



The St Helens Teaching School Alliance

# The St Helens

## Teaching School Alliance

### **'Celebration of English Conference'** **A focus on raising standards in Vocabulary and the English Language**

#### **Opening address- Maddy Barnes**

Maddy Barnes is an English consultant and has been a successful assistant head teacher in both Salford and Manchester. She has also taught in India, China and Poland where she has observed a range of teaching styles. Maddy works within test development for reading and GPS and is an experienced English marker & team leader for GPS. She is a KS2 writing moderator for Manchester. Maddy is a published author (writing New Primary English and Skills Builders) and series editor (Optional Tests for years 3-5, and the new Achieve series for 2017) with Rising Stars. She has also edited and planned The Moderation Toolkit for Prim-Ed – nominated as a finalist in the 2019 ERA! Maddy provides training for schools and alliances both nationally and internationally. She is passionate about 'getting it right' for children. She believes that when you find the right book, it will do the work for you!

#### **Guest speakers include:**

##### **Michael Rosen:**

Michael Rosen is one of Britain's best loved writers and performance poets for children and adults. His first degree was from Wadham College, Oxford and he went on to study for an MA and a PhD. He is currently Professor of Children's Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London where he co-devised and teaches an MA in Children's Literature.

Michael writes a monthly open "letter" to the Secretary of State for Education in The Guardian where he critiques Government policy on schools from the standpoint of a parent. He visits schools, teachers' conferences and university teacher training departments where he is in demand to give performances, workshops and keynote addresses. He also appears regularly at literary festivals all over the UK and Ireland.

##### **Session focus: Reading for Pleasure**

This is a mixture of text-based and classroom-, school- and school community-based activities. Text-based is on how to read a poem, a book, a chapter in ways that open up the text in pleasurable ways. The classroom, school and community based on activities are an interactive checklist of ways of engaging whole schools and parents in reading books - with evidence of how beneficial this is.

## **Lemn Sissay**

Lemn Sissay is an award-winning writer. He was awarded an MBE for services to literature by The Queen of England. He is chancellor of The University of Manchester and an honorary Doctor from The University of Huddersfield, The University of Manchester and The University of Kent. Amongst other awards are a NESTA new radical award, in 2017, he won a point of light award from The Prime Minister. His poetry and 2019 Memoir *My Name Is Why* are published by Canongate Books.

He was the first poet commissioned to write for the London Olympics and wrote the official poem for the FA Cup. He is poet Laureate of Canterbury. If you google the name "Lemn Sissay" all the returning hits will be about him because there is only one person in the entire world named Lemn Sissay.

Lemn is a poet, playwright, artist performer and broadcaster. He has read on stage throughout the world: from The Library of Congress in The United States to The University of Addis Ababa, from the Botanic Gardens of Singapore to literature festivals in Sri Lanka, from Wembley Football stadium to Maryland Football stadium, from the theatres of Bangalore to the theatres of Dubai, from a literature festival in Bali to a stage in Greenland AND Wigan library. He read poetry at Sir Paul McCartney's book launch at The Queens Theatre in The West End.

In 2018 he brought a legal case against the government for 'stealing me and my childhood'. The government settled the case out of court for a six-figure sum. Lemn Sissay is a writer and a winner. Lemn lives in London, Manchester and Ethiopia.

Session Focus: Lemn will perform some of his poetry.

## **Mary Roche**

Mary Roche PhD: author of *Developing Children's Critical Thinking through Picturebooks* (Routledge 2015). The book received a United Kingdom Literacy Association Academic Book Award (2015).

\* Mary's 'Critical Thinking and Book Talk' (CT & BT) approach has been adopted by the National Council Curriculum Assessment, Ireland (NCCA) and (PDST) Literacy Advisers have now shown every primary teacher nationally how to use Mary's CT&BT approach.

\* *Developing Children's Critical Thinking through Picture books* is a prescribed text in several Initial Teacher Education colleges at home and internationally. It is currently being translated into Chinese.

\* Mary is a frequent speaker at conferences at home and abroad (e.g. Literacy Association of Ireland; UK Literacy Association; Dolly Parton Imagination Library; IBBY UK; Brookes College Oxford; OMEP Ireland, Oxford Reading Spree) and has delivered several keynote addresses.

\* She is a member of Literacy Association of Ireland and is currently the 'Literacy Ambassador for Ireland' to the UK Literacy Association

\* You can follow Mary on Twitter @marygtroche

**Session focus: LITERACY FLOATS ON A SEA OF TALK: PICTURE BOOKS AS AMAZING LANGUAGE LITERACY RESOURCES**

In her multimedia presentations Mary demonstrates how every librarian, early years' practitioner, Special Needs, primary or post primary teacher can use picture books to develop Critical Thinking, Oral Language and Meaning Making in children. Reading and discussing picture books together can help stimulate young children's imaginations; develop their understanding of how language works; build their visual literacy skills; reinforce for them the value and pleasure of reading; strengthen the relationship between parent/teacher and child; give them a great start to their education AND encourage them to become confident speakers and critical thinkers. Mary will explain how we can use these picture books as language and literacy resources for developing a culture in which meaningful social interaction can form the 'sea of talk' upon which readers and writers and thinkers can sail.

**Mary Myatt**

Mary Myatt is an education adviser, writer and speaker. She trained as an RE teacher and has also taught English, history, maths and Latin. A former local authority adviser and inspector, she works in schools talking to pupils, teachers and leaders about learning, leadership and the curriculum. She maintains that there are no quick fixes and that great outcomes for pupils are not achieved through tick boxes.

Latest books:

Curriculum: Gallimaufry to Coherence

Hopeful Schools: building humane communities

High Challenge, Low Threat

Her education blog [www.marymyatt.com](http://www.marymyatt.com)

Twitter: @MaryMyatt

**Session focus:** *When I read great literature, great drama, speeches, or sermons, I feel that the human mind has not achieved anything greater than the ability to share feelings and thoughts through language.'*

James Earl Jones

Mary's session will make the case that we should be creating the conditions for all our pupils to encounter and engage with rich, demanding language. There will be practical examples for making this a reality in the classroom.

## **Alison Wilcox**

Alison has extensive experience in working as a primary and middle school teacher, both in a full-time capacity and as a supply teacher, in private and state schools, in England and Scotland. Whilst teaching, she worked closely with pupils who struggled with creative writing to assess what additional resources would benefit them in improving their descriptive writing, and, as a result, developed the Descriptosaurus model. Alison gave up full-time teaching to complete the project, and now balances writing, research, in-service education and periods of freelance teaching.

In 2013 and 2017, she collaborated with the National Literacy Trust on their very successful writing competitions. Descriptosaurus; Action & Adventure, and Descriptosaurus: Ghost Stories were written following the 2013 National Literacy Trust Writing Competition. She has recently completed the third edition of Descriptosaurus and is now researching the impact of poetry on vocabulary acquisition, observation and descriptive prowess.

**Session focus: *Words are sacred. They deserve respect. If you get the right ones, in the right order, you can nudge the world a little.* (Tom Stoppard)**

How to create a word conscious community that enthusiastically seeks to extend its vocabulary: not to fulfil the requirements of a standardised test or curriculum strand but through an understanding of the value of vocabulary as an essential tool that increases the number of feelings and thoughts they can express, the number of events they can describe and the number of things they can identify and explain.

***The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be rekindled.* (Plutarch)**

## **Darren Chetty**

Darren Chetty taught in London primary schools for twenty years and is currently a Teaching Fellow at University College London. He is a contributor to *The Good Immigrant*, edited by Nikesh Shukla. He co-authored, with Jeffrey Boakye, *What is Masculinity? Why Does it Matter? And Other Big Questions*. Darren co-writes, with Karen Sands-O'Connor, a regular column on children's literature for *Books for Keeps*. He has been a judge for the YA Book Prize, The Little Rebels Award, The Blue Peter Book Award and an advisor for the Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Children's Book Awards. He is a member of the Steering Committee for Reflecting Realities, a project run by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) examining ethnic representation in children's fiction in the UK. Darren tweets @rapclassroom

**Session Focus: 'Growing Up Outside the Secret Garden'**

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