

Claire's environmental print day

Claire gets up and draws her curtains which have letters of the alphabet on. As she looks out of her window, she notices the paperboy walking down the street carrying a bright orange bag with the word 'News' written on it. She wonders if her older brother Craig will be reading the newspaper already. Claire goes downstairs to have her breakfast. Yes, Craig is reading the newspaper. There are some big black letters on the front page and a picture: 'Princess Diana'. It must say this as there is a picture of Princess Diana next to it. On her plate, there is a postcard from her Granny. Her mum reads the word 'Blackpool' on the front. She then reads the message on the postcard. Evidently it is raining in Blackpool, but her Grandad has managed to paddle in the sea. 'What cereal do you want, Claire? Come and choose,' her Mum says.

Claire looks at the four packets on the breakfast table. She recognises the bright yellow cereal packet with a blue 'W' for 'Weetabix' and chooses this. As she puts one Weetabix into her bowl, she notices a red token on the side of the packet and asks her Mum to cut it out as she is collecting them for a 'Weetabix Monster'. She needs three more in order to send for the monster, She drinks her milk from her favourite cup that has a 'C' for Claire printed on the side. Claire can see other things in the kitchen that begin with the 'c' in her name: carrots, candle, a can of beans and Candy their cat.

After finishing her drink, she goes upstairs to get ready for her morning at the nursery. Claire brushes her teeth using a new tube of 'Colgate' toothpaste. It's got a 'c' in it, just like her name. 'What shall I wear today?' she asks herself. Claire looks in her wardrobe and sees her blue jumper which her granny knitted for her. It has a picture and the name of 'Tinky Winky', her favourite Teletubby, on it. Granny had sewn her name into the back collar so she could read it and know which way to put it on. Claire puts on her new shoes. They have a bright white 'tick' on them which shines in the dark and they leave a pattern and the word 'Nike' in wet sand. Claire picks up her book bag containing the book *Spot's Birthday Party* (which she shared with her Mum last night) safely tucked inside. She will be able to borrow another one from the nursery library today. Her book bag has a house drawn on it with children playing around it and the words 'Nursery House' written on the door. It is just like the nursery where she is going for the morning.

The kitchen

Recipe books

Calendar

Symbols and logos on kitchen appliances

Written and pictorial labels on food packages

Sticky labels on fruit

Written and pictorial labels on washing powder packages

Cooking instructions on food cans and packages

Numbers, letters and symbols on the dials on the cooker, microwave, fridge, washing machine

Note to the milkman

Written shopping list

Till receipt from the supermarket

Advertising leaflets

Bills

Family noticeboard with items pinned to it, e.g. dentist and doctor appointment cards, letters from school, takeaway menus, advertisement leaflets

Words on storage jars – ‘Tea’ ‘Sugar’ ‘Coffee’

Children’s pictures and writing stuck onto the fridge

Words and messages on mugs

Magnetic letters and fridge magnets (words and logos) on the fridge

Plastic carrier bags, advertising shops

Money

Cheque book

The sitting room or lounge

Television

Newspapers

Magazines

Books

Comics

Catalogues

Radio and TV Times

Telephone directory

Address book

Message pad and pencil by the telephone

Birthday cards

Letters

Forms

Knitting pattern

DIY leaflet

Written words, symbols and numbers on the electric or gas fire

The bathroom

Words on soap and toiletries

Words on towels, flannel and bath mat

Foam letters for bath play

Waterproof book for bath play

Words, symbols and numbers on taps and shower

A child's bedroom

Comics

Books

Magazines

Catalogues

Postcards

Posters

Story tapes

Words and symbols on bedding (quilt and pillow case) and curtains

Toys and game packages and their contents

Clothing

Footwear

Computer

Television

Tape recorder

The short journey to nursery on the bus is quite busy. Claire knows she is going the right way as she recognises some shop, street and road signs along the way: 'Daniel's the Hairdresser' (where she has her hair cut), the letters 'BP' in bright yellow shows her the petrol station where cars are filled up with petrol, the sign 'Time and Plaice' with the smiling fish is where her Mum buys fish and chips for tea and 'Sally's Sweet Shop' is where Claire goes to spend her pocket money on sweets. The black, white and red sign showing a parent and a child tells her that she is near 'Nursery House' and the sign tells drivers to drive carefully as there are children around. As Claire walks up the drive she can read the sign on the front door: 'Welcome'.

Claire and her Mum go inside. She finds her coat peg to hang her coat. It has got a picture of a brown and white dog and the word 'Claire' underneath. Claire shows her Mum her painting on the wall. Claire had told Tracey (the nursery nurse) about it and she had written underneath 'Claire with her cat Candy'. Claire now reads this to her Mum. There are many messages and words for Claire to read in the nursery. These tell her where things belong and tell her what to do. In the toilets, a sign reminds her to 'Wash your hands'; in the painting area a sign tells her to 'Hang your apron up here'; above the Book Corner a sign invites her to 'Come and read a book'; her name written on a label stuck onto a milk bottle shows Claire which is her bottle to drink at Snack Time. The menu by the door tells her that her snack today is an apple. In the Home Corner, there is lots to read (comics, newspapers, catalogues, recipe books) and lots to write on (a pad by the telephone, a calendar, a diary, paper and envelopes to write letters on). Claire joins in all the activities during the morning. She enjoys going outside with Tracey to look at the cars in the car park and examine the number plates on them.

Tracey points out that some of the black marks are numbers and some are letters. Inside the nursery, Tracey reads her group the story of *Mrs Wishy Washy* from a big book. Claire is able to read the story and she joins in with the noises: 'wishy, washy, wishy, washy', when the animals are washed. Claire chooses the story of *The Gingerbread Man* to take home from the nursery library as it has farm animals in like those in *Mrs Wishy Washy*.

The morning session is soon over and Mum comes to take her home. On the journey home, they stop at the newsagents. Mum buys a magazine for herself and a 'Postman Pat' comic for Claire. Claire asks for a tube of 'Smarties' as she likes to find the hidden letter inside the lid. What letter will it be? A look on the lid reveals the letter 'r'.

Claire's afternoon is spent doing several activities. She reads her comic, plays with words, numbers, shapes and colours on her 'Talking Computer' and sings along to the songs on her 'Nursery Rhyme Time' video. On children's television, she enjoys watching the story of *Kipper* who goes with his friend Tiger camping. At tea time, Claire has great fun playing with the spaghetti letters on her plate. She finds a 'c' for cat and 'm' for Mum. At bath time, Claire makes her name on the side of the bath by throwing the wet sponge letters onto the bath side. Once dry, she snuggles down under her quilt which is covered with letters and numbers. She remembers the activity at nursery and looks for some numbers in and amongst the alphabet letters on her quilt, finding a '5', '3' and '7'. Her Mum comes in to read her a story. Claire chooses *The Gingerbread Man* which she borrowed from her nursery library. Before she drops off to sleep, she has joined in the rhyme, 'Run, run as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!', several times.

Claire has had a busy day and has been surrounded by letters, words, logos, signs and pictures. She has listened, watched and played with them, learning about her world and the part literacy plays in communicating meaning to her. It must be stressed that children would not normally have access to all of these experiences. The picture presented here is deliberately extreme in order to demonstrate the potential that the environment has for surrounding children with print and texts. However, all children will have some opportunity to interact with print in their everyday life.