



Colours

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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'Learning is designed to be fun,' says the blurb on the back of these Picture Play books. Whether mathematical concepts can be learned from books at all, however good their content, is an idea I strongly question (though they may promote the idea that books are fun, which in itself is an important piece of learning); but this particular series leaves much to be desired.

Numbers is probably the best of the four; the pages are split into three sections which can be turned independently to change the scene.

'Watch the animals change their sizes,' is the message on the front cover of **Sizes**. The implication seems to be that the size of the creature changes, but of course this is not so; it only appears so in relation to what it is placed alongside. This could be thoroughly misleading to a child. What seemed like a good idea has gone disastrously astray due to insufficient care with the way the material is presented and with the language used.

This is also a major criticism of **Shapes**: what does one say when the child responds, as did one five-year-old, to the question, 'Can you count the rectangles?' with a quite simple 'No'?

The basic idea that colours are best learned not in isolation, but by contrast, is one that I go along with, but black is presented as grey throughout the book and in my copy, the final spread presented brown and black as an almost indistinguishable grey. And why head the pages 'Remember'? - a hippopotamus is NOT purple and anyway on this particular page it is shown as blue. 'Endless surprises' these books certainly do provide, but in the case of this reviewer, not, I'm sure, the ones intended.

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