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New research from CLPE supports Children's Laureate Lauren Child's call for children to be allowed time to think and develop ideas

The CLPE's new Power of Pictures research finds that giving children the opportunity to explore their creativity through art and supporting them to learn through picturebooks, has a direct and positive impact on children's literacy.

The findings will be published in an interim research report launched at a conference at the CLPE (the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education) on **Friday 14th June 2019** where outgoing Children's Laureate Lauren Child will deliver the keynote speech. One of Child's key aims for her laureateship is a focus on highlighting the importance of giving children time and freedom to explore and evolve their creativity. The CLPE's findings have produced strong evidence that the sort of creative freedom that Child has been calling for directly benefits children's writing and comprehension skills.

The findings are the result of an extensive research project over 6 years and the most recent research is drawn from the charity's participation in a wider report commissioned by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). The *Learning About Culture* report, which will publish in full in 2020, is an investigation into the role that cultural learning plays in improving educational outcomes for children.

During the research, 1500 Year 5 primary school children from across England worked with author-illustrators and CLPE education experts to learn how picturebooks are written using words and pictures. Their teachers also learnt how picturebooks can be used within the classroom, and how they can teach children about storytelling techniques such as structure and characterisation.

The key findings of the CLPE's research are:

- **Children who are given opportunities to read and respond to picturebooks throughout their primary years learn about sophisticated narrative structure, plot and character development in an accessible way.**
- **Children benefit from the opportunities, time and space to form their ideas prior to and during writing.**
- **When children are given opportunities to draw as part of the writing process this helps them to formulate, develop and extend ideas for writing; making their independent, self-initiated writing richer.**
- **A focus on reading illustration helps to develop children's deeper comprehension skills, allowing them additional opportunities to infer, deduce, think critically and empathise.**
- **Writing is a creative process and rough and draft work are essential to producing quality outcomes.**

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- **When the teaching of creative writing mirrors the process used by professional writers children can produce extended and independent writing beyond a level they currently experience.**

Charlotte Hacking, who devised the Power of Pictures scheme in 2013 along with multi-award-winning author **Ed Vere** conducted the research: *“In this increasingly visual world, the skill of analysing and interpreting images is even more essential for children – picturebooks are such an important tool for teaching these skills at an early age and benefitting children’s understanding in a wider context, for example when reading news stories, learning about cultural events or even when using social media.”*

Lauren Child adds: “I have put nurturing creativity at the centre of my aspirations for my time as Waterstones Children’s Laureate, as well as highlighting the importance of visual literacy and the value and significance of illustration as an art form.

Picture books at their best are philosophical, artistic and highly personal.”

Louise Johns-Shepherd, CE of the CLPE said, *“At the CLPE we have known about the value of picturebooks to all readers for a very long time. The evidence from this research helps us to articulate the unique importance of this genre to children’s developing literacy – and highlights the interrelationship between drawing, thinking and writing.”*

For more information about the CLPE project, please contact Catherine Alport (hello@catherinealportpr.co.uk/07843804083)

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Notes for Editors:

About The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education:

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) is an independent UK charity working to improve literacy in primary schools. Their work raises the achievement of children by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, putting quality children's literature at the heart of all learning. It is a charity with a national and international reputation for excellent literacy training, research and resources. Visit www.clpe.org.uk for further information or follow CLPE on Twitter @clpe1.

About Power of Pictures:

The Power of Pictures programme was initially devised in 2013 by Charlotte Hacking, Programme Leader at the CLPE and author-illustrator Ed Vere. The aim of the programme is to help primary school teachers to develop their understanding of the craft of picture book creation and illustration as a way of raising children's achievement in literacy. There are currently 10 author-illustrators involved in Power of Pictures, who work with the CLPE both within the classroom and by talking directly to teachers at conferences throughout the year. The author illustrators who worked on this year's project are: Viviane Schwarz, Alexis Deacon and Tim Hopgood.

Free teaching materials and resources for all age groups as well as short films from children's illustrators are available on the Power of Pictures website: www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures

About Lauren Child:

Lauren Child MBE is a multi-award-winning author and current Children's Laureate, whose books are known and loved the world over. She is the creator of many much-loved characters, including Charlie and Lola, Clarice Bean and Ruby Redfort. Since her first book was published in 1999, Lauren has sold over six million books in 19 languages worldwide. Her many awards include the prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal for *I Will Not Ever Never Eat a Tomato*, the Nestle Gold Book Award for *That Pesky Rat* and the Nestle Bronze Book Award for *Beware of the Storybook Wolves*. Lauren loves designing and making things and finds it exciting to see her drawings turned into objects. Other favourite things include the cinema, TV matinees, small Italian cars...

About The RSA's Learning About Culture Report:

Learning About Culture is a two-and-a-half year investigation into the role that cultural learning plays in improving educational outcomes for children. Its intention is to develop more evidence of what works and support schools and cultural organisations to use that evidence, as well as evidence from their own work and elsewhere, to continuously improve their practice. At the centre of the programme is a partnership between The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to deliver the UK's largest ever study of cultural learning. The RSA's research and engagement will go beyond that study, working with partners in the cultural and education sectors to build a commitment to self-improvement as strong as the commitment to ensuring access.

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