

My Life as a Goldfish and other poems by Rachel Rooney, Illustrated by Ellie Jenkins (Frances Lincoln)

These succinct poems, sometimes darkly humorous and incorporating delicious wordplay, are lessons in how economy of words can lead the imagination to soar. The collection explores a thought-provoking range of different perspectives, with both humorous and more poignant poems each examining a range of emotions and feelings.

Rachel Rooney was the winner of the CLPE Poetry Award in 2012, for her collection *The Language of Cat and Other Poems*.

This collection was shortlisted for the 2015 CLPE Poetry Award.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence.

- To explore a range of differing perspectives, themes and the use of language and word play in poems.
- To explore, interpret and respond to a range of poetry, developing descriptions of mood and feelings.
- To develop an understanding of a range of poetic devices and examine how Rooney uses them in her work.
- To use poetry as a stimulus for art.
- To perform in response to poetry.
- To compose and perform their own poetry.

This teaching sequence is designed for a Year 3 or 4 class.

Overview of this teaching sequence.

This teaching sequence is approximately 2 - 3 weeks long if spread out over 10 – 15 sessions and is divided into two parts, each focusing on different poems. Part 1 examines personal perspectives, in response to immediate environments and familiar settings. Part 2 explores wider environments and perspectives, building on the learning from Part 1. The wide range of poems in this collection provides extensive opportunities to explore different poetry forms and the way language is used across the range. Additional sessions have been provided in each of the two parts of the teaching sequence to allow teachers to use their professional judgement when selecting the poems they wish to explore as they work with their pupils through the teaching sequence.

The highlighted poems provide opportunities to enjoy a number of different poems in the collection, while exploring personal, immediate and wider perspectives, and considering the multiple lenses through which we all view life. All of the poems allow for an exploration of Rooney’s use of language to describe feeling, and this is an important element that should be explored through all of the sessions, both in the discussions when responding to the poems being read aloud and through the writing in response to the poems.

The themes and style of these poems offer inspiration to young budding poets and serve as models for the development of their own poetry writing and developing their use of language to describe feelings and emotions.

Teaching Approaches

- Reading aloud and rereading
- Performance poetry
- Writing in role
- Role play
- Visualising
- Shared writing

Writing Outcomes

- Poems inspired by the collection
- Note taking

Exploring Poetic Devices

- Imagery
- Metaphor
- Personification
- Repetition
- Rhyme
- Rhythm
- Word play

Opportunities to develop and reinforce phonic knowledge and reading fluency.

- Use the selected poems, and the additional poems you select to share, to explore the sounds and patterns of language through repetition.

Cross Curricular Links:

Art and Design:

- Through the inspiration of the poetry children will be encouraged to respond through art and produce creative work that explores their ideas and records their experiences as stipulated by the aims of the National Curriculum.

PSHE

- Through the discussions about their personal responses to the poems in the collection children will consider how others feel, explore emotions and feelings and develop a sense of empathy for wider perspectives and considerations, such as other cultures.

Teaching Sessions:

Session 1: Reading aloud, re-reading, and reader response

Reading aloud is one of the most important ways that children are motivated and supported to become readers, slowing written language down so that children can hear and absorb the words, tunes and patterns. Reading aloud helps children broaden their repertoire as readers, becoming familiar with a wider range of poetic forms and the work and voice of particular poets.

*The 'Tell Me...' approach (Aidan Chambers: *Tell Me: Children, Reading & Talk with The Reading Environment*. Thimble Press 2011) provides an opportunity for children to take part in conversations about poems, helping them to explore and reflect on the themes, poetic devices and language in use, allowing them to extend their understanding in ways that are made meaningful, personal and pleasurable. Discussing our likes, dislikes, discussions around the questions and puzzles raised by the poems, and the connections the poems trigger through links with our personal perspective and experiences, deepens our understanding of both the poet's intention and the mood and feelings evident in the poems themselves.*

Selecting poems by well known poets and those written personally for inclusion in a class or personal anthology provides the opportunity for children to build a bank of poems they are familiar with, while considering the ways in which poems can be sorted and categorised, strengthening their understanding of the use of the range of poetic device within the poems themselves. Once created, the anthologies can be housed in the class reading corner and be revisited for subsequent readings and to add to them, promoting a wider engagement with poetry both as creators and audience members. Performance readings of poetry allows children the chance to 'lift the words off the page', bringing their personal experiences and understandings to their interpretation of the poem. In creating their performance, children develop their comprehension of the words on the page and can explore the patterns and rhythms of the language, and the moods and feelings expressed by the poet.

Poems: *We Wish You a Hairy Kiss, Miss* (p43), *Never Never Never* (p64 – 65), *Six Facts About Light* (p30), *The Problem with Spelling* (p50)

- As an introduction to this collection by Rachel Rooney, share a few of the poems by reading them aloud and discussing them. Start the discussions with 'Tell Me...': What did you like or dislike about the poem, and why? What does the poem remind you of? What questions does the poem trigger in your mind? Record the children's responses on post-it notes and display these on the working wall so that the responses can be built upon and developed throughout the teaching sequence. Additionally, ask: What other Rachel Rooney poems do you know? What about similar work by other poets?
- Select other poems from the collection that you are not planning on working on in greater depth through the teaching sequence – poems such as *We Wish You a Hairy Kiss, Miss* (p43) or *A Song to Annoy Adults when Visiting A Museum* (p45) would be wonderful to share as examples of the use of language, humour and word play used by Rooney in her poems, and also provide a useful starting point for a regular routine of sharing poetry. Poems such as *Six*

Facts About Light (p30) or *The Problem with Spelling* (p50) link well with other areas of the curriculum, and in turn might provide a window to other sources of inspiration for the children's own poetry composition, and the use of different registers of language to explore new interpretations and understandings through poetic devices and forms.

- You might like to have the children in small groups each discussing different poems, considering what they like and dislike about the poems, the questions they raise and the connections they make as a reader to the themes, experiences and language of the poems, and the connections to other poems you already know.
- Alternatively, give the children a selection of the poems to perform in small groups. Allow time for the children to read through the poem/s, choosing the poem they would like to perform and rehearsing their interpretation of it. They might like to text mark their poem, adding sound effects, and considering how they can deepen the mood and feeling created by the variety of ways they can be read.
- The children could add poems to a class or personal poetry anthology, perhaps drawing on those poems that particularly inspire them and, over the course of the teaching sequence, exploring their responses to them through their own poetry writing, sharing their ideas and reflections in poetic forms that interest them.
- Visit <http://www.poetryline.org.uk/key-teaching-approaches/poetry-1049> or <http://www.poetryline.org.uk/key-teaching-approaches/performance-poetry-1050> to explore other ways of displaying and performing poetry.
- These poems might inspire the children to write some of their own poems, and again, these might feature in a classroom display or an anthology.

As the teaching sequence progresses, beyond session 1 through subsequent sessions, you might like to revisit the anthologies started in this first session, adding to them with poems by Rachel Rooney (and other well known poets writing about similar themes) and the children's own poems inspired by those that they are reading.

- Revisit the class and personal anthologies and develop them further. Consider the different ways in which poetry can be categorised and arranged in an anthology. Are there particular themes that you can begin to pick up on that could form the basis of your sorting of the poems in your anthology? Do poems fit into the broad categories of personal perspectives, immediate and wider environments, or is there a crossover between these lenses?
- Children might like to choose their favourite poems from the collection or that have been inspired by the collection to rehearse and perform. These might be recorded or shared in an assembly.
- Consider the wider lens perspective built upon in the second part of the teaching sequence by drawing from other poets who might share similar themes and personal perspectives. Share a range of their work through collections and anthologies.
- Visit <http://poetryline.org.uk> to see Rachel Rooney reading some of her poems, and look for poems exploring similar themes written by other poets. This site houses a number of videos where the featured poets share their work and their thoughts on writing poetry, which might

provide further impetus to the class routines for both reading and writing poetry established through this teaching sequence.

Part 1 – Personal perspectives

In this section of the teaching sequence, the children will explore personal responses and begin to develop the ability to communicate their ideas through a judicious use of language, and consider some of the ways a poet can communicate their ideas to their audience through word play and the layering of meaning.

Session 2: Reading aloud, visualisation, reader response

Visualising character or settings is a powerful way of encouraging children to move around the poem in their imaginations. They can bring it to life by describing it in words or recreating it through drawings or paintings, deepening their understanding of the language, themes, characters and settings explored through the poems.

Role on the Wall is a teaching approach where an outline of a character is used to explore the perception of the character and their outward appearance is written around the outside of the outline, while the character's feelings and responses to their environment are written inside the outline. The role on the wall can be revisited at later points in the teaching sequence, using a new colour, so that changes in a character's development can be explored over time.

Poem: *Nobody Knows* (p14 – 15)

- Prior to the session you might like to gather a selection of images that represent the settings explored in the poem to support those children that may have less experience of some of these settings – a garden with a gate, the banks of a river, a forest, a snow-covered mountain, clouds, an ocean, a cave, a moonlit sky, etc.
- Read the poem aloud to the children, allowing them time to savour the language and images that form in their minds. The poem explores a number of settings; some familiar and some of which they may have limited experience. Examining this wider perspective poem and its range of settings provides an opportunity for the children to begin to develop reader response, and the personal perspective they can bring to other poems in the collection.
- Consider who Jonjo might be? What does he look like? Why is he sharing his world with the protagonist in the poem? How or why can the world being shared be considered magical? Using role on the wall, spend some time discussing Jonjo, his motivations for sharing his world and the features of the world that resonate in particular ways with the children. Write your ideas about how Jonjo is feeling inside an outline of him. Build up a bank of both ideas and descriptive language (words and phrases) on a flip chart and display on the working wall.
- Ask: What images came into your minds as I read the poem? Collect a list of the settings the poem explores and the explore each of these through the images that came into the children's minds – a garden with a gate, the banks of a river, etc.

- Ask the children to listen as you read the poem a second time, focusing on one of their settings. You might like to display images to assist them in their visualising of the settings.
- Provide the children with a selection of drawing materials, which might include pastels, chalks, pencils, etc. and ask them to draw the images that came to mind. What are the particularly beautiful, interesting or magical things about the setting you have chosen? Encourage the children to focus on an aspect of the settings rather than copying an image of the setting.
- Play a few minutes of <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inlc4qYRIU8> while the children draw, allowing them time to develop.
- Encourage the children to note down any words or phrases that came to mind, using the previous collected descriptive language and any new ideas, on post-it notes and display these along with their images on the working wall or in a class gallery.

Session 3 and 4: Note taking, shared writing

Shared writing allows children to focus on the compositional elements of writing while the teacher, modelling the writing process and vocalising the choices they make as the text is constructed, attends to the transcriptional elements. Through the shared writing process, children can be made explicitly aware of both the purpose and intended audience of the writing and the role of language in meeting these effectively.

- Remind the children of the work they did in the poem in the last session by going on a gallery walk, taking in the images and collected language displayed on the working wall of class gallery.
- Explain to the children that they are going for a walk in a local park or areas within the school grounds, taking digital cameras and/or sketchbooks to record the things they observe in the chosen settings. The poem from the last session provided the opportunity to explore the beauty and magic to be found within aspects of everyday settings, and the children will be considering the setting they explore in this session, which might be familiar to them, in a new or different way.
- You might like to organise the children into small groups, with each child having a specific information gathering role: photographs, sketches, words and phrases using the senses, a collection of stones and leaves, etc. Alternatively, you might arrange them in pairs and have them work together to explore the setting, gathering a range of information in different ways and sharing these once back in the classroom.
- While in the setting, ask the children to consider each of their senses in turn and focus on gathering information about the setting with these in mind. What can you see? What can you hear? What smells can you sense and what do these smells remind you of? How do you feel? Note that the sense of taste is difficult to gather information about, but when linked to the sense of smell a taste might come to mind – acrid smells of rubbish or pollution catching in the back of your throat, the smell of fruit reminding you of delicious treats, etc. Make a collection of words and phrases that come to mind while they are in the settings, collecting these for later use.

- Encourage the children to considering the range of levels from which they view the setting (standing, kneeling, laying down, etc.) to explore how the world looks from a different view point. They might also collect photographic images taken from different levels.
- During the exploration of the setting, make a collection of interesting stones, pebbles and leaves, etc. to bring back to the classroom.
- While on the walk to and from the setting, collect additional photographs, describing the journey in visual ways. Display these images once back in the classroom, to place the setting firmly in the children's zones of experience.
- Collect images of signs that you see along your journey for their possible use later in the teaching sequence.
- Once back in class, arrange their collections of objects, words and phrases, and sketched images in a display by the working wall. You might like to build the display into a map representing where the setting is in relation to your school or classroom and how you get there, showing in visual form what can be seen on the journey to and from the setting as well as images from the setting itself.
- In pairs, the children discuss what they saw on the walk, referencing the photographs, sketched images, objects, words and phrases gathered on the walk, and recording what Jonjo might say about the setting they explored. Widen their discussions into a whole class discussion, collecting their responses and ideas on a flip chart.
- In a shared writing session model how you might use the structure of the poem to frame the children's own composition inspired by their walk, making explicit reference to the words and phrases collected before and during the walk. Explore the ways in which Rooney uses the descriptive elements of language to bring out the sense of awe and wonder at the settings explored through the poem, and play with language to create similar effects.
- Allow time for the children to work independently on their own compositions, selecting elements of the setting they explored on the walk and highlighting the awe and wonder in their own poems. They might like to work in pairs or individually.
- You might like to allow additional time for the children to publish their work, which could then be displayed on the working wall alongside the display of sketched images, photographs, words and phrases, which provided the inspiration for their writing.

Session 5: Note taking, shared writing, responding to poems

Poem: *Seven Pebbles* (p12)

- Share some of the items (stones, leaves, interesting sticks, etc.) gathered during the walk in sessions 3 and 4.
- Form a circle and pass some of the items around the class. Ask the children for a one word description of the item and collect these on a flip chart. Ask questions to deepen their thinking and develop their ability to consider new points of view: How does it feel? What colours can you see? What questions would you ask about this item if you were an explorer from another

place or different planet?

- Repeat the activity with a stone or pebble. How is this stone different or unique from other stones and pebbles we have collected? Again, gather their responses and ideas on a flip chart.
- Share the poem by reading it aloud. Ask the children to listen carefully as you read, letting the words build pictures in their minds. Allow time for the words to hang in the air for a moment after you have read. You might like to read the poem a second time and perhaps display the words on the IWB using a visualiser or as text in a Word document as you read.
- In pairs discuss the poem and consider what it is saying to them. The poem encourages us to look at the uniqueness of objects (in this case pebbles) as well as what unites them.
- Provide an opportunity for children to compose their own poems, using stones, pebbles or other items gathered on their walk. They might like to use the structure of the poem as a model or explore their own ways of communicating their ideas in poetic form, building on the descriptive language they have been using during the last few sessions.
- Display their draft poems. You might like to choose one or two to read aloud, providing the opportunity for the children respond to them, commenting on what they like about the poem and what images it brought to mind as it was shared.
- Redraft and refine their poems – editing the language in use to better communicate a deeper mood or feeling, following the discussions during the session and building on the understandings gained from the writing in response to the walk. Consider the ways in which Rachel Rooney expresses her perspective and view of the world and take lessons from this back into their own poetry writing, selecting key words and phrases that provide the insight to her perspective.

Session 6: Reader response, note taking

Poem: *My Life as a Goldfish* (p16)

- Ask the children to consider what you might see if you were a goldfish in a bowl in the corner of your classroom – what would you see each day? What would *your* day be like? Discuss their ideas and collect these on a flip chart.
- What other spaces in the school might be interesting to observe if you were a goldfish in a bowl. Discuss different spaces and what they might show us about school life. What if you were there all day? Is it always busy or sometimes quieter? Who would you see?
- Build a list of interesting spaces in the school. Organise the children into small groups and set them off to explore one of these spaces.
- Ask the children to sit quietly in the space they are exploring. Again you might give each child a specific role for their time in the space; collecting descriptive words and phrases, sketching the view, listing the people who pass by, listing the sounds and smells experienced in the space, etc.
- After an agreed time period, the children should return to class and share their findings with another group, taking turns to explain their observations and feelings while in the space. You might like to extend understanding and their response by repeating the activity at different

times of the day, gathering and comparing information on their return to class and coming back to their composed poetry to recast and edit their ideas taking on board this new information. How does the day space change during the day?

- Display the poem to the class and read it aloud. What do they notice about it? Why are the two parts of the poem different? What feeling or mood was Rachel Rooney trying to convey? How are they different? How does the space between the words affect our reading of the poem? How is rhythm created through the position and interplay of words and spaces between words?
- Using the poem as a model, consider their own interpretation of the school space they explored. How can they capture the mood and feeling of the space?

You might like to extend the teaching sequence here. Take the class on a walk of the school, pausing at each of the spaces explored by the groups and listening to readings of their drafted poems in these spaces. Does the poem capture the mood of the space effectively?

You might extend the whole class or personal anthologies created in session 1 here. These poems might be published in the anthologies along with sketches or photographs of the spaces themselves.

Session 7: Reading aloud, re-reading, writing in role

When writing in role, children can access feelings and language that are not available to them when they write as themselves – the role giving them the impetus to explore a wider range of feelings and emotions than they might experience as themselves. They are challenged to think as another and explore other possibilities, building a deeper understanding of empathy and other characters' points of view.

Poems: *The Worm's Turn* (p18), *Lice are Nice* (p19), *Quiet Observation* (p20), *Parrot's Complaint* (p21)

- These poems, through the use of word play and humour, explore personal perspectives from other points of view, providing an interesting platform to explore what insects and other creatures think of us. The clever use of word play in *Quiet Observation* adds layers of meaning by exploring the meaning of a phrase such as 'making a meal' and contrasting it with the phrase 'eating dinner' on the next line. The use of repetition in *Parrot's Complaint* adds a layer of meaning to our understanding of what it is to be a parrot, repeating snippets of language.
- Ask the children to listen as you read your choice of the poems, extending their understanding of a different point of view as explored in the previous session.
- You might like to arrange the class into small groups, giving each group a different poem to explore and consider.
- Ask the children to consider the ways language is used to elicit our ideas and understanding about the creature and their point of view.
- Using the poems as a model for their own writing, the children can explore how other

creatures and insects might view us.

- Visit <http://www.poetryline.org.uk/poetic-devices/personification-223> and explore how elements of personification can be used to extend meaning when making comparisons between animals and ourselves, or when exploring how animals might view us when contrasted with how we view them.
- Redraft their poems to bring out the elements of personification, making them more explicit and layering meaning through the comparisons that the poems portray.

Session 8: Reading aloud, visualisation

Poem: *Mrs Von Pugh* (p46 – 48)

- Read the poem aloud. You might like to display the poem on the IWB as you read it a second time, allowing time for the children to see the images in their mind's eye and supporting them to do this.
- In pairs, discuss their ideas about the poem, using the images they imagined as a starting point. What is the poem telling us? How does it give us this information?
- Build up a picture of Mrs Von Pugh using Role on the Wall as described in session 2. Draw her outline and add information about her, highlighting her special abilities and aspects of her personality. How does she look? How do others see her? How does she feel?
- Explore, discuss and develop understanding on how language and poetic devices are used by Rachel Rooney, including her use of similes, metaphor, rhyme, etc. You can find out more about poetic devices by visiting <http://www.poetryline.org.uk/poetic-devices>.
- What would Mrs Von Pugh make of this class? Imagine she was coming to teach your class – what would she think of you, the class, the school?
- Discuss in pairs and begin to build a list of characteristics of the class – general behaviour, regular routines, and particular incidents that might happen, etc. during her visit.
- Use the generated ideas to compose a poem from Mrs Von Pugh's point of view. You might like to use the structure of the original poem and start with the line, 'Let me tell you the story of Class 3B' or a similar line that helps to bring your own class into sharp focus, exploring explicitly how others perceive them.
- Use shared writing to explore aspects of the children's composition, again, using the poem as a structure and highlighting the poetic devices and other elements we can take from it to use in their own writing. Spend time re-reading the composed lines to demonstrate the editing process itself. Also explore the need for judicious use of language, choosing the words carefully to maximise their effect.

Session 9: Note taking, visualising

Poem: *The Whisper* (p28 – 29)

- Give each child an A4 piece of paper and ask them to draw a small cross in the centre of it. Explain to them that the paper represents their surroundings and the cross represents them.
- Ask the children to sit very quietly in the classroom and listen for all the sounds we can hear. Record, on their piece of paper, what they hear around them in any form they like. They might like to draw small pictures to represent the things they think are making the sounds, or annotate their paper with words, phrases and description of the sounds themselves.
- Share their work in triads or small groups and begin to build a class list of the things they heard – clocks ticking, creaking floors, footsteps in the corridor, computer whirring, bells or alarms ringing, distant traffic or playground noise, etc.
- Sort the sounds into two groups – gentle sounds and louder sounds.
- Focus on the sounds that the children have classified as gentle sounds – clocks ticking, etc. What might some of the gentle classroom noises be trying to tell us? Perhaps the class computer is trying to tell us that it is busy thinking, or the school bell might be trying to remind us it is lunch time.
- Share the poem and use the poetry ‘Tell Me’ grid to enable the children to discuss what they feel the poem is trying to say.
- Revisit the list of gentle classroom sounds and explore any additional sounds that the poem has provoked them to think about.
- Compose poetry inspired by the whispers around us, drawing on the ways in which Rooney’s use of language expresses the mood and feeling the poem creates of gentle noises and gentle reminders or messages that the objects and trying to convey.

Session 10: Writing in role

Poem: *Home Time* (p52)

- Read the poem aloud and ask the children to imagine they are the clock in the poem – how does the poet give us the feeling we are the clock?
- This might be an opportunity to explore the poetic device of personification. Visit <http://www.poetryline.org.uk/poetic-devices> to find out more about this poetic device and to see additional poems that feature this device.
- Building on the work from the last session, what might other inanimate objects around school observe and how might they feel? What aspects of daily school and classroom life might they be able to comment on?
- Discuss these ideas and guide the children to talk about the significant times of the day when the inanimate object has a particular job to do, or makes a significant contribution. What is that job and how does it help us? Do we always listen and give it our respect? How might it feel?
- Use shared writing to explore the point of view of a table – perhaps one of the dinner hall tables or a particular staff member’s desk.
- Allow time for the children to consider other inanimate objects, drawing on the bank of

knowledge they have gained through their explorations of the school spaces, the sounds they hear and their understanding of point of view and personal perspectives.

Part 2 – Wider environments and perspectives

In this section of the teaching sequence, the children will explore wider environments and perspectives, reflecting on their personal responses and further explore their ability to communicate ideas through their use of language and poetic devices, building their own abilities as poets while drawing on the models in the collection and the work of other poets.

Session 11: Visualisation and writing in role

Poem: *The 20a Bus* (p54)

- Think about the local public transport network – you might have seen some on the journey to the local park for the walk in session 2, or the children might have experience of taking public transport locally and more widely. Ask the children to discuss their experiences in pairs and bring the discussion into a larger, whole class group. Build a list of their ideas on a flip chart.
- You might like to support their conversations by watching https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do7N7qtAc_w and talking about the types of transport you see.
- Imagine riding in the bus. What does it feel like? How do you move? What happens when the bus slows down or speeds up? What sounds can you hear?
- Share the poem. It explores the poet's feelings during a bus trip (when she was quite young!) and provides an opportunity to discuss how this perspective and her experiences might be shared by the children.
- Imagine you are the girl on the bus. Where are you going? What are you carrying? How do you feel? What is happening around you on the journey? Who is on the bus with you? The children can explore their ideas through role play in small groups. You might like to have the children film their role play to view back later – providing a record of their improvised discussions that they can then use in the writing.
- Use the poem as a model to write their own poems about a bus journey, from the point of view of a passenger or the bus driver.

Session 12: Writing in role

Poem: *Misunderstandings* (p38)

- Share the images of ambiguous signage taken on the walk in session 2. You might like to incorporate images of other ambiguous signs to the collection of photos collected on the walk and discuss the meanings that could be made from them. What are the signs trying to say? How do we know this? Where or how does the ambiguity feature? Are the ambiguities due to

spelling or grammar errors in the writing on the signs themselves, or do the words have dual meanings which create misunderstanding? Consider the ways in which our understanding of grammar and the structures of words and language creates the ambiguity.

- Working in small groups or pairs, the children can discuss their understanding of the signs from a range of perspectives - How might someone from another planet interpret the signs? How would you explain the meaning of the signs to them? Consider the alternative meanings you find and how others may interpret them. Encourage rich, language-related discussions and record their ideas and discoveries on post-it notes and thought bubbles, which could be displayed with the images.
- Share the poems. How has Rachel Rooney used the dual meanings of words and a play on ambiguity to build humour in these poems? What misunderstandings is she playing on? What lessons can we learn from this use of language and word play?
- Use the poems and their structure, along with the ideas resulting from the earlier discussions around the ambiguities of the signs examined and discussed, to compose their own poems.

You might like to extend the teaching sequence here by asking the children to make a collection of other signs they notice in their wider environment, examining them for ambiguities that they might explore as stimulus for further poems. Display Rooney's poems along with images of the signs they find and their poems. The children might choose to add some of these to the class or personal anthologies created in session 1.

Session 13 and 14: Visualising, note taking, writing in role

Poem: *Nursery Rhyme Advert* (p66 – 67)

- Consider other signage we might see in the local area – you might have noticed some estate agents' signs advertising houses for sale or to let. Support the children's understanding by showing some images of these. Start a discussion by asking the children: Have you noticed these types of signs before? What are they for? What do they do? How do they do it?
- Look at the ways in which houses are advertised in newspapers also.
- Share the first of the poems and think about the characters who might be selling these properties. What other nursery tale characters might consider moving? What might their homes look like? Explore the living spaces of a range of characters that might include: Old Mother Hubbard, Little Miss Muffet, The Three Bears and Goldilocks, Hansel and Gretel, the Old Woman who lived in a shoe, etc. How might you advertise their properties?
- Think about the persuasive language you might need to 'sell' the less favourable features of their properties in a more positive light. (e.g. The small and cramped conditions in the shoe belonging to the Old Woman might be described as bijoux.)
- The children can take the role of an estate agent working for the characters and write an advertisement for the property, then consider how this might be expressed in poetic form. You might like to support the children by sharing examples of estate agent details either from newspapers or from websites such as <http://www.rightmove.co.uk/> or

<http://www.primelocation.com/for-sale/> providing them with models of the information that is usually included in this form of writing.

- Share the second of the poems.
- In small groups, revisit nursery rhymes and familiar traditional tales, and explore other 'villainous' characters – their likes, features and personality traits and characteristics. How might they be misunderstood?
- In a shared writing activity compose a lonely hearts advertisement for one of the characters. Again, explore the ways in which less favourable features and characteristics can be expressed in a more positive light.
- The children could compose their own advertisements for the lonely hearts column.

You might extend the teaching sequence here, using an ICT session to publish their advertisements in suitable software and compiled to form a class newspaper. The class newspaper might also include some of the house advertisements.

Session 15 and 16: Role play, writing in role, performance poetry

Poem: *Monkey See, Monkey Do* (p 22)

- Ask the children to listen to the poem and think about from whose perspective the poem is written from? Does it make you feel like the poet observing the animals, or are you the animals describing your own movements and actions?
- Share the poem aloud with the children. You might like to read the poem a second time to allow them to fully build the pictures in their mind. You might like to collect a bank of words that describe the actions that come to mind.
- In pairs, ask the children to role play the exchange between two monkeys. Before reading it to them, ask them to consider how they interact? What do they do? Do they mirror each other's movements or respond with a different movement? Do they make any sounds as they interact? How does one monkey know what the other monkey is thinking? Read the poem to them as they explore the interaction.
- Talk to your partner about how the poem made you feel and discuss the perspective you think it reflects. Share ideas with another pair and with the whole class.
- Widening the perspective, think about how other animals move. Explore the movements and mannerisms of a range of domestic and wild animals – how does a cat move after it has been lying in the sun? Imagine you are a lion on the plains of Africa stalking your prey. Allow time for the children in groups to investigate the movements.
- In groups the children could choose an animal to write about, using the poem as a model.
- Make links to the personal perspective expressed in the final lines of the poem and explore the possibilities for bringing a personal perspective into the poems the children compose.
- Rehearse and perform their poems with movement and actions, adding a soundscape with voiced and percussive accompaniment if appropriate. You might like to share the performances more widely by filming them and sharing in an assembly, or performing them

for parents or other classes.

Session 17: Note taking, shared writing, responding to poems

Poem: Superstitious Sayings p62 - 63

- Share the poems. Are any parts of the poems familiar to them? Small groups could each be given a different poem to discuss, sharing their ideas with each other and then joining with another group to share these ideas. Share common ideas and reflections with the whole class, and begin to build a bank of their ideas on a flip chart.
- Each of the poems begins with a common saying. Discuss the first two lines of one of the poems – some may know of other sayings that they have heard before. Collect some of these for use later, adding them to the list of their initial ideas.
- Explore other common sayings and idioms. Visit <http://www.knowyourphrase.com/> for an extensive list of common sayings and their meanings. Examine sayings like ‘A fool and his money are soon parted’, extending the meaning to take into account other contexts based on personal understanding and experience.
- Compose their own poetry using the structure of the poems as a basis, extending the meaning of the initial saying and exploring wider perspectives through it.

You might extend the teaching sequence here, reflecting on other idioms and common sayings, perhaps by starting a saying of the week display. Each week a common saying can be shared, reflected upon and children can discuss and share their understandings of how the lesson gleaned from the saying can be taken into their everyday lives. They might make simple posters or write cautionary tales about characters who didn’t take heed. Share other cautionary tales, Aesop’s fables and other stories with moral lessons to be learned. Poems such as Hilaire Belloc’s *Matilda who told lies and was burned to death* might inspire them to write further cautionary tales in poetic forms. Listen to a performance reading of the poem https://youtu.be/qHzPag_SYx8, which might inspire the children to read and interpret this and other longer narrative poems in a similar way.

Session 18: Note taking, writing in role

Poem: *Liar* (p34)

- Ask the children to imagine how they feel when they don’t tell the truth. Share their ideas with a partner. If they had to describe the feeling as a colour, what colour would it be? What animal might best represent a lie? (*A fox, a snake or another animal?*) Build up a bank of class ideas gleaned from their discussions and display on the working wall.
- Children might like to draw shapes, colours and images that come to mind as you read the poem. Read the poem aloud twice, leaving a few minutes between readings for the children to

interpret the images and thoughts that come to mind as marks on the page – there are no right or wrong images here, it is about expressing a mood or feeling through the colours, shapes and connections they use to make sense of what they hear.

- Share their interpreted images in a class gallery. Children might be given post-it notes and they can walk around the gallery, adding post-it notes with words and phrases that come to mind to the display of images. What does the image make you think of? What words come to mind?
- Widen the perspective to consider other actions motivated by feelings (shouting, laughing, etc.) or feelings themselves, such as fear of particular things, anger or surprise. Explore their motivations and how they feel, expressing this using the poem as a model. What characteristics of the actions or fears could be described through personification or metaphor? If your actions or fears were a living thing, how would they act and what would they do? How can the metaphor of the living creature be extended to bring the fear alive and make the feelings it provokes more meaningful for an audience?
- Consider the relief felt by owning up or facing your fear – how do you deal with the living thing that represents your fear? What becomes of it?
- Compose poetry which expresses these emotions. You might like to provide some time to rehearse and perform the poems or share them in published form in the class or their personal anthologies.

Session 19: Note taking, writing in role

Poem: *Violet* (p24)

- Write the statement ‘What do colours mean to you?’ on the IWB and ask the children in small groups to discuss the statement. Show the second statement, ‘Can colours mean different things to people from different cultures?’ and explore their ideas on this – you might support their work by sharing examples of images of Hindu weddings (red) and Christian weddings (white) where different colours play an important part. Are there other examples?

You might like to extend the teaching sequence here through work in RE or PSHE, encouraging children to research other examples of festivals and cultures where colour plays a role and has a particular significance or role to play. What do the colours in these cultures represent?

- Give the children a range of art materials, magazines and images and have them make a collage of a colour that they have a particular affinity with or that has a personal significance to them.
- Share the poem and discuss the images that come to mind – What is the significance of Violet to the poet? What does the colour violet make you think of? Do you connect to the same or different things?
- Consider other colours and write poems that reflect the connections you make with them –

you might encourage them to take a wider perspective viewpoint and explore the colour on a cultural or community level rather, bringing your personal view through this wider lens.

Session 20: Writing in role

Poem: *Chick* (p82 - 83)

- Read the poem aloud. The poem is a delightful opportunity to return to an exploration of Rooney's use of words, language and metaphor to create mood and feeling – in much the same way as *Nobody Knows* (explored in session 2 of the teaching sequence) and will provide an opportunity for the children to demonstrate the ways in which their understanding has grown and developed through the course of the teaching sequence.
- How is the metaphor of the bird extended? How might it relate to Rooney's own experiences or view of herself? Are there any other meanings we can draw from the imagery the poem portrays?
- Look back to the session on *Monkey See, Monkey Do* where they explored the movements of animals – how can they draw lessons from that session and use what they learned to draft this recast view from an animal's point of view.
- What lessons can they take from the poem itself – How has Rooney shaped the language to extend the metaphor? How has she layered the meaning and built on the readers' understanding of the cycle of the bird from birth to leaving the nest?
- How might they describe their own growth and development as poets using imagery and metaphor? What animals might portray the kinds of characteristics they envisage for themselves?
- Individually or in pairs, the children could write their own poems which reflect their aspirations for the future, their view of themselves as poets.
- Share their drafts with others, exploring the effectiveness of their choices.
- Redraft and publish the poems, sharing them in their individual or the class anthology. The children might like to perform their poems for their peers.