

The Final Year by Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Joe Todd-Stanton

Otter-Barry Books

Life can be tough in your last year of primary school. Tests to take, preparing for the change to high school. Nate is ready for it all, knowing his best friend PS is at his side - they've been inseparable since Nursery.

But when they are put in two different classes and PS finds a new friend in Turner, the school bully, Nate's world turns upside-down. As he struggles to make sense of this and forge new friendships, he's dealt another blow when his youngest brother, Dylan is rushed into hospital.

His new teacher, Mr Joshua, sees a spark inside of Nate that's lit by his love of reading and writing and shows him how to use this to process what's going on. But with so much working against him, and anger rising inside him, will this be enough?

A powerful and lyrical story about finding your place in the world and the people that matter within it.

This collection was shortlisted for the 2024 CLPE Poetry Award

Overall aims of this teaching sequence:

- To explore and understand the importance of poetry as a genre.
- To explore musicality, rhythm and rhyme in poetry.
- To know how to listen and respond to a wide range of poems from a single poet collection.
- To understand that poems are written for different reasons.
- To interpret poems for performance.
- To gain and maintain the interest of the listener through effective performance of poems.
- To recognise how a poet uses poetry as a voice to express their own feelings and views.
- To draft, compose and write poems based on personal interests, experiences and emotions using language and form with intent for effect on the reader.

This is a CLIPPA (CLPE Poetry Award) Teaching Sequence for Years 5 to 7

Overview of this teaching sequence

This teaching sequence is designed to be delivered over 5 weeks or 25 sessions, but teachers will want to use their own judgement about the length of time their class will need to spend on each of the sessions.

With a longer novel like this, it would be useful to have multiple copies of the text for children to share and read for themselves in small groups or pairs. CLPE School Members can get **30% off** all book purchases at Peters Books to facilitate this as part of their membership.

Important note for teachers:

You will need to fully read both the book and this teaching sequence to decide whether it is

appropriate for your class and for the circumstances of individual children.

The book contains scenes where Dylan, Nate’s youngest brother falls ill and is taken into hospital. At one point, children may infer that Dylan has died. The scenes will be read straight through, until the children realise that he is in fact stable and alive, but these scenes will likely trigger a significant emotional response. Be aware of this before reading this section with your children, particularly any children who have directly experienced familial loss or serious illness. Sometimes reading will allow us to make sense of experiences from our own lives, but at other times this may be too upsetting to confront directly. You will need to make decisions as to how to approach this section of the text based on the knowledge of your own children.

Pupils will learn directly from the poems and creative practices of the poet, Matt Goodfellow. They will listen to, read, respond to, perform and write their own poetry inspired by what they have learnt and experienced, learning much about what this powerful genre offers to them as readers and writers.

They will have the opportunity to use the knowledge they have gained about poetic form, devices and structure throughout the sequence to decide how to present their poem on the page, as well as consider how these could be performed to an audience. The poems will be published in a variety of ways, including being performed, to be shared with the school community and beyond.

Understanding of, and response to, the novel will be greatly enhanced by the specifically planned cross-curricular links built into the sequence in PSHE, Geography and Science. Teachers should carefully read the cross curricular links outlined both below and within the sequence to ensure that time is planned into other subjects to extend learning from and beyond the book.

Overview of Approaches and Outcomes

Teaching Approaches:

- Reading aloud
- Hearing poems performed by a poet
- Performing poetry
- Looking at language
- Re-reading and revisiting poems
- Responding to poetry
- Learning about poetry from published poets
- Modelled writing
- Responding to writing
- Publication

Outcomes:

- Performance of the poet’s poetry
- Identifying poetic language and devices
- Text marking and annotation
- Using visual organisers to record information
- Evaluation of performances
- Poetry Journal with ideas and inspirations for own writing
- Writing in role
- Own written poems
- Non-fiction writing linked to concepts explored in the text: non-chronological reports and explanations
- Performances of children’s own original poetry

Exploring poetic forms and devices:

This collection gives an opportunity to explore the following poetic forms and devices:

- Assonance
- Alliteration
- Rhythm
- Rhyme
- Imagery
- Enjambment
- Opposition
- Free verse
- Verse novels

Cross curricular links

Personal, social and emotional development:

- Many poems in the collection relate to children's direct and personal experiences. They will be able to connect to and share their feelings and experiences linked to school, family and everyday experiences and the wider world.
- Some of the poems focused on in this sequence cover events such as family tension and break ups, personal worries and anxieties caused by personal events. Whilst it is important that all aspects of life are represented in poetry, as these allow children to see and make sense of emotions and experiences faced by themselves and others, teachers are advised to prepare themselves to mediate discussions with the children around the concepts and themes explored in the novel to avoid judgements being made on characters and their situations, which may arise from stereotypical portrayals seen and heard about in the mainstream media and popular culture. Planned activities will allow children to explore the discrimination faced by families who speak in regional accents and dialects and/or who come from working class backgrounds or live in low income households.
- Ensure that the class share a common understanding that during discussions they will be respectful and courteous and that there is no expectation that they have to share their responses or personal connections to the text, but that if they choose to do so this is a safe and secure forum for listening, not judging, and that nothing shared will be shared outside the room or used against anyone or that no one will react in a way that makes anyone sharing experience feelings of shame or disgrace, or be treated in a less favourable way because of anything they choose to share. Ensure time and space can be built in to pick up on themes and topics that need greater exploration.
- Be aware that children may want to write about experiences that are personal to them but may not want to share this writing publicly. This is valid and valuable and should be emphasised with the children. Writing is a personal endeavour, and it is up to each individual writer what they choose to share and what they choose to hold back.
- Equally, children may not want to refer to personal experiences when writing and should not be encouraged to do so if this is the case. Provide a range of alternatives for them, like encouraging them to step into a fictional scenario, writing about experiences they have seen or heard about in books, in films or on TV or by providing photographs of potential subjects that they can use to stimulate their ideas for writing, or by bringing the writing back to the novel itself. The important thing to communicate is that poetry is within us and all around us. Anything they have seen or experienced can provide the context for a poem, as Matt shares in the range and breadth of poems he writes throughout this collection.
- The book is also a fantastic context for exploring the different kinds of bias that are prevalent in society, and how people can be discriminated against because of their race, class, ability, sexuality, religion, age and gender. Explore the effects of discrimination and what is meant by prejudice, including looking at ways to address and tackle discrimination, both in terms of addressing problematic viewpoints, stereotypes and judgements and ways in which we can

work towards a more equal society. BBC Bitesize has some useful resources to explore this in Key Stage 2: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z8yjd3#zfnq7yc>, as does the PSHE Association: <https://pshe-association.org.uk/belonging-and-community>. This will also include accent and class bias. It can be used as a basis for a focus on creating a culture of respect for different voices, being clear that voices different from their own are equally valid and valuable and that judgements should not be made about the way in which people speak, just as we should not make judgements about the way people look, and that accents are not to be parodied or people stereotyped because of the way in which they speak.

- **As a teacher**, you may wish to read some recent and relevant articles to support your own understanding of some of the issues that underpin this, though these are not recommended for sharing with the children: <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/angela-rayner-tweets-accent-northern-b1992377.html>. This article from the Yorkshire Post also gives some useful history on accent bias and its links to social class bias, which is important to explore in the context of the book: <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/opinion/columnists/accent-shaming-of-angela-rayner-and-northerners-is-classless-rob-potts-3537971>
- Alongside this, care will need to be taken in carefully understanding the character of Nate's mum. It is important here for conversations to be open, but also to support children's understanding of some of the activities Mum engages in and why this might be, rather than making generalisations about her, based on a surface reading of the text.
- **As a teacher**, you will need to be clear on the likely reasons behind some of her behaviours to be able to mediate and extend conversations and to sensitively but constructively challenge any discriminatory comments. For example, in understanding why she and Auntie San play Bingo, it's important to understand the links between gambling and poverty. Research shows that gambling can be twice as likely in communities with the highest levels of concentrated poverty, compared to communities with the lowest poverty levels, and that gambling may be viewed as one of the few opportunities for financial advancement, and perhaps provides the lure as a means for easily gaining money. This could also be countered or extended to relay that Bingo can serve as a community touch point and offer social opportunity, experience and interaction. Therefore, Mum is likely doing this with the intention of bettering the life of the family, rather than frittering their money away, as evidenced when Nate tells us: 'Mum says we'll go somewhere fancy like Las Vegas when she wins big at Bingo'.
- Likewise, in conjunction with PSHE lessons around drug and alcohol education, it is important, alongside learning about the dangers of smoking and alcohol, to understand the influences that encourage people to engage in smoking or drinking. The PSHE Association has very helpful resources that can support such learning in the classroom: <https://pshe-association.org.uk/drugeducation>. It's important, rather than simply demonising these behaviours, that children understand the reasons why she may choose to smoke or drink, and the addictive nature of these substances that may make it difficult for her to stop.
- Depending on the age and emotional maturity of your children, these investigations and provocations could lead to a wider study about the widening inequality gap in UK society, why this exists, the impact on those from poorer backgrounds and how future governments might

work meaningfully to lessen and eventually to eradicate this, promoting greater equality of opportunity for all.

- Children will also focus on the relationships they have in their lives and the community that can offer support to them, and in turn that they can support and the importance of a range of relationships for healthy personal, social and emotional health and wellbeing and development.

Music:

- Matt's poetry is inspired by his background in writing song lyrics, as he explores in this video: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/matt-goodfellow-what-poems-do-you-remember-your-childhood>
- In the video, he mentions 'storyteller' lyricists like Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, John Prine and Kris Kristofferson. Listen to some of their music and look at some of their lyrics, as appropriate to the age of your children, finding the stories behind the words in the same way as you do with Matt's poems. Look at the similarities, differences connections in themes and subjects, and the voices, styles and patterns they use in their words.
- In the book, there is repeated reference to Bob Marley's song *Three Little Birds*. As it is referred to in the text, explore the lyrics with the children, and take time to consider why Matt Goodfellow may have chosen to reference this track and the links between the lyrics and concepts in the text.
- This could turn into a wider study of the music of Bob Marley and the wide influence he has had both on music and musicians and more widely. More than just a musician, Bob Marley was a cultural icon who used his platform to spread messages of peace, fight against oppression, and encourage social change. His legacy is not just in the melodies and rhythms of his songs but in the hearts and minds of those he touched with his words. At the end of the book, the children will be invited to consider what messages Matt Goodfellow could be communicating in the novel that encourage us to explore and consider issues prevalent in society today, which directly affect the communities the novel is set within.
- This could also be widened out into a study of Matt Goodfellow's other poetry (see book list below) to explore themes and issues prevalent in his poetry and how he chooses to communicate these to young audiences.
- You may wish to go on to explore the work of other poets and musicians who use their art to do the same, in particular Benjamin Zephaniah, whose poems and wider work can also be explored on his [poet page on the CLPE website](#).

Geography:

- Although it isn't directly mentioned in the text, as Matt Goodfellow reveals in his video about the dialect used in the book, the story is set in East Manchester. Allow time for the children to locate this area on a map of the UK and to look at local maps of the area to gain a sense of the area more broadly. They should use language to describe the physical and human geography of the area and look at aspects such as the kinds of homes and buildings, recreational facilities,

population density, employment, economy and transport infrastructure in the area. This will all enhance children's understanding of the characters and their lives.

- If you are based in or near this area, this could be completed as a local fieldwork study.
- If you are based outside of the area, children could research the area, comparing this area with their own locality.
- Many words and phrases in the text relate to the physical environment, such as: suburban semis, city, streets that surround the centre, take-aways, neon-washed litter, railway bridges, flyovers, taxis, buses, vape shops, corner shop, school, estate, claddin(g), council, regeneration, main road, terraced, landlord. Investigate the meanings of these words and what they tell us about the area the book is set.
- You may want to extend this into a larger study on urban regeneration, and the benefits and disadvantages for the local communities. This article from the Guardian may provide useful insights which will connect thinking to the lives of families such as Nate's:
<https://www.theguardian.com/local-government-network/2013/aug/29/mixed-communities-plan-government-regeneration>. This could also invite an opportunity to study the history of the architectural style, design and aesthetic of social housing around England over time. E.g.
 - Brutalist: [Concrete Beauty: A Rough Guide to London's Brutalist Housing Estates - Architizer Journal](#) and [Exhibition corrects myth that demolished Brutalist housing estate was unpopular with its residents \(manchester.ac.uk\)](#)
 - Inter-War Era: [Inter-War British Social Housing | RIBA pix](#)
 - Post War Era: [Post-War Council Housing Estates: The Planners' Dream of The Future | Historic England](#)

Science:

- Events in the book are ideal to link with the topic of the heart and the circulatory system in Science. This will help children to understand how the infection travelled round Dylan's body to his heart.
- BBC Bitesize has some supportive resources for this, which help children to understand and explore the circulatory system, including an explanatory video with transcript and explanation diagrams: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z9w9r2p#z6k88hv>.
- The children are advised at one point of the sequence to work together to research the circulatory system to compose an explanation as to how the infection travelled around Dylan's body in his bloodstream for someone else to understand. They could do this in any way they wish, such as:
 - A written report containing diagrams.
 - An explanation diagram with text and images.
 - A video presentation with images and voiceover.
 - A webpage.
 - A leaflet.

Art:

- Explore the black and white illustrative style of Joe Todd-Stanton throughout the book. In his illustrations, Joe presents the everyday lives of the characters in a series of intimate vignettes, akin to the ethos of the Kitchen Sink Artists of the 1950s.
- You could use this to begin an investigation into this movement. ‘Kitchen Sink’ painters is a term applied to a group of British artists working in the 1950s who painted ordinary people in scenes of everyday life. You can explore some of their work on the Tate website: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/k/kitchen-sink-painters>.
- Encourage the children to keep a sketchbook – either given to them or handmade – throughout the unit and to use it to capture everyday scenes, in the classroom, in the local environment or at home that they find interesting. Look at how Joe keeps his lines and shapes simple, rather than create a photorealistic representation. Draw alongside the children to replicate his style, modelling and demonstrating how to closely observe a scene, pick out significant details and how to translate these to the page, talking through your process, just as you would when modelling writing.

Links to other texts and resources:

Other books by or featuring Matt Goodfellow:

- *Let's Chase Stars Together*, Matt Goodfellow (Bloomsbury Education)
- *Bright Bursts of Colour*, Matt Goodfellow (Bloomsbury Education)
- *Chicken on the Roof*, Matt Goodfellow (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Caterpillar Cake*, Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Krina Patel-Sage (Otter-Barry Books)
- *The Same Inside*, Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Roger Stevens (Macmillan)
- *Be the Change: Poems to help you save the world*, Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Roger Stevens (Macmillan)
- *Being Me: Poems about Thoughts, Worries and Feelings*, Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow and Laura Mucha (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Shu Lin's Grandpa*, Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Yu Rong (Otter-Barry Books)

Other texts and poetry collections linked to the styles and themes in The Final Year:

- *Skellig*, David Almond (Hachette)
- *Everything All at Once*, Steven Camden (Macmillan Children's Books)
- *My Big Mouth*, Steven Camden, illustrated by Chante Timothy (Macmillan Children's Books)
- *Little Light*, Coral Rumble (Troika)
- *The Weight of Water*, Sarah Crossan (Bloomsbury)
- *Love That Dog*, Sharon Creech (Bloomsbury)
- *Fight Back*, A.M. Dassu (Scholastic)
- *Every Cloud*, Ros Roberts (Little Tiger)
- *Running on Empty*, S.E. Durrant (Nosy Crow)
- *A Kind of Spark*, Elle McNicholl (Knights Of)
- *There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom*, Louis Sachar (Bloomsbury)
- *The Unforgotten Coat*, Frank Cottrell-Boyce (Walker)
- *Michael Rosen's Big Book of Bad Things*, Michael Rosen, illustrated by Joe Berger (Puffin)
- *Overheard in a Tower Block*, Joseph Coelho, illustrated by Kate Milner (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Werewolf Club Rules*, Joseph Coelho (Quarto)

Before beginning the sequence:

- Before this session, ensure that individual Poetry Journals (small notebooks, which could be handmade) are available for each child to use throughout the unit to note ideas and inspirations. Set the context for how these will be used; they will be for the children's own thoughts, ideas, inspirations and drafts of poems. They will not have to share these with anyone else, unless they specifically want to, but they should be using these all the time to collect and craft ideas for poems that could be worked up to finished pieces at the end of the unit.

- Create a focus display, where you can display a copy of the front cover of the book, photographs of the author, Matt Goodfellow and illustrator, Joe Todd-Stanton, a copy of the text and other books, poems or poetry collections that the children know or could be inspired by (see links to other texts). This should include a copy of *Skellig*, by David Almond, which is heavily referenced and linked to in the text. The children may want to read this for themselves alongside or after reading *The Final Year*, or you may wish to go on to study this novel as a whole-class unit. Power of Reading plans are available for this text at: <https://clpe.org.uk/books/book/skellig>

Session 1: Introducing the novel and hearing the author read aloud to explore the language and world of the text.

- Share the front cover of the novel with the children. Read the title, the name of the poet Matt Goodfellow and the illustrator, Joe Todd-Stanton. *Have the children heard of either of these people before? Do they know any other books written or illustrated by either of them?* Provide a picture of both for the children to see and add these to the display alongside the front cover of the text.
- Give out a copy of the front cover to mixed pairs or groups of children and allow them time and space to respond to what they see, gathering their thoughts, ideas, observations and questions about the title text and cover image. You could provide supportive questions to frame discussions, if necessary, such as:
 - *What does the title, *The Final Year*, mean or suggest to you?*
 - *What do you know or think you know about the characters, setting and potential storyline from the title and cover art?*
 - *What do you notice about the main character seen on the cover? What do the wings make you think about or feel? Why do you think this character might have been shown in this way?*
 - *What ideas do you have about the story that might lie ahead?*
- Take some time for pairs or groups to feed back their initial impressions, noting prevalent ideas around a copy of the cover that can be displayed on the working wall. *What ideas were common in all the discussions? Why do you think this was?*
- Now, listen to author Matt Goodfellow read Part 1 of the book, *Before We Begin* (p.4-9): <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/part-1-we-begin-matt-goodfellow>
- Allow time for the children to discuss what they have heard, to gather their initial responses to the text, using supportive questions to guide discussions, such as:
 - *How did it feel to hear the author read the text aloud? What did you notice about the way in which he read the text? What might you infer about him or the story from this?*
 - *How did what you heard link to your initial ideas from the front cover?*
 - *Were there any words or phrases that you didn't understand or want to clarify the meaning of?*
 - *What more did you learn about the characters and where the story is set?*
 - *What other thoughts does this first section give you about the story that might unfold?*

- Provide the children with paper and soft drawing pencils (2B-4B is ideal) and tell them that they are going to hear Matt Goodfellow read this introductory section again. This time, as they hear him read the words, they should try and picture what they see in their mind's eye as he reads. If this image comes to them quickly, they can start drawing straight away, but explain that they will also hear the section a third time, to give them time to draw what they have been visualising. Play the video a second, then a third time to allow the children to compose their ideas and represent these on the page through drawing.
- Ask the children to place their drawings on the table in front of them and then to get up and walk round the classroom to browse each other's drawings. Allow time for them to consider and respond to each other's work. *What ideas or images were prevalent? Why do you think this might have been? What did you see in other people's work that interested you? Why was this? What other ideas did people's drawings give you about the initial section of the story you just heard?*
- Take time to look at Joe Todd-Stanton's illustration throughout this section. What has he chosen to focus on? What is similar and different to your own interpretations? What further ideas do you gain of the setting and characters from these illustrations?
- Finally, either provide children with a copy of the book to share in pairs or groups, or a copy of this section of the text to re-read for themselves. In the printed text, they will notice that Matt Goodfellow has made pragmatic decisions about the way he represents words on the page to mirror the authentic spoken accent and dialect of the main character, Nate.
- Without revealing this, encourage children to consider this for themselves as they read the text, provoking their thinking with supportive questions: *What do you notice about the way in which the words are represented on the page? How does this connect with how they heard Matt Goodfellow reading the text? Why might he have chosen to write certain words in the way he has?* Investigate the choices that Matt has made and how he has altered the standard spelling of these words to reflect how they are spoken by the character. Continue to encourage the children to do this, and to identify any vocabulary that they don't know the meaning of, or would like to clarify the meaning of, throughout the text.
- Listen to Matt talk about the decisions that he has made in a video where he discusses writing in dialect: <https://clpe.org.uk/books/book/final-year>. *How does what he said compare to the thoughts they had? Do they know any other authors who choose to write in a way that reflects the authentic voices of the characters in their stories, or poets that write in authentic voices? Who are they?*
- **It is important for teachers to understand that, although a push for Standard Spoken English is prevalent in the curriculum, their authentic voices, accents and dialects are part of their identity, part of who they are, just as Nate's is in this book.** Talk about some of the different accents and dialects that children have in the class, or that we see across the UK, including voices from other parts of the world. Some children may have moved from another region or country or have past generations of family members who have. Celebrate the languages, accents and dialects shared, linking these two writers, authors and poets that share their voices in their work. You might watch performances and explore poetry from Benjamin Zephaniah, Valerie Bloom, Manjeet Mann, Steven Camden, Nikita Gill or Jackie Kay, all of whom have videos on CLPE's Poet pages: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets> to explore a range of spoken accents and dialects and languages.

- Use this as a basis for a focus on creating a culture of respect for different voices, being clear that voices different from their own are equally valid and valuable and that judgements should not be made about the way in which people speak, just as we should not make judgements about the way people look, and that accents are not to be parodied or people stereotyped because of the way in which they speak.

Cross-curricular learning to enhance understanding of the text:

- In a series of ongoing Geography sessions, explore the area of East Manchester, which Matt Goodfellow reveals the story is set in. Allow time for the children to locate this area on a map of the UK and to look at local maps of the area to gain a sense of the area more broadly. They should use language to describe the physical and human geography of the area, looking at aspects such as the kinds of homes and buildings, recreational facilities, population density, employment, economy and transport infrastructure in the area. This will all enhance children's understanding of the characters and their lives.
- Suggestions for how to do this are outlined in the Cross Curricular links section.
- In an ongoing series of PSHE sessions, identify the different kinds of bias that are prevalent in society, and how people can be discriminated against because of their race, class, ability, sexuality, religion, age and gender.
- Suggestions for how to do this are outlined in the Cross Curricular links section.

Session 2: Reading and responding to poetry – building our understanding of characters and their lives.

- Begin the session by reading aloud the first part of **Part 2: Some Stuff Ya Need to Know: The Family**, from **Me (gonna do mine in rhyme)** (p.11) up to **Dylan** (p.19), taking time to ask the children to identify and clarify any unfamiliar or dialect-specific vocabulary after reading. *Which poems do you remember most vividly? Why do you think this was? What did you notice about the poems in this section?* The children may have found some of the poetic forms and devices interesting or memorable, such as the rhyme used in **Me (gonna do mine in rhyme)** (p.11), the alliteration prevalent in **No.2: Brandon – Jaxon's dad** (p.16) or some of the figurative language used to create strong imagery across the poems.
- Now take time for the children to re-read and reflect on what they have heard in this new section. *What more do they learn about Nate and his family? What impression do they gain of them from what they have heard?*
- Use this as an opportunity to begin a [Role on the Wall](#) for the character of Nate. This could be done as a whole class, or groups, pairs or individual pupils could work together to make their own. Either draw an outline of a general boy shape or copy an outline using one of Joe Todd-Stanton's illustration as a guide. On the outside of the outline, summarise what you know about Nate from being directly told in the text. On the inside of the outline, use what has been learned to infer what he is like as a character. Encourage the children to keep referring to the text and illustrations, from what they have read so far, to evidence and justify their opinions.

- Come together to discuss what the children have surmised, being prepared to mediate discussions with the children around the concepts and themes explored in the novel to avoid judgements being made on characters and their situations, which may arise from stereotypical portrayals seen and heard about in the mainstream media and popular culture. Navigate these conversations sensitively, exploring how certain characters might be perceived and why this might be, and using discussion to draw out the realism in the lives of the characters and their situation with understanding of the challenges they face.
- Think back to the footnote at the end of ***Me (gonna do mine in rhyme)*** (p.11): (Just swear I'm scared I'll lose control of The Beast that sleeps within my soul.) *What do you think this means? Why do you think The Beast is presented as a proper noun? What might this reveal to us about Nate?*
- Now, listen to Matt Goodfellow read ***Oh, so ya wanna know about The Beast, right?*** (p.20-21): <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/oh-so-ya-wanna-know-about-beast-right-matt-goodfellow>. *What more does this tell you about Nate?* Allow time for the children to add to their initial thoughts on the Role on the Wall, before looking at the poem on the page. It would be beneficial to give children a printed copy of the poem to text mark and annotate with their thoughts, feelings, observations, ideas and questions. Use supportive questions to help them gather their thoughts:
 - *What do you notice about how the poem is laid out? How is it different from other poems you've read so far?*
 - *Why might Matt Goodfellow have decided to lay the poem out in this way?*
 - *How do you respond to Joe Todd-Stanton's illustration of The Beast? What does it make you think about? Does it remind you of anything you have seen before? What sense does it give you of how it exists and behaves? Why do you think he may have chosen to represent it in this way?*
 - *What does it make you think about? How does it make you feel? What makes you feel this way?*
- Take time for the children to feed back, drawing thoughts on the language and layout choices made and what effects these have on them as readers.
- Now read aloud to the end of Part 2, up to **PS** (p.27). Once again, consider what we more we learn about Nate and his life, and add new thoughts, observations and inferences to the Role on the Wall.
- Invite the children to create a visual organiser to share the key relationships Nate has in his life, that he introduces us to in this section. They can choose any format for this, as long as it is a device to allow them to become clear on the characters and their relationships, which can be added to as the story continues to unfold. Use supportive questions to encourage their thinking:
 - *Who is in his direct family? What are they like?*
 - *Who is he closest to? Who is he most distant from?*
 - *Who else is important around this?*
- Consider the character of Auntie San. *Why do you think he calls her Auntie San, even though we know she is 'no blood relation'? What might this tell us about her and their relationship?*
- *Why do you think he describes PS as 'family too.'?*

- End the session by discussing the poems read so far. *Which ones are the most memorable? Why do you think this is? Which characters are you most interested in? Why do you think this is?*
- You could follow this by encouraging children to create a pen portrait of their most memorable character so far, telling others about them and explaining why this character has captured their attention.

Session 3: Re-reading and Performing Poetry – Expressing the meaning of a poem through performance

- Reflect together on what we know about Nate and his family so far, drawing on the notes and observations that have been made on the Role and the Wall and the visual organiser created in the previous session. *Where does he live? Who are the important people in his life? What is his life like?*
- Listen to Matt Goodfellow read **Our House** (p.24-25): <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/our-house-matt-goodfellow>. Consider the way in which he reads the poem. *How does the way he uses his voice capture our attention? How do we feel as we hear him read this poem? What makes us feel this way? What sense of the house do we gain from the words on the page and the way in which he performs them?*
- Now, listen to Matt Goodfellow’s advice on performing poetry: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/matt-goodfellow-what-advice-would-you-give-performing-poetry>. *How might this advice relate to a performance of this poem? How might they bring out the atmosphere and emotion of this poem in their performance?*
- Use these observations to consider how to work up any of the poems from Parts 1 and 2 for a performance. Allow individuals and groups of children to select any of the poems that particularly resonated with them to perform, and to decide how to organise themselves to do this most effectively. Use supportive questions to support them in considering the best ways in which to perform their chosen poem:
 - *What meaning or feelings did you gain from reading your poem? How might you convey this to an audience?*
 - *How do you think it might be best performed – individually, in pairs, in a group? Why?*
 - *How might you use your voice to bring out the meaning or emotion behind the words? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower?*
 - *How will you make sure any actions you may decide to include add to the performance, not detract from it?*
- Introduce children to the advice for a successful performance that CLPE have produced for schools shadowing the CLiPPA: <https://clpe.org.uk/system/files/2021-10/Advice%20for%20a%20successful%20performance.pdf>.
- Give the children time and space to mark-up copies of the poem with their ideas and work up a performance of the poem in the way they think it would work best. Give them space to decide how they will work – individually, in pairs or in a group – and how best to bring the words to life for their audience. If children are reluctant to perform, they can work with a group as a

response partner, looking at what is successful and what could be improved in their performance to build their confidence to perform in later sessions.

- After the children have had time to work up and rehearse their performances, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Before 13th June 2024, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes, including the chance to perform on stage with Matt at the National Theatre, as part of the CLiPPA Award Show on 12th July 2024.
- Then, ask the children to feed back on the interpretations of different groups, evaluating the effectiveness of different techniques and styles and what these brought to their understanding of the poem. *What was most effective about each performance? What did the performance bring to your understanding of or feelings about the poem? Which poems resonated with you personally? Why was this?*
- Come back together to discuss the similarities and differences in the poems that were explored in this session. *Were any specific poetic forms or devices used? Were the poems of a particular length – why might this have been? Were particular emotions evoked by poems? How was this achieved? Did the way in which poems were laid out direct your performance? How and why?*

Session 4: Reading and responding to poems read - exploring how text layout helps to communicate meaning and emotion in a verse novel and expressing this through performance

- Begin by looking at the title page of the next section of the book – **Part 3: End of Year 5**. *What might we expect in this next section of the story? What might happen at the end of Year 5 in a primary school? What might be introduced in preparation for Year 6? Allow children to connect this with their direct experience of school, talking about transition processes and what they know and have experienced about Years 5 and 6. How might you expect Nate to be feeling at this point of his school life? Why might he be feeling this way?*
- Read on until **PS** (p.35). *How are you left feeling at this point in the story? What made you feel this way? Using a shared copy of the book, or by placing the book under a visualiser, re-read this section so that the children can clearly see how the poems have been presented on the page. How does the layout help to emphasise what happens? What do you feel as you see the poems on the page? Which poems resonate with you the most strongly? Why do you think this is?*
- Listen to Matt Goodfellow talk about how poetry makes him feel: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/matt-goodfellow-how-does-poetry-make-you-feel>. *How does what he says connect with the poems you've read so far? Which poems remain most strongly in your mind? Why do you think this was? Did they evoke particular feelings in you? What were these feelings and how do you think his writing evoked these feelings within you?*
- Share copies of the poems in this section with mixed pairs or groups of children, giving different groups or pairs a copy of a different poem, either:
 - **All through Year 5 they've been tellin us** (p.29)
 - **Yeah, well, maybe, but** (p.30)
 - **Mum's out cold still** (p.31)

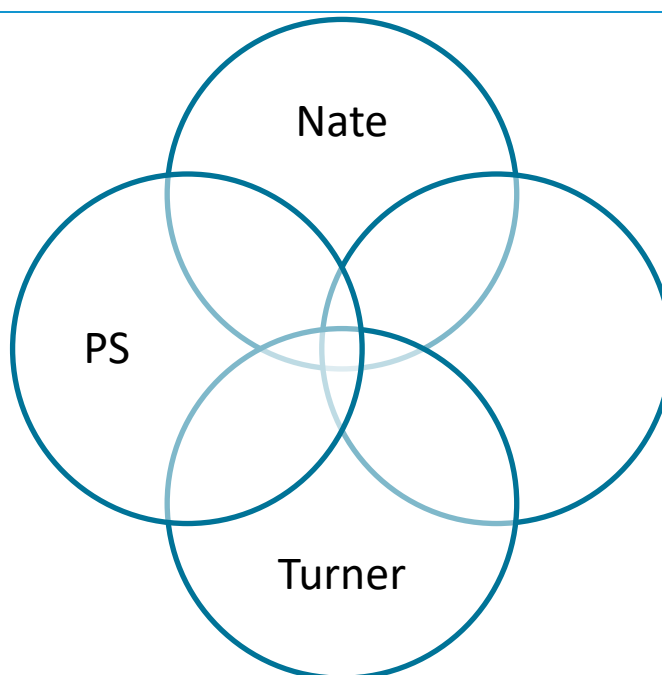
- **After registers** (p.32)
- **I only hear two names** (p.33)
- **He nods at me** (p.34)
- **PS** (p.35)
- Encourage the children to text mark and annotate their poem with their thoughts, feelings, ideas and observations about it. This should include:
 - How it sits in the sequence of poems so far to build our understanding of the narrative.
 - The emotions evoked by the poem, and why this is.
 - What it tells us about the characters and their situations at this point in the story.
 - How the length and layout of the poem adds to our understanding or emotional engagement.
- If a pair or group has one of the shorter poems, they should be encouraged not to make their responses too simplistic, because of the length, but to think about where this sits in the context of the narrative and why this length of poem and precise language has been chosen at this particular point, connecting it to other poems that have come before it.
- Come back together to feedback and discuss what the children have observed. *What more do we learn about Nate? What is he likely to be thinking or feeling at this point?* Encourage the children to continue to record their thoughts on the Role on the Wall. They could also produce a thought bubble for Nate to summarise their ideas.
- Now, listen to Matt Goodfellow read the next poem, **Mr Joshua** (p.36-37): <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/mr-joshua-matt-goodfellow>. *What do we learn about Nate's new teacher? What sort of a person do you think he is? How do you think Nate feels about him? What makes you think this? What are we told directly and what are we left to infer?*
- Re-read this poem, sharing once again how the poem is laid out on the page. *How does the layout help us to understand how Nate is feeling at this point of the story? Why might certain choices of line breaks and spacing have been made?*
- Consider the re-appearance of The Beast. *Why might it have chosen this point to emerge? Why do you think it withdraws? What does The Beast signify for Nate? Do you believe him when he says he's fine? Why or why not?*
- Read on, up to **He stops me as I leave** (p.46). *What more do we learn about Mr Joshua here?*
- Give each child a copy of the illustration of Mr Joshua and Nate at the bottom of p.37. *What words or phrases would you choose and use to describe Mr Joshua from what you've heard about him so far?* Invite the children to scribe these around a copy of the illustration. Now, encourage them to think about why they have chosen these particular words, justifying these opinions with evidence from what has been read so far.
- Finally invite the children to choose one poem, or a short series of these poems from this section to work up for a performance. Allow individuals and groups of children to select any of the poems that particularly resonated with them to perform, and to decide how to organise themselves to do this most effectively.
- Remind yourselves about what was most effective from the performances from the previous session, then give the children time and space to mark-up copies of the poem with their ideas for a performance of their chosen poem(s) in the way they think it would work best. Give them

space to decide how they will work – individually, in pairs or in a group – and how best to bring the words to life for their audience. If children are reluctant to perform, they can work with a group as a response partner, looking at what is successful and what could be improved in their performance to build their confidence to perform in later sessions.

- After the children have had time to work up and rehearse their performances, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Before 13th June 2024, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes, including the chance to perform on stage with Matt at the National Theatre, as part of the CLiPPA Award Show on 12th July 2024.
- When they have performed, ask the children to feed back on the interpretations of different groups, evaluating the effectiveness of different techniques and styles and what these brought to their understanding of the poem(s). *What was most effective about each performance? What did the performance bring to your understanding of or feelings about the poem(s)? Which poems resonated with you personally? Why was this?*
- Come back together to discuss the similarities and differences in the poems that were explored in this session. *Were any specific poetic forms or devices used? What emotions were evoked by particular poems? How was this achieved? Did the way in which poems were laid out direct your performance? How and why?*

Session 5: Developing understanding of and empathy with characters

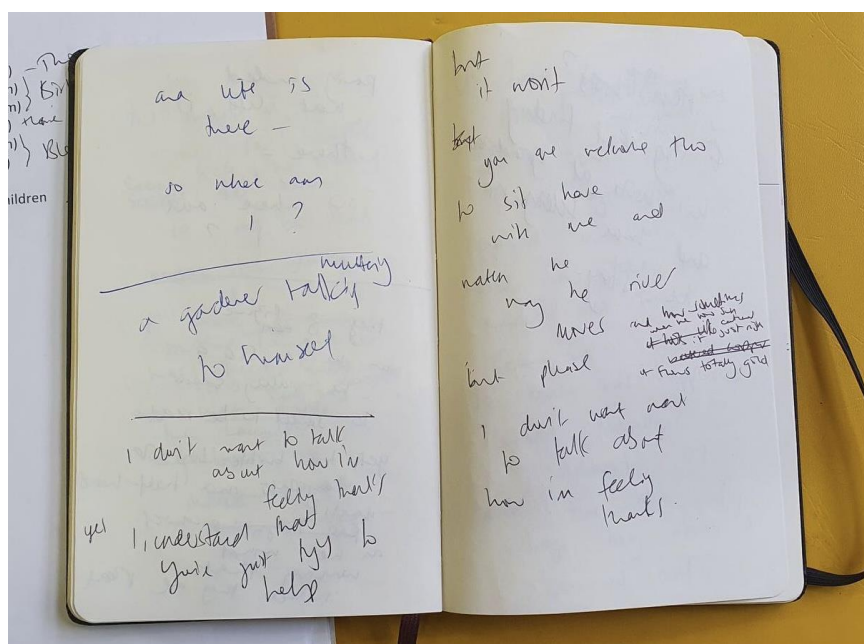
- Come together to encourage the children to summarise what they have read so far, before reading on from **At lunch** (p.47) to **On the last day of Year 5** (p.56-57), taking us to the end of Part 3. Take time to clarify any unknown or dialect specific vocabulary, such as
- Take some time to reflect on what more we learn about Nate, PS and their relationship. *How are they similar? What's different about them? What do you think makes them best friends? Do these poems give you any more insights as to why Nate thinks of PS as 'family too'?*
- Now, reflect on the new character that has been introduced - Turner. *Who is he? What do you know or think you know about him? How do you think Nate and PS feel about him? What tells or shows you this in the text?*
- Give children copies of this series of poems to re-read, text mark and annotate for themselves, along with a visual organiser to be able to compare the three boys. There will be another character to add to this as the story progresses, so a four-way Venn diagram, as illustrated below, will be ideal for this, with Nate, PS and Turner's names added to three of the circles at this stage. This would be useful to print out large on A3 paper, as the children will continue to add to these as the story progresses:



- As they read the text for themselves, encourage the children to consider what the words chosen directly tell us about the characters and what they might allow us to infer without directly telling us. Encourage them to use the visual organiser to note down their similarities and differences on the diagram, using each character's solo space to identify features unique to them, and overlapping areas to identify similarities between them.
- They may, at first find it easier to find similarities between Nate and PS, but more difficult to see similarities with Turner. Encourage the children to think deeply, drawing inferences and evaluations from what they've heard so far – one similarity between them all, for example, which could be noted in the centre overlap, is that they are all in Year 5 and going into their final year of primary.
- You could follow this up by giving the children a further chance to engage in performing poems from this section to bring out the emotions involved in the relationships between the characters. Before 13th June 2024, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes, including the chance to perform on stage with Matt at the National Theatre, as part of the CLiPPA Award Show on 12th July 2024.
- Give each child an individual Poetry Journal (small notebooks, which could be handmade) to use throughout the unit to note ideas and inspirations. Set the context for how these will be used; they will be for the children's own thoughts, ideas, inspirations and drafts of poems. They will not have to share these with anyone else, unless they specifically want to, but they should be using these all the time to collect and craft ideas for poems that could be worked up to finished pieces at the end of the unit.
- Encourage them to use these today to think about how they could write a poem about a close friend in their lives, learning from how Matt Goodfellow has written about PS from Nate's

perspective. Make this as broad as possible; for some children a pet, a relative or special toy might be thought of as a best friend – this doesn't have to be someone at school.

- Take some time to consider and make notes of who you might write about and how you might describe them or explore aspects of your relationship in a poem. On a blank page, encourage them to write freely for ten minutes, recording as many ideas and as much information as they can think of. Some children may wish to record their ideas in drawings, rather than words as a means of generating ideas and vocabulary for writing. You could also share an example from Matt's own journal, exemplifying the messiness and immediacy of writing at the point of drafting:

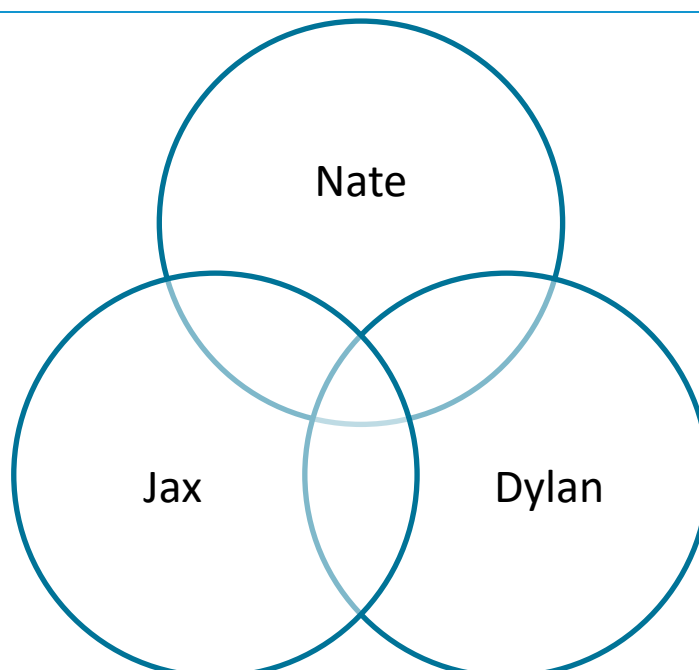


- Give the children a period of independent writing time, where they can work up these ideas into a poem of their own, on a new page of their journal, drawing back on the original poems and their structures, language and forms to use to support their own writing, if they would find this helpful. They could borrow from the original lines and structure, or they could break away from this to craft their poems freely.
- As they work on their poems, allow them to consider where, how and why they will break up lines and verses, or use line spacing, drawing on what they found have effective in Matt's own work.
- Work on your own poem alongside the children as they write, sharing your own process with any children who are struggling to get going or who need support in the craft of writing. When they have had chance to work up a draft, allow time for them to read this aloud to a partner, who can tell them what they liked about their work, ask them questions about it, discuss any challenges and suggest improvements as a reader.

- Model this process by sharing your own work with the children first, looking at how to make edits on the page, as challenges are explored, and suggestions are made. Model that writing is a tentative, rough and often messy process as you shape ideas into a finished piece.
- When they have acted on the response, allow them time to present their poem for publication. This might be writing it up in presentation handwriting, typing up on a word processor or filming a performance of their finished poem. Collect these together and make a display or bind into an anthology of friendship poems. Allow the children time to reflect on their work and that of others, talking about what they liked, what they found challenging and how they feel about the finished compositions.

Session 6: Exploring intra and intertextual connections

- Begin the session by re-reading the final poem in Part 3 ***On the last day of Year 5*** (p.56-57). Consider what you heard in this poem about the Year 6 leavers assembly. *What do these experiences make you think about what might happen in Year 6 for Nate? What do you think might happen in the rest of Nate's story, based on what we have read so far?* Give each child an A5 piece of paper or large sticky note and invite them to make their predictions about what might be likely to happen in the next part of the story, based on what they've read and their own knowledge and experience. Stick these up around a copy of the poem on the working wall or in a shared journal and look at the similarities and differences between the children's predictions and what has contributed to these.
- Now read on, from ***I love the smell*** (p.59) up to ***As I'm leavin the library*** (p.66). *What more do we learn about Nate here, that we might add to the role on the wall? What else do we learn about his family, in particular his brothers, Jax and Dylan?*
- In the same way as you did with Nate, PS and Turner, give the children a visual organiser – a three-way Venn diagram is ideal - and copies of the text to be able to compare the three brothers. As before, this would be useful to print out large on A3 paper, so that the children can continue to add to these as the story progresses. *In what ways are they similar? What is unique about them? What do we know about the relationships they have with each other?*



- As before, encourage them to use the visual organiser to note down their similarities and differences on the diagram, using each character's solo space to identify features unique to them, and overlapping areas to identify similarities between them.
- Come back to re-read and think about the final poems, from *I read everything I can find* (p.63) to *As I'm leavin the library* (p.66). *Have the children heard of David Almond before? Have they heard of any of the books by him that are mentioned in the poems? Do they know any others? Why is it that Nate likes his writing? How do these ideas relate to his own life?*
- You may wish to share the first few pages of *The Boy Who Swam* with Piranhas and ask the children to consider what it might be about the text that 'hooked' Nate.
- Ask the children if they have a favourite author or book(s) that 'hook' them. *Who are they? How does their work resonate with you in the same way David Almond's work does with Nate? If you don't have one, why? What would you like to read that you haven't found yet?* Invite the children to record their thoughts in writing, display these in the book corner and use these to update stock to both reflect and widen children's choices, based on their tastes and preferences. You should also look to the importance of the cultural relevance and voice of David Almond's work on Nate as a reader, ensuring that there are texts in your book stock that allow all children to see their lives reflected in what they read.
- In their individual poetry journals, in the same way as they did in the previous session with their friends, invite them to make notes and draft and write poems about significant members of their family. They may have siblings, like Nate, who they want to write about, or they may want to write about cousins, parents, aunts, uncles or grandparents. This could broaden out to people like Auntie San and PS, who they consider 'like family', as Nate does with them.

- Revisit significant poems about family members read so far and consider how Matt Goodfellow chooses and uses language to bring out their characters and the relationships they have with each other, and how the layout, form and style of the poems also contribute to our emotional engagement and understanding. Use all this knowledge to support you in developing your own writing.
- Model this with your own ideas alongside the children, exploring how you might begin crafting a poem based on one of your own family members, talking through the choices that you are making as a writer to communicate the right feelings and images for your reader.
- As you all write, think about the form the poem will take and if they will use any of the poetic devices you have explored in Matt Goodfellow's poetry, such as rhyme, wordplay, repetition, imagery, alliteration or assonance. You may have children in the class who are very adept at using rhythm and rhyme in their writing, some may be more comfortable to write in free verse and find it easier to express their thoughts and feelings in this way.
- Encourage them to select the form and devices that allow them to best express their themes and feelings, as they have seen and responded to in Matt's writing.
- When their drafts are complete, encourage them read these aloud to themselves, perhaps while walking around or moving so they can feel the rhythms of their writing before sharing with a response partner to lift the words off the page, hearing how they sound when performed. Give time for response partners to ask the writers questions, discuss parts they aren't sure are working, adjust rhythms or make suggestions to improve the writing.
- Start to think together about how the poem could be presented on the page to enhance the meaning and the reader's understanding. Draw the children's thoughts back to what they saw in Matt Goodfellow's poems and the impact this had on them as readers. Encourage them to use this knowledge to edit and publish their draft to work up to a finished piece.

Session 7: Developing empathy with characters and events, recognising authorial intent and impact on the reader.

Important notes for teachers:

- In this section of the text, we learn more about Nate's mum. It is important here for conversations to be open, but also to support children's understanding of some of the activities Mum engages in and why this might be, rather than making generalisations about her, based on a surface reading of the text.
- **As a teacher**, you will need to be clear on the likely reasons behind some of her behaviours to be able to mediate and extend conversations and to sensitively but constructively challenge any discriminatory comments. For example, in understanding why she and Auntie San play Bingo, it's important to understand the links between gambling and poverty. Research shows that gambling can be twice as likely in communities with the highest levels of concentrated poverty, compared to communities with the lowest poverty levels, and that gambling may be viewed as one of the few opportunities for financial advancement, and perhaps provides the lure as a

means for easily gaining money. This could also be countered or extended to relay that Bingo can serve as a community touch point and offer social opportunity, experience and interaction. Therefore, Mum is likely doing this with the intention of bettering the life of the family, rather than frittering their money away, as evidenced when Nate tells us: ‘Mum says we’ll go somewhere fancy like Las Vegas when she wins big at Bingo’.

- Likewise, in conjunction with PSHE lessons around drug and alcohol education, it is important, alongside learning about the dangers of smoking and alcohol, to understand the influences that encourage people to engage in smoking or drinking. The PSHE Association has very helpful resources that can support such learning in the classroom: <https://pshe-association.org.uk/drugeducation>. It’s important, rather than simply demonising these behaviours, that children understand the reasons why she may choose to smoke or drink, and the addictive nature of these substances that may make it difficult for her to stop.
- Continue reading the book aloud, from *Text from Spain*: (p.67) to *Every now and then* (p.78-79).
- Reflect on the poems read to add more information to Nate’s role on the wall, particularly considering the emotional connections and relationships he has with his family. The children may also choose to add more information to their visual organiser exploring the characters of Nate, Jax and Dylan and the relationships between them.
- Here, we begin to gain further insights into Nate’s mum, consider these alongside what’s already been read, flipping back to poems about her in previous parts of the book, to discuss and build a picture of her as a character. *What do we know or think we know about her from the text? What do we learn about her relationship with Nate, Jax and Dylan? What do we know about her relationship with Auntie San?*
- Encourage the children to pick out specific parts of the text that:
 - **share the love she has for her sons:** repeated use of the phrases ‘my boys’, ‘yer a good un’ and ‘love ya’, the fact she has stayed with them throughout their lives when their fathers have not, that the boys have a home of their own, are fed, have playtime and things to play on/with – such as their bikes, Dylan’s Spiderman costume and their games console.
 - **show her ambition to do her best for the family:** going to the Bingo in the hopes of a financial win for them, that she borrows money to ensure Dylan has a birthday party, her admission that ‘I try my best, Nate I really do.’, her continuing ambition that ‘things’ll be different one day’.
 - **show her caring and positive nature:** that she’s ‘always tryna fix someone’, that she ‘laughs a lot loud proper head back snortin’, how she went to school to support Nate with exploring his ‘issues’, the solidarity she gains from her friendship with Auntie San and the support they provide for each other, the fact she’s ‘always dead nice’.
 - **highlight the hardships she’s faced in her life:** that she ‘ran away at 15’, she had Nate ‘at 17’, that she has been affected by Nick’s (Nate’s dad’s) disappearance ‘she’s always been lookin for Jesus it’s just that now she only sees his face at the bottom of a bottle or the back of a bingo card.’, that she ‘stresses out’ at the idea that the landlord will put

the rent up or sell the house, the talk of her ‘lost loves and bad luck, missed opportunities, near misses’.

- As per the teacher’s notes above, spend time through carefully mediated whole class discussion to really get under the surface of her character, beyond some of the initial generalisations that might be made, to highlight her love and strength amidst the challenges faced by the position she finds herself in.
- Now, listen to Matt Goodfellow read: ***Summat I worry about over the last few weeks of summer*** (p,80) to ***Text from PS to me*** (p82): <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/summat-i-worry-about-matt-goodfellow>. *What do these poems tell you about the relationship between Nate and PS and how Nate feels about this at this point of the story? Look back over the poems read so far. Can you identify a point at which the change might have started occurring? What was the reason for this? What other clues are there in other poems in this section that show that there might be a change in their relationship?*
- Look back at these poems on the page to encourage the children to find evidence for their ideas. They might note:
 - The choice of the word ‘worry’ in the title of the first poem – directly showing Nate’s feelings and the choice to say that this is ‘over the last few weeks of summer’, showing that this is an ongoing worry and has been happening for some time.
 - The way Nate points out that not answering his phone is something PS has ‘never done before’, showing a significant change.
 - The changes in PS behaviours evident in the language chosen; ‘he gets proper twitchy’, ‘he’s lyin’, ‘he can’t look at me’, ‘he hisses’, the choice to end the speech *Get off my case man!* with an exclamation mark, and what this tells us about the way in which he says this.
 - The impact of the final lines, and the presentation on the page of the final word ‘disappear’ – and what this leaves us thinking and feeling.
 - The contrast between Nate’s tentative question, and PS’s abrupt reply in their text messages.
- Follow this session by encouraging children to use their Poetry Journals to come up with ideas for poems about any personal experiences they wish to and feel comfortable to record. *What significant experiences, from your everyday life at school or home might you choose to write about in a poem?* You might refer to subjects covered by Nate in the book so far as a way of stimulating the children’s ideas. They might write about a first or last day at school, meeting a new teacher or moving to a new class, a time where they have experienced a certain emotion liked to something that happened at school or home, a memorable birthday party or family celebration, their home itself, the place where they live or what they like doing in the school holidays.
- Once again revisit significant poems read so far and consider how Matt Goodfellow chooses and uses language to share certain experiences in Nate’s voice, and how the layout, form and style of the poems also contribute to our emotional engagement and understanding. Use all this knowledge to support you in developing your own writing in your own voice about your own life.

- Model this with your own ideas alongside the children, exploring how you might begin crafting a poem based on a significant experience for you, talking through the choices that you are making as a writer to communicate the right feelings and images for your reader.
- As you all write, think about the form the poem will take and if they will use any of the poetic devices you have explored in Matt Goodfellow's poetry, encouraging them to select the form and devices that allow them to best express their themes and feelings, as they have seen and responded to in Matt's writing.
- When their drafts are complete, encourage them read these aloud to themselves, perhaps while walking around or moving so they can feel the rhythms of their writing before sharing with a response partner to lift the words off the page, hearing how they sound when performed. Give time for response partners to ask the writers questions, discuss parts they aren't sure are working, adjust rhythms or make suggestions to improve the writing.
- Start to think together about how the poem could be presented on the page to enhance the meaning and the reader's understanding. Draw the children's thoughts back to what they saw in Matt Goodfellow's poems and the impact this had on them as readers. Encourage them to use this knowledge to edit and publish their draft to work up to a finished piece.

Session 8: Recognising and understanding how an author creates emotion and develops empathy in a reader.

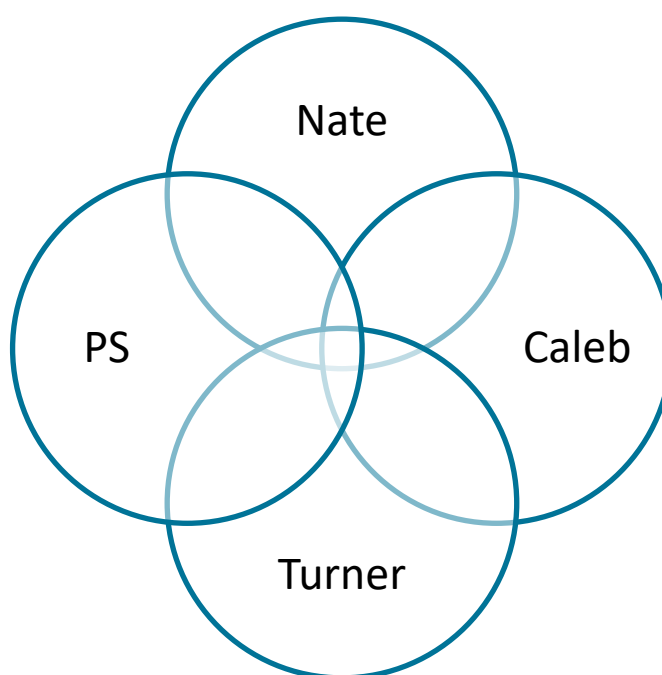
- Begin the session by looking at the title of the next section of the book; **Part 5: The Final Year**. Revisit the thoughts they had previously about what they might be expecting for the rest of the book. *Did the poems in Part 4 give you any additional predictions? What are these and what gives you these ideas?*
- Read aloud the poems from The first day back (p.84), up to Three little birds (p.88). *What more do you learn from the text and illustration about how the relationships between Nate and PS and PS and Turner are developing? What connections have been created between PS and Turner? How does this affect Nate and his relationship with PS? Use the visual organiser for the three boys to record further thoughts and ideas. How might these developments affect Nate as the story moves on? What makes you think this?*
- Now, read on from **On the playground** (p.89) to **When the bell goes** (p.96-97) *What more does this section tell you about Mr Joshua? What role do you think he plays in Nate's story? Give the children time and space to add more thoughts and ideas around their copy of the illustration of Mr Joshua, where they recorded their initial ideas about him. Encourage them to refer to the poems to provide evidence for their ideas from the text.*
- Now, read the next two poems, I catch a flash of PS's bag (p.98) and The Beast begins to stir (p.99). *How do you feel about Nate at this point in the story? What makes you feel this way? What more do we learn about the relationship between Nate and Jax here? Why do you think it is at this point that The Beast begins to stir? What has triggered this? How does Nate keep it under control? Add any more thoughts about Nate, Jax and their relationship to the brothers' visual organiser.*

- Finish the session by reading aloud from ***What the next few weeks teach me about Mr Joshua*** (p.100-101) to ***A poem I write in my ideas book about PS but would never EVER show anyone in the world let alone him*** (p.108). *What more do we learn about Mr Joshua and his role in Nate's story? What does he notice in Nate? How does he support him? How does poetry and writing help him?*
- Come together again to watch Matt talk about writing poetry for young people: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/matt-goodfellow-what-special-about-writingpoetry-children>. *How might what he says here connect with the poems you have read? Do you think any of the poems have helped you to make sense of life or the world around you?*
- Discuss with the children how reading, in particular reading poetry, can help us see our own lives reflected and help us make sense of our experiences and emotions. *Has reading any part of the Final Year enabled them to connect with or reflect on any experiences or emotions they have experienced in their own lives? Has writing any of their own poems enabled them to do this? In what ways?*
- Come back to think about the emotional journey Nate is going through in the story. Begin to create a graph of emotion with the children to mark out the high and low points for Nate, connected to specific events that have happened in the book. You could create this as a whole class, negotiating together about what events to include and what emotions to connect to these, or you could allow children to work individually or in mixed pairs or groups to create their own.
- Consider the high and low points that have been identified and discuss how these might be affecting Nate. *What and who is triggering his emotions and what and who is helping him to control them?*
- This could be broadened out into a wider discussion about children's own emotions and the strategies and support systems they have for managing these. The children could share and discuss these together, recording ideas and advice that might support others when they find themselves in emotionally challenging situations, in a focus display or in a shared scrapbook for them to refer to on a regular basis.

Session 9: Connecting story events and characters to our own lives.

- Read aloud the next series of poems, from ***One mornin*** (p.109) to ***I don't notice Mr Joshua has walked into the library and is readin the poem over my shoulder***. Continue to reflect on the things that trigger Nate's emotions and the support systems he has for managing them. *What does Mr Joshua do to support all the children, and particularly Nate, to be calm and confident? Why do you think The Beast stays asleep when Turner picks on him? Who supports him to control and manage his emotions as well as from Turner's provocation? How do they do this?*
- Encourage the children to reflect on these events, by making connections to their own personal experience, so that they can begin to relate events to their own lives, using supportive questions to stimulate their thinking, such as:
 - *Has anything like this ever happened to you, or have you ever seen anything like this happen – in real life, on TV or in a film or in something else you have read?*

- *What do you think about the way each of the characters conduct themselves and react? What does this teach us about them as characters?*
- *Can you empathise with any character in particular? Who and how?*
- Add Caleb's name to the final circle of the Venn diagram and discuss what we learn about his character. Revisit his first appearance in **Year 6J** (p.93), as well as the poems that have just been read. Encourage the children to reflect on Caleb and the relationships that are developing between all four boys, using supportive questions to scaffold their thinking, such as:
 - *What do we know about Caleb? What are our initial impressions of him? How is he similar and different to Nate? Why might they have struck up a relationship? How does Caleb compare to PS and Turner? What role do you think he might play as the story progresses?*
 - *How has PS and Turner's relationship developed? How does this affect Nate's relationship with PS? How has PS changed? Why do you think this is?*
- Encourage the children to record their thoughts and ideas on the visual organiser.



- Now, read on from ***DYLANNNNNNN! COME DOWN FOR TEA!*** (p.121) to ***At school Mr Joshua goes*** (p.131). *What more do we learn about Nate and Caleb from the text and illustrations in this section of the book? How is their friendship developing and why do you think this might be? What experiences do they share?* Encourage the children to add their thoughts and ideas to Nate's role on the wall and the 4-way Venn diagram.
- Consider together the book that Mr Joshua introduces to the class, *Skellig* by David Almond. *Have any of the children read this book? What do we learn about it from this part of the text? How might it connect with Nate's life and experiences?* Re-read the final poem, ***At school Mr***

Joshua goes (p.131). *Why do you think Mr Joshua takes them to the park to play? Why do you think this leaves him with ‘a big smile on his face’? What more do we learn about him? What do you think about him as a teacher?*

- Provide the children with further time to work in their Poetry Journals to continue to explore their own ideas for poems based on experiences from their own lives. These might be inspired by events in the story, such as experiencing and managing emotions, getting on and falling out with friends, experiences from home or school, or important people in the children’s lives.
- Allow children the freedom to come up with and develop ideas flexibly, based on the previous modelled poetry writing. Some may spend time drawing and making notes, others may go straight into drafting lines, snippets or verses for poems. There will be time at the end of the sequence for them to continue to work on and develop these ideas for publication.

Sessions 10 and 11: Broadening understanding of story concepts through non-fiction research and writing.

- Read aloud **When we get back to class** (p.132-133). *Have you ever been on a school trip before? Where did you go? What was it like?*
- Investigate together where the children are being taken on the trip, The Lake District, and more specifically, Windemere. *Has anyone heard of or been to the Lake District before? What do they already know or think they know about this place? What might the children do on a trip there?*
- Find The Lake District and Lake Windemere on a map. Explore the distance between there and East Manchester and look at the differences between the two locations in terms of environment and physical and human geographical features.
- You could share a video of the area with the children to be able to see and hear about the features of the area, for example: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/ks2-geography-lakes-lochs-and-reservoirs/zp4pp4j>
- Watch the video once and allow the children to respond to what they have seen. *What have they learned about The Lake District, that they didn’t know before? How does it compare to where Nate lives, and where his school is? Why do you think the school might have chosen to bring them here for their school journey? How do you think Nate will react to being in this place?*
- Now, watch the video for a second time, this time, tasking the children to make notes of specific information about The Lake District, that they could use to tell someone else about this place. Allow time for them to share their notes with someone else to make a new combined set of information.
- The video also has a transcript, which could be printed out and highlighted to retrieve specific facts and figures that need cross-checking. These can then be checked and/or added to their combined notes, if necessary.
- Set the children the task of conducting additional research on the area. Again, this could be done collaboratively in the pairs in which they are working. The following websites may be useful:
 - The Lake District National Parks website: <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk>

- Windemere attractions on the Visit Cumbria website:
<https://www.visitcumbria.com/amb/windermere-lake/>
- Windemere and Bowness on the Visit Lake District website:
<https://www.visitlakedistrict.com/explore/windermere-and-bowness>
- BBC Bitesize Discover the Lake District:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zvmv3j6#zvgkdp3>
- Model to the children how to read and summarise information to take effective notes. Be clear that this does not involve copying out swathes of the text that has been read, it is about capturing key facts and ideas in a way that can be used and incorporated into their own writing later.
- Give the children the opportunity to collate and present their findings back to the rest of the class in a variety of ways. They could work independently or collaborate in mixed pairs or groups. Give them choice and voice in what and how they write. You might suggest that they:
 - Make a travel guide leaflet.
 - Write an article for a travel magazine.
 - Create a PowerPoint presentation to present to an audience.
 - Make a video guide, advert or documentary.
 - Create a webpage.
 - Write a blog.
- Ensure the children are aware of the purpose, audience and form their chosen writing takes and the level of formality, language, tone and style used for the writing. Provide real world examples of each of these pieces and model how to move from gaining and exploring ideas, through to drafting, responding to, editing and proof reading before publishing writing. Ensure that a range of materials, including appropriate technology is available for children to publish their chosen outcomes authentically.
- Now, re-read the poem for a second time. *How do you think Nate feels about going on the trip? Why might he feel this way? Is there one overwhelming feeling, or might his feelings be mixed? Why might this be?*
- Encourage the children to follow the style of Joe Todd-Stanton to create an illustration of Nate. Model how to do this by drawing for the children to follow, ideally under a visualiser or alternatively on a flipchart. Annotate the drawing with thought bubbles to share ideas of what Nate might think or feel about his upcoming trip with the two Year 6 classes, Mr Joshua and Mrs Griffin.
- Pin these up for the children to see and encourage them to read and reflect on each other's work. *What ideas were similar or different? Why do you think this was?*

Session 12: Reading and responding to story events.

- Now, read on from **Wednesday 8.55am** (p.134-135) up to and revealing Joe Todd-Stanton's double page illustration on p.144-145. *How do you think Nate is feeling about the trip? What in the text or illustration tells you this? What are you shown without directly being told? Why*

might he be feeling this way? How does this compare with the predictions we made about what he might be thinking or feeling in the previous session?

- Now, consider the actions of Mr Joshua in these poems, linking back to what we already know or think we know about him. *What does he do that shows us the care he has for the children on the trip? Why do you think he stops to tell Nate and Caleb to ‘Soak it in... Feel it. Draw it... Write it’? What might he see in the boys and their relationship? Do you think it was ‘lucky’ that Nate and Caleb got the only room with two beds? What makes you think this?*
- Think now about Nate and Caleb’s reactions to the trip. *What do they notice that all the other ‘muppets miss’? What might this reveal about them? What do you think it is about the place that they’re staying in that makes Nate describe it as ‘mint’? What does it offer to him?*
- Now, give mixed pairs or groups of children a copy of the double page illustration on p.144-145, with space around it to annotate it with their thoughts, observations, ideas and questions. *Why do you think Joe Todd-Stanton chose to insert a whole double page spread at this point, solely focussed on Nate, Caleb and the landscape? Where is your eye drawn to first in the illustration? Where does it move to next? What do you notice when you closely read the illustration? What does it leave you thinking about? How does it leave you feeling? What makes you feel this way?*
- Give plenty of time and space for the children to closely read the image, annotating to make their thinking visible. Come back to discuss, looking at the similarities and differences in the children’s responses.
- Now, read on to **The Coach Home** (p.158). *What were the highs and lows of Nate’s trip? How did we gain a sense of the emotions he felt throughout through the language used and the way in which poems were presented on the page?* Give children time and space to re-read and discuss the poems in this section, in mixed pairs or groups, looking at when Nate is feeling threatened by Turner’s behaviour in opposition to the calm he feels when engaging in the natural environment. Encourage them to make notes of their thoughts, feelings, observations, ideas and questions as they read, to make their thinking visible. They might talk about:
 - The language chosen and the feelings evoked by Nate in his own poems, and what this tells or shows us about him.
 - The layout decisions made in the poems where Turner becomes a threat, and why this might have been done.
 - How he manages to control The Beast – and what this signals about his relationship with Turner.
 - Language that evokes a particular emotional response in them and why this might be.
 - The length and line spacing used in poems where Nate is trying to make sense of what’s happening and why these decisions might have been made.
 - The emotions evoked by the illustrations and what Joe Todd-Stanton has done to achieve this.
 - The focus on the word ‘Transience’ – what this means, how it relates to what Nate is going through and what it might make us think about the rest of the story to come.
 - The imagery used in the poems talking about the natural elements of snow, water and fire, and what this makes us think about and feel.

- What Nate might be thinking or feeling on **The coach home**, as he reflects on the trip as a whole.
- Come back together to reflect on what the children have observed. *What are they left thinking and feeling about Nate at this point? What predictions do they have about what might happen in the remainder of the story? What makes them think this?*

Session 13: Using writing in role to gain a wider understanding of characters motivations and behaviours.

- Re-read the section of the text that the children discussed in the previous session, from **Wednesday 8.55am** (p.134-135) to **The Coach Home** (p.158).
- Encourage the children to reflect on this section by writing in role about the trip from the perspective of one of the characters. Give children choice, voice and agency as to who they would like to write from the perspective of, from the following options:
- Nate – writing a postcard home to Mum, Jax and Dylan. *What would he choose to tell them? What might he choose to leave out? Why might this be.*
- PS, Caleb or Turner – writing a diary entry to reflect on their experience. *How do they reflect on where is they have visited and what's happened while they have been there? How do we show what's been most important to them? How do we show their feelings towards the other characters, including the adults? If writing as Caleb, how will you reflect on what's happened to Nate? What do you think about how he is being treated by Turner and PS? If writing as PS, do you feel any remorse about how Turner is treating him? Do you choose to recognise anything about how your friendship with Nate used to be?*
- Model this from the perspective of a teacher-writer, writing in role as Mr Joshua. Make visible how you step inside the shoes and thoughts of the character by relating to experiences in your own life. *If he was writing a letter to his wife, talking to her about the trip, what might her tell her? Would he show his awareness and feelings towards what is happening to Nate? How might he do this?*
- Share how to draft, reflect on, and edit your piece as you work, until you come to a completed piece that you are happy with. Consider how to choose and use language and punctuation to enhance meaning, and how to organise your writing into sections for readability. Give time for the children to do the same with their own writing.

Session 14: Reading and writing to reflect on, connect with and make sense of emotions and experiences.

- Read aloud from **Now, you've never seen Christmas til you've seen it in a primary school** (p.159) to **The three of us** (p.168-169). Take time to reflect on the Christmas Nate has this year, compared to his usual Christmases, noting any new reflections on Nate's role on the wall. *What are the high and low points for him? How does Nate's birthday compare to Dylan's birthday, which we saw in the poem on p. 71? How does the break-up of his friendship with PS particularly affect him at this time? What support does he gain from his brothers? What more do you learn*

about their relationship from this series of poems? Invite the children to note their responses on the brothers' three-way Venn diagram.

- Spend time comparing the two poems *Missin dad sketch me and Jax do* (p.22-23) and *Midgame dad act* (p.162-163). *What are the similarities and differences in the two poems? What is significant about Dylan's actions in Midgame dad act? What does this tell you about their developing relationship? Why might Christmas be a time where they reflect on their fathers?*
- Spend time looking at the two illustrations in this section. What more do they share about this time and the relationship between the brothers? Re-read the final poem, *The three of us*, again *What are you left thinking and feeling at this point in the story? What makes you feel this way?*
- Now, read on, from *A couple weeks into the new term* (p170-171) up to *Outside, Caleb's sittin on one of the benches by the field* (p.173). Reflect on what Nate said at the end of *The three of us* – 'A New Start? Nah, man.' *How has the new year at school started for him? Do you think it will offer new possibilities for him? Why or why not?*
- Consider Mr Joshua's reflection on Caleb in *A couple weeks into the new term* – 'He's a good kid. You're a good match. You'll always find your people, Nate.' *Why do you think he says this to him now? Do you agree that he and Caleb are a good match? Why is this?* Look back to the four-way Venn diagram to look at the evidence for this, adding any new information gained from these new poems.
- Provide the children with further time to work in their Poetry Journals to continue to explore their own ideas for poems based on experiences from their own lives in relation to Christmas, birthdays and other holidays and cultural celebrations. These might be inspired by how Nate reacts to different celebrations in his own life, what Christmas is like at school, that some of the events, although celebratory had an air of disappointment because of other things going on around them.
- Continue to model the writing process as a teacher-writer, exploring how to come up with, draft and develop ideas, based on experiences from your own life, reflecting on and editing your writing as it develops.
- Allow children the freedom to come up with and develop ideas flexibly, based on previous modelled poetry writing. Some may spend time drawing and making notes, others may go straight into drafting lines, snippets or verses for poems. There will be time at the end of the sequence for them to continue to work on and develop these ideas for publication.

Session 15: Responding to reading to understand authorial intent.

NB: This session involves reading scenes where Dylan, Nate's youngest brother falls ill and is taken into hospital. At one point, children may infer that Dylan has died. The scenes will be read straight through, until the children realise that he is, in fact stable and alive, but these scenes will likely trigger a significant emotional response. Be aware of this before reading this section with your children, particularly any children who have directly experienced familial loss or serious illness. Sometimes reading will allow us to make sense of experiences from our own lives, but at other times this may be

too upsetting to confront directly. You will need to make decisions as to how to approach this section based on the knowledge of your own children.

- Begin the session by re-reading *Outside, Caleb's sittin on one of the benches by the field* (p.173) before listening to Matt Goodfellow read the next poem in the novel, *The noise* (p.174-176): <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/noise-matt-goodfellow>. *What is happening here? Is this what you were expecting on the page turn? What does it make you feel? How does the way the poem is written and read enhance our emotional response to the poem?*
- Introduce the term foreshadowing to the children – where an author gives their audience gives their audience hints or signs about events that happen in the future. These do not directly give away the outcome but suggest it. *Was there anything that we could look back on that now were suggesting this seemingly sudden event?*
- The children may or may not remember the comments about Dylan that Matt Goodfellow has used to foreshadow Dylan's collapse. Flick back through previous poems to find these in:
 - *Dylan comes down pale* (p.122)
 - *Christmas Day night* and *Midgame dad act* (p.161-163)
 - *Yo, Nate, whassup with Dyl at the min?, I go upstairs and make sure Turbo Terror's done his teeth* and *The three of us* (p.165-169)
- Continue reading right up until *When we land* (p.193) – it's important for the children to read this right through, as in *A 4am simple lesson in tenses* (p.177) many of the children may infer that Dylan has died. Matt Goodfellow leaves this deliberately ambiguous for the reader, and it is important to unpick this after the children are safe in the knowledge that Dylan is alive. *What did this section of the text leave you thinking at feeling at various points?*
- Encourage the children to re-read this section of the text for themselves, in mixed pairs or groups, in order to set this section in the context of what they have read so far to consider why Matt Goodfellow might have made some of the decisions he did in playing out this series of events, for example:
 - The suddenness of *The noise* (p.174-176), its length and pace and what thoughts and feelings this induces in us.
 - The inclusion of *A 4am simple lesson in tenses* (p.177), followed by two blank pages.
 - The length of time it takes to reveal that Dylan is, in fact, alive – what this allows him to show and make the reader think and feel.
 - The way in which the school and Mr Joshua look after the boys as Auntie San goes to the hospital to be with Mum.
 - How Jax and Nate's relationship helps them deal with the situation as best they can, including keeping The Beast under control.
 - The relevance of the storyline of Skellig to what the boys are going through (the children do not have to have read Skellig to make sense of this, there is enough detail in the text).
 - How Caleb offers support, even without directly being there.
 - Mr Joshua's response throughout – what more this reveals about him and the relationship he has with Nate.

- How and why this event might bring PS and Nate back together.
- Come back together to discuss the overall authorial intent, looking at how and why he may have done what he does in this section of the text. *What does this make them think about how they can use language, layout and pacing in their own writing for impact on a reader?*
- Re-read ***A little while before lunch*** (p.191) and look at how PS and Nate respond and react to each other. *What do their actions show us, without the need for them to use words to tell us? Why might Matt Goodfellow not have chosen to include them talking to each other here? What might this show or tell us? Why do you think it might be difficult for PS to talk here? What might he be thinking that he might not feel able to say?*
- Lead this thinking through to a piece of writing in role as PS. The children may choose to do this simply as a piece of stream of consciousness writing, or, if they have flourished in writing poetry of their own, they could choose to do this in a series of poems written from PS's perspective.
- Model how this could be done as a teacher-writer. Here you could do the same, but taking on the role of Mr Joshua, who you would relate with more readily as a character. *What are they thinking and feeling as they find out about Dylan initially? How do they show what they think or feel about Nate and his family at this time?* Share the process of how to step into the shoes of the character, based on their previous actions in the text, to convey their thoughts and feelings. Draw back on what has been learned about how to convey emotion in a text from Matt Goodfellow's writing to consider how to use language, layout and punctuation in similar ways.
- When writing has been completed, allow the children to swap their pieces with a partner to respond to what they found effective in each other's writing and to offer any suggestions as to how it might be improved.

Session 16: Broadening understanding of story concepts through non-fiction research and writing.

- Read aloud from ***We're sittin round the kitchen table*** (p.194-195) up to ***And then he's off spirallin away down the street shoutin*** (p.201). What has happened to Dylan? Do you know what a Congenital Heart Defect is? Clarify this term with the children, along with other medical terms in Mum's explanations in ***We're sittin round the kitchen table*** (p.194-195) and ***There's no cereal left so I butter some toast for me and Jax*** (p.198-199), such as 'valves', 'infection', 'drip', 'antibiotics', to clarify and understand why Dylan collapsed and what is being done to treat him. Dylan's official diagnosis from the doctor (revealed in p.) is endocarditis. Endocarditis is a rare and potentially fatal infection of the inner lining of the heart (the endocardium). It's most caused by bacteria entering the blood and travelling to the heart. As a teacher, you can find out more about this on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/endocarditis/>
- Linking this to learning in Science around the heart and circulatory system will help children to understand how the infection travelled round Dylan's body to his heart. BBC Bitesize has some supportive resources for this, which help children to understand and explore the circulatory system, including an explanatory video with transcript and explanation diagrams: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z9w9r2p#z6k88hv>. As you explore the resources, look at the technical language used, and the different style of the writing from the narrative they

have been exploring in the book. This will include a more formal style, detailed explanations of processes involved, the standard spelling of words and phrases and the use of technical not colloquial language.

- The children should work together to research the circulatory system to compose an explanation as to how the infection travelled around Dylan's body in his bloodstream for someone else to understand. They could do this in any way they wish, such as:
 - A written report containing diagrams.
 - An explanation diagram with text and images.
 - A video presentation with images and voiceover.
 - A webpage.
 - A leaflet.
- Give the children time and appropriate resources to compose and publish their writing in their chosen form.
- Re-read the final poems, ***On the way to school, Jax starts to talk*** (p.200) and ***And then he's off spirallin away down the street shoutin*** (p.201). *What do we learn about Jax here? How does this compare or contrast to what we've noticed about him in the poems before this? How might Dylan's hospitalisation have affected him? Why do you think he chooses to thank Nate at this point of the story?*

Session 17: Deepening our understanding of characters, their motivations and actions.

- Begin the session by listening to Matt Goodfellow read ***Have ya ever felt lost, Sir?*** (p.202-203): <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/have-ya-ever-felt-lost-sir-matt-goodfellow>. *How does this poem reveal to us how Nate is feeling at this point in the story? How does this compare to how Jax is feeling as shown in the previous two poems? Why might he have chosen Mr Joshua to talk to about this at this time? What do you think Nate might be learning about himself because of the experiences he's had? How does this connect with what Mr Joshua tells him when he says: 'in order to really find yourself you first have to be lost out there in the wilderness', 'it's the darkness that switches on the lights' and 'in the darkness you will find yourself and your people.'?*
- Read on up to ***At night I walk in the rain*** (p.222-223). What more do we learn from this section of the text about:
 - Nate
 - Dylan's condition
 - The importance of the book Skellig
 - Mum
 - Jax
 - PS and Caleb
- Give the children time and space to re-read this section of the text for themselves, making notes and observations about each of these areas. Come back together to share and compare what the children have found out and their wider thoughts and opinions about this section of the text.

- Now listen to Matt read, ***Tonight I dream of you*** (p.224-225): <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/tonight-i-dream-you-matt-goodfellow>, alongside looking at the accompanying illustration in the text. *What does this poem make you think about? How does it make you feel? What makes you feel this way? What do you notice about the accompanying illustration, what sense or feelings do you gain from it? Why is this? What are we left thinking or feeling about Nate after reading this?* Add any new thoughts, observations and conclusions to Nate's role on the wall.

Session 18: Making personal connections with a text to understand and empathise with characters and their actions.

- Read aloud from, ***Auntie San's gonna move in for a bit, boys*** (p.226) to ***Me and PS and Caleb are sittin in the dinin hall*** (p.244). *What do we learn about PS from this section of the story? Do you think his actions are justified, in how he reacts to Turner? Why or why not? What do you understand about why he went off with him in the first place? How do you think he feels about his actions now? What tells you this?*
- Now, encourage them to consider the events from Nate's perspective. *Were you surprised that he forgave PS so easily? Why do you think he did this? What does PS mean to him?*
- Encourage the children to reflect on these events, in connection with their own lives. Create a space for the children to feel safe to share personal experiences, with agreed rules that they do not have to share if they do not wish to do so, that they should not share things which might embarrass, shame or ridicule others, and that conversations should support us to explore, make sense of and resolve issues and dilemmas and discuss strategies for which we can address and resolve conflicts with our friends when these arise. *Have they ever experienced times where they have faced issues in friendships they've had? How did these arise? How were they overcome?*
- Sensitively mediate conversations to be able to use points raised to explore common friendship issues and how these might be overcome. Relate this back to what happens in the text, and how Nate deals with the fall out of PS's actions by forging a new friendship with Caleb, confiding with a trusted adult in Mr Joshua when he finds things tough, and being forgiving of PS when he returns.
- Use these conversations to encourage the children to step into role as PS again to write a note from PS to Nate to say what he couldn't say when they played FIFA. How he might explain why he went off with Turner, how he now feels about some of the things that occurred during this time and how he feels about their friendship now.
- When they have had a chance to draft, reflect on and edit their writing, encourage them to swap their note with someone else who reads and reflects on it in the role of Nate and writes a response as in role as him.

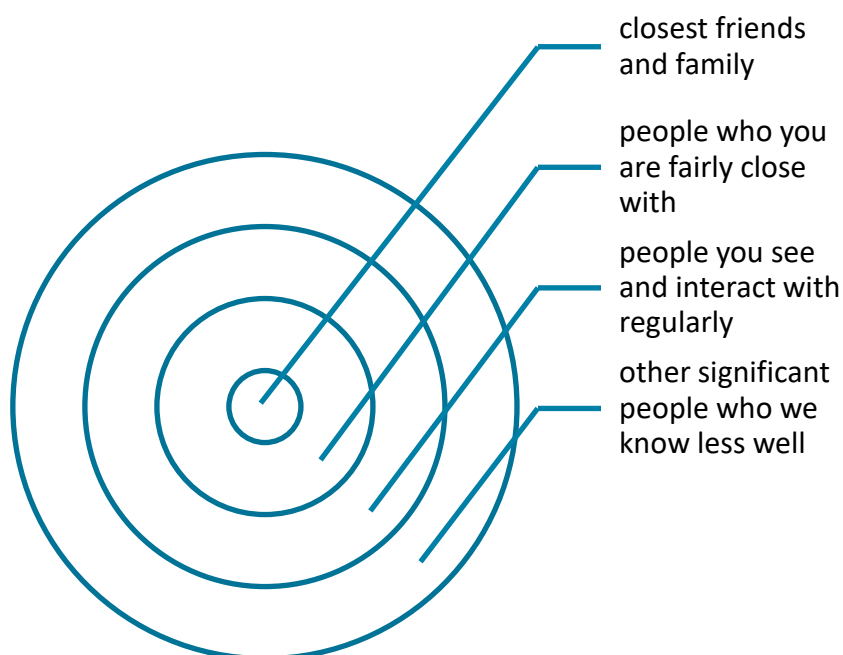
Session 19: Using events from a text to make sense of our own experiences.

- Read aloud from ***The phone call*** (p.245) to ***The Beast says*** (p.251). *What do you think has triggered The Beast to rise within Nate again? What is going on around him? Which of these things are in his control and which are not? How might these things have affected him? What do you think he could do now to try to 'keep The Beast at bay'? What has worked for him previously?* Encourage the children to flip back through the text to come up with a series of potential ideas, relating these back to previous events.
- Now, listen to Matt Goodfellow read ***The concrete cracks and crumbles*** (p.252-253): <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/concrete-cracks-and-crumbles-matt-goodfellow>. *Is this what you expected to happen next? Why or why not? What do you think has triggered his anger? Why do you think that it is at this point that he doesn't manage to control The Beast? Why might he think that 'it's not OK' and 'everything's not gonna be alright'? What might the consequences of Nate's actions at this point be? What support might he need to manage his emotions?*
- Give the children a copy of the poem, with space around it to annotate it with their thoughts, ideas, observations and questions and time to re-read and discuss this in mixed pairs or groups. *What does the poem tell us about Nate at this point in the story? What have Matt Goodfellow and Joe Todd-Stanton done in the text and illustration to bring us inside this moment? What do we think or feel about both Nate and Mr Joshua as we re-read the poem?* Encourage them to text mark, annotate and highlight the poem, making their thinking visible on the page.
- Come back together to share and compare the children's responses, to come to shared understandings.
- Use the poem as a way of engaging the children in thinking around their own emotions. Give them time and space to record their own thoughts and observations about experiencing and managing anger specifically. Use key prompts for the children to make notes around:
 - What are my triggers for anger?
 - What happens when I get angry?
 - What happens when I am overwhelmed by my feelings of anger?
 - What are some ways of the ways I could use to calm myself down?
 - What might be some of the short-term consequences of anger?
 - What might the longer-term consequences of anger be?
- Discuss some of the children's responses together, perhaps using these to create a whole class display that shares how children can recognise and manage feelings of anger if these arise.
- Now, read on from ***Auntie San takes a big drag or her fag*** (p.254) to ***The little machine*** (p.256-257). *How do Auntie San and school support him after this? What has happened or is happening that might affect Nate's emotions from this point? Are these likely to be positive or negative effects? What makes you think this? What might you say to Nate, or what advice might you offer him at this point in the story?*
- Encourage the children to draft a note to Nate to record and share their ideas. Consider the tone and language they would use for this. This is much more likely to be less formal, with more colloquial language, as they would speak to another child of their own age. Explore how to

engage the best response from him as he reads, by relating his experiences to their own and offering constructive and compassionate strategies to support him.

Session 20: Learning from story events to develop our own personal, social and emotional awareness.

- Read on from *I miss the grammar, punctuation and spellin test on Monday* (p.258) to *I watch a pair of swifts rollercoasterin the skies above the hospital* (p.268). *What happens in this part of the story? What shows us how Nate is feeling at each point?* Encourage the children to look back at the poems to draw on specific language, form and layout choices based on what they have learned throughout the sequence to evidence their responses.
- Take time to consider the character of Auntie San. *What do we learn about her in this series of poems? How does this connect to what we already know about her?* Think about Nate’s initial description of her, that she’s ‘no blood relation but family, y’know?’ Reflect on what this means now. *Why do you think Nate describes her in this way? Do you think she thinks of them in the same way? What shows or tells you this? Consider the role she plays in Mum’s life as well as the boys. Why is her friendship important to Mum? What do they bring to each other’s lives?*
- Allow time for the children to reflect on the relationships they have in their own lives. *Why are friends and family important? Who are the most important people in your life? Why is this? What do you bring to each other’s lives? How do you support each other?*
- Follow this up by encouraging the children to exploring the different relationships they have in their own lives. Draw four concentric circles on a flipchart:



- Explain to the children that they are going to complete a diagram that will help them to explore the different relationships we have with different people in our lives. This is just for the children to refer to themselves, not to share more widely, so they may wish to use initials to preserve privacy and protect feelings. You can model this by drawing on examples of people in your own life:
 - In the inner circle the children should write the names, initials of the people closest to you, whom they love, such as close family and friends that are 'like family', like PS and Auntie San are for Nate.
 - In the next circle they should write the name or initials of people who are very close to you, good friends, wider family members or special teachers or adults that might support them, as Mr Joshua does with Nate.
 - In the next circle they should write the names or initials of the people they know quite well, see a lot and get on with, like classmates, people at their place of worship, relatives they see less often or other trusted adults at the school, like Miss Hough, Nate's counsellor.
 - In the outer circle they should write people who could support them, but they know less well, like someone who works in a local shop, a doctor, like Dylan's doctor in the story, or family members that they know about but don't see or hardly ever see.
- Use this to talk about the different relationships we have in our lives and who we go to or draw on in certain situations. *Who are the people we go to with specific needs or problems? Who can we rely on to support us when we are in need? Who should we be supporting?* Explore specific scenarios, related back to events that happened in The Final Year, such as when Jax and he enjoy each other's company playing FIFA, when he looks after Dylan and Jax when Mum's not around, when Auntie San supports the boys while Mum is in hospital with Dylan, how Caleb supports Nate when PS goes off with Turner, how he can turn to Mr Joshua when he feels he needs adult support beyond Mum and Auntie San, and when a professional such as a doctor is needed for very specific help, as when Dylan got sick.
- Encourage the children to use and reflect on their diagram to support their personal and emotional resilience and to know who they can turn to in different situations, that this is ok to do so and what can be gained from this. Come back to the idea that Mr Joshua introduces that 'you find yourself and your people those who have seen it too those who navigate and find a way' to consider the different people they have in their direct and wider community and why relationships with others help us to thrive.

Session 21: Sharing our own thoughts, feelings and emotions through writing.

- Read aloud from ***Me and Caleb and PS*** (p.269) to ***As we wade through the stream*** (p.281). *How do you think Nate is feeling about the journey that lies ahead of him in High School? What makes you think this? How are you left feeling about Turner? What does Nate have in his support network that Turner might not? How might this affect Turner and his ability to control his emotions, make sensible choices and deal with issues and dilemmas he faces?*

- Consider the role that Mr Joshua has played in Nate's story. *What has he brought to Nate's life? What might have been different if he'd not been Nate's teacher? Why do you think he chose to write 'Never forget to do what you must' in the copy of Skellig he gave to him? Why might he have chosen to give this gift to Nate? How do you think Nate feels about the gift he's been given and why might he feel this way?*
- Re-read the last poem in this section, ***As we wade through the stream*** (p.281). Think about the final line of the poem, 'EVERY LITTLE THING GONNA BE ALRIGHT!' *Do you think this will be the case from now on? Why or why not? Think about the title of the song these words come from, Three Little Birds. How do you think this song and its title relate to the story you've just read?*
- Use this section of the text to open discussions around High School (Secondary School) and Transition with the children. What do you think the boys feel about going to High School? What experiences did they have on their transition day? What might this make them think about what lies ahead? What questions, hopes and worries might they have about making the move to High School from Primary School? Will Nate still be worried about Turner, for example? Or will he worry about not having Mr Joshua as a teacher anymore? Will he hope that he can do more writing? Or that he's in the same class as Caleb and PS? Will he have questions about the teachers he'll have for different subjects? Note these down on a table on a flipchart.
- Use this as a way of children opening up to their own questions, hopes and worries about the transition to High School, that can be addressed and built on in the series of activities undertaken by your school to prepare children for a seamless and comfortable transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

Session 22: Reflecting on the text as a whole through book talk.

- Read aloud the last part of the book: ***The Final Poem*** (p.282-285). *What are you left thinking and feeling after reading the last poem? Was it a satisfying conclusion for you? Does it leave you with any questions? Why do you think Matt Goodfellow decided to end the story here?*
- Consider the character that is introduced as the poem ends. *Who do you think the man might be that shouts Nate's name and walks towards him? What makes you think this? What might the impact of this person be on Nate and his life?*
- The children might want to follow this up with reflections about how the story might continue, either in a series of predictions or a series of poems which could follow on from this final poem.
- Take time to reflect on the verse novel as a whole. Listen to Matt Goodfellow talk about verse novels:
 - *What did you like about the story?*
 - *Was there anything you disliked?*
 - *What questions are you left with after reading the book?*
 - *What connections do you make with it, either with your own life or with other things you've read or seen?*
- Open this initial discussion up into a more extended conversation around the text:
 - *Which were your favourite parts of the book?*
 - *Do any particular poems stay in your mind? Why do you think this is?*

- *What have you learnt about poetry or verse novels that you didn't know before?*
- *Would you be encouraged to read more verse novels or poetry after reading *The Final Year*? Why, or why not?*
- *What might you want to ask the author Matt Goodfellow, or the illustrator Joe Todd-Stanton after reading the book?*
- Invite children to re-read favourite poems or ones that have remained in their minds for a particular reason. They might also wish to reflect on their responses to the book or pose their questions to Matt or Joe in a letter to them. These could be sent to them via their publisher.
- Take time to reflect on what they've learnt about verse novels and poetry from looking at this collection:
 - *What were you expecting when we first looked at the front cover? Was the book what you expected it to be? Why/why not?*
 - *Was there anything in the book that surprised you?*
 - *How would you describe this book to someone else? What would you tell them about it? What might you keep back so as not to spoil their experience?*
- Look at some of the reviews that have been given about *The Final Year*. Author David Almond says on the back of the book that it is 'Authentic and very moving', poet and author Manjeet Mann says it is 'A beautiful story of friendship, family, grief, falling apart and putting yourself back together again', the review site *Through the Bookshelf* says it is 'Powerful... sensitive and incredibly relevant. Read it and get it into the hands of children who will see themselves and feel understood, recognised and valued'. To what extent do you agree with these reviews? What would you want to say to review the book for yourself? Give time for the children to draft, compose and publish their ideas, either on paper, to display around a copy of the front cover of the book in the class book corner or school library or posted on a school book blog.

Sessions 23-24: Composing, developing and reflecting on our own writing inspired by the text.

- Listen to Matt Goodfellow talk about why he thinks poetry is important: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/matt-goodfellow-why-poetry-important>. Consider what he says about poetry being an opportunity to write in your voice about your life. *What do you think he means when he talks about writing in your voice? How do you think this might connect with the poems you've just read? How could you ensure that the words you write on the page reflect your voice, as the poems in *The Final Year* reflect Nate's? Are there some words that you use that could be included? Could the way in which you choose to spell words reflect how you say them?*
- Now, listen to poet Matt Goodfellow talk about what inspires him to write poetry: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/matt-goodfellow-what-inspires-you-poet>. *How does what he says connect with the poems you've read so far? What do you think he might have been inspired by in his own life or in the lives of others? What themes and ideas run throughout the poems we've seen so far?*

- Following this, listen to Matt explain how he goes about writing his poetry: <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/matt-goodfellow-how-do-you-work-your-poems>. *What have you learnt about writing from what he says? What aspects of life have you started to write about already in your poetry journals, or what else do you think you could write about or explore through poetry?*
- Perhaps, like Matt says, they might have more than one idea in their mind. Show them how to use their poetry journal to make rough jottings to get these ideas down onto paper then to work out which of these they might want to work up into poems of their own.
- Encourage them to draw on what they found effective in the poems they read – how they sounded, the feelings they evoked and how they were laid out on the page.
- Write alongside the pupils to demonstrate authentic writing processes, showing the challenges and successes of taking a poem from an initial idea to publication.
- Allow time over these two sessions for the pupils to draft, gain a response, edit and publish their poems in their chosen form to share with an audience. The poems should be in their own voices, inspired by their own lives, and could be the story of an experience told over poems or could be a series of poems related to them and their lives, presented like a mini verse novel.
- They may want to write these out in presentation handwriting, type them up on a word processor or record a voice or video performance.
- They may also choose to illustrate their poems drawing on the distinctive kitchen sink style of line drawings created by Joe Todd-Stanton over the course of the novel.

Session 25: Publishing and presenting work based on the verse novel

- Spend time reflecting on the poems that the children have written for themselves. *What kinds of poems were your favourite to write? What did you find it easiest to write about? What was more difficult or challenging for you? Why do you think this was? How did the poems in The Final Year, or the style of Matt Goodfellow's writing provide inspiration and ideas for you? What did you learn about writing from reading the book?*
- Following this, arrange to hold a poetry festival for pupils to do readings of selected poems from the verse novel, or from their own work to parents or other classes in the school or display their work as part of an exhibition, including their own published poems and accompanying illustrations.
- Allow extra time for pupils to go through the poems they have produced throughout the unit and do any more work necessary to work these up for final publication or performance.
- For the children performing at the event, ask them to consider what they learnt from listening to the poems being read aloud and performed and trying out ideas in their performances of poems from this collection, which will be helpful to remember when reading their own poems.
- Display the children's own poems and artwork prominently in the school library or other shared area or on a blog, website or school social media account so they can be read by a wider audience. Ensure you obtain each child's consent before publishing their work. This might lead on to wider explorations around the concept of copyright. You may wish to draw on the resources CLPE produced in partnership with the ALCS to explore this in more depth: <https://clpe.org.uk/teaching-resources/ALCS-resources-on-copyright>.

- You could even send Matt children's responses to the text and/or copies of the children's poems with a covering note or letter thanking him for inspiring their work, by email via the details on his website: <https://www.mattgoodfellowpoet.com/contact>, or by tagging him into a school Tweet. Matt's X handle is @EarlyTrain and his Instagram handle is @mattgoofellowpoet
- You may also want to investigate the prospect of inviting Matt to the school for a poet visit. Details of how to do this can be found on his website: <https://www.mattgoodfellowpoet.com/booking-info>.