



Lesson
Plans

Cats, Dogs and Us
For All-Age Special Schools

Introduction

Welcome to this IFAW teaching pack resource for special schools. In this section of the resource you will find five lessons themed around the well-being of cats and dogs, each linked to curriculum areas your students study:

1 Happy or sad?

A PSHE lesson focusing on emotions.

2 Play or stay away?

A literacy lesson focused on speaking and listening.

3 Movement speaks

A PE, PSHE and literacy lesson looking at how we can communicate through our movements

4 Care for me

A science and PSHE lesson looking at what we and our pets need for a healthy happy life.

5 Let's act

A literacy, drama and citizenship lesson focusing on sharing our learning.

In these lesson plans, lesson one is described in much more detail than the other lessons, as this lesson establishes routines that will be used to support learning in all the lessons. We appreciate that you may not be planning to deliver all five lessons and may prefer to dip into them for ideas to suit the needs of your class. If you are doing this it is worth reading through lesson one, even if it is not one you plan to teach, so that you can also select from the suggested routines designed to support your students.

Objectives are provided for each lesson - please select objectives for each of your students, appropriate to their needs. The majority of the resources needed for teaching these lessons are included in this pack. Where extras are needed, these are clearly listed at the beginning of each lesson plan.

You may want to use these lessons over the course of a half term, building to a performance at the end of term which can be shared with other classes in school, friends, family and even the local community. However, as the lessons within this pack feature a variety of subject area focuses, it should be possible to cover them all in a week which may be a better option for students who need a continuity of focus in order to be able to take on board their learning. You can further augment the lessons in the pack in your other lessons, for example using cats and dogs as your inspiration in your art lessons, or as subjects of your stories in literacy lessons. You could even count or measure them in your maths lessons.

We hope you and your students enjoy using this resource together.

Happy or sad? PSHE

Objectives

Students will learn:

- To express their own emotions
- To begin to recognise the expression of emotions.
- To understand that cats and dogs express emotions too and to begin to be able to identify some of these expressions.

Additional resources:

Mirror

Toys a cat or dog might play with

Optional:

Images of your student's favourite TV, book or computer game characters looking happy or sad.

At a glance overview of this lesson:

- Music cue
- Share pages 3–7 of the magazine and think about being happy or being sad.
- Exploring physically how cats and dogs express emotions.
- Independent and group activities focused on how cats and dogs express emotion.
- Feedback from the group.

5 minutes:

Introduction to IFAW lesson

All of the IFAW lessons in this pack will start in the same way, to support you in cueing your students in to their learning and helping them to understand that the learning in this lesson links to the learning in all the other lessons plans. An auditory cue will be used in this lesson, in the form of lively music with clear dog barks and cat meows. The minute-long cue can be found at www.ifaw.org/cats-dogs-and-us-uk-animation

As with all these lesson plans, you can adapt these to suit the needs of your students and choose a routine that best suits you. What we would encourage you to do is follow that same routine, whatever it is, each time. For example an alternative to the online audio cue could be to sing one of the songs from Activity Sheet 1 (page 2 of the Supplementary Resources document) together before each lesson.

Begin in a circle as a whole class and listen to the music cue for as long as you need for your students to pick out the sounds of dogs and cats. You can support their recognition of these sounds using pictures or symbols, or simply by pointing to the cartoon images that will appear on screen at the same time as the music. Try to highlight the animal noises without using too many words. You can show your students they are of interest by changing your facial expression and stilling your body movements, or simply by holding up the relevant symbol or photo and saying "Cat."

An alternative, and potentially more fun way, to start this session would be to use the audio cue to gather everyone to the circle. Play the music and encourage your students to pretend they are cats or dogs as they move to the circle and cluster together. Once everyone is in the circle, play the minute long audio cue. You could encourage students pretending to be dogs to join in with the barking and those pretending to be cats to join in with the meowing.

Introduce the theme of the coming lessons:

"We are going to be learning about cats and dogs"

You can support your communication using the symbols on page 18 of the student magazine. These could be enlarged and held up for everyone to see, or you may want to print out a pair of symbols for each student and introduce the lesson personally to each student one by one, handing them the relevant symbols as you do so. The benefit of this

option is that your students will be holding an item that cues them in to their coming learning as the lesson continues. Alternatively large symbols could be placed on clear display on a flip chart or plain display area, so that they are there as constant reminders of the focus for learning.

Share the first part of the magazine with your students (pages 3-7)

Communicate with each student in turn, establishing their understanding of the words 'cats' and 'dogs'. Your communication will depend on the abilities of your students. Some example communications follow:

- **Sharing a photo of a pet cat with a child and explaining to them "this is your cat", offering the label 'cat' to the animal that they are familiar with through signing, symbol, speech, or text.**
- **Asking a student what we are learning about today and receiving the answer "cats and dogs" verbally, or through signs, symbols or gestures.**
- **Asking a student what we will be learning about today and scaffolding them as they complete your answer "cats and...." and offering them a choice of symbols, e.g. dogs, apples.**
- **Repeating to a student the focus of the coming sessions, accentuating the meaning of the key words 'cats' and 'dogs', using mime, video clips, photos, sensory cues, etc.**

10 minutes: Introduction to this lesson.

"Today we are going to think about being happy or sad"

Support your introduction with your facial expressions, symbols and signs as appropriate.

Offer a choice of focus to your students "Which shall we think about first? Being happy or being sad?"

Students could express their preference verbally, or by pointing towards a symbol, or by using their faces to mimic the expressions. Once you have looked at one emotion with them, go back and look at the other.

"What makes you happy/sad? How do you show that you are happy/sad?"

Take answers from your students. Use a mirror to show your students their facial expressions. If you have a large enough mirror you can position yourself alongside your students so that they can see their own face and yours as you make happy/sad expressions. Be aware that for students with autism this may be a difficult task. You can find ways to support their engagement by utilising happy/sad expressions in media they enjoy, for example the facial expressions of a favourite TV character.

Encourage your students to show their happy and sad faces to each other, and to look at each other's happy and sad faces. You could extend this activity to include happy/sad voices.

Explain that although all our faces are different, the way we express happy or sad has aspects in common. Spend extra time helping students to understand the expressions of those in class who express themselves in non-typical ways. For example you may have a student who does not smile or frown but expresses their emotions through sound or with their eyes.

"Cats and dogs can feel happy and sad too. We are going to find out how they show their feelings."

10 minutes: Active activity

"We are going to find out how cats and dogs feel by pretending to be cats and dogs"



Offer your students the choice of focusing on cats or dogs first. You can use the choice page on page 12 of the Supplementary Resources for this pack, for the class to decide which animal to be first.

Hand out the role-play cat and dog mask resources on page 13 of the Supplementary Resources document to support your students in understanding the activity.

Students will repeat this activity in small groups focusing on the other animal during the group activity below.

The following is written as if students choose to focus on dogs first.

Have everyone pretend to be dogs and move around the classroom as if a group of dogs in a garden. Introduce an item to the group, e.g. a ball (going outside to do this would be best, but if inside use a balloon or a beach ball). Pause the play and ask the students to act like happy dogs. Ask them if anyone knows how a happy dog behaves – some students may indicate an understanding of tail wagging. Demonstrate a happy dog play pose to your students and invite them to copy you in whatever way they can. Repeat the role-play, allowing students to roam around the room a little, then introduce the ball - "Look a ball" - and encourage them to go into play pose 'Happy dog' (see photo below).

Gather everyone together and look at the aspects of happy dog: wagging tail, happy ears, play pose.

Show a video clip of a happy dog (you can find these in IFAW's Cats, Dogs and Us film at www.vimeo.com/64918575 (minutes 00:00-00:16, 2:05-2:14, 4:14-4:20, 11:53-12:05) as well as other examples on YouTube) and point out their expressions to students. Highlight them by referencing the images on pages 12-15 in the student magazine page and with the symbols.

Now show students what a sad or angry dog looks like. Offer them the opportunity to demonstrate this in a modest way (obviously having everyone in class pretend to be an angry dog could escalate in an undesirable way).

LESSON BOOSTERS

If you have any option of bringing a real cat or dog, or even both, into the lesson this will heighten your students' experience of this lesson.

If you are able to collect photos of students' pet cats or dogs prior to beginning this topic, this will help bring alive the connection between the topic and their lives for your students.



© Shutterstock/w-ings

The happy dog 'play pose'.

25 minutes:

Main activities, independent and group work

Choose from the following activities which all focus on identifying the communication of emotions and group your class according to their interests and abilities. It is great if everyone can attempt to work on their own, at whatever level is suitable to them.

Independent activities:

- **Activity Sheet 3: Happy Dog Lotto** on page 5 of the Supplementary Resources document. This activity focuses your students on the visible signals that tell us about how an animal is feeling. You could create a happy class lotto by taking photos of each of your students when they are looking happy and printing them as a lotto board and cards. Doing this will help your students to reinforce their understanding of how their peers express their emotion. Seeing their own expression of happiness alongside their peers helps them to understand that when their peers look like that, they feel the same as when they themselves look like this.
- Pretend to be a cat or a dog and play as if happy or sad. Students can have the opportunity to explore the role-play that started the lesson independently. You can use the role-play resources to support your students in engaging in fantasy play.
- Explore sensory stimuli relating to cats and dogs see examples in the 'Sensory experiences relating to cats and dogs' on page 8 of the Supplementary Resources document for ideas. Staff supporting students can highlight to them their own emotions e.g. that stroking the cat makes you happy.
- Explore the sensory sequence in Activity Sheet 4 on page 7 of the Supplementary Resources document about caring for cats and dogs - this activity will be well suited to students who benefit from repeating one activity over all sessions in order to have the chance to engage and explore their learning. These are likely to be students with profound and multiple learning disabilities, but of course the sequence can be used with any students for whom it meets their needs.

Group activity:

- Work in a small group with an adult to explore how a happy cat behaves in the same way as the happy dog example above; you can use role-play props and look at clips of happy cats online or in the *Cats, Dogs and Us* film (www.vimeo.com/64918575 – minutes 6:31 – 6:57, 7:40 – 8:04, 8:29-8:45, 9:00-9:10).
- Explore the first section of the magazine with friends or with an adult (pages 3–7).
- Share the sensory sequence (Activity Sheet 4, page 7 of the Supplementary Resources document) with an adult or peer. This resource is particularly suited to students whose learning will be primarily sensory and will need repetition through the lessons in order to engage and respond. Typically this will be learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities, but of course you can use the resource with any learners whose needs it meets.

10 minutes: Plenary

Call everyone back to the circle using the online cats and dogs audio cue from the start of the lesson.

“Today we learned about how cats and dogs show that they are happy and sad. We also learned about how we show when we are happy and sad”

Take feedback from each member of the class in turn. Students can demonstrate their learning by responding to simple questions. Staff supporting students can share with the class particular achievements that a student has made during the lesson, connecting these with feelings to highlight to peers unique expressions of emotion, e.g. “Zac vocalised when he heard the dog’s barking. Zac showed he was happy by keeping his eyes open.”

Show the class once more how dogs and cats express happiness.

Show how dogs and cats express sadness. Explain that if animals are displaying aggressive signs we should not try to play with them.

Play or stay away – Literacy: speaking and listening

Objectives

Students will learn:

- To clearly communicate a willingness, or lack of willingness to play.
- To begin to understand that other people, cats and dogs may want to play sometimes and not other times.

Additional resources:

Quick activities or toys that your students especially like/dislike

Toys a cat or dog might play with

Optional:

Pictures of your student's pets

Camera

At a glance overview of this lesson:

- Music cue
- Exploring how we play
- Pages 12-15 of the magazine and role-play exploration of animals at play
- Creating posters about cat and dog play, independently and in groups.
- Review the posters.

5 minutes:

Introduction to IFAW lesson

IFAW online cats and dogs music and audio cue – as in lesson 1 (www.ifaw.org/cats-dogs-and-us-uk-animation).

“We are learning about cats and dogs” – support your communication as in lesson 1.

10 minutes:

Introduction to this lesson

“Sometimes we want to play. How do you show you want to play?”

Have to hand several quick-play activities you know your students enjoy, e.g. bubbles to blow. Invite each student to play in turn and encourage the other students to notice how each student expresses their desire to play. Some might answer “yes I want a turn”, others might look happy or reach out. As these things happen highlight them to your students. You can do this by repeating the words used or by showing the physical actions. Students, that are able to, can repeat their own actions or show you alternatives that they might use in other situations.

Make sure you allow time for responses from students who take a while to process an opportunity. Support the rest of the group in understanding that a student's apparent lack of response does not mean they do not want to play. Demonstrate how to wait for a response without chatting or adding in unneeded physical prompts. A good way to do this is with a smile on your face and a glint in your eye, so that your expression says “Wait for it! It's going to be great.” Then when a response begins you can beam with delight. Praise students for noticing subtle responses in each other.

“What about if we don't want to play?”

You can offer your students activities they dislike, or show them pictures of places that look unappealing to play in. Alternatively you can have the negative response modelled by another member of staff who can pretend they do not want to play with any items offered previously.

Teach your students that if they do not want to do something they can say “Stop” (demonstrate the stop sign) or “No” (demonstrate the no sign) clearly and people will understand that they do not want to take part.

Being able to clearly express Stop or No is a powerful tool when protecting personal safety – a clearly expressed assertive “No” or “Stop” can cause a perpetrator to hesitate and sends a clear message to onlookers about your willingness to take part in a situation.

“Sometimes cats and dogs want to play, and sometimes they don’t. Today we are going to learn how cats and dogs tell us that they want to play.”

If any of your students have ideas about how cats and dogs might express themselves, they can share them here.

10 minutes: Active activity

Show your students how cats and dogs might express wanting to play or not wanting to play. Look at pages 12-15 of the student magazine together. Examples include:

- A cat may walk away or hiss if they do not want to play.
- A dog may walk away or growl if they do not want to play.
- A cat may move closer or bat with their paw if they want to play.
- A dog will bend down and put their bottom in the air if they want to play, they may wag their tail.
- Video clips – see examples from IFAW’s online film *Cats, Dogs and Us* www.vimeo.com/64918575 (minutes 8:05-8:45 for cats, 11:45-13:00 for dogs and 14:40-15:12 for both)



Students choose whether to be a cat or a dog or simply remain themselves. Support the role-play aspect of this section by providing headbands made from the Role-Play Resources on page 13 of the Supplementary Resources document to choose from.

Set out a selection of games that may appeal to cats and dogs - you could have a selection of toys aimed at pets.

Students can explore the activities indicating whether they want to play or not.

Adults supporting the students can encourage them to behave like the animal they are dressed as and to notice the behaviour of other students.

25 minutes: Main activities, independent, group

Create six class posters showing how cats and dogs communicate “yes I want to play”, “no I don’t want to play, stay away” and also how the class say “yes I want to play” and “no I don’t want to play”.

Students can contribute to this task by working independently or as a group. Options could be:

- **Watching videos of cats and dogs and capturing screen shots to print off their communications.**
- **Browsing pages 12-15 of the magazine alone, with a friend or supported by an adult.**
- **Choosing images from a selection to stick onto the posters.**
- **Sharing the sensory sequence (Activity Sheet 4 on page 7 of the Supplementary Resources document) with an adult or peer.**
- **Creating poses yourself and being photographed (this could be dressed as a cat or dog or expressing as a human).**
- **Listening to sounds and identifying if they are a ‘yes let’s play’ sound or a ‘no stay away’ sound.**
- **Experiencing sensory experiences linked to ‘yes let’s play’ or ‘no stay away’, e.g. purring as a yes from a cat, sharp teeth as a no from a dog. Cat and dog-related sensory experience ideas can be found on page 8 of the Supplementary Resources document.**

10 minutes: Plenary

Review the posters that have been created. Use the photos and images from pages 12-15 of the magazine to highlight the aspects of animal communication that are key to understanding the expressions of cats and dogs. Take time to review how class members express themselves, paying special attention to supporting everyone in understanding any class member who has atypical expressions.

Movement speaks: PE, PSHE and Literacy

Objectives

Students will learn:

- To communicate using their own movements.
- To begin to recognise physical expressions of body language in people they are familiar with.
- To be able to identify and copy some aspects of physical animal expression.

Additional resources:

Optional:

Images of your students' pet cats or dogs looking happy or sad.

At a glance overview of this lesson:

- Music cue
- Warm up using cat and dog movements.
- Exploration of the non-verbal communication we use.
- Circuit of movement stations each focused on a particular aspect of animal expression.
- Review of animal expressions and role-play of how to respond to them.

5 minutes:

Introduction to IFAW lesson

IFAW online cats and dogs music and audio cue – as in lesson 1 (www.ifaw.org/cats-dogs-and-us-uk-animation).

“We are learning about cats and dogs” – support your communication as in lesson 1.

10 minutes:

Introduction to this lesson

Warm up.

In a big space have your students warm up their muscles by running as fast as a dog, or springing as lightly as a cat. Explore different ways animals move for fun, e.g. dogs roll over, cats stretch, etc.

Students can move at a level appropriate to them. For some this may be whole body independent movements, for others it may be supported movements of specific body parts.

You can use video clips of animals to inspire copycat actions.

10 minutes: Active activity

Tell your students that they know that we communicate in lots of ways, not just words. You may be able to offer some examples from around school, e.g. symbol communication, sign language, Big Macs and Switches, Eye gaze, etc. Explain that we also communicate with our bodies. Demonstrate clear physical communication to your students, for example by standing with arms folded or in a wide stance, by frowning or by leaping up and punching the air exuberantly. This is a good opportunity to re-visit expressing “stop” and “no”, having students practice assertive stances as they communicate.

Remind students that they have learned some physical ways cats and dogs communicate – demonstrate these and have students join in with happy and sad cat/dog.

For students who are not fully mobile, encourage participation at a level appropriate to their abilities. For example, a hand could be moved to express claws out and claws in, on a cat. A head could be lifted to say hello, please scratch under my chin as a cat, or turned away out of disinterest.

25 minutes:**Main activities, independent, group**

Explain to your students that in this lesson they are going to practice the moves cats, dogs and people make to express different feelings. They can work independently, or in small groups.

Set up a circuit of movements and emotions in stations around the room (you can use the symbols from the glossary to label each station, to allow students to explore them independently). Support students to explore the emotion and movements on each station: happy dog, happy cat, happy human, sad dog, sad cat, sad human, angry dog, angry cat, angry human, frightened cat, frightened dog, frightened human.

10 minutes: Plenary

Choose students whose movements you noticed to demonstrate the physical actions for each station. Work your way around all the stations so all the moves have been reiterated.

Focus on the stations where an animal is expressing fear or anger – you could have a member of staff play the role of this animal. Have students walk over to them, see their expression and react. What should you do if you meet an angry dog? – Walk away, or do not walk over in the first place. How can you greet a frightened dog? - Approach slowly from the side and offer them your hand to sniff. What should you do if you meet a scared cat? - Give them space. Do not go to them but wait patiently for them to approach you when they are ready.

LESSON BOOSTERS

You could take photos during this lesson of clear movement expression and add them to the posters you made in the previous lesson or to decorate the wall around the edge of the posters with this extra information.

You could take video clips during this lesson and use them to augment the performance created in lesson 5.



Care for me: Science and PSHE

Objectives

Students will learn:

- To experience activities to do with the care of self and care of pet cats and dogs.
- To begin to understand that humans and animals share a set of common needs, for example that we all need water to survive.
- To be able to identify some of the resources animals and people need to survive happily and healthily, e.g. shelter, water.

Additional resources:

Simple role-play items to create a bedroom set-up in your circle time, e.g. a blanket and pillow.

Optional:

Real life items to match those on Worksheet 1: Pet Needs (page 9 of the Supplementary Resources document).

In preparation for this lesson, ask parents to send in photographs of pet cats and dogs being looked after at home, e.g. being fed, or asleep in their baskets.

At a glance overview of this lesson:

- Music cue
- Role play getting ready at home to welcome a visitor.
- Investigating the resources needed to care for cats and dogs.
- Browsing pages 8-11 of the student magazine.
- Independent and group work focused on preparing to welcome a pet at home.
- Learning how IFAW helps cats/dogs/people.

5 minutes:

Introduction to IFAW lesson

IFAW online cats and dogs music and audio cue – as in lesson 1 (www.ifaw.org/cats-dogs-and-us-uk-animation).

“We are learning about cats and dogs” – support your communication as in lesson 1.

10 minutes:

Introduction to this lesson

We have been talking about cats and dogs as our friends. We look after our friends. Give examples of how you look after your friends – link these to things we might do for cats and dogs. Cats and dogs live with us, if a friend came to live with us what would they need? You can browse page 8-11 of the student magazine with your students ‘We take care of our friends’ to show some examples of what animals need.

Set up the circle as if it is a room in a house and choose one student to be the friend coming to live with us. Establish that they will need a bed (and also to be indoors – they wouldn’t want to live with us out in the rain). They will also need food and water.

10 minutes: Active activity

Cats and dogs need the same as us: food and water and shelter. Set articles relating to the care of cats and dogs around the room to be explored: food bowls, tinned food, dried food, beds, brushes, toys, leads, etc. Move around the room exploring the articles and talking about who needs them and why, and linking it to our own needs.

25 minutes:

Main activities, independent, group

Get ready for a pet.

Ask the students to imagine you are about to get a pet, or someone else’s pet is going to come and stay at your house. What will they need? Students can work independently or in groups to complete Worksheet 1: Pet Needs. This worksheet can also be done using the concrete objects from around the room earlier. Instead of the paper worksheet, students could be asked to collect the items they will need for taking care of a pet and put them on the table.

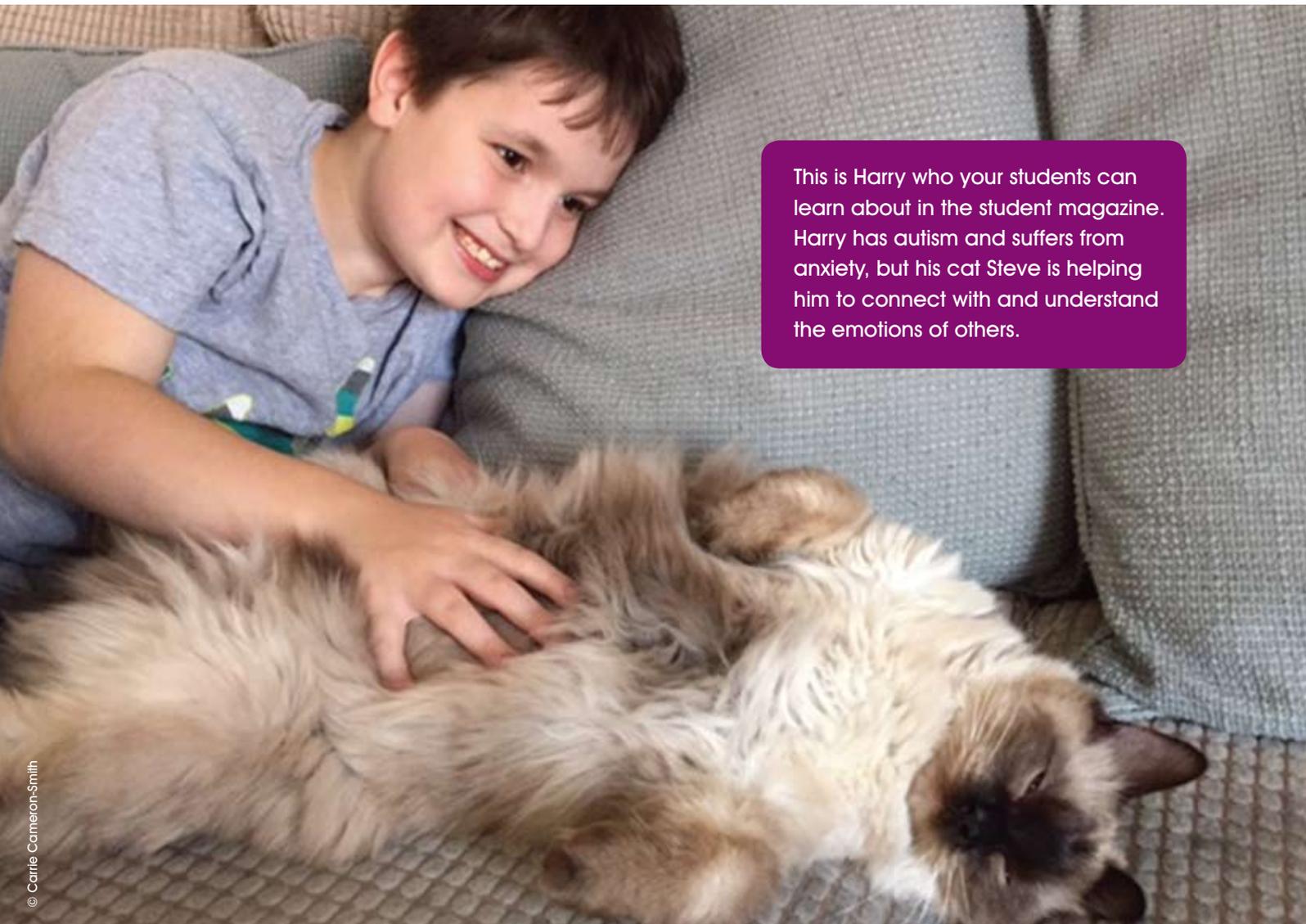
Adults supporting the activity can talk to students about how well cared for the cat/dog will feel when they come to stay but that they will also need something that can't be seen: exercise. Students can practice how they would take a dog for a walk or let a cat outside to play through simple role-play with the adults.

You could also share the sensory sequence in Activity Sheet 4 on page 7 of the Supplementary Resources document with an adult or peer.

10 minutes: Plenary

Review everyone's worksheets and compare them with the little room for a friend that was set up at the start of the lesson. Establish, through questioning the students about their work, that everyone needs water and food and a shelter to live in.

Explain to your students that some cats/dogs/people do not have these things. You could explain that the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) helps people to help cats and dogs who need better looking after. You can see some examples on page 17 of the student magazine. Let them know that in their next lesson they will be helping a little bit too.



This is Harry who your students can learn about in the student magazine. Harry has autism and suffers from anxiety, but his cat Steve is helping him to connect with and understand the emotions of others.

Let's Act: Literacy – speaking, listening, Drama, Citizenship

Objectives

Students will learn:

- To experience activities relating to the care of cats and dogs.
- To remember some aspects of their learning from the past four lessons.
- To feel it is important to share their learning with others

Additional resources:

Images, or recordings, from the work your students have done so far.

Optional:

Further dressing-up resources for your performance.

At a glance overview of this lesson:

- Music cue
- Review the student magazine
- Read page 16 of the magazine, discuss a plan of action!
- Independent and group work preparing for a performance about animal welfare.
- Invite people to your performance.

5 minutes:

Introduction to IFAW lesson

IFAW online cats and dogs music and audio cue – as in lesson 1 (www.ifaw.org/cats-dogs-and-us-uk-animation).

"We are learning about cats and dogs" – support your communication as in lesson 1.

10 minutes:

Introduction to this lesson

We have learned a lot about cats and dogs: happy, sad, play, go away, movement speaks, care for me. Review photos and posters of all your learning. The students should be impressed with how much they now know!

Read through the magazine together with your students, choosing parts you feel are important.

10 minutes: Active activity

There are people who do not know about cats and dogs and how to look after them – read page 16 of the student magazine with your students. Ask students what do you think we should do? – We should share what we have learnt with people.

25 minutes:

Main activities, independent, group

Practice for a performance about animal welfare and what your students have learnt, for your school and a wider audience. Ideas and further details for a performance can be found on page 14 of the Supplementary Resources document, including a template for inviting audience members and certificates for students for their involvement.

Share the sensory sequence in Activity Sheet 4 (page 7 of the Supplementary Resources document) with an adult or peer.

10 minutes: Plenary

Come together to plan how you will share the message of your animal welfare performance. Who could be invited? Hand out invitations to the performance - students can write in, or have scribed, the names of people they would like to invite.

With your students reiterate the main themes of your learning through these set of lessons: "It is important that people come to our performance so that they can learn...". Have students volunteer information, e.g. that cats need water, that a dog with his tail hidden is frightened etc.