

Poem of the Day by Jon Biddle

Context

I am currently English Coordinator/Reading Champion at Moorlands Primary Academy in Norfolk. The school has been through a turbulent few years (high turnover of staff, negative relationships with many parents) and is now rebuilding. Creating a genuine reading culture is at the centre of this. After surveying the children across KS2 earlier in the year, we realised that their knowledge of poets and poetry was limited. Many of them could only name Michael Rosen and Paul Cookson, who had visited the school two years previously.



Research inspiration and rationale

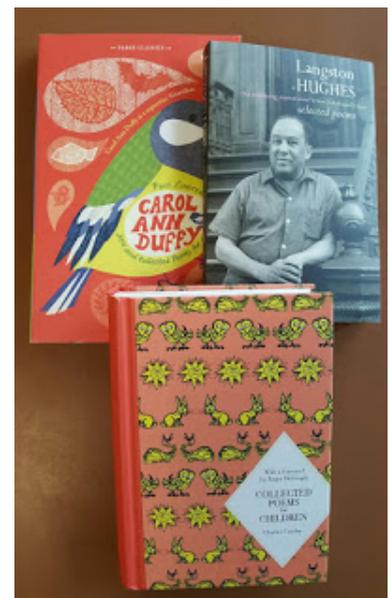


UKLA research shows that a significant percentage of teachers can only name a narrow range of authors and poets (20% of the 1200 teachers didn't name a single poet! Cremin et al., 2009), and tend to rely on a very limited canon. If this is the case, then the range of poets that the children are exposed to will also be narrow. Conversations with students, as well as results from class reading surveys, confirmed this to be true at Moorlands.

The importance of creating positive reading identities for all children, giving each child ownership of their own Reading for Pleasure and building reciprocal reading communities were three of the findings from the *Teachers as Readers* project. Poetry, due to its often accessible nature, can be used as a way for children to take control of their reading identities, as well as to support the development of a genuine reading community.

Aims

- To increase the diversity of poems and poets that students and staff are exposed to and raise the profile of poetry across the school.
- To provide students with opportunities to discuss, share and perform poetry with their peers.
- To broaden the range of material read aloud in classrooms.





Impact

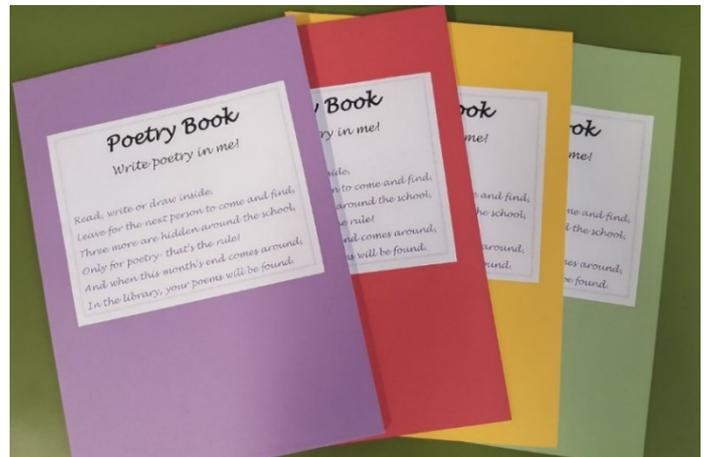
- Some teachers had immediate success with Poem of the Day which was, in part, due to their initial levels of enthusiasm and poetry knowledge. In other classes, it took several weeks for it to become firmly established as part of the daily routine but most persevered.
- Children and staff actively look forward to Poem of the Day. Several classes have a waiting list each week and some have even begun running it twice a day.
- The profile of poetry has been raised significantly across the school over the past few months. Children are now reading poetry books in the playground when practising for their performance, and more children are borrowing poetry books to read at home. We have also created a poetry display in the library, consisting of books selected by our Year 6 Library Assistants.

months ago. They enjoy talking about the poems the class are sharing together, with their selections showing increasingly more variety.

- As a result of the increased interest in poetry, we are now working with poet Joseph Coelho as our Patron of Reading.
- Staff knowledge of poems and poetry has improved across the school.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

Raising the profile of poetry by introducing Poem of the Day and the Poetree has helped the children become more confident when sharing and discussing poems. We are now looking at ways to develop the reading relationship between staff, children and parents by using poetry. This will include making poetry the focus of our next round of learning cafés and inviting parents to share their favourite poems for our upcoming school reading newsletter. Several teaching staff have realised that poetry is an accessible and enjoyable way for a child to develop their love of reading and are continuing to work to help maintain its higher profile (eg blank exercise books around the school for the children to write poetry in, poetry and videos in assembly, etc.)



Poet and Patron of Reading, Joseph Coelho, enjoying the Moorlands Poetree