Lost in space (Foundation/key stage 1)

What the photo says
You can use this evocative image of people on the move at New York’s Grand Central Station, taken in June 2008, to introduce the idea of places being interconnected through travel.

It also helps young children to develop visual literacy – specifically, interpreting photographs; and in general terms it offers an excellent context for discussion about everyday geographies.

Lesson idea
Context: This lesson/activity could be part of a study of a distant locality, preferably somewhere that can be visited by train. (National Curriculum Geography key stage 1, Breadth of study 6b: a locality either in the United Kingdom or overseas that has physical and/or human features that contrast with those in the locality of the school.) It could form part of a transition unit between Foundation and key stage 1.

Other resources
- an interactive whiteboard to display the photograph
- role play area set up as a railway station, to be added to by the children.
- books about transport and travel
- additional photographs of Grand Central Station/other railway stations, particularly in the distant locality being studied.

Suggested activity
Display the photo on the interactive whiteboard. Start a discussion, using questions like:
- How many people can you see? Is it a busy or quiet place? (Children should notice that there are quite a few people in a small space and that therefore it is relatively busy)
- What do you think the people are doing? (Focus on the group of people and/or on individuals)
- What do you think the people might be looking at?
- What do you think the weather might be like in this place? (Relate to children’s own experiences)
- Where do you think this place might be?
At this point tell the children where the photograph was taken and repeat some of the questions, to see if their ideas have changed. Continue the questioning as you think appropriate, including perhaps:

- Who has been to a station before? What did you do there?
- What else might you see at a station?
- Why do people go there?
- Our role play area is going to be a station, what will we need to include?

Look at photographs of different stations (particularly of the locality you are going to be studying) and note similarities and differences.

**Curriculum opportunities**

**Sustainable development:** Why people might choose to travel by train

This topic is rich with cross-curricular opportunities, so can be a useful link to the Foundation Stage areas of learning and the key stage 1 curriculum in terms of transport/travel and the locality to be studied.

_Emily Richardson, GA Early Years and Primary Phase Committee_