

Being Me: Poems about Thoughts, Worries and Feelings by Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Laura Mucha, illustrated by Victoria Jane Wheeler

Otter-Barry Books 978-1913074654

Read about the Land of Blue where it's OK to feel sad, find ways to slow down, chill out, discover kindness in yourself and other people. Then maybe your special Thought Machine will tell you. THIS IS GOING WELL. YOU'RE DOING GREAT. YOU'VE GOT THIS! And you have. This ground breaking collection by three leading poets, well known for their empathy and perception, offers understanding, support and encouragement, as well as advice from leading developmental psychologist Karen Goodall.

This collection was shortlisted for the 2022 CLPE Poetry Award.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence:

- To explore and understand the importance of poetry as a genre
- To explore rhythm and rhyme in poetry
- To know how to listen and respond to a wide range of poems from a multi-poet collection
- To understand that poems are written for different reasons
- To interpret poems for performance
- To gain and maintain the interest of the listener through effective performance of poems
- To recognise how a poet uses poetry as a voice to express their own feelings and views
- To draft, compose and write poems based on personal interests, experiences and emotions using language and form with intent for effect on the reader

This teaching sequence is designed for a Year 4, 5 or 6 class.

Overview of this teaching sequence

This teaching sequence is designed to be delivered over 15 sessions, but teachers will want to use their own judgement about the length of time their class will need to spend on each of the sessions. The first sessions in the sequence look at the purpose of poetry, introduce the three poets and explore children's pre-existing knowledge about poetry. Children will have the opportunity to listen to, respond to and perform a range of poems from the collection to make connections with the poems, their meanings and the types of poetry contained within the collection. The next part of the sequence moves on to a focus on rhythm and rhyme. Within these sessions there will be an exploration of how to create rhythm in a poem and how to convey this effectively in a performance.

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The sessions will then explore how poetry can be used to describe personal experiences and evoke an emotional response in a reader. There is a focus on getting to the heart of a poem, understanding the events described and themes raised by exploration of how the poets have used language judiciously and for effect and how the layout of the poems also contribute to their meaning. There will also be a focus on how to convey emotion effectively in a poem and performance. These sessions provide the opportunity to reflect critically upon and respond to the ways in which language is used to express, convey, represent, symbolise and signify pertinent points, themes and messages. Reader response and group discussion prior to personal reflection on poems explored forms an integral part of a number of the sessions detailed in this sequence.

Throughout the sequence, pupils will have the opportunity to read poetry, listen to poems being read, offer personal responses to the poems, to prepare them for performance and to write their own. The whole sequence builds towards the chance for the class to write and perform their own poems on a subject of interest to them.

The pupils will have the opportunity to use the knowledge they have gained about poetic form, devices and structure throughout the sequence to decide how to present their poem on the page as well as consider how these could be performed to an audience. The poems will be published in a variety of ways to be shared with the school community and beyond.

Overview of Approaches and Outcomes:

Teaching Approaches:

- Reading Aloud
- Hearing poems performed by a poet
- Performing poetry
- Looking at Language
- Re-reading and revisiting poems
- Responding to poetry
- Learning about poetry from published poets
- Modelled writing
- Responding to writing
- Publication

Outcomes:

- Performing poetry
- Identifying poetic language and devices
- Text marking and annotation
- Evaluation of performances
- Poetry journal with ideas and inspirations for own writing
- Independently written poems
- Performances of children’s original poetry.

Exploring poetic forms and devices:

This collection gives an opportunity to explore the following poetic devices:

- Alliteration
- Rhythm
- Rhyme
- Personification and Metaphor

- Enjambment
- Free verse
- Assonance
- List poems

Cross curricular links:

Personal, social and emotional development:

- Many poems in the collection relate to children's direct and personal experiences. They will be able to connect to and share their feelings and experiences linked to school, family and everyday experiences and the wider world.
- Some of the poems focused on in this sequence cover events such as family tension and breakups, personal worries and anxieties caused by personal events and bereavement. Whilst it is important that all aspects of life are represented in poetry, as these allow children to see and make sense of emotions and experiences faced by themselves and others, teachers are advised to read the poems in their entirety before introducing these to pupils in order to decide the suitability of poems and how best to mediate the content with their own classes and children in mind.
- Ensure that the class share a common understanding that there is no expectation that they have to share their responses or personal connections to poems read, but that if they choose to do so this is a safe and secure forum for listening, not judging, and that nothing shared will be shared outside the room or used against anyone or that no one will react in a way that makes anyone sharing experience feelings of shame or disgrace, or be treated in a less favourable way because of anything they choose to share. Ensure time and space can be built in to pick up on themes and topics that need greater exploration.

Music:

- The second part of the sequence focuses on the importance of rhythm in poetry. This work could be extended into music sessions, allowing pupils the opportunity to create their own rhythms using instruments and experiment with writing and setting words to rhythms.

Geography and History:

- The poems 'One of These Days' (page 44), 'Snail' (page 45), 'Shame' (page 70) and 'Full Circle' (page 74) are linked to current and wider world events. Support the children's wider understanding of topics and themes by identifying places where these events take place, the wider history around these issues and how to conduct additional research on the themes and topics using primary and secondary sources.
- As part of this process, look at how to find credible information, how to tell whether there is bias in information presented, and whether the information presented accurately

reflects and represents those involved.

Links to other texts and resources:

Other books by or featuring Matt Goodfellow, Liz Brownlee and Laura Mucha:

- *The Same Inside: poems about empathy and friendship*, Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Roger Stevens (Macmillan)
- *Be the Change: Poems to help you save the world*, Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Roger Stevens (Macmillan)
- *Shaping the World: 40 historical heroes in verse*, ed. Liz Brownlee (Macmillan)
- *Apes to Zebras: An A-Z of Shape Poems*, Liz Brownlee, Sue Hardy-Dawson and Roger Stevens, illustrated by Lorna Scobie (Bloomsbury Education)
- *Animal Magic: Poems on a Disappearing World*, Liz Brownlee, illustrated by Rose Sanderson (Iron)
- *Caterpillar Cake*, Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Krina Patel-Sage (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Chicken on the Roof*, Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Hannah Asen (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Bright Bursts of Colour*, Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Aleksei Bitskoff (Bloomsbury)
- *Shu Lin's Grandpa*, Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Yu Rong (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Dear Ugly Sisters And Other Poems*, Laura Mucha, illustrated by Tania Rex (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Rita's Rabbit*, Laura Mucha, illustrated by Hannah Peck (Faber & Faber)

Other poetry collections for Key Stage 2 linked to the styles and themes in Being Me:

- *Cloud Soup*, Kate Wakeling, illustrated by Elina Brasliņa (The Emma Press)
- *Stars with Flaming Tails*, Valerie Bloom, illustrated by Ken Wilson-Max (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Hot Like Fire*, Valerie Bloom, illustrated by Debbie Lush (Bloomsbury)
- *The Rainmaker Danced*, John Agard, illustrated by Satoshi Kitamura (Hodder)
- *The Language of Cat*, Rachel Rooney, illustrated by Ellie Jenkins (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Michael Rosen's Big Book of Bad Things*, Michael Rosen, illustrated by Joe Berger (Puffin)
- *Werewolf Club Rules*, Joseph Coelho, illustrated by John O'Leary (Frances Lincoln)
- *This Rock, That Rock*, Dom Conlon, illustrated by Viviane Schwarz (Troika)
- *Belonging Street*, Mandy Coe (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Things You Find in a Poet's Beard*, A.F. Harrold, illustrated by Chris Riddell (Burning Eye Books)
- *Riding a Lion*, Coral Rumble, illustrated by Emily Ford (Troika)
- *Saturdays at the Imaginarium*, Shauna Darling-Robertson, illustrated by Judith Wisdom (Troika)
- *If I Were Other Than Myself*, Sue Hardy-Dawson (Troika)
- *Everyone's the Smartest*, Contra, translated by Charlotte Geater, Kätlin Kaldmaa and Richard O'Brien, illustrated by Ulla Saar (The Emma Press)
- *Where Zebras Go*, Sue Hardy-Dawson (Otter-Barry Books)

- *Weird, Wild and Wonderful*, James Carter, illustrated by Neal Layton (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Dancing in the Rain*, John Lyons (Peepal Tree)
- *Talking Turkeys*, Benjamin Zephaniah (Puffin)
- *Wicked World*, Benjamin Zephaniah (Puffin)

Before beginning the sequence:

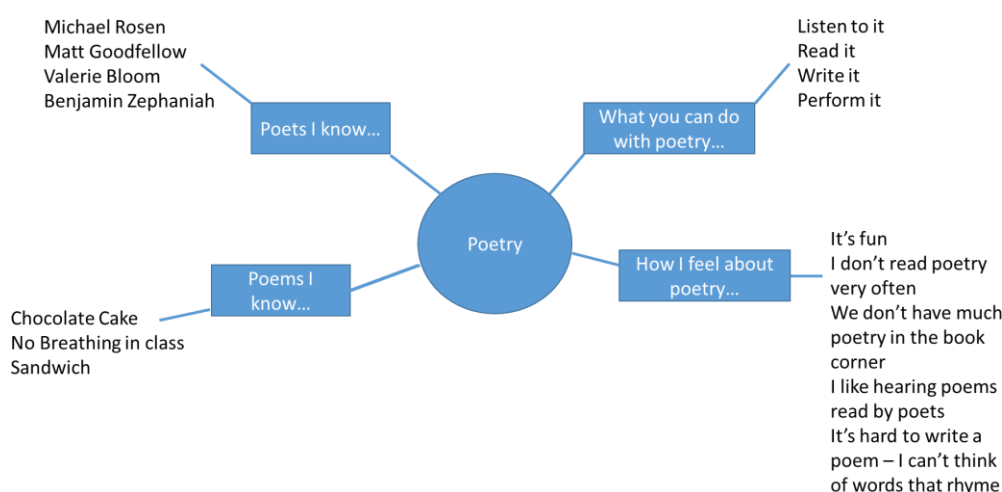
- Ensure that individual Poetry Journals (small notebooks, which could be handmade) are available for each child to use throughout the unit to note ideas and inspirations. Set the context for how these will be used; they will be for the children's own thoughts, ideas, inspirations and drafts of poems. They will not have to share these with anyone else, unless they specifically want to, but they should be using these all the time to collect and craft ideas for poems that could be worked up to finished pieces at the end of the unit.
- Create a focus display or poetry corner, where you can display a copy of the front cover of the book, a copy of the text and other poems or poetry collections that the children know or could be inspired by (see links to other texts).

Session 1: Introducing poetry as a genre and the three poets in this collection

The experience of being read to is likely to be the real foundation of children's knowledge of poetry, and is also going to be a major influence on how they write themselves. So it is important that it should be as rich, interesting and 'ear-catching' as it can be. It is important that voices other than the teacher's should be heard interpreting a poem. In this way, a range of accents, dialects and voices can be introduced into the reading. It can be particularly valuable for children to hear the poets themselves reading their own poems. This allows authentic voices to be heard.

- Share the front cover and the title of the collection with the children. Read the name of the poets Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow, Laura Mucha and the illustrator, Victoria Jane Wheeler. *Have the children heard of any of these people before?* Provide a picture of them for the children to see, and add these to the display alongside the front cover of the text.
- Gather the children's initial responses to the title and the illustrations. *Do they find them interesting, intriguing or amusing, for example? How do they work together? What sense do they give you about the kinds of poems you might find in this collection?* Jot the children's ideas around a copy of the front cover of the text to add to the poetry display and come back to at the end of the unit.
- Open up discussions which will allow you to gain a sense of the children's initial perceptions of poetry. *What do they think of when the word poetry is mentioned? How do they feel about poetry? Which poets or poems do they know and like? Do they like reading poetry? Performing poetry? Do any of the pupils write their own poetry?*
- To support them in shaping their ideas, allow time for the children to consider all the ideas and feelings (positive and negative!) that they have about poetry from the discussions

they have had and to note these ideas down in their Poetry Journals. They can choose any way that is helpful to organise their thoughts, for example in a spider diagram or concept map, e.g.



- Come together to watch Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Laura Mucha talk about their feelings about poetry and look at the similarities and differences with the feelings of the children, using the videos on CLPE's poetry pages: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets>
- Note down any poets and poems mentioned by the children during initial discussions around poetry and ask children to bring in books or copies of their favourite poems. You can help children to source poems and collections in school, using your school or local library if you have one, if they don't have copies of these themselves.
- Now, watch the poet Laura Mucha read the first poem in the collection: 'Thought Machine' (page 8): <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/laura-mucha>, without yet sharing the text or illustration. Give time for the children to share their initial responses to the text. *What does this poem make you think about? How does the poem make you feel? What makes you feel like this? What do you think the poem is about? What do you think this poem might tell us about the writer? What ideas might it give us about the collection as a whole? Does it fit with the ideas that you had about poetry? Why or why not?*
- If they have not already discussed it, draw their attention to Victoria Jane Wheeler's illustration, which is also itself a response to the poem. *What do you think the illustration aims to convey? Do you like it? Why? Why not? Do you feel it adds to your engagement with and appreciation of the poem? How?* You could ask children to consider how they might illustrate the poem if asked and provide art materials so they can do so. Any artwork created can be added to the children's own Poetry Journals or to a shared Poetry Journal.
- Come back to talk about how this first poem introduces us to the theme of the whole

collection. Listen to Laura Mucha read 'Thought Machine' again or re-read the poem aloud yourself. Poetry gives a wonderful way in to exploring language and vocabulary, including the ways in which words sound and how these look on the page. *How do you think this poem relates to the title of the collection? What do you think the 'I' in the poem is thinking and feeling? What do you think they might worry about? What tells you this?*

- Come back to look at the words on the page in 'Thought Machine'. Look at the capitalisation of the inner thoughts of the narrator. *Why has the poem been written like this? What image does this create for us as a reader? Is this the sort of poem you would think of when asked to think of poetry?*
- Now, give the children a copy of the poem, including the illustration, in mixed pairs or groups and give them time to re-read and discuss the poem for themselves. Encourage the children to text mark and annotate the poem with their thoughts, ideas and questions about it.
- Now, encourage them to lean on the structure of the poem to write a poem of their own. *If they were to write about their own Thought Machine, what thoughts would it make?* Give them time and space to jot down their initial thoughts and ideas in note form, ready to expand and come back to when they start to draft their poem. Model your own thoughts and ideas alongside the children as they work.
- Re-read the poem again, looking at how to borrow from the structure of the original to start crafting their own ideas. Model this yourself, using the notes you made. Talking through the drafting and crafting process in this way opens up the ways in which writers work to the children and will help to model the kind of thinking they will do when they come to their own piece of writing.
- Give time and space for the children to come up with their own lines. Once again, it would help to model this process if you talked this through with your own lines first. Open up conversations that explore the process of responding to and editing writing. Engaging children in active explorations like this will demonstrate how to make conscious decisions about the writing with the effect it has in mind.
- Now, allow time and space for the children to explore, experiment with and compose their own writing in the same way. When they are happy with the lines that they have written, provide time for them to write or type these up to display around a copy of the original poem. Give time and space for the children to read and respond to each other's compositions, talking about what these might reveal about their own thoughts and feelings.

Session 2: Initial Response and Performance

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. Giving voice and sound to poetry is an important key to unlocking the meanings and music contained in each poem. It is through performing poetry that the quality of rhyme and verse form, and the power of language can be explored and realised. Presenting poetry to an audience in this

way might also lead children to recognise more clearly the humour in a poem or reflect more thoughtfully on its meaning.

- Begin the session by briefly reviewing the previous session:
 - *Why do you think poetry is important, why do we write it, and what is it for?*
 - *What impression did the opening poem ‘Thought Machine’ make on you?*
 - *How do you feel about reading further into the collection?*
 - *What expectations do you have about the rest of the poems in the collection?*
- Explain that in this session the children will be reading two more poems from the collection and will have the opportunity to deepen their response through performance. Share the poem ‘Chatting to my Inner Critic’ by Laura Mucha (page 19), first by reading it aloud for the children to hear. Give them time to talk about their initial responses. *How did this poem make you feel? What were you thinking as it was read? What do you think it was about? Did any words or phrases stand out? How is this poem similar to ‘Thought Machine’ from the previous session? How is it different? How is this poem set out? What punctuation has the poet used? Why do you think she has done this, how does it affect the way you read the poem?* Allow children time to try out different ways of reading the poem. Make notes of significant responses on post-it notes around a large copy of the text on a Working Wall display or in the shared Poetry Journal.
- Go on to read ‘Doing Nothing’ by Laura Mucha (page 56) out loud to the children. Give them time to talk about their initial responses. *How did this poem make you feel? What were you thinking as it was read? What do you think it was about? Did any words or phrases stand out? What links can you make between this one and the others read in the collection so far?*
- Next share with the children, on an IWB if possible, a large-scale copy of the poem - or give out copies to each pair or group— reading again and allowing them to follow the words in the text. Ask them this time to think about the ideas that come to mind as the poem is read, modelling this type of response and valuing all interpretations.
- Go on to explore the way the poem looks on the page. *Why do you think the poet has set out the poem in this way? How do the line breaks affect the way you read the poem? What punctuation has the poet used? Why do you think she has done this, how does it affect the way you read the poem?* Children might refer back to ‘Chatting to my Inner Critic’ and make links to the way this poem was laid out on the page.
- Watch Laura reading the poem: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/laura-mucha>. This time, as the children watch and listen, ask them to continue to think about the ideas that come to mind as the poem is read, but also to consider the way the poem sounds. *What is the rhythm of the poem? How does the way the poem is set out affect the rhythm?* Allow children time to try out different ways of reading the poem. As you read and re-read the poem you could use a metronome or tap out a beat to provide rhythm, and this could become a feature of any performance the children work up to from their response to the poem. *Can they experiment with different rhythms? What impact does changing the*

tempo of the rhythm have on the way the poem is read? Does this affect the way you feel about the poem? How would you read the inner thoughts differently?

- Having introduced the three poems so far, allow time and space for the children to discuss them themselves in mixed pairs or groups, using supporting questions to prompt their discussions, such as: *What does this poem mean to you? What language in the poem captured your thoughts? What did the poems have in common, how were they different?* As well as discussing their responses, encourage the children in text marking and scribing ideas around their copy of the poems. *Is there a poem that particularly resonates with them, or a poem that they are drawn to?*
- As a follow up to these discussions, allow the children to work up their chosen poem to perform. You could share the advice of poet Ruth Awolola on performing poetry: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/ruth-awolola-what-advice-would-you-give-performing-poetry> Consider what she says about ‘ensuring that there is meaning in your words’, that ‘it’s clear’ and that ‘everyone else can feel what you are feeling when you are saying the words’. Encourage the children to think back to how they felt when they read the words. *How can they use their performance to share these feelings?* Share the [advice for performing poetry](#), provided for schools taking part in the CLiPPA shadowing scheme, to help the children make decisions around how to perform their chosen poem and how to develop their performances to bring out the feelings created by the poem they chose. If you have children who may be reluctant to perform in front of their peers, you could share the advice of Roger McGough on performing poetry: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/roger-mcgough-what-advice-would-you-give-performing-poetry>
- After the children have had time to work up and rehearse their performances, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Before 14th June 2022, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes.
- Then, ask the children to feed back on the interpretations of different groups, evaluating the effectiveness of different techniques and styles and what these brought to their understanding of the poem. *What was most effective about each performance? What did the performance bring to your understanding of or feelings about the poem? Did it change your feelings from when you first looked at the poem? Why was this?*

Session 3: Rhyme, Rhythm and poetry

Rhyme is the repetition of syllables, typically at the end of a verse line. Rhymed words conventionally share all sounds following the word's last stressed syllable. Rhyme is one of the first poetic devices that we become familiar with but it can be a tricky poetic device to work with. Matching content to a rhyming pattern takes a lot of skill. Rhyming patterns can be in couplets where pairs of lines rhyme or can be alternate where every other line rhymes.

Lots of people believe poetry must rhyme, but an exploration of the work of many modern poets reveals poems that don't rhyme at all, or play with more traditional rhyme schemes. Comic verse is the type of contemporary poetry that is most likely to rhyme

- Begin the session by listening to Liz Brownlee perform 'Find Me' (page 20): <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/liz-brownlee>. Allow the chance for children to respond initially to the poem. *What does the poem make them think about? How does it make them feel? What makes them feel this way? What do they notice about the way Liz Brownlee performs the poem?* The poem is written in rhyme. Rhyme is the first poetic device we become familiar with, but can be tricky to work with. Matching content to a rhyming pattern takes a lot of skill and at this point it is more relevant for children to be able to hear and identify it than write with it.
- Hand out copies of the poem on the page for the children to follow as you read through it again or replay Liz's performance. Encourage the children to identify and highlight the pairs of rhyming words. They could use different coloured pencils to identify pairs of words that rhyme.
- Re-read the poem, encouraging the children to join in, first with the predictable rhyming words as they come up and then again, then closely looking to match the words to the text.
- This poem also offers a good opportunity to explore beat and rhythm. The beat is the steady pulse that you feel in the poem, like a clock's tick or a heartbeat. This is what you would clap along to, or what you feel you want to tap your foot to. Re-read the poem aloud and try to feel the natural pulse and beat of the lines, tapping your feet, clapping your hands or tapping a pair of rhythm sticks or claves on the beat and encouraging the children to follow.
- Since the three kinds of poetic meter in English depend on syllabic rhythm, an understanding of syllables is crucial to recognising them. Words divide into syllables depending on how many vowel sounds they have: *place* has one syllable, while *unique* has two and *identity* has four. In words with more than one syllable, a single syllable will carry the greatest stress; e.g. the first syllable is stressed in *unique*. An understanding of syllabification will also support children's growing understanding of spelling.
- Support the children in counting and identifying the number of syllables in each stanza of the poem:

What makes me *me*
is on my mind (8)

a place to fit
is hard to find (8)

am I unique?
one of a kind? (8)

I'm not the
same as them. (6)

They know they are
just what they think (8)

identity is
quite distinct (8)

my puzzle piece
does not have links (8)

I'm not the
same as them. (6)

They don't know
I feel this way (7)

I think of it
sometimes all day (8)

I wonder if
it's safe to say (8)

I'm not the
same as them. (6)

- Look at the patterns they can see in the number of syllables in each line, then each pair of lines. *Where are the similarities, where are the differences?* The children should note the regular pattern of 16 syllables in each pair of stanzas, that is usually split between 8 syllables in the first and 8 in the second, except in the lines: they don't know I feel this way / I think of it sometimes all day, but we could discuss how using 'do not' instead of don't would make 8 syllables. *Why do you think the poet choose 'don't instead of 'do not' here?* Look at how the syllabic rhythm helps us to see the stresses in the poem, and to follow the rhythm in performance.
- Note the use of the refrain 'I'm not the same as them' and the fact that this only has 6 syllables. *What is the significance of this on the way the poem is read? What impact does this have on the poem? Why do you think the poet made this choice?*
- Practise reading the poem again, using the beat and rhythm to help the fluency of the reading for performance, but without being chained to these, so that the performance

becomes monotonous or stilted.

- Now give out the following poems to groups of children: 'Kindness' (page 11), 'Secrets' (page 14), 'I'm an Orchestra' (page 24) and 'Can't Explain' (page 29). You might want to give each group all of these poems, or select one poem for each group. Allow the children time to read the poems, identify the rhyme patterns in the poems and the pulse and syllabic patterns contained within them.
- When the children have had time to explore these, give them time and space to work up the poems for performance, using the rhythms of the poem to enhance their performances, considering Liz's original performance of 'Find Me'. You might also wish to watch examples of other poets performing poems to see how poems can be performed drawing on the rhythms and patterns of language, such as:
 - Michael Rosen in 'The Rhythm of Life':
<https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/michael-rosen-rhythm-life>
 - Joseph Coelho in 'A Little Bit of Food':
<https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/joseph-coelho-little-bit-food>
 - Hilda Offen in 'Flying Machine':
<https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/hilda-offen-flying-machine>
 - Roger McGough in 'The Lost Lost Property Office':
<https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/roger-mcgough-lost-lost-property-office>
 - Matt Goodfellow in 'A Special Badger':
<https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poems/special-badger-1>
- After the children have had time to work up and rehearse their performances, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Before 14th June 2022, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes.
- Come back together to discuss the rhyme patterns in these poems. *What did the children notice about the sounds and spelling patterns in the words that rhyme? Did the word endings sound the same and look the same as in spark and dark or how and now, or did they sound the same and look different, as in subdued and mood, wait and captivate or hole and soul?* Use these discussions to look at the sounds and shapes of words more closely, particularly the alternative ways of representing vowel sounds in the English language.

Session 4: Deeper responses to reading and evoking empathy in poetry

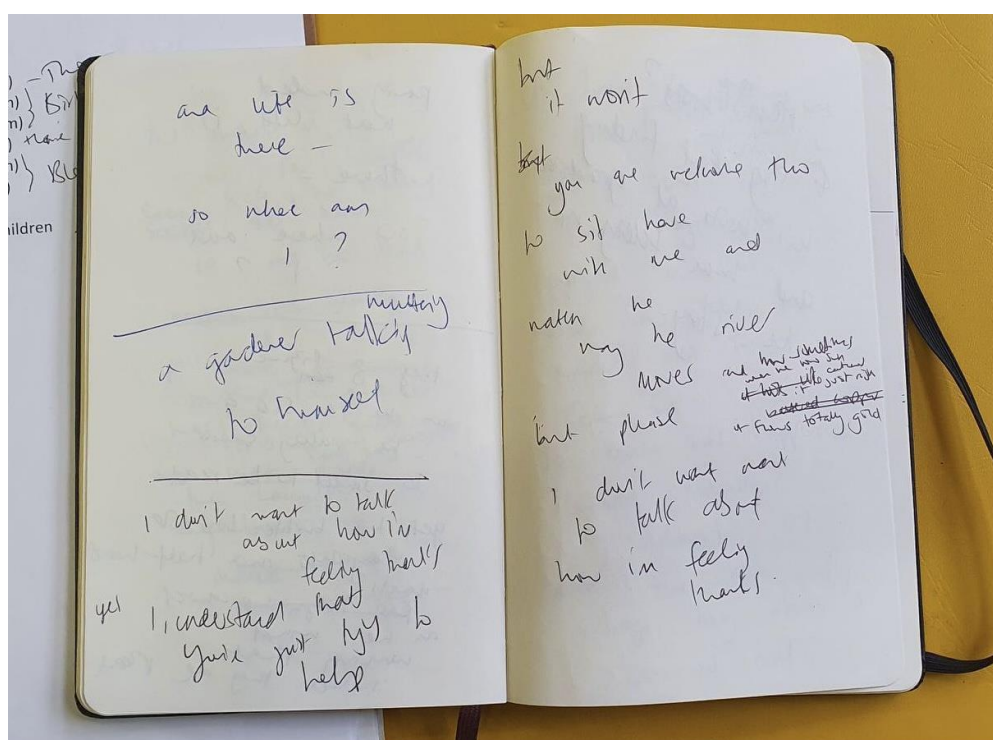
Poems offer a special way of thinking. They can express some of the more intuitive, affective aspects of our perceptions, those which are sometimes left out of a narrowly conceived, cognitively orientated curriculum.

- Begin this session by watching Matt Goodfellow performing ‘Michael’ (page 16) <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/matt-goodfellow> . Discuss the children’s initial responses to the poem. *What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? What made them feel this way? Did it remind them of any of the other poems they have read so far? Or anything in real life or that has occurred to them?*
- Now, give a copy of the poem to mixed pairs or small groups of children to re-read and discuss. Allow them time and space to share their thoughts, observations, to look at the language used and to raise questions that they have about the poem. Encourage them to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their copy of the poem as a record of their thoughts and discussions.
- Come back together to discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - The fact that this poem, unlike many of the others they have looked at, doesn’t rhyme. *What would we call this type of poem?* You could explore the range of [poetic forms](#) shared on the poetry section of CLPE’s website and decide which best fits this poem. You could also go on to look at what else it is that makes this piece of writing poetic, focusing on some of the [poetic devices](#) shared on the poetry section of CLPE’s website.
 - The imagery Matt creates in the descriptions, and what this makes them think about or how it makes them feel.
 - The way that in most stanzas, the last line emphasises the narrator’s misunderstanding of the situation being described e.g. ‘They never do that for us’, ‘for free’. *Why do you think the poet does this here? What difference does it make to us as the reader? How does it help with our perceptions of Michael?*
 - The significance of the last line of the poem being a separate stanza on its own; to further highlight the narrator’s perception of Michael.
 - The way that some lines run into the next. This is known as enjambment. *Why do you think the poet uses this device here? What difference does it make? What affect does it have on us? How does this technique strengthen the imagery he creates for us?*
 - *What message they think the poet is trying to convey. How might this be different from that of the narrator?*
 - *What this poem inspires in their own thinking. Are there things that you wonder about children in your classroom? Can you relate to Michael or the narrator?*
- Follow up by reading the poem ‘Bobby’ by Laura Mucha (page 36). Give the children time and space to reflect on their initial responses to this poem. *What do they like/dislike about this poem? What is puzzling them? Can they make any connections to ‘Michael’ or other poems we have read so far?*

- Explore in more depth the similarities and differences between this poem and ‘Michael’, both in terms of the content of the poem and in the way it has been written. *What messages are the poets trying to convey in these two poems? Do any of these messages resonate with you?*
- Follow up by discussing how poetry can be written in a way that tackles social misconceptions and can help the reader to feel that their voice is being heard.
- Consider together how we can generate a perception of something or someone without fully understanding what is really going on. Encourage the children to think about something in their own lives that could be or has been misunderstood or ill-perceived. This may prove difficult for children, so give the children some quiet time – at least 15 minutes - to sit, stare and think. *Do random thoughts, questions or ideas come to mind? Can they focus on a particular time when they were misunderstood or have they misunderstood something? What thoughts come into their mind as they sit and ‘do nothing’?* If the children don’t do this themselves, make reference to the earlier work on the poem ‘Doing Nothing’ and acknowledge that for some, this experience may be much like it was for the narrator in this poem. If things do occur to them, ask them to jot down or doodle ideas in their Poetry Journals. As an enabling adult and model of the creative process, ensure that you do this in your own Poetry Journal, alongside the children.
- At the end of this focused time, ask the children to look back at the jottings they have made. *Did they have a number of different thoughts or a few thoughts that developed over time?* Share some of your own thoughts and ideas to open up the process and show that these do not have to be sophisticated ideas.
- Ask them to look over what they’ve done and pull out something that could have the potential to be built upon. Ask them to write this thing at the top of a new page in their journal and to use this stimulus to complete a piece of stream of consciousness writing. For this, give the children 5-10 minutes to pick up a pen and just keep writing. Encourage them to ignore punctuation, style, grammar, format - anything that stops them from writing. The idea behind stream of consciousness writing is that you write in a state of flow. It involves you writing down whatever comes to mind. Do this yourself alongside the children.
- After this period of writing, ask the children to come back to read over what they’ve written and to text mark and highlight anything that might be good inspiration to build up into a poem about their own misconceptions or those perceived by others about themselves.
- Give the children a period of independent writing time, where they are able to work up these ideas into a poem of their own, drawing back on the two poems read to look at poetic forms and devices that they could use in their own writing. As they work on their poems, allow them to consider how and why they will break up lines and verses, drawing on what they found effective in Matt’s and Laura’s own work. Work on your own poem alongside the children as they write, sharing your own process with any children who are

struggling to get going or who need support in the craft of writing.

- When they have had chance to work up a draft, allow time for them to read this aloud to a response partner, who can tell them what they liked about their work, ask them questions about it, discuss any challenges and suggest improvements as a reader. Model this process by sharing your own work with the children first, looking at how to make edits on the page as challenges are explored and suggestions are made. Model that writing is a tentative, rough and often messy process as you shape ideas into a finished piece. You could even share a photo of Matt's own notebook so that they can see that this is how real writers work:



- When they have acted on the response, allow them time to present their poem for publication. This might be writing it up in presentation handwriting, typing up on a word processor or filming a performance of their finished poem, as they saw Matt do at the start of the session. Collect these together and make a display, around copies of the two poems that stimulated their ideas. Allow the children time to reflect on their work and that of others, talking about what they liked, what they found challenging and how they feel about the finished compositions.

Session 5: Poetry connected to our own experiences – School

Children need the permission and opportunities to share and write about themselves, their feelings and important events using poetic forms. 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.

- Begin the session by listening to Matt Goodfellow read the poem 'First Day' (page 66) on his poet page on CLPE's website: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/matt-goodfellow>. Allow time for the children to discuss their initial reactions to the poem. *What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? What made them feel this way? What personal connections do they have with the poem? Does this connect with their own feelings about school or do they have a different opinion of school from the 'I' narrator in the poem? What do you know, or think you know about the narrator in this poem? What in the poem allows you to infer this about them?*
- Now, give out copies of the poem on the page to mixed pairs or groups of children. Play the video of Matt reading the poem again, encouraging them to follow the poem on the page as he reads. As they listen to the poem, can they develop an image of Mr Mawhinney? *How does this image develop as the poem is read? Do they know of any teachers like Mr Mawhinney? Or any not like him? What feelings are we left with at the end of the poem? How does this compare with the feelings we had at the start of the poem? What is the emotional journey of the narrator of the poem?*
- Now, allow time for the children to re-read and discuss the poem together, sharing their thoughts, observations, looking at the language used, how the words are laid out on the page, the accompanying illustration and to raise questions that they have about the poem. Encourage them to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their copy of the poem as a record of their thoughts and discussions.
- Come back together to discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - What they know or think they know about the narrator from the poem.
 - The imagery of Mr Mawhinney; their first impressions and the journey of the child's perception of Mr Mawhinney throughout the poem.
 - The alliteration in *suffer in silence, stands by my side, speaks to me softly, sparkling, does deftly, brilliant bloke.*
 - The assonance in *goat, knows, cope.* A focus on how these vowel sounds are represented in words could be useful revision here.
 - The layout of the poem, with four lines in each stanza.
 - The rhyme and rhythm of the poem. *What impact does this have?*
 - The impact of the illustration.
 - The emotional journey of the narrator's reflection.
- Follow up by handing out copies of the following poems to the pairs or groups: 'Back to Me' (page 10), 'Everyone' (page 60), and 'Consequences' (page 62). Allow time and space for the children to talk about each poem in turn, then to look at the possible connections between all four poems and to build a picture of how the 'I' or the 'we' as narrators might feel about school, or the event that takes place in the school setting of each poem. Come

back together to discuss: *What personal connections do you have with these experiences of or feelings about school? Which ones particularly resonate with you? Why do you think this is?*

- *If you were to draw on your own experiences of, or emotions connected to school in poem, what could these be?* To support the children's thinking, allow them time and space to think about this and share aspects of school life and feelings they have connected with school in a visual organiser in their Poetry Journal. They might focus on aspects such as feelings about school, things we do at school, my favourite parts of school, what I don't like about school, memorable experiences I've had at school. As an enabling adult and model of the creative process, ensure that you do this in your own Poetry Journal, alongside the children.
- Reinforce that poetry is a place where they can be honest about their thoughts and feelings, but to do this in a way that isn't offensive.
- Look at 'Everyone' by Laura Mucha (page 60) and discuss together how this poem is describing other people but how it is indirectly describing the narrator. Discuss how this, and others such as 'Consequences' uses the experiences or actions of others to highlight how the narrator is feeling. Look at how the children might be able to use analogy or metaphor, as the poets do in these poems, to describe any negative feelings they may have in this way.
- When they've completed their visual organisers, give them time to think about aspects they could share through a poem. Do this yourself, drawing on your own visual organiser to model the process.
- Tell them that they can come back to add to this organiser at any time, and that their thoughts and ideas will be worked up into their own poems at the end of the sequence, but that they can continue to build up and work on ideas in their journals in the meantime.

Session 6: Poetry connected to our own experiences

Personal experiences and memories can provide a powerful stimulus for children's poetry writing. Through poetry writing children are encouraged to reflect on their experience, to recreate it, shape it and make sense of it.

NB: The poem focused on in this session explores themes of parental sadness and depression. Whilst it is important that all aspects of life are represented in poetry, as these allow children to see and make sense of emotions and experiences faced by themselves and others, teachers are advised to read the poem in its entirety before introducing to pupils in order to decide the suitability and how best to mediate the content with their own classes and children in mind.

- Begin this session by watching Matt Goodfellow read the poem 'A Thought' (page 22): <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/matt-goodfellow>. Allow time for the children to discuss

their initial reactions to the poem. *What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? What made them feel this way? What personal connections do they have with the poem?*

- Discuss with the children the concept of the 'I' in the poem. It is important for the children to understand that the 'I' in a poem can be anyone - a speaker who is quite unlike the poet, an historical figure, a fictional character who shares characteristics with the poet, real people from the poet's life, or sometimes the poet themselves. For this reason, when discussing the 'I' in poems presented with an 'I' narrator, we should say the speaker, the narrator or the 'I', rather than 'the poet'. With this in mind, ask the children: *What do you know, or think you know about the narrator in this poem? What in the poem allows you to infer this about them?*
- Now, give out copies of the poem on the page to mixed pairs or groups of children. Play the video of Matt reading the poem again, encouraging them to follow the poem on the page as he reads. Allow time for the children to discuss the poem together, sharing their thoughts and observations, looking at the language used, how the words are laid out on the page, the accompanying illustration and to raise questions that they have about the poem. Encourage them to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their copy of the poem as a record of their thoughts and discussions.
- Come back together to discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - Their thoughts and understandings about the narrator in this poem, and what it is in the poem that guides their thinking and ideas.
 - The use of the metaphor in 'mum's sadness was a necklace'.
 - The assonance in words like *sadness* and *necklace*.
 - The alliteration in 'see her sadness and say'.
 - The imagery used by the poet and how this affects them as they read the poem.
 - The choice of line breaks, the separation between lines and why this might be.
 - The way that the sentences in the poem lead into one another from one line to the next. This is called enjambment.
 - The choice not to punctuate the last line with a full stop, or in fact, to use any punctuation throughout the poem – *why might Matt Goodfellow have made this pragmatic choice? What does it leave you thinking or feeling?*
- Follow up by handing out copies of the following poems to the pairs or groups: 'Arguing' (page 35), 'If only' (page 53) and 'Dad's New Girlfriend' (page 68). Allow time and space for the children to talk about each poem in turn, as they did with 'A Thought', then to look at the possible connections between all four poems and to build a picture of the 'I' or the narrator of each poem. Come back together to discuss: *What do we learn about the narrators in each of the poems? How do we feel about them after reading? What makes us think or feel these things?*
- Talk together about the writing process, and how, although these 'I' narrators might not be the poet themselves, they may be based on the poet's traits or own experiences. *If you*

were to draw on your own traits or experiences in poem, what could these be? To support the children's thinking, allow them time and space to think about themselves and share aspects of themselves which they are comfortable to share in a visual organiser on the page. They might focus on aspects such as character traits, hobbies and interests, feelings and emotions they've experienced, important events in their lives. As an enabling adult and model of the creative process, ensure that you do this in your own Poetry Journal, alongside the children.

- When they've completed their visual organisers, give them time to think about aspects they could share through an 'I' narrator. Do this yourself, drawing on your own visual organiser to model the process.
- Now think about the kind of poem that might be inspired by this character trait, hobby, interest, emotion or experience. On a new page in their Poetry Journal, or on a sheet of plain paper that they can stick into their journal, ask the children if they can build a picture by sketching an illustration of the 'I' character, thinking about how they will convey what they are like, what they are doing or how they are feeling. You might go to Victoria Jane Wheeler's illustrations to inspire their thinking.
- When they have had time to think about the moment and 'I' character they want to convey, allow them time and space to write words, phrases, snippets of lines or thought or speech bubbles around their illustration to build up their ideas. Some children might go straight into drafting their own poem if they have been inspired by the drawing process. Continue to model this with your own ideas, supporting children who are slow to start or who struggle for ideas.
- As with the previous task, give the children a period of independent writing time, where they are able to work up these ideas into a poem of their own, drawing back on the three poems read to look at poetic forms and devices that they could use in their own writing. As they work on their poems, allow them to consider how and why they will break up lines and verses, drawing on what they found effective in the poet's own work. Work on your own poem alongside the children as they write, sharing your own process with any children who are struggling to get going or who need support in the craft of writing.
- When they have had chance to work up a draft, allow time for them to read this aloud to a response partner, who can tell them what they liked about their work, ask them questions about it, discuss any challenges and suggest improvements as a reader. Model this process by sharing your own work with the children first, looking at how to make edits on the page as challenges are explored and suggestions are made. Continue to model the tentative, rough and often messy process as you shape ideas into a finished piece.
- When they have acted on the response, allow them time to present their poem for publication. This might be writing it up in presentation handwriting, typing up on a word processor or filming a performance of their finished poem, as they saw Matt do at the start of the session. Collect these together and make a display, or collect these as part of an anthology of children's own poems alongside copies of the four poems that stimulated

their ideas. Allow the children time to reflect on their work and that of others, talking about what they liked, what they found challenging and how they feel about the finished compositions.

Session 7: Deeper responses to poems read: Identifying and conveying meaning and emotion in words and performance

Allowing ample time for pupils to explore and make personal choices and reflect on what resonates with them personally is an important investment that can heighten engagement with and response to poetry. Rather than looking at a poem as a puzzle that needs to be solved, or to be mined for specific language and technique, we need to encourage a personal and emotional response as a way in to looking at what it was about the writing that garnered the response.

- Begin this session by listening to Laura Mucha read the poem 'The Land of Blue' (page 12) on her poet page on CLPE's website: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/laura-mucha>. Allow time for the children to discuss their initial reactions to the poem. *What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? What made them feel this way?*
- Now, give out copies of the poem to mixed pairs or groups of children. Play the video of Laura reading the poem again, encouraging them to follow the poem on the page as she reads. Come back to discuss: *What personal connections do they have with the poem? What do you know, or think you know about the narrator? What in the poem allows you to infer this? How does it connect with and differ from 'A Thought', which was explored in the previous session?*
- Now, allow time for the children to re-read and discuss the poem together, sharing their thoughts, observations, looking at the language used, how the words are laid out on the page, the accompanying illustration and to raise questions that they have about the poem. Encourage them to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their copy of the poem as a record of their thoughts and discussions.
- Come back together to discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - The way the narrator describes what the 'land of blue' is *not*, rather than what it is like. *What impact does this have on the way we perceive the narrator here?*
 - The impact of the use of rhyme within the poem.
 - The use of adjectives to describe the other places mentioned in the poem in comparison to the simple language used to describe 'The Land of Blue' – *Why was this pragmatic choice made by the poet? What impact does this have?*
 - The alliteration in the poem: *wobbly, weary, weak*.
 - The repetition of the first stanza at the end. What impact does this have on drawing the poem to a close?
 - The emotional journey of the poem and how this is presented.
 - The repetition of the phrase 'you might feel'. What is the narrator trying to convey here?

- The impact of Victoria Jane Wheeler’s illustration.
- The punctuation of the poem – the significance of the use of the hyphen.
- Personal connections they have with the emotions or experiences shared.
- Follow up by handing out copies of the following poems to the pairs or groups: ‘Albatross’ (page 52), ‘The Lump’ (page 28), ‘Bottled Up’ (page 38) ‘Today’ (page 54) and ‘The Thinking Tree’ (page 32).
- Encourage the children to look more deeply at the poems, exploring the themes and concepts introduced and the poet’s use of language. Then ask the children to pick one poem to discuss more deeply. Ask them to talk about the poem together, discussing what the poem makes them think about, how it makes them feel and what makes them feel this way.
- You can use this as an opportunity to re-introduce children to the names of specific forms or devices to look at what makes their chosen poem poetic. You might introduce this by way of what Michael Rosen calls ‘secret strings’ (What is Poetry? Walker 2016). He talks about the importance of discovering how the poet might have used assonance, alliteration, imagery, rhythm and sound. *Can they identify any of these in their chosen poem?*
- Encourage the children to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their chosen poem with their thoughts, ideas and questions.
- Come back together to discuss: *Why did they choose the particular poem they did? What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? Did they feel the same throughout the poem or did their feelings change at different points? How or why do you think this is? What connections did they make with the poem? Did it connect to any other poems they have read or to personal or real life experiences they’ve had? What did they find particularly effective about the poem?*
- Now, share with the children 2019 CLiPPA winner, poet Steven Camden’s thoughts on performing poetry: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/steven-camden-what-advice-would-you-give-performing-poetry>. Consider what he says about connecting with the words and fitting your emotional connection to the words into your performance. Give each group time to look at their poem again, talking specifically about the emotions they feel as they read their chosen poem and how they might convey this in their performance.
- Encourage them to think about how they will vary the pace, tone and volume of their voices to convey their connection with the words and the emotions evoked by the poem. Allow them time and space to think about or discuss this, if they are working in a pair or group, and to mark up their copy of the poem with performance notes before trying out ideas, adapting where necessary and rehearsing their performances to share with the rest of the class.
- After the children have had time to work up and rehearse their performances, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Before 14th June 2022, this could be filmed and submitted for the CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition to win poetry

prizes.

- Then, ask the children to feed back on the interpretations of different groups, evaluating the effectiveness of different techniques and styles and what these brought to their understanding of the poem. *What was most effective about each performance? What did the performance bring to your understanding of or feelings about the poem or the subject matter? How was the performance different from hearing the poem read aloud?*
- Allow time and space for the children to add to their visual organisers with any new ideas they gained from this session and to begin thinking about ideas for their own poems in their Poetry Journals. These may be rough notes of ideas in words, pictures or visual organisers, or snippets of lines or verses. Allow the children to decide if theirs are ideas they want to share or write just for themselves if dealing with more sensitive issues, such as those explored in some of these poems. Writing about such issues may help to explore and work through them.
- As the children do this, it is important for you to keep up your own journal alongside, modelling ideation and composition and how to develop ideas into drafts, talking through stuck points and where ideas may not be working and have to be abandoned or how these can be worked around.

Session 8: Poetry connected to our own experiences – Our wider lives and experiences

A places, people and families theme could offer a clear focus for the personal memories of each writer and can provide a variety of ways in which it is possible to represent early childhood experiences and give them new life. Often, places hold particular memories for families. They may be tied to a special occasion like a wedding, a birth place or a holiday.

- Begin the session by reading the poem ‘Dropping the Ball’ by Laura Mucha and Rochelle Burgess (page 42). Allow time for the children to discuss their initial reactions to the poem. *What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? What made them feel this way? How does this poem compare and contrast with other poems in the collection that they have read so far?*
- Now, give out copies of the poem on the page to mixed pairs or groups of children. Read the poem again, encouraging them to follow the poem on the page as you read. Come back to discuss: *What personal connections do they have with the poem? Can they remember a particular moment in their lives when they’ve felt like this; have they experienced something similar? How do you think it might feel to have had this experience?*
- Allow them time to think about and make a note of any similar experience, or to reflect on the experience shared in their Poetry Journal to come back to. They may want to reflect on this in a poem later on.
- Now, allow time for the children to re-read and discuss the poem together, sharing their thoughts, observations, looking at the language used, how the words are laid out on the

page and to raise any questions that they have about the poem. Encourage them to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their copy of the poem as a record of their thoughts and discussions.

- Come back together to discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - The imagery created in the personification and metaphor of the ball and its link with racism.
 - The layout of the poem on the page. The inner voice in italics may remind them of the poems 'Thought Machine' and 'Chatting to My Inner Critic' from earlier on in the sequence. *What is the same about these poems? What is different? Why has the poet chosen to write in this way?*
 - The repetition of the phrase 'I know I'll get the ball'. *What is the impact of this? How significant is it the second time it is used?*
 - The centralisation of the word 'alone' on the page at the end of the poem and the significance of this to the poem's message.
 - The emotional journey of the poem and how this is represented with the narrator using dialogue between themselves.
 - The use of rhetorical questions.
 - The use of punctuation. *What is the poet trying to convey with their use of a range of punctuation?*
 - Their personal connections with the emotions and experiences shared.
- Follow up by handing out copies of the following poems to the pairs or groups: 'A pencil speaks' (page 39), 'One of These Days' (page 44), 'Shame' (page 70) and 'Snail' (page 45). Allow time and space for the children to talk about each poem in turn, as they did with 'Dropping the Ball', then to look at the possible connections between all five poems and to build a picture of the experiences and emotions shared in these poems. Spend some time discussing children's prior knowledge and support children to find out more about the topics covered in these poems. You could explore the book *What is Race? Who are Racists? Why Does Skin Colour Matter? And Other Big Questions* by Claire Heuchon and Nikesh Shukla (Wayland) to further explore ideas and concepts raised in the first poem.
- Come back together to discuss: What personal connections do you have with these experiences or of the feelings connected with these? Which ones particularly resonate with you? Why do you think this is?
- *If you were to draw on your own personal experiences or emotions in a poem, what might these be?* To support the children's thinking, allow them time and space to think about this and share aspects of their wider lives and feelings they have connected with these in a visual organiser in their Poetry Journal. As an enabling adult and model of the creative process, ensure that you do this in your own Poetry Journal, alongside the children.
- Reinforce that poetry is a place where they can be expressive about their thoughts and feelings and that they can do this indirectly through taking snippets of their own lives and presenting these through the 'I' narrator. Go back to the original poem, 'Dropping the Ball'

and discuss how it is able to show the importance of this moment and the depth of the emotion around it without directly telling us. Look at how they might be able to use imagery, personification or how to build anticipation as the poets do throughout the poems shared.

- When they've completed their visual organisers, give them time to think about aspects they could share through a poem. Do this yourself, drawing on your own visual organiser to model the process.
- Tell them that they can come back to add to this organiser at any time, and that their thoughts and ideas will be worked up into their own poems at the end of the sequence, but that they can continue to build up and work on ideas in their journals in the meantime.

Session 9: Deeper responses to poems read – poetry to connect with and make sense of personal experiences and emotions

Poetry requires careful consideration of word choices, order and arrangement to best convey the thoughts and feelings of the poet and inspire a response from the reader. This makes poetry a powerful and effective art form that can inspire profound, deep and meaningful responses and engagement.

NB: The series of poems shared in this session cover events such as family tension and break ups, personal worries and anxieties caused by personal events or bereavement. Whilst it is important that all aspects of life are represented in poetry, as these allow children to see and make sense of emotions and experiences faced by themselves and others, teachers are advised to read the poems in their entirety before introducing these to pupils in order to decide the suitability of poems and how best to mediate the content with their own classes and children in mind.

- Begin this session by listening to Liz Brownlee read the poem 'The Quiet Child' (page 41) on her poet page on CLPE's website: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/liz-brownlee>. Allow time for the children to discuss their initial reactions to the poem. *What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? What made them feel this way? Were their feelings the same throughout the poem or did they change at different points? What emotions are they left with as the poem ends? How did Liz's performance bring out the emotions evoked in the poem?*
- Now, give out copies of the poem on the page to mixed pairs or groups of children. Play the video of Liz reading the poem again, encouraging them to follow the poem on the page as she reads. Come back to discuss: *What personal connections do they have with the poem? What do they empathise with in the experience of the narrator?*
- Now, allow time for the children to re-read and discuss the poem together, sharing their thoughts, observations, looking at the language used, how the words are laid out on the page, the accompanying illustration and to raise questions that they have about the poem. Encourage them to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their copy of the poem as a record of their thoughts and discussions.

- Come back together to discuss as a group. The children might talk about:
 - The layout of the poem: two-line stanza with rhyme every 4 lines.
 - Being able to empathise with the narrator’s warmth of self-acceptance and the struggles to conform; but the confidence and strength it provides.
 - The metaphor of the ‘leaf that trembles’.
 - The way each stanza plays with juxtaposition to emphasise the message of the poem.
 - The repetition of the phrase ‘I am’ and the impact that this creates.
 - Questions around the accompanying illustration – why does he look ‘deflated’ if he is supposedly feeling strong?
 - The lack of punctuation at the end, and indeed mostly throughout. What does this make you think? Is this the end of the narrative or not?
- Follow up by handing out copies of the following poems to the pairs or groups: ‘I Believe in Me’ (page 51), ‘In Betweens’ (page 55), ‘The Way’ (page 58), ‘Up’ (page 63), ‘Full Circle’ (page 74), ‘In the Heart of a Book’ (page 64).
- Encourage the children to look more deeply at the poems, exploring the themes and concepts introduced and the poet’s use of language. Then ask the children to pick one poem to discuss more deeply. Ask them to talk about the poem together, discussing what the poem makes them think about, how it makes them feel and what makes them feel this way and any comments on the language, devices and layout of the poem.
- Encourage the children to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their chosen poem with their thoughts, ideas and questions.
- Come back together to discuss: *Why did they choose the particular poem they did? What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? Did they feel the same throughout the poem or did their feelings change at different points? How or why do you think this is?* Listen to Matt Goodfellow talk about his own inspirations for poetry on his ‘What inspires you as a poet?’ video on his poet page on the CLPE website: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/matt-goodfellow>. *Why might Matt Goodfellow and indeed the other poets in this collection have chosen to tackle themes and subjects like this in their poems? How do you think writing about a challenging or difficult subject or issue might help the writer and reader of the poem?*
- Ask the children once again, how they might bring out the emotion of these poems in a performance. Give each group time to look at their poem again, talking specifically about the emotions they feel as they read their chosen poem and how they might convey this. You may wish to draw on the advice for a successful performance, created for schools shadowing the CLiPPA, to guide their thinking with these particular poems.
- Encourage them to think about how they will vary the pace, tone and volume of their voices to convey their connection with the words and the emotions evoked by the poem. Allow them time and space to think about or discuss this, if they are working in a pair or group, and to mark up their copy of the poem with performance notes before trying out

ideas, adapting where necessary and rehearsing their performances to share with the rest of the class.

- After the children have had time to work up and rehearse their performances, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Before 14th June 2022, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition](#) to win poetry prizes.
- Then, ask the children to feed back on the interpretations of different groups, evaluating the effectiveness of different techniques and styles and what these brought to their understanding of the poem. *What was most effective about each performance? What did the performance bring to your understanding of or feelings about the poem or the subject matter? How was the performance different from hearing the poem read aloud?*
- Provide time and space for the children to begin thinking about ideas for their own poems based on personal experiences in their Poetry Journals. These may be rough notes of ideas in words, pictures or visual organisers, or snippets of lines or verses.
- It is vitally important to allow the children to decide if theirs are ideas they want to share or write just for themselves if they are choosing to address more sensitive issues, such as those explored in some of the poems in this collection. Writing about such issues may help to explore and work through them, but they may or may not wish to share these publicly. As the children do this, it is important for you to keep up your own journal alongside, exploring concepts and ideas that you would be happy to share and talk about with the children, and to come back to, to work up into full poems.

Session 10: Poetry as a window into our own thoughts, worries and feelings

Many of the cross curricular themes and topics that act as a focus for learning and teaching in the primary classroom are capable of being illustrated through poetry. A focus on 'conservation' poems for example is a good example of bringing together a collection of poems around a particular theme. Poems offer a special way of thinking. They can express some of the more intuitive, affective aspects of our perceptions, those which are sometimes left out of a narrowly conceived, cognitively orientated curriculum.

- For this session, prepare copies of 'My Head is full of Hurry' (page 30), 'What to Do With Worries' (page 34) and 'I Don't Forget' (page 69) for mixed pairs or groups of children to share.
- Read each poem aloud to the children and allow time for children to give their initial responses to the poems. *What did each poem make them think about? How did it make them feel? What made them feel this way? What do they already know or understand about the topics and themes these poems are based around? How do these link with other poems we have read? What questions do they have about what they have read?*
- Reflect back on the title of the collection *Being Me: Poems about Thoughts, Worries and Feelings*. Having read a lot of the poems in the collection now, consider why this title was

chosen. Encourage the children to share their thoughts and responses on this.

- Spend some time discussing children’s prior knowledge and initial questions and support the children to find out more about the topics covered in these poems, to gain a greater understanding of the issues raised. CBBC Newsround has a section on children’s mental health: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/52713333>. You could also explore mental health more broadly using books like *What is mental health? Where does it come from? And other big questions* by Lucy Maddox (Wayland), *My Little Book of Questions* written by Britta Teckentrup (Prestel), *Be Resilient: How to Build a Strong Teenage Mind for Tough Times* by Nicola Morgan (Walker) as well as *Michael Rosen’s Sad Book*, illustrated by Quentin Blake (Walker).
- Now, allow time for the children to re-read and discuss the poems together, sharing their thoughts, observations, looking at the language used, how the words are laid out on the page and to raise questions that they have about the poems. Encourage them to make their thinking visible by text marking and annotating their copy of the poem as a record of their thoughts and discussions.
- Come together to discuss: *How do the poems encourage us to engage with these issues and empathise with the people involved? Why might poets write about issues like these in their collections?*
- Ask them to choose any of the three poems explored to prepare as a performance reading. Support them to think very carefully about how they will plan their performance so that it doesn’t belittle the experience of the people described and others in their situation. *What kind of decisions do they need to make to ensure they remain true to the poet’s intent? What do they hope to gain from their performances, individually and as a whole?*
- Give the children ample time and support to develop and refine their performances until they are ready to share these with the wider group. Invite the children to evaluate their own and other’s performances and refine them, potentially to film and submit to the CLIPPA shadowing scheme.
- Now, allow time and space for the children to consider whether there are any other current issues that they could draw attention to in the form of a poem. Discuss different events they might have seen in the news or heard about in other areas of the curriculum that could form the basis of a poem. Ask them to jot potential ideas down in their Poetry Journals and think about the feelings they have connected with these issues. *Why are these issues important to them? What feelings do they have connected with these issues? What do they think other people need to know about this issue?*
- Give time for the children to conduct extra research around the issues they want to explore using credible sources of information and looking for examples of people talking about these issues who have direct experience of these things so that they are able to refer to and take into account the voices and perspective of people directly affected. Encourage them to take notes in their Poetry Journal so that these can be drawn upon and

be worked up into their own poems at the end of the sequence, and that they can continue to build up and work on ideas in their journals in the meantime.

Session 11: Writing own poems in response to the collection: Ideation

Following an authentic model for writing in the classroom allows students to feel what it is like to be a writer. It is so much more than simply 'doing' writing tasks.

Following an authentic process results in well-developed pieces of writing; pupils follow a truly creative process and have the impetus to write for themselves.

The core focus of an authentic writing process is on giving pupils a credible opportunity to develop their own voice, have a choice about what they want to say and how they say it and the chance to write with freedom.

Ideation is the creative process of generating, developing, and communicating new ideas. Activities and demonstrations should focus on exploring where and how we get ideas from in the real world of writing and giving pupils time, space and stimulus to begin to form and shape ideas for their own writing for real life purposes and audiences.

- Reflect on all the poems that have been read in the collection so far. *How would you describe the different poems? Can you categorise them under different headings? What would these be? What were different poems about? Could you categorise these into different topics or themes? What ideas do these give you about what poetry is and what it could be? What ideas do you have for poems of your own?*
- Often, when people talk to writers about their work, one of the most commonly asked questions is where they get their ideas from. Listen to Matt Goodfellow talk about where he gains inspiration for his poetry on his poet page on the CLPE website: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/matt-goodfellow>. Ask children to reflect on what Matt said and talk in pairs or small groups to list as many places as they can think of where a person can get ideas to help their writing. After a couple of minutes, get children to report back and create a class list: *Where can we get ideas from?* Children might mention: things that we see/notice, something heard, memories, other books that we've read, a song that we heard, dreams, imagination, daydreaming, playing, films, toys, family events, arguments, etc.
- Listen to Liz, Laura and other poets talk about how they go about writing their poetry: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/videos?f%5B0%5D=tags%3A10757&search>. *What ideas can they pick up from this?* 2015 CLiPPA winner Joseph Coelho, 2018 CLiPPA Highly Commended poet Ruth Awolola and 2019 shortlistee Philip Gross all talk about the importance of keeping a note of ideas in a notebook or on a phone.
- Come back to the Poetry Journals where children have been jotting down ideas, inspirations, sketches and drafts of poems. Remind the children that these books are only for them – there's not a particular amount of writing you expect them to do, they can write in any way they wish, and they can also sketch and draw. It's also important to make

clear that you won't be marking them.

- Now give time for the children to reflect back on the ideas they've collected and think about which they feel might be most successful to take forward to a draft piece of writing in the next session.
- It is important for you as a teacher of writing to reflect on your own feelings about writing alongside the children and review ideas you have collected in your own journal. Our recent research highlights the importance of teachers as writers of poetry. Share some of the ideas you would consider working up and why, and how you might start to think about doing this, then give the children some time to begin to work up their own ideas or to sit and think about how to do this.
- Some children may choose to start by drawing, doodling or sketching ideas initially. You might even refer back to some of the illustrations in the collection.
- They could also draw on the ideas of practising poets. You can listen again to Matt Goodfellow and other poets talk about how they go about writing their poetry here: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/videos?f%5B0%5D=tags%3A10757&search>. They might start by jotting down favourite words or phrases, they may want to splurge their ideas like Kate Wakeling, they may have a line that is their starting point, like Sue Hardy-Dawson, they might make a mind map around the theme or title, like Ruth Awolola.
- Remind them that they don't have to start writing a poem straight away, they might just begin by collecting words, phrases, ideas and images that can be used later. However, if they have an idea that they want to start exploring immediately in a poetic form that is also fine.

Session 12: Writing Own Poems, Gaining a Response

Creation is the act of writing down and shaping ideas with a purpose, audience and form in mind. Activities and demonstrations should focus on exploring different ways to capture, work up and develop ideas in the journey to publication. Sharing the processes of real writers, for example their thoughts and advice and images of their journals, notebooks and sketchbooks can be a valuable part of this process, sharing how the work will often begin rough, in note form and tentative before being worked up more fully for an audience.

It is important to develop children as reflective writers by giving ample opportunity throughout the writing process to talk about themselves as writers, enable them to voice their views, listen to others and develop new knowledge and understanding.

- Reflect on the ideas that the children have been noting in their Poetry Journals throughout the unit. *Which ones do they feel strongly enough about to take through to writing? How can you take your initial notes forward into crafting a poem?*
- Take a theme or topic from your own journal that you could begin working up into a poem. Model how you might begin crafting a poem based on one of the topics discussed

during one of the sessions, talking through the choices that you are making as a writer to communicate the right feelings and images for your reader.

- Think about the form the poem will take and if they will use any of the poetic devices you have explored in the poetry in this collection, such as rhyme, repetition, imagery, alliteration or assonance. You may have children in the class who are very adept at using rhythm and rhyme in their writing, some may be more comfortable to write in free verse and find it easier to express their thoughts and feelings in this way. Encourage them to select the form and devices that allow them to best express their themes and feelings in the best way, as they have seen and responded to in Liz, Matt and Laura's writing.
- Consider which poems in this collection, which we explored in detail in session 3, were enhanced by rhyme. *Which poems work well as rhyming poems? Did any work not so well? Why might this be?* Encourage the children to explore whether rhyme would convey the correct message in their own poems or not.
- Allow time for children to draft their own poems around the themes and subjects of their choice, then allow them to read these aloud to themselves, perhaps while walking around or moving so they can feel the rhythms of their writing before sharing with a response partner to lift the words off the page, hearing how they sound when performed.
- Give time for response partners to ask the writers questions, discuss parts they aren't sure are working, adjust rhythms or make suggestions to improve the writing.
- Start to think together about how the poem could be presented on the page to enhance the meaning and the reader's understanding. Draw the children's thoughts back to what they saw in the poems in this collection and the impact this had on them as readers and use this knowledge to make notes about this on their draft.
- You might also think about whether the poem will have an accompanying illustration, and if so, what this might be. Again, look back at the poems studied. Which of these had accompanying illustrations and which didn't? Why do you think this was? What is the impact of having the illustrations there? What does the reader have to do if the poem is not illustrated? What style of illustration do you think might best fit the theme and emotions captured in your writing?

Session 13: Editing Own Poems

Children's writing can be improved if they, a partner or their teacher reads it aloud at an early stage, giving it life and breath and helping the young poet see the patterns and tunes they have created. Just as an author would work with an editor, children should be given opportunities to help each other by reading their writing aloud and responding as readers. This allows them to support each other as they compose and structure their ideas. Writers can tell response partners what they are pleased with in their writing, particular devices or parts of the poem they may be struggling with and gaining a picture from the reader of how their writing impacts on them. Response partners should be encouraged to

reflect on the impact of the poem on them as a reader. Children can then re-draft parts of their work, based on these conversations.

- Give further time for children to redraft any parts of their poems that they discussed with their response partner in the previous session, or to work on their poems further if they need time to do this.
- When they have a poem that they have read aloud to a partner, discussed and explored changes and that they are happy to present to a wider audience, start to think about how that poem could be best presented. *How will it look on the page? What form will it take? How will you use line breaks, spacing on the page to enhance the meaning or emotions behind your poem? Will you hand write it? Will you publish using a word processor? What script or font will you choose? Will you make any specific decisions about the way certain words look or are placed on the page? Will you illustrate the poem? If so, how will the words and illustration sit and work together?*

Session 14: Publishing Own Poems

Publication is the means to present writing in a way that is most appropriate for the purpose, audience and form. This may be through the spoken as well as the written form and may also involve visual communication, if appropriate.

Prior to publication, writers should work with a supportive partner to polish the work ready for publication, proof reading work and checking for spelling and punctuation accuracy. Materials that facilitate the most appropriate forms of publication, reflecting those used by a practising writer working in this way should be provided to give writers the full sense of the satisfaction publishing and presenting writing can bring.

- Allow plenty of time and space for the children to make a final draft and then publish their work accordingly.
- When they are happy with the way their poems look on the page, think about how this could be lifted off the page and be performed to an audience. Give each child a photocopy of their finished poem and allow them to mark this up with performance ideas. *Will you perform on your own? Do you need others to support you? How will you use voice, body movements and facial expression to enhance the listener's engagement and understanding?*
- Ensure time is given to try out ideas and rehearse performances of children's own poems before presenting to an audience and consider ways to allow published poems to be shared with an audience – as part of a display in a prominent area in the school, printed in an anthology to share in a public reading space or school library, on a class blog or the school website, or published on a school social media account – you could even tag in the poet.

- Allow the children time to reflect on the writing process. *How did it feel to write their own poems? What was successful? What was challenging? Have they been inspired to write more poetry? Why or why not? If so, what else might they want to write about?*

Session 15: Reflecting on the Collection

- Begin by reading aloud one of the final poems in the collection 'Being Heard' (page 95) and allow time for children to give their initial responses to the poem. *What did this poem make them think about? How did it make them feel? What made them feel this way? Why do you think we have chosen to end the sequence with this particular poem?*
- Revisit the poems that have been explored throughout the sequence. Ask children what their favourite poems have been, re-read some that the class suggest or invite them to read these to the class.
- To draw together all the work done in this unit, hold a discussion about the collection as a whole. *Which were your favourite poems? Which were the most memorable for you? Why? What have you learnt about poetry that you didn't know before? Would you be encouraged to read more poetry after studying this collection? Why? Why not?*
- Compare their current thoughts around the book with their first impressions. *What were you expecting? Was the poetry included in the collection what you expected it to be? Why/why not? Was there anything in the collection that surprised you? How would you describe this collection to someone else? What would you tell them about the poems? What might you keep back so as not to spoil their experience?*
- Come back to discuss the poems that they have heard performed by the poets, heard read aloud or read and performed themselves and discuss the similarities and differences within them.
- Spend some time now reflecting on the poems that the children have written. *What kinds of poems were your favourite to write? What did you find it easiest to write about? What was more difficult or challenging for you? Why do you think this was?*
- Following this, you might hold a poetry festival for children to do readings from their collections to parents or other classes in the school or display their work as part of an exhibition, including the published poems and accompanying illustrations. For the children performing at the event, ask them to consider what they learnt from listening to the poems being read aloud and performed by other poets as well as trying out ideas in their performances of poems from this collection that they will need to remember when reading their own poems.
- Display the children's own poems and artwork prominently in the library or other shared area or on a blog, website or school social media account so they can be read by a wider audience. Ensure you obtain each child's consent before publishing their work. This might lead on to wider explorations around the concept of copyright. You may wish to draw on the resources CLPE produced in partnership with the ALCS to explore this in more depth: <https://clpe.org.uk/teaching-resources/ALCS-resources-on-copyright>.

- You could even send the poets copies of the children's poems with a covering note or letter thanking them for inspiring their work, by email via the details on their websites: <https://www.mattgoodfellowpoet.com/contact>, <https://lizbrownleypoet.com/contact/>, <https://lauramucha.com/about/contact/> or by tagging them into a school Tweet. Matt's Twitter handle is @EarlyTrain, Liz's is @lizpoet and Laura's is @lauramucha
- You may also want to look into the prospect of inviting them to the school for a poet visit. Details of how to do this can be found on their websites.