

## Welcome Activity



### ■ Poetry Papering:

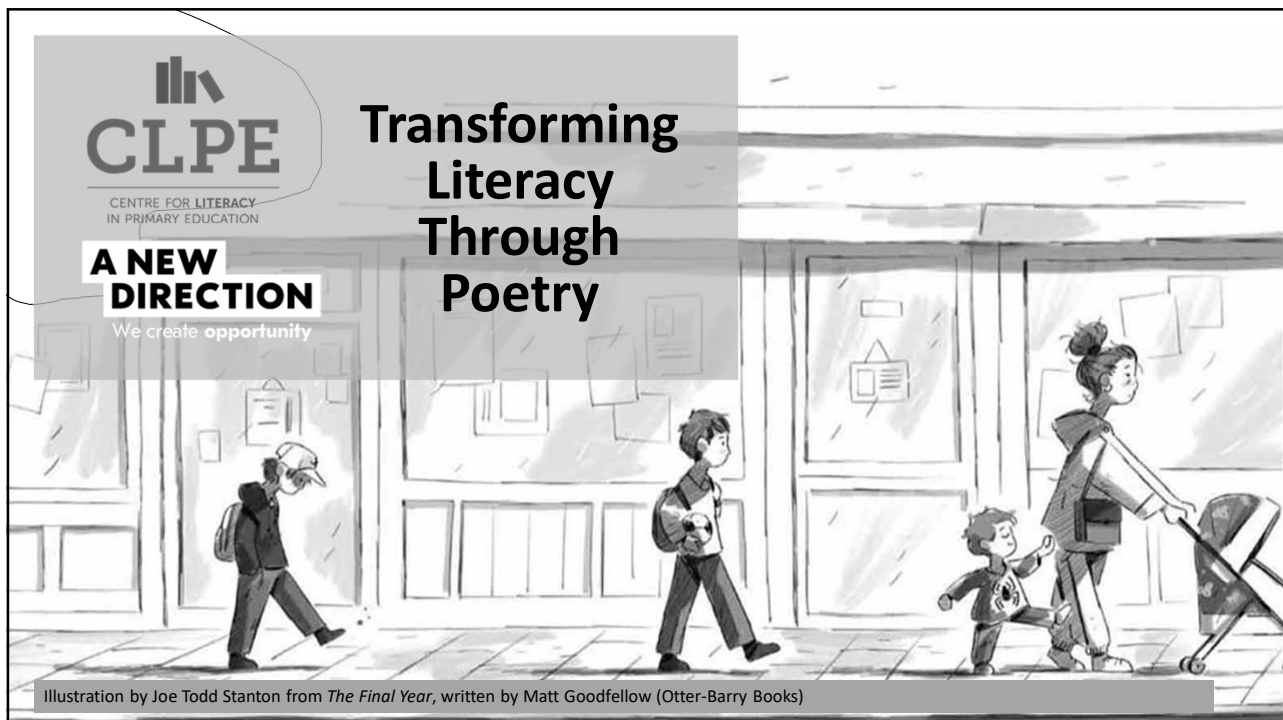
- Have a look at the poems around the room.
- You don't have to stop and read every poem. Pick a poem that speaks to you.
- Take it to your table.

### ■ Post-It Prompts:

- Then, complete one or more sticky notes and add them to one of the two flip chart posters at the back of the hall:
  - a. *Teaching poetry is....*
  - b. *One of my favourite poems...*

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1




2

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1



## A New Direction and CLPE

<b>Masterclass 1:</b> <b>Building 'Reading for Pleasure' Schools</b>	<b>Masterclass 2:</b> <b>Planning Creatively Around Quality Texts</b>	<b>Masterclass 3:</b> <b>Transforming Literacy Through Storytelling</b>	
<b>Masterclass 4:</b> <b>Transforming Literacy Through Picture Books</b>	<b>Masterclass 5:</b> <b>Transforming Literacy Through Poetry</b>	<b>Masterclass 6:</b> <b>Transforming Literacy Through Classroom Drama</b>	

- ~~Masterclass 1: 26/11/2024~~
- ~~Masterclass 2: 21/01/2025~~
- ~~Masterclass 3: 04/03/2025~~
- ~~Masterclass 4: 29/04/2025~~
- Masterclass 5: 10/06/2025
- Masterclass 6: 08/07/2025

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## Programme

- Broaden **knowledge of a range of poets and poetry** that can inform an effective poetry spine from EYFS to UKS2 and beyond;
- Explore **a range of creative approaches** which can engage children with a variety of poetic styles and forms;
- Investigate how poetry supports the development of **reading fluency**;
- Understand how to support pupils to **respond to poetry at a greater depth** and develop deeper levels of inference;
- Explore ideas and activities designed to **support children to write effectively** to make impact on the reader and foster their own authentic voices through writing poetry.

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## The National Poetry Centre for Primary Schools



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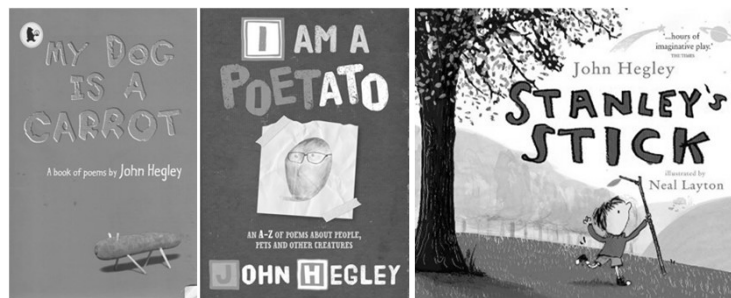
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## Opening Discussion:



***“Poetry eases the process of reading.”***

**John Hegley**



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- List as many responses to the following statement:

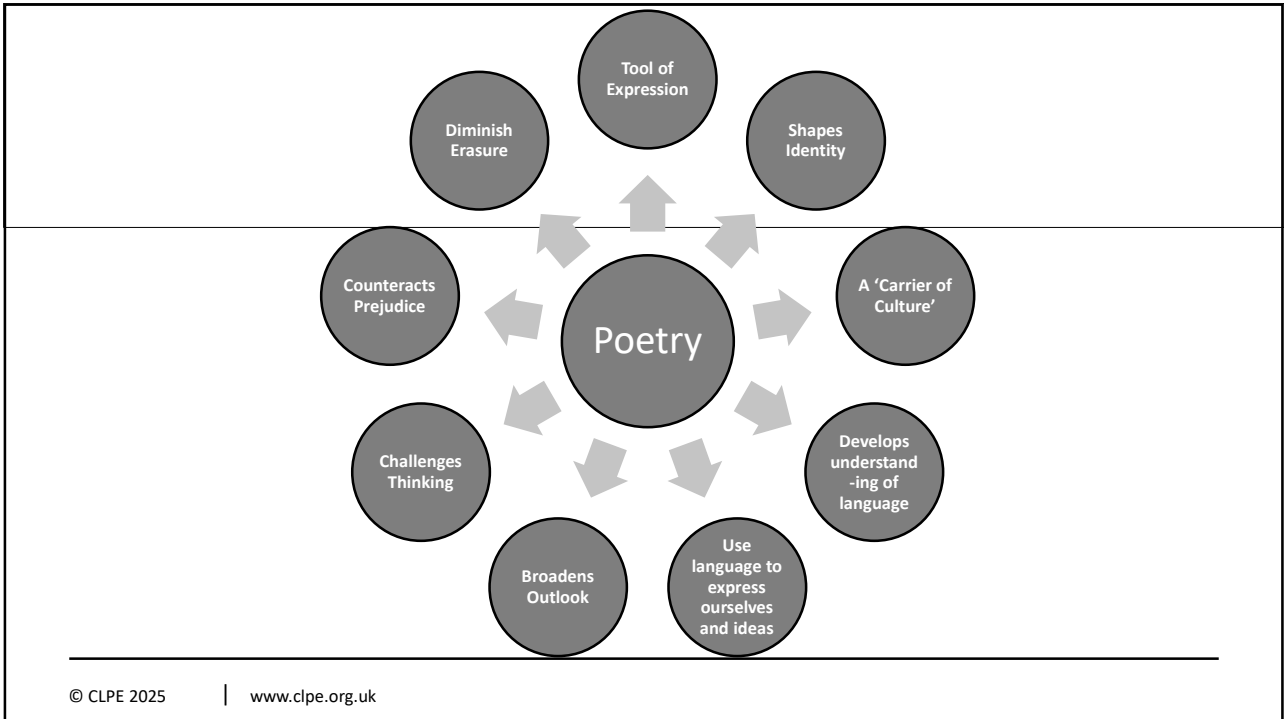
**Teaching poetry is valuable because...**

- Reflect on your list and circle the most important reason in your opinion.

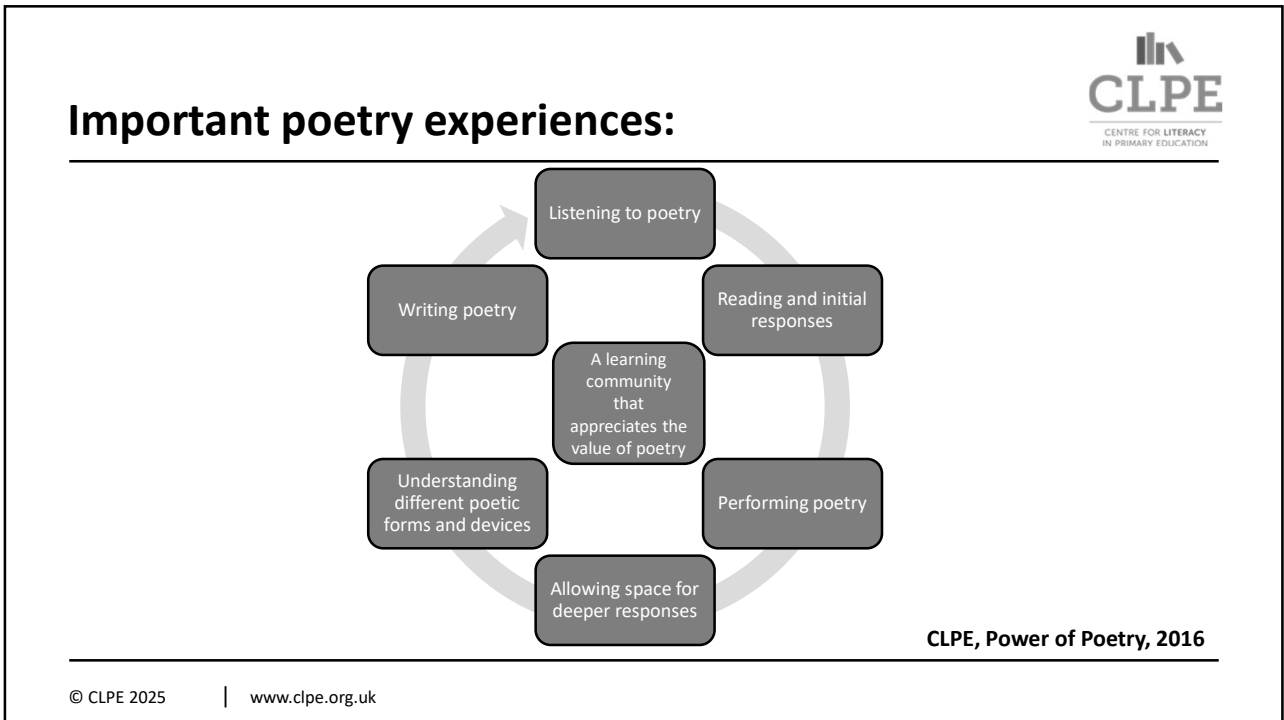
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9



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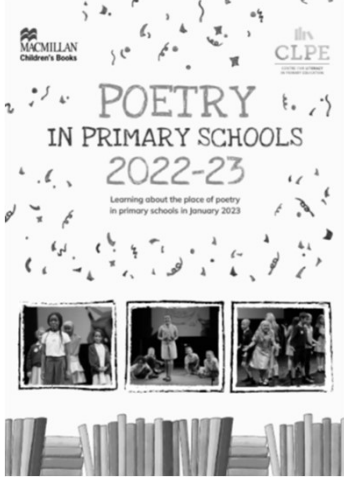
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## Poetry in the current context:


### Key Headlines from CLPE and Macmillan's The Big Poetry Survey 2023



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## Personal Reflection:



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## What are the barriers to teaching poetry in your classroom?

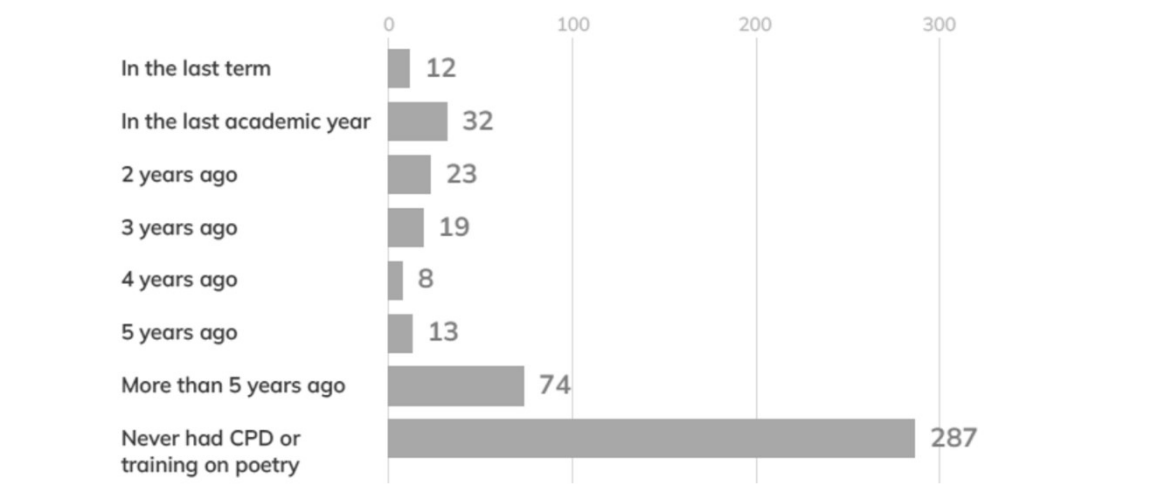


<p><i>“There are many barriers: teacher knowledge, time within the curriculum, constraints of SATS preparation and poetry is not deemed a ‘focus’ within the Trust.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Time pressures on the curriculum. Our English curriculum is currently dominated by time consuming novel studies. Poetry is not a familiar text type to our pupils and many do not have a wide vocabulary.”</i></p>		<p><i>“We need better subject knowledge in how to teach children to write poetry, what to include in different year groups, how to select poems to read and share, how to use poems to develop children’s writing and how best to assess this.”</i></p>
<p><i>“I don’t think management in my school see value in it. I don’t think there is specific space or emphasis given to poetry in our curriculum for excellence.”</i></p>		<p><i>“It’s hard for staff to know how the expectations around grammar fit and SLT can be negative towards poetry as a writing opportunity as the grammar expectations aren’t always relevant.”</i></p>	

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## When did you last receive CPD or teacher training on poetry?



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## How confident do you feel in planning for and teaching poetry?



*"I personally feel quite confident, but I feel like there is very little time given to poetry in our curriculum. When I get to teach it, it's usually because I have snuck it in."*

*"Whilst I am confident, some of my wider staff team are not, and do not see the benefits of teaching poetry."*

*"I'm lacking in confidence and am aware I need more support and access to good quality resources."*

*"I tend to stick to what and who I already know, using resources I'm already familiar with and not looking for new/different ideas/poets"*

*"I feel that I don't always know enough about poetry or have enough time to teach it in depth."*

*"I feel confident teaching non-fiction and stories but I've not had any training on teaching poetry."*

*"As an ECT, I have minimal experience planning and teaching poetry. I have enjoyed teaching it but want to learn more about engaging all learners and providing appropriate scaffolding."*

*"Really enjoy it, but would like more confidence in finding texts, planning and teaching sequences."*

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## How many poetry books do you have in your class collection?



### Book stock by year group

	5 or less	5-10	10-20	20-50
EYFS (36)	20	10	6	
Y1 (51)	21	22	8	
Y2 (74)	40	24	9	1
Y3 (72)	27	27	13	5
Y4 (64)	23	25	9	7
Y5 (67)	26	24	11	6
Y6 (90)	33	37	15	5

### 5 or less:

- EYFS: 55%
- Y1: 41%
- Y2: 54%
- Y3: 38%
- Y4: 36%
- Y5: 39%
- Y6: 37%

Overall: **42%** of classroom collections had fewer than 5 poetry books. Only 21% have more than 10.

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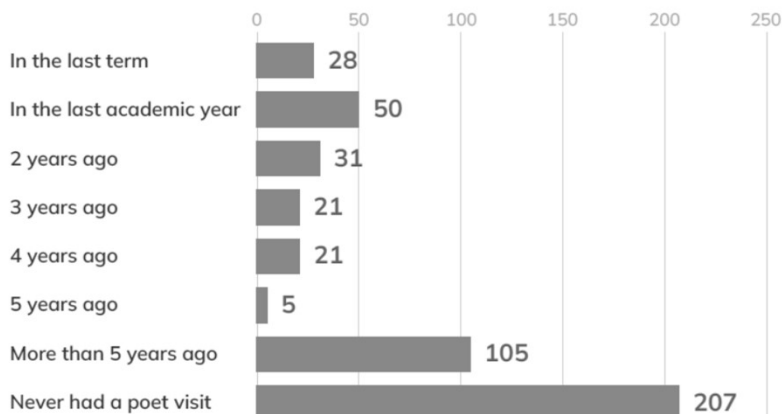
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## Children and teachers connecting with poets:

When did your school last have a visit from a poet?



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## Poetry in Primary Schools 2023: What poets can you name?

CLPE, 2023 (mentions /468)	Teachers as Readers, 2006-7 (mentions /1200)
Michael Rosen (376)	Michael Rosen (452)
Benjamin Zephaniah (167)	Allan Ahlberg (207)
Joseph Coelho (109)	Roger McGough (197)
Spike Milligan (71)	Roald Dahl (165)
Roger McGough (70)	Spike Milligan (159)
Roald Dahl (69)	Benjamin Zephaniah (131)
Valerie Bloom (69)	Edward Lear (85)
Julia Donaldson (61)	Ted Hughes (58)
Allan Ahlberg (56)	A.A. Milne (57)

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## What collections or anthologies can you name?

Collection/Anthology Name	Number of mentions
The Works, collected by Paul Cookson	52
Revolting Rhymes by Roald Dahl	42
Please Mrs Butler by Allan Ahlberg	40
The Lost Words by Robert MacFarlane, illus. Jackie Morris	33
Poems to Perform ed. Julia Donaldson	27
A Great Big Cuddle by Michael Rosen, illus. Chris Riddell	24
Heard it in the Playground by Allan Ahlberg	21
Smile Out Loud/Poems Aloud by Joseph Coelho, illus. Daniel Gray-Barnett	21
Overheard in a Tower Block by Joseph Coelho, illus. Kate Milner	20

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## What poems can you name?

Poem (first publication date)	Number of mentions
Chocolate Cake – Michael Rosen (1985)	150
The Owl and the Pussycat – Edward Lear (1870)	63
Jabberwocky – Lewis Carroll (1871)	59
Please Mrs Butler – Allan Ahlberg (1983)	55
On the Ning Nang Nong – Spike Milligan (1959)	40
The Highwayman – Alfred Noyes (1906)	33
Talking Turkeys – Benjamin Zephaniah (1994)	31
The Sound Collector – Roger McGough (1990)	28
The Magic Box – Kit Wright (1987)	22


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21



## Reflect:

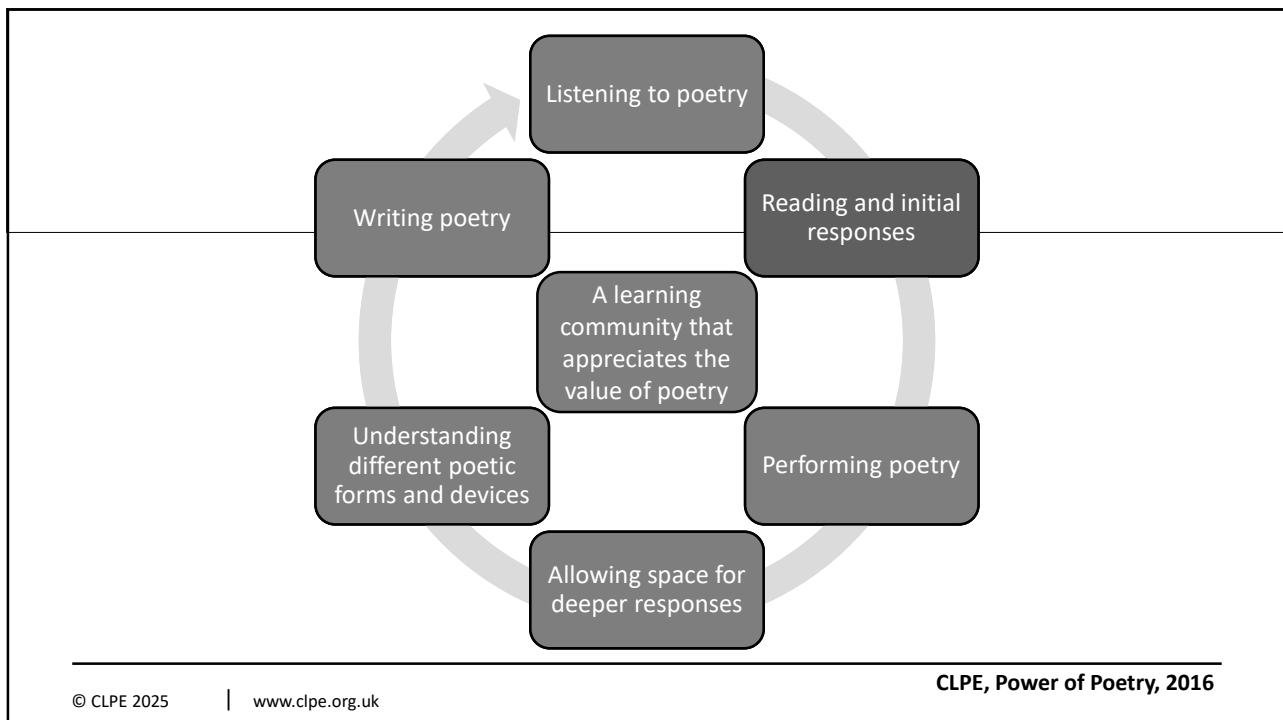
- *What poems, collections or anthologies have you used in the classroom?*
- *What poets do you regularly draw on?*
- *How do the children in your class/school engage with and respond to poetry?*
- *How do you think your own knowledge and experiences compares with other staff in your school?*
- *How well do the poets you draw on reflect the backgrounds and experiences of your pupils?*
- *What might they infer about poetry from your current choices?*




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23



## Poetry Papering:

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- Come back to the poem you chose:
  - *Why did you initially decide on this poem?*
  - *How does the poem make you feel?*

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## Introducing Matt Goodfellow:



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## Have a Break & Browse the Poetry Collection

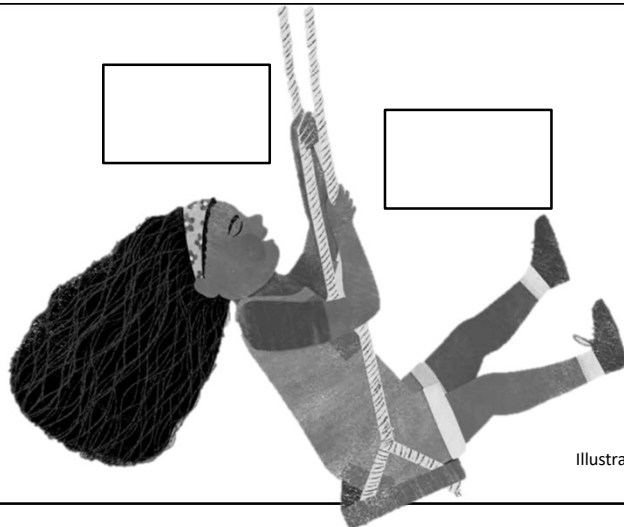


Illustration by Krina Patel-Sage from *Caterpillar Cake* by Matt Goodfellow (Otter-Barry Books)

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## Have a Break & Browse the Poetry Collection

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- During this comfort break, explore the poetry books displayed around the room and in the poetry section of the library.
  - Make a note of any collections or poets that you feel your children would enjoy or be engaged by.
    - *What do you notice about the broader collection?*
    - *What could these texts offer a school in terms of: developing readers and writers; enriching the wider curriculum; supporting children’s personal/social/emotional development; and enhancing your reading for pleasure culture?*
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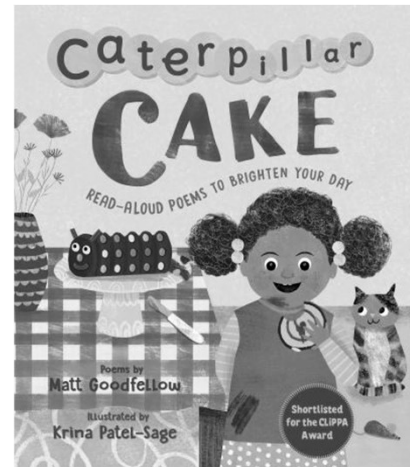
## Post-Browsing Reflections:

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- *What did you notice about the collection? Did anything stand out to you?*
  - *Did you find a text that intrigues or interests you as a reader?*
  - *What collection or anthology did you find that might support the development of readers and writers in your class?*
  - *Did you find a collection that could enrich your wider curriculum?*
  - *Did you find collections that might help support children’s personal, social or emotional development?*
  - *Did you note any collections that would enhance your school reading for pleasure culture?*
-

## Poetry and Early Readers

### The Role of Rhyme and Song Impact on Literacy Development



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## The Role of Rhyme and Song in Early Literacy Development

•Increases vocabulary and language development

•Listening to / following rhyming patterns

•Rhythm

•Appreciate a shared culture

•Co-ordinate body movements whilst singing

•The links between gross and fine motor skills

•Sequencing

•Aids memory

•Have fun with language and play with words

•Encourages creativity and imaginary play

•Phonological awareness

•Uses the body as a symbol, helps communication

•Developing understanding of onset and rime

•Alliteration

•Using the body as a musical instrument, connecting and coordinating different parts of the brain

•Engages attention

•Key to children developing an 'ear' for language



Rhythm  
and  
Rhyme

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## Rhythm, Rhyme and Early Reading

- Listen to the next poem read aloud.
- *What do you like about the poem? How does it make you feel?*
- *What do you notice in the poem?*
- *What aspects of the poem might support different aspects of early reading?*

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31

### Hide and Seek



hide in the butter  
hide in a tree  
hide in the nest  
of a big bumblebee

hide in a teapot  
hide in a drawer  
hide in the teeth  
of a crocodile's jaw

hide in a slipper  
hide in a shoe  
hide in a bottle  
of PVA glue

hide in a mattress  
hide in the sink  
hide in the fizz  
of your big brother's drink

hide in a beanbag  
hide in a pram  
hide in a jar  
of raspberry jam

hide in the flannel  
hide in the snow  
I can still find you  
wherever you go

14 15

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## Poetry and Early Readers

“Poetry is an ideal form for focusing children’s attention on the patterns of words and language and for improving children’s understanding of the flow of language through its musicality and rhythmic patterns, something that can also support increasing reading fluency. Listening to poets perform poetry, live or through video or audio recordings, reading poems, finding word patterns, and discussing their meanings before giving time to groups, pairs, and individual children to practice and perform helps to **build understanding about word structures, consolidate meaning, recognise how punctuation affects reading, and develop fluency.**”

from Chapter 3: How Texts Teach What Children Learn, *The Balancing Act: An Evidence-Based Approach to Teaching Phonics, Reading and Writing*, Dominic Wyse and Charlotte Hacking (Routledge, 2024)

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The child and their language(s)

Writing Reading



Reading Writing

The child and their environment, including texts

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33

## Before children can decode phonetically, they must first...



- Be aware of words as units of sound
- Be aware of syllables in words
- Appreciate and enjoy rhythm and rhyme in spoken language
- Be aware of onset and rime

*If a child is unaware that words can be subdivided in this way, teaching them phonics or the alphabetic code to enable them to read will be unsuccessful.*

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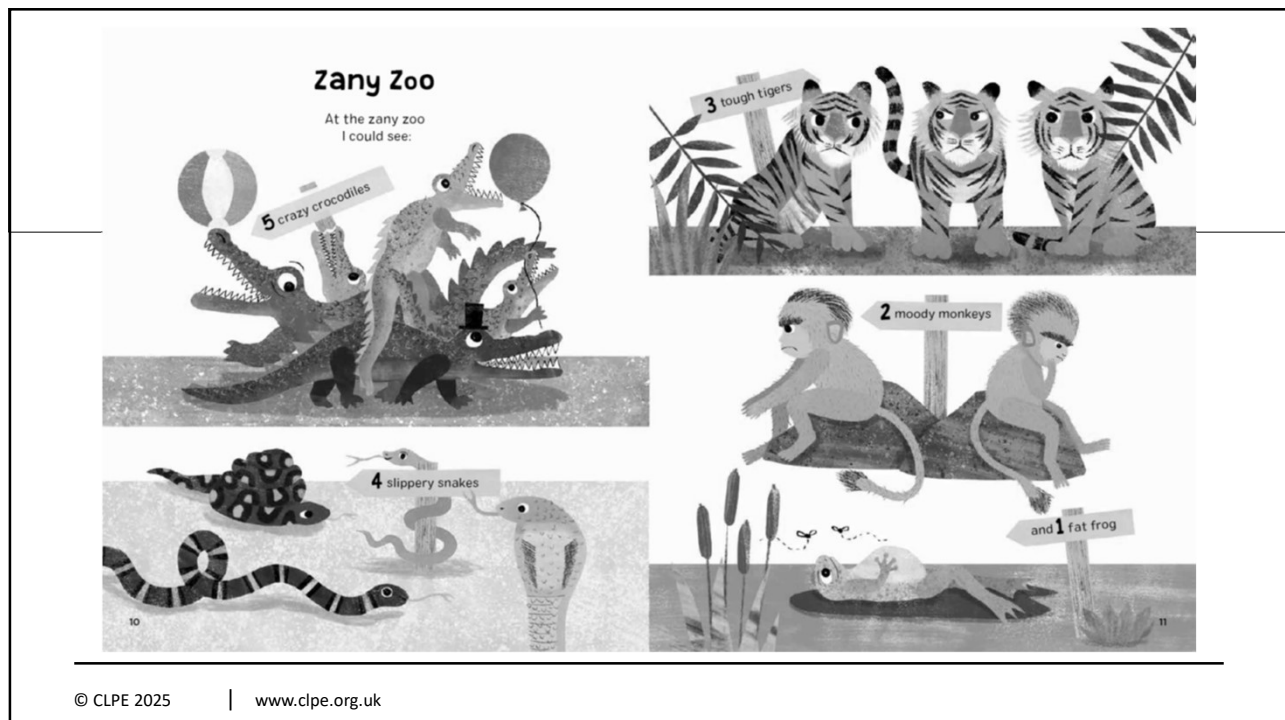
## Playing with Sounds:

Listen to Matt read the next poem, **Zany Zoo...**

- *How can poems like this support children's early phonological development?*
- *What would support children's wider engagement with the concepts explored?*

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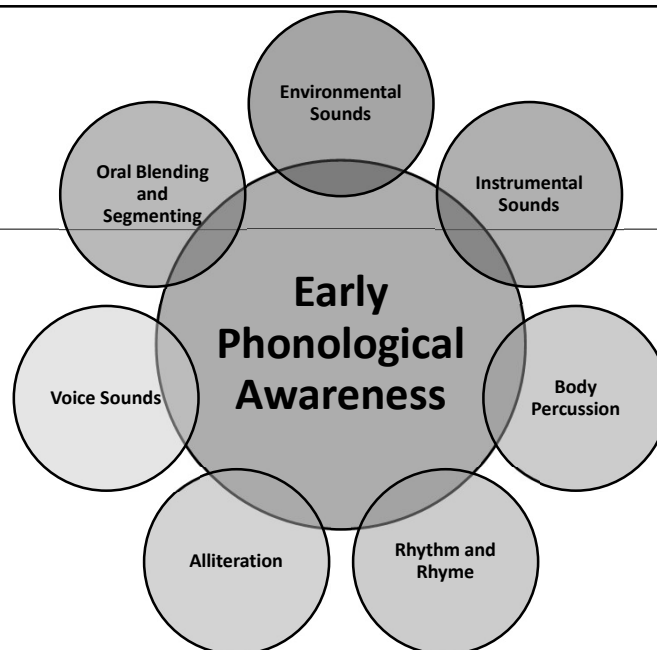
## Playing with Sounds: Exploring Alliteration

Re-read the poem in your group...

- *Which phrases do you like best and why?*
- *Can you come up with more alliterative animal phrases for numbers 6-10?*

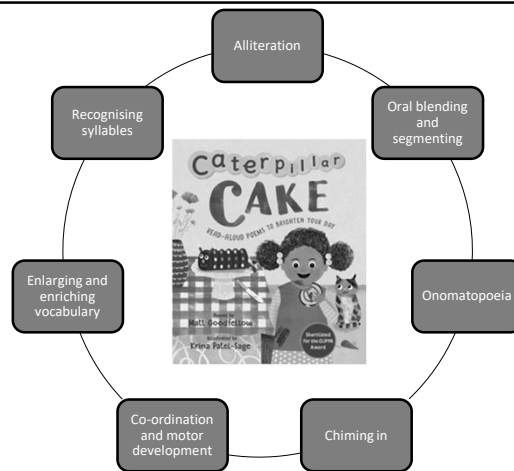
Be ready to share your ideas with the wider group.

37



38

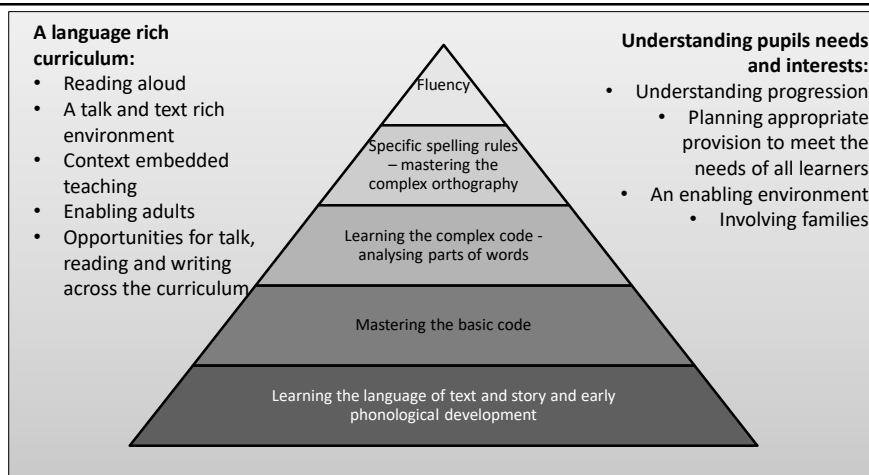
## Establishing essential knowledge, skills and experiences which underpin early reading and writing:



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## Systematically supporting independence and fluency:



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### Introducing grapheme phoneme correspondences in context:



**igh**

**fight**

**light**

**bright**

**Here It Comes**

snuggle down  
snow's in town  
dressing gown  
bed

morning light  
snowball fight  
shining bright  
sled

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41

### Articulation of Basic Code – Digraphs, Trigraphs and Adjacent Consonants:



**brush**

**hair**

**pack**

**step**

**back**

**teeth**

**hands**

**now**

**School Photo**

brush hair  
wash face  
pack bag  
tie lace

give mum  
big hug  
don't step  
in mud

walk quick  
on time  
at school  
all fine


sit down  
back straight  
keep still  
that's great

teeth white  
hands link  
big smile  
now...BLINK!

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## Articulation:

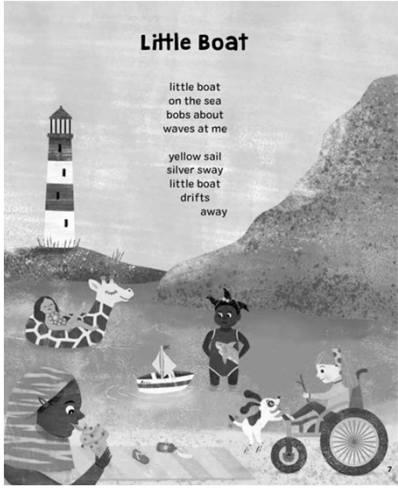
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**Little Boat**

little boat  
on the sea  
bobs about  
waves at me

yellow sail  
silver sway  
little boat  
drifts  
away

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ai

ow

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43



## Encouraging children to write from their own experience...

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Listen to Matt read the next poem, *My Shell...*

- *What does the poem make you think about?*
- *How does the poem make you feel?*
- *What makes you feel this way?*
- *What personal connections do you make with the poem?*

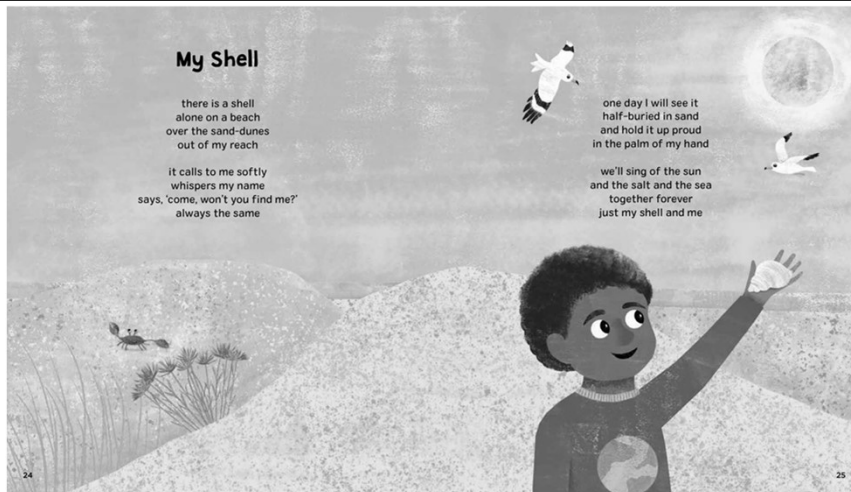
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## Allowing children to connect language with real experiences:



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## Introducing the complex code, morphological units and compound words in KS1

name	beach		
same	reach		
says	sea	see	
always	me		
day	we'll		
	softly	buried	for/ever

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## Developing ideas and language for writing:

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- *Look at the shell you have been chosen. What are your initial thoughts about it?*
- *Draw a sketch of the shell. What else do you notice by doing this?*
- *Talk to a partner about your shell – what is similar and different about the shells you have?*

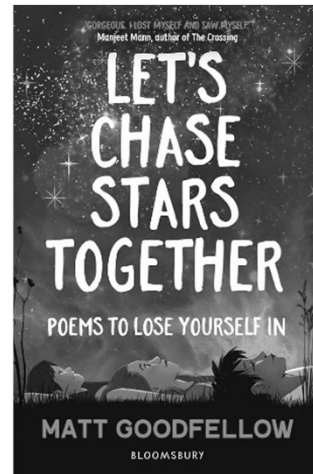
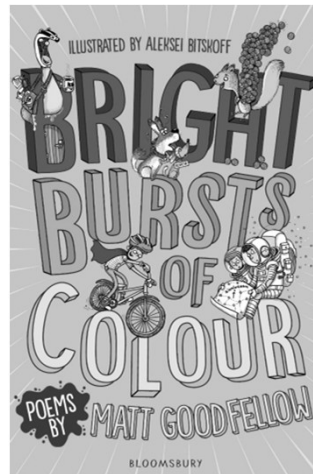
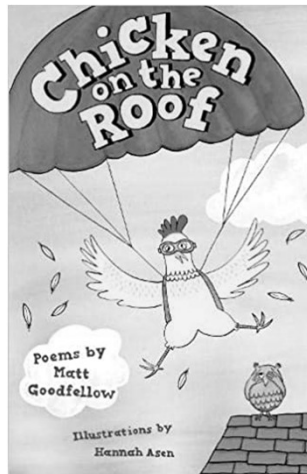
## Tentative writing...

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- After listening to the Matt's ideas, have a go at writing about your shell. Remember:
  - Your writing is draft;
  - It doesn't have to rhyme;
  - It doesn't have to follow a specific form;
  - If you get stuck – speak directly to your shell.



## Choosing and using poetry to support developing readers and writers



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## Using poetry to support the development of literacy: What's important?



- Continued importance of rhyme to support children's knowledge of phonics and spelling;
- Developing reading fluency;
- Developing comprehension beyond the literal
- Knowing how to use language effectively to engage a reader;
- Knowing that writing can be used to entertain, capture moments and reflect on or express emotions.

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## Fostering reading engagement and fluency:

- Read this next poem from *Bright Bursts of Colour*.
- After reading, share your initial responses:
  - *What do you like/dislike about the poem?*
  - *Did it remind you of anything?*
  - *What responses do you think your children would have towards the poem?*
  - *What reading strategies and cues might children draw on to lift this off the page? How might the poem support children's reading skills and fluency?*

51

### A Special Badger

I'm a special kind of badger  
in a special badger den  
writing special badger poems  
with a special badger pen  
learning special badger lessons  
in a special badger school  
earning special badger kudos  
for my special badger cool  
wearing special badger badges  
saying *badgers are the best*  
passing special badger interviews  
and special badger tests  
drinking special badger coffee  
from a special badger mug  
but my special badger problem:

I am actually a slug



52

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## Hearing a poet perform:

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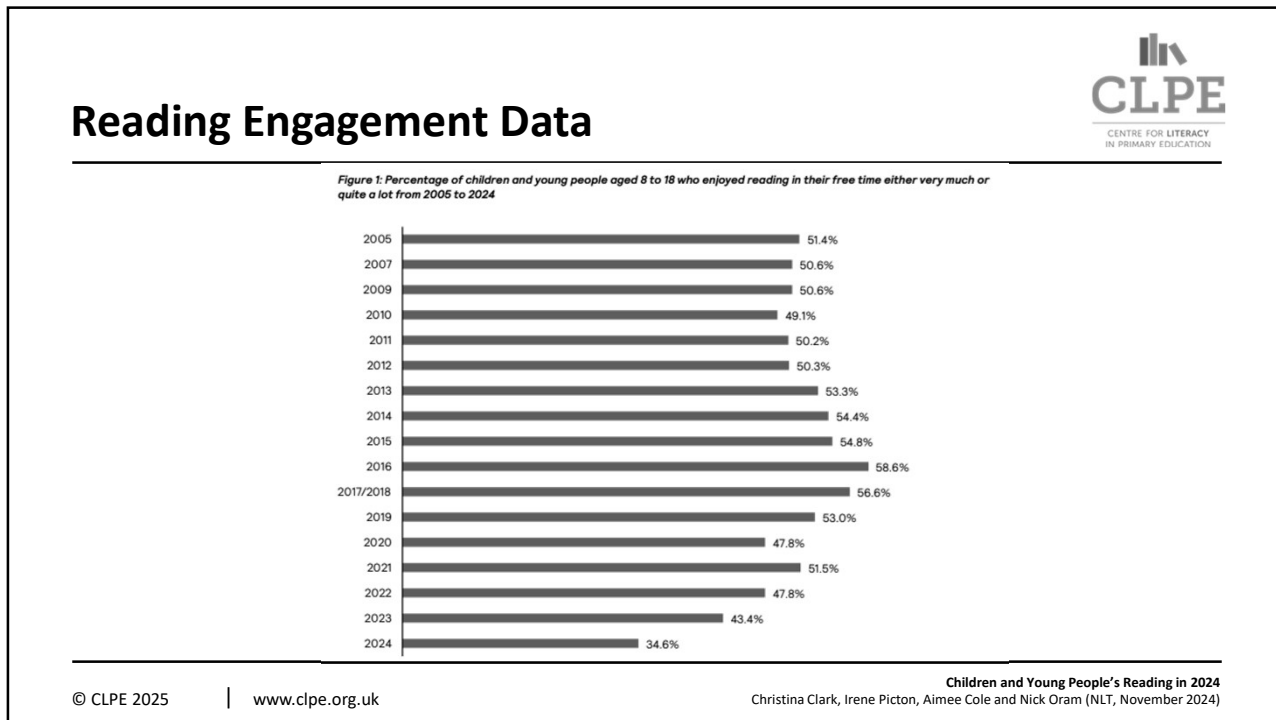
Now, listen to Matt perform the poem:

- *What did his performance add to your reading of the poem?*
- *Did the performance make you think about the poem in a different way?*

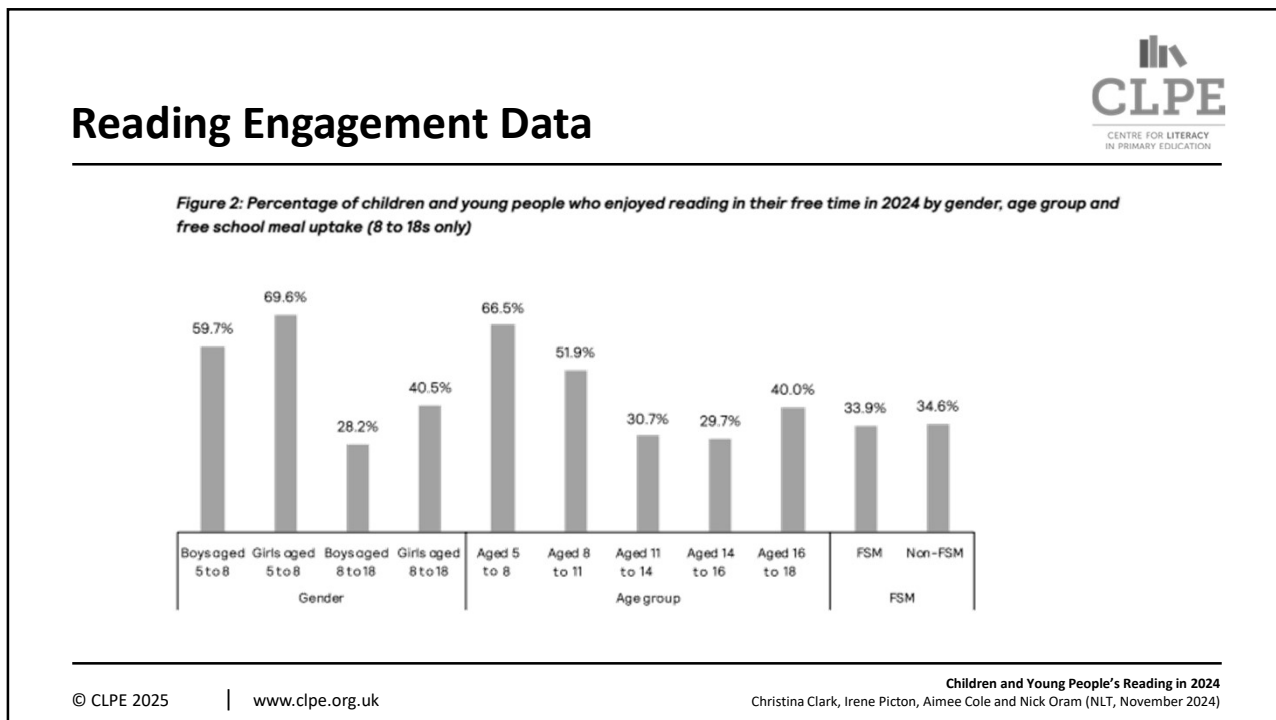
## Poetry in Primary Schools, 2023: Children's experiences of Poetry

---

- 88% of teachers thought their children enjoyed engaging with poetry, with 28% of them saying they really enjoyed it.
- In terms of what the children enjoy most about poetry, 89% reported that children enjoyed listening to it being read or performed and 72% reported that they enjoyed performing it themselves.
- However, when we asked how often children get the chance to hear poems read aloud or listen to poets read their poems via audio or video, we saw a lack of opportunity for this. **Poems are read or listened to daily in only 4% of classrooms. In 74% of primary school classrooms poems are heard or read less than once a week.**



55



56

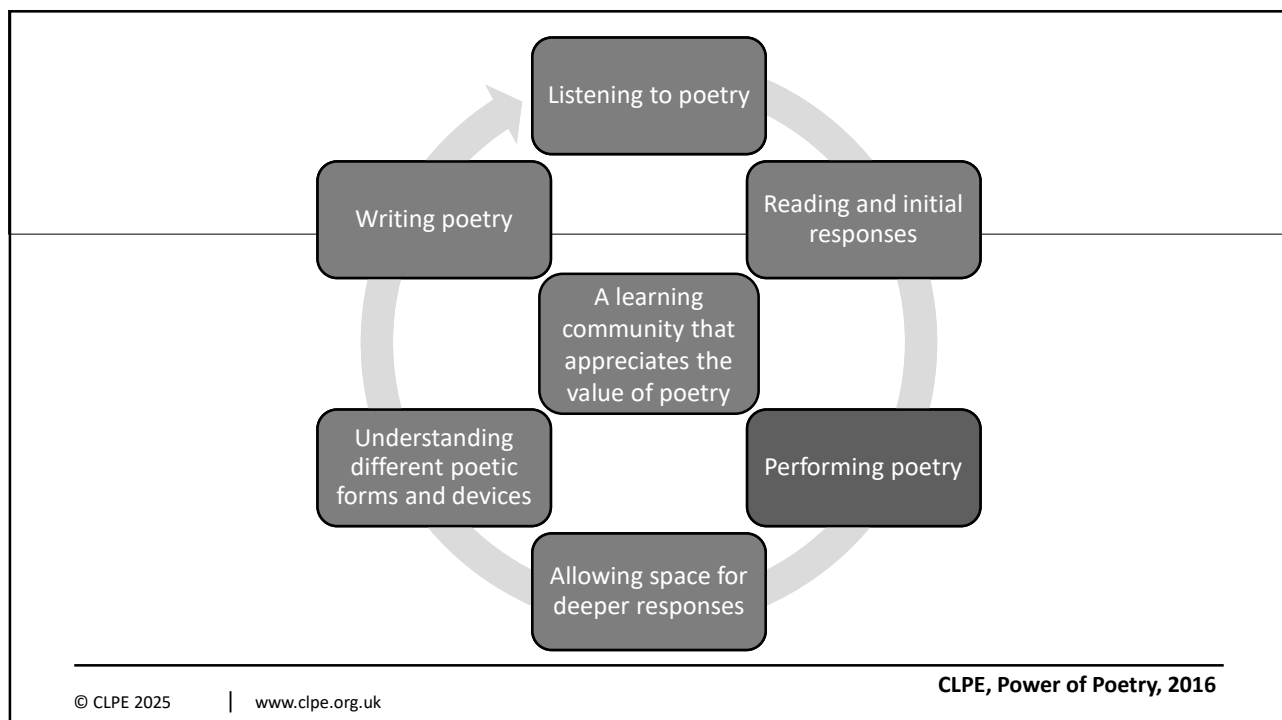
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## Reflect:

- *How does/could poetry support reading engagement in your school?*
- *How might you draw on poetry as an opportunity to support, engage and develop early readers across all phases?*
- *What opportunities might there be?*
- *What resources or support would you need?*
- *What challenges might you face?*



57



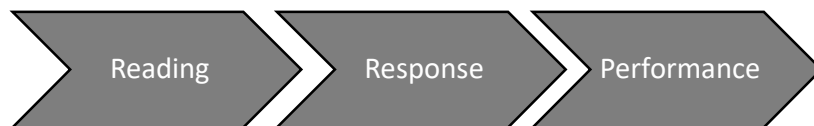
58

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## Performing Poetry: Lifting Words from the Page

'A poem is an invitation to inhabit the voice of the poet and to give it voice... to feel the full effect we have to speak it, to fill it with our breath, shape it in our mouths and feel it in our bodies.'

D. Pullinger, *From Tongue to Text: A New Reading of Children's Poetry*. 2017



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59

## What advice would you give for performing poetry?



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## Response through performance

Read and discuss the **poetry pack** and choose one to perform as a group.

Consider:

- *How does the poem make you feel?*
- *What language makes an impact on you as a reader?*
- ***What choices might you make to bring this poem to life for an audience?***
- *How might you most effectively communicate what the poem means to you? What would you like to draw out from the poem in performance?*
- **Text mark the poem with annotations to support performance, and then rehearse.**

61



8


### Heading Home

I fumbled through forests  
wandered through waves  
danced through the desert  
and crawled into caves


cantered through canyons  
squinted through squalls  
raged across rivers  
and wild waterfalls

carved through crevasses  
conquered a cliff  
tore through a twister  
and marched through the mist

mastered the mountains  
and sliced through the sea –  
before I found out  
I'd forgotten my key




9



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62

## Ride



I like  
my bike

the  
whirring blur  
of churning cogs  
turns worlds  
beneath  
my feet



into something  
separate


from me

that  
I can't  
feel  
or see

I like  
my bike

I am  
free



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63


## TRANSITION


it was brilliant, sir  
proper good  
amazing  
we used Bunsen burners  
real flames  
imagine that, here, sir  
you'd be sacked  
and the big kids  
massive  
bigger than you, sir, some of 'em  
with moustaches  
and the corridor crushes, sir  
it's mad  
crazy

the size of the sports hall  
bigger than our whole school  
when you shout, it echoes  
and there's showers, sir  
and a pool  
and we used drills and saws and files and pliers  
and we got lost, sir  
loads of us got lost  
and I can't believe we'll be there full time in September  
bonkers, sir, proper bonkers when I think about it  
and sir

I'm frightened







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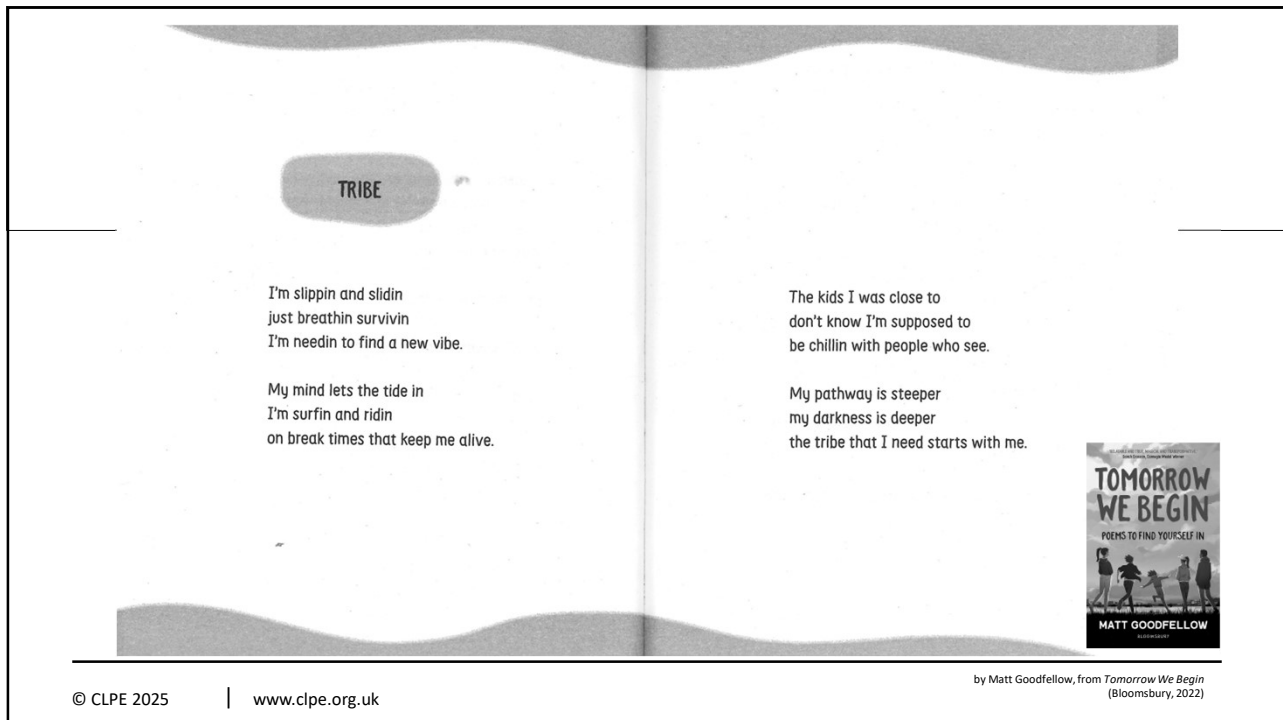
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by Matt Goodfellow, from *Let's Chase Stars Together*  
(Bloomsbury, 2022)


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65



## Poetry Performance and Reading Fluency



Shadowing School Winners at CLIPPA 2020  
Emogen and Poppy, Year 5 at Whitshill primary school.



Shadowing School Winners at CLIPPA 2020  
Meyan, Gabriel and Eymon, Year 6 at Potts Hill Primary.

- Dynamics
- Rhythm
- Pace
- Fluidity
- Confidence
- Expression
- Audibility
- Emotion
- Tone
- Rhyme
- Meaning
- Clarity
- Identity

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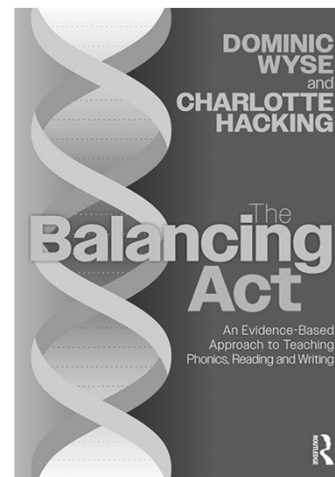
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## Developing Reading Fluency



“Reading fluency involves reading words accurately and automatically, at a fluid speed to enable comprehension, and without undue effort, as well as use of appropriate prosody – an understanding of suitable stress and intonation appropriate to the meaning of the text. Fluent reading requires reading accuracy, which facilitates an appropriate reading speed, leading to the reading feeling effortless and the reader deploying changes in volume, pace, and phrasing, sounding interested and engaged when they read text aloud. **Fluency means that the reading effort can be re-directed from lifting the words from the page to comprehending the meaning of the text at increasingly deep levels.**”



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## CLiPPA 2022 Shadowing School Performances



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## CLiPPA 2023 Shadowing School Performances



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## CLiPPA 2024 Shadowing School Performances



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**CLiPPA**  
THE CLPE POETRY AWARD 2025

**THE SHORTLIST**



**Winner Announced in a Live Performance at the National Theatre, London on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 14:00. Ensure that you are signed up to receive details of the LIVE STREAM.**

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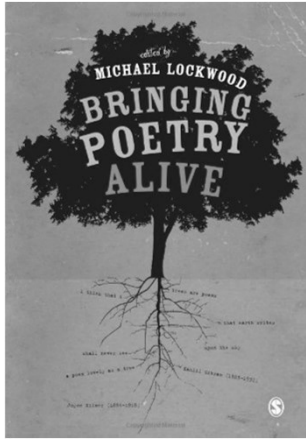
71

## Reflecting on Meaningful Approaches to Response

Response may involve:

- Expressing feelings - *How does it make you feel?*
- Articulating Thoughts - *What does it make you think?*
- Discussing ideas – *Engagement in authentic dialogue*
- Discussing the language – *How do the words work?*
- Using imagination – *Does it inspire your imagination?*
- Production and performance – *Can you represent your feelings, thoughts, imagination through a creative activity?*

**Goodwin, 2011**

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72

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## Poetry in the primary classroom: Key issues

*'A poem is mined for its use of adjectives, metaphors and contrasting short and long sentences without attempting to engage pupils' personal response to the ideas and feelings it expresses. The text becomes a kind of manual rather than an opportunity for personal response to experience.'*

**Ofsted Review of English, 2005**

73


WHEN LAMPS ARE LIGHTED IN THE TOWN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_
Class: \_\_\_\_\_
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### When Lamps are Lighted in the Town

When lamps are lighted in the town  
The boats sail out to sea.  
The fishers watch when night comes down,  
They watch for you and me.

When little children go to bed,  
Before they sleep they pray  
That God will watch the fishermen  
And bring them home at day.



**1** Who is the poet writing about?  
Tick **one**.

fishermen     builders  
 teachers     artists

**2** The children pray for the fishermen. What do they think might happen to them?  
Tick **one**.

They might go home for their dinner.  
 They might get lost at sea.  
 They might go for a walk.  
 They might buy some fish.

**3** Draw lines to match the words that rhyme in this poem.  
One has been done for you.

sea	day
town	me
bed	down
pray	fishermen

**4** "When lamps are lighted in the town."  
What time of day is it?  
Tick **one**.

morning     afternoon  
 evening     lunchtime

**5** How do you know what time of day it is?  
.....

**Which questions did you get right? Colour them in.**

1  
  2  
  3  
  4  
  5  
 Total marks /5  
  😊  
  😐  
  😞

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74

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## Reflection

- Reflecting on the day so far:
- *How might you support and develop children's engagement in hearing, reading, responding to and performing poetry?*
- *What experiences can you immediately develop and implement in your classroom?*
- *Is there anything that you would like to do to develop knowledge of poetry and poets for yourself, your colleagues or your students?*
- *What impact would you like to see for your students?*
- *What questions do you have?*

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75

## Lunch

Illustration by Aleksei Bitskoff from *Bright Bursts of Colour* by Matt Goodfellow (Bloomsbury Books)

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76

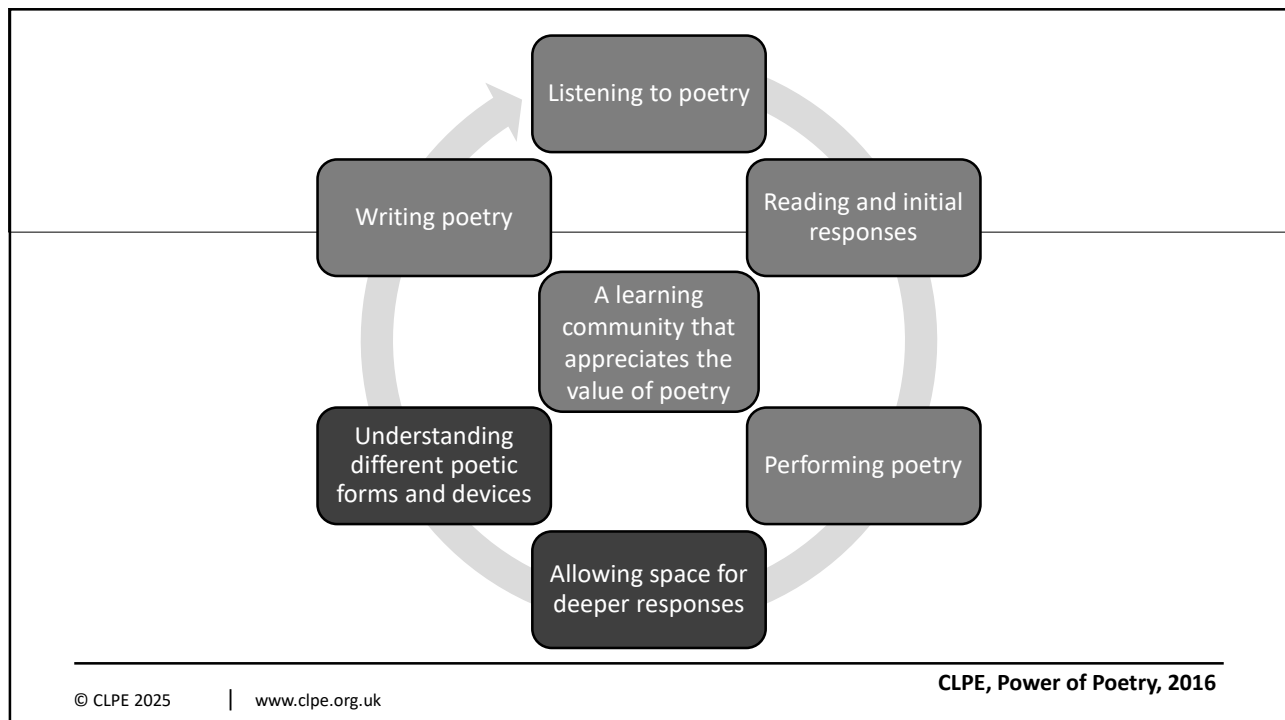
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## Responding to Poetry

Developing an ear for poetic language and responding to poetry as a reader

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78

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## Reading Poetry

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- Read with the **eye**: look at the poem laid out on the page. Look at a poem as you would a painting, a photograph, a sculpture. What *does* it look like?
- Read with the **ears**: read aloud poems that appeal – hear their ‘music’, their sound.
- Responding to **what is unique**: read a poem at least twice – finds its heart, an idea, a feeling.

**Benton and Benton (1999)**

---

## The importance of choice and voice...

---

- Read the next set of poems:
    - *David*
    - *Strest*
    - *Callum*
    - *A Thought*
    - *We start Skellig*
  - In pairs, choose one that you most want to talk about.
-



### David

could draw the most beautiful planes I ever saw:  
 didn't need a ruler to get the lines straight  
 designs of blue-sky genius from a mind only eight.


At playtime we became them: supersonic jets  
 blasting through the atmosphere, both our arms  
 outstretched.


He taught me how to sketch, and told me mine were  
 good.  
 When I said I couldn't do it, he showed me that I  
 could.

Then David's mum met someone new - he had to  
 move away  
 packed up all his pictures, emptied out his tray.

Every flight was cancelled, every drawing gone.  
 I walked around for weeks: forgotten, lost, numb.

Until it all came back to me: that look in David's eye  
 I raised my arms, ran - and remembered how to fly.





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81

### Strest

Charlie never cries,  
 not even  
 when he came down the slide  
 too fast in Year 5  
 and broke his wrist.  
 Miss couldn't believe it,  
 he even smiled and waved  
 to our class across the playground  
 when Mr Smith drove him off  
 to hospital.


Charlie never cries,  
 not even  
 when his gran died -  
 he was back in school  
 the next day  
 said he was fine,  
 he'd survive -  
 but you could see it  
 in the shadows  
 of his eyes.


Charlie never cries  
 but when it was time  
 for the reading paper

we'd  
 revised  
 revised  
 revised  
 for.  
 Charlie sighed  
 flicked through the pages  
 for ages  
 put his pen down.  
 Miss appeared at his side  
 saying, try your best, Charlie  
 it's just a test  
 and he looked over at me  
 and I swear I could see  
 right inside his mind  
 and it was dark  
 and he was hiding  
 shoulders shaking  
 and he knew  
 he couldn't do  
 what they wanted  
 him to do  
 however hard he tried.

And I'll never forget  
 the day of the test.

the day  
 Charlie  
 cried.






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82



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mates from the estates ride past on mountain bikes and scooters  
imitation Gucci bad-boys firing finger-pistol shooters  
going: c'mon Callum, sack it off – school won't teach you nothin'  
and though he smiles and laughs along beneath it all he's bluffing

he's seen it with his brothers and a half-remembered dad  
he's seen the blue lights flashing on some social worker's pad  
so he packs his bag each morning and gives his nan a kiss  
solid in the knowledge that he wasn't born for this

and waits until the bikes the shouts the scooters  
disappear  
then walks into a future somewhere far away from here

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83

### A Thought

I wish Mum's sadness  
was a necklace  
she could unclasp  
from her throat  
in the cool bedroom-dark  
and drop carelessly  
into a mirrored box

in the morning  
she'd throw back the curtains  
open the box  
see her sadness  
and say

I choose not  
to need  
to wear you  
today

Matt




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**We start Skellig**

and straight away I'm hooked.  
Every afternoon I settle in my chair  
and get carried away to this other world.

The weird guy in the garage  
all dusty and pale  
eatin takeaways and drinkin beer

the wilderness  
babies  
owls.

And Mina,  
man,  
she's cool  
a bitta mystery about that one  
just her and her mum at home.

As Mr Joshua reads  
he does different voices for each character  
Dr Death like a proper creepy old dude.

I watch Caleb doodlin  
just lines and lines arcing and flowin  
across the back of some old maths worksheet  
framin the spaces of his brain.  
He draws wings.


We have these long chats  
about what we think's gonna happen:  
who the guy in the garage might be  
what he's doin there  
how Michael feels about movin house  
bein away from his mates  
and the baby.

And then one afternoon  
Mr Joshua stops readin at the end of a chapter  
puts the book under the visualiser  
so we can see the words he's just read.

Mina's talkin to Michael about drawin  
how it can make ya look at the world more closely,  
help ya see things more clearly  
and Caleb's watchin  
and so am I

and Mr Joshua nods at me,

*Words and pictures, eh, 6J – tell your story, guys*  
*tell your story.*




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85

## Text marking and annotating – time to think at greater depth:

- Now, mark up your poem with your thoughts, ideas, questions and opinions about the poem you chose.
- Highlight specific language that has a particular effect on you and describe why this is.
- Ensure you look beyond just describing the literal and make connections, reason with evidence, ask questions, form conclusions to get to the heart of the poem for you as readers.



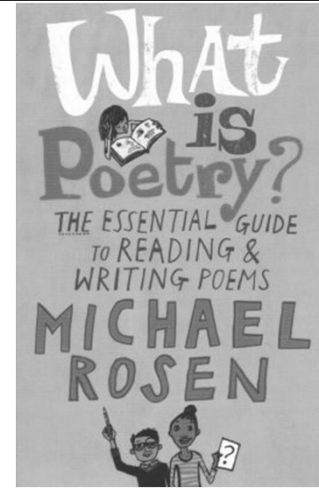
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## 'The Secret Strings'

- Alliteration
- Assonance
- Rhythm
- Repetition
- Imagery
- Opposites



**Michael Rosen: What is Poetry? 2016**

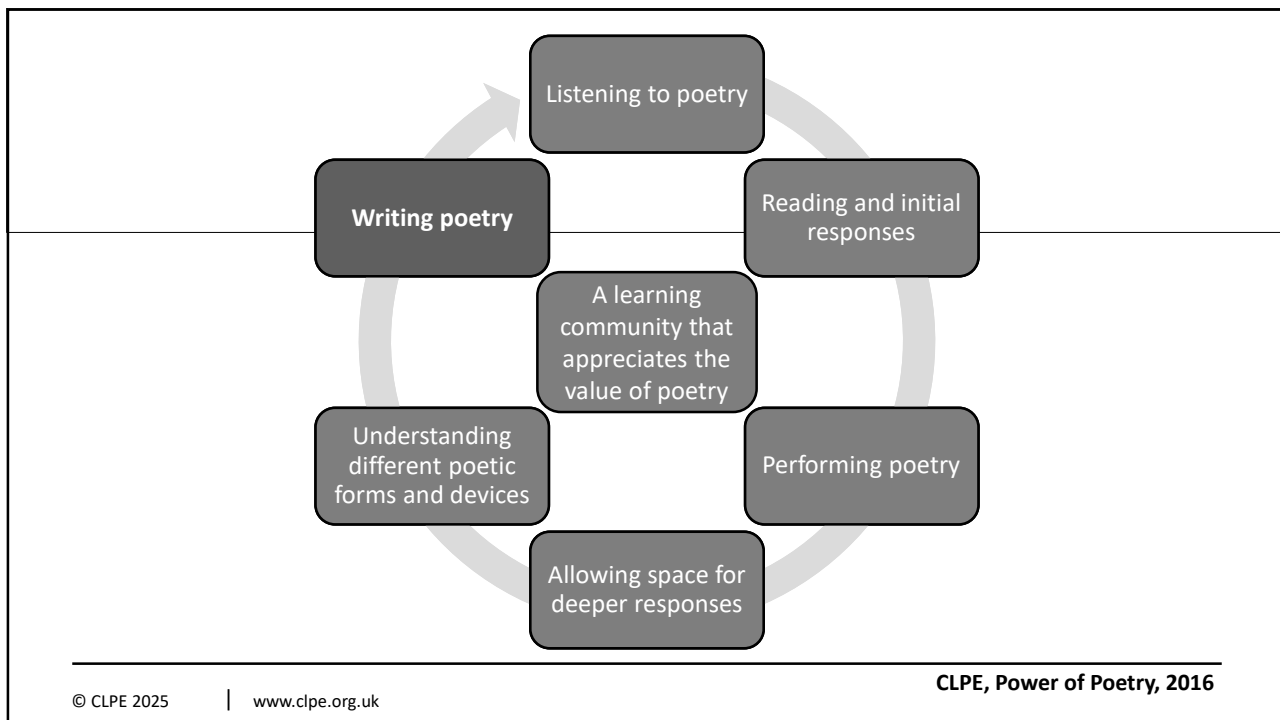
87

## Re-reading and Responding at a Deeper Level


Personal Response		
What did you like?	What did you dislike?	What connections did you make with yourself and the wider world?
Layers of Meaning		
What questions does it ask?	What questions does it answer?	What questions does it leaves us with?
Looking at the Text		
What themes do you identify?	What language was most memorable for you?	What secret strings did you notice?

88

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89



## From imitation to inspiration

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*‘Where pupils only imitate chosen forms and the topics are prescribed, this leaves little scope for them to explore their own feelings and experiences. This limits pupils’ original writing.’*

**Ofsted: Poetry in Schools, 2006-7**

*“In 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 communicate this to the reader or to the listener.**”*

**CLPE, The Power of a Rich Reading Classroom, 2020**

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## Writing Workshop with Matt Goodfellow



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91

## Stepping inside a moment:



Listen to Matt reading the poem *Ten...*

- *What did the poem make you think about?*
- *How did it make you feel?*


Re-read the poem to yourself..

- *What made you feel this way?*
- *What personal connections do you have with the poem?*
- *What are your most memorable or treasured moments?*

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**Ten**

The kitchen table's  
heart beats  
alive  
with party pulse.


I take a deep breath  
blow out  
ten bright candles


give Mum, Dad  
Grandma  
a kiss

and make my  
wish

to always remember  
being here  
today

like this.






---

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93



## An opportunity for creative writing:

---

- Think of an unforgettable moment in your own life; this could be from childhood or could be more recent.
- What's the first line you think of connected to this moment?
- Where does that line lead you? You might think about what could come before, or what could come after.

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## Responding to your own writing

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- Respond to your draft yourself - Get up, pace your rap out, read your words aloud to yourself at least three times.
- As you do this, gain a sense of whether the rhythm and patterns are right, where words don't quite fit or sound right.
- **Work up a second draft.**

## Working with a Response Partner

---

- **Share your second draft with the person next to you.**
- Talk to them about any sticking points or challenges, ask them for specific advice about any aspects you need support with.
- Allow them to respond as a reader, what works for them and what might they suggest to improve it?
- **As a response partner:** How will you communicate your responses – could you do this as a question rather than a comment, to allow the poet to go back and reflect on their own work?
- When you're ready, work towards a final draft. Think about what you might like it to look like on the page.
- Be prepared to share this with the wider group. *If you are really uncomfortable about doing so, we won't force you!*



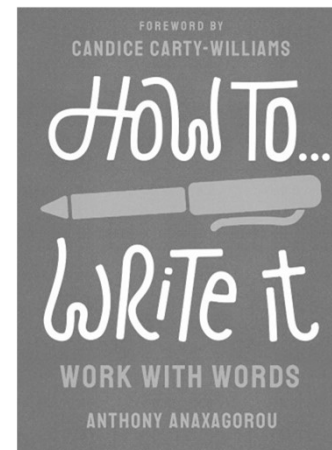
## Writing from personal experience



*'It's through human nature, and experiences, that we learn...*

*...I want you to understand that **your story is important**, that **your voice is valid**, and that your life and your experiences are the only tools you need to tell a story.'*

**Candice Carty-Williams**



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97

## Writing from personal experience



“Sharing writing... is one way in which we can take children seriously. All those ‘silly childish things’ like being jealous of one’s brother, or not liking housework can be dealt with as real experiences of that human stage called childhood. **By treating it as real and valid now, we acknowledge that the child is not simply a pre-adult with incomplete or immature feelings. We give the child the possibility of valuing his or her own experience.**”

Michael Rosen, *Did I Hear You Write?* (1989)



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## A Poetry Case Study (POR 2023):

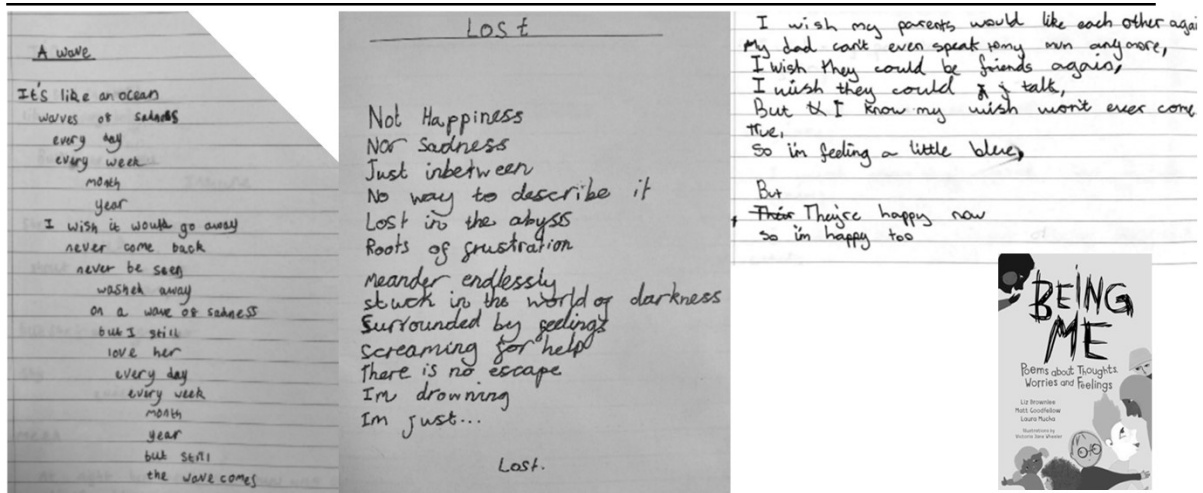
My current class exhibit a lot of mental health concerns and there has sadly been bereavement within some of the families. With this in mind, I wanted to take advantage of the *Being Me* unit as it addresses mental health through a wide range of learning. The unit is essentially split into three parts: (1) personal mental health (2) life at school and (3) wider issues. These subjects were supported by high-quality texts from poets Matt Goodfellow, Liz Brownlee and Laura Mucha. **Children discussed the intent and choices of the poet, before working in pairs, groups or individually to perform the poems. This allowed them to truly understand the poems provided which helped to further inspire their own writing on the various subjects...**

**Opportunities for adults to write alongside the children**, married with discussion and analysis of the *Being Me* poems, further provided struggling writers with inspiration and examples to help guide their work...

The unit was a massive success. **Children continued to write poetry in their free time following the unit** and many of them were excited to take their poetry journals home to carry on with the process. At the end of the unit I conducted another class audit and 19 of the children, compared to just 2 originally, said that they would continue writing poetry outside the classroom."

Dave Wilson, Year 5 teacher, Summercroft Primary School

## Valuing Children's Voices:



**A Wave**

It's like an ocean  
waves of sadness  
every day  
every week  
month  
year  
I wish it would go away  
never come back  
never be seen  
washed away  
on a wave of sadness  
but I still  
love her  
every day  
every week  
month  
year  
but still  
the wave comes

**Lost**

Not Happiness  
Nor Sadness  
Just inbetween  
No way to describe it  
Lost in the abyss  
Roots of frustration  
meander endlessly  
stuck in the world of darkness  
Surrounded by feelings  
Screaming for help  
There is no escape  
I'm drowning  
I'm just...  
Lost.

I wish my parents would like each other again  
My dad can't even speak to my mum anymore,  
I wish they could be friends again,  
I wish they could talk,  
But I know my wish won't ever come true,  
So I'm feeling a little blue,  
But  
They're happy now  
so I'm happy too

**BEING ME**  
Poems about Thoughts  
Worries and Feelings  
Liz Brownlee  
Neil Goodfellow  
Laura Mucha  
Illustrations by  
Emma and Alex

## Preparing Children for Writing

It is important to:

- use approaches that help make abstract concepts concrete;
- demonstrate ways to develop writerly habits, e.g. thinking aloud, note taking skills, engaging in tentative writing to trial ideas, self-reflective editing;
- encourage children to experiment with poetic language;
- support them to develop their own voices as poets, making choices about what they want to write about and how they wish to publish.

101

## An authentic process for writing:



- *How do the approaches, exercises and ideas shared today support each element of the writing process?*
- *Is there an area of the writing process where your children would benefit from spending more time?*
- *What supports ideation in the classroom?*
- *What opportunities are there for publication in poetry? Why is this important?*

102

## Children are the best poets...

“Children are the best poets ... as everything is new and they don’t see barriers in the way that adults sometimes do. More than writing formal assignments, essays, or even fiction, **poetry really allows a child to access their emotions, release their feelings, and make sense of their experiences.** It can also help them to become more emotionally literate and improve their confidence in their writing in general.”

**Carol Ann Duffy (2015)**



Year 5, Summercroft Primary

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103

## Reflections for the Day



- *What will you take away from today to implement in your own classroom?*
- *How do you feel about those possibilities?*
- *What are you hoping for - for yourself, for your students, for your school?*
- *What support might you need?*
- *What further questions do you have?*

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104

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## Ways to share and enjoy poetry with your class:

- Read poems aloud
- Allow time for re-reading
- Savour the language
- Performance read the poems
- Explore the ideas and themes
- Establishing routines around sharing poetry e.g. poetry papering, poetry performances
- Creating anthologies of poetry chosen by the children
- Provide space and time for children to write poetry across a wide range of forms and on subjects that interest them

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105

## Supporting resources:



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106

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## Download our free 'What We Know Works' research summary:



# POETRY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

## What we know works

Centre for Literacy in Primary Education

### Poetry in Primary Schools

What we know works

1. Provide teachers and children with regular exposure and access to poetry, from a range of poets, in a range of voices and in a variety of forms.
2. Provide professional development opportunities to build teachers' knowledge, confidence and expertise.
3. Give poetry a place within and across the curriculum.
4. Recognise the benefits of poetry to develop core literacy skills.
5. Encourage openness in children's responses to poetry, enabling them to make connections with their own lives and the world.
6. Provide varied opportunities to lift poems from the page and bring them to life, including through performance.
7. Work alongside professional poets to understand the motivation to read and create poetry.
8. Use a range of models and approaches to support children to read and write poetry.
9. Allow children to have choice and voice, develop tastes and preferences and write from their own motivations and experiences.
10. Give children's own poetry an audience, so that they see themselves as poets.

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107

## Choose collections that inspire and show what poetry is and could be:



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108

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## Consider progression and breadth of poetry across the school



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109

## Consider engaging children with a poet visit:



### EVENTS AND HOW TO BOOK



Matt provides inspirational performances and writing workshops.

He works in primary schools, high schools, colleges and universities delivering inspirational workshops to both young people and teachers. He performs at libraries and festivals and delivers keynote talks at a wide range of different events.

All of Matt's bookings are managed by Authors Aloud UK. For more information about what Matt's events and workshops, email [info@authorsalouduk.co.uk](mailto:info@authorsalouduk.co.uk)



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110

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## Evaluation



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111



112

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