

Hello!

This month I attended a memorial for my late colleague Professor John West Burnham. John was an amazing intellectual inspirational leader and was really influential in my headships challenging my thinking on many occasions. He wasn't just inspirational, he was my aspiration.

As I read through Andy's assemblies this month I am reminded of John and his positive outlook; he would have loved Agents of Hope!

Have a great month and enjoy some aspiration!

Hazel Pulley, CEO Excelsior MAT

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For information about services Excelsior MAT offers see

<https://excelsiormat.org/work-with-us/service-for-schools>



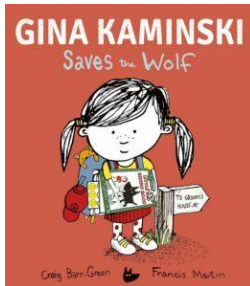
Welcome to the new Agents of Hope newsletter. I was so excited to find the book this month, "Gina Kaminski saves the wolf". The main character is neuro-diverse and the point of the story is how they manage their every day feelings of anxiety and make sense of their world. This story is a gift for us – the main character has a feelings chart that she uses throughout and there is even a wonderful but where she finds there isn't a correct feeling listed on her chart... but she gets on with it anyway. Thank you Craig Barr-Green and Francis Martin, I will be using this book for years to come and I can think of children who will be able to relate.

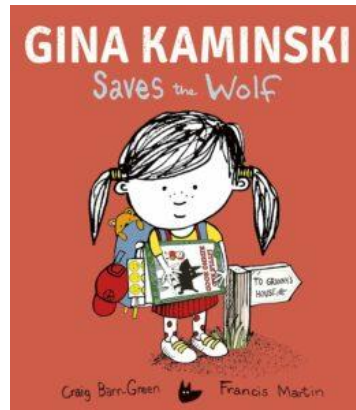
There are also three new assemblies to teach mental health and well being. I think my favourite is Kennyi – it makes me giggle every time I watch it!

Have a great October,

Best wishes

Andrew Moffat





Text: Gina Kaminski saves the wolf by Craig Barr-Green and Francis Martin

Enquiry question: How do I fix problems?

RSE links:

Respectful relationships: practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.

Starter: Look at the front cover – what book is Gina reading? What is the story of Little Red Riding Hood? What does the title suggest Gina is going to do? Does the wolf in that story need saving?

Main: Read Gina Kaminski saves the wolf and discuss:

- Why does Gina have a chart? How does it help her in class?
- Why do you think Gina find it hard to choose between two books?
- Why does Gina prepare so carefully for her trip to fairy tale land? Is it good to prepare? Does everyone need the same amount of preparation?
- How can mum make her instructions easier for Gina?
- Compare the facts Gina gives to granny with mums instructions – how are they different?

Activity: Discuss Gina's solutions to the three mistakes:

1. The cake – she eats it – any other solutions?
2. The shortcut – she sticks to the road – any other suggestions?
3. The wolf- get it to jump in to a book – any other way of saving the wolf?

Children write the three problems and write news solutions to them.

Gina has a chart that gives all the feelings she experiences in her story, can you remember them? There is one feeling that is not on her chart (when she tells the woodcutter the wolf has gone). Construct a new feelings chart for Gina with all the feelings she might need during the day and including the woodcutter feeling.

Plenary: How does Gina manage her different feelings? Is it always possible to prepare for every feeling or event? What do you think Gna would do if something unexpected happened? How would you help Gina if she was in your class, how could Gina help you? What can we learn from Gina?

Why is this story about no outsiders?

I start each assembly by showing the picture and then asking children to guess what the story is; “What do you see, where so you think it is, what might the story be?” after a few guesses and a discussion I tell them the story and then use the questions listed in each plan to explore the situation and relate to our lives. I encourage children to listen and debate with each other; “Would anyone like to build on what xxx has just said?”; “Does anyone agree with that?”; “Does anyone disagree with that?”; “Would anyone like to explain in a different way?”



[Woman leaves 'kindness packages' for people to find in Calne - BBC News](#)

A mysterious person called “Miss Busy” is leaving kindness packages for people on walking routes in Wiltshire to brighten up their day. The packages include cards, stickers, small books and messages.

Miss Busy said she got the idea while walking with her daughter one day and finding a crochet key chain. She says finding the chain really cheered her up. So she decided to start leaving little packages for other people.

Miss Busy wants the packages to be found so she leaves them in sight; she hangs them on trees. People have started using the blank cards in Miss Busy’s packages to leave notes for other people. One man said he was taking his dog out for a walk when he found a package, “It was right there, it was hanging from a tree. I opened it up and it made me smile.”

- Why do you think Miss Busy is doing this?
- Why does she remain anonymous?
- “Finding the crochet chain really cheered me up,” how did this cheer her up? Is it because she always wanted a crochet key chain? If she had found a little wooden train, would it have still made her happy?
- “I opened it up and it made me smile.” - Mrs Busy does not even know what this man likes! Does that matter? Would any present make someone smile? Do you think it is the present that matters, or the words with it?
- Look at the picture, why is the package sealed in a plastic bag?
- Why have people started to leave other messages for new people?
- Is there anything we could do in our school like this? (what do we need to be careful of – litter)
- What can we learn from Miss Busy?
- What does this show about people today? Why is this a story of hope?



[11-yr-old spelling bee contestant giggles at 'sardoodledom' - Upworthy](#)

A clip has resurfaced on social media of an 11 year old child breaking in to giggles during a spelling bee competition when he was asked to spell a funny sounding word.

The Scripps national spelling bee is held annually in America. Competitors have to memorize root words, phonetic rules and unusual spellings in order to be crowned champion. They are given a word and have to spell it out loud. The event is also televised so the pressure is high.

In 2007, 11 year old Kenny Aouad was asked to spell the word “Sardoodledom”. After repeating the word, Kenny burst out laughing. Sardoodledom loosely means melodrama in acting; a plot structure that is contrived.

You can see Kenny’s reaction in the link above. It is delightful. Bu the best bot is here he composes himself and says “I’ll give it a go” .. and then spells it correctly!

People praised Kenny for being himself in a situation that was very stressful. Kenny broke the tension. He also carried the audience with him.

At the end of the competition, Kenny came 34th, in 2009 he returned and came 5th.

- What is a spelling bee, why is it harder than a normal spelling test?
- How do you think competitors feel as they approach the mic? Why?
- Why do you think Kenny laughed at Sardoodledum?
- Does anyone want to have a go at spelling it out loud?
- Why do you think the clip of Kenny laughing went viral?
- Broke the tension – what does that mean?
- Should Kenny have remained serious? Is he being disrespectful to the competition?
- How did Kenny compose himself – “I’ll give it a go” – what does that tell us about the kind of person Kenny is?
- What can we learn from Kenny about coping in stressful situations?
- Why is this a story of hope?



[Senior dog wins the crowd at dachshund race \(upworthy.com\)](https://www.upworthy.com)

There is an event at the University of California every year where dozens of dachshunds race after a toy rabbit to see who is 'top dog'.

This year an elderly dog called Sophie entered the race. When Sophie was introduced at the start of the race, she was thought to be a hopeless competitor as all the other dachshunds were pups with lots of energy and vitality.

Sure enough, as the race started, the dogs raced to the finish line. Sophie was quickly left behind at the back. But Sophie never gave up and it was clear very soon which dog the crowd were rooting for. As Sophie made it to the finish in her own time, the crowd went wild. There is footage you can watch in the link above.

Sophie did not win any medals but everyone said she won the hearts of the crowd. Thousands of people shared the video on social media and made comments like, "Just goes to show that even the oldest among us still have a great amount of heart. Just ask my 90 year old mother!"

- Why isn't this story about the winning dog?
- Why was everyone thinking Sophie was going to lose when they saw her? Of course, they were right about that, but what was everyone wrong about?
- Why do you think Sophie became a hero when she actually came last?
- This story is about a dog, is this story relevant to humans? Why?
- What can we learn from Sophie?
- Why is this a story of hope?



[Construction workers stop work to fill up a little kid's toy cart \(upworthy.com\)](https://www.upworthy.com)

People are often very busy at work and a construction site is no exception; there are deadlines to meet and pressure is high as there are safety measures to think about all the time.

On this particular day, a child watched the workers as they dug up the road to lay pipes. The child was very excited as they loved big machines and had their own truck that they loved to play with. The child pushed their own truck near to the big trucks so that they felt they were part of the dig. The child's mum held on to them so they were safe.

The workers stated to show the child how the machines worked and to their surprise, suddenly, one of the operators manoeuvred their massive metal claw above the child's truck, whereupon they filled the toy truck with dirt.

The video was shared on social media and thousands of people applauded the construction workers for taking time out of their day to fill the child's truck.

- What sort of job do you think the construction workers were doing in the road?
- What are the dangers around construction sites?
- Why was the child's mum holding on to them tight, was it safe for them to be watching?
- Is it a good idea to push your toy truck on to a construction site? Explain your answer.
- What do you think the construction workers first thought when they saw the kid and their truck?
- Why do you think they decided to fill up the truck?
- What do you think was the impact on the child when their truck was filled with dirt?
- By doing this, what do you think the construction workers are showing the child about people today?
- What can we learn from the construction workers?
- Why is this a story of hope?

Note: I have deliberately not given the child a gender, just to subtly challenge gender stereotypes and expectations that the child was a boy (it was a boy!) You could mention this at the end and ask the children whether they think the child was a boy or girl; it would be great if you got an reply back that it could be either or that it didn't matter.

Newsletter written by Andrew Moffat, Personal Development Lead at Excelsior MAT, AHT at Green Meadow Primary School. <https://excelsiormat.org/>

For weekly No Outsiders assemblies on current news events with a focus on equality and diversity, go to the assembly plans link on www.no-outsiders.com

There are also free No Outsiders lesson plans for additional picture books to the ones in the scheme on the website <https://no-outsiders.com/lesson-plans>

Andrew is available for No Outsiders / Equality and Diversity CPD in schools and at conferences.

Training options:

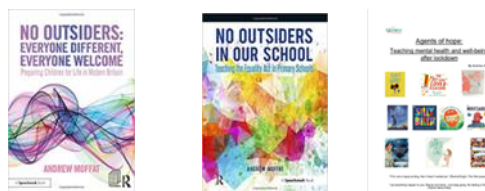
- A day in your school modelling lessons across both key stages enabling staff to watch No Outsiders / equality lessons in their class followed by whole school inset
- One hour Insets or twilights
- Whole day inset or half day inset
- Conference keynotes / workshops
- Teacher trainee lectures / workshops

Email a.moffat@excelsiormat.org for details. Dates available from September 2023.

See www.no-outsiders.com for more information about No Outsiders.

Andrew is the author of

- “No Outsiders: Everyone different, everyone equal” (Speechmark 2020)
- “No Outsiders in our school: Teaching the Equality Act in Primary Schools” (Speechmark 2015).
- “Agents of hope: Teaching mental health and well-being after lockdown” (2020) available for free download at <https://excelsiormat.org/pd-at-excelsior>



Also available- full Excelsior PD scheme written by Andrew Moffat. Three modules are available for free download: “Relationships”, “Living in the wider world”, “Health and well being”. All modules have plans for Y1-Y6. Email a.moffat@excelsiormat.org

Awards for Andrew’s work:

MBE 2017 (Equality and Diversity in Education)
Top 10 finalist Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize 2019,
Pink News ‘Role Model of the year’ 2019, European Diversity Awards ‘Hero of the year’ 2019,
Honorary Doctorate, University of Worcester 2019,
Visiting professor, University of Sunderland 2019,