The Great Spaghetti Suit

Author: Alan MacDonald
Range: Family story
Theme: Pride goes before a fall
Teaching Notes authors: Gill Howell and Vicki Yates

Synopsis
None of the suits in Sue’s shop are good enough for the famous singer Bernard Bellow. When he threatens to tell everyone to stop buying suits from their shop, Sue and her son make a suit for him that amazes everyone … until Rolo the dog makes it unravel in front of their eyes.

Group or guided reading

Introducing the book
- Look together at the cover. Ask the children to suggest where the story takes place.
- Read the title and ask the children to predict what the story will be about. Ask the children to find the word ‘spaghetti’ in the title.
- Read the blurb on the back cover. Ask the children if this gives them any more clues to the plot.
- Read the author’s name and ask the children if they have read other books by this author.

Strategy check
- Ask the children to tell you which strategies they can use to work out new words.
- Ask the children to find the word ‘spaghetti’ on the title page. Ask a volunteer to read the word, separating it into phonemes.
- Find the word ‘shoulders’ on page 4 line 3. Ask another volunteer to separate it into phonemes.
- Find the word ‘who’s’ on page 3 line 2. Remind the children that apostrophes can be used to show shortened forms of words. Ask a volunteer to say what the complete words are, i.e. ‘who is’.

Independent reading
Focus: Explain to the children that you want them to think about the following question while they are reading independently: What would happen if the shop doesn’t make a special suit for the famous Bellow?
- Observe the strategies the children use when they meet new vocabulary, and prompt them as needed.
- At the end of a chapter encourage the children to recount the main points in the correct sequence.
- Praise the children for reading with expression.

Returning and responding to the text
- When the children have read the whole story, ask them to say why Sue and her son were worried that they couldn’t find a suit in their shop that pleased Bernard Bellow. Ask the children to find the evidence in the text.
- Ask them to describe how Bernard Bellow behaved while he was in their shop. What does this tell us about his character?
Why does Bernard Bellow look down his nose on page 6?
Ask the children if they think Sue’s son was pleased when Rolo started eating the suit.
Did Bernard Mellow deserve what happened?
Ask the children to say what they liked about this story.

Speaking and listening activities
Ask the children to work with a partner and take on the roles of the boy in the story and the famous Bellow.
Ask them to discuss together how to act out the scene at the start of the story, when Bernard Bellow tries on all the suits and fails to like any of them.
Ask some of the children to perform the scenes for the others.
Praise children for putting themselves in the role of the characters.
Ask the children to comment on each other’s performances. What did they do or say that was funny? How did they show their personalities?

Further reading activities
Ask the children to look through the book in pairs. Ask them to suggest speech bubbles for each of the illustrations.
Provide the children with Post-it Notes and ask them to write their speech bubbles, then swap them with their partner’s and add the speech bubbles to the illustrations.
Ask them to take turns to read the dialogue in the story using an expressive tone. Encourage the children to think about how Bernard Bellow would say his words.

Suggestions for using ICT
Ask the children to use a word processor and their story maps from their writing activity to retell the story in their own words.
Prompt the children to ask a partner to read their story and edit it, showing the changes they made. Ask them to compare stories and discuss whether the edits improve the story or not.

Writing activities
Ask the children to list the places in the story where the main events take place, i.e. the shop, the house, the theatre, the street.
Ask them to draw a story map showing the settings and, using the book for reference, to add notes detailing the events that took place in each setting.