Celebrating our Impact
A review of our work and achievements throughout 2019
Welcome to the UKLA’s Impact Report for 2019!

This report outlines the breadth, depth and diversity of the Association’s activities over the past twelve months, all achieved due to the commitment, hard work and expertise of our members.

As the UK’s leading association dedicated to literacy in education, United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA) brings together teachers, teacher educators, researchers and many others working in literacy education for all ages. We are a charitable organisation, so the vast majority of our work is achieved by volunteers supported by a small but committed team at the UKLA office led by General Manager, Trish Latorre. The achievements of UKLA members in 2019 are truly impressive as shown by the considerable number and range of activities described in this report, bringing together members in local regions, across the UK and across the world, to exchange ideas, debate possibilities and share the enthusiasm and expertise necessary to generate a truly fulfilling and empowering literacy education.

Over the last twelve months, we have held inspiring conferences and events, produced thoughtful, research-informed publications, given awards, funded research, and made the case for a broad balanced literacy education to policy makers and other organisations. We have also been working to develop three key areas of the Association’s work. Firstly, we have been strengthening the voice of the Association, through raising the profile of our work both to members and to the broader education community. Secondly we have been working to ensure that the Association is increasingly representative of the wider population and that we promote educational practices that challenge inequalities. Thirdly, we have involved more of our members in the active work of the Association, through our committees and through various networks and groups that bring members together to share, develop and reflect on practice.

In a publication of this length, we can only scratch the surface of the Association’s achievements in 2019. As UKLA President, however, I am humbled by all that UKLA’s members have achieved. As an Association we look forward to many more years of championing and nurturing research-informed literacy education that recognises the diverse experiences and strengths of our members and of the children, young people and adults they work with.

Cathy Burnett - President, UKLA
UKLA – an Association for the whole of the UK
The United Kingdom Literacy Association draws its strength from working across all four nations of the UK, providing many opportunities for debate and for exchanging approaches and ideas. Active members in each country have organised a wide range of activities in 2019, from local get-togethers to large-scale events and curriculum development programmes.

In Wales, six OU/UKLA Reading for Pleasure groups from Wrexham, Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Pembrokeshire ran free CPD sessions. At the OU/UKLA Reading for Pleasure conference in Bristol in November, Simon Fisher, a teacher from Wrexham, and Jo Bowers, from Cardiff Metropolitan University, shared the wealth of children’s literature based in Wales and by authors and illustrators in Wales. Cogan Primary School, Penarth, was nominated and shortlisted for the Brenda Eastwood Award for good practice in teaching for diversity and inclusion. Judith Kien, Senior Lecturer in Education at Cardiff Metropolitan University, was awarded a UKLA research grant for a project surveying literature used in the early secondary years.

In Scotland, teachers and academics have initiated many opportunities to develop the curriculum in creative, engaging and innovative ways. One group of teachers meet for a termly “Book Bistro” at Food Story café in Aberdeen – usually with a focus on the UKLA long and shortlists, or with a topical theme, linked, for example, to maths or science weeks. This year, schools in Scotland are judging a new UKLA Book Awards category for information books, to ensure that these books are not overlooked. This process is being masterminded by Jess Anderson, from the University of Strathclyde, with the help of Jacqui McBurnie, the head of St. Anthony’s Primary school, Renfrewshire.

In Northern Ireland, over 4000 upper primary and early secondary pupils participated in a ten week annual project based on a critical literacy teaching resource developed by Donna Hazzard (Northern Ireland Representative and member of the UKLA Critical Literacy SIG) and launched in 2017 by UKLA President Andrew Lambirth. Planning is underway for UKLA’s 10th Northern Ireland conference in 2020; The Future of Literacy: Imagine the Possibilities. This event will add to the wide range of UKLA conferences that teachers in Northern Ireland have enjoyed with inspirational conference speakers including Michael Morpurgo and Michael Rosen.

In England, teachers from Sheffield, Oxford, Bristol and the Midlands have taken part in the UKLA Book Awards this year. Much of UKLA’s campaigning work has focused on working to enrich the curriculum framework for English. For example, in October we submitted evidence to the Oracy All Party Parliamentary Group’s call for research which emphasised the importance of linguistic diversity and the role of talk in literacy and learning. We hope that England will follow the lead of the other UK nations, where these elements already have a much stronger place within the curriculum.

Equality, diversity and inclusion at UKLA
UKLA is reviewing its position as an inclusive Association.
We value diversity, but we know that certain voices tend to be privileged in literacy research and teaching. We want to redress this imbalance, so we are asking ourselves:

- What does UKLA offer educationalists and academics from historically under-represented and minority identity groups, for example, black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people and those who identify as LGBTI+?
- What can UKLA committees and members do collectively to recognise the repercussions of privilege in order to combat racism, ableism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice?
- What processes and actions will make diversity and inclusion central and embedded, not an ‘add on’ to all UKLA’s work?
- How might members of UKLA be enabled to become aware of/monitor individual and structural/institutional discrimination within the institutions they work in, in order to combat that discrimination?
- What practices would encourage a more diverse body of educationalists and researchers to become members of UKLA?
- What can UKLA do to campaign against some of the embedded institutional discriminatory practices...

such as colonial, ableist, or sexist curricula; unjust exclusions; discrimination in streaming; in employment practices - in universities, schools etc?

The remit for all UKLA sub-committees now explicitly requires conveners to ensure that all actions take into account issues of diversity and inclusion and make all efforts to ensure that the membership of each committee reflects social and cultural diversity.

This year, for the first time, a diversity and inclusion bursary was awarded for a group of practitioners to present their work at the UKLA International Conference. The bursary is awarded for work showing commitment to an inclusive literacy/English curriculum which may:

- reflect the ethnic and linguistic experience of the children/students and take account of their home cultures
- respond positively to diversity and represent the social and cultural composition not only of the school but of society more generally
- raise awareness of different cultures and challenge prejudice and stereotypes
- highlight shared values across cultures and welcome difference
- work with parents and the community to include their skills, experiences and expertise.

Manjit Bassi, Dan Mackintosh and Georgie Lowe of John Gulson Primary School in Coventry presented “Can I see myself in this book?” a project with Nursery and Reception children and their families to create a set of picturebooks featuring the children and their families at home and at school.

See p.10 for information about the Brenda Eastwood Award
Working in Partnership

OU/UKLA Teachers’ Reading Groups (TRG’s)

Together, the OU and UKLA are building communities of readers. In 2018-9 there were eighty OU/UKLA Teachers’ Reading Groups across the UK, and five internationally. These groups provide free evidence-based CPD for teachers, teaching assistants, early years professionals, librarians, reading volunteers and others, to enrich their understanding of reading for pleasure (RfP) and how to support it. Led by our excellent volunteer OU/UKLA Teachers’ Reading Group (TRG) Leaders, the aims of the groups are:

• to foster children’s reading for pleasure through supporting teachers’/members’ own RfP and research-informed practice
• to support the profession by building a professional community around RfP locally and online
• to share teachers’ resultant development work on the OU RfP website.

What’s the evidence base?
The TRGs draw on the OU/UKLA Teachers as Readers research which in the second of its three years examined effective RfP practice. The OU’s website which showcases this work is a professional online community packed with resources and over 300 examples of teachers’ research-informed practice. The TRGs are local offline communities. https://researchrichpedagogies.org/research/reading-for-pleasure

What’s involved for leaders and members?
After initial training with Teresa Cremin, Roger Macdonald and Rebecca Kennedy in London, the leaders and group members set about recruiting members, eagerly received their bookboxes (generously supported by publishers and both the OU and UKLA) and launched their six sessions of professional development for RfP. Members review and then develop their practice, working to avoid the pitfall of ‘activity country’ - a series of unconnected fun reading activities which, research makes clear, fail to make a sustained difference to young readers’ motivation to read or impact upon the frequency of their engagement in reading at home or school. Research-informed practice takes time but offers the opportunity to embed new ways of working.

Highlights of the year
In the OU evaluation of this work, 100% of the Leaders and members reported that attending the TRG had made a positive difference to their classroom practice. Some of the many highlights include:

OU/UKLA Reading for Pleasure conferences
Three were held for TRG members and other delegates focused on finding and sharing pleasure in reading (Cambridge, London and Manchester). Workshops were led by TRG leaders and it was fabulous to meet so many leaders and members and hear more about their work, as well as meet authors and RfP Award winning teachers and schools from the Egmont RfP Award in collaboration with the OU and UKLA.

Developing and sharing new knowledge of children’s literature
A core element of the TRGs has been to widen professional repertoires. Two groups, led by UKLA members Rebecca Simpson Hargreaves (Manchester University) and Ruth Clarke and Rebecca Webb (Chichester University), led Poetry focused TRGs. Supported by the Forwards Arts Foundation, these groups valued the chance to work with professional poets too!

Building local communities of readers
Many TRG members have worked to build local communities of readers within and beyond their classrooms. This has taken varied forms and resulted in some cases in Reading festivals, for example, Rochdale held their first Children’s Literature Festival in 2019 led by the TRG. Additionally, the Aspire Education Trust held picture book awards involving all staff and children voting on their favourites! School ‘Pop-up Reading Picnics’, ‘Stories by the Campfire’ and ‘Boys, Butties and Books’ events have also been held.

Supporting the growth of Reading Teachers
Several TRGs explored the notion of being a Reading Teacher – a teacher who reads and a reader who teaches - and workshops on this focus were held at conferences. TRG members have shared some of this work, publishing in English 4 to 11, including Claire Williams, Becky Barnard, Becky Denby, Ben Harris, Lisa Birchall, Steph Davies and Teresa Cremin.

Working with government to help inform policy
At the Cambridge OU/UKLA conference a member of the English team from HM Government joined for the day and subsequently two colleagues from the English team visited The Open University to find out more about the Teachers as Readers research and the growing RfP movement. Teresa Cremin is now a member of the RfP subcommittee of the English Hub Council.
And the award goes to...

Supported by generous sponsors, UKLA’s Awards programme showcases the work of schools and individual teachers whose practice inspires others.

Putting literacy and literature at the heart of learning

The Literacy School of the Year Award, sponsored by the publisher Nosy Crow, enables UKLA members to nominate schools where practice is innovative and effective. In 2019, the standard of entries was so high that the judges announced joint winners:

Humberstone Junior Academy, in Leicester, has an immersive novel-based curriculum, through which texts are chosen which would be considered challenging by many schools. The learning environment is breath-taking. The school is buzzing with ‘book talk’ – not surprising in a school with a very high focus on developing children’s oracy. Writing assignments are similarly imaginative. Our assessors saw examples of books of fairy tales published for an audience of 5-7 year olds, letters of welcome and support sent to children in the Early Years dictating and performing their stories and upper juniors analysing Shakespeare through performance.

Headteacher, Lucy Timmons, said:

"Winning the UKLA Literacy School of the Year Award has transformed our school community. We have a fervent belief in our approach to designing teaching and learning opportunities in English, and for our school this award has only served to secure that belief and inspire us to continue on our journey. The United Kingdom Literacy Association is a great resource for the leadership and direction of not only English, but our pedagogy”

Diversity Matters

The annual Brenda Eastwood Award for good practice in teaching for Diversity and Inclusion, in memory of a UKLA colleague who celebrated diversity in her own life and work, recognises good practice in empowering children and young people to respect and appreciate diversity.

The award is a huge honour for the school and is recognition for all the excellent, creative work undertaken by the staff team. We look forward to sharing our curriculum and practice with our teaching colleagues in other schools.

Annemarie Williams, Linton Headteacher

At Linton Mead Primary School in Greenwich, London, all of the staff share - and enjoy - reading texts with children. Professional development is rooted in research-based pedagogies. The English curriculum is based on chosen whole school texts leading to a high status exhibition of the children’s text related work and tickets to the ‘opening’ of the exhibition are highly prized by the wider school community. Displays of children’s work in response to text can be found everywhere in the school; children respond through art, music, drama and film-making, as well as very high quality writing, with children in the Early Years dictating and performing their stories and upper juniors analysing Shakespeare through performance.

Headteacher, Lucy Timmons, said:

In 2019 there were joint winners:

Farrah Serroukh, from the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), for her ground-breaking research work Reflecting Realities, a survey of ethnic diversity in UK children’s books, demonstrates that black and minority ethnic characters (BAME) are underrepresented. Farrah’s work has created a shift in attitudes and awareness within children’s publishing and in the way teachers select texts.

Sabine Little, from the University of Sheffield, for her work on multilingualism, initially funded by a UKLA research grant, which led to the setting up of a multilingual library in Sheffield’s Central Library, stocked in collaboration with local parents. The collection of books has been enthusiastically received by the local community and its reach is growing.

A Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Dr Christine Callender, of the UCL Institute of Education, for her tireless research work on issues of race and how these impact those from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. Dr Callender’s strong belief and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is reflected and integrated into her teaching, research and service to the community.

Academic Book Award

Celebrating books that make a lasting, significant contribution to the teaching of English, this award is presented every year for a recently published academic text about the teaching of English for teachers, students, consultants or HE tutors. The 2019 winner was Teaching Primary English: Subject knowledge and classroom practice, by Eve Bearne and David Reedy (Routledge, 2018).

Comprehensive, well informed and easy to use, this outstanding handbook is linked to an excellent supporting website. Teaching Primary English is both practical and well theorised, multi-layered and full of good ideas, illustrated by well-chosen classroom examples. The breadth is as extraordinary as the depth and it fulfils all of the criteria for the UKLA award, making a distinctive contribution to literacy education, encouraging teachers to be reflective, innovative and creative.

Celebrating excellence in research

The UKLA / Wiley Research in Literacy Education Award honours outstanding articles from our two journals, Literacy and The Journal of Research in Reading. This year, the Literacy winner was Bobbie Kabuto for ‘Family Narratives of Biliteracy’ (Vol 52:3). The judges welcomed discussion on how bilingualism is conceptualised, and the extent to which home literacy is acknowledged.

The Journal of Research in Reading (JRiR) winners were Nouwens, S., Groen, M. A., Kleemans, T., and Verhoeven, L. for ‘The role of semantic retrieval in children’s reading comprehension development in the upper primary grades’ . (Vol 41:3). The panel felt the study was thorough and welcomed the implications for educators beyond the Dutch speaking world.
The UKLA Book Awards

The only book awards judged entirely by teachers

With sponsorship from Capita Reading Cloud and Love Reading, the UKLA Book Awards, now in their twelfth year, enable teachers in primary and secondary schools to engage with the very best in contemporary children’s publishing. The Awards are highly regarded by publishers, schools and colleagues in teacher education. Each summer, books published in the previous year are submitted to a long-listing panel. This panel of serving and retired teachers, children’s librarians and teacher educators, selects a longlist to be read by teams of teacher judges. One of this year’s long-listers, Clare Alonzi, said:

“[I] thoroughly enjoyed reading the picture books for the UKLA book awards and have vastly increased my knowledge of authors and illustrators as a result. Sharing the books with the children and explaining the process of selection was really impactful - they shared in the process, asking if any more books had been delivered and sharing their opinions in class and assemblies as to whether a book should make my top twenty. I was also able to recommend books for staff to use with their classes.”

In September, the long-listed books start arriving in the schools of our teacher judges. There are three age categories: 3-6+, 7-10+ and 11-14+ as well as, for the first time this year, an information books category. For the

The judges there is real joy and excitement in opening parcels of the longlisted books with their class. From September to March, as well as sharing the books in school with children and colleagues, they meet up regularly with other teacher judges in their area to discuss the texts, ready for shortlisting to six books in each age category and choosing the winners in June. Laurel Smith, one of the teacher judges in Sheffield, said:

“[The UKLA Book Awards was a fantastic opportunity to raise the profile of reading in school and share high quality texts with colleagues and children. As a literacy leader, developing teacher subject knowledge of a wide range of children’s literature is a key area, and the Awards helped me to do this in a fun and engaging way. It was also a great development opportunity for the teachers involved - leading to one colleague presenting to a wider audience on her experiences, which was a great career and confidence boost! The pupils in my class who took part in the filming were also able to develop their confidence in speaking independently about their reading experiences and opinions, and the passion with which they spoke about their favourite books was utterly inspirational!”

Each team of teacher judges works together in a book group, led by volunteers from senior staff in schools and university tutors. Mat Tobin, from Oxford Brookes University, who is currently leading a book group, commented:

“There is often a divide between book awards and audience. Those who celebrate the best in children’s literature are often a step removed from the client. What the UKLA Book Awards offers is the enviable opportunity of sharing ...literature for children with children and teachers. Not only does this singular opportunity bring the best of books closer to the intended audience, it also presents children and teachers with the best of chances to engage with a diverse range of rich stories. Every year the judges revise the criteria and this year is no exception. With a greater focus on bringing to teachers and children stories that ‘reflex all identities and promote diversity’, this is an award that celebrates reading for all. Partnership with colleagues in teacher education is enhanced through a student ‘shadowing’ scheme. Over the last few years, student teachers from 50 universities across the UK have been able to join the judging process through a shadowing programme based on the shortlisted books. They discuss the books with their tutors in groups, and vote for their own winners. Sponsorship from the NEU has enabled six nominated students to attend the UKLA International Conference in July. One student shadower, Barbara Guerriero, commented:

“Meeting the authors of the books I shadowed was just incredible and I created meaningful connections with like-minded people who are as passionate about children’s literature as I am... It was a great experience that left me inspired and energised, inspired and motivated!”

The winners of the Book Awards are announced each year on the Friday evening of UKLA’s International Conference, at a ceremony attended by the shortlisted authors and illustrators, along with their publishers, who relish the opportunity to hear directly from teachers about the impact of their books in classrooms.

UKLA Book Award Winners

“[The winners of the Book Awards] was a fantastic opportunity to raise the profile of reading in school and share high quality texts with colleagues and children.”
Spreading the Word

UKLA supports and extends membership through publications, including journals, books and web resources.

Our International Journals: prestigious, peer-reviewed, and popular!

UKLA’s two academic peer-reviewed journals *Literacy and Journal of Research in Reading* (JRiR) are published 3 and 4 times per year respectively. Both journals have distinguished records of publishing excellent accounts of research in literacy education. The current editorial teams are co-Editors Natalia Kucirkova, University of Stavanger, Norway, and Diane Collier, Brock University, Canada, for Literacy, co-Editors Nenagh Kemp, University of Tasmania, and Jo Taylor, University College, London, for JRiR.

Both editorial teams continue our strong traditions for research excellence as we expand offerings with more international submissions. Our journals appeal to an international readership and make important contributions to global discussions of vital contemporary issues in literacy research. Literacy produced an additional issue in print and online versions in 2018, and JRiR has produced two additional online issues. Special issues on topical issues are often published; recent special issues have focused on “Assessment, Accountability and Policy” and “Reading for Pleasure and Engagement”.

Connections with classroom teachers: Ideas and issues for busy professionals

**English 4-11** (jointly produced by the English Association and UKLA) is growing in popularity as teachers discover an excellent resource. The magazine has a reader-friendly approach, backed by sound pedagogy, to inspire teachers to try out new ideas to develop their own practice. Under Sally Wilkinson's editorship, the magazine features lively accounts of classroom practice, ideas for classroom projects, reports of classroom research, reviews of books and resources, and interviews with authors. Focused on Early Years through to work with ten and eleven year olds (with the occasional article about older students), the magazine is highly regarded by teachers and students as both practical and inspiring.

**UKLA News**, the Association's newsletter, also plays a role in extending involvement throughout the UK. Karen Daniels has taken over as editor and is strongly supported by Donna Hazzard from Northern Ireland and Petula Bhujwani from the East Midlands. Each takes responsibility for one issue each year, an approach which encourages more participation from members throughout the UK.

**Ideas in Practice**: Claire Dowdall is now editor for this series and began her role by steering through the revised edition of ‘I know what to write now!’ Engaging Boys (and Girls) through a Multimodal Approach by Petula Bhujwani, Bill Lord and Cath Wilkes. In addition, Petula and Craig Wilkie gave us Power-up Literacy: multimodality with the technology and extended classroom, with a wealth of associated website resources. 2019 also saw the publication of *Using Technology to Improve Reading and Learning* by Bernadette Dwyer and Colin Harrison – a highly practical guide with many useful strategies and resources.

Visit the website

In her new role as curator of website resources, Jo Tregenza has begun reorganising and adding to the existing resources. Four new free resources have recently been uploaded to encourage browsers to join the Association to find more resources. In addition, in line with UKLAs’ commitment to diversity, a new series for members written by Hannah Laurence and Samantha Jane Hulston provides excellent ideas for using picturebooks reflecting diversity in early years classrooms.

Two Occasional Papers have been added this year: *English as an Additional Language*, by Naomi Flynn, University of Reading, highlights the many strengths that multilingual learners bring to the classroom and offers a range of practical ideas for teachers to implement with their classes. A revised and updated version of *Multimodality*, by Eve Bearne and Kat Vallely emphasises the need for multimodal approaches from the earliest years onwards.

Look out for the new website series *Grammar in its Place...* This series is the result of a two-year collaboration between the University of Sussex, University of Exeter, Chantry Primary School, Aurora Academy and Little Common Primary School, Bexhill on Sea. At the heart of the project is the determination that grammar should be taught in context and through high quality books.

Find out all about UKLA’s publications and resources by going to www.ukla.org
A Research-Informed Association

UKLA’s robust research profile is continually strengthened by members’ energetic research activities.

This was evidenced in 2019 by the range, diversity and rigour of the papers given at the annual International Conference, and at national and regional conferences and workshops. UKLA members have published research-informed papers in our academic journals Literacy and the Journal of Research in Reading, as well as in our professional books and practitioner publication English 4-11. The work of UKLA Special Interest Groups (SIGs) also contributes to UKLA’s vibrant research profile, and is an area that has seen growth in 2019, with recent SIG proposals building from the work of previously funded UKLA research. In 2019 the Research Sub Committee continued to facilitate the Post Graduate Student Research Network for Masters and doctoral students, using a social media platform. This network hosted a successful research slam at the International Conference, where new researchers shared work and experiences.

Among our many important research objectives, UKLA aims to contribute to evolving conceptions of literacy, as our world is increasingly mediated by screen-based textual practices, and to contribute to debates about accountability and curriculum.

In particular we aim to highlight the implications of shifts in policy and practice for literacy education. We seek to fund research projects that will be influential in national and international policy contexts and that will promote informed decision-making by literacy professionals, policymakers, and the public. Currently we are interested in supporting work that focuses on literacy and literacy practices across the full life span, in a wide range of settings including homes, early years settings, primary and secondary schools, libraries, book groups, in the UK or beyond. This wide and inclusive remit extends to the consideration of a range of methodologies. Details of how to apply for funding for research grants are on the UKLA website, along with short summaries of each funded project, and recently completed project reports.

In 2019, using social media and UKLA’s online and paper-based publications, the opportunity to apply for research funding was heavily promoted. As a result, the Research Sub-Committee received an unprecedented number of applications for the November deadline, which the panel enjoyed reviewing. Following close scrutiny of all proposals, a UKLA research grant was awarded to Ian Cushing of Brunel University, London and Marie Helks of Sheffield Hallam University, for the study: Grammar policy, pedagogy and the primary-secondary transition: students’ perceptions and reflections. The awarding panel agreed that the project’s aims and focus on pupil voice within the context of grammar at the transition stage was timely, and likely to have significant impact.

During 2019 Judith Kneen (lead researcher) of Cardiff Metropolitan University and colleagues embarked on their study: What literature texts are being taught in Years 7 to 9? [11 to 14 year olds] The team report that very good progress has been made during 2019. Survey and interview data have been successfully collected and data analysis and presentation of results will be concluded in 2020.

UKLA Student Research Prize

The award is given annually for outstanding student work at undergraduate, postgraduate or higher degree level undertaken at a UK institution. Studies using any research approach (ethnographic, experimental, historical, etc.) are welcomed. Each study is assessed in the light of the chosen approach, the scholarly quality of its report, and its contribution to the field of literacy. The winner(s) and their supervisor(s) are given the opportunity to attend the next UKLA conference to receive their prize and to present their research. In 2019, the UKLA Research Sub-Committee received a good number of very high quality applications and discussion about each submission was robust and enjoyable. Two submissions stood out, and following much discussion, the Research Sub-Committee agreed that

The 2019 Student Research Prize was awarded to Helen Bradford, University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, for her PhD thesis Co-Constructing Writing Pedagogy With Two-and-Three-Year-Old Children. The Research Sub-Committee thought the thesis to be an impressive example of scholarship. The focus on early writing was timely, and the questions raised and implications noted were of real value to the literacy community, offering a valid contribution within the context of current debates. The thesis was extremely well-constructed and structured, and the use of data to inform discussion was a real strength.

The Research Sub-Committee Special Commendation was awarded to Georgina Tarling for her PhD thesis Developing Reflective Engagement in the Use of Online Digital Devices: A Multiple Case Study of Seven Year Olds and their Home-School Contexts. The panel found the thesis to be another impressive example of scholarship. It provided a powerful account of the need to understand how to nurture reflective and critical engagement amongst young users of digital technologies. The account was comprehensive, well-written and well-informed. The research design had integrity, and ethical considerations informed the work at all stages.

Details about how to nominate undergraduate or postgraduate student research for the 2020 award are available on the UKLA website.

Helen Bradford
Meeting up for play

The 55th UKLA International Conference 2019 held at Sheffield Hallam University, Institute of Education July 12th to 14th was themed Literacy and Play for All: Improvisation, possibility and imagination. The keynote speakers, presenters and delegates embraced the theme with a mixture of playfulness and strong pedagogical underpinnings in presentations, workshops and seminars.

The opening address by UKLA president Cathy Burnett followed by the welcome from the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Tony Bowling, set the stage for a successful conference. The President reflected on the nuances of play in literacy and the possibilities that can be explored in a time of challenge and accountability. The keynote speakers demonstrated play for all in their respective presentations: Lalitha Vasudevan (Columbia University)'s outline of a 'Dangerous) Play Manifesto: A Provocation for Educators and Researchers' was insightful. Her research interrogated approaches to play which can be deeply personal, social, joyous and dangerous. Delegates were asked to reflect on play and invited to laugh as they interacted with the content of the research. University of Illinois Professor Ann Haas Dyson's keynote, 'We're playing sisters on paper: Children composing on Graphic Playgrounds' demonstrated young children's delight in their learning.

Becky Parry and Fiona Scott from the University of Sheffield, chaired a panel about 'Creativity, play and digital media' where Sharna Jackson (Site Gallery, Sheffield), Leigh Hodgkinson (animation director and BAFTA winner), Chris Lindgren (UX Researcher and Play Designer) and Iain Simons (British Games Institute) brought different and stimulating viewpoints to a discussion about how digital technology can foster and encourage play and creativity.

Chris Riddell OBE, author and illustrator, engaged, delighted and enthralled delegates with his presentation 'The power of the pencil - how using illustration can create new readers', sketching as he spoke. The Harold Rosen Memorial lecture, presented by Professor Andrew Burn, Institute of Education, UCL, on 'Play: From the archive to the playground and back again', encapsulated the conference theme and encouraged delegates to reflect on their own experience of games. There were also games included in the delegates' pack that could be referred to during the lecture.

The international conference continues to draw participants from North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and Africa, providing a platform for new and established researchers. All who attended remarked on the warmth, inclusivity and knowledge of literacy, both formal and informal, experienced throughout the three days. The social events were much enjoyed. A huge thank you is due for the teamwork and community spirit evident in UKLA and all the sponsors who support the organization.

National Conferences

In 2019 UKLA held two National Conferences: March 16th Sharing Inspirational Practice, held in Bristol, celebrated and showcased UKLA’s School of the Year winners who presented workshops. Delegates had an opportunity to hear about good practice, engage with research and listen to the visiting author, Fleur Hitchcock speaking about the impact of her work in schools. On November 9th, David Reedy (UKLA) and Nicole Gurvidi (Tower Hamlets Education Partnership) held a joint NEU/UKLA conference in London on Creative Approaches to Teaching Grammar in Context. This practical and engaging conference was well-attended, most pleasingly by many student teachers.
Developing a Special Interest

During 2019, six Special Interest Groups (SIGs) allowed members to network with others across the globe who share their enthusiasm for a specific topic.

The Initial Teacher Education SIG, co-convened by Teresa Cremin and Rebecca Austin, allows those who work in English in Teacher Education to share and develop innovative practice and collaborate in research and development projects. The SIG was launched in February 2019 with a day’s event: ‘Exploring tensions between principles and practice’ at the Open University, Camden, London. More than fifty delegates working in initial teacher education and training in different contexts across the UK met for discussions about research and practice undertaken in work with student teachers. Recent developments were highlighted, with a focus on student teachers’ engagement with children’s literature as well as input about storytelling, music and phonological awareness, and student teachers as writers.

The new OFSTED inspection framework and its potential impact on our work was discussed and this continues to be something that those in the ITE sector will need to be aware of as the ‘deep dives’ into reading in Ofsted inspections roll out in schools.

The event provided opportunities for colleagues working in geographically close locations to meet and explore opportunities for collaborative working in terms of practice and potential research. At UKLA International Conference, members of the group met again to discuss their work and make plans for the following year. Further support networks will be developed: members have access to a Facebook group and will be invited to further meetings in the Spring of 2020.

The Early Literacy in Education SIG, co-convened by Karen Daniels and Lucy Rodriguez Leon, is the only group in the UK representing the Early Years sector with a specific focus on early literacy. The aim is to develop and co-ordinate a strong collective voice that promotes research-informed practice and advocates flexible and responsive approaches to early literacy education. The SIG, launched in July 2019, has brought together an international group of practitioners, researchers, consultants and lecturers in Initial Teacher Education to develop key guiding principles for early literacy pedagogy that recognise and celebrate young children’s lives and experiences.

The group will engage critically with policy and how this shapes early literacy pedagogy. With proposed changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework in England currently at the consultation stage, the work of the SIG is timely. We recently contributed to the joint early years sector coalition’s published review of evidence for the EYFS framework, ‘Getting it right in the EYFS: a review of the evidence’.

The SIG currently has four interrelated working groups led by key group members focusing on developing the following:

- key principles for early literacy education, synthesising research from multiple perspectives, to inform and guide practice
- collaboration with early years organisations to strengthen engagement with the sector and with policymakers and promote appropriate research-informed early literacy curricula
- digital literacies in early literacy education
- a forum for Initial Teacher Training providers to promote research-informed practice.

The Literacy and Multilingualism SIG, convened by Sabine Little, Lecturer in Languages Education at the University of Sheffield, and a trained teacher, explores both challenges and opportunities linked to multilingualism and literacy development, including translanguaging and plurilingualism, both within formal and informal education contexts (including heritage language schools), and at family/community level.

The SIG offers a vibrant and active forum for exchange and collaboration for all those interested in multilingualism and literacy development, including teachers, researchers, authors, illustrators, translators, and related charities/community groups. Through a series of events and ongoing collaborations among the membership and with core partner organisations, we seek to influence both policy and practice linked to the experiences of multilingual learners.

Storytelling SIG - In recent years, storytelling in English schools has been framed by a model of recitation and performance. While other parts of the UK may not have inherited this particular approach, storytelling as a practice is often marginalised in literacy teaching and learning. The Storytelling SIG, convened by Alastair Daniel, aims to broaden education professionals’ understanding of how storytelling can be used in the classroom, and their appreciation of the benefits that oral storytelling brings to children’s language development, both written and spoken.

The SIG convenes as an online Facebook group, through which current research and examples of practice are shared. Face-to-face conversations at UKLA conferences have helped members make connections across the sector, as well as develop their own thinking. The visibility of the SIG is also maintained through an evening storytelling event at the International Conference, at
which members are invited to share their own stories in a relaxed atmosphere.

In 2020 we are looking forward to a joint event with the Multilingualism SIG, which will be hosted by the University of Roehampton. The event will include workshops and a performance from Sef Townsend, a storyteller with an international reputation for his multilingual performances.

Active since October 2019, the Critical Literacy SIG, co-convened by Jennifer Farrar and Kelly Stone of Glasgow University with Paul Gardner, Sonja Kuzich and Von Sawyers of Curtin University, Western Australia, is a UK/Australia partnership. The overarching aim of the SIG is to provide a forum for the exploration of critical literacies in schools and universities to highlight how power works in and through communicative practices. We want to provide a forum for members to explore and critique critical literacy policies and practices; encourage open discussions about the challenges associated with taking up activist, transformative identities and positions as educators; promote the work of the SIG and its members, with the aim of publishing in different fora to reach wider audiences new to and interested in developing critical literacies in their contexts.

We aim to have a symposium on critical literacy to launch and publicise the SIG at the UKLA international conference in Bristol, 2016. Building on the previous Digital Literacies SIG (2003-2006), it brings together practitioners, researchers, consultants and any others who are interested in sharing experiences from research and practice, and developing a common language and framework for teaching and assessment – in relation to digital literacies. At the end of 2018, a small group of SIG members proposed a Task Group to specifically develop and produce a framework to support the integration of digital literacies within the curriculum and to consider implications for assessment. In 2019 the SIG and Task Group developed its work in three key ways.

Throughout the year, the Task Group continued to work together to review existing frameworks for digital literacy, to construct the draft principles for digital literacies in education and to plan their case study research in 12 settings to test the principles in case study research. Throughout the year, the Task Group continued to work together to review existing frameworks for digital literacy, to construct the draft principles for digital literacies in education and to plan their case study research in 12 settings to test the principles. This work will be finalised in 2020.

The Digital Literacies in Education SIG, convened by Claire Dowdall, launched at the UKLA international conference in Bristol, 2016. Building on the previous Digital Literacies SIG (2003-2006), it brings together practitioners, researchers, consultants and any others who are interested in sharing experiences from research and practice, and developing a common language and framework for teaching and assessment – in relation to digital literacies. At the end of 2018, a small group of SIG members proposed a Task Group to specifically develop and produce a framework to support the integration of digital literacies within the curriculum and to consider implications for assessment. In 2019 the SIG and Task Group developed its work in three key ways.

In June, a research sharing day was hosted at the University College London Knowledge Lab, where SIG members discussed their research projects and reviewed progress made by the Digital Literacies in Education Task Group. Following this, members of the Task Group led a very well-attended workshop at the International Conference in Sheffield: Extending children’s creative and critical use of digital media: Building a framework, to share 12 draft principles for digital literacy education, and to seek feedback from delegates, before trialling these principles in case study research. Throughout the year, the Task Group continued to work together to review existing frameworks for digital literacy, to construct the draft principles for digital literacies in education and to plan their case study research in 12 settings to test the principles.

As a result of their dedication and passion for advancing literacy throughout the UK, there has been a wealth of regional events and activities that have taken place, including:

- Author visits
- English research hub events
- Guest lectures and keynote speakers
- National conferences
- NQT support networks
- Participation in the book awards
- Professional development events
- Regional conferences and book sales
- Student conferences
- Teachers as Readers book groups
- Termly regional newsletters

Being part of a network of likeminded individuals has supported many of our Regional Reps and encouraged them to try out new ideas and organise events that they would not have done had they not been part of this growing community. These events and activities continue to provide conversational spaces for teachers to be re-inspired and critically engage with alternative perspectives, values and understanding about literacy and how best to support children in developing these.

Throughout 2019, Regional Reps have continued their invaluable work as key members of UKLA, raising its profile and attracting new members.

After running a workshop at the National Conference, Kirsty Jones, English Lead at Horfield Primary School and Regional Rep for Bristol, Gloucestershire, Hereford and Worcestershire, describes the benefits of attending and taking part in the conference. She explains:

There is a growing interest among many of our members to get more involved in the work of UKLA and this has been noticed through increasing numbers of Regional Reps taking up posts in the past year. This has meant that for most of our regions there are now two reps working in collaboration. Their combined enthusiasm and passion for literacy have resulted in many superb events taking place, as well as an increase in membership. At the time of writing this report, we find ourselves in a unique position where our growing network has opened up further Regional Rep vacancies in the following regions: Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Durham, Northumberland, Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset, Northern Ireland and Scotland. If you would be interested in taking on the role of Regional Rep within one of the above regions, please contact Kat Vallely: K.Vallely@gre.ac.uk

For updates and more information about SIGs, click on SIGs and Networks on www.ukla.org
International Links

UKLA continues its focus on building connections with literacy colleagues across the globe.

The work of the Association is promoted through our International Ambassador scheme and through membership of the Federation of European Literacy Associations (FELA) and the International Literacy Association (ILA). It also maintains connections with two literacy projects overseas: the Donkey Library in Ethiopia and the Children’s Book Project in Zanzibar.

The Donkey Library provides a mobile library service to rural schools, the donkeys carrying panniers of books from village to village where they are greeted with great excitement by the children. The Children’s Book Project provides own-language books to a number of schools in Zanzibar and some in-service training for teachers in best practice in sharing those books. Both projects have been identified by personal UKLA connections to ensure that all monies raised directly support these charities. Funds are raised primarily through the second-hand bookstall and raffle at UKLA’s International Conference, supplemented by generous donations from colleagues who forfeit public speaking fees, organise poetry afternoons and pass hats – and buckets - round student and teacher gatherings.

UKLA’s International Ambassadors currently represent the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Brunei, Ireland, Slovenia and Iceland, bringing a welcome international perspective to the Association and promoting the work of UKLA in their own countries. A number of our International Ambassadors completed their three-year term of office in 2019, and having enjoyed the experience, promoting the work of UKLA and making major contributions to the annual International Conference, were delighted to be appointed for a further three-year term.

The international symposium at the July conference in Sheffield took the theme Cross-Nation Perspectives on Collaboration and Community with a fascinating range of contributions from the Ambassadors, providing a welcome international perspective at the beginning of the conference – a useful reminder, were it needed, that the July conference is indeed international and welcomes colleagues from around the world.

This year, UKLA International Committee members attended the FELA meetings in January in Hamburg and in July in Copenhagen. Whilst these meetings are largely procedural, they are supplemented with seminars or linked with conferences to enable colleagues to explore recent literacy research and raise issues pertinent to their own country. Between meetings it is not uncommon for FELA members to contact each other for advice and support. Much can be learned from each other’s approaches to what are often common concerns and triumphs, and use these connections to ensure UKLA’s continuing influence both at home and abroad.

Looking to the Future

In 2020, UKLA will continue to focus on diversity and inclusion and to provide many opportunities for members to learn from one another, strengthening existing collaborations and forging new alliances across localities, regions and nations.

Over recent years, we have seen what can be achieved through collaboration, particularly in the area of children’s literature – by the teacher judges of UKLA’s flagship Book Awards, for example, and in the inspirational work of Teresa Cremin and colleagues in developing the OU/UKLA Teachers’ Reading Groups that have done so much to promote reading for pleasure in schools across the UK.

In 2020, we will continue to champion this important work, and also to focus on many other aspects of literacy education that are central to life in the 21st century, drawing on a wide range of research. Members are already working to renew and enhance our understanding of - and support for - multilingualism, digital media, critical literacy, and early literacy. Early 2020 will see the launch of a new set of UKLA Viewpoints, written by experts from our membership, that state our position on key literacy topics linked to underpinning research. Viewpoints, we hope, will support debate and practice – by members and within the wider communities in which they work.

There is much to do in campaigning for literacy education that is fit for the 21st century, and in promoting the dialogue between research and practice needed to develop appropriate literacy pedagogies at all ages. But, as a unique community of teachers, researchers, teacher educators and other literacy professionals, UKLA is in a strong position to do this.
Acknowledgements

Our thanks go to...

UKLA Staff and Trustees would like to thank the following people and organisations for their valued contribution to helping our work continue to develop and grow:

• Our members, in particular those who have volunteered their time, efforts and passion
• Our Regional Representatives and committee members
• Our International Ambassadors
• The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
• National Education Union
• The National Literacy Trust
• The Reading Agency
• The Open University
• Reading for Pleasure

"The UKLA Awards programme is enhanced by the support of our sponsors – Wiley for the journal research prizes, the Capita Reading Cloud and Love Reading for the Book Awards, Nosy Crow for the School of the Year, the National Education Union for sponsoring shadowers and Just Imagine for Our Class loves this Book. Each of our sponsors brings their own perspective to the work of the association, along with their enthusiasm, expertise, insight, and, of course, the very welcome financial support which enables us to include so many of our members."

Chris Lockwood, Convener Awards

Welcome to UKLA

UKLA achieves its goal of improving literacy education by creating a supportive community for those working in literacy, language and communication, and by supporting and providing access to the latest research for use by practitioners and policymakers.

The United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA) is the UK's leading association dedicated to literacy in education and brings together teachers, teacher educators, researchers and many others working in literacy education for all ages.

UKLA offers a supportive community for those working in literacy, language and communication, champions research, and provides an informed national voice that speaks to policy.

Join us today and benefit from:

Networking opportunities
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Involvement in UKLA Book Awards
Free access to English 4-11, Literacy journal and UKLA News
Access to research
Free web resources
Research-informed publications
Access to help and support from other members

Ross Young

www.ukla.org/join