

# UKLA NEWS

SPRING 2017



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*The President's Message -  
Prof Andrew Lambirth*

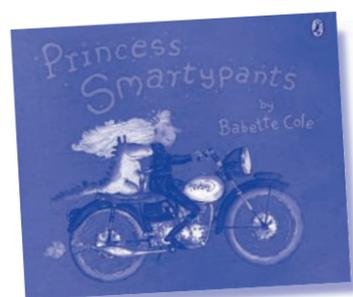
*The inimitable  
Babette Cole  
remembered*

Welcome to the latest edition of the UKLA Newsletter.

I shall begin my piece by expressing my sadness over the death in January of one of the world's greatest authors and illustrators of children's literature, Babette Cole. By the time you read this I'm sure you will have read many obituaries for this great writer, but I would like to take this opportunity to add my own words here.

Anyone who has read Babette's books to children will know the great joy and pleasure they bring. I love reading her books to school children and watching their look of disbelief on their faces when they realise the teacher is reading a hilarious story full of extraordinary characters involved in activities that nudge at the boundaries of what is often thought to be 'appropriate' taste in classrooms. Her books for me are what I used to call 'attitude changers'. The rare qualities of her books can convince children that books and reading can be about pleasure; not just the safe pleasures of cosy reading by firesides with buttered crumpets, but pleasures that run off the scale of what adults believe children should be experiencing, thinking and talking about for their entertainment. Babette's books feel somehow dangerous and subversive to children, teachers and parents and that's why many of us love them. Her books teach children to read and to want to read because they often provide carnivalesque pleasures that bring relief from the rules and conventions of thought with which some school cultures are imbued. A number of authors after Babette have tried to entice children into reading by offering only the rude and vulgar, but those books and poems lack the quality and the creativity of Babette's work. It is not at all easy to write for children in the way she did.

Some of my favourite Babette Cole books include *The Trouble with Mum*



(1983) and its sequels, *The Hairy Book* (1984) and that family of books which include slimy and smelly; other classics including *Princess Smartypants* (1986) and *Prince Cinders* (1987) and of course the great *Dr Dog* (1994) that depicts the Grandad who had been eating too many baked beans and drinking too much beer! Many of Babette's books are overtly pedagogical, in the case of *Dr Dog*, the dog of the title teaches its owners how to look after themselves and avoid common medical conditions. *Mummy Laid an Egg* (1993) taught children about sex, and *Hair in Funny Places* (2001) showed children what to expect to happen to their bodies when they reach puberty. These books presented the 'facts of life' in ways that only Babette Cole could. She was a unique writer for children, but importantly someone who along with others like Michael Rosen revolutionised children's literature and children's reading for good.

From me, and on behalf of UKLA, thank you Babette Cole and farewell.

Last November I attended the More than a Score UK conference at Great Ormond Street Hospital. More Than a Score is a coalition calling for a better approach to assessment and accountability in primary schools. The campaign, which links parents' groups, child psychologists and psychotherapists, trade unions and experts in early years and primary education, maintains that the current system of standardised testing in England is deeply flawed and results in a narrowed education as schools concentrate on teaching to the test. It was an excellent conference. UKLA Past President David Reedy chaired an important discussion at the beginning. I gave a workshop on the Centre for

## UKLA 53rd International Conference 2017

### *Language, Literacy and Class: Connections and Contradictions*

Friday 30th June to  
Sunday 2nd July 2017

Technology and  
Innovation Centre,  
University of  
Strathclyde, Glasgow



This year's theme invites colleagues to consider the connections and the contradictions between language, literacy and class. At a time when austerity is increasingly becoming one of the social norms and consequently widening divisions become more evident in society, this conference will explore the impact of these changes on literacy education - both the connections and the contradictions, the problems and the innovations.



*Keynote speakers include:*

Prof. Shirley Brice-Heath,  
Stanford University (far left)

Prof. Sue Ellis, University of  
Strathclyde (centre)

Dr Vicky Duckworth,  
Edge Hill University (right)

More speakers to be confirmed.

**Book online at [www.ukla.org/coonferences](http://www.ukla.org/coonferences)** We look forward to seeing you there.

Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) and joint association Reading and Writing Scales with colleagues from CLPE. Michael Rosen gave a tremendous speech that rounded off the day. UKLA is very pleased to be part of the coalition behind the campaign. The Association continues to be at the forefront of work to improve literacy education in the UK. You can watch highlights from the conference at the More than a Score UK web site available at: <https://morethanascore.co.uk>

I hope that by now you have booked your place for UKLA's International Conference in Glasgow. Glasgow is a fascinating city in which to meet with friends and colleagues from around the globe and to listen and engage with new ideas or to return to the old ones. There is an exciting range of speakers that will provide you with much food for thought. Do come along and recharge your 'intellectual batteries' and relax with some really wonderful people who make UKLA what it is. Book your place on the UKLA website today... and bring a friend.

UKLA is a literacy charity run mainly by volunteers. The good work it does through its research, publications, conferences and awards can only be undertaken because of the people who give up their time to run it and because of the membership. We are always looking for new members and for those who wish to get involved. This year, if you are someone who values UKLA, why don't you resolve to bring a friend along to conference, show them some of our publications and ask them to join?

We look forward to welcoming you to our wonderful conference events happening around the UK. Check over leaf for details.

*Andrew Lambirth  
President of UKLA  
University of Greenwich*

## Call for papers for a Special Themed Issue of *Literacy*

### *Reading for pleasure: supporting reader engagement*

Edited by: Teresa Cremin and Gemma Moss

Education systems worldwide face the challenge of balancing a desire to raise young readers' attainment, whilst simultaneously seeking to create vibrant reading communities of readers within and beyond school. Many countries, cognisant of the bi-directional relationship between reading attainment and positive attitudes to reading, evidenced for example in PIRLS and PISA data, are now paying increased attention to the concepts of reader engagement and reading for pleasure in both policy and practice. Research too is examining related issues such as gender, parental involvement, the tensions which exist for schools when reading for pleasure is mandated, practices which purport to foster reader engagement, the role of rich texts in nurturing young readers and the relationship between and influences upon teachers' and students identities as readers.

This Special Issue of *Literacy* seeks to bring into the spotlight recent empirical research which foregrounds the issue of volitional reading by children and young people in the context of the English and/or literacy classroom in a range of educational settings and beyond. We invite scholars researching in this area to submit abstracts to submit full papers by 31 July, 2017.

**Deadline for submissions: 31st July 2017**  
**Date of publication: May 2018**

Please use the Wiley Scholar One system: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/literacy>

Please see author guidelines on the Literacy homepage:

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1741-4369/homepage/ForAuthors.html](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1741-4369/homepage/ForAuthors.html)

## UKLA International Ambassadors

UKLA's international ambassadors are Mary Roche, Ireland; Judy Parr, New Zealand; Runar Sigþorsson, Iceland; William Bintz, USA; Paul Gardner, Australia; Jill McClay, Canada; and Alice Manning, Spain.



Following our series of special articles, we are delighted to introduce: **Alice Manning, Spain**

Alice studied at the University of Bristol and started her teaching career in the Bristol area as an NQT. Two years ago Alice moved to Sevilla, Spain to teach in an English Language Academy, a job she "absolutely loves".

Alice got involved with UKLA on the advice of her former PGCE lecturer Jane Carter. On Jane's advice, she entered her Year One class into the UKLA Our Class Loves This Book competition.

Alice entered her class for the competition with the book *Dog Loves Counting* by Louise Yates. She was shortlisted and subsequently invited to speak at one of UKLA's conferences. "This was a fantastic opportunity for me to meet other like minded people from around the world. It inspired me to enter the competition the following year."

True to her inspiration Alice entered the competition a second time with the book *The Crocodile who Didn't Like Water*. This time she and her class went one step further and won the competition, earning her a return visit to the 52nd UKLA International Conference in Bristol where she presented a summation of her and her class's experience. "The competition is a great way to get teachers and children to explore books creatively and in-depth, whilst carefully documenting evidence of the pupils' work to send to UKLA. This type of competition is very unique. It encourages the class teacher to exploit the potential of a text in order to maximum pupils' engagement, enjoyment and literacy learning. As you are taking part in a competition, working towards a final deadline, and exhibiting your class' creations in a final presentation, it also keeps you on your toes."

"I used a number of strategies to explore the book with my young class. We did lots of prediction, used emotion faces to show how the crocodile's feelings changed throughout the story, and sorted felt and wood animals including crocodiles into their various habitats, e.g. water, desert, forests, etc. The children used the animals to create their own small world play with laminated images from the book acting as backgrounds, as well as designing and making their own books. Whenever class finished, the children would ask if they could take the book home. This was a reflection of the positive impact this fantastic book was having. Needless to say the children and I were over the moon when we found out we had won. It was such an amazing experience and was very moving for me to see the children's work rewarded by winning this fantastic prize."

As a result of this work Alice was offered the opportunity to become a UKLA Ambassador. She accepted the role and responsibility enthusiastically and is enjoying the challenges and opportunities it affords. Alice says, "UKLA has given me such invaluable opportunities, not only in helping me with my teaching but also in giving me a great feeling of self belief working in the best job in the world. I would highly recommend UKLA to all teachers."

## UKLA Literacy School of the Year Award

The UKLA Literacy School of the Year Roll of Honour celebrates schools providing rich, exciting, innovative curriculums in English whilst achieving good outcomes for their pupils. From a number of strong submissions four have been selected for the Roll of Honour 2017. Congratulations to:

Altmore Infant School and Children's Centre, East Ham, London  
Hill Mead Primary, Brixton, London  
Horfield Church of England Primary School, Bristol  
Woodside Primary School, Aberdeen

The winning school will be announced on 1 July 2017 at UKLA International Conference the University of Strathclyde.

This year we are delighted to welcome Nosy Crow, our new sponsors for the UKLA Literacy School of the Year Award.

Kate Wilson, Managing Director of Nosy Crow, writes,

*We are delighted to be working alongside the UKLA to sponsor the UKLA Literacy School of the Year 2017. Every year, at the UKLA International Conference, we are delighted by the level of enthusiasm for children's literature and literacy. As a publisher of both books and apps, it's a pleasure to know that what we create with our authors and illustrators is in such skilled hands and that, as a result, children are getting the very best out of them in the classroom. Of course, as well as their enthusiasm for literature and literacy we also have to mention the profound understanding and knowledge of both topics exhibited by UKLA members - topics we at Nosy Crow feel are profoundly important to children both in and outside the classroom, during their school years and far beyond.*

## Don't Miss! Forthcoming Special Issue of Literacy

Look out for the upcoming Special Issue of *Literacy* on Assessment, Accountability and Policy, which will be published in May 2017. In this issue, scholars and educators from a range of international contexts consider the impact of assessment and accountability practices on literacy education.

## UKLA Research Grants

Please apply by 1st March 2017

UKLA members are invited to apply for a research grant of up to £3000. We welcome applications for original research that is focused on literacy, and which helps fulfil the aims of UKLA. We have a record of funding projects for a range of age groups and within diverse settings, including homes, early years settings, primary and post-primary schools, libraries, and book groups. Projects may be based in the UK or abroad and we are happy to consider proposals incorporating a range of methodologies. Applications are particularly welcome from teachers and other practitioners, and from teacher/practitioner/academic partnerships.

Further information and details on how to apply can be found on the UKLA website: <https://ukla.org/research> visit the UKLA website.

## UKLA Belfast Conference

### Critical Literacy: A New Basic

5th January 2017

UKLA recently hosted a regional conference at St Mary's University College, Belfast. This is UKLA's 8th conference in Northern Ireland. It was attended by sixty Key Stage Two and Three teachers, literacy coordinators, school vice-principals and principals. Also attending were the delightful pupils of St Colman's High & Sixth Form College, Ballynahinch.

Delegates enjoyed talks from Prof Peter Finn, Principal of St Mary's, Noel Doran, Editor of The Irish News, Angela McGowan, Director of the Confederation of Business Interests (CBI) and Donna Hazzard, UKLA's Northern Ireland representative.

A range of thought provoking workshops on critical literacy received plaudits from the many attendees. Workshops included:

*Reading and Viewing: Deconstructing Images*  
*Understanding Newspaper Stories*  
*Newspapers and Reciprocal Reading*  
*Assessing the Credibility of News Reports*  
*Newspaper Blackout Poetry*  
*Headline Text and Image Matching*  
*Putting the News into Literature Circles*  
*Advertising and the Newspaper*

Catherine Gilliland  
Geraldine Magennis  
Gabrielle Nig Uidhir  
Sean Mac Corraidh  
Geraldine Parks  
Paul Hazzard  
Eibhlin Mhic Aoidh  
Matthew Martin

Some comments from delegates,

*"A most enjoyable afternoon. I really got an insight into critical literacy."*

Susan Topping, Literacy Coordinator,  
Lismore Comprehensive School

*"A very well run day full of new information in a friendly, professional and comfortable environment. A great initiative!"*

Sean McDermot, St Francis' Primary School, Lurgan

*"I hadn't realised the relevance and necessity of teaching critical reading to our children explicitly to tackle the overload of consumerisation in today's society. The project will be a perfect way to investigate doing this."*

Coleen McCluskey, Literacy Coordinator, St Mary's Star of the Sea

*"Fascinating project that will enable children to consider the validity of all the texts they encounter."* Henry Duffin, Principal, St Anne's P.S., Ballymena

*"I'm delighted to be involved in this new and exciting project, promoting critical literacy."* Tracey McDowell, Vice Principal, St Aloysius P.S., Lisburn

*"Exciting venture by St Mary's University College and The Irish News which will expose pupils to a reputable newspaper on a weekly basis enthralling them to appreciate current affairs."* Lawrence O'Kane, Principal, St Brigid's P.S., Cloughmills

## UKLA is pleased to announce the shortlist for the 2017 Academic Book Award

The 4 books selected for the shortlist all make distinctive and very different contributions to the field. Their subjects include linguistics; multilingualism in the early years; reading development and teaching; and guiding reading and comprehension. The panel this year is chaired by Dr Guy Merchant, Professor of Literacy in Education at Sheffield Hallam University.

The 4 shortlisted books are:

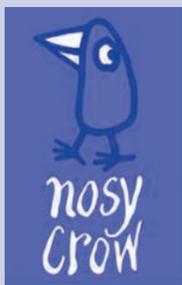
Giovanelli, M. and Clayton, D. (2016) *Knowing about Language: Linguistics and the Secondary English Classroom*, London, Routledge.

Smidt, S. (2016) *Multilingualism: Early Years*, London, Routledge.

Stuart, M. and Stainthorp, R. (2016) *Reading Development and Teaching*, Sage Publishing.

Tennent, W., Reedy, D., Hobsbaum, A. and Gamble, N. (2016) *Guiding Readers: Layers of Meaning*, UCL Institute of Education Press.

The winner will be announced on 1 July 2017 at the UKLA International Conference, University of Strathclyde.

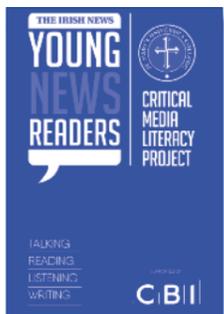


## Exciting New Additions to UKLA's Resources Collection

Free downloadable resource materials

### Young News Readers: Critical Media Literacy Project by Donna Hazzard

This Key Stage Two and Three teaching resource is premised on the concept that how we read is as important as what we read. Young people today live in a world where they are bombarded by print and non-print texts, all of which implicitly or explicitly present perspectives on race, gender, class, as well as many social, political and economic issues. This resource draws on Freebody and Luke's Four Resources Model (1990) to teach children and young people not to uncritically conform in their personal lives, but at a societal level as well. These skills and dispositions are what literacy scholar and educator Allan Luke (2009) refers to as 'a new basic' for navigating our text and media-saturated world.



### Books for Keeps: Power of Children's Literature Resource

*A Visit to a City Farm* by Verna Wilkins

Resource created by Liz Robertson

We now have 14 resources for Books for Keeps. This new addition presents a story of interconnected education in a diverse urban setting - a city farm. Created by our member Liz Robertson, this resource will introduce teachers to the work of Verna Wilkins, acclaimed children's writer and publisher. The resource contains the original Books for Keeps review and a range of teaching ideas and connections to other books to support the use of this lovely book in the early years classroom. Find the resource using the Book for Keeps 'Series' drop down tab in the Resources section of the web site.

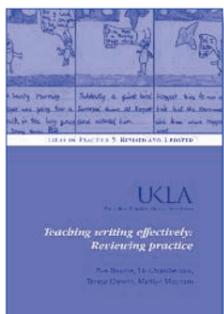
### Revised and Updated for 2017

#### *Teaching Writing Effectively: Reviewing Practice*

by Eve Bearne, Liz Chamberlain, Teresa Cremin and Marilyn Mottram

This self-support book for teachers and subject leaders provides the basis for a thorough review of classroom practice in teaching writing. The book brings together key ideas about teaching writing from contributors who have extensive experience of working with teachers to improve classroom writing. Themes explored are:

- the role of the English subject leader
- purposes for writing across the curriculum
- teachers as writers
- talk for writing
- writer's voice
- issues of diversity and inclusion
- spelling, handwriting, grammar and punctuation
- response to writing
- assessment.



### New Diversity and Inclusion Resources

In line with UKLA's aim to support and inform all those concerned with the development of language, literacy and communication, these resources provide ideas for promoting diversity and inclusion, recognising the dynamic and evolving contexts for literacy education in the 21st century.

#### Buy One Get One Free Offer for UKLA Members!

UKLA is offering a FREE copy of *The Handbook of Teaching Early Reading: more than phonics* worth £19\* to our members when they buy a copy of any of the following UKLA titles:

- *The Handbook of Teaching Early Reading: more than phonics*
- *Literacy and Community: developing a primary curriculum through partnerships*

or any of the English Language and Literacy 3-19 (Owen) series:

- *English Language and Literacy 3-19: Talk*
- *English Language and Literacy 3-19: Drama*
- *English Language and Literacy 3-19: Writing 3-7*
- *English Language and Literacy 3-19: Writing 7-16*
- *English Language and Literacy 3-19: Reading 3-7*
- *English Language and Literacy 3-19: Reading 7-16*
- *English Language and Literacy 3-19: Grammar and Knowledge about Language*
- *English Language and Literacy 3-19: Media*
- *English Language and Literacy 3-19: English 16-19*

• *English Language and Literacy 3-19: Summary*

Go to [www.ukla.org/shop](http://www.ukla.org/shop)



## Save the date! Forthcoming UKLA Conferences Near You

We look forward to welcoming familiar and new faces to the wonderful conferences listed below. Do ensure to avoid disappointment by reserving your place early. Further details and booking information can be found on the UKLA website: <https://ukla.org/conferences>

### UKLA National Conference

Saturday 11th March 2017

#### *Telling the Tales of Shakespeare: Story, Language and Play in the Classroom*

Venue: Focus on Learning, Albany Teaching and Learning Centre, Crossgill, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE37 1UA

With a starting point of the stories of Shakespeare, this inspirational conference will explore practical ways of developing storytelling as a powerful tool for teaching and learning in the classroom. The programme will include a keynote speech from Dr. Alastair Daniel that will focus on storytelling as a powerful and effective strategy in teaching and learning. Participants will attend three workshops aimed developing storytelling skills, as well as examining storytelling as a powerful medium for exploring the works of Shakespeare. The workshops will be led by highly experienced and entertaining storytellers from the world famous Globe Theatre. Finally we will round off with a performance from one of the Globe's wonderful storytellers, who will regale us with a Shakespearean tale or two.

### UKLA National Conference

Saturday 18th March 2017

#### *Finding and Sharing Pleasure in Reading*

Venue: University of Cambridge, The Old Schools, Trinity Ln, Cambridge CB2 1TN

International evidence indicates reading for pleasure offers significant benefits, cognitively, socially and emotionally. It is an overarching aim in the English NC that pupils develop a 'love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment' (DfE, 2013). This one day conference will help you explore ways to develop your own knowledge of children's literature and create an authentic, flexible and engaging reading for pleasure pedagogy that supports young readers. It will offer challenges and new ideas based developed by teachers in UKLA's Teachers as Readers research. As part of the conference, we are excited to launch a vibrant, research-informed OU Reading for Pleasure website to support the profession. All workshops are led by practising teachers and members of the website Teacher Advisory Group alongside Teresa Cremin and Mary Anne Wolpert.



### UKLA Research Symposium

Tuesday May 16, 2017

#### *Digital Literacies in Education*

Venue: Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield S1 1WB

This symposium, the fifth annual research day organised by UKLA and BERA, will explore how opportunities and challenges surrounding the use of digital literacies are playing out in educational contexts for learners and educators. In particular it aims to raise pressing questions about how literacy educators and researchers can respond to the changing opportunities and challenges generated by 21st century digital technologies and landscapes. Keynotes will be given by two leading academics working at the forefront of this field, Prof Jackie Marsh (University of Sheffield) and Dr. Julia Gillen (Lancaster University).

The event offers a unique opportunity to engage with the diversity and richness of contemporary research relating to digital literacies in education while stimulating debate about how literacy provision in educational settings should respond to the changing nature of literacies. The day will be of interest to practitioners, researchers, consultants, charities and other organisations working in the field of literacy and education.

### UKLA National Conference

Saturday 10th June 2017

#### *Shakespeare in the Classroom: Storytelling and Stories*

Venue: Canterbury Christ Church University, Rowan Williams Court, Medway Campus, Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4UF

Taking the stories of Shakespeare as a starting point, this inspirational conference will explore practical ways of developing storytelling as a powerful tool for teaching and learning in the classroom. Professor Teresa Cremin will give a keynote talk on the scope and potential of narrative to support children's learning in Literacy and across the curriculum. Participants will have the opportunity to attend three workshops led by the Globe Theatre's highly experienced and entertaining performers. The day will close with a performance by one of the Globe's expert storytellers, who will regale us with a Shakespearean tale or two.

### AELE 20th European Conference

Monday 3rd to Thursday 6th July 2017

#### *Working together to encourage equity through literacy communities: a challenge of the 21st century*

Venue: Faculty of Education, Av. Séneca, 2, 28040, University Complutense of Madrid, Madrid, Spain

This European Conference organised by the Spanish Reading and Writing Association (AELE) provides a meeting point for discussing issues related to the literacy as social practice. One of its main objectives is to highlight research and good practice in literacy that takes place within and outside the school. Teacher-educators, teachers, researchers, librarians, students, parents, etc. can actively participate in this event by submitting projects and sharing experiences. There will be opportunities for theoretical and/or practical contributions on the theme of literacy as a 'moving target'.

## Literacy News from Northern Ireland

### Literacy at Transition Project

By Aidan Lennon, Project Regional Manager; Educational Advisor  
**About the project**

The Literacy at Transition Project was developed in response to a report from DE that indicated a dip in pupils' attainment in literacy when transferring from primary to post-primary school. The focus of the project was to address issues relating to literacy at what is often referred to as a crisis point. We hoped to do this by:

- Providing professional development for teachers at KS2 and KS3 focused on the development of high quality teaching and learning;
- Bringing together KS2 and KS3 teachers from partner schools to facilitate sharing of best practice;
- Utilising the potential of I.C.T. to support and facilitate on-going cross-phase collaboration.

To date 533 teachers have been involved. The teachers and their school principals have participated in a five-day programme of professional development. Participants have worked together in groups to identify priority areas for development relevant to their own contexts. Subsequently, the groups have drawn up action plans that focus on specific issues, for example, the effective transfer of pupil data.

#### Impact of the project

The impact of the project can be measured on three fronts:

##### 1. Teacher Professional Learning

Teacher Professional Learning focused on reflecting on pedagogy and effective practice. A key outcome of this is that through critical reflection participants refined and/or developed their teaching strategies. As one teacher said:

*"I've thoroughly enjoyed the CPD Project as it's encouraged me to be much more creative in my classroom. My Year 9 pupils have produced some amazing personal writing using visual stimuli and Year 10 have been working on iMovies based on Heaney's 'Mid Term Break'."*

Mrs Gillian Weir,

Head of English at The Wallace High School, Lisburn.

##### 2. Professional Learning Communities

The project provided a rare opportunity for teachers from primary and post-primary schools to work collaboratively. As a result, the school partnerships, school clusters and Area Learning Communities that evolved, continue to collaborate across phase to improve learning and teaching in literacy.

##### 3. Capacity Building

In addition to the range of learning opportunities, for example, cross-phase training for student teachers and a KS 2 and 3 literacy TeachMeet, we created a project website. The website contains a wide range of resources, such as, videos documenting the transition of pupils from primary to post-primary school from the pupils' perspective. The website is accessed through Northern Ireland's C2K system. Teachers are encouraged to contribute resources to the website and to share examples of good practice.

Encouragingly, one participant said of the project:

*"The CPD Literacy at Transition Project has greatly helped me in developing the teaching and learning of literacy within our school."*

Mrs Tracy Morrissey, Carnmoney Primary School.

### The KS2/3 Critical Literacy Project

By Donna Hazzard, Project Manager; Principal Lecturer

#### About the project

The KS2/3 Critical Literacy Project provides a programme for teachers to enable the development of critical literacy through reading newspapers. Critical literacy is what literacy scholar and educator Allan Luke (2009) refers to as 'a new basic' for navigating a text and media-saturated world. It is an essential and empowering life skill that develops, "the knowledge and ability to foster equal and just participation in all the decisions that affect and control our lives" (Shannon, 1995:31). The conceptual framework for the programme draws on Peter Freebody and Allan Luke's Four Resources Model (1990) to support children and young people in developing as critical thinkers. As critical thinkers they will be able to decode and analyse texts, question information, conclusions and viewpoints; and be clear, accurate, and relevant. Pupils should also develop important intellectual traits and personal capabilities, such as those identified by Paul and Elder (2004), for example, intellectual integrity, empathy, and autonomy, important capabilities and virtues for life and work.



## Desert Island Books: Dr Alison MacKenzie

*Alison was keynote speaker at UKLA's Regional Conference, Literacy for All, in Northern Ireland in 2016. She is a Senior Lecturer at Queen's University, Belfast. Here she shares with us her desert island books:*

On reading *The Lion, the witch and the wardrobe* (CS Lewis) I wanted a wardrobe that took me to another world. Edmund, who does not believe Lucy that Narnia exists is amazed when

he enters this frozen world. He quickly becomes nasty, betraying his siblings and the faun, to curry the Queen's favour. He lets power go to his head. Women don't usually have power, but this Queen does. But she is wicked, her emotions frozen, and the land in permanent winter. I cried when they trapped Aslan. I loved him. He was compassionate, kind, and gracious. But the Queen knew his goodness and that he wanted to end her evil power. Christ-like, he dies to save Edmund. I wanted to ride on his back, bury my face in his mane, and to be protected by him.

*The Famous Five and Mallory Towers.* I read and reread the novels of Enid Blyton. The adventures of the Five and of Darrell in St Clare's, seemed so exotic to me, a girl from a remote Scottish island who had never heard of a 'souwester', 'anchovy paste', or such a thing as homemade lemonade. I come from a religious background where girls are expected to be quiet, especially among men, so I loved the character of George, a tomboy, who was strong, defiant, and fiery. Though a girl, she stood up for herself and for what was right, and she never told lies. Perhaps I didn't model myself on her, but I certainly wanted to be her, and I too determined not to tell lies or be bullied by others. Darrell from Mallory Towers was fiery, popular and clever. My love of reading is much indebted to Enid Blyton.

*Eric* by Shaun Tan although brief, is powerful. It is a book of all our times since it tells us how we ignore, discredit, or fail to understand someone who is different. While the narrator wonders if Eric is happy and tries to imagine what it is like for him to be living in a strange country, he never asks Eric what he thinks or feels, while his parents explain his habits as a 'cultural thing'. At the close of the book, long after Eric has left, and never having taken the opportunity to find out who he really was, the family finally discover why Eric collected so many small things. There, in a cup in the pantry, is a note saying 'Thank you for a Wonderful Time'. Around the cup are all the odd things Eric collected and which he fashioned into flowers and plants, and in the dark of the pantry they glow and thrive, nourished by the kindness and gratitude of their strange guest. The discovery was so unexpected, and so moving, it brought tears to my eyes. Shaun Tan's work is profound. The words are few and understated but eloquent; and the pictures alone 'speak' of the human condition – loneliness, the harm that lack of compassion brings, the consequences of unjust actions and ignorance.

If we want to understand how we exclude people because they are not attractive or because they are not 'one of us', there is no better book than *Something Else* by Kathryn Cave and Chris Riddell. Something Else (he has no 'proper' name – he is not a person, but a 'Something') is friendless; nobody wants to know him, or to play with him, no matter how hard he tries to be like them. But he is too different; he looks, sees and thinks differently, and so he is excluded. One day, a creature turns up at his door, claiming to be like Something Else. Instead of responding warmly to him, he, just as the others have done to him, rejects the Creature because he is not 'MY sort of something else'. Something Else's rejection diminishes the Creature, and as he becomes sadder and smaller, he realises that, despite his own exclusion, he has become conditioned to believe that 'difference' means rejection. He is desensitised to the pain and need of the other, who, like him, wants and needs friendship. Fortunately, Something Else is wise and kind enough to know his mistake and to correct it. The Creature and Something Else teach us that there is room for everyone, even for really 'weird looking' creatures like human boys, and that we all belong together in our human and non-human community.

Research carried out by the National Literacy Trust (2015) found that parents reading newspapers with their children led to significant progression in reading skills. This programme places a focus on family engagement so as to reinforce the good literacy work done in school, and in doing so to enhance pupils' skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

#### Impact of the project

The initiative was launched with a professional learning event for teachers organised in association with the United Kingdom Literacy Association. The event included talks on the importance and relevance of critical literacy as well as a series of workshops to demonstrate pedagogical techniques. Following this event, Henry Duffin, Principal of St Anne's Primary School, Ballymena commented, "This is a fascinating project that will enable children to consider the validity of all the texts they encounter. In addition BE2-4 student teachers also received training as part of their undergraduate literacy programme.



*Pupils from St Colman's High and Sixth Form College, Ballymabinch.*

The project will run for eight weeks with each participating school choosing their own start date in the months of February and March. To date 100 schools and over 4,000 pupils are registered. Each pupil will receive their own weekly copy of The Irish News newspaper and will be awarded a certificate of accomplishment from St Mary's University College on completion.