

Guided reading

SECTION

2

of the word, the full capitals and exclamation mark.)

Spread 13

Enjoy counting and comparing the ten elephants' different positions as they jump in surprise. What do the elephants mean by 'It must be Elmer'? How did they work out who had made them jump? (Draw on knowledge of Elmer's character.) Compare the pink background of this picture with the green background of the first spread. Help the children to see that the bright colour reflects and emphasises the excitement and fun and break from normality in this scene.

Spread 14

Ask why Elmer's dye washes off the top of him first; why are his legs still grey in the picture? Examine the body language of the laughing elephants – one clutching his or her stomach; another pushing a third, and so on. Explain the literal and figurative meaning of the words 'show your true colours': showing our true colours helps others to see our personality, what makes us behave as we do. In Elmer's case, the berry-dye washing away also showed his literally true

colours. Draw attention to the capitalisation of Elmer's Day – the phrase becoming a name, in a similar way to other special days such as New Year's Day.

Spread 15

Invite the children to choose their favourite elephant decoration, describing it in words rather than by simply pointing; using colour, shape and motif words, and stretching their active vocabulary in the process. Encourage others to listen and point to which elephant they think is being described. How does the picture suggest that Elmer's Day is a *noisy* parade? Observe how some elephants work in twos to make a sound (cooperating to play cymbals, and triangle and stick). Discuss why Elmer isn't in bright colours on this one day a year. ('Ordinary' elephant colour is special to him; it commemorates how Elmer's Day began; he is Elmer *and* he is an elephant.) Relate the climax of the story to celebrations that the children enjoy; encourage them to identify with the characters by considering how they dress up for special occasions. What is the very last word of the story? ('Elmer'.) Notice how this is a satisfying ending to the story, drawing a circle back to the title of the book.

PAGE

6