



UNIVERSITY of  
GREENWICH

# THE ROAD TO READING

*SOPHIE ROBINSON & IZZY HEDGES*

# CONTEXT

- We are both from the University of Greenwich, Avery Hill, Eltham.
- We are both in our final year of teacher training and have experience in a variety of primary schools around this area.

# YOU RESEARCH INSPIRATION AND RATIONALE

“Without secure subject knowledge and thoughtful appreciation of reading and being a reader, teachers are not effectively able to employ a reading for pleasure pedagogy.” –  
Cremin et al, 2008.

Only 46% of teachers could name six children’s authors, however these were mainly the typical celebrity authors that these teachers would have studied at school themselves.

Only 10% of teachers could name 6 poets

Only 10% of teachers could name 6 picture fiction creators

Cremin et al, 2008

# AIMS

- To create a larger collection of book by a variety of authors which we can use readily in the classroom.
- To increase our confidence so we no longer struggle to recognise some current authors and poets, and can recall outstanding literature to use in our classrooms.
- Use our knowledge and collection in the classroom so that all children can relate and connect to texts and develop a reading for pleasure ethos for the classroom community.

# SURVEYS

## Reflecting on our own knowledge of authors and poets

3. Please indicate when this was:

Within the last month   
 Within the last 3 months   
 Within the last 6 months   
 Over 6 months ago

4. How do you usually get hold of children's books for your own reading?

Tick as many as appropriate

Library   
 Bookshop   
 On-line bookshop   
 From friend/s   
 Other (please specify)

5. List 6 'good' children's book authors

Jacqueline Wilson  
 Roald Dahl  
 Dr Seuss  
 Shaun Tan Philip Reeve  
 David Almond Patrick Ness

6. List 6 good children's picture book authors/illustrators

Queenie Blake  
 Julia Donaldson  
 Emily Gravett Nicola Davies  
 Jeanne Willis  
 Gary Crew

\*By 'good' we mean those you have found valuable and successful to use with primary aged children.  
 ©www.researchinpractice.org

children's books to use in your classroom

Library coordinator's recommendations   
 Other (please specify)

9. List 6 other types of children's texts of which you are aware and name one example of each:

Magazines  
 Non-fiction  
 Top of the pops  
 National Geographic

10. How do you rate your repertoire of children's books and other texts on a scale of 1-10 (10 is high) circle one number

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

For ideas on how to increase your knowledge of children's literature and other texts see Teachers' knowledge of children's literature and other texts: Practical classroom strategies.

5. List 6 'good' children's book authors

Jeremy Sherratt  
 Jacqueline Wilson  
 Dr Seuss  
 David Almond  
 Julia Donaldson  
 Roald Dahl  
 Anthony Browne

6. List 6 good children's picture book authors/illustrators

Nick Sharratt  
 Queenie Blake  
 Bimbo Porter  
 Lauren Child

7. List 6 good children's poets

Michael Rosen  
 Dr Seuss  
 Julia Donaldson

8. How do you decide which children's books to use in your classroom? (Tick as many as appropriate)

Personal interest/knowledge   
 Children's recommendations   
 Literacy practice   
 Literacy coordinator's recommendations   
 Other (please specify)

\*By 'good' we mean those you have found valuable and successful to use with primary aged children.  
 ©www.researchinpractice.org

9. Have you discovered any new children's books to use in your classroom? (If you know it)

Enormous Crocodile

10. Have children's books been used recently for your own pleasure? (If the books and the authors)

Dark: Jeremy Sherratt  
 Once the River: Julia Donaldson

11. Indicate when this was:

Within the last month   
 Within the last 3 months   
 Within the last 6 months   
 Over 6 months ago

12. How do you usually get hold of children's books for your own reading? (as many as appropriate)

Library   
 Bookshop   
 On-line bookshop   
 From friend/s   
 Other (please specify)

©www.researchinpractice.org

# FACEBOOK

We wanted to join a community of readers, where we could both offer and gain new ideas for our own development. This has proved to be useful, as people have given new authors and specific books to try. By connecting with other readers, our breadth of knowledge has increased.



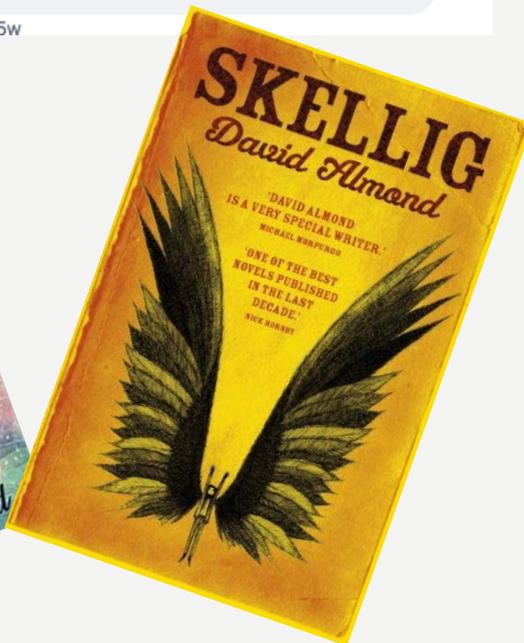
**Izzy Hedges** I'm reading *The Colour of the Sun*, I like what the book is based on and its themes and that it's written with a bit of an accent!

Like · Reply · 5w



**Roger McDonald** Oh yes - David Almond is from Newcastle- you can hear the local accent and context really well.

Like · Reply · 5w



**Sophie Robinson** I have just finished reading *Skellig* and I have loved every second. Very powerful imagery throughout, found it moving and beautiful. Highly recommend!!!

Like · Reply · 4w



**Roger McDonald** Fantastic Sophie. Pleased you enjoyed it. You might also enjoy 'My name is Mina'.

Like · Reply · 4w



**Becca Austin** The film version is also excellent: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Skel.../dp/B001S2PK18/ref=sr\\_1\\_3...](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Skel.../dp/B001S2PK18/ref=sr_1_3...) I didn't watch it for ages because I thought it might not be as good - but Tim Roth gives the performance of a lifetime!



AMAZON.CO.UK

**Skellig [DVD] [2009]**

Save

Like · Reply · 4w · Edited



**Roger McDonald** Fantastic, thank you Becca- I remember that with Tim Roth as *Skellig*.

Like · Reply · 4w



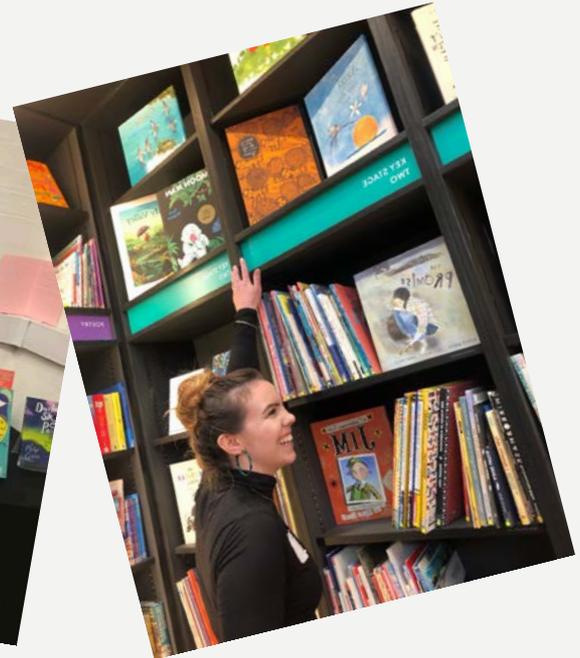
**Emma Rogers** *Skellig* is one of my all time favourites. It is a fabulous read and great to read to a class of Y5/6 children. I always use it as an example of how to teach grammar in context - there are such fabulous sentence structures in the book.

Like · Reply · 3w



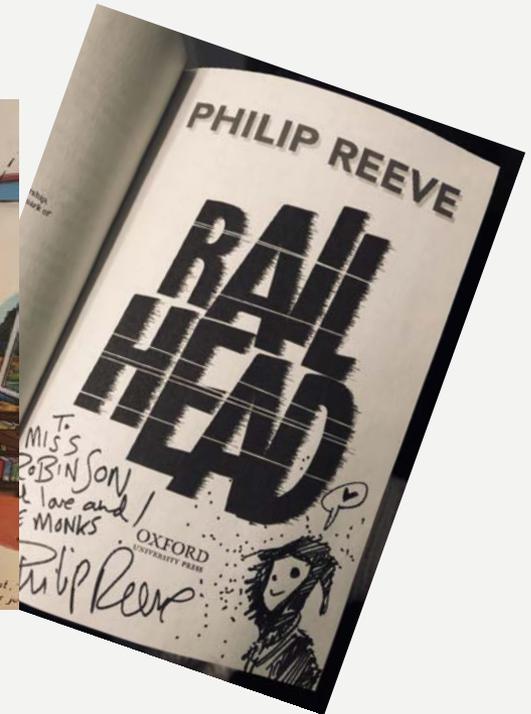
# POETRY @ CLPE

We both knew that our knowledge of poets was the area we needed to improve. Our trip to the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) had a focus on poetry and how to make it relevant in the primary classroom. This not only introduced us to a range of new poets and their work, but gave us practical ideas to engage all children, helping them connect and disregard any misconceptions around poetry.



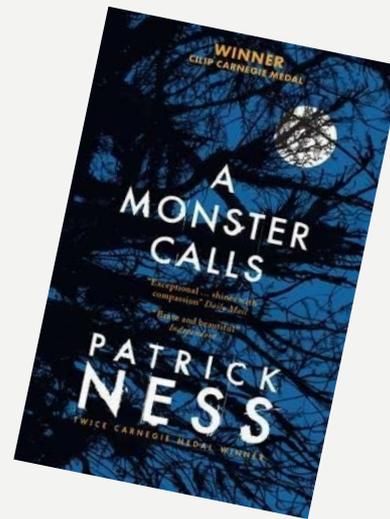
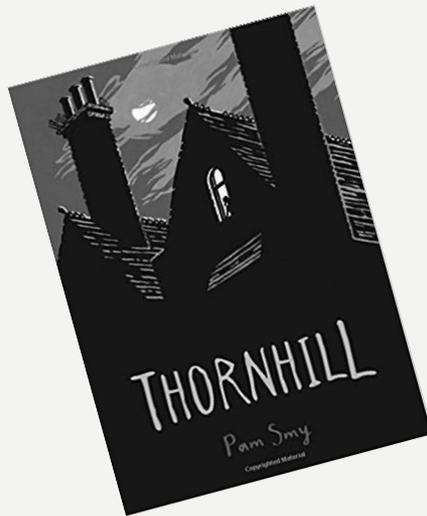
# AUTHOR MEET

To achieve the aim of increasing our author knowledge, we went to an author meet at CLPE, to listen to Philip Reeve. This event was a way for us to become more engaged with an author we didn't have much knowledge about. After listening to Philip talk, we were able to meet him and engage within an environment full of readers who share the same interests. This gave us practical ideas for the classroom too, looking at a new genre which can be made cross curricular and fun.



# READING JOURNALS

Throughout this journey, we have been writing reading journals of 'A Monster Calls' by Patrick Ness and 'Thornhill' by Pam Smy. This has given us the opportunity to think in more depth around the text from our own perspective, and is allowing us to explore literary features and illustration.



# IMPACT

This process has shifted our attitude to reading as we are now aware that relying solely on well-known authors can restrict the best opportunities for learning and enjoyment. Since we have undertaken this work, we have a new found appreciation for a range of authors and poets. We are now no longer afraid to come out of our comfort zone. The examples on the previous slides are evidence of this development.

# SECOND SURVEY

## List 6 'good' children's authors

By 'good' we mean those you have found valuable and successful to use with primary-aged children.

Pam Smy  
Jeanne Willis  
Colin Thompson  
Patrick Ness  
Neil Gaiman  
Shaun Tan



## List 6 'good' children's picture book authors/ illustrators

By 'good' we mean those you have found valuable and successful to use with primary-aged children.

Jeanne Willis  
Sarah McIntyre  
Colin Thompson  
Shaun Tan  
Pam Smy  
David Weisner

## List 6 'good' children's poets

By 'good' we mean those you have found valuable and successful to use with primary-aged children.

A F Harrold  
Malorie Blackman  
Joseph Coelho  
Paul Janeckzo  
Roger McGough  
Michael Rosen

# REFLECTIONS ON IMPACT THE TEACHERS AS READERS (TARS) RESEARCH HAD ON PRACTICE

We recognise the importance of keeping this process going so that our canon of authors and poets is constantly refreshed and relevant to the children in our classrooms.

We can now relate to Rosenblatt (1978), who states that teachers gradually make connections and respond more emotionally to texts, as we have become more involved with a community of readers making it relevant to our daily life.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Bearne, E. and Goodwin, P. (2008) Exploring teachers' knowledge of children's literature *Cambridge Journal of Education* 38 (4): 449-464.
- Cremin, T. (2010) Motivating children to read through literature in G. Gillon, J. Fletcher, and F. Parkhill, (Eds) *Motivating literacy learners in today's world* Auckland: New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER)