Progression in poetry

Purpose and audience:
Like many art forms, poetry could be said to have little purpose and yet every culture has song, rhyme or poetry as an essential aspect of its cultural inheritance because it goes to the heart of language, thought and who we are as human beings. Usually poetry matters most to the writer and then the reader. It may be written specifically to entertain but often will be written in order to preserve and celebrate experience. Poetry helps us to create, or recreate, imagined or real experiences that are deeply felt. Reading poems and making our own poems challenges, surprises, enriches and comforts.

Early poetic utterance emerges with the discovery of the power of sounds and words. Very young children play with sounds, rhythms and enjoy inventing words. As they grow up, children enjoy rhymes, inventing new combinations of words, riddles and other forms of word play. Such early language playfulness lies at the heart of poetry.

Children also soon discover that language has the power to recreate experience. For instance, a young child looking in awe at the moon on a cold December night may find that ordinary language will not sufficiently convey enough of the experience or what was felt - because it merely labels or reports the experience (I saw the moon. It was fantastic). In order to capture something of both the experience and what was felt, language has to be used in a different manner (the moon hung in the dark, like a bear’s silver claw, and the stars speckled the night…). So, poetry helps us to explain ourselves to the world and the world to ourselves – capturing something of the essence of the experience as well as our response. Children should listen to, speak, read and write poetry for a wide range of audiences, varying language features and text structures to suit the audience and purpose.

Structure:
Children should read a rich vein of poetry that includes many different forms and styles. However, mastery of many forms is highly skilled and young children may find themselves constrained by attempting demanding structures. For instance, reading Charles Causley ballads provides much pleasure but children will find writing in the ballad form too demanding a task except for the most gifted. For writing, the form should not constrain or stultify imagination. Simple structures for writing can act as a coat hanger for the children’s own ideas so that their writing is not just a pale imitation but brings into being something new. So, a well-chosen form will release the child from worrying about structure. Form should not interfere but should liberate creativity. By the end of key stage 2, children should have a range of simple forms to draw upon for their own writing.

The key forms for children’s writing are:

- collage or list poem
- free verse
- shape poems (free verse in a shape)
- short patterned poems, for example, haiku, cinquain, kennings
- borrow or invent own pattern, for example, pairs of lines
- simple rhyming form, for example, rap

Language Features:
Different poetic forms use different language features. It is important that children do not just recognise language features, such as simile, but also discuss the impact,
their response and interpretation. As writers, they should develop a repertoire of stylistic techniques that they can use to create different effects. The progression in poetry identifies different devices such as the use of powerful verbs, alliteration, simile and metaphor. It is important to see this as cumulative so that early techniques are revisited and become part of an increasing, automatic and confident use of language in a child’s individual voice.

Key features of poetry include:
- sound effects – repetition, alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, rhyme;
- visual effects – simile (like/as), personification, metaphor;
- selection of powerful nouns, adjectives and verbs;
- surprising word combinations;
- use of repetition and repeated patterns for effect.

**Knowledge for the writer**

Depending on what is being written:
- observe experiences carefully, drawing on your senses
- brainstorm words and ideas
- notice details that illuminate
- use a few words that evoke more than is described
- select powerful words that are linked to the senses, for example *click, crack, greasy, jagged*
- create sound effects and images by using alliteration, similes and metaphors sparingly
- invent new word combinations to surprise the reader, showing something in a new light
- use free verse or a form to capture your ideas
- use the shape upon the page to emphasise words and meaning
- hold the subject in your mind as you write
- draw upon observation, memory and imagination
- try writing very quickly in a focused manner
- use word play for extra impact
- keep re-reading as you write to capture flow and rhythm
- read aloud to hear how it sounds and see how it looks
- be careful when revising so that each word is fresh and each word counts
- revise by adding in and on, trimming, changing words, re-ordering, using stylistic effects, avoiding cliché and over-writing, checking for rhythm and flow

Children write most effectively about subjects that they have experienced and that matter. It is the desire to capture and communicate to a reader or listener **real experience** and **genuine feeling** or to **play with language** that leads to the most powerful writing.

An imaginative and interesting starting point is essential, for example:
- a first hand experience – observing butterflies, looking at a candle flame, studying feathers with magnifying glasses;
- objects – skeleton leaves, marbles, hands, trees, watches, a clock, a ship-in-a-bottle;
- art – drawing before writing, postcards/posters of paintings, music, sculptures, film clips, photos, dance;
- locations – churchyard, building site, sea front, deserted house;
- collections – buttons, shoes, stamps, coins, fruit, leaves, pieces of bark;
• a recalled, common experiences – darkness at night, snow falling, bonfire night;
• seasons and weather – wintry days, storms, frost on the window pane, celebrations;
• playful ideas – magical windows, putting on masks, looking through coloured glasses, riddles;
• relationships – things gran says, old people, my mum says, our teacher is, my cat;
• memories – secret places, details, strange events, old dreams, things I used to do;
• feelings – anger, sadness, elation, memorable incidents;
• models – suitable model poems, for example, ‘The Magic Box’ by Kit Wright, or phrases to stimulate writing, for example, a line from Shakespeare

Progression is achieved through:
• reading, performing, becoming familiar and drawing upon a rich range of poetry;
• teacher modelling and scribing class poems;
• developing a repertoire of stylistic techniques and simple forms;
• careful crafting of poems

Links to key aspects of learning
Units of work on poetry will involve children in using elements from many of the cross curricular, key aspects of learning explored in Learning and Teaching in the Primary Years - creative thinking, communication, empathy, enquiry, evaluation, information processing, managing feelings, motivation, problem solving, reasoning, self awareness and social skills.

In reading and writing poetry children will particularly use:
• self-awareness
  Example FS: listen to poems being read and talk about likes and dislikes
• empathy
  Example Y5: discuss poet’s possible viewpoint
• creative thinking
  Example Y3: invent new similes and experiment with word play
• evaluation
  Example Y5: explain the use of unusual or surprising language choices and effects, such as onomatopoeia; comment on how this influences meaning

Cross curricular links
Across the age phases many opportunities for reading and writing poetry occur in all other of areas of the curriculum. For example there are collections of poems around curriculum subjects (such as science poems) or curriculum themes (such as hot and cold/ice and fire). First hand experiences in any curriculum area can be the starting point for creating a poem.

Children with Special Educational Needs and/ or Learning Difficulties/ Disabilities
Learning objectives should be chosen which are related to the aspect on which the whole class is working. If with appropriate access strategies and support a child can not work towards the same learning objective as the rest of the class, teachers may want to track back to an earlier objective. The structure and the new electronic format of the renewed frameworks for literacy and mathematics support multi-level curriculum planning, and allow teachers to easily track back through a progression.
strand to locate earlier learning objectives. It also makes direct links to a wealth of other useful materials which will help to plan teaching and children’s learning. Further guidance and principles on tracking back can be found in

_Including all children in the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson: management guide (Ref: 0465)._

Further useful references for children working significantly below age related expectations can be found in the QCA/DfES documents _Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties_ (QCA/01/736 www.nc.uk.net/ld and the QCA DVD ‘Using the P scales’ QCA/05/1589.

Planning for individual children or groups of children based on assessment for learning will be informed by knowledge of their priorities. For the majority of the time it will be appropriate for children to work on objectives that are similar and related to the whole class. However, at other times you will also have to consider whether the children have other priority needs that are central to their learning, for example a need to concentrate on some key skills.

For further guidance on planning for children with SEN/LDD see the library section and

_Learning and teaching for children with special educational needs in the primary years (ref: 0302/2004 G)_

_Teaching the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson in special settings._

_Teaching the daily mathematics lesson for children with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties (ref: 0033/2003)_

**Children who are gifted and talented**

Children who are working well above the overall level of their class or group will benefit from planning that may:

- add breadth (for example enrichment through a broader range of content, tasks and resources)
- increase depth (for example extension through complexity)
- accelerate the pace of learning by tracking forward to later objectives within or across key stages

The structure and the new electronic format of the renewed frameworks for literacy and mathematics support **multi-level curriculum planning**, and allow teachers to easily track forward through a progression strand to locate later learning objectives. It also makes direct links to a wealth of other useful materials which will help to plan teaching and children’s learning.

For further guidance on planning for gifted and talented children see the library section and www.nc.uk.net/gt/general/05_environment.htm.

**Children learning English as an additional language (EAL)**

Children learning EAL must be supported to access curriculum content while also developing cognitive and academic language within whole-class, group and independent contexts. With the exception of children learning EAL who also have SEN, it is critical to maintain a level of cognitive challenge which is consistent with that of the rest of the class. Children who are /have become conversationally fluent will continue to require explicit attention to the development of the academic language associated with the subject and of specific aspects within the subject.

Planning should identify the language demands of the objectives and associated activities and making sure EAL learners know and can use the language demanded by the curriculum content of the unit/lesson then becomes an additional objective. In order to identify the language demands, teachers and practitioners should consider the language children will need to understand in order to access this activity, and the language they will need to be able to produce, either oral or written, in order to demonstrate success in achieving the learning intentions.
For further guidance on planning for children learning EAL see the overview of planning for each year group, the library section and also Learning and teaching for bilingual children in the primary years: Unit 1 Planning and Assessment for Language and Learning and Unit 2: Creating the Learning Culture, Making it work in the classroom.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strands 2, 5, 6 &amp; 7 Reading Poetry:</th>
<th>Strands 1 &amp; 6 Performing Poetry:</th>
<th>Strands 8 – 12 Creating Poetry:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• subject matter and theme;</td>
<td>• use of voice;</td>
<td>• original playfulness with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• language use; style</td>
<td>• presentation</td>
<td>language and ideas;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• pattern</td>
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<td>• detailed recreation of closely</td>
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<td>observed experience;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• using different patterns</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>• listen to poems being read and</td>
<td>• join in with class</td>
<td>• enjoy making up funny</td>
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<td></td>
<td>talk about likes and dislikes –</td>
<td>rhymes and poems,</td>
<td>sentences and playing with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>including ideas or puzzles,</td>
<td>• copy actions</td>
<td>words;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>words, and patterns</td>
<td></td>
<td>• look carefully at experiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and choose words to describe;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• make word collections or use</td>
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<td>simple repeating patterns</td>
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<td>Year 1</td>
<td>• discuss own response and what</td>
<td>• perform in unison, following</td>
<td>• invent impossible ideas, e.g.</td>
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<td>the poem is about;</td>
<td>the rhythm and keeping time;</td>
<td>magical wishes;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• talk about favourite words or</td>
<td>• imitate and invent actions</td>
<td>• observe details of first hand</td>
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<td></td>
<td>parts of a poem;</td>
<td></td>
<td>experiences using the senses</td>
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<td>• notice the poem’s pattern</td>
<td></td>
<td>and describe;</td>
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<td>• list words and phrases or use</td>
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<td>a repeating pattern or line.</td>
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<td>Year 2</td>
<td>• talk about own views, the</td>
<td>• perform individually or</td>
<td>• experiment with alliteration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>subject matter and possible</td>
<td>together; speak clearly and</td>
<td>to create humorous and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>meanings;</td>
<td>audibly.</td>
<td>surprising combinations;</td>
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<td>• comment on which words have</td>
<td>• use actions and sound</td>
<td>• make adventurous word choices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>most effect, noticing alliteration;</td>
<td>effects to add to the poem’s</td>
<td>to describe closely observed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• discuss simple poetry patterns</td>
<td>meaning</td>
<td>experiences;</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• create a pattern or shape on</td>
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<td>the page; use simple</td>
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<td>repeating phrases or lines as</td>
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<td>models.</td>
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<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Year 4</td>
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| • describe the effect a poem has and suggest possible interpretations;  
• discuss the choice of words and their impact, noticing how the poet creates ‘sound effects’ by using alliteration, rhythm or rhyme and creates pictures using similes;  
• explain the pattern of different simple forms | • perform individually or chorally; vary volume, experimenting with expression and use pauses for effect  
• use actions, voices, sound effects and musical patterns to add to a performance |
| • invent new similes and experiment with word play;  
• use powerful nouns, adjectives and verbs; experiment with alliteration;  
• write free verse; borrow or create a repeating pattern | • vary volume, pace and use appropriate expression when performing  
• use actions, sound effects, musical patterns and images to enhance a poem’s meaning |
| • describe poem’s impact and explain own interpretation by referring to the poem;  
• comment on the use of similes and expressive language to create images, sound effects and atmosphere;  
• discuss the poem’s form and suggest the effect on the reader | • use language playfully to exaggerate or pretend;  
• use similes to build images and identify clichés in own writing;  
• write free verse; use a repeating pattern; experiment with simple forms |
| Year 5 | • discuss poet’s possible viewpoint, explain and justify own response and interpretation;  
• explain the use of unusual or surprising language choices and effects, such as onomatopoeia and metaphor; comment on how this influences meaning;  
• explore imagery including metaphor and personification;  
• compare different forms and describe impact | • vary pitch, pace, volume, expression and use pauses to create impact;  
• use actions, sound effects, musical patterns, images and dramatic interpretation | • invent nonsense words and situations and experiment with unexpected word combinations;  
• use carefully observed details and apt images to bring subject matter alive; avoid cliché in own writing;  
• write free verse; use or invent repeating patterns; attempt different forms, including rhyme for humour |
| Year 6 | • interpret poems, explaining how the poet creates shades of meaning; justify own views and explain underlying themes  
• explain the impact of figurative and expressive language, including metaphor;  
• comment on poems’ structures and how these influence meaning | • vary pitch, pace volume, rhythm and expression in relation to the poem’s meaning and form  
• use actions, sound effects, musical patterns, images and dramatic interpretation, varying presentations by using ICT | • use language imaginatively to create surreal, surprising, amusing and inventive poetry;  
• use simple metaphors and personification to create poems based on real or imagined experience;  
• select pattern or form to match meaning and own voice |