



School Library Service

Primary Library Network: Autumn 2026 Library Information and Resources

Focus: Developing poetry throughout the school

Why is taking the time to think about my poetry collection important?

The [CLPE Poetry Survey of 2023](#) found that barriers to teaching poetry in class included access, with 79% of classrooms having fewer than 10 poetry books and 44% with five or fewer.

- ✓ When pupils have access poetry for their independent reading it increases their engagement.

The findings from the [NLT poetry survey of 2025](#) suggest that "...poetry may serve as a stepping stone to a more positive literacy identity... supports literacy development, emotional wellbeing, identity formation, and cultural participation, but, crucially, as our young respondents highlighted, also offers a source of joy and fun.

- ✓ Nurture a love of reading, writing and performing poetry as an integral part of the school day, not just a curriculum bolt on extra.

The 2023 [DfE Reading Framework](#) states that "Teachers should identify a core set of poems for each year group ... those chosen should be able to withstand a lot of repetition, elicit a strong response and extend children's vocabulary in different areas of learning".

- ✓ Regularly audit your poetry collections across the school and ensure requirements are met.



"Poetry provides the gateway for so many young readers and writers in their journey towards becoming literate; delighting, supporting and engaging children as they build a love of literature. It is a crucial genre for teaching the fundamentals of literacy: understanding language and vocabulary; reading fluency; a broad range of reading comprehension skills, such as the ability to infer, deduce and empathise; expanding the range and breadth of children's reading; pupil's ability to respond to texts and their phonics/decoding ability". CLPE



What should I consider when developing my poetry collection?

- Look for attractively illustrated, age appropriate and appealing books.
- Choose from a diverse range of poets and illustrators.
- Look for contemporary texts in which every child can see themselves.
- Choose poetry collections that broaden their view of the world around them.
- Select texts that represent a range of forms including verse novels.
- Ensure DfE requirements are met by “including rhyming poems, poems where alliteration is a strong feature, word games, traditional songs and rhymes, nonsense rhymes, and poems that are particularly rhythmical”.
- Create a resource of poetry readings and videos and invite poets into school.
- Withdraw damaged and unappealing books, check older texts for appropriate language and subject matter.
- Read reviews and follow poetry awards to develop your knowledge of children’s poetry.
- Ask the school library service for advice when looking to purchase or borrow new poetry books.

SLS book lists

	9781797235592	Poetry Comics
	9781406395815	Five Little Friends Collection of Finger Rhymes
	9780711279735	All Aboard the L
	9781915659989	The Flying M Dreams Collection Magical Po
	9781803380605	When Po Sky
	9781915444806	Red & Poet
	9781915659552	Sc A
	9781805135968	
	978191776867	
	978191568	

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	9781444977189	Poems
	9780711278738	Colossal Words
	9780241527603	Over to
	9781529524352	A Fit
	9781915659866	Poetry Book
	9781915659644	All About
	9780008459	All About
	9781915659552	All About
	9781805135968	All About
	978191776867	All About
	978191568	All About

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School Library Service

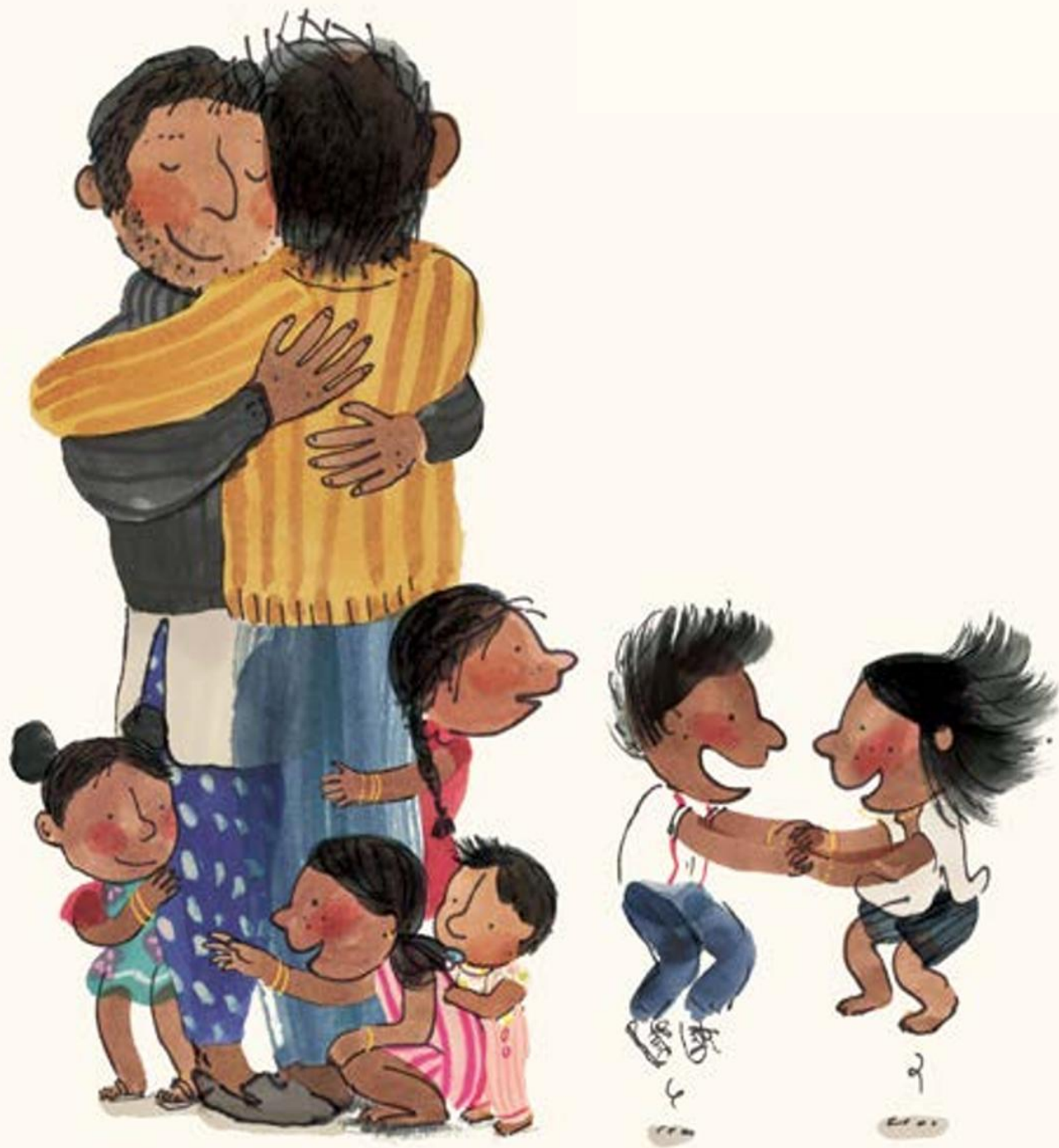
Poetry booklist

- Subject to availability, the individual titles below can be purchased at a saving of 25% off RRP and include plastic jackets, stationery and free delivery as standard.
- Subscribing schools can return books purchased through us as part of their exchange.
- Please contact us at schoollibraryservice@devon.gov.uk or 01392 287244.

ISBN	Title	Author	RRP
9781035003846	The Big Amazing Poetry Book		£9.99
9781805132646	This is Not a Small Voice Poems by Black Poets		£20.00
9781838919597	Courage in a Poem Poetry About Empowerment		£8.99
9781035049387	Cosy Poems Chosen by Gaby Morgan		£9.99
9781838919801	Our Earth is a Poem Poetry About Nature		£8.99
9781915659477	The Poetry World of John Agard	Agard, John	£12.99
9780063060906	How to Write a Poem	Alexander, Kwame	£12.99
9781785307171	Words Can Fly Mindful and Uplifting Poems for Children	Ashworth, Donna	£16.99

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"Children who don't see themselves reflected in the reading materials provided are more vulnerable to developing weaker connections which in turn can impact on ability to see the benefits and pleasures of reading."

CLPE's longitudinal study, **Reflecting Realities in the Classroom**, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

[Reflecting Realities Research](#)

What is the best way to organise my poetry collection?

The convention for libraries is to house poetry in non-fiction with the Dewey number 821 but in a primary school we need to consider where our poetry collection will be most useful and impactful.

In your school library

- Poetry collections can be organised by author surname, with anthologies arranged by theme, titles or format. Once a system has been decided upon use small labels or pencil the location inside the book for consistent shelving.
- Smaller collections can be arranged to look attractive.
- Direct everyone to the collection with clear signage.
- Make regular poetry displays, include poetry in thematic or curricular displays.

In your classroom book corners

- An attractive basket to display books facing forward. Labelled.
- Ensure books are age appropriate.
- Keep a book stand for the poetry book you have most recently read from.

How can I create a poetry friendly ethos in my school?

"Provide opportunities for children to listen to and read poems purely for pleasure, garnering genuine responses about what children like and what different poets or poems make them think and feel, without any agenda to analyse or use as a model for writing" [Poetry in Primary Schools — What We Know Works CLPE](#)

“Children need time to read, re-read and respond to poetry.” Try some of the ideas on the [Forward Arts Foundation-Poetry Power](#) page such as ‘poetry papering’. This also will help them to develop their personal tastes.

This Book Trust page has practical suggestions, tips and ideas from Michael Rosen along with poetry book lists: [Create a Poetry-Friendly Classroom](#)

“It is important to hear and feel the distinct rhythms of different voices and dialects.” Use CLPE’s directory of poetry videos, this increases engagement and enthusiasm. [Poetry Videos CLPE](#)
Or for audio only visit their sister site [The Children’s Poetry Archive](#)

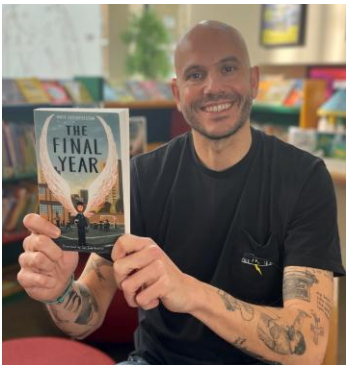
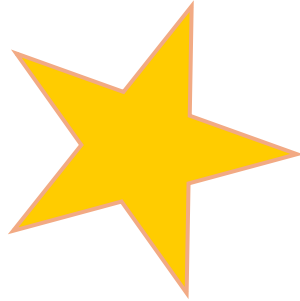
A few whole school poetry ideas:

- Plan a poetry slam or regular poetry cafes. An opportunity for pupils to perform their own poems or a favourite. Encourage whole body listening and celebrate brave sharing.
- Regularly read a poem in assembly, relate it to the day's theme.
- Start interactive poetry displays. Let poems grow and change by providing cutout shapes for poetic phrases to be added. Leaves for a tree or clouds, bubbles, butterflies, birds for a sky display all work well. Themes can be suggested.



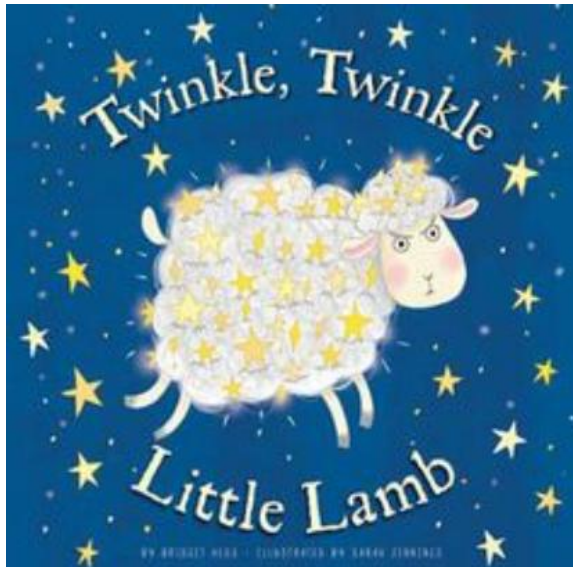
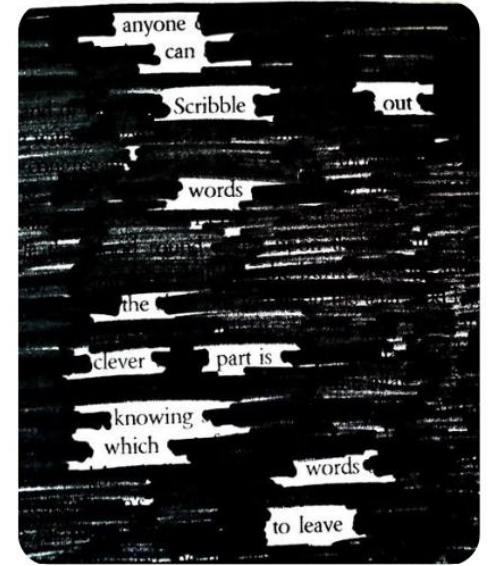
A few whole school poetry ideas

- Author visit? –Why not a poet? Often more focused on the spoken, rather than written, word and so may engage a different cohort. Consider a virtual visit as many are available online and use this as an opportunity to expand children's experience of the world.
- Get all the teachers to put the class's favourite poem on the classroom door. Involve support staff. What are the mealtime assistants' favourites?
- Start a lunchtime poetry club or have an occasional poetry focus in your book club.
- Publish your poetry, in a school anthology or add a star poem to each school newsletter.



A few classroom poetry ideas

- Blackout poetry: Hand out pages taken from a withdrawn fiction book, pupils read the page, choose a few words that sound good together. Blackout the unwanted words with a marker until a short poem is created.
- N+7: Using a poem or song lyric highlight every noun. Look each up in a dictionary and replace it with the noun which appears 7 nouns after it. This can be adapted by changing the formula.



- Nursery Rhyme Mash Up: Use copies of several nursery rhymes, cut up, mix and adapt lines.
- The 3 Minute Poem: At the start of term everyone writes down some potential poem titles on slips of paper. Two or three times a week select a title at random, then teacher and pupils all spend exactly 3 minutes writing a poem. Read a few at the end. This is challenging the first few times but with repetition quickly becomes a fun way to write.

Poetry Highlights for the Autumn Term

This year's **National Poetry Day** is on the theme of Wonder

Thursday 1 October 2026

How to get involved: [Forward Arts Foundation](#)

Free resources and activities: [National Literacy Trust](#)

World Nursery Rhyme Week

Monday 9 to Friday 13 November 2026

Sign up for a newsletter and resources [World Nursery Rhyme Week](#)

Lots of related resources on [Twinkl](#)

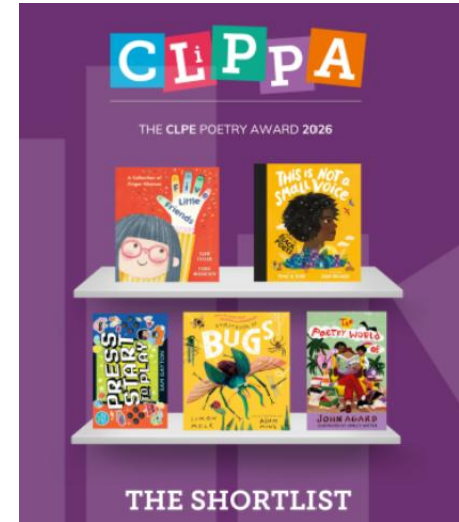
Poetry masterclass for KS2 practitioners on Monday 2 November: inspiring young writers through poetry

[NLT Poetry Masterclass](#)

Poetry Awards

The CLiPPA poetry award short list for 2027 will be out in April. Visit the website to get involved. [CLiPPA — The CLPE Poetry Award](#)

The CLiPPA poetry award also runs a shadowing scheme encouraging response through performance.



The Verse Novel Awards were created by teachers Jon Biddle and Marie Zarro to celebrate the very best contemporary verse novels for children and young people. Participating schools receive the shortlisted books in September and the winners will be announced in December [Verse Novel Awards](#)

Further reading and useful resources

Authors aloud – can book poets to visit (online or in person)

<https://authorsalouduk.co.uk/poets/>

Authorfy –masterclasses from poets eg 10 videos from Matt Goodfellow – free just to the end of this year.

<https://authorfy.com/poetry/>

Poetry by Heart – competition 1 October 2026 – 25 March 2027

<https://poetrybyheart.com/>

National Poetry Day Thursday 1 October 2026

<https://forwardartsfoundation.org/national-poetry-day/>

Poetry Together is a free initiative that encourages schools and care homes to connect with each other, learn a poem off by heart, and come together to recite. <https://www.poetrytogether.com/>

Michael Rosen Day Thursday 12 November

<https://www.walker.co.uk/michael-rosen-day/>



Professional Updates

- Introducing the Waterstones Children's Laureate 2026-2028: Patrice Lawrence [Waterstones Children's Laureate | Waterstones](#)
- Autumn Reading Challenge from the National Literacy Trust [Future Voices Reading Challenge in partnership with Amazon | National Literacy Trust](#)
- Picture Book Assemblies 2026 – 2027 from Jon Biddle [Picturebook Assemblies 2026-2027.pdf - Google Drive](#)
- Thursday 8 October [Go All In for Take 10 to Read and set a new GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ title! | National Literacy Trust](#) register to take part.
- Education Committee's Report on Reading for Pleasure July 2026.
<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/54321/documents/302025/default/>
- Sarah McIntyre's and Philip Reeve's Adventure Mice website – library lesson ideas and 'Draw and Make' activities <https://www.adventuremice.com/>
- Books for Keeps – monthly magazine with interesting articles and book reviews
<https://booksforkeeps.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/BfK-280-September-2026.pdf>

Professional Updates

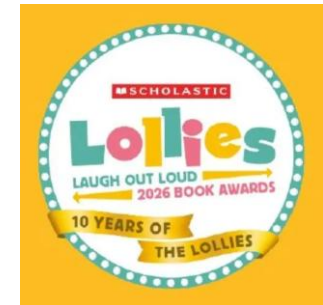
Events

- Bud-Lit Festival – Budleigh Salterton 23 – 27 September 2026 <https://budlitfest.org.uk/>
- Black History Month – October <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>
- National Non-Fiction November <https://fcbg.org.uk/nfn/>
- Join Jacqueline Wilson Wednesday 14 October. Free online event.
<https://empathylab.uk/jacqueline-wilson-event/>
- Chris Naylor-Ballesteros at Exeter Northcott Theatre – The Children's Bookshow [The Children's Bookshow | Chris Naylor-Ballesteros performance](#)
- British Library Learning free online event with Thiago de Moraes, Viviane Schwarz and Alex Barrow. Comics and creatures create-along : make your own magical worlds. Friday 6 November <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/comics-and-creatures-create-along-make-your-own-magical-worlds-tickets-1989818172719>
- World Book Day 2027 register for tokens <https://www.worldbookday.com/educators/>

Professional Updates

Book awards

- Spark! Book Awards: register to participate [Spark! Book Awards](#)
- The Diverse Book Awards – Shortlist announced Thursday 24 September <https://www.thediversebookawards.co.uk/>
- The Laugh Out Loud Book awards 2026 –voting deadline Friday 23 October <https://shop.scholastic.co.uk/lollies>
- The Young People's Book Prize aims to promote literacy in young people and inspire them to read about science. Register to shadow and judge the books. <https://royalsociety.org/medals-and-prizes/young-peoples-book-prize/>
- The Excelsior Award <https://www.excelsioraward.co.uk/>
- Peter's Children's Book of the Year <https://peters.co.uk/pcboty>



SLS news

New resources on our website

School Library Service

Black history month - Primary list

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ISBN	Title	Author	Price
9781530506251	Black History (board book)		£7.99
NF 900			
9781839133404	The Unspoken	Alexander, Kwame	£8.99
NF 306	AR: 3.9 LY		
9781529557424	Brilliant Black British History	Adnaka	£8.99
NF 941	AR: 8.3 MY		
9781626366955	10 Children who Changed the World	Joseph, Paterson	£10.99
NF 920			
9781529052947	Black and British	Olusoga, David	£12.99
NF 941	AR: 7.3 MY		
9781836431411	The History of We	Smith, Nikolas	£8.99
9780241552627	Places	Trumpah, Melody	£9.99
NF 305			
9780500660447	Bright Stars of Black British History	Williams, J Y	£12.99
NF 920			
9780711207159	Shining Bright, Shining Black	Wilson, Jamie	£9.99
NF 920			
9780702344497	Windrush Child Younger graphic	Zephaniah, Benjamin	£10.99

<https://devonlibrarieservices.co.uk/lib-exchange/primary-and-nursery-school-library-service/>
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National Year of Reading booklist for October.

To coincide with Black History Month this book list has been compiled to help schools enhance their library collections and support learning, understanding and inclusion across the school community.



Christmas Lucky Dip.

Use this resource to introduce 16 festive stories. Each decoration hides a new reading adventure.

[Support for schools, bookshop and advisory service. | DES](#)