

6 June 2014 *For immediate release*

New free teaching resource for Primary School teachers launched by the Poetry Society



The Poetry Society has launched an exciting new resource aimed at primary school teachers. **Poetry Train – The Essential Guide to Using Poetry in the Classroom at Key Stages 1 and 2** is a free 32-page book, written by **David Harmer** and **Roger Stevens**. Over the last few weeks it has been distributed free of charge to over 13,000 teachers and trainee teachers across the country.

Drawing on the poets' schools experiences working on the Poetry Society's *Poetry Train* programme, it is packed with lesson plans and activities to help boost teachers' confidence in using poetry in the classroom. The book includes poems by **Carol Ann Duffy**, **Jackie Kay**, **James Carter** and others, and Poetry Society President **Roger McGough** has contributed the foreword:



'Where the fairies are', an illustration from *Poetry Train* by Alex Foster.

'Children love rhyme in the way that they love music and colour. Short and easy to memorise, poems fire the imagination, and the sooner they listen to, and begin writing poems the richer their inner lives will be. It is essential to foster an enthusiasm for poetry as children move through their primary education. The first step in doing this is to encourage and support teachers with the tools and techniques to bring poetry to life. Giving teachers the confidence to deliver inspiring introductions to poetry will help develop the writers and readers of tomorrow.' – Roger McGough, President, the Poetry Society

Poetry Train was set up to increase the confidence of trainee primary school teachers in teaching the reading and writing of poetry. In 2013, independent research into the programme by the National Foundation for Educational Research, found:

*"Student teachers who participated in Poetry Train demonstrated significantly greater improvement in **knowledge** of and **enthusiasm** for poetry, **confidence** in teaching poetry, and acquisition of **teaching skills** than a comparison group."*

The *Poetry Train* book shares the proven techniques that Roger Stevens and David Harmer developed through the programme. We hope it will be a useful starting point for any primary teacher looking to introduce poetry to their classroom.

Poetry Train is freely available to download from the Poetry Society website at www.poetrysociety.org.uk/education, and distributed as a print publication to local authorities, schools and teacher training centres nationwide. To read the National Foundation for Educational Research report on Poetry Train, visit: nfer.ac.uk/publications/PSTT01/

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**To arrange interviews with the poets, for pictures or any other information please contact
Robyn Donaldson on 020 7420 9886 or email rdonaldson@poetrysociety.org.uk**

Notes to Editors:

THE POETRY SOCIETY

The Poetry Society was founded in 1909 to promote a “more general recognition and appreciation of poetry”. Since then, it has grown into one of Britain’s most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally. With innovative education and commissioning programmes and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, the Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages. It publishes the magazine *The Poetry Review*, runs the National Poetry Competition, the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award and the youth performance poetry championship SLAMBassadors UK. A registered charity, the Poetry Society is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. www.poetrysociety.org.uk

POETRY TRAIN

The *Poetry Train* programme was led by the Poetry Society, in partnership with Roehampton University and Bishop Grosseteste University College, Lincoln, and was generously supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. The *Poetry Train* resource features illustrations by Alex Foster.

For further information

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