

# Gartree High School

Ridgeway, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5TQ



29<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dear parents and carers,

Yesterday I was at the Leicestershire Secondary Head Teachers annual conference and was most fortunate to hear Michael Rosen (children's novelist and poet; the author of 140 books; Children's Laureate from 2007-2009). He talked to us about reading for pleasure and poetry - particularly relevant as it was National Poetry Day. We are currently having a push on reading for pleasure in school, with staff and students sharing the titles of the books they are currently enjoying. As Michael Rosen said yesterday "language belongs to us all." I think this poem captures that sentiment perfectly.

## Words Are Ours

by Michael Rosen (b 1946)

In the beginning was the word  
and the word is ours:  
the names of places,  
the names of flowers,  
the names of names,  
words are ours.  
Page-turners  
for early-learners  
How to boil an egg  
or mend a leg  
Words are ours  
Wall-charts  
Love hearts  
Sports reports  
Short retorts  
Jam-jar labels  
Timetables  
Words are ours  
Following the instructions  
for furniture constructions

Ancient mythologies  
Online anthologies  
Who she wrote for  
Who to vote for  
Joke collections  
Results of elections  
Words are ours  
The tale's got you gripped  
Have you learned your script?  
The method of an Experiment  
Ingredients for merriment  
W8n 4ur txt  
Re: whts nxt  
Print media  
Wikipedia  
Words are ours  
Sub-titles on TV  
Details on your cv  
Book of great speeches  
Guide to the best beaches



Looking for chapters  
on velociraptors  
Words are ours  
The mystery of history  
The history of mystery  
The views of news  
The news of views  
Words to explain  
the words for pain.  
doing geography  
Autobiography  
What to do in pay-phones  
Goodbyes on gravestones  
Words are ours.

Mr Scranage from our English department has organised a "Poetry Trail" and competition in school, and students responded enthusiastically! He has also shared the following poems with you in celebration of National Poetry Day - the theme this year was 'Freedom':

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Invictus by William Ernest Henley  
Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.  
In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.  
Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.  
It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.

The New Colossus by Emma Lazarus  
Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to  
land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall  
stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes  
command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!”  
cries she  
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your  
poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe  
free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to  
me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

Sympathy by Paul Laurence Dunbar  
I know what the caged bird feels, alas!  
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;  
When the wind stirs soft through the springing  
grass,  
And the river flows like a stream of glass;  
When the first bird sings and the first bud  
opes,  
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—  
I know what the caged bird feels!  
I know why the caged bird beats his wing  
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;  
For he must fly back to his perch and cling  
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;  
And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars  
And they pulse again with a keener sting—  
I know why he beats his wing!  
I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,  
When his wing is bruised and his bosom  
sore,—  
When he beats his bars and he would be free;  
It is not a carol of joy or glee,  
But a prayer that he sends from his heart’s  
deep core,  
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—  
I know why the caged bird sings.

This term we are putting reading at the top of everybody’s ‘to do’ list. The benefits of reading are so far reaching for people young and old, whether you are building knowledge and understanding of a particular topic or extending your vocabulary or enjoying a particular genre – or all of these! Literacy skills are at the heart of school life and all students are encouraged to read daily for pleasure. During form time, students should be reading at least twice a week. This may be independently or aloud to the group. The whole staff group are leading by example. Here are some examples of what Gartree High School staff are reading:

*The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood; *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline; *Did you ever have a family?* By Bill Clegg; *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C S Lewis; *Mountains of the Mind* by Robert MacFarlane; *How Not To Be A Boy* by Robert Webb.

There are still a couple I need to catch up with!

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On a sporting note, this week the netball and football teams hosted South Wigston High School. The netball teams did a unique treble – the Year 7s lost a very close game, 3 – 5; the Year 8s won 20-15; the Year 9s drew 5-5.

In football, the year 7s lost against a very strong team 2-5; the Year 8s won very comprehensively 8-1; the Year 9s put an excellent shift in, winning 5-0 for their second consecutive win of the season. Next week is a rest week for Year 8s and 9s. The year 7 team play against Beauchamp on Monday evening.

Have a good weekend!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Singleton'.

Sonia Singleton  
Headteacher

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