

Curriculum Links	Strand	Strand Unit
Science	Living Things	Plant & Animal Life
English	Oral Language; Writing	Emotional and Imaginative Development through Language.
SPHE	1. Myself 2. Myself & the Wider World	1. Growing & Changing; Making Decisions 2. Developing Citizenship
<b>Learn Together</b> (Educate Together Schools)	1. Moral & Spiritual 2. Equality & Justice	1. Exploring Moral Development Cultivating Spiritual Growth 2. Activating Equality & Justice through positive Action

### Content objectives:

Children will understand the benefit of adopting a pet from an animal welfare organisation as opposed to buying one.

### Resources:

- [www.ispca.ie](http://www.ispca.ie)
- New Chance for Pixie
- Other Pets You Might Want to Adopt and How to Care for Them
- Cats Make Great Pets

### Learning objectives:

- Children will appreciate the benefit of adopting an animal from an animal shelter and providing it with a forever home.
- Children will listen to Pixie's happy tale and the story of her adoption.

### Differentiation:

- Children can work in groups to answer some of the questions posed in this lesson.

### Assessment:

- Teacher questions/children's questions
- Written work



# Learning activities:



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## Introduction

- Pose the following question - If someone decides to acquire a pet (after careful consideration & discussions with family members) where would they go?
- Explain that in most situations it is better to adopt a pet from an animal shelter rather than to buy one from an independent seller.
- In pairs, can the children think of any reasons why this may be?

Adoption from animal shelters also give pets a new start in a happy new home where they are wanted, loved and looked after.

- Read Pixie's story for the children.

## Conclusion:

Children express their opinions from today's lesson and draw up an advertising campaign to promote the adoption of pets from animal shelters.

## Development

Explain that animal shelters interview potential pet owners to ensure that they are suitable and responsible. Sometimes they even visit the home to ensure it is suitable for a pet. Animal shelters do not make a profit from re-homing pets.

Some independent breeders and pet sellers make a profit from selling animals. They may not be so thorough in their vetting of buyers. This may lead to the animal ending up in an unsuitable home where the 5 promises are not kept.



# New chance for Pixie



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The ISPCA took a call from someone worried about a dog living near them, Inspector Elaine Reynolds visited the house and found a Cavalier King Charles terrier cross living in a back garden. The dog called Pixie was less than one year old and had been born with only one eye.

Pixie's owners hadn't understood what would be involved in owning and training a dog. They could not housetrain her or stop her from doing damage in the house. Because they didn't know how to train her, they made her live in the back garden. She was bored and frustrated and barked all the time because she was lonely and wanted attention.

Pixie's owners agreed to give her to the ISPCA so that she could be found a better home. She was taken to the National Animal Centre in Longford to be cared for and find a new home.

Pixie is a great dog but needs to go to a family that have experience of owning a dog and who will be at home to give her the time and attention she needs.



'Pixie' the dog

Pixie is great with children and other dogs but will need experienced owners who are at home most of the time and can give her the time and attention that she needs.





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# Other Pets You Might Want to Adopt

..... and How to Care for Them

## Rabbits

As a rabbit owner, it is important to know some rabbit care basics in order to create a safe, loving environment for your bunny.



### What to Feed Your Rabbit

Just like people, bunnies enjoy a good meal. A nice mix of hay, pellets and fresh vegetables as well as fresh water will make your rabbit healthy and happy. An occasional treat can be given, but only in small quantities. One of the great things about owning a pet rabbit is that you can grow a lot of their food yourself in the garden.



### Litter Training Your Pet Rabbit

Rabbits make wonderful indoor pets in part because they can be litter box trained, just like cats!



### Bunny Proofing Your Home

To protect your rabbit as well as your home you need to bunny proof. Chew toys, wire protectors, puppy-pens, and supervision are essential in providing a safe home for your pet.



### Housing Options for Your Pet Bunny

There are many options for housing your bunny indoors, including puppy pens, custom enclosures, large cages, or simply a bunny proofed room. The best option will depend on your living arrangements.







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# Other Pets You Might Want to Adopt

..... and How to Care for Them

## Guinea Pigs:



Guinea pigs make great pets. They enjoy being handled too! Guinea pigs can live for four to eight years and both males and females make

excellent pets. In their natural habitat guinea pigs prefer to live in groups. Their sociable nature means that they're happiest when they have another guinea pig for company. Male guinea pigs are often even friendlier than females. Two guinea pigs that have been bought at the same time and are of a similar age will usually live happily together.

### Where do they like to live?

Guinea pigs can be kept outdoors all year round but they should be brought into a shed during winter. If you're planning to keep your guinea pigs outdoors, make sure the hutch is draught free and fully weatherproof. The hutch must be raised off the ground to keep the floor dry and to protect your pets from possible attacks by cats and foxes. The base of the hutch should be covered with wood-shavings to form an absorbent layer. Fill the bedroom area with a cosy bedding material such as hay or safe bedding so your pets can snuggle up at night. Avoid using straw as this may irritate your guinea pigs' eyes.

### What do they like to eat?

Guinea pigs need extra fibre in their diet to aid digestion. Hay is a natural fibre and should always be available in your pet's hutch or cage. It also helps to grind guinea pigs' teeth down, preventing them from growing too long and becoming painful. Guinea pigs eat little and often so make sure dry food and hay are always available. If you find that their food bowl is often empty, you're probably not giving them enough food. Fresh food should be given to your guinea pigs in the morning and if it remains uneaten, remove it the next morning.

### Playtime

If left alone in their cage or hutch when you're not around, your guinea pigs will get very bored. Providing toys for them to chew on and hiding treats around their cage will enhance their quality of life. Houses and hideaway holes will allow your pets to snuggle up just as they would in the wild and wooden toys are not only fun to play with, they help to grind their teeth down too!

### Keeping them clean

Guinea pigs are generally very clean. Replace soiled bedding daily and clean the entire hutch or cage thoroughly with a pet-safe disinfectant once a week.



# Cats make great pets!



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More independent than dogs, cats still need love, attention and care to enjoy happy lives.

The best way to approach a cat is to get down to its level and show it the palm of your hand. If it wants to make friends it will come over and rub off you. If a cat hisses or swishes its tail, it is telling you it wants space and to leave it alone.

Cats need food, water and love being brushed. They also love milk but their bodies aren't able to process it very well so it is best avoided. It is best to have cats neutered and make sure they get their shots from the vet.

If a cat does scratch you, it is important to clean and disinfect the cut. Cats love to be clean and are very curious creatures. Be careful to keep your cat away from certain flowers like lilies- if they eat them they could get very sick.

**Respect your cat and it will respect you too!**

