

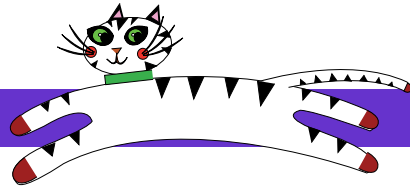


Catrìona

air chuairt

TEACHERS' NOTES





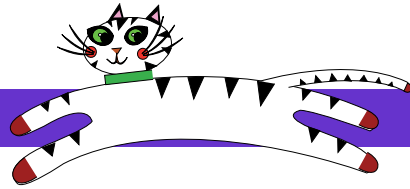
THE CATRÌONA BAG



INTRODUCTION

The Catrìona Bag contains a range of materials, artefacts and activities to help teachers and other adults in delivering the Early Years curriculum in Scotland. These are the basic components within the Catrìona Bag:

1. one *Here Comes Catrìona* picture book
2. one set of ten Sràid a' Chnuic houses
3. four small books: *Am Beicear*, *An Dotair*, *Am Fear-smalaidh*, *An t-Iasgair*
4. one Catrìona glove puppet
5. one Catrìona toy
6. two role-play mask templates: Catrìona the Cat; Calum the Dog
7. four stick puppet templates: the baker, the doctor, the fireman, the fisherman (you will need lolly sticks or similar to assemble puppets)
8. one Catrìona shape game (four Catrìona baseboards; four 'shape' cards for cutting out; one 'shape' dice)
9. one set of forty-eight small picture cards
10. one Catrìona lotto game (four lotto cards, sixteen counters, sixteen picture cards taken from the set of forty-eight)
11. one spinner for the feelings game: 'Ciamar a tha thu a Chatrìona?'
12. two sheets of Catrìona reward stickers

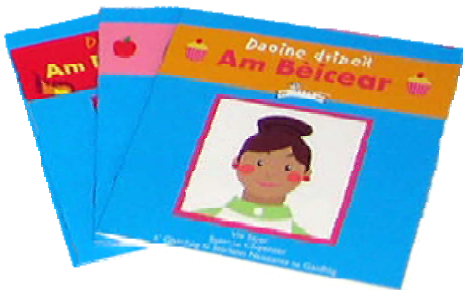


RATIONALE

All the work supported by Catriona is based around the character of one inquisitive young cat and her fondness for visiting her friends and neighbours. Luckily they all live in one long terrace, Sràid a' Chnuic, in houses which differ in height, width, colour and shape; the number of windows varies as does their design and also the design of the front doors. Both exterior and interior views are intended to stimulate discussion and comparison since the inhabitants, too, vary according to age, gender, ethnicity and occupation. The picture book is a suitable size for reading aloud, and for sharing with a small group.

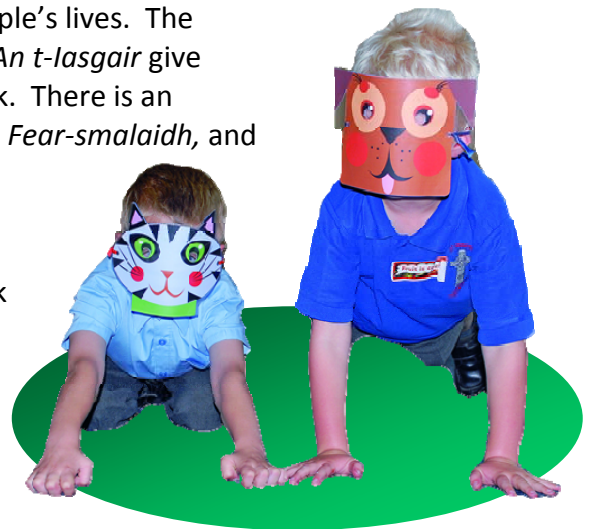
Language patterns are very important in *Catriona air Chuairt*. The pattern of house number, greeting, an offer of breakfast and Catriona's response: Cha ghabh, tapadh leat (no thank you) is the same on each of Catriona's visits except the last, where she doesn't have time to respond, so eager is she to escape from Calum, the vet's large and enthusiastic dog! The pattern of counting forwards, established at house number 1, is reversed when Catriona begins her flight homewards.

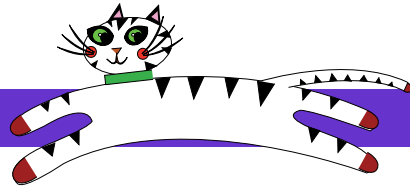
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, WELL-BEING AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY



A sense of community and the valuing of friends and family is very important to *Catriona Air Chuairt*. Different cultures are suggested within the story (Signora Sidoli and Dotair Patel), as are the different occupations and roles played by adults and children; this gives opportunities to discuss stereotyping. The white collar which suggests that Anna Mhurchaidh's role may be as a minister is a starting point for further discussion about the importance of spirituality and worship in people's lives. The

small books *Am Beicear*, *An Dotair*, *Am Fear-smalaidh* and *An t-Iasgair* give opportunities to explore how different people live and work. There is an especial focus on the importance of physical exercise in *Am Fear-smalaidh*, and the role of food is important in *Am Beicear*. Handled sensitively these elements provide opportunities to talk about the importance of hygiene, a healthy diet and different kinds of food and drink. Although each small book title stands alone, there are many opportunities for cross-referencing between the characters. Above all, there are opportunities to focus upon the importance of people's feelings, with specific resources, such as the spinner game: *Ciamar a tha thu a Chatriona?* and masks and puppets, to support role play.

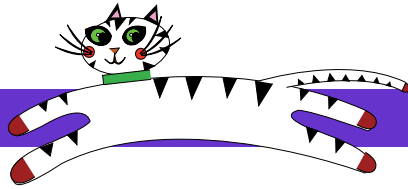




Here are just some of the possible activities to support children's personal development:

- Discuss the value of eating together and the importance of breakfast as a meal. Discuss the choices on offer in each house and what the children like to eat at home.
- Eating together. Planning, developing and reflecting are important aspects of children's learning and this should be considered when planning first hand experiences. Children should be encouraged to think about planning and organising in advance what they are going to eat and drink, and then helped to develop the activity in practical ways, thinking about the implications at each stage: washing hands, preparing food, setting out the breakfast area, eating companionably and clearing away. Reflecting on the experience afterwards is extremely important too and lays foundations for children to be able to recreate the activity in different ways within role play.
- Children should be encouraged to discuss the feelings of the characters in the story. Catriona is very frightened by Calum, the vet's dog. Did Calum really mean to frighten her in this way? These feelings may be explored further in role play. Masks of Catriona and Calum are provided in the bag. Perhaps Calum and Catriona have been brought together to talk about 'the situation'. Calum probably wants to say sorry to Catriona for scaring her, but he may also want to explain that he was only playing! There is potential to create other role play situations using the Calum and Catriona masks and the iasgair, dotair, beicear and fear-smalaidh stick puppets. Calum has probably paid a visit to their premises too!
- It shouldn't be forgotten that dogs have an important helping role – guide and rescue dogs, for example – so it is important to think about situations where Calum supports other characters. He might, for example, smell smoke, and play a key role in alerting the fire service.
- The feelings game *Ciamar a tha thu a Chatriona* uses a spinner and four images of Catriona in different moods. Children take turns with the spinner and, depending on where the pointer finishes, tell the rest of the group how Catriona is feeling. Perhaps 'tha Catriona brònach.' Questions may then be asked and answers modelled by the adult assisting the activity, for example, 'Oh tha Catriona brònach, bidh mise brònach nuair... Cuin a bhios tusa brònach Sara?'





- At the end of the story we see Catriona dreaming (the pictures recap parts of the story). This provides an opportunity for children to articulate both what Catriona is dreaming and what they dream about.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

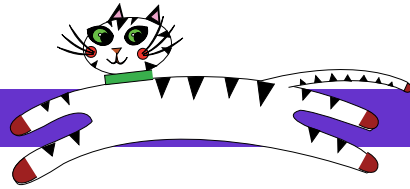
Catriona is greeted in a variety of ways in Gaelic, and Mrs Sidoli greets her in Italian. Activities based on Catriona encourage a wide range of communication in both indoor and outdoor environments and through text-based and practical activities. These are just some of the possible activities to support this vital area of learning:

TALKING ABOUT THE STORY AND THE PICTURES

- The pictures in the story are full of incidental detail and humour. Time should be given so that children can articulate what they see, especially in the house interiors.
- Throughout the story an expectation is created that Catriona is going to refuse breakfast, whatever she is offered; the opportunity should be taken to discuss the kinds of food on offer, and the children should be encouraged to *predict* what Catriona would like to eat.
- The set of individual houses offers opportunities for precise description. There are opportunities here for using mathematical vocabulary. Children should be encouraged to ask questions of each other: (How many? What colour? What kind of? What shape?) This can be turned into a more extended guessing game where a child thinks of a particular house (either by name or number) and everybody has to ask questions to elicit clues.
- Houses may be classified according to criteria chosen by the children. The names are provided below for quick reference:



- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1, Sraid a' Chnuic | An Acarsaid |
| 2, Sraid a' Chnuic | Darach |
| 3, Sraid a' Chnuic | Sealladh na Tràghad |
| 4, Sraid a' Chnuic | An Cala |



- 5, Sraid a' Chnuic
- 6, Sraid a' Chnuic
- 7, Sraid a' Chnuic
- 8, Sraid a' Chnuic
- 9, Sraid a' Chnuic
- 10, Sraid a' Chnuic

- Ceol na Mara
- An Seann Mhansa
- Casa Mia
- Taigh an Leathad
- Fasgadh
- Ceann a' Bhàigh



- Children may be encouraged to describe their own homes, perhaps with a photograph as a prop, supported by questions from others in the group, or they might be asked to describe and design the house they would like to have. (See Creative Development) They should be encouraged to choose a name which describes their home.
- Catriona's Lotto Game may be played by up to 4 children. It is based upon four of the houses and objects related to them. Each basecard shows the items to be collected for that house.

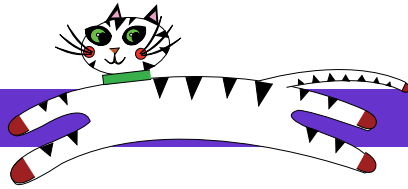
1. The teacher or adult takes 16 small playing cards from the pack of 48. These cards are those which represent the items on each of the 4 basecards; for example, *silidh*, *mias*, *cat* and *bonnach* are the items on the Casa Mia basecard where Mrs Sidoli the baker lives.



- 2. Each player receives a basecard.
- 3. The adult 'calls' using the 16 playing cards as her 'bank'. She may decide that it is enough to show the visual image. Children then decide whether the card is relevant to their house and, if so, they name it and say a little bit about it, for example, who the object belongs to or how it relates to the house.
- 4. A harder version of the game involves giving the children clues rather than simply showing pictures.
- 5. When children recognise an object belonging to their house, they claim a counter to cover the matching image on their baseboard.

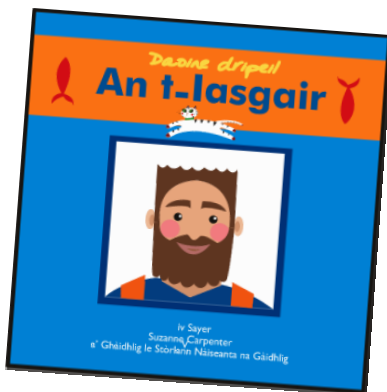
The winner is the first player to cover all four images.





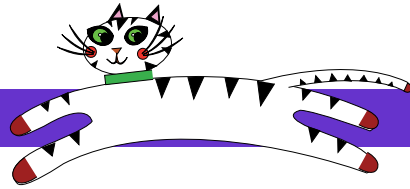
ROLE PLAY

- Spontaneous role-play activities can be developed from the activities of the adults in the story: fisherman, hotel owner; builder, fireman, vet, cook, gardener, child-minder, doctor, baker, vicar. Care should be taken to offer props to suit the characters, and the quality of play will be improved if specific scenarios are offered. For example, there might be a crisis in the hotel because they have run out of eggs for breakfast, or the fisherman might have discovered a hole in the net just before setting off in his boat.



- The small books are also helpful in supporting role play because they give more character detail and background. They can be used in conjunction with the stick puppets to develop role play. Care has been taken to avoid stereotyping as far as possible. Inviting people in to talk to the children would be helpful in this area because it would allow the children to ask questions. The simple format of the small books could be used as a model for the children to make books based on visitors from their own community, using the digital camera and ICT.
- Specific settings from the story might be developed to support role play over a longer period. For example, a bakery and/or baker's shop could be opened, or a tourist office, an estate agents, or a small hotel. Ideally any longer term setting should develop from a visit to a real location. Much discussion would stem from a visit and photographs could be used to recreate the correct 'look'. Any role play activity based in such a location should offer built-in opportunities for reading, writing and mark making – filling out forms, taking bookings, using an appointments diary, ordering stock, writing bills etc). Problems and specific scenarios can again be suggested to prevent play from becoming repetitive or stale.
- The breakfast situation around which *Catriona air Chuairt* revolves could lead to the setting up of a café or breakfast bar. A variety of different breakfasts could be offered, again providing opportunities for emergent literacy through the use of menu boards, notepads, order books by the phone etc.



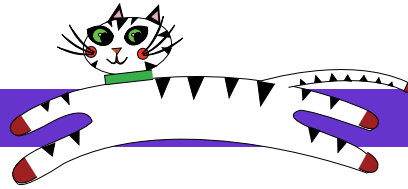


- A focus on preparing breakfast could be used to generate a supermarket or shop visit, with an emphasis on making and using a list, and checking the shopping bags back in the classroom, along with shared reading and writing opportunities for organising, stocking and labelling a food preparation and serving area.
- Within role play, it is very important to give opportunities for speaking, listening, reading, writing and mark-making, so there should always be support materials on hand, such as leaflets and flyers, as well as a range of pads, paper and chalkboards. There should always be a phone to stimulate oral communication.
- There are many opportunities for extending play into the outdoors. Sràid a' Chnuic itself could be marked out in chalk on an outside wall. Visits and deliveries could then be made by a variety of characters, for example the minister could be delivering invitations to a special celebration or visiting a new baby or someone who hasn't been very well.
- An outside box could be developed for one or more of the characters in the story. The builder's resources, for example, might include a safety helmet, tape measure, hose, bucket, wheelbarrow, bricks, trowel and materials for making 'cement' (washing up liquid and sand). Providing that children are appropriately dressed, there are few limitations. Opportunities for co-operative play are extensive and each different scenario offers the chance to develop different kinds of language, both in terms of vocabulary and grammar. (Commands and instructions are likelier in a building scenario; questions and statements are likelier in a home visit.)



READING AND WRITING

Shared reading may be conducted in small groups using the picture book and the patterned language means that children will quickly become familiar with elements of the text. The same language pattern can be used to support shared writing. Either Catriona or another pet could visit houses and people chosen by the children. The same pattern of house name (or number), greeting and offer of food could be used along with a response of 'Cha ghabh tapadh leat' or 'Cha toil leam...'. Perhaps the story might have a different outcome with Catriona accepting politely, / 'Tapadh leat, Is toigh leam _____'. Catriona's visits could take place at a different time of day – which would give opportunities to discuss other foods to promote children's awareness of healthy eating choices.



GAMES

Before any game is played, it is essential that children know what the pictures on the cards represent. Lay the cards face upwards on the table and discuss with the children what each one is. This activity should be conducted in conjunction with the picture book *Catriona air Chuairt*, so that the children see the picture items in context. Correct naming is especially important where the figures of the vet and the fisherman are concerned.

Games to develop visual discrimination

GAME 1 : PAIRS

1. This game may be played by up to 4 children. Where appropriate, the full pack of 48 cards may be split so that children are playing with a smaller number of cards.
2. First check that the children recognise and can name all the images.



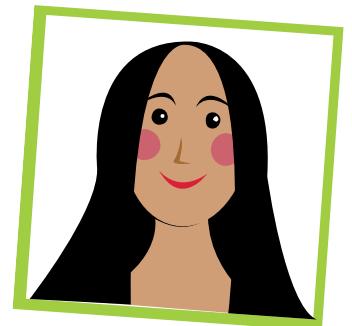
3. Turn the cards face down. The first child turns up a card and names it, leaving the card face up in the place where she found it; she then picks up a second card, names it and leaves it face up in its place.

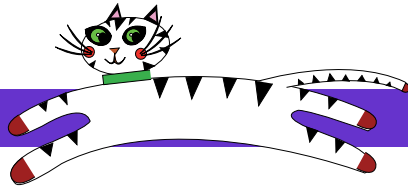
4. If the two cards match, the child keeps the pair and has another go. It is important that cards are always left in the correct position, until collected as a pair, because this is a game of memory which depends upon visualisation.

5. If the child fails to turn up a matching pair, play passes to the next player.
6. Play continues until there are no more cards on the table.
7. The winner is the person who holds the most cards (or pairs) at the end of the game.

GAME 2 : SNAP

1. This is a game for up to 4 players.
2. The pack is shuffled and dealt equally to the players.





3. Players hold their cards so that they cannot see what is in their hand.
4. Player 1 puts down a card face upwards onto the table. This is the basis for the 'central pile'.
5. Player 2 puts a card face upwards on top of the first.
6. Play continues with each player adding a card face upwards to the central pile until two identical cards are put down consecutively. At this point any player may call 'Snap'. She then 'wins' every card in the central pile and adds them to her 'hand'.
7. Play continues until players have no more cards to put down. The winner is the player with the most cards at the end of the game.



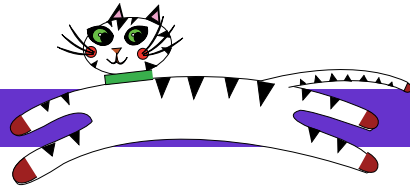
GAME 3 : KIM'S GAME

1. Spread the cards out face upwards on the table (limit the number according to the children's ability). Discuss with the children the detail of what they see, not just the identity of each card.
2. Ask them to close their eyes.
3. Remove a card (or more than one).
4. When the children open their eyes again, they should be able to tell you which card/s are missing.
5. Children themselves should be given a turn at leading the game and removing cards.

GAME 4 : I HEAR WITH MY LITTLE EAR

With cards spread out face upwards, teacher or LSA announces, 'I hear with my little ear something **beginning** with _____' (Cluinnidh mise lem chluais bhig_____). Children claim the card if they can identify it from the **initial** sound.

NB No letters are involved in this game; it is purely oral.



GAME 5: PICTURES AND WORDS

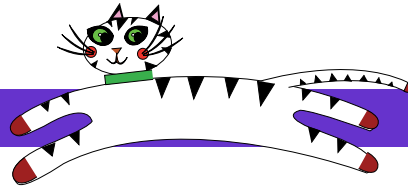
A pairs game can be played based upon matching whole words and pictures. Whole words are written onto blank cards to match the picture cards selected. If children have difficulty reading the whole word, they might be encouraged to sound individual letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Sràid a' Chnuic itself represents a physical number line and supports children in their awareness of numbers and patterns in the environment and everyday life. Mathematical language can be developed in discrete activities but also within role play. Each house has a number and Catriona proceeds in sequence from number 1 to number 10 (and then very quickly in reverse!) Each house also has a physical identity: it has shape, height and width, a number of storeys and windows, distinctive colours for walls and doors and a distinctively patterned roof. There are many different objects to count, for example chimneys; houses may also be classified on the basis of these properties. The set of individual houses gives opportunities for the following activities:

- Counting activities: how many houses, doors, windows, grown-ups, children or animals can the children count? 'More' and 'fewer' may also be used in comparing houses on the basis of numbers of windows, doors etc.
- The double-sided Catriona houses form a natural number line. Blu-tacked to a wall or white board, they may be matched to a digit-card numeral or to written representations of the number. Children may be encouraged to produce their own numbers to match each house on blank card.
- Cards may be removed from the line to develop the concept of odd and even numbers.
- The sequence of houses is also helpful in developing the language of order: first, second, third...
- Parcels (or mail) may be sorted and delivered according to house number. This activity

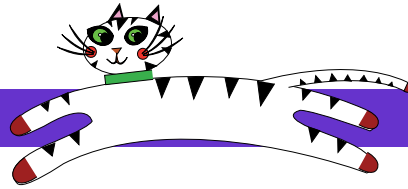




may be tailored specifically to support one-to-one correspondence and may be extended to the outdoors if houses are chalked on an outside wall.

- Patterns and sequences can be discussed, for example, the sequence of house colours can be investigated and recognised as a repeating pattern and recreated through practical activities (beads or cubes threaded onto a lace) or represented by colouring squares.
- The group of individual house cards can be used to develop the language of size and comparison. Houses may be described as tall or short; narrow or wide. Houses can also be compared: taller, tallest; shorter, shortest; narrower, narrowest; wider, widest.
- A mathematical properties game may be played to develop mathematical reasoning. 'Can you find...a house with a red door?' The game can be made more demanding if further properties are added, for example: 'Can you find...a house with a red door... and three windows?' Children should also be encouraged to lead the game.
- House cards may also be grouped according to specific criteria, using large hoops or setting rings. For example, houses may be grouped according to the number of storeys or windows.
- Description of the houses also encourages positional language: beside, between, in front, behind, along, down, up. This is supported also by the Catriona toy which can be placed in a variety of positions both inside and outside the classroom. A digital camera can then be used to take pictures of Catriona which might then be developed into a caption book.
- General discussion related to breakfast foods could lead to the making and interpretation of simple charts or graphs.
- Catriona's morning visits form part of her day to day routine and offer an opportunity to recognise time of day and the passage of time. Catriona makes her visits, then eats and then goes to sleep. This may be related to reading the time on an analogue or digital clock. The children may describe and sequence their own daily routines and recognise that animals are different in the way that they order their activities.
- Shape. Suzanne Carpenter's style of illustration in *Catriona air Chuairt* lends itself to the easy identification of simple regular 2D shapes. This is true for the houses, but is also relevant to the markings on both Calum and Catriona. Children should be encouraged to notice different shapes.





- The Catriona Shape Game. For up to 4 players. Before the game begins shapes (triangles, circles and rectangles) should be cut out from the coloured Catriona shape cards.



1. Each player has a Catriona baseboard. As these are available in 4 different colours, children may be given the choice of colour to collect (or, if preferred, the coloured shapes may be collected randomly).
2. Each player takes a turn to throw the dice and, according to the shape thrown, may claim either a triangle, a circle or a rectangle. The shape is then placed on the corresponding place on the baseboard. For example, player 1 throws the dice; it lands on a triangle; she claims a triangle and places it on one of Catriona's ears.
3. Younger children may simply ask for a shape but older or more able players should be encouraged to ask more precisely. If, for example, the dice is thrown and it lands on a triangle, the player should be encouraged to say which kind of triangle is required, 'Please may I have a small green triangle?' Towards the end of the game, the options on the baseboard become fewer and fewer, and the chances of throwing an appropriate shape diminish.
4. The winner is the first person to fill his or her baseboard, but the game should continue until everybody has had the chance to collect a complete Catriona. NB the colours on the dice are for decoration only.



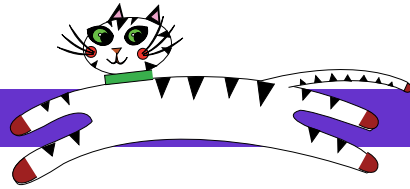
LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Gaelic is used within the story in contexts which support understanding, such as greetings, house names and Catriona's response 'Cha ghabh, tapadh leat'. Catriona's visits naturally link with the kind of simple language patterns which underpin basic social exchanges in Gaelic.

These are just some of the language patterns which derive from the situations in *Catriona* and the related resources, for example the set of houses and the Catriona toy and puppet:

- Simple greetings:
 1. *Madainn mhath.*
 2. *Feasgar math..*
 3. *Ciamar a tha thu?*





- Numbers to ten: aon, dha, tri, ceithir, còig, sia, seachd, ochd, naoi, deich.
- Simple 'where' questions – ideal to use with the Catrìona toy and a box (which could be decorated to look like a house).

Caite bheil Catrìona?

- Various 'where' answers:

*Tha Catrìona **anns** a' bhogsa*

*Tha i **fon** bhogsa.*

*Tha Catrìona **air** a' bhogsa.*

*Tha i **air beulaibh** a' bhogsa.*

*Tha Catrìona **air cùl a bhogsa***

*Tha i **ri taobh** a' bhogsa.*



- Location questions:

1. Co a tha a' fuireach an seo?

2. Caite bheil Mgr. Moireasdan a fuireach?

3. Cò a tha a' fuireach an ath dhoras ri Mgr. Moireasdan?

4. Càite bheil thusa a' fuireach?

- Location answers:

1. Tha Mgr. Moireasdan a' fuireach an seo.

2. 'Tha Anndra a' fuireach ann an Ceann a' Bhàigh'.

3. Seònaid NicGhriogair. [Tha Seònaid NicGhriogair a' fuireach an ath dhoras ri Mgr. Moireasdan.]

4. Tha mi a' fuireach air ...

- Number questions:

1. Cò mheud? [pointing to objects]

2. Cò mheud uinneag?

- Number answers:

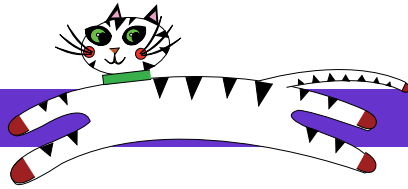
Dhà

- Colour questions:

1. De an dath a th' air taigh Signora Sidoli?

2. De an dath a th' air taigh/doras Anndra?



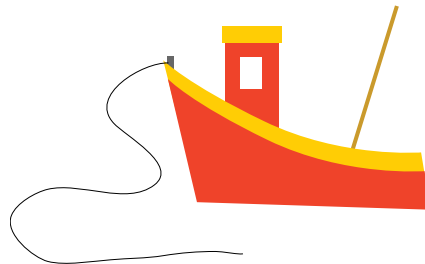


- Colour answers:
 1. Tha taigh Signora Sidoli gorm/ buidhe/ uaine/ pinc/ purpaidh.
 2. Tha doras Anndra Glas/ gorm/ buidhe/ uaine/ pinc/ purpaidh.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Catriona air Chuairt helps to increase children's curiosity about the world around them, and in particular to become aware of different kinds of work. The presence of people and animals in the story also gives opportunities to discuss care, responsibility, concern and respect.

- Role play activities are particularly effective in supporting children's awareness of the range of work people undertake. The 'outside box' is an excellent way of developing this range: Mrs Sidoli may sell her bakery products from an outside stand 'in the road', and the fisherman's many activities are more suitable outside the classroom: mending nets, taking his boat to sea, bringing in the catch, sorting and releasing smaller fish, setting lobster pots, sorting and selling the catch.

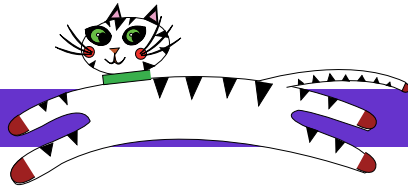


- Awareness of the locality in the story helps children to begin to recognise differences between where they live and localities in other parts of Scotland. Because the story is set in a seaside location and there is a guest house in Sràid a' Chnuic, children may be made aware of the links between people and places.
- The outdoor environment may be used to create simple maps and plans of Sràid a' Chnuic (chalked out on the playground), which may be translated to different media back in the classroom.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Catriona's body is shown in tension, arched, ready to spring. Both fine and gross motor skills can be developed through a range of Catriona related activities.

- Fine motor skills are developed through the use of small tools, such as scissors and



crayons. Although adults might prefer to cut out shapes for the Catriona shape game from the printed cards provided in the bag, additional shapes may be photocopied onto card. These may be coloured and cut out by the children before the game is played. If the Catriona baseboard is also photocopied, children might glue their shapes to the card when they have finished playing.

- Gross motor skills developed through activities such as curling, stretching, arching, darting, climbing, running are natural to a supple young cat like Catriona. Her movements could be recreated and linked to create simple sequences based on the story line.
- Positional language can be developed with the use of the Catriona toy (see Mathematical Development) and used to investigate boxes, tunnels and circuits both indoors and out.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Awareness of colour, pattern, texture and shape should be developed through observation and discussion. *Catriona air Chuairt* and the set of individual houses provide many opportunities to do this. Children should be given opportunities to experiment with representing individual houses and characters in a variety of media: through drawing, painting, printing, modelling and collage.
- Discussion about houses and children's awareness of their own homes might be developed into a planning and design activity where, either in 2D or in 3D, children plan, create and decorate their ideal home.

