developers do not change their minds. | |
| **Step 9: Other points of view**   * The Minpins * Other creatures, trees and plants who live in the affected habitats * The head developer * The builders working on the development * Local villagers and people who use the woodland (e.g. dog walkers, farmers) * Rival council leaders who are in support of the new infrastructure | | **Step 10: Possible team tasks and classroom activities**   * Reading and researching about The Minpins and their birds – to learn about their diet, habitat and behaviours * Conducting a survey of plants, trees and wildlife in the local area * Designing and making surveying equipment, including maps * Mapping the trees, plants and creatures in the local area – understanding how the plants and trees grow and what they need to survive * Exploring other kinds of habitats and the trees, plants and creatures found there * Persuading others of the importance of the forest as a habitat * Talking to and educating local people * Visit to Kirby’s Woods to find out more: What typical plants, trees and creatures will be found in this kind of habitat? * Make a ‘flying bird-mobile’ * Research suitable habitats for re-location of the Minpins * Designing and making a new habitat for the Minpins (possibly inside shoe boxes) * Creating a New Creature suitable for the local area – perhaps as a guardian to protect the Minpins in the future * **End mantle with a Minpins tea party** | | | **Step 11: National Curriculum Links**  *Subject to change as the mantle develops*   * **Science:** Naming and identifying local trees and plants; knowing what plants need to survive and identifying and labelling different parts of plants; understanding the lifecycle of plants; identifying and understanding micro-habitats within the forest habitat; asking and answering questions; observing closely and identify and classify. * **Geography:** mapping the local area; use simple maps of the local area e.g. large scale, pictorial; study the school and its grounds; make simple maps and plans; use locational and directional language to describe the location of features on routes; name, describe and compare familiar places * **Computing:** Creating, saving and retrieving work; internet safety (contributing to a class blog) * **Art and Design:** collage images of the creatures; tree leaf rubbing, sketching and oil pastel work to create photograph images, designing and creating new habitats; study Andy Goldsworthy outdoor art * **Design Technology:** Design products based on design criteria: communicate ideas through talking, drawing, templates and mock-ups; select from and use a range of tools and equipment; build structures; explore and use mechanisms such as levers, sliders, wheels and axles; create a new, safer habitat for the Minpins and a new guardian for them. | | | | **7 aspects of planning a start:**   1. What’s happening? Location, people, events? 2. What signs are there for the students to interpret – words, pictures, movement? 3. What’s going to attract their interest – the tension? 4. What questions are raised – the inquiry? 5. What tasks are the students going to do to bring them into the fiction? 6. How are students going to take on the mantle of the expert team? 7. How are they going to be introduced to the client and the commission? |

**Mantle of the Expert: Habitat Biologists (The Minpins).** Step 12: Sequence of steps into the fiction.

**Steps In**

**Step 1:** Begin by sharing and enjoying The Minpins by Roald Dahl. Spend time investing in the adventures Billy has with the Minpins and how they overcome the Fearsome Beast together. Activities could include:

* Children splitting into teams to come up with ideas for getting Billy home safely
* Drawing the ‘Gruncher’
* Making a representation of a Minpin (by drawing, building, making etc.) and measuring the Minpins; making a new house for a family of Minpins (design and make then evaluate and describe); make a flying bird mobile
* Create posters and find out about the different kinds of birds that the Minpins fly on
* Use different art materials to create backgrounds of the forest and puppet Minpins
* Map out the Minpins’ forest or their tree; 4 and 6 point grid references and compass points
* Step into the role of Billy and his mother to explore “Billy’s mother was always telling him what he could and couldn’t do”; create a conscience alley with Billy walking through the middle; circle time exploring feelings about being told what to do and how we keep safe; hot seating as different characters; imagine “what if…” with different parts of the story
* Diary writing as Billy at various parts of the story.   
  <https://www.teachingideas.co.uk/library/books/the-minpins> <http://www.deffordschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Minpins-Topic-Oak-Class.pdf>

**Step 2:** Once the story has finished, complete a creative writing task on the kinds of adventures Billy has on the back of swan, flying to new places. The children can come up with a new location, creatures and characters and write a creative fictional story for assessment.

**Step 3:** Have the children find/receive a tiny letter one morning. It’s from the Minpins saying “Please help us! There is a new monster threatening our home. We don’t know what it is except it is very, very loud and makes the ground shake. We know it is not the fearsome beast as there is no smoke. Billy is too big to fly on swan to our forest now. Please help us!” If the children agree to help, they can travel to the forest and speak to the Minpins (AIR). They will discover that the beast is actually several machine such as diggers, dumper trucks and bulldozers. Agree to help the Minpins and return back home. Write a letter/make a phone call to the development company they saw in the forest.

**Step 4:** Meet with the development company. Learn their side of the story: “We do as we are told. Milton Keynes needs this vital infrastructure putting in and we are in charge of doing the groundworks. We have to dig up trees and clear a path. We will have to dig up trenches and lay electricity cables. I feel terrible that we are going to be scaring living creatures and uprooting plants and trees, but what can I do? This is my job and I have to do as I’m told.” Debate ways of helping the developer. Agree that perhaps if his boss knew how many important plants, trees and creatures were there then he might change him mind.

**Step 5:** Conduct a plant, trees and creature survey in the local area. Prepare by looking at maps of the local area and identifying where is likely to be habitats similar to the Minpins’ forest. Use an OS map to navigate to that location and then use books and apps to identify plants and trees. Record any creatures seen, then use prior habitat knowledge and imaginations to think about other creatures that be captured by wildlife cameras.

**Step 6:** Return to school and create a pictogram of living things surveyed and write a report for the developers.

**Step 7:** Write to the Minpins to let them know about the steps they are taking to help them.

**Step 8:** Wait to hear back from the developers. In the meantime, create posters and educate locals on the importance of the forest as a habitat. The Minpins’ tree is hugely important to them – it’s their home! Could it survive if it is picked up and moved? What about if they have a pole put through the roots? Explore the lifecycle of plants and parts of plants while waiting.

**Step 9:** Have a letter from the developers: it is no use, there cannot be any other route for the infrastructure to take. The development will be going ahead no matter what. What will the team do now?