



Teaching Poetry in the Primary Classroom

Gervase Phinn

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When asked by the school inspector what he thought of poetry, an eleven year old replied that “it’s all lalada and daffodils, isn’t it?” In his primary school the boy had come across very little poetry apart from nursery rhymes, snatches of rhyming verse and a few comic pieces and nonsense poems. Poetry to him was something arcane, not really related to his own life. He had studied no powerful, challenging, contemplative, arresting, quirky poems and had written very few poems himself. His teacher admitted that he was no English specialist, had received few ideas at college on the teaching of poetry and didn’t really know where to start. As children progress through the primary school they need to be exposed to a rich diet of poetry and encouraged to read, perform and write it themselves. Providing a varied and stimulating environment is essential if it is to flourish. In addition, children need specific guidance and ideas to start them off writing their own poems. This book, written by a former teacher and school inspector, and popular and widely published children’s poet, offers an accessible, practical and structured programme for the teaching of this sometimes neglected aspect of the English curriculum.

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