



## Case study 1: *Bubbles* – Getting started with reading

### Why shared reading? (0:00-1:15)

I teach new entrants, and shared reading is something we love doing. The sheer fun and enjoyment of reading the books together really builds a love of reading. It's a huge part of our classroom programme, and it's such a stress-free way of getting children on the pathway to reading. We do shared reading every day. I introduce a new book most weeks, and we reread familiar ones and the poem cards too. Within a few days of starting school, children already have one or two books they're getting to know, and they're experiencing what it's like to be a reader.

Shared reading builds confidence with language and shows children how texts work, which sets up a good foundation for guided reading. There are so many teaching opportunities – ways of making meaning, learning new words, thinking critically, forming opinions, learning concepts about print, exploring and experimenting with words and sounds, and so on.

Shared reading is also a great opportunity for me to notice what the children can do and what they might need help with, both when we're reading together and when they're having a go at reading the books and poem cards by themselves.

### Using *Bubbles* (1:16-2:08)

When I choose a text for shared reading with new entrants, I want something really engaging. *Bubbles* is perfect because blowing bubbles is something that nearly all children know about. We build on that by reading and enjoying the book together (and at some point, we also blow bubbles). It's also a really fun story, and the children love the surprise ending – who would think the bubbles would land on a hedgehog? It's really engaging for them.

*Bubbles* has a nice, simple structure, like a poem, and the repetition of words like “up, up, up” and “over the cat, over the dog” means that children can join in really quickly. I think it's important for them to feel like they can be successful at reading as soon as they start school, and *Bubbles* is a really supportive text for them.

### Becoming readers (2:09-3:20)

One of the best things about using *Bubbles* is that the text is so simple, the children can join in and feel like readers really quickly. And there are so many ways it helps build children's understandings before they start guided reading.

I focus a lot on helping the children understand that reading is all about making meaning, so I encourage them to talk about the story and the pictures, especially during the first reading.

Once they're familiar with the story, I often focus on the things that will help them read the text successfully, like noticing punctuation to get the phrasing right, and one-to-one matching (those sorts of concepts about print). For example, I might say at the beginning of the session, “Remember, we're thinking about reading this story smoothly and making it sound like talking.” So I listen for fluency and phrasing and whether the children change their voices to make it sound interesting. At the end of a session, one of the children said to me, “Well, that sounded like a real story, didn't it?”

### Meeting many needs (3:21-5:03)

One of the things I love about shared reading is the way I can use it to meet the needs of many students at the same time. For example, for English language learners, *Bubbles* is a good way of building vocabulary and getting familiar with language structures like “over the cat, over the dog”. And it's a book I can use with children on their first day at school.

I usually plan to use a shared book several times over a number of days. I have a rough idea of what I want to use it for, but it often changes in response to what I notice during the lesson. But for the first reading, we read it through so that they get to know the story, and we do a lot of talking about it. Sometimes I find that I have to feed in some of the ideas to support meaning, for example, in *Bubbles*, they need to understand the concept of the wind blowing the bubbles, and they need to know what a hedgehog is. Asking the children questions helps me to know whether they understand the ideas in the story.

I often use *Bubbles* with a small group as the children seem more confident about joining in, and it's much easier to notice what they are doing. I love it when I hear one of the less confident children chiming in with “up, up, up” and “down, down, down” with great expression!

It's really helpful to have the audio available so the children can listen and read along. It's another way to help them towards reading the text by themselves. Once they know the text really well, they can use the small books to read independently.

### Observations and reflections (5:04-5:57)

I'm often surprised in shared reading by the things that children are noticing, like a child who hasn't been at school very long saying “Oh, there's ‘the’”. That shows me that they're noticing and attending to the text, so I would note that down on my planning. Or if I'm reading *Bubbles* with a small group and I hear them noticing the commas and phrasing their reading, then that helps me to make decisions about what I'm going to teach next.

I also like to help students make links between what they are learning and other aspects of the classroom programme. With *Bubbles*, I often base language experiences around it, such as going out to blow bubbles and talking about what we see and then using this for shared and independent writing.