



SNEAK PEEK

The land of make-believe

Just as parents have sorted their Tinky Winkys from their Makka Pakkas, a shiny new pre-school show is coming. *RT* went to find the Piplings of Nara...



◀ **IMAGINARY FRIENDS**

As well as being rather charming, the model Piplings help to establish background shots for the animators and give the children something to act with. "The wonderful thing about a five-year-old is that a model is enough to fire their imagination," says producer Simon Spencer. "Even when you take them away, they're still able to play along."



ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND
 The real-life setting for the pastoral world of the Piplings couldn't be more incongruous: a 75,000ft² disused turbine hall on an industrial estate near Glasgow. It ranks as the biggest film set in Europe – bigger than the James Bond set at Pinewood. It was the only building available with enough height to house the vast lighting rigs. The garden of Nara occupies roughly half the space, with enough room left for the props department, canteen and staff badminton courts!

BEHIND THE
scenes

THINKING INSIDE THE BOX

THE PIPLINGS – Lau Lau, Nok Tok, Yo Jojo and De Li – are the wide-eyed stars of *Waybuloo*, a major £9.5 million CBeebies production set to air next week. An adventurous mix of live action and computer animation, *Waybuloo* is set in a magical world called Nara, in which the animated Piplings and real children coexist, tackling simple problems involving feelings such as confusion, disappointment and fear.

"It's unique in that it's emotionally driven," explains producer Simon Spencer. "Each Pipling represents an emotion or quality – love, happiness, wisdom and imagination – and challenges are solved with the help of the children. It's about building social skills and relationships. We want to reflect their play patterns at nursery."

When their emotional journey is successfully completed, the Piplings float off into "buloo", a nirvana-like state of happy contentment, where state-of-the-art animation comes into its own. There's even a calming yoga session, rechristened Yo Go, which parents can do with their children. But even if parents can't envisage their children getting in touch with their emotions, there's plenty of good old-fashioned entertainment.

"In the end, it's about having fun," confirms Spencer. "We don't have any high ideals other than to engage and to entertain."

Lucy Sweet

▶ PLAYMATES
 When the young actors aren't on set, wooden stand-ins mark where the children will be. "We've got six models to use as references," says production manager Emma Fernando. Some of the models have been defaced by the kids, including one called Joshua, who has a green moustache!



Language lesson

Learn the basics of Waybulese

- Nara** – the magical land inhabited by ...
- Piplings** – gentle creatures who personify positive emotion. When they're happy they ...
- Buloo** – float up in the air on those warm feelings, so ...
- Waybuloo** is a journey to happiness, when the Piplings spin over Nara. (Keep up at the back!)

◀ LET ME TELL YOU A STORY
 Storyboards help the director know where the animation will be. These sequences are completed in Canada, then editing can begin and *Waybuloo* finally begins to come to life

