

National Poetry Day 2023 – Theme: ‘Refuge’

Thursday 5 October marked National Poetry Day 2023, the UK-wide celebration of the power, richness and diversity of poetry.

The official theme for 2023 was **‘Refuge’**, inviting pupils and communities to explore the idea of sanctuary, safety, belonging and home through poetry. National organisations highlighted poetry’s “transformative and healing power” as a source of refuge for both writers and readers.

This year also saw Lemn Sissay - acclaimed poet and author - appointed as National Poetry Day Ambassador, championing poetry as a source of strength, resilience and expression.

Across our school, classes explored the theme of *refuge* in age-appropriate ways, using poems that helped children think about safety, comfort, kindness and the places – and people – in which we find shelter. Pupils shared their work and reflections at the end of the week in Celebration Worship.

EYFS (Reception)

Themes: comfort, safety, home, belonging

- **“Safe in the Nest”** – short nest-themed poem
- **“Bedtime” – Michael Rosen**
Warm, familiar, supportive; evokes feelings of home and security.

Years 1 & 2

Themes: kindness, sanctuary, emotional refuge

- **“I Will Build an Embassy” – Lemn Sissay**
A National Poetry Day 2023 poem exploring what refuge means.
- **“The Door” – Miroslav Holub**
A simple poem about courage and leaving fear behind.

Years 3 & 4

Themes: belonging, identity, cultural refuge, emotional strength

- **“Refuge” – Will Kemp**
Published for NPD 2023, this poem explores giving refuge to others and finding home in kindness.
- **“The Sound Collector” – Roger McGough**
Great for discussing losing things, feeling unsettled, and what makes us feel ‘at home’.

Years 5 & 6

Themes: displacement, protection, resilience, global refuge

- **“The Island” – Armin Greder**
Poetic picture book; excellent for discussion about belonging and exclusion
- **“I Will Build an Embassy” – Lemn Sissay**
Evocative and thought-provoking; ideal for upper KS2 reflection.