'Did I call on you?' said Mr Gosforth to me. 'No,' he continued. 'Five minutes gone.' Then he turned to Mrs Pritchard. 'I can take it from here,' he said.

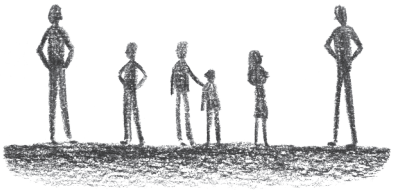
Mrs Pritchard smiled. But it was the kind of smile that actually means 'I'm not happy about this at all', which is Horrible Nan's main kind. Then she left.

Immediately, everyone was whispering madly about Mrs King and why she'd gone and where she was and what was going on, then Mr Gosforth clapped his hands so hard it sounded like a crack and it sent dust dancing into the sunlight and silence.

No one moved a muscle. No one said a word.

'Right then,' said Mr Gosforth. 'Maths.'

THEORIES



After school me and Ahmed walked Sam back to mine and Paris Metcalfe came too because of having to be chaperoned, which means watched over, because of being a girl. Normally we talk about e.g. who would win in a fight: Spider-Man or a Megalosaurus, which Sam always says is the Megalosaurus and Ahmed always says is Spider-Man and Paris always says is just stupid and made-up and who cares anyway? But that day, we were all deciding what had happened to Mrs King.

'It'll be a sick bug,' said Ahmed, sounding like he knew what he was talking about. 'Forty-eight-hour thing.'

'Shows what you know,' said Paris.

'I do know,' said Ahmed.