



“I wish our clever  
young poets  
would remember  
my homely  
definitions of  
prose and poetry;  
that is, prose,—  
words in their  
best order;  
poetry,— the  
best words in  
their best order.”

Samuel Taylor  
Coleridge  
(1772-1834)

# Primary Matters

## Poetry Special



The Primary magazine for  
The National Association  
for the Teaching of English

Primary  
Matters  
Autumn 2022

# Primary Matters illustrator, Stella Perrett, describes the inspiration behind her poetic choices for this term's special poetry edition



'The Owl and the Pussycat' by Edward Lear and 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes are a nod to tradition. I doubt if there is an English teacher in the country who has not at some time introduced their children to these poems. They give children a grounding in total fantasy (Lear) and the wide range of human emotions (Noyes), plus a sense of adventure and excitement.

To bring it into the modern era I've chosen a poem by Ted Hughes who wrote a lot of children's poetry, a less well known one of his, 'Moon Whales', which covers children's interest in space and space-creatures.

Benjamin Zephaniah is a Nature poet, animal activist and a committed Vegan so the poem of his I've chosen is 'Trees Please'. Both these two cover children's interest in Ecology and conserving animals/nature.

Finally, I chose a poem by American poet Joyce Sidman, who has just won a prize for her children's poetry book 'Hello, Earth!' The one I've chosen is about a neuro diverse child reading a poem, so it couldn't be more relevant to the modern classroom, bullying, and children's mental health. It's called 'One of Us!'

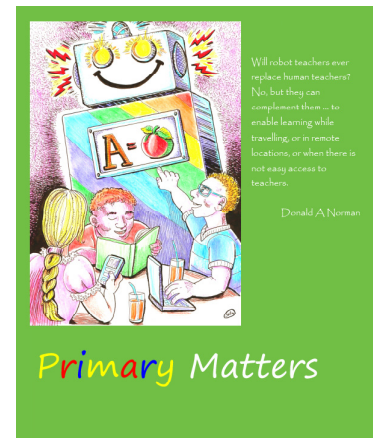
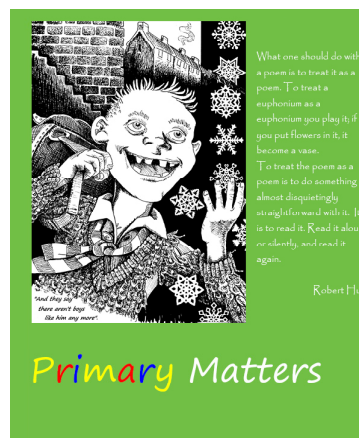
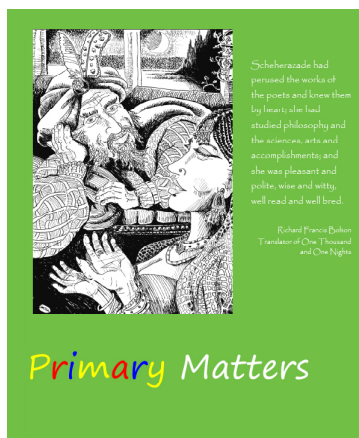
Perhaps teachers will encourage readers to look them up, and/or use them in the classroom for discussion.

The Owl and the Pussycat <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43188/the-owl-and-the-pussy-cat>

The Highwayman <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43187/the-highwayman>

Trees Please <https://eastangliancoppicenetwork.wordpress.com/2016/02/26/trees-please-benjamin-zephaniahs-poem-for-britains-woodlands/>

Hello Earth <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/155480/one-of-us>





# Primary Matters

## Poetry Special

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### NATE

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The views expressed in the magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the association.

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Poems, poems, poems

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Welcome back to a new school year and a special welcome to our new-look poetry special issue of *Primary Matters* - free for all English teachers this term! I am thrilled to bring you an amazing collection of articles which are brimming with advice, ideas and inspiration from experts, authors, poets and teachers, all oozing an infectious enthusiasm about poetry that I urge you to take on board.

With the recurring concern that poetry is a neglected area and suggested reasons for this ranging from fear, lack of confidence and pressure of the curriculum, you are sure to find something which will resonate with you. There really is no excuse for the teaching of poetry to be relegated to that acrostic Christmas poem squeezed in at the end of a term when everyone is off to Bethlehem.

You will spot a similarity between the messages in the articles—a golden thread which links them together—and that is an absolute and passionate certainty that poetry is essential to enthuse children about language. Children need to be marinated in vocabulary and what better way to do that than through poetry.

Every article is offers a wealth of practical suggestions to use with the children you teach, giving them a real opportunity to encounter 'beautiful language and profound ideas' (James Clements p11).

Our cover image has been specially created by Stella Perrett and is itself bursting with opportunities for discussion, and we are able to offer one lucky reader a chance to win the original illustration. All you need to do is to send an anecdote related to poetry from your teaching experience. I will start you off with one of my own:

The scene is set in a mixed Year 5/6 classroom, and the focus of the lesson, midway through a teaching sequence from reading to writing, is 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes, and just at the point where...

*He tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred.  
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there  
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.*

Cue Liam, aged 10 at the time:

"Well, Mrs Gough, we know where this is going."

Over to you—send your anecdotes to [membership@nate.org.uk](mailto:membership@nate.org.uk).

**Janet Gough**

*Editor*

# Primary Matters

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I've spent many years wondering why it is that so many of us are fearful of poetry. Perhaps it is simply because we are unfamiliar with poetry and not too sure how to approach it. We know how stories are told and what to expect from newspaper reports, letters, articles and information. However, most teachers' experience of poetry is limited to the school exam system and it is probably there that the problem lies.

there will be a myriad of possible links and associations echoing from their lives. The idea of just enjoying poetry in the same way that we might enjoy the class story has probably become a faint memory that may have last been experienced in a reception class when singing nursery rhymes.

As a child, my parents read me nursery rhymes from a very old collection. One of my favourites was a rhyme about 'Babylon':

*How many miles to Babylon?  
Three-score miles and ten.  
Can I get there by candlelight?  
Yes – and back again.*



Page 5

“I just loved snuggling up with my Dad and the book and hearing his voice incant the rhyme. It was a magical, pleasurable nugget in my life. It is only on reflection that I can now tease away at what it meant for me.”

Beside the rhyme was a picture of a child dressed in nightclothes carrying a candle. I loved the sound of that poem. Who is asking how many miles to Babylon and why? Babylon sounded like a strange, mystical place. The answer seemed that it was far away, but it would be possible to get there. How on earth could you travel in the dark, with just a candle, and get there and back again? Wouldn't the wind just blow the candle out? In my head, Babylon was a magical city that could be travelled to at night; you just needed candlelight to take you there. I associated candles with magic and Christmas.

None of this I understood at the time, these were unvoiced thoughts jostling around; I just loved snuggling up with my Dad and the book and hearing his voice incant the rhyme. It was a magical, pleasurable nugget in my life. It is only on reflection that I can now tease away at what it meant for me. Nothing was ever explained, nothing needed to be explained, and yet it has stayed with me for 65 years. I was totally confident and happy in the poetry experience. My proposition is that because children do not experience poetry for pleasure, this becomes a barrier. Many remain unfamiliar with its language, unaware how to respond to its sound and meaning, let alone know that it can be a joy.

Years of poor teaching have reduced our experience to something fearful like an impenetrable verbal puzzle, an unfamiliar code to be cracked. Reading like a detective is not the way to read poetry. We need to begin by savouring rhymes and poems, by responding without fear not by some strange form of linguistic investigation. Daily rhymes and poems from the very start should build familiarity and help children become comfortable with the language and possibilities of poetry. This would begin with nursery rhymes, action rhymes and gradually move into

the territory of poetry in all its many guises. Poetry for pleasure is the key. If children's only experience of poetry is in the occasional 'unit' where a poem is disemboweled and dissected, no wonder most children do not like poetry or know how to respond.

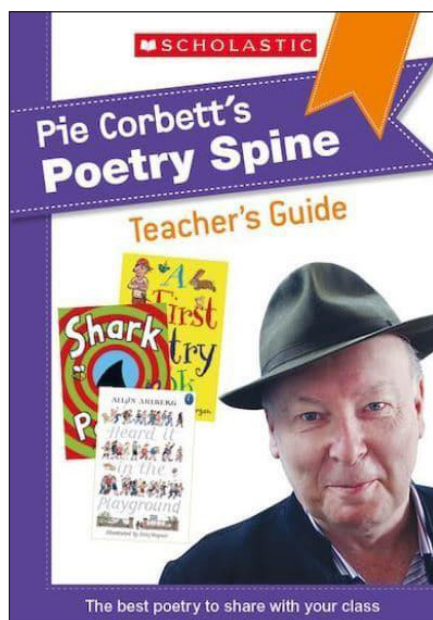
On the other side of this rather bleak picture, there has been a great movement in the country over the last thirty years or so of poets working in schools. This movement has brought poetry alive for many children and intriguingly it seems that children love poetry under the right conditions. Poems can be enjoyed for themselves; for their music and meaning. Many of these poets have produced collections and edited anthologies of poetry that lie close to the experience of children, often in immediate language, instantly understandable. A poem like 'Chocolate Cake' by Michael Rosen provides no great barrier to understanding but is a mesmeric joy that touches on the truth of a child's experience. Such poems act as stepping-stones into the wider world of poetry that over time creates a love of poetry and leads us steadily into more challenging territory.

The poetry reader often has to be confident in their uncertainty; not concerned by the pressure for immediate understanding. That is not how poetry always works. Poems are experiences. For instance, I have loved TS Eliot's 'The Love Song of Alfred J Prufrock' for half a century but much of it remains a wonderful and strange mystery to me. Poems do not always present themselves as a clear narrative or simple statement that proceeds in a logical manner. Poems often hint and suggest, creating echoes in the memory. If we can learn to enjoy the words, the sound, the images, atmospheres and suggestions that poems provoke over the years then perhaps children and teachers would be more ready to engage with tougher material.

## Build a poetry curriculum

Reading and performing helps us internalize language and possibilities – it increases our range of voices to call upon when writing. As teachers, we need to put into the minds of children the voices of many poets and poems for them to draw upon when creating, so they have internalized a massive bank of poetic possibility. Each poem spent time on becomes a block of knowledge, a frame of reference.

Work out which poets and poems are going to become the main focus for teaching over primary years. This means that the children become familiar with a range of poets over time. As a school, agree on and resource a poetry spine with key poets and poems for each term. Establish ‘rhyme/poem of the week’ across the school to ensure that children hear and perform lots of poetry. Make sure that poetry books are readily available.



## Choosing Poetry for Teaching

Much of the poetry published over the last 20 years is easy to understand and, whilst the poems might be fun to read, their impact may be brief. Poems for use

in lessons have to earn their place in the curriculum. Poetry teaching deepens the relationship between the reader and the poem. Great poems, those that have survived the years, may help us to come closer to eternal truths about ourselves and our world, exploring the human condition as well as bringing fresh ways to experience ourselves and the world. Choose quality poetry that challenges and stands the test of time.

## Deepening understanding of poems

To understand a poem, we have to actively engage, recreating the poem inside our minds, making it our own by relating it to our real and imagined experience. Poems have to be read aloud to experience the musicality and meaning. The written poem is like a musical score that comes alive when the poem is spoken aloud so that has to be our starting point.

## Read aloud and perform

To be experienced by the children, the poem must be read aloud by both the teacher and, most importantly, by the children. Only through reading a poem or listening to it being read can you feel the experience. The first encounter with a poem may be through a teacher reading to the class or putting the children into groups to prepare a choral reading. As the groups work together, they will naturally begin to try and interpret the poem, thinking about how it should be spoken. The key is to ‘vary’ – pace, rhythm, expression and volume in relation to meaning. Capture performances, create class CDs or film clips; perform for other classes or in assembly; use percussive instruments to feel the rhythm. We may never fully understand Blake’s ‘Tyger’ but we can have it by heart and love the mystery. Do not be afraid to make the poem live. The more poetry lives fearlessly, the more the children will love poetry without fear.

“Reading poetry makes my imagination run wild. Our ‘poem of the week’ has introduced me to so many new poems, ideas and images, and has helped enrich my vocabulary.”

**Gweni, Y6**

Coastlands School  
(taught by Wenda Davies)



“When we read our ‘poem of the week’ together I really enjoy sharing it with my friends. I would say to children who haven’t read much poetry before to not be scared – to be brave, because a poem can mean different things to different people so your ideas can’t be wrong. Reading and writing poems helps you block out the rest of the world.”

**Georgie, Y4**

Coastlands School  
(taught by Wenda Davies)

### Interact with poems

Help children dig under the skin of a poem, with some form of interaction. Match the activity to the poem, considering what might help children think more intensely.

**a) Titling** – miss out the title – the children read the poem and then decide in pairs or threes what it might be called and provide evidence for their thinking.

**b) Cut up** – cut up a poem by words, lines or verses and put it into a different order. The children have to reorganise the fragments into a coherent whole. In Tennyson’s poem, I have cut the six lines in half – now piece together.

#### The Eagle

*He falls.  
with crooked hands;  
close to the sun  
beneath him crawls;  
in lonely lands,  
ring’d with the azure world,  
from his mountain walls,  
The wrinkled sea  
he stands.  
He clasps the crag  
he watches  
and like a thunderbolt*

**Alfred Tennyson**

**c) Cloze procedure** – omit key words from a poem, creating a cloze procedure. The children have to fill in the blanks thinking about rhythm, meaning and style. Try these famous lines from Macbeth:

*Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.  
Fillet of a ..... Snake,  
In the cauldron boil and bake;  
..... of newt and ..... of frog,  
..... of bat and ..... of dog,  
Adder’s ..... and blindworm’s .....,  
Lizard’s ..... and owlet’s .....*

**d) Rewrite** – a poem as prose and the children have to put the poem back into lines, considering where each line or verse break might fall.

*Owl was darker than ebony, flew through  
the night eyes like amber searchlights, rested  
on a post, feathers wind-ruffled, stood  
stump-still, talons ready to seize and squeeze.  
Owl was death that swamped the fields for it  
flew through the dark that tightened its knot  
that bandaged the hills in a blindfold of fear.  
Owl flew – who – who – who –*

**Pie Corbett**

**e) Underline** – children read, discuss and are asked to underline or highlight memorable, interesting or bewildering but beautiful aspects for further discussion.

Take my mesostic riddle:

#### Animal Riddle

*Like a small Bear it  
bundles over the dArk road,  
brushes past the front gate,  
as if she owns the joint.  
rolls the Dustbin  
like an expert barrel rider.  
Tucks into yesterday’s Garbage,  
crunches worms for titbits.  
Wakes us from deep slEp,  
blinks back at torchlight.  
Our midnight feasteR,  
ghost-friend,  
moon-lit,  
zebra bear.*

**Pie Corbett**

**f) Respond in another form** – for instance, on the next page is part of an invented dictionary definition by Year 5 in response to ‘Jabberwocky’:

*A vorpal sword is the most deadly weapon ever made by man. The handle has encrusted diamonds included in its pure gold. Although it may look very small, a press of the green diamond will let it become extendable to at least 6ft! A special feature is hidden beneath the sword; it is a poison stick. One press of the red diamond and it shoots out at the speed of light.*  
Deadline 85/100.

**g) Respond through the arts** – set poems to music or percussion; poems may be acted, illustrated, painted or even turned into a model. Hot seat a poem, create a freeze frame or dance movement.

**h) Use a poem as a springboard into writing** – reading more closely and appreciatively may come through responding to the poem through creative innovation. Kit Wright's 'Magic Box' and Miroslav Holub's 'The Door' are good starting points. The poem below is by Laura, year 6, in homage to 'Dreams of an Inland Lighthouse-Keeper' by Philip Gross.

**The Boat made of Stardust**

*The boat made of stardust  
floats over the echoing waves  
As living stars  
Jump on to the boat  
Hitching a moonlit ride.  
Celestial bodies  
Are concealed  
Under towering piles of  
Silver and gold.  
Delicate grains  
Hide in cracks  
In the floorboards of the boat.  
Heavenly particles  
Hang from cobweb threads  
  
Like grotesque decorations.  
Bejewelled stars  
Glisten in the moonlit sky*

*And reflect on the  
Silver studded surface  
Of the boat made of stardust.*

**Discussion**

Discussion is essential as it is through talk that we may begin to bring into being what we think about a poem. It helps if the teacher models 'thinking aloud' about a poem – what has drawn them to a poem, which bits they enjoy, what aspects 'speak' to their experience. Share, too, the mysteries or parts that are hard – these can be put to one side, remaining uncertain at the moment. Explain what interests or surprises; talk about the word choices and imagery; the pictures a poem paints; the memories or ideas that it triggers; as well as the patterns that add to the pleasure and meaning.

**Book talk**

Exploratory and tentative book talk helps a class grow understanding and deepen appreciation. The teacher triggers the discussion with an open question such as, 'what can we say about this?' Show a genuine interest in the poem and what the children say. Orchestrate the discussion so the class have a chance to deepen their understanding. Coax out initial ideas, including what the class enjoyed or what the poem made them think about, feelings or memories evoked. All ideas should be accepted and given consideration. If the comments leave the poem behind or become 'wild', return to the poem.

Through sharing ideas, gradually the class deepens their understanding of what the poem might offer. Slow the pace of discussion and use 'line by line' reading to help the children tie clues together and gradually build up the movement through the poem.

"When we start a new poem of the week, it's sometimes difficult but it gets easier the more we say it. Often I know them off by heart by the end of the week."

**Jason, Y5**  
Coastlands School  
(taught by Wenda Davies)

“Our aim is to develop an inclination towards poetry with its joys of surprise, emotion, mystery, music and beauty.”

All these activities encourage children to talk about and engage more deeply. Poems are not like sums. They can be difficult to understand in the normal sense but they can always be experienced, rather like music or art.

How we approach a poem depends on thinking about what will be the best way into the poem. This routine is not a mechanistic system but usually contains:

- 1) **Read and perform** – in small groups or as a class – vary the volume, pace and expression in relation to the meaning.
- 2) **Activity** – provide an interactive activity

to help the children engage closely with the poem.

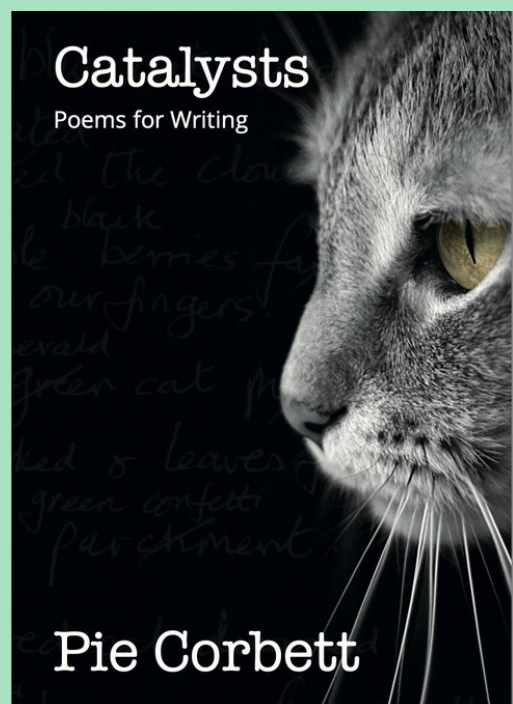
3) **Discussion** – read the poem through bit by bit, sharing possible responses and meanings. Always go back, reread and think about the movement of the meaning across the poem as a whole.

Our aim is to develop an inclination towards poetry with its joys of surprise, emotion, mystery, music and beauty. Try to avoid summoning the implements of grammatical and exam torture and applying them to poetry!

Poetry should bring serious joy.



**Pie Corbett** is a poet, storyteller, author and editor of over 250 books. His poetry is found in anthologies around the world (also on BBC, in Lamda, GCSE and the SATs).





# Making a poetry friendly classroom - investigating, performing, inspiring

**Michael Rosen** provides a range of practical, classroom-based strategies that promises to inspire the next generation of poetry enthusiasts.

I have to be careful about drawing directly on my own experience in classrooms. I'm not a classroom teacher working day in day out with the same group of children. I'm a visitor who has made poetry a life interest. What I'm going to suggest in this article comes instead from working off-site with teachers on term-long or year-long workshops in situations where they can try things out with their classes, come back to the workshop and share their classes' work.

The first suggestion is one of broad strategy. Rather than thinking of poetry as a series of short-term exercises that get instant results, the process that has emerged in these workshops that has proved to be the most useful and effective is what we ended up calling 'the poetry-friendly classroom'. We can express that as questions: 'how can we make a poetry-friendly classroom?', 'what activities will make a classroom be a place where poetry has a place?' I hope as you read the list of suggestions on page 12, you can yourself immediately think of things.

If all these kinds of activity are part of classroom life, then the children will build up knowledge about poetry, will see that there are many different kinds of poems and that poetry belongs to them. It's not some strange, distant and alienating form.

One key part of this, which I haven't mentioned in the list, is what I call 'poetry show' or 'spoken word'. This is one method we've found always works. You make available, either with books or with a generous number of copies of poems,

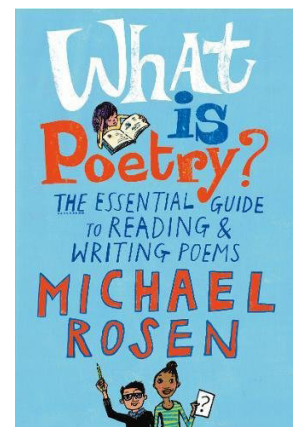
enough poetry for each 'table' of children to choose a poem to perform. You announce that in 15 minutes' time, you're going to have a 'Poetry Show' (or some such) and the children in groups of 2 to 4 will choose a poem and figure out how to perform some or all of it. You can prime them a little for the first time you do this by saying that they can say the poem together or in turns. They can do actions; they can make sounds that match the poem in whatever ways they want. You can remind them that they don't all have to say the words, as they can do actions or make sounds instead. Then you give them some time to choose poems from the pile in front of them, and then practise how to perform them.

Then at the end of, say, 15 minutes, you call them together. Perhaps for the first time you do this, you can be the MC and play it up...make it like a real show and make sure that everyone treats each group's performance with respect and attention. You do a little linking 'intro' for each, saying the children's names and get the children to announce the title of the poem they are going to perform. If you've got a class of 30, you might expect there to be 10 or so poems in this show.

At the end, you ask the children to say if they've seen or heard anything that they would like to try out next time you do a poetry show. This makes for a positive and constructive way to build on what they've seen and to build a 'repertoire' of ways of performing poems. (See the following page for a comprehensive list of activities.)

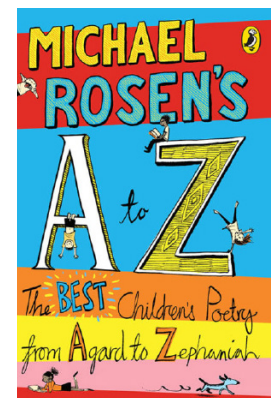


Image: Billie Charity



## Inspiring the next generation of poetry enthusiasts - a provisional list that you can add to, adapt, improve over time:

- have a designated space for poetry books
- make poetry posters for the wall(s) where a child or teacher writes out the poem and decorates/illustrates the poster
- put post-its next to the poster so that the children can write thoughts and comments about the poem or parts of the poem and stick them on
- play audios or videos of poets or actors reading poems; add to these by getting the children or other teachers to make audios and videos of poems too
- think of poems as part of other arts – starting-points for illustration and art, making power-points out of poems using audio, video, accompanying sound-tracks of sound effects or music
- make music to accompany live performance of poems
- get the children to do 'freeze-frames' (or 'tableaux') to illustrate lines or verses of a poem
- make 'boxes' to illustrate a poem where a box is full of made objects which tell the story or emotion of a poem
- make poetry 'incidental' – by that I mean that reading out poems (by you or the children) can be slotted in to the gaps in the timetable – just before playtime or before going home as a fun way to fill time rather than purely or only as something that has a learning outcome
- slot poems into assemblies in the same way – incidental ways of opening an assembly or closing it (always, always, always make sure that when poems are performed in assembly that everyone can hear them i.e. use microphones)
- if you have prepared performances of poems as a class piece or some such, make sure that they are as animated and interesting as possible e.g. by doing what one would do with a choir – getting children to do a mix of solos, duets, choruses but also incorporating
- sounds, music and mime or freeze-frames to make the poetry performances more visual. Don't forget to video these so that they can be seen again and again
- make poetry anthologies: these can be a whole class anthology in which children copy out their favourite poems or parts of poems (no need to get hung up on them having to be whole poems). Or, we can encourage individual children or pairs or groups of children to make anthologies of poems. Encourage them to slot in their own poems amongst poems by published poets
- create a 'Words Wall' in which children collect favourite lines from poems and songs (or sayings from people they know) that strike them as interesting or amazing or odd or intriguing
- if children like rap and can do beat-box or know other ways to make a rhythm, encourage them to perform them and/or write raps themselves. Note that a good deal of traditional verse from nursery rhymes up to Shakespeare songs or modern poems can be performed to rap rhythms
- use art (e.g. projected on to the white board), silent film, music as starting points for 'day dreaming' into writing poems where the children can write anything that pops into their heads
- the simplest way to have a go at writing is to read a poem and say to the children: we could write a poem like that where 'like that' can be to copy the sound or shape, or rhythm or pattern of the poem. Or it can copy the theme of the poem but to a different shape or 'form'. Or, it can be any aspect of the poem that 'triggers' a thought of something to write about.



“It’s a mistake to think of language as ‘words’ or even ‘sentences’. Language in use is always in ‘context’ involving many subtle, unsaid ways of referring to things, feelings and ideas across many words, many sentences.”

If anyone asks you why you’re doing this, you can say that working out how to perform a poem is the best way to do comprehension of poetry. The performers have to do close reading, and interpret what a word or line or verse means and match their voices and movement to the meanings. That’s a learning outcome, if you need one. Moreover, the more you do these poetry shows, the greater the number of poems the children get to know. As the teacher, you can introduce any poems into these poetry shows that you want and choose in order to bring in variety or for whatever priorities that you have.

How about close reading of poems? As a result of the workshops I’ve mentioned, I’ve developed what I’ve called the ‘Secret Strings Game’.

Here’s the theory: all language hangs together or sticks together through what’s called ‘cohesion’. It’s a mistake to think of language as ‘words’ or even ‘sentences’. Language in use is always in ‘context’ involving many subtle, unsaid ways of referring to things, feelings and ideas across many words, many sentences. We do this by using e.g. pronouns and linking words and phrases like ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘that’, ‘who’ or like ‘later’, ‘the other day’, ‘you know’. We also create cohesion through sound and rhythm as we do in speech, signs, posters, ads, poetry and of course song. When we study literature, we can give these all sorts of names like ‘rhyme’ and ‘meter’ (and a whole set of names for the types of meter and they types of rhythmic units – rather like bars in music). These are called ‘feet’ and have names like ‘iamb’ or ‘dactyl’ and the like. There are also ways in which cohesion in poetry can be created out of repetitions – repeated consonants (alliteration), repeated vowel sounds (assonance) and repeated or contrasted images (often called ‘patterns of imagery’).

The way in which ‘figurative language’ can be used in poems very often is part of a pattern in which a poet explores similar ways to talk about a ‘field’ or topic. This can be called the ‘lexical field’ which can be literal or can be done through e.g. metaphor, simile and personification.

You need not say any of this to your primary school class but you can have it in the back of your mind for the ‘Secret Strings Game’. Or you can find the best time to say some or all of it. That’s up to you.

In this game, you invite the children to be ‘Poetry Detectives’. You then invite them in pairs or slightly bigger groups to find the ‘secret strings’ that link any part of a word, whole word, phrase or even bigger ‘chunk’ of a poem to another part of a word, whole word, phrase etc.

You make clear that any link that they can prove is a link, **is** a link! And you can say that poets themselves don’t always know what secret strings they have created. You can say that the strings can be links between same or similar sounds, rhythms, rhymes. Or it can be links between words or phrases that kind of mean something similar. You can tell them that poets are often keen on ‘contrast’ where they point out to us things that are very unlike each other. That’s a kind of secret string too. It can be links between ‘pictures’ or – if you want to use the word – ‘images’. Many poems rely on a pattern of images.

Then they have felt tip pens and, on the copy of the poem in front of them, they can draw a loop round the two items they are linking and then draw the ‘string’. They discover and draw the secret strings.



I promise you that if you do this with a class of children, several times over a term, you will sensitise a class to most of the 'knowledge about' poetry that you'll find in any text book about poetry. They will be excited by this and share with each other what they've 'spotted'. You'll hear children arguing passionately for the right of this or that to be a string. They will become very inventive about it and spot strings that you, or indeed the poet, may well not have thought of. You can up the quality of what they're looking for by alerting them to strings of e.g. imagery, if you think they haven't spotted them. They will then incorporate that the next time you all play the game.

Where and when it is age-appropriate, you may well want to give the children names for what they've spotted and/or encourage them to find out some of them. When it comes to the business of 'feet' and 'meter', Stephen Fry's book 'The Ode Less Travelled' is as good a book as any and will help you give names to the rhythms of poems and language. As I say, the trick is for the children to discover some of these BEFORE we ask or demand they find them!

We can also take this to another level and say to the children, 'why?' Why do we think the poet has created this or that secret string? Remember here, we may or may not come up with answers! This is a non-SATs way of looking at a piece of literature. It is saying, 'let's speculate and share our thoughts about why a writer has made something in the way that they have.' You can, of course, offer your thoughts but do give the children space to develop their thoughts first or alongside yours.

There is another way to use 'Secret Strings': this is called 'intertextuality'. The theory here is that when we speak and write we

are not fully inventing language. We are writing with what has already been said and written, the body of language we know. And that's not just 'words' or 'phrases' or 'sentences' but it might also be themes, scenes, even a tone or mood. It might be a character that one piece of literature has 'borrowed' from another. And when it comes to poetry, it's fairly likely that the poet has 'borrowed' the shape, form or genre of poetry from another poet or poets.

We can alert children to 'intertextuality' by giving the Poetry Detectives the job of drawing Secret Strings out from the poem to anything that they think is a link. Don't worry that this might be not time appropriate: they're not necessarily looking for links to what the poet deliberately drew upon. This bit of the game is about showing that texts live in a sea of texts both in writers' minds but also in readers' minds. So this time, the children can draw lines away from the poem and create a speech bubble and write in what they think is the 'intertextual' link. Again, if you spot a link that you think is important or relevant, join in the game! This part of the game can get personal in that the children find links to things from their lives or to what they know. Don't block that off just help the children see distinctions between the different kinds of links – some that the poet might have known about, some texts that only the reader thought of and some experiences that only the reader thought of.

If you do the 'Poetry Friendly Classroom', the 'Poetry Shows' and the 'Secret Strings Games', I promise you, your class will be poetry enthusiasts and any suggestions you make for writing poems will land on fertile ground. The children's heads will be full of ways that poems can be made.

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## Further reading

[www.michaelrosen.co.uk/books/](http://www.michaelrosen.co.uk/books/)

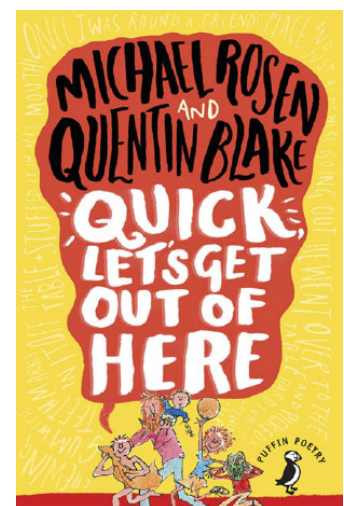
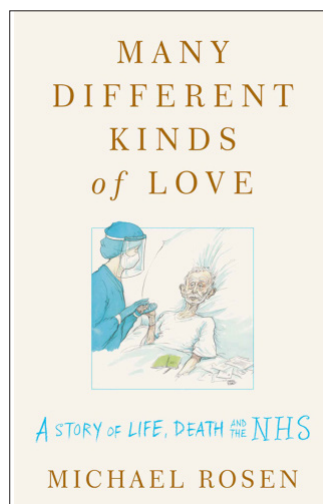
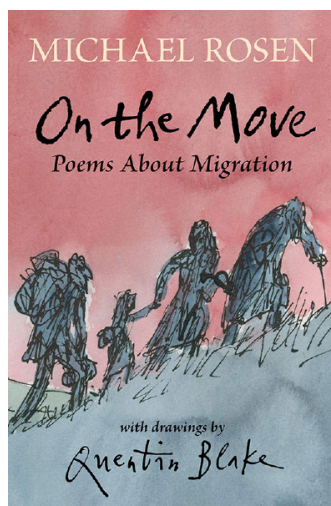
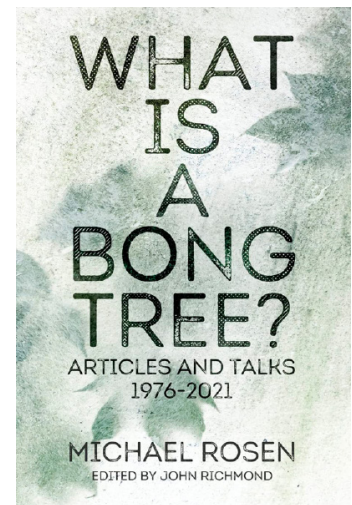
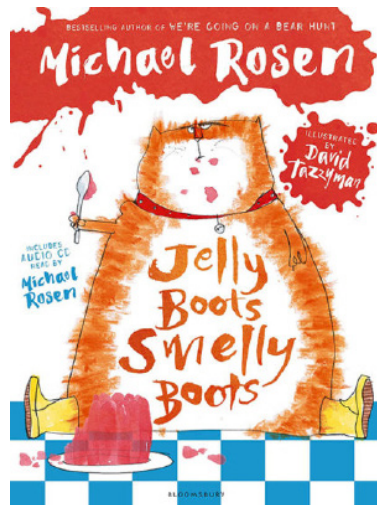
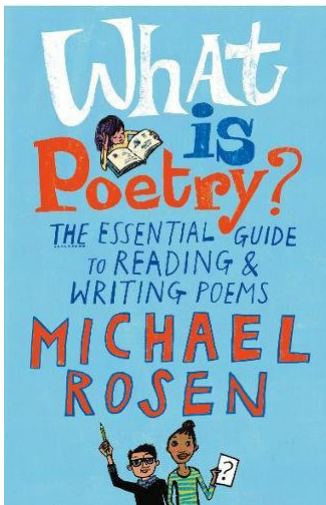


Image: Helen Weinstein

**Michael Rosen** is one of Britain's best loved writers and performance poets for children and adults. His first degree in English Literature and Language was from Wadham College, Oxford and he went on to study for an MA at the University of Reading and a PhD at the former University of North London, now London Metropolitan. He is currently Professor of Children's Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London where he co-devised and teaches critical approaches to reading on an MA in Children's Literature, having done the same at Birkbeck, University of London. He has taught on MA courses in universities since 1994. He was the Children's Laureate from 2007-2009 and has published over 200 books for children and adults, including the recent bestseller 'Many Different Kinds of Love' and 'On The Move.' To find out more about Michael's forthcoming events, please visit [www.michaelrosen.co.uk/](http://www.michaelrosen.co.uk/).

# From wallowing and zooming to creating and inspiring - a poetry case study with animal instincts

**James Clements** provides a KS2 case study on animal poems, designed to engage young people with reading, thinking and observing poetry.



*James is pictured (above) with his 2021 NATE Primary award*

There can be few types of writing that are more important during our childhood years than poetry. From the action-filled refrains of our first songs and nursery rhymes to the rhyming couplets of our favourite picture books, poetry is central to children's earliest literacy experiences.

But poetry doesn't just provide fun for the youngest children. As well as being a source of enjoyment, poetry can give children the chance to encounter both beautiful language and profound ideas. Creating poetry gives children the chance to play with both of these facets of writing. If we want to help children to become keen and confident writers, controlling language

and ideas with flair and imagination, then time spent listening to, reading, writing and performing poetry is likely to play a significant role in their writing journey.

Writing poetry might start with games and word-play. It might begin with thinking about something in a new or different way. It might be inspired by a particular style or type of poem or spring from a burning desire to share something with the world.

In the case study below, poetry is inspired by reading and thinking about poems written by others and very careful observation.

## 1. Wallowing in words

Perhaps the best place to begin the teaching of poetry writing is with children listening to poetry. Sharing as many different types of poem as we can helps children to develop an ear for the rhythms and language patterns poets employ as well as reminding children that poetry is a special type of writing, different from prose.

The KS2 class we're following is lucky enough to be familiar with a wide range of poetry – their teacher has found that a reading a poem aloud is a great activity to be squeezed into the day whenever the opportunity arises. These snatched little moments aren't intended to be planned-for learning opportunities like lessons (and often there isn't any great discussion about the poem itself) instead this is reading for pleasure at its purest.

In this unit of work, the children are going to write poems about an animal of their choice. In the days immediately before they begin, the teacher reads plenty of very different poems about animals to the class, as well as giving them the chance to follow their interests and work in groups and pairs to explore a wider range of poetry from books and anthologies. The aim here is for buzz and excited chatter about what the children have found: whole poems, words, phrases and ideas.



## 2. Zooming in

Next, the teacher decides to share two key poems, 'Humming Bird' by DH Lawrence and 'The Abyss' by Philip Gross, discussing and considering their structure, language and exploring the ideas they share.

On the surface, both describe an animal using unusual and exquisite language. However, both poems also share another interesting feature: the poets themselves are situated within the two poems, each poet sharing their thinking and perspective on the creature themselves. The two animals – a humming bird and a deep-sea shrimp – are not just described, their nature and environment are pondered by the poet. We learn about them through the lens of the poets and their thoughts. This provides an interesting concept to explore with children and means that the poems are not merely reduced to model texts for children to analyse and consider the language, but are fuel for thought in the broadest sense, the types of literature that will encourage children to think and discuss deep and rich ideas, new ways of thinking about the world. Perhaps this is what English lessons should seek to do. English is about more than (the admittedly important business of) becoming literate: studying literature can change how we see ourselves, other people, and the wider world.

The poems are introduced one at a time, each following a similar teaching sequence. First they are read aloud, so the class can get a feel for the language and rhythm. They then share their initial thoughts in small groups, commenting on their overall sense of the poem as well as any specific ideas or words and phrases that catch their attention.

Next, using a visualiser, the text of the poem is shared on the IWB. The class read through it together. The children look at the poem in pairs using Aidan Chambers' Tell Me beginnings as a prompt:



Image: Mark Olsen (Unsplash)

- Was there anything you liked about this poem?
- Was there anything you disliked about this poem?
- Was there anything that puzzled you?
- Were there any patterns or connections that you noticed?

This leads to some interesting talk about whether this is a normal hummingbird. The class decide that it isn't – it's a giant prehistoric hummingbird. The class are intrigued!

Then the children read a paper copy of the poem together in pairs, looking specifically at how the poet describes the hummingbird. The class notice that while the poet uses some adjectives (long, big, terrifying), much of the most interesting and evocative description comes from the verbs (whizzing, flashed, jabbing) and noun phrases (this little bit chipped off in brilliance).

The process is repeated with 'The Abyss'. This time, the children notice that the poet has used comparisons such as similes and metaphors (like ghosts of themselves; like a Hell dissolving; with its surgeon's kit of probes and feelers). The teachers draws the children's attention to the fact that these are perhaps surprising or new comparisons and that is part of why they catch our attention and reveal something about the shrimp in a way that 'the shrimp is as fast as lightning' or 'as fast as a cheetah' might not.

### 3. Looking for inspiration

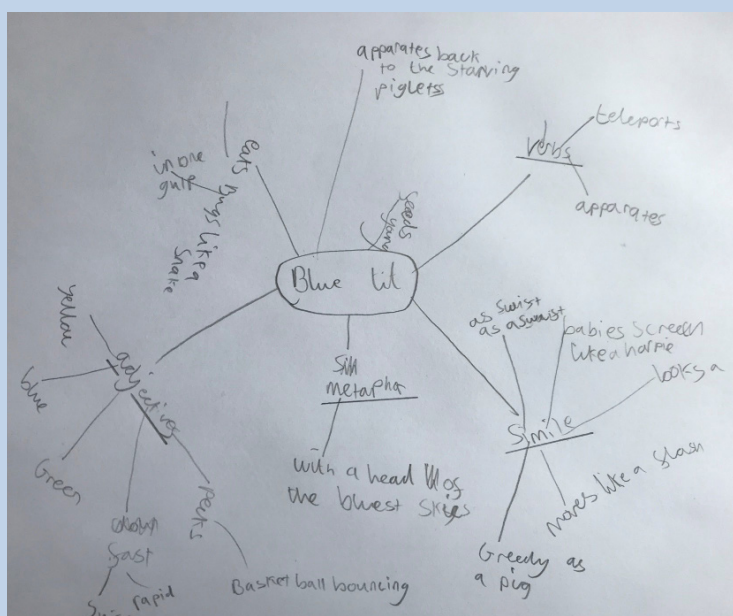
The teacher tells the children that they are going to write their own poems about an animal of their choice. Working in pairs, the children create a short list of animals they might want to write about. The class is enthusiastic about this task and soon each have a list of suitable animals. The creatures chosen range from the exotic (lions and pangolins) to the familiar (one child is writing about her cat). Sam decides that he is going to write about blue tits. He thinks he might imagine giant prehistoric blue tits, like DH Lawrence's humming bird, but he's not quite sure yet.

The next task is to collect as many words, phrases and ideas as they can that might be useful for their poem. The children are reminded that they might want to think about:

- interesting (and perhaps unexpected) similes and metaphors
- verbs and nouns, as well as adjectives, to describe their animal
- their own relationship and viewpoint to the animal in the poem (I imagine, I am told, I saw...)
- whether the poem could be about something beyond the animal itself (how the poet feels; a big issue like conservation; a lesson that could be learned from its life)

The teacher models this process as a 'shared planning' session. The teacher chooses a film clip of a plumed bird of paradise from a David Attenborough documentary. In the clip, the bird is dancing to attract a mate. Together, the class think of some words, phrases, images and comparisons (arranged as a spider diagram) describing the bird's 'manic dancing', and 'feathers upturned like a smile'. The teacher notes that the bird is doing the same dance for attention that some children do with their hands up when they are desperate to answer a question in class.

Sam uses a school iPad to watch a film of a blue tit feeding its young. He is amazed at how quickly it moves, seeming to appear and disappear. He also comments to his friend how ugly and greedy the chicks are! He decides that the current blue tits are more than interesting enough to write about and that he doesn't need to invent giant prehistoric ones.



Drawing on the poems he has studied already, Sam tries to think of some interesting verbs to describe the birds' movements (teleport and apparate) and some comparisons (greedy little pigs). He also notices the colour of the birds – they aren't just blue and yellow, they are a mixture of blues, yellows, greens.

He jots these down as a spider diagram (left), just like the shared example on the board.

#### 4. 'The best words in the best order'

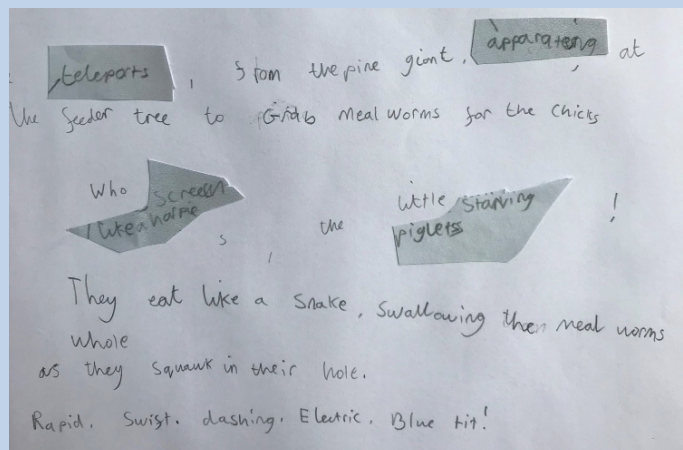
Now they have some ideas to play with, the class can begin the business of transforming their ideas to reflect Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous description of poetry.

While they are writing, the teacher moves around the classroom answering questions, offering feedback and supporting individuals. Sam chooses to cut up his spider diagram and arrange the words and phrases, joining them together and adding new text.

The teacher walks around the class offering some feedback concentrating on both secretarial issues ('Oscar, have a look at your poem again – there are quite a few missing capital letters') and suggestions for things that might be added ('Sumeya, this is lovely but could you add some more description about your wolverine's nature? There's lots about his physical appearance, but your reader might want to know more about what he's like...'). Then the teacher works with a small group whose poems are currently similar to lines of descriptive prose (like that found in an information text), helping them to add a more poetic feel and structure to their creations.

In the next session, after listening to several children's poems being read aloud, the teacher leads a mini-lesson focused on less obvious similes and metaphors. Many poems feature 'fast as a rocket' and 'big as an elephant', so the teacher wants to model some different possibilities.

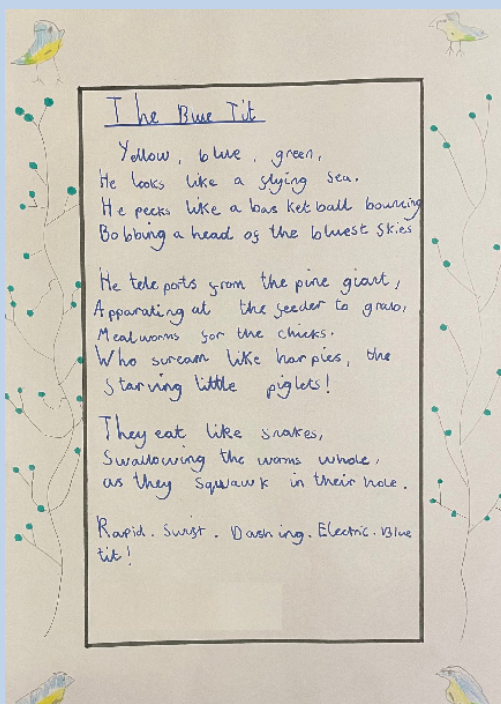
The class look at a film clip of a golden snubnosed monkey and suggest it has 'hands like a pickpocket' and 'vicious teeth like scimitars to



#### 5. Creating something to be proud of ...

The class are given the rest of the morning to publish their poems, illustrating them if they wish. The teacher shares several pieces of work from a previous anthology made by the class in the autumn term, showing them some different possibilities: an illustrated border, an accompanying picture beneath the poem or a lightly coloured illustration with the text written in pen over the top. The children choose how to present their poem. Sam decides to add a border to his poem. Despite not always being the ...er... neatest child, he works carefully and is very proud of his finished piece. The poems are collected together into a class anthology, which is added to the class library area.

This unit has given the children to work through the stages of a processled teaching sequence, moving from collecting fuel to publishing a polished outcome of which they can be proud. While the writing task is a whole-class one, children have had plenty of choice about the content, subject and form of their work.





In this case study, we've looked at a very 'input-output' relationship between published poetry and a child writing their own poem. Most of time, we'd hope that the poetry that children listen to, read, talk about or perform affects their writing in a much less linear and direct way.

Encountering the rhythm, sounds, words and ideas of a wide range of different poetry gives children a window

into many different ways of using language, letting them soak up ideas that might come in handy in the future. Hopefully, encountering lots of poetry is also a fascinating, joyful experience, too. And that's reason enough to ensure it remains a central part of children's lives.



Author, James Clements

**James Clements** is an education writer, researcher and winner of the 2021 NATE Primary award.

This article is adapted from *On the Write Track* by James Clements, a new book about teaching writing in the primary school published by Routledge in October 2022. Read below for further details:

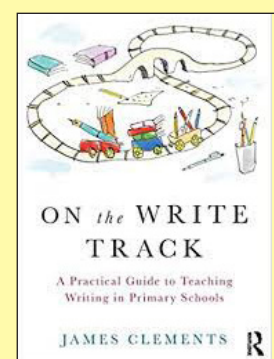
*On the Write Track* puts teachers' autonomy and their knowledge of what is right for their pupils at the heart of teaching writing. It explores a set of research-based principles, before illustrating these with case studies and examples of classroom practice.

Writing is about communication. Learning to write gives children a voice that others will listen to – a voice they can use to share their ideas, articulate their feelings, amuse and delight their readers and argue for what they believe in.

While every child, every teacher and every classroom are different, approaches to teaching writing can sometimes feel prescriptive, whether they are based on a particular curriculum model, commercial scheme, assessment system or underlying philosophy.

This book provides freedom and choice by introducing a series of 'tracks' for writing teaching, including practical approaches to:

- building a community of writers in the classroom
- employing a process-led sequence for teaching writing
- encouraging children to write for pleasure and share their own interests
- exploring the use of rich and diverse texts as fuel for writing
- drawing on spoken language and oracy to develop written communication
- teaching grammar and punctuation to support writing
- utilising feedback to help children develop their writing voice
- using drama and play as starting points for writing



Through considering these different tracks and thinking about how to weave them together into a coherent whole, teachers can help every child to make the journey to being a confident, skilled, keen writer.

Find out more [here](#).

## Falling in Love with Poetry - a journey of tingling, laughing and reflecting

**Bob Cox** reflects on his love affair with poetry and provides advice for teachers on text choices, teaching approaches and confidence building.

Poetry is personal, memorable, musical and profound. Towards the start of my career – a long time ago – my class of secondary modern pupils won a poetry competition for an anthology full of poems which spoke from the heart. I can still remember the judge, a local poet himself, say that a successful poem makes the reader tingle at some point. For the winners, he had chosen sincerity over polished conventionality. It might be a word, a phrase, an ending, an unusual twist – but there is something which hits the senses. That moment might produce laughter, reflection or even silence – but the words count emotively.

Here is one that does that for me, the ending of ‘Eden Rock’ by Charles Causley:

*My mother shades her eyes and looks my way  
Over the drifted stream.  
My father spins  
A stone along the water.  
Leisurely,  
They beckon to me from the other bank.  
I hear them call, ‘See where the stream-path is!  
Crossing is not as hard as you might think.’  
I had not thought that it would be like this.*

Is this about Causley’s parents or all our parents? The poem had begun with the haunting line:

*They are waiting for me somewhere beyond  
Eden Rock.*

Knowledge about language feeds personal response. The more we think about ‘beckon’ the more powerful the meaning and connotation becomes. Is this a call from

the other side? Which words or phrases pull at your emotions? Think of how much your own prior reading and maybe your personal experiences come into play.

Do read the full poem:

[Eden Rock - Poetry Archive](#)

I often feel the same emotional response about the pupils’ work I receive from our wonderful network of ‘Opening Doors’ schools. Here are a few lines from the stimulus poem and the pupil’s work which applies ideas from a Caribbean wind to a journey of the sun.

### Opening of ‘Wind’, Dionne Brand:

*I pulled a hummingbird out of the sky  
one day but let it go,  
I heard a song and carried it with me  
on my cotton streamers,  
I dropped it on an ocean and lifted up a wave  
with my bare hands,  
I made a whole canefield tremble and bend.*

### Response by Alina, aged 9, Locks Heath Junior School:

*Journey of the Sun  
I hid behind a white, marshmallow soft cloud,  
I lazily hung over the rushing river,  
I peeked over the snow-capped mountain,  
I glowed with all my might, on top of the world,  
I was like a torch in a dark, powerless room,*

Please read more inspirations by accessing the Crown House pupil work site:

[Bob Cox - Crown House Publishing](#)

“Knowledge about language feeds personal response. The more we think about ‘beckon’ the more powerful the meaning and connotation becomes.”

So, if the ambiguities, ranges of styles and sheer wonder of poetry are that powerful then how is it that of all the forms and genres of English weaving their way through the primary curriculum, then poetry is the most absent or the most neglected? That's a massive generality of course but nevertheless it's a point often made by English leaders themselves and by external advisors with the privilege – like me – of visiting many schools and acquiring a big picture beyond social media sound bites.

Here are some of the major reasons for the lower status poetry can have in some schools:

- 1) Lack of confidence and knowledge about poetry – past and present – on the part of teachers.
- 2) A mindset of discrete delivery of poetry, as if it were a very different shaped brick in a big wall
- 3) Lack of poetry planned progressively in their own curriculum
- 4) Lack of poetry in the school library
- 5) Lack of discussions about poetry in regular planning about English

Of course, all of the above conspire to undermine confidence.

Yet – and this is important – I've never found anything other than a genuine desire on the part of teachers to include poetry through the primary phase. It's been a question of supporting that desire with advice on the teaching of poetry and the encouragement to include increasingly complex poems through the school. South Rise in Greenwich, for example, (see Lauren Walters' article on page 31) have shown

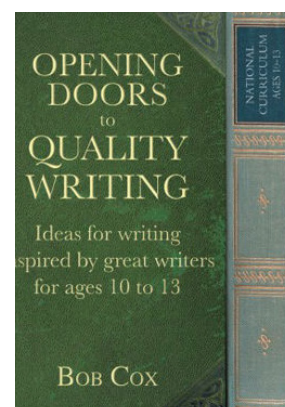
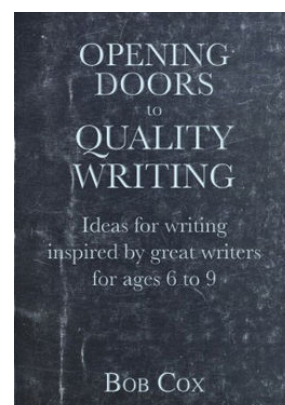
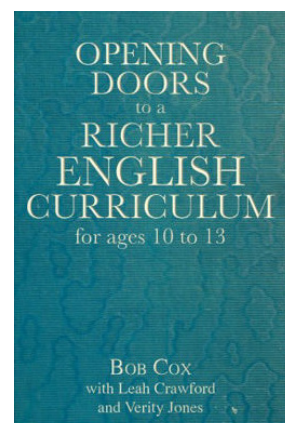
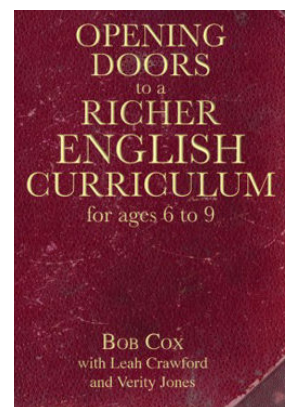
extraordinary passion in building a rich poetry journey for their pupils.

We have seen that the five barriers above can be in a large measure overcome by an action plan for poetry placed at the centre of the curriculum with progressively harder and more fascinating texts explored. For this to happen we have seen schools utilise their internal talent and/or ask us for support with:

- 1) Resources – range and diversity
- 2) Developing knowledge and learning about ways of teaching poetry
- 3) Making more complex poetry accessible for all
- 4) Linking poets from the past to contemporary poets
- 5) Boosting an appreciation of poetry through the school community.

At the heart of this is the journey a teacher makes to become confident with new texts. That habit becomes career-long once embedded. I can recall talking to a teacher who was honestly articulating concerns over poems she had never heard of like Charlotte Mew's 'The Call' or Miroslav Holub's 'The Door'. Yet she then said that she loved teaching rhythm via 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes or narrative ballads via Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott', both of which are 'complex' yet memorable poems.

It's not the challenge of the language or the literary conventions that are the main barrier, after all; it's the journey needed towards familiarisation and constant usage of newly discovered poetry. So many schools with whom we work are finding that journey an absolute delight rather than a barrier.



Bob Cox is an award-winning author and has supported around 500 schools directly and delivered well over 1000 insets of various types across the UK and abroad, including webinars. To find out more about Bob's work and his 'Opening Doors' series, you can visit [www.searchingforexcellence.co.uk](http://www.searchingforexcellence.co.uk), email [bobcox@searchingforexcellence.co.uk](mailto:bobcox@searchingforexcellence.co.uk) and follow Bob @BobCox\_SFE.



## SOS - Save our Sonnets (and other poetic forms) - rescuing poetry from the Christmas acrostic

**Dawn Robertson** makes the case for raising the profile of poetry within and beyond the classroom.

Ian McMillan's poem, 'You can never have too much poetry' advocates starting each day with a full 'breakverse' but, in my role as an English consultant, I rarely see poetry given that spotlight. It is often avoided or neglected. I find it shunted to the end of the term as an acrostic poem entitled CHRISTMAS, forced into a busy, tinselled-filled morning or maybe a shape poem, tenuously squeezed into the curriculum using a template found on-line. I feel it is the Cinderella of English!

**Nobody puts poetry in the corner – some ideas to help raise its profile!**

**1. Make poetry visible - If you walk around your school, are you bathed in poetry?**

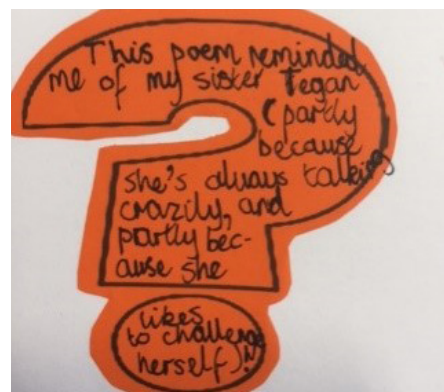
Are there specific poetry displays or lines of poetry used for inspiration around the school? Have you thought of creating a 'poetree'? Do curriculum displays have poetry books too?

Is there a poetry section in the library? Are there posters of poetry and poets here? Is there a poet of the month with examples of their poems to look at and discuss?

of poetry used for inspiration around the school? Have you thought of creating a 'poetree'? Do curriculum displays have poetry books too?

Is there a poetry section in the library? Are there posters of poetry and poets here? Is there a poet of the month with examples of their poems to look at and discuss?

Does children's poetry writing get celebrated?



It's

easy to raise poetry's profile. For a term, begin every assembly with a poem. Read from books like 'I am the Seed that grew the tree' by Waters and Preston-Gannon that offer a poem linked to nature for every day of the year. Share Macmillan's wonderful series of anthologies entitled 'The Works' that give a smorgasbord of every different type of poem and poet that you will need. This series is thoughtfully chosen by Paul Cookson, Gaby Morgan or Pie Corbett and will open up everyone's eyes to the variety of poetry at your finger-tips. Ask pupils to share their thoughts about the poems these poems on a display in the hall so that they can see all the different responses.



## 2. Is poetry at the heart of your English teaching?

Look at your English curriculum overviews. Can you see poetry clearly? If not, you need to work together to think about what your children should know about poets, themes, structures and individual poems by the time they leave your school. Start by auditing what you have on your current curriculum:

- Can you justify why your current poets are on the list? Do you ensure diversity and is there a variety of different cultures captured?
- Is there a good balance of classic and contemporary poetry? Do you use lyrics as part of your poetry curriculum?
- Do you explore themes in poetry?
- Does the list include different forms of poetry and explore poetic features – e.g. list poems, concrete poems, nonsense poetry, Shakespearean iambic pentameter?
- What poetry is shared for performance? Is some poetry used more for reading, whilst others might lead to writing outcomes?

### Building your curriculum

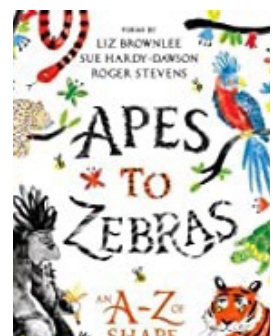
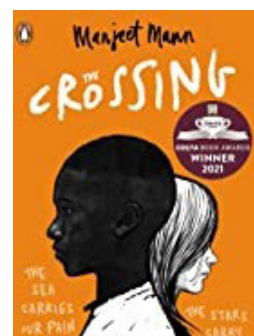
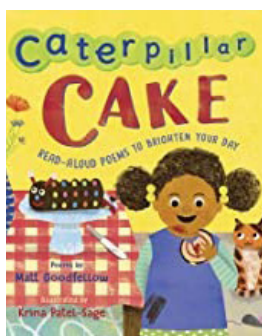
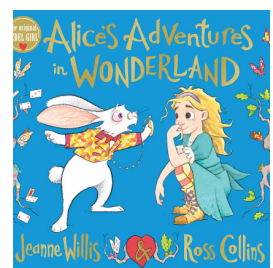
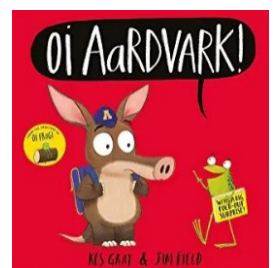
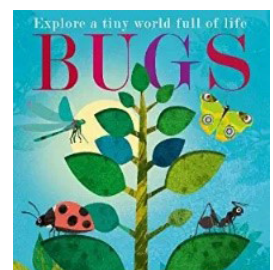
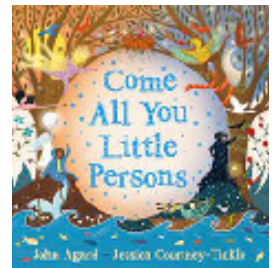
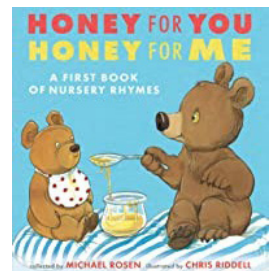
Start with EYFS and KS 1 and look at the rhymes that you teach, the poetic narratives you share and the poems that you perform with your children.

Do you offer your pupils a comprehensive ‘vertebrate of verse’ with voices from different times, cultures and experiences? We need to get into the habit of thinking

about poetry like we do fiction by exploring the poem, discussing our likes and dislikes, unpicking the structure and language choices, performing them and then using them to inspire our own writing. Pupils should see their teachers creating poetry too. We could also make cross-curricular links. If pupils are studying the river in geography they could read poetry such as Valerie Bloom’s ‘The River’ and watch the clip on Youtube or explore the journey from H<sub>2</sub>O to the source in James Carter’s ‘Once upon a Raindrop’. Whatever topics we choose to explore, children need to be given the best examples of poetry we can find.



The poet Sue Hardy-Dawson (@[suehardydawson](https://twitter.com/suehardydawson)) tweeted recently, that ‘Poems, like songs, need to become familiar’ and this could be encouraged with a poetry basket in the classroom that children can return to and add to. Weekly poetry sessions could take place where everyone could share old and new favourites.



I love the idea of having a recommendation chart. Here is an example from Jon Biddle's [@jonnybid](mailto:jonnybid) class. It is clear that poetry is at the heart of his learning.

POEM OF THE DAY		
Day	Name	Poem & poet
Mon	Mr B.	Eddie at the Car - MR
Tue	Emily, Winter, Jasmine	School report - page 14 BM
Wed	Aleisha + Jasmine	Opposites page 2
Thu	Itay + Aleisha	Our granny page 18
Fri	Freddie + Lydia	Work as a Joe Jack's Kay

If you want children to read and write poetry you have to find quality examples to share with them. Once you have found these, teaching becomes so much easier!

The internet is full of wonderful websites and blogs to help find that perfect poem to use in a school's poetry curriculum:

- <https://poetryarchive.org/> - offers the most comprehensive collection of contemporary poets reading their own work in the UK. It includes areas for pupils and teachers as well as activities for the classroom.
- [www.childrens.poetryarchive.org](http://www.childrens.poetryarchive.org) - Poetry at your fingertips.
- <http://www.poetryroundabout.com/> Edited and curated by Liz Brownlee, the National Poetry Day Ambassador, and full of lots of poetry and resources.
- <https://performapoem.lgfl.org.uk/> - a site full of advice about the performance of poetry

- <http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/> Held on the first Thursday of October. This website shares all the resources for supporting this day in school and includes amazing articles written by poets about their love of poetry. Full of poems and ideas that are very accessible.
- [www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk](http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk) This features an idea-bank, resources for teachers, information on competitions and programmes of live events.
- <http://www.booktrust.org.uk> This has a comprehensive section full of ideas about how to effectively share poetry with our pupils.



- [www.clpe.org.uk](http://www.clpe.org.uk) Their poetryline bank of resources is rich with ideas for teachers looking for the highest quality poets and poems. They also have a downloadable powerpoint that can be used for CPD.
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z4mmn39> 8 learner guides and 14 clips to support the teaching of poetry.
- [www.searchingforexcellence.co.uk](http://www.searchingforexcellence.co.uk) This is Bob Cox's website that will help you enter the world of Opening Doors to a Richer English Curriculum where poetry teaching is explored in depth
- [brian-moses.blogspot.com](http://brian-moses.blogspot.com) The poet, Brian Moses, has a poem for every subject and happily shares them on his wonderful blog.
- [www.cccpworkshops.co.uk](http://www.cccpworkshops.co.uk) Neal Zetter, shares a huge array of poetry on his website that offers something for everyone.
- [www.mmu.ac.uk/poetrylibrary](http://www.mmu.ac.uk/poetrylibrary) The brand new poetry library in Manchester has something poetic to offer to everyone!

# Perform a Poem



### 3. Do you have real fun with poetry? Is there a poetry buzz?

- Set a monthly or half-termly poetic challenge. This could be shared at an assembly so that everyone can hear it. Designate a board to share the responses. Make each challenge very different.
- Ask everyone what their favourite poem is. Display this poem with a photo of who has chosen it and why. This will hopefully enable the school to show the diversity of poetry as the display might include more traditional poems and poets, like A.A. Milne, modern classics like Little Red Riding Hood by Roald Dahl or lyrics by Coldplay.
- Collect as many different poems about a theme so that everyone is searching for great poems – e.g. pets, the weather, Christmas, monsters, colours, nature.
- Create a whole school question and answers poem e.g. What will I put in my suitcase when I go to visit the stars? What would you find in a pirate's pocket?
- Give every class the challenge of create an alphabet of poets e.g. Agard to Zephaniah or a recipe of poetry with a crumb of Coelho, a dollop of Duffy and a pinch of Patten on the way.
- They could be asked to create an alphabet linked to a subject e.g. worms, dog breeds, bottoms, elves, treasure. These could be inspired by specific books.
- Have a masked poet competition on-line. Ask the teachers to pick their favourite poem and read it in a costume or by using an APP to disguise their identity. Pupils then have to vote about who they think it might be.
- Capture extreme poetry reads in photographs e.g. on top of a mountain, sitting in the bath, reading with a horse.
- Learn a poem, film pupils reciting it and put their photo on display with a QR

code to see them performing.

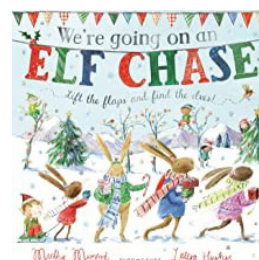
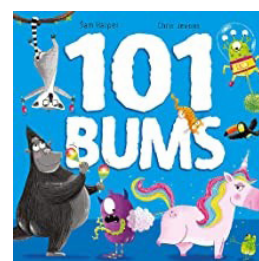
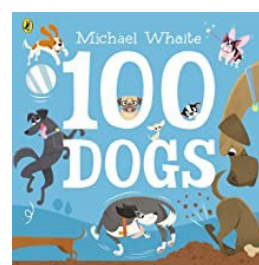
- Hold a poetry performance festival where every class will share a poem and individuals can perform too.
- Create a community of poets. Ask as many people as possible what their favourite poem is and photograph them reading/reciting it.
- Offer a quote about poetry and ask everyone to discuss it in class and see if they can find a poem that connects with it in some way.

### 4. Have you invited poetry into your school?

Children need to see that poetry is organic and working with poets is a wonderful way to do this. During lockdown, more poets than ever shared their work via zoom. Poets, like Tomfoolery (Tomos Roberts), responded to the pandemic by writing and performing poetry that resonated with children.

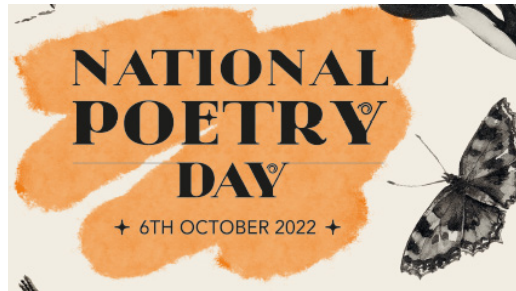
Twitter is a great platform for directly connecting some wonderful poets. Our new children's Laureate, Joseph Coelho (@JosephACoelho) shares his latest work. Poets including Liz Brownlow (@LizBrownlow), James Carter (@JamesCarter), Julie Anna Douglas (@Julia Anna Poetry), Matt Goodfellow (@EarlyTrain), Sue Hardy-Dawson (@suehardydawson), Niall Oliver (@NMOliverPoetry) Brian Moses (@BrianMoses), Coral Rumble (@RumbleCoral), Chris White (@chriswhitepoet) and Neal Zetter (@Nealzetterpoet) generously offer lots of their ideas and poems and are keen to share their poetic passion.

Many poets can be contacted directly to set up visits and zoom sessions or through their publishers or organisations such as <https://authorsalouduk.co.uk/> and a wealth of poetry and free resources to share on the day can be found at <https://nationalpoetryday.co.uk/>



Authors  
Aloud UK

I hope you enjoyed National Poetry Day this month. The theme was *The Environment* and a wealth of poetry and free resources are still available to view at <https://nationalpoetryday.co.uk/>



### 5. Are you up-to-date with the latest poetry being published?

It is always difficult to keep a finger on the poetry pulse but there is so much information out there that it is a very quick way to find out more about poets, awards and celebrations:

CLiPPA – the CLPE poetry awards <https://clpe.org.uk/research/poetry> showcases the best published poetry for children and is judged by poets and literacy experts. There is also a CLiPPA Shadowing Scheme that encourages schools to explore and perform the poetry on the shortlist. The

award culminates in a prestigious ceremony in London where schools are invited to perform poetry alongside the shortlisted poets.

Award for Excellence in poetry for children given yearly by the National Council of Teachers of English - <https://ncte.org/awards/ncte-childrens-book-awards/>

Local Authority book awards e.g. Stockport Children's Book Award – earlier this year it nominated the lyrical picture book *Bear* and her book by Frances Tosdevin and Sophia O'Connor that showed how a book could save the day and a cautionary tale by Catherine Emmett and David Tazzyman entitled 'The Pet', telling the story of a spoilt child who demands a gorilla as a pet.

I will end with the words of the wonderful Michael Rosen, reminding us that: 'poetry is the sound of words in your ears, it's the look of poets in motion and that can be you. Make your poems sing, whisper, shout and float. Let the words make the rhythm and give the viewers a buzz to see you.'

Good luck and let poetry fly from your fingertips!



**Dawn Robertson** is an independent Primary English Consultant based in Manchester. She is passionate about sharing her love of English with fellow teachers and spends her time training throughout the country, as well as supporting schools in creating a dynamic English curriculum that meets their pupils' needs.

She is the author of *Lizzie and the Birds* and has also written a teacher's guide to show how to use her picture book to produce a wide range of stimulating reading and writing outcomes. She can be found sharing ideas on her website [www.itjustdawnedonme.co.uk](http://www.itjustdawnedonme.co.uk) or on Twitter [@justdawned](https://twitter.com/justdawned).

## A poet before you know it - strategies to develop children's vocabulary and creative instincts

**Jane Andrews**, English Advisor at HFL Education, shares some great ideas to use poetry to kick-start children's language at the beginning of a narrative or non-fiction unit of work.

How many of us profess a deep love for poetry and keep volumes by the bedside to delve into at every opportunity? In reality, very few. It is something we are all familiar with and have studied ourselves at school and there may be particular poems or poets that stick in our minds. I have a soft spot for Dylan Thomas which began on YouTube. My grandparents were from South Wales and I was captivated when a cousin sent me this link for 'A Child's Christmas in Wales'.

If I ask teachers how they feel about poetry, I often get a 'Marmite' response – they love it or hate it. Whichever camp you belong to, or perhaps somewhere in between, see what you think of the ideas below. When writing, in their eagerness to get it all right, children sometimes struggle to hit the right tone for the reader. One of the key issues in the past was children thinking that they had to use the 'wowiest' word available in a thesaurus rather than the 'right' word.

There may also be lengthy success criteria that children are working towards and, if this is not focused on the effect on the reader and the purpose of the writing, it can send the outcome awry. The following shows how a poetry unit, designed to build vocabulary before a narrative or non-fiction

unit, can lift their understanding of how well-chosen language transports the reader into the writing. They will learn to paint a picture with words and play with the reader's emotions. With free-verse poetry they don't need to worry about clause structures and, in fact, this is a place where it is legal to play with and often break the rules.

Poetry can help children love language and encourage them to play with it. They can then take these techniques through to other writing opportunities.

Let's imagine we have an upcoming narrative or non-fiction unit on dragons. Spend a week on the following free verse ideas which will build the children's vocabulary and help them consider how this language affects the reader.

A shared read of Jackie Morris's wonderful text, 'Tell Me a Dragon' might be a good starting point and a way of firing up their creative juices. With all of the vocabulary-building approaches, it is essential that you provide the vocabulary. Some words they probably know but don't use themselves and a few words they might not know but would be very useful.

"Poetry can help children love language and encourage them to play with it. They can then take these techniques through to other writing opportunities."



**Acrostic poems**

These help children consider whether the vocabulary is appropriate for the effect they wish to create. Is your dragon friendly, a hero, deadly? Generate as many words as possible that might relate to your dragon beginning with each letter – the teacher should also add some. A variety of pictures would support this process. Select the words which describe the creature you have in mind. The teacher could model on another subject e.g. ‘TEACHERS’ Now, let those words set the tone for the rest of the line:

**D**ragons  
**R**age screaming from deadly eyes  
**A**ngry fire destroying everything in its path  
**G**igantic eyes, never missing a trick  
**O**dorous steam streaming from its cavernous nostrils  
**N**oxious breath  
**S**cales like a knight’s armour, shielding from attack



Image: Ravit Sages (Unsplash)

**A cut above the rest**

Take a short poem or a verse from a poem you will be studying. There are two ways you can cut it up:

1. Print it double line-spaced and then cut up on the lines. Place them in an envelope and the children will put the lines in an order they believe makes sense. Sometimes, they begin with the only line that starts with a capital letter and put it at the top, and then place the line ending with a full stop at the bottom. Poems don’t always give us such clues and this is immediately something to discuss. There is no right or wrong about the order they create, rather it is the conversations evolving from why they think they should go in this order.

**or**

2. Rather than cut up each individual word, you can type the poem and then cut and paste each word on to the next page in alphabetical order. If the word appears three times, paste it three times.

With both of these approaches, the children can often talk quite knowledgeably about the poem before ever reading it. I might choose poems about animals, e.g. ‘My Brother Bert’ by Ted Hughes or ‘Penguins on Ice’ by Celia Warren.

**Similes**

I’m sure we’ve all seen a variety of inappropriate similes. I’ve seen ‘as white as ice cream’ to show how white somebody had turned in fear. We have only to ask the children if they want to put a picture of an ice cream into somebody’s mind while building the tension in our story and they realise it’s inappropriate. This approach helps them to consider how to develop appropriate similes and metaphors. We start with the clichés such as ‘As light as ...’ and the children respond ‘a feather’. We then model how to push this simile by explaining that I could think of something lighter. I would need to think of something really small, like a fairy. Then I would push it to find something even smaller like a fairy’s eyelash and then a tear drop.

**Similes (continued)**

Now I have as light as the teardrop on the end of a fairy's eyelash. Again, this is only appropriate if I want something as lovely as a fairy in the reader's mind. Going back to my dragons I might have 'its fire is like a scorching wind striking down anything in its path'. I could then change that to a metaphor by saying that 'its fire, a scorching wind, striking down anything in its path.'

**Consequences**

First of all, decide as a whole class the feeling we want to create about our dragon i.e. dangerous, endangered, friendly etc. Mine is 'dangerous'. The grammar exemplified is for Year 4 but you would choose word classes appropriate for your class.

1. Fold a piece of paper in half and half again, creating 4 columns down the page.
2. First of all, decide as a whole class the feeling we want to create about our dragon i.e. dangerous, endangered, friendly etc. Mine is 'dangerous'. The grammar exemplified is for Year 4 but you would choose word classes appropriate for your class.
3. Fold a piece of paper in half and half again, creating 4 columns down the page. Write four verbs, one

screeching	tearing	attacking	swooping
------------	---------	-----------	----------

4. Fold the paper over and pass to the next person. Write four determiners:

one	some	a	few
-----	------	---	-----

5. Fold the paper over and pass to the next person. Write four nouns:

breath	nostrils	eyes	scales
--------	----------	------	--------

7. The paper is then passed to the next person. Each column contains words that must be in that line/verse but in any order and with any additional language added:

*One deadly breath*

*blasts from the giant*

*suddenly he is screeching to a halt*

*beside me*

You may need to remind the children of the features of that word class – or leave it as an assessment activity and find out what they do/ don't know. The above approaches for developing appropriate vocabulary through free verse poetry might also be applied to themes, e.g. 'adventure', 'excitement', 'nature's wonders'. This allows children to develop vocabulary together but then to create very individual poems. Always make it clear that we are choosing words which have a desired effect.



**Jane Andrews** is an English Adviser with HFL Education, formerly known as Herts for Learning. Before this, she enjoyed being a teacher and a leader in primary schools. If she were to profess to a passion and bias in her work, it would be developing spoken language and children's ability to communicate. This article was first published in *Primary Matters* in Autumn 2016.

# ‘Opening the Doors’ to teaching poetry: principles and practice - a view from the classroom

**Lauren Walters** explores the impact of adopting the ‘Opening Doors’ approach to teaching poetry.

“Take a moment and consider, what does the teaching of poetry look like in your school and classroom? Is it something that is taught just because ‘it needs to be’ or do your staff show a passion and desire to teach it – just as they would a narrative or diary?”

With over 50 forms of poetry, it is no wonder that primary school teachers find it difficult to pinpoint exactly what needs to be taught by the end of KS1 and KS2.

The National Curriculum states that at Key Stage One pupils should be taught to:

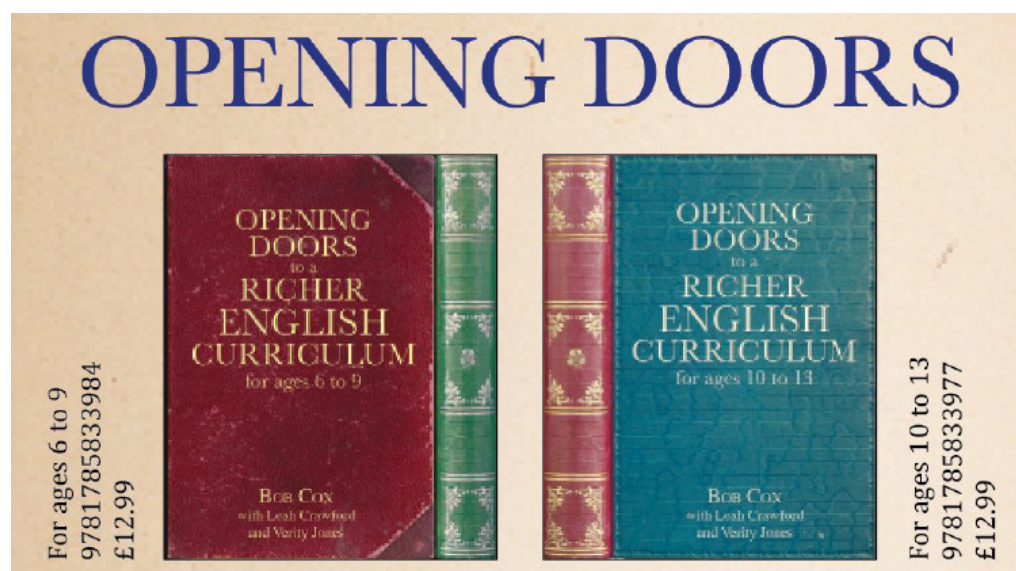
- Develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by listening to, discussing and expressing views about a wide range of contemporary and classic poetry at a level beyond that at which they can read independently.
- Recognise simple recurring literacy language in stories and poetry.

At Key Stage Two, pupils are taught to:

- Develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read, by listening to and discussing a wide range of poetry.

- Recognise some different forms of poetry (for example, free verse, narrative poetry).
- By the beginning of Year 5, pupils should be able to read aloud a wider range of poetry written at an age-appropriate interest level with accuracy and at a reasonable speaking pace.
- Learn a wider range of poetry by heart.

Take a moment and consider, what does the teaching of poetry look like in your school and classroom? Is it something that is taught just because ‘it needs to be’ or do your staff show a passion and desire to teach it – just as they would a narrative or diary? How does your teaching sequence scaffold and support all learners to ensure that everyone can access the poem and outcome? This big question is something which Bob Cox, through his [‘Opening Doors to a Richer English Curriculum’ book series](#), aims to address.





## The Opening Doors Principles in practice

The Opening Doors Principles guide and facilitate open discussion around a range of poetry and prose. I am going to use the example of ‘Green Candles’ by Humbert Wolfe throughout this article. Popular in the 1920s, it might not be the first poem which comes to mind to teach but let’s explore its learning opportunities in the classroom:

*‘There’s someone at the door,’ said gold candlestick:  
‘Let her in quick, let her in quick!’  
‘There is a small hand groping at the handle.  
Why don’t you turn it?’ asked green candle.  
‘Don’t go, don’t go,’ said the Hepplewhite chair,  
‘Lest you find a strange lady there.’  
‘Yes, stay where you are,’ whispered the white wall:  
‘There is nobody there at all.’  
‘I know her little foot,’ grey carpet said:  
‘Who but I should know her light tread?’  
‘She shall come in,’ answered the open door,  
‘And not,’ said the room, ‘go out anymore.’*

Cox suggests zooming in on the ending as a place to start: challenging the idea of always starting at the beginning of a text. Why do we need to start with the first line?

“She shall come in,” answered the open door,  
“And not,” said the room, “go out anymore.”

Taking time to discuss a small part of the poem, as an introduction, encourages rich discussion amongst all pupils. Why might ‘she’ not be able to go back out? Watch as children make predictions based on their prior experiences from books and films. Following this up with a ‘big question’: What has happened in the room? This opportunity for collaborative learning can lead to a whole range of ideas and could be collected on sugar paper, on post-it notes or even through digital collaborative tools such as Padlet. Cox then goes on to suggest that by comparing the imperatives ‘shall’ and ‘not’, the two personalities can be juxtaposed. As the class teacher reveals further stanzas to the class, discussions around dialogue and personality can develop and deepen. By

combining the language used and context, children can infer character and intent. This is known as ‘reading between the lines’ or ‘reading beyond the lines’, as summarised by Peter Guppy and Margaret Hughes (1999: 134).

Taster drafts are an important and invaluable part of the Opening Doors Principles. They provide opportunities for teachers to gain an initial assessment for learning. In this instance, children could be asked to write the second stanza – trying to imitate the dialogue but using two different items in the room, perhaps the ceiling and a cushion, or a wall and chair? This formative assessment can then be used to inform planning moving forward. Did the majority of the class punctuate the speech incorrectly? Then take a couple of days to practise punctuating speech. Did a group of children not use the format of a poem and instead wrote in a paragraph? If so, plan a focus group using direct instruction around stanzas.

Before children can consider writing their own version of the poem, you, or your class teacher, needs to have a clear understanding of their desired outcome. When I, in school, taught this, the children were guided throughout to consider what items in our room might say, what their personalities would be and whether we too can create a dramatic poem. These small steps all led to them writing their own poem based on our classroom.

But did they really understand what we meant by ‘dramatic’? To explore this further, we used the idea of a ‘radial layout’. Often, these ‘bigger questions’ are deemed unachievable by those working pre-key stage but by breaking down the question ‘How is the poem made dramatic?’ into smaller questions such as ‘Why are the candles green?’ and ‘What do we learn about

“Taster drafts are an important and invaluable part of the Opening Doors Principles. They provide opportunities for teachers to gain an initial assessment for learning.”

the lady?’ all children can access the ‘big question’ and share their thoughts through scaffold and support.

As mentioned, the National Curriculum states that children should, by the end of Key Stage Two, develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read, by listening to and discussing a wide range of poetry.

Therefore, build in wider reading, or as Cox calls it ‘link reading’, into your teaching sequence. In the sequence being discussed, other poems which include dramatic direct speech, such as “The Night Express” by Frances Cornford and “Who Are We?” by Benjamin Zephaniah can help children deepen their understand of the sequence and impact of speech.

The Opening Doors strategies finishes with ‘Wings To Fly’: an opportunity for children to complete an extended piece of writing. This outcome is set by the class teacher and builds on the teaching sequence, embedding all skills practised throughout. As mentioned, one example outcome, by children at a South East London school, was imitating the original poem but changing

the setting to their own classroom. What might the inanimate objects say when the children leave the classroom?

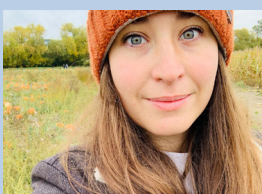
By following this sequence, we felt, that our children had a stronger understanding of direct speech (something usually only used in narrative writing), how to use it across a range of genres and to portray personality.

Now familiar with this poem, our staff have reported an increased confidence in not only using this poem and Opening Doors Principles, but other unfamiliar poems. An example, seen here, is an outcome from a Year 3 pupil after their class spent two weeks applying the strategies discussed above to Miroslav Holub’s poem ‘Fairy Tale’.

With the new Reading Framework: Teaching the Foundations of Literacy (January 2021), highlighting the need for children to learn poems through ‘call and response’ whilst also having ‘poetry embedded in language-rich classrooms’ and ‘to ensure that daily poetry, rhyme and singing is a priority’, this is the ideal time to reflect on and evaluate how poetry is taught in your school.



*A Year Four, ‘Opening Doors’ classroom display on Green Candles.*



**Lauren Walters** is a primary school teacher and lead practitioner working at a school in South East London: South Rise Primary School. Now in her seventh year, Lauren has led on English in her establishment for the last three years and has a particular passion in closing the attainment gap in reading and writing.

## The spirit of invention - a new poetry competition from Britannica Magazine



As we grow into adults, many of us sadly lose touch with poetry and poems. We come to believe, wrongly, that poems are somehow less relevant to our busy grown-up lives, until we reach a point when they are only wheeled out for special occasions, such as weddings and funerals. This is an enormous shame because, as children, we instinctively delight in poetry and wordplay, from the poems we read together in class to the cheeky rhymes, riddles and chants we share on the playground.

At Britannica Magazine – a new monthly non-fiction magazine for children from the makers of Encyclopaedia Britannica – we want to inspire every child who opens our magazine with a love of knowledge, learning, reading and writing. This includes helping children fall in love with the wonder of words. Which is why, alongside articles about everything from fossilised dinosaurs to optical illusions, we've also featured articles about the histories of interesting words (in which you'll find out why the Hawaiian root meaning of 'ukulele' is jumping flea) and an A to Z of words coined by William Shakespeare – including alligator, gossip and eyeball – that are still in use today.

The cover feature for our latest issue is 25 Inventions That Changed the World. It takes children on an incredible journey through thousands of years of human ingenuity, celebrating the eureka moments that shaped today's world. They're all in there, from cooking, writing and the wheel to X-ray machines, microchips and the World Wide Web.

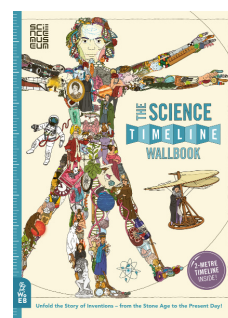
And because we know young readers love poems and poetry just as much as they adore science and inventions, we are also launching a new poetry competition to coincide with the issue.

Young writers of all ages are invited to send in a poem about their all-time favourite invention. The five winners will receive a hardback a copy of the Science Timeline Wallbook, which tells the story of amazing inventions from Stone Age to the present day across an extraordinary two-metre fold-out wallchart.

So if you know any aspiring poets (or inventors!), please encourage them to enter the competition by emailing their poems to the Britannica Magazine team at: [editor@britannicamagazine.co.uk](mailto:editor@britannicamagazine.co.uk). Good luck!

**Andrew Pettie**

Editor, *Britannica Magazine*







National Association for  
the Teaching of English

**Latest news  
from NATE**



**CALLING ALL  
TEACHERS OF POETRY**

**POETRY TEACHING - PAST,  
PRESENT AND FUTURE -  
A NATIONAL SURVEY**

**Have your say on:**

- the joys and challenges of teaching poetry
- how young people's lives can be enriched by their experience of poetry
- the changes you would like to see


**Complete the survey @**  
[bit.ly/poetry-survey-2022](https://bit.ly/poetry-survey-2022)



**THE POETRY SOCIETY**

POETRY BY  
HEART




The English teaching community, including NATE, Poetry By Heart, The Poetry Archive, The Poetry Society, National Poetry Day, The English Association and The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, believes that the lives of young people can be enriched by their experience of poetry, within and beyond the classroom.

We are keen to get the views of classroom practitioners at all key stages (and levels of experience) on their experience of poetry from the perspective of a learner and teacher.

The aim of this survey is to raise the profile of poetry teaching, share good practice and explore some of the challenges that young people and teachers face. We plan to publish the findings of this survey later in 2022. As a thank you for your time, your name will go into draw to win a set of the 2021 CLIPPA shortlisted texts.

Please visit: [bit.ly/poetry-survey-2022](https://bit.ly/poetry-survey-2022). Thank you in advance for your time.

**Re-imagining English, Re-connecting English teachers**  
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<p><i>Readings and Q&amp;A</i> from award-winning author, scriptwriter and NATE Patron, Frank Cottrell-Boyce.</p>	<p><i>Poetry as Spoken Words</i>, with author, academic and co-director of Poetry By Heart, Julie Blake.</p>	<p><i>Writing Wild - a creative writing workshop</i>, with author, and academic, Ashley Hickson-Lovence.</p>	<p><i>Young Poets' Stories: mental health, mentors and networks</i>, with poet and academic, Sue Dymoke.</p>	<p><i>'I Heard What You Said' - a black English teacher in a white system</i>, with author, Jeffrey Boakye.</p>	<p><i>Colourful poetry &amp; the diversified curriculum</i>, with poet and academic, Daljit Nagra.</p>

**Trainee/ECT (NATE members) £10 Trainee/ECT (non-members) £20 NATE Members £39 Non-members £49**

# Spoken language, vocabulary, poetry and the living work of art that is Earth

**Allison Riley**, consultant at The Literacy Company, suggests ways of using picture books to engage young people in environmental issues whilst creating vocabulary-rich poetry.

## How are coral reefs and trees connected?

Sadly, the changes to our climate and increased global warming are affecting our oceans. As oceans become warmer, they become more acidic. This is spoiling the fragile relationship between coral polyps and the algae they use to survive. Algae, which gives coral its colour as well as the nutrients and oxygen to survive, is rejected when acidity increases; corals become bleached and will gradually die. How can trees help? Trees help to reverse global warming by absorbing carbon dioxide; therefore, limiting the damage to the corals in our ocean.

## How did we learn this?

Books. Two wonderful children's picture books: *The Coral Kingdom* by Laura Knowles and Jennie Webber, and *The Wonder of Trees* by Nicola Davies and Lorna Scobie. Both of these books are suitable for Key Stages 1 and 2 as they can be used with pupils in different ways.

## How can we use these books in the classroom?

Not enough time is spent playing with words, enjoying how they sound when you put them together, squeezing them like playdough and stretching them like elastic bands. In this article, activities for playing with the rich vocabulary in these two books will be suggested, and also how to turn word play into simple yet effective poetry.

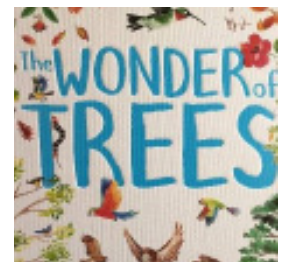
*The Coral Kingdom* is written as a poem. It introduces coral reefs to pupils in KS1

upwards beautifully and scientifically. Read the book with your pupils: enjoy the pictures and the words. The lines do rhyme – notice the rhymes but don't make finding them a main focus. Instead, enjoy the way the words in each line are put together and roll them around in your mouths: 'Coral crimson, red and rose', 'a salty sunset flecked with gold'. Say in loud and quiet voices, repeat over and over; create actions to match the words. When you have finished reading the book with the children, collect all the words and phrases that you have enjoyed. You may wish to do this before reading and type up onto word cards.

After reading the book, clear the tables away, roll out lining paper or large sheets of sugar paper and use markers to play with writing the words. Children should record any words and phrases they like on the paper after the activities.

## These are some of the activities you might like to do with your pupils:

- Using two sets of colour coded cards, give pupils either a noun or an adjective – pupils wander around, sticky high 5 then see if their pair of cards match up. How does it sound? What does the phrase mean? Do the words match? Have you made a noun phrase with alliteration? camouflaged creatures, thriving seahorses, living jewels, sunken ship, colossal reef



“Not enough time is spent playing with words, enjoying how they sound when you put them together, squeezing them like playdough and stretching them like elastic bands.”

- Investigate the animals in the pictures. Which verb is used to describe their movement? E.g. Turtles cruise in the water. How would they cruise? Think of a suitable adverb e.g. slowly. Create pairs of verbs and adverbs cruising slowly, patrolling cautiously, clinging tightly
- Collect phrases from the book 'sea stars clinging and mantas roam'. Change the order and word class of the words e.g. roaming mantas ('roam' is changed from verb to adjective) cruising turtles, gliding whales, emerging royal blue corals
- Find adjectives which describe the nouns e.g. crimson coral. Use these to make apt similes coral as crimson as the night sky, coral as jade as a turtle's shell, reefs as colossal as a skyscraper
- Create noun phrases with alliteration using the rich vocabulary purple polyps, camouflaging creatures in crevices, jade jewels

Above all, encourage your pupils to enjoy the words, to say them out loud, to scribble them out until they find the right choice, to stretch and squash their noun phrases: to play. Spend time reading each other's words and phrases and read aloud effective choices.

All of these words and phrases can be put together to create a simple free verse poem. You may wish for the children to write on photocopies of the book's pages or water-coloured backgrounds. Start the poem with the line 'This is the reef where...' then encourage children to paint a picture with words to describe the reef, the corals and the animal inhabitants...

## Year 2 (-ly adverbs, progressive verb forms, -ing suffix)

*This is the reef where...*  
*Turtles are cruising slowly*  
*Mantas are roaming quietly*  
*Royal blue coral emerges in the water*  
*Year 3 and 4 (adverbs, prepositions, similes)*  
*This is the reef where...*  
*Purple polyps project out their arms*  
*Feathered and frayed,*  
*Patrolling sharks surround sunken ships*  
*Crimson coral climbs high*  
*As the evening sky*



*The Wonder of Trees* can be used in a very similar way. Suited more to a Key Stage 2 audience, it has detailed sections about trees in a range of environments with engaging pictures. Similar word play can be enjoyed through this book: 'fire-surviving acacias', 'needle like leaves resisting the cold', 'big-bellied Proboscis monkeys on the Bornean mangroves'.

A final thought in the words of Sylvia A. Earle, oceanographer, 'Not everyone can do everything, but everyone can do something to make a difference'. This is the message we're hoping to share with as many children as we can through a range of engaging pictures books.



**Allison Riley** is an English consultant with eight years' experience of supporting schools with planning, assessment, moderation, subject leadership and curriculum planning. Over the last five years, she has been part of a team on developing and writing award-winning materials to support schools with reading, writing, spelling and a writing intervention. Most recently, Allison has been overseeing the launch of new, curriculum themed units of work for both primary and secondary schools.

If you have enjoyed this article and the environmental theme, check out the full units of work created by The Literacy Company [here](#).



# Uniting, protesting and performing - a poetry shout-out from the Literacy Tree

**Lynn Sear** explains how *The Literacy Tree* promotes poetry at a whole-school level.

There are some texts that demand performance and poetry is certainly that. There are some texts that unite whilst reading as a group and poetry does this job effortlessly. And there are some texts that go beyond just one class, the ones that feel like a protest and the ones you want to shout from the rooftop and 'Change Sings' was one of these.

We take the choosing of texts very seriously at the Literacy Tree as we know our schools use the recommendations well to engage, excite and expose children to the highest quality of literature out there. In the past couple of years, we have added to the canon of gorgeous texts in the Literacy Curriculum with sequences specific to year groups, by creating resources based around one book that you can use throughout the school.

We now have whole school planning sequences for five beautiful books where the literature and the themes and subjects presented within them act as an umbrella for a range of age-related outcomes. These have been so popular since schools reopened physically after Covid and to keep with demand we are planning to add many more of these over the next year.

At the presidential inauguration in 2021 the young poet Amanda Gorman took to the stand and recited the poem, 'The Hill We Climb'. The poem was written to call for 'unity and collaboration and togetherness' among the American people and carries a strong message that the future holds opportunity. 'The Hill We

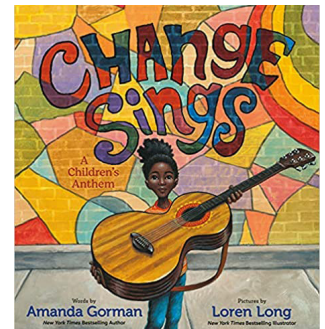
Climb' was widely praised for its message, phrasing, and delivery. The effect of this poem, of Gorman's carefully chosen words were extremely powerful and it is cited as being one of the key moments of President Biden's ceremony. This is what good poetry does – it has the power to make us stop and think, standing together in a collective space.

*When day comes, we step out of the shade  
aflame and unafraid.  
The new dawn blooms as we free it.  
For there is always light.  
If only we're brave enough to see it.  
If only we're brave enough to be it.*  
**Amanda Gorman**, 'The Hill We Climb'

When we learnt that Gorman had penned a children's book we made sure we had a copy before it was released and set to work creating a resource for the day it was published. It felt obvious to us that this should be used as a whole school resource and that the power of the text could be harnessed through a collective response. We asked our school members if they would be interested in using the book for a whole school text as part of their Recovery Curriculum post pandemic and many of them made room for it immediately.

*I can hear change humming  
In its loudest, proudest song.  
I don't fear change coming,  
And so I sing along.*

This is more than a poem, it's a call to arms, a chant, a hymn of hope. And whether you read the book as a metaphor or literally as a tale of a change movement there is no



“We now have whole school planning sequences for five beautiful books where the literature and the themes and subjects presented within them act as an umbrella for a range of age-related outcomes.”

doubt that this presents a strong, positive message of hope that all children need to hear and will find empowering to do so.

All of our planning sequences follow our Teach Through a Text pedagogy to support immersion and as a backbone. The Engaging Starting Point is an essential part of this and our sequence begins with children discovering a guitar in their classroom in an instrument case mysteriously propped up against the whiteboard with a motivational letter from the author. (If there are limited instruments, this could be done in a whole school assembly.)

An envelope is attached to the instrument or through its strings, handwritten on the front is the message:

*To all children at \_\_\_\_\_ Primary School.  
This is a message for you!  
From poet, Amanda Gorman.*

### Letting the words linger...

As part of the sequence, children have multiple opportunities to hear the poem being performed as well as performing the poem themselves in a range of different ways. The performance aspect is vital to the sequence - and totally in keeping with the text; some lines asked to be acted and even shouted!

*I hum with a hundred hearts,  
Each of us lifting a hand.  
I use my strengths and my smarts,  
Take a knee to make the stand.*

They explore the central theme of positive change by thinking about changes they would want to see happen in their school, local community and the wider world.

Through exposure of further performance poetry and entifying various poetic devices they develop their own poetry. They follow a shared write of stanza which we vary according to age, developing rhyme, following a clear pattern and focusing on a specific issue. We give an example:

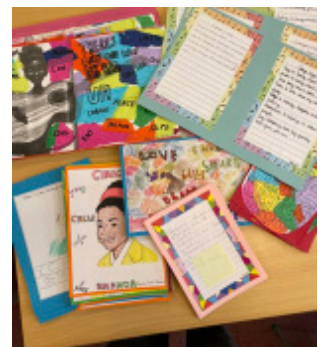
*Year Two Sings!  
Save the seas  
Those beautiful shining seas  
That hug our precious costs  
They bristle with colours and life  
But are now choking with plastic  
Change is recycling and saying no to plastic.  
There is hope where my change sings.*

*Year Six Sings!  
Listen to your friend  
Those magical people in our lives  
- take notice and be aware!  
When they may fall or stumble  
So you can be there  
Not to laugh or judge  
But to pick up and mend  
Change is listening to your friend.  
There is love where my change sings.*

*Help our elders  
Those people born before  
They helped us to grow  
Like sunlight through an open door  
Hear their call for care!*

### Publishing poetry with purpose

Children design their posters and display these around the school. They are encouraged to take flyers home for parents to attend a poetry recital event and listen to their poetry. We also send some of these poems to Amanda Gorman. The beautiful and vivid artwork in the book from Loren Long is explored and each class publish their own poetry compilations, ending with a whole school performance.



Lynn Sear has a background in drama-in-education and is always looking for ways to engage children within literature to use as a platform to inspire high quality writing. This inspired her focus for an MA in Achievement and Equity in Education. She co-founded the Literacy Tree with Anthony Legon in 2012.

# The Power of Poetry to reflect, share and broaden children's realities

**Charlotte Hacking** explores the universal and transcendal power that poetry has in engaging children with literature.

“Children need to feel the joy in reading poetry aloud, joining in, dramatising and performing poems themselves. If poetry is not given a voice, if it just stays on the page as a printed object, then it is not going to come alive for most children”

Poetry has the potential to help children to see themselves reflected in literature and to express themselves through their own writing. It can open doors to children's own desires to read and express themselves through poetry. Poems shared can reveal what this genre can offer to children as a medium in reading and in writing.

Everyone can see their place in poetry, but only if it is showcased. Read poetry aloud often. Drop it in to every moment of the school day, with no preconceived agenda. Give children the opportunity to hear and see a wide range of poets reading and performing their poetry. Children need to see the universality of poetry and that poetry is for them; it transcends age, culture, race, religion. The [poet videos](#) on the CLPE website contain a wide range of poets performing a wide range of poetry and are added to each year in line with CLPE's poetry award, the CLIPPA.

Such resources are particularly important in opening up children's perceptions that poetry can also be for them. One teacher on our [Power of Poetry project](#) had shared [Valerie Bloom's 'Haircut Rap' video](#) with her children. One of them remarked, 'I didn't know poets can be black people too. I thought Valerie Bloom was white.' We keep access to our poetry resources completely

free to expand the range of poets and poetry used in classrooms, ensuring these reflect the realities of all children so they can see themselves in the world of poetry and that it is a space for them.

In sourcing texts for the classroom, teachers need to look for and make available collections that open children's eyes to what poetry is, who writes it and what it can do.

Recorded performances offer children a valuable opportunity to hear a wide variety of voices and dialects. Poetry is a carrier of culture. It marks, shares and shapes who we are and our feelings and experiences of the world and is an important vehicle to explore individual identity and the identity of others. Hearing poets like Jackie Kay, Nikita Gill, Matt Goodfellow and John Lyons enables children to hear a variety of voices and broadens their understanding of language as a whole. As one school, who worked with us at CLPE reflected, 'The children are now more engaged with poetry. They were a particular fan of Matt Goodfellow and never realised a poet could be 'so cool'! It was great to introduce them to more female poets too. Now when asked 'What does a poet look like?' they respond by saying any one of us, which is wonderful to see. As Emmie (one of the children) put so beautifully 'Poetry has no limits.'





Children need to feel the joy in reading poetry aloud, joining in, dramatising and performing poems themselves. If poetry is not given a voice, if it just stays on the page as a printed object, then it is not going to come alive for most children. CLiPPA has a [shadowing scheme](#) attached to the award that encourages children to do exactly this. Groups of children put together a performance of a poem from one of the shortlisted collections. If their video submission wins, they are invited to perform at the event and feel the excitement of seeing poetry performed live. Some incredible responses were seen in this year's winning shadowing school submissions, such as an outstanding interpretation of [Karl Nova's The Dancer by Quincey, a Year 6 pupil](#).

Across our work we see the importance of children hearing from, working with or watching professional poets. Seeing a poet bring their own work to life and beginning to understand what that means in terms of the creation of poetry helps children to see themselves as writers. Listen to poets talk about their writing process; what inspires them, their unique voices, how they work, how they draft, edit and redraft – all this yields a wealth of information to consider the freedoms and support we give children in their own writing. You can see and hear many poets do this in the [poet interviews](#). A visit from a poet brings this experience directly to the children and can be hugely enriching and inspiring.

Poetry gives you a voice to express what you want, in your own way. It is important for children to be able to recognise the poetry in their own lives by hearing poetry by a range of poets that do the same. They need to see that poetry can be used to encapsulate moments that are new, funny or familiar or

as a more cathartic experience to express feelings such as guilt, sadness or loss. [Being Me: Poems About Thoughts, Worries and Feelings](#) by Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Laura Mucha has garnered the most entries in the CLiPPA schools shadowing scheme this year, perhaps because this is such an important collection of poetry for our time, bearing witness to children's thoughts, feelings, experiences and emotions in a way that genuinely offers recognition, affirmation and hope. The three poets have worked in perfect harmony to create a collection that shows their child readers that their emotions and experiences matter, as well as demonstrating how writing about such things can help them make sense of their thoughts and feelings.

Children also need the permission and opportunities to share and write about themselves, their feelings and important events. Through writing poetry, children are encouraged to reflect on their experience, to recreate it, shape it, and make sense of it. In a poem it is possible to give form and significance to a particular event or feeling and to communicate this to the reader or to the listener. An example of this comes from Mahir, a Year 5 student, in response to the poem [Gingerbread Man by Joseph Coelho](#). The poem resonated with personal experiences, giving him licence to express himself in his poem, [Racism](#).

As a teacher reflected on the Power of Poetry project: 'Poetry gives the children an increasingly rare opportunity to express thoughts, feelings and ideas about their world; to feel like a writer, to be a writer. Writing poetry is a place where their thoughts, feelings, ideas and humanity are valued and recognised.'



Charlotte Hacking is the Learning and Programme Director at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education and has led and developed the CLPE's Power of Poetry research project, designed to highlight the importance of poetry as a vehicle for improving children's engagement in and enjoyment of reading and creative writing in schools. Find out more [here](#).

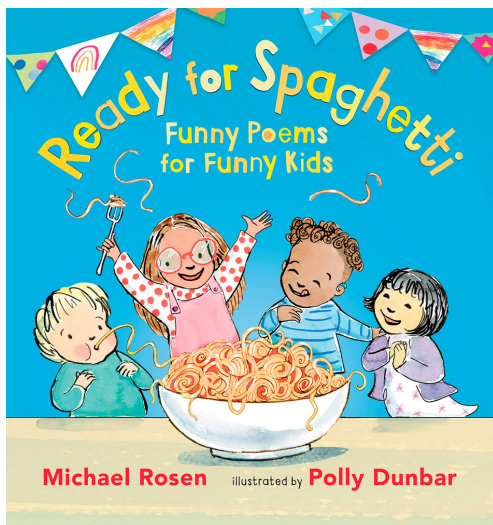
# Book reviews

## Ready for Spaghetti

**Michael Rosen (author) & Polly Dunbar (illustrator)**

Walker Books (Hardcover £14.99)

'Ready for Spaghetti: Funny Poems for Funny Kids' is everything we have come to expect from the ever-popular Michael Rosen. His unique insight into the way young children view the world is brought to the fore in this wonderful compilation of poems taking the reader through the various aspects of a child's day.



From the first poem which starts in the morning, we experience the joy and enthusiasm of all the experiences a young child has over the course of a day. From the lively waking *up, up, uppity-up* to start the day, to the chaos of mealtimes and being *all setti for spaghetti*, playing outside and finally the hush at bedtime, these poems are sure to captivate children and adults alike. Sharing these, and being guided through the idyllic events of the day in hilarious rhyme and delightful illustrations, is a simply lovely experience you would want for every child.

Polly Dunbar's illustrations are gentle and careful, depicting every emotion a child may feel as they enjoy their day, and complementing the words beautifully. The icing on the cake would be listening to Michael Rosen as he reads some of the poems on YouTube. You just have to listen to Michael reading 'The Sneeze'.

## Over to you!

**Roger McGough (author) & Jennifer Naalchigar (illustrator)**

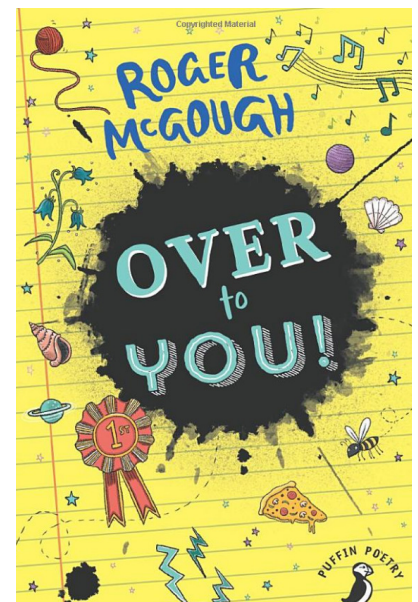
Penguin (Paperback £7.99)

This poetry book is a hoot! The first few poems are cleverly written as if the author is struggling to come up with a poem (as if, indeed!). The character of a teacher provides regular guidance and the poems themselves, with distinctive voices depending on where they are in the pecking order, have something to say as well – the first poem cries '*Enough! Stop! Stop!*' and makes the poet promise not to write a second.

There is learning sneaked in with explanations for poetic forms and terms, e.g. the explanation of a simile, and then it's 'Over to you!' and we are treated to animals with aspirations: the rhinoceros who dreams of becoming an airline pilot; the cat who dreams of becoming a racing driver, the wasp who speaks out in defence of its actions, and so many more entertaining and thoughtful renditions.

Poem after poem had me laughing out loud. Roger McGough is a consummate wordsmith and his flair, skill and appeal to young readers (and old ones) are evident in spades in this collection. The closing poem reiterates that 'writing makes you feel better' – a message for everyone.

This is such a brilliant book and comes highly recommended. I could wax lyrical about the rest of the poems in this collection, but really – just buy it!



Bloomsbury (Paperback £7.99)



Packed with poems about friends, family, sadness, joy, hope and every other feeling you could think of, Matt guides us through our quest to find our place in the world. The cover quote on this magazine from Coleridge could not be more apt than for this young poet who uses ‘the best words in their best order’.





# Book reviews

## Catalysts – Poems for Writing

**Pie Corbett (author)**

Talk for Writing (Paperback £14.99)

‘This is the latest book from the Talk for Writing stable, and, like everything by Pie Corbett that I have ever devoured, taken advantage of, or stolen from, it does not disappoint.



Consider the number of articles and comments in this magazine and in the world of teaching, that assert that poetry is the road less travelled, the poor relation, the avoided area, and the part of the English curriculum that can be sadly neglected, often because of teachers’ own lack of either knowledge or confidence. This handbook is the answer to any teacher’s prayers for ideas and suggestions to teach poetry effectively.

The compilation is designed to provide plenty of opportunities to read and enjoy poems with children, and the need for this is a recurring message coming across loud and clear from all our article writers. The huge number (over 100) and variety of suggested poems are sure to include something that will appeal to everyone. The poems may also be used as an inspiration and a scaffold – a catalyst - for children to write their own poetry. There are instructions included for teaching a wide range of poems, but with the rider that instructions may be ignored, altered and developed to meet the needs of the children, a reflection of Pie’s deep understanding of teaching.

The poems can be perused and selected at random, or deliberate choices can be made depending on the focus of the lessons. There is so much to draw upon, and the collection is abounding with poems that offer endless opportunities to explore the richness of language. In Pie’s own words: ‘The catalyst poem is a stepping-stone to independent writing.’

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## NATE Needs You!

### Request for book reviewers

Please get in touch if you would like the opportunity to be one of NATE's book reviewers (and have your work published). You may have read and used a book in your own teaching or just liked reading it for pleasure! We can also send out new books to you for review.

I look forward to hearing from you.

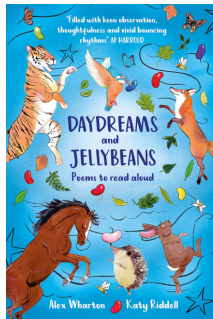
Janet Gough

Editor, *Primary Matters*

[primary@nate.org.uk](mailto:primary@nate.org.uk)

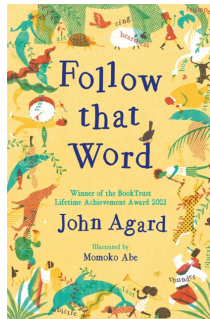
# Top Ten poetry books

Selected by Wenda Davies, Coastlands CP School



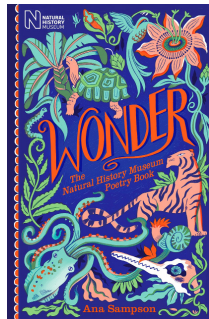
**Daydreams and Jellybeans'**  
by Alex Wharton,  
illustrated by Katy  
Riddell

A lovely collection of warm, playful poetry. Full of rhythm and energy, these poems are ideal for reading aloud.



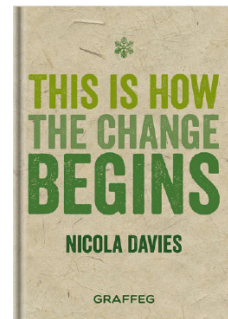
**'Follow that Word'**  
by John Agard,  
illustrated by Momoko  
Abe

A wide range of entertaining poems, referencing fairy tales, myths, moments from history and more ordinary matters from everyday life and the natural world.



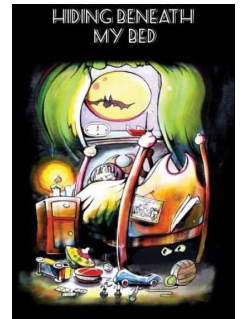
**'Wonder: The Natural History Museum Poetry Book'** chosen  
by Ana Sampson

A marvellous anthology of classic and contemporary poems that provoke new ways of looking at nature and the world around us.



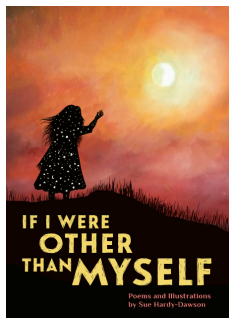
**'This is How the Change Begins'**  
by Nicola Davies

A collection of six lyrical, thoughtprovoking poems relating to the climate crisis, reflecting on how humans are harming the planet, while at the same time offering hope for the future.



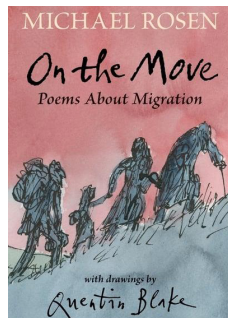
**'Something Hiding Beneath my Bed'**  
by Brian Moses,  
illustrated by  
Patrick Coombes

An entertaining collection of poems about childhood and growing up. Deliciously relatable, these poems delight in everyday life.



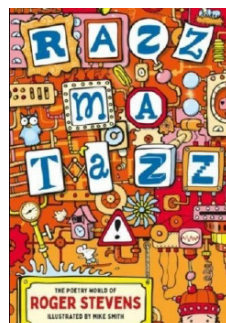
**'If I Were Other Than Myself'** by Sue Hardy-Dawson

A magical collection of dream-like poems that exult in wordplay and invention. Brimming with love for the natural world, so many of these poems are perfect for inspiring young poets to write their own poems.



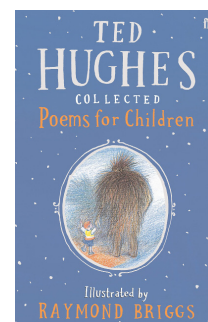
**'On the Move: Poems about Migration'**  
by Michael Rosen,  
illustrated by Quentin  
Blake

A moving, insightful collection of poems relating to migration and displacement. A powerful book on an important theme.



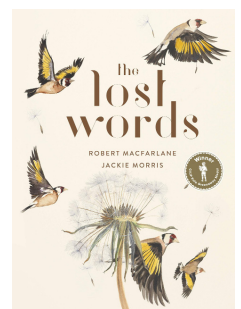
**'Razzmatazz'** by Roger  
Stevens, illustrated by  
Mike Smith

An inventive, quirky and warm-hearted collection of poems, enhanced by the poet's commentary about his poems plus advice for budding young poets.



**'Ted Hughes Collected Poems for Children'**, illustrated  
by Raymond Briggs

Ranging from witty and quirky, to more serious and thought-provoking, this is a classic collection of poems that should be in every ks2 classroom.

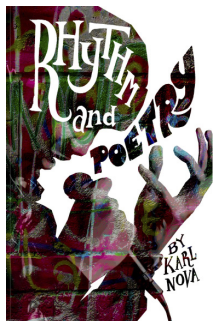


**'The Lost Words'**  
poems by Robert  
Macfarlane,  
illustrations by Jackie  
Morris

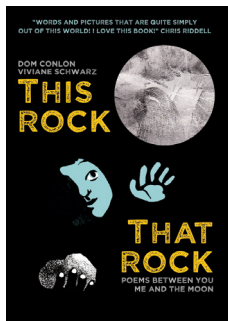
A stunning collection of inventive acrostic poems that celebrate the natural world, Jackie Morris' illustrations delight at every turn. A wonderful book.

# Top Ten poetry books for Key Stage 2

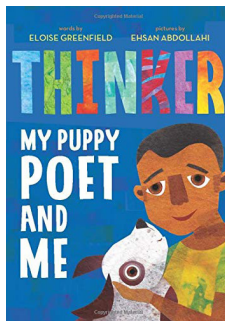
Selected by Jon Biddle, Moorland CE Primary Academy



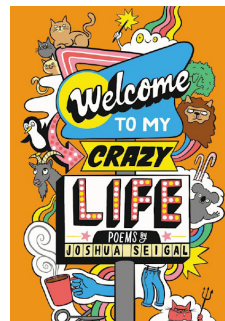
**Rhythm and Poetry**  
Karl Nova



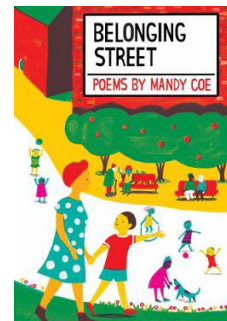
**This Rock, That Rock**  
Dom Conlon



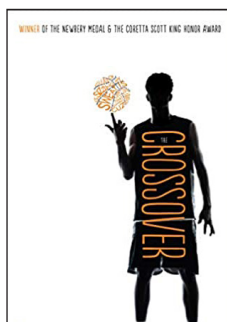
**Thinker: My Puppy Poet and Me**  
Eloise Greenfield



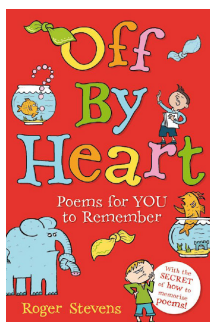
**Welcome to my Crazy Life**  
Joshua Seigal



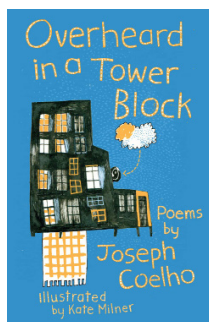
**Belonging Street**  
Mandy Coe



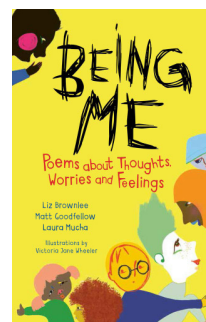
**Crossover**  
Kwame Alexander



**Off by Heart**  
Roger Stevens



**Overheard in a Tower Block**  
Joseph Coelho



**Being Me**  
Liz Brownlee,  
Matt Goodfellow  
& Laura Mucha



**Stars with Flaming Tails**  
Valerie Bloom

## CALLING ALL TEACHERS OF POETRY

**POETRY TEACHING - PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE - A NATIONAL SURVEY**

**Have your say on:**

- the joys and challenges of teaching poetry
- how young people's lives can be enriched by their experience of poetry
- the changes you would like to see

Complete the survey @ [bit.ly/poetry-survey-2022](https://bit.ly/poetry-survey-2022)



**THE POETRY SOCIETY**

POETRY BY HEART



The English teaching community, including NATE, Poetry By Heart, The Poetry Archive, The Poetry Society, National Poetry Day, The English Association and The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, believes that the lives of young people can be enriched by their experience of poetry, within and beyond the classroom.

We are keen to get the views of classroom practitioners at all key stages (and levels of experience) on their experience of poetry from the perspective of a learner and teacher.

The aim of this survey is to raise the profile of poetry teaching, share good practice and explore some of the challenges that young people and teachers face. We plan to publish the findings of this survey later in 2022. As a thank you for your time, your name will go into draw to win a set of the 2021 CLIPPA shortlisted texts.

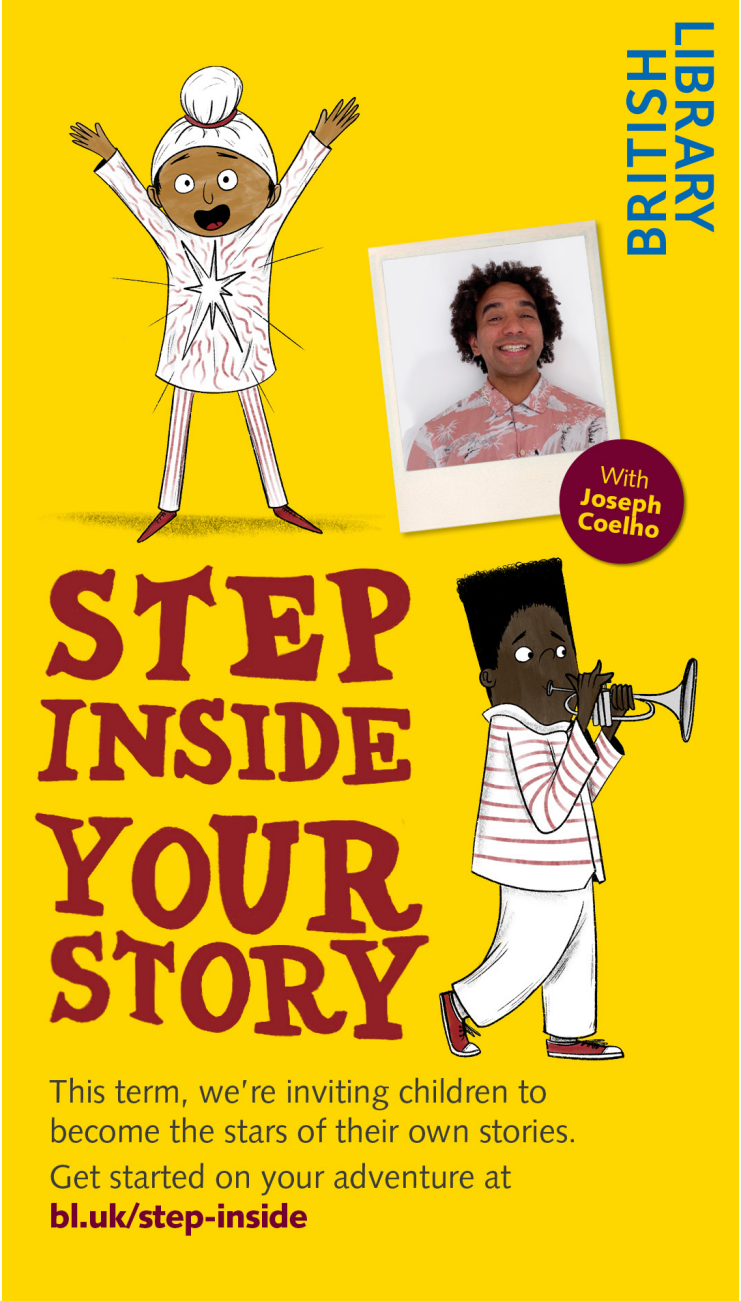
Please visit: [bit.ly/poetry-survey-2022](https://bit.ly/poetry-survey-2022). Thank you in advance for your time.



## Step inside your story - a new opportunity with *The British Library* for all young storytellers out there

Join a host of authors and illustrators, including Waterstones Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho, to inspire your students to become the heroes of their own tales. To celebrate inclusivity in children's books, the British Library is inviting children to make concertina books about themselves, this autumn.

[Find inspiration](#) and top tips, and enter our prize draw for the chance to win book tokens for your school: [bl.uk/step-inside](https://bl.uk/step-inside).



The poster has a bright yellow background. At the top right, the words 'BRITISH LIBRARY' are written vertically in blue. In the center, the title 'STEP INSIDE YOUR STORY' is written in large, bold, dark red capital letters. To the left of the title is a cartoon illustration of a girl with dark skin, wearing a white headscarf with a red band and a white long-sleeved shirt with red flame-like patterns. She has her arms raised in a 'V' shape. To the right of the title is a cartoon illustration of a boy with dark skin, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with red horizontal stripes and white trousers. He is walking and playing a silver trumpet. Above the boy's illustration is a Polaroid-style photo of a smiling man with curly hair, wearing a red and white patterned shirt. To the right of the photo is a small red circular badge with white text that reads 'With Joseph Coelho'. At the bottom of the poster, there is a block of text: 'This term, we're inviting children to become the stars of their own stories. Get started on your adventure at [bl.uk/step-inside](https://bl.uk/step-inside)'.

BRITISH LIBRARY

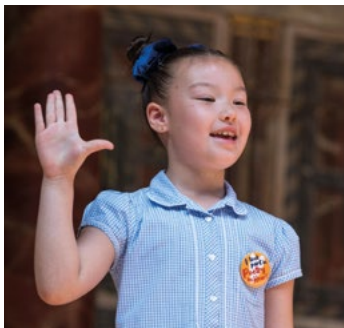
STEP INSIDE YOUR STORY

With Joseph Coelho

This term, we're inviting children to become the stars of their own stories. Get started on your adventure at [bl.uk/step-inside](https://bl.uk/step-inside)

# Perform a poem on stage at Shakespeare's Globe, London

Grand Finale –  
26th June 2023



- ♥ **Open to all KS2 pupils - and staff**  
categories for solo and group performances
- ♥ **Choose poems from the website**  
hundreds of choices specially for children
- ♥ **Learn poems by heart and share them together**  
in a school club, class, competition or celebration event
- ♥ **Enter by secure video upload**  
by the end of Spring term 2023
- ♥ **The best from every region invited**  
to perform at Shakespeare's Globe, 26th June 2023
- ♥ **Free competition kit and support**  
school staff sign-up at [poetrybyheart.org.uk](https://poetrybyheart.org.uk)

## Enter

by video upload from  
mobile, tablet or  
computer at the end of  
the Spring term



[poetrybyheart.org.uk](https://poetrybyheart.org.uk)

POETRY BY  
HEART

Choose a poem

Learn it by heart

Perform it out loud



## What 100 teachers and school librarians say about Poetry By Heart



POETRY BY  
HEART

Choose a poem

Learn it by heart

Perform it out loud





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# Empowering English teachers to inspire young people

## Why become a NATE member?

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- ◆ Develop your subject expertise by attending NATE's internationally acclaimed conferences – regionally, nationally, and online (with member discounts)
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- ◆ Promote, share and publish your work through NATE's publications and CPD events
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- ◆ Voting rights for NATE posts and the opportunity to stand for these positions within NATE's development team

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\*excludes Universities who will need to take out University membership.

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