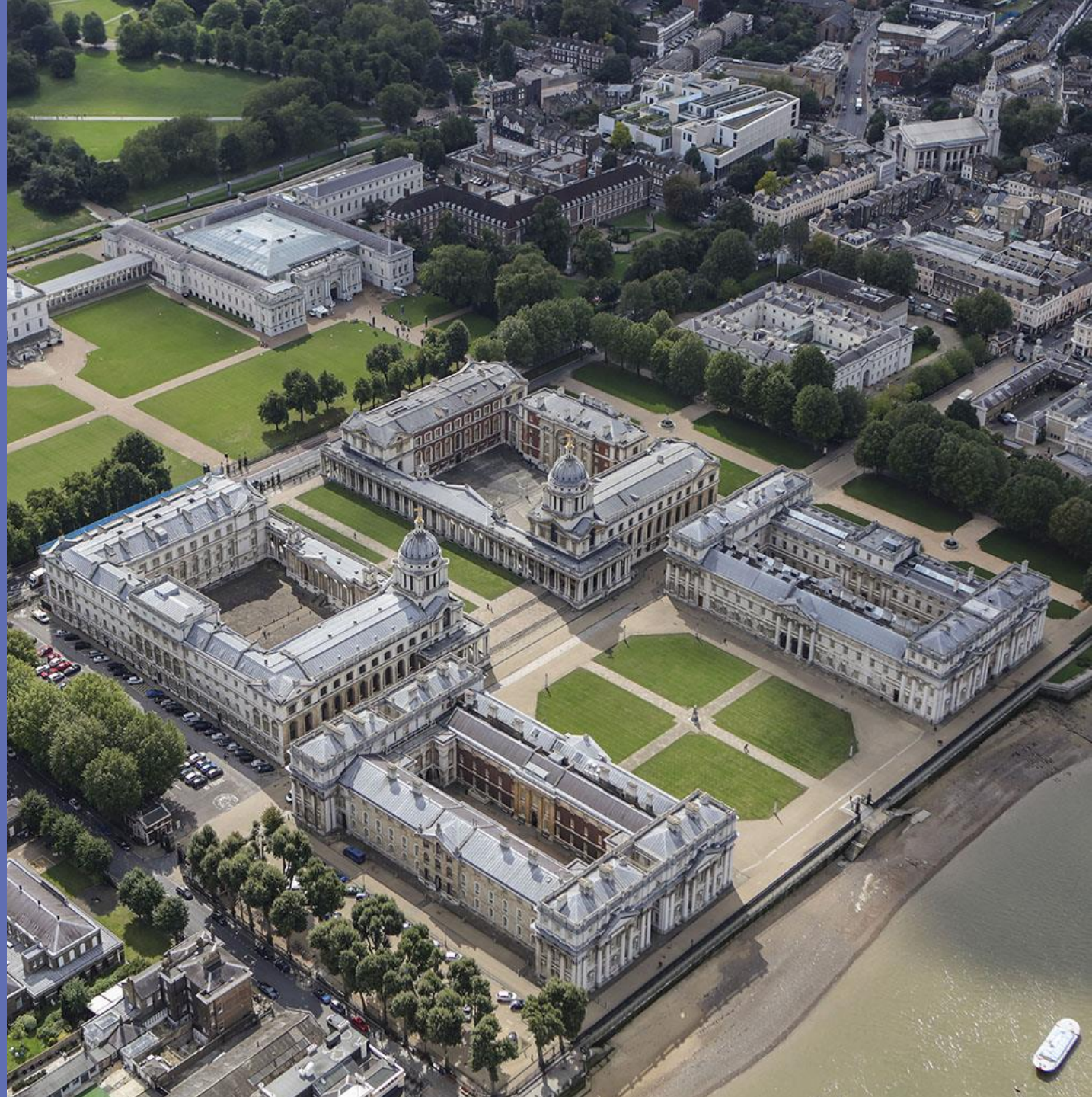


UKLA Conference 2018:  
**Construing the teacher:  
reading sociocultural  
representations in  
children's and young  
adult storytelling**

Dr Branwen Bingle  
University of Greenwich





# The parameters of the research



Children's Literature: what is the author's ideology & how do they construct teachers as characters?

Socio-cultural Constructs of Teachers

Trainee Teachers: what perceptions and personal constructs of the role of a teacher do they hold?

Children: what perceptions and personal constructs of teachers as real and imagined do they hold?



# Developing a Theoretical Sample

1. Literature identified by the Y5 participants as books they have read which included teachers as characters;
2. Literature identified by the participant primary trainee teachers as texts they read during childhood which included teachers as characters;
3. Texts recommended by BookTrust as appropriate for primary-aged children (4-11 years) on the theme of school or teachers
4. Texts written by authors identified by the UKLA Teachers as Readers project (2006-2008)

## Categorising the Corpus

**Beginning/ Early/ Developing:** 16 texts fell into this category due to their format (picturebook) and content, with many being set during the first year at school or even nursery school.

**Moderately Fluent/ Fluent:** 8 texts were placed in this category. These were novels with short chapters and integrated illustrations.

**Experienced/ Independent:** 10 texts, largely illustrated chapter novels of longer length. Some mature themes, but written in an accessible way using text and illustrations to develop the narrative.

**Mature:** 11 texts, all chapter novels dealing with mature themes in depth.



Generic Groups: Types Of Narrative for Beginning/Early/Developing Readers

Starting School	Day in the Life	Social Problem
<i>Starting School</i>	<i>The Sports Day</i>	<i>Alfie and the Big Boys</i>
<i>Topsy and Time Start School</i>	<i>The School Trip</i>	<i>First Week at Cow School</i>
<i>I Am Too Absolutely Small for School</i>	<i>Little Rabbit Goes to School</i>	<i>Marshall Armstrong is New to Our School</i>
<i>When an Elephant comes to School</i>	<i>Once Upon an Ordinary School Day</i>	<i>Knight School</i>
<i>Come to School too, Blue Kangaroo</i>	<i>Harry and the Dinosaurs go to School</i>	<i>Snow Day</i>
	<i>Totally Wonderful Miss Plumberry</i>	

Generic Groups: Types of Narrative for Moderately Fluent/Fluent Readers

Realism

*Sophie Is Seven*  
*How to Write Really Badly*  
*Horrible Henry's Sport's Day*  
*The Worry Website*  
*Clarice Bean, Utterly Me*

Fantasy

*The Magic Finger*  
*The Worst Witch*  
*Oliver Moon and the Potion Commotion*

Generic Categories published tales

Generic Groups: Types Of Narrative for Experienced and Independent Readers

Relationship between staff / pupil pivotal to the plot	Relationship between staff / pupil part of the plot	Relationship between staff / pupil surplus to the plot
<i>The Demon Headmaster</i>	<i>First Term at Malory Towers</i>	<i>The Great Ghost Rescue</i>
<i>The Brilliant World of Tom Gates</i>	<i>Well Done, Naughtiest Girl</i>	<i>Demon Dentist</i>
<i>Matilda</i>	<i>The Lottie Project</i>	
	<i>The Boy in the Dress</i>	
	<i>Daizy Star, Ooh La La!</i>	

Generic Groups: Types Of Narrative for Mature Independent Readers

Boarding School Narrative	Societal Realism	Alternative Provision	In Loco Parentis Imprudentis
<i>Tom Brown's Schooldays</i>	<i>The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 ¾</i>	<i>Skellig</i>	<i>Carrie's War</i>
<i>The War of Jenkins' Ear</i>	<i>Web of Lies</i>	<i>Scarlett</i>	<i>Stormbreaker</i>
<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i>	<i>Teacher's Dead</i>	<i>The Graveyard Book</i>	

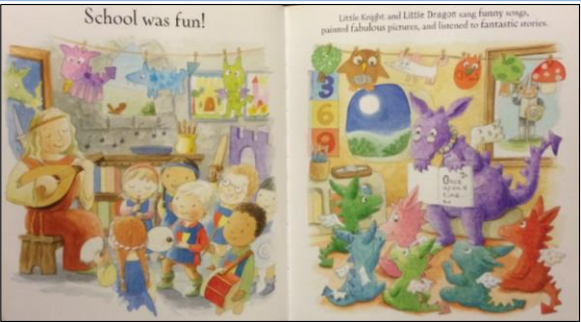


Figure 1 Little Knight: young teachers and old dragons

# Number of teacher-characters across the published corpus

Category	No. of teachers (n=163)	% of identified characters (163)	% of books in sample (n=45)
Beginning/Early/Developing	28	17	36
Moderately Fluent/Fluent	18	11	18
Experienced/Independent	53	33	22
Mature	64	39	24

# Example of Literary Analysis using Bipolar Constructs

Generic Groups: Types Of Narrative for Beginning/Early/Developing Readers

<i>Totally Wonderful Miss Plumberry</i> by Michael Rosen / Chinlun Lee (2007) Walker Books Ltd			
Character Name/Context	Physical Description (if available)	Emergent Pole	Implicit Pole
Miss Plumberry/Class teacher	BME/Female/Young	Teachers interact with their pupils on a one-to-one basis	Teachers ignore their pupils individually, only talking to them as a homogenous group
		Teachers notice when we are not happy and know what to do	Teachers don't notice our emotional state and/or can't help
		Teachers understand the power of their attention and use it to endorse pupils' stories/actions with other pupils	Teachers don't do anything to help pupils socialise
		Teachers influence pupils' actions and thoughts	They don't affect pupils other than academically
		The way teachers address problems influences how pupils think about them	Pupils base their opinions of teachers on how fun/boring they are.
Whole Text		Wonderful teachers recognise their pupils' needs and address them to make sure everyone feels valued at school	Poor teachers don't notice when pupils are upset and don't meet their needs

# Example of Literary Analysis using Bipolar Constructs

Generic Groups: Types Of Narrative for Mature Independent Readers

<i>Stormbreaker</i> by Anthony Horowitz (2000) Walker Books			
Character Name/Context	Physical Description (if available)	Emergent Pole	Implicit Pole
Mr Donovan/Maths teacher	Male	Regardless what has happened in pupils' lives, teachers have to get on with the lesson	They are interested and/or concerned about their pupils wellbeing beyond the learning
		Teachers often try to catch pupils out if they think they are not listening by questioning them about the lesson	Teachers noticing and making sure pupils are listening without trying to humiliate them
		Teachers are not able to challenge more able pupils and they are resigned to this	They set questions that challenge even the most able
Whole Text	No other staff members are mentioned; schools in general are referred to but no specific details about other staff	Teachers have no understanding of or involvement in pupils' lives outside of school	Teachers know everything about their pupils



# Characteristic Roles and Traits of the Teacher

Characteristic  
Roles & Traits  
(based on  
initial  
identification  
by Dockett et  
al 2010)

**Classroom Manager:** providing a welcome, meeting and greeting; organising space; allocating resources and seating; mismanaging resources

**Disciplinarian:** strict enforcer of the rules; arbitrary punisher; just and fair; judicial

**Pedagogue:** utilising a range of strategies; monotonous use of singular approach; engaging; limiting

**Nurturer:** providing emotional support; providing physical sustenance; well-meaning but ineffective without pupil input

Additional  
Roles & Traits  
(identified by  
Bingle 2017)

**Guardian:** in loco parentis; watching/observing; protective/protecting; negligent, dereliction of duty

**Cultural Arbiter:** facilitating access to high culture; limiting or enabling access to popular culture; judging validity

**Community Leader:** offering guidance; passing judgement; has followers, willing or otherwise; benign; dictatorial

**Entrepreneur:** providing education as a business or not-for-profit organisation

# Participant demographics


Participant Demographics (n=32)	No. of Female Participants	No. of Male Participants
Year 5 Pupils	11	11
Primary Trainee Teachers	5	5

Character's Name: Miss Shepherd

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

Caring	enthusiastic	Organised
authoritative	Passionate	Confident

Practical dresser:  
Flat shoes for working all day, long skirts, preferably trousers for working with children




Caring face -  
Winkle - leading is stressful!

The character is a funny but caring teacher. All the children would love her and feel comfortable to confide in her.  
She's creative and always creates imaginative and inspiring lessons/displays.

Character's Name: Mrs

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

Genious	honest	laughable
Kind	loyal	magic



apple jack  
Stylish  
lonely  
happy  
loves children - a animal lover  
Caring  
Sweet  
Shines  
Caringly  
god a horse ride  
apple Jack

Character's Name: Miss V

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

eccentric	approachable	creative
experimental	funny	spontaneous



Character's Name: Mrs. Jones

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

Creative	Passionate	Visionary
Kindhearted	affectionate	Placid



Character's Name: Mrs

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

Graciously	understanding	Kind
Classy	Tactful	




Likes animals/shoes  
Likes books, music, shopping  
generally teacher  
Right handed

Character's Name: Mrs Jones

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:


kind	friendly	affectionate
calm	strong	loving



Character's Name: Mr. Jones

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

Approachable	Kind	Reliable
A bit	Compassionate	Respectful



Character's Name: Mr. Jones

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

Firm	Fair	Respectful
Intelligent	Organised	Personable




long hair  
beard  
hair tie  
Plain black  
I wonder messenger bag  
belt  
Smart trousers  
Smart dress shoes

Character's Name: Miss Guss

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

Respectful	friendly	energetic
ambitious	fun/creative	kindness



Character's Name: Mr. Thompson

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

Polite/charismatic	Creative	Interpreted
Playful/compassionate	Courageous	Humorous



Character's Name: Voltaire/Goma

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

honest	friendly	understanding
clever	strong	

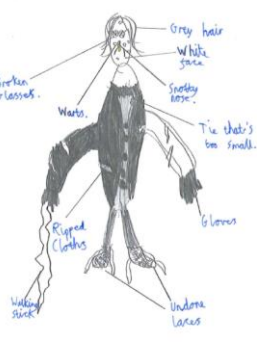


intelligent  
looks like a dragon  
wears itchy clothes  
teaches students to train dragons  
big-headed  
one spot bigger than the other  
good swimmer

Character's Name: Mrs. Nelson

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

Strict	Honest	Messy
Organised	Helpful	Unkind




Grey hair  
White face  
Stubby nose  
Tie that's too small  
Gloves  
Broken glasses  
Warts  
Ripped clothes  
Yellow socks

Character's Name: Mr. S.

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:


Kind	funny	likes cooking
supportive	likes to dance	friendly/compassionate



Character's Name: Mr. Flynn

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:


Friendly	Warm	Exciting
Colorful	Confident	Cool



Character's Name: Miss Funn

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

Funny	Fun	Joyful
Playful	excited	Active

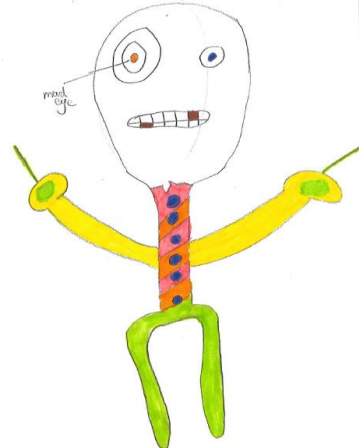


teacher  
Miss Funn  
ocean  
Play ground  
slide  
girl  
hope school  
boy  
boy  
girl  
round about

Character's Name: Miss Faulkner

Key words to help you describe the character's personality:

OS/9	unkind	
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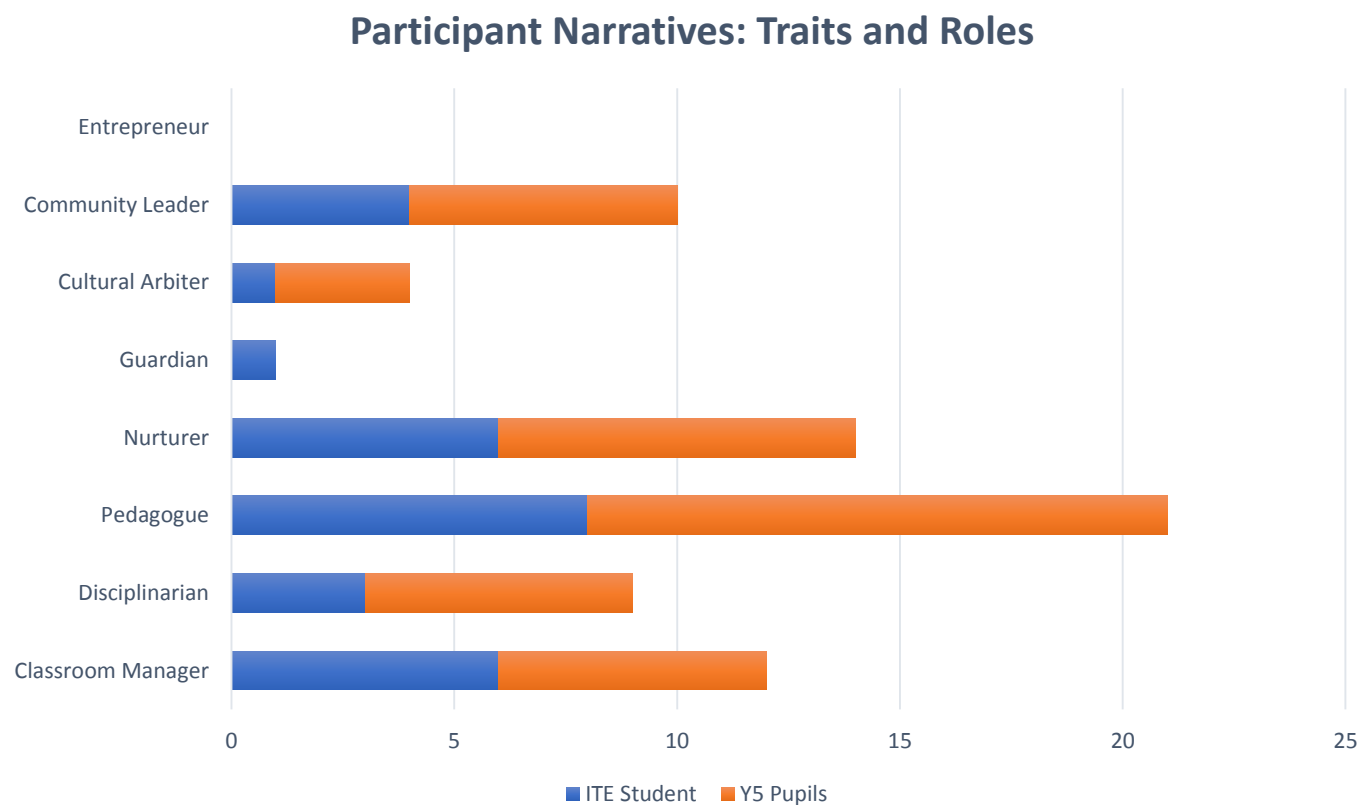


# Participant narratives: story categories

	Dedicated to teaching	Trapped by the job	The Disappearing Teacher	Life outside school	Ineffective in role	Removed from role
Character Name	Jess Amy Mr J (Jim) Miss Bisp Mr Flynn Mr Geofferies Mr A. Findlay Mr Jones Miss Wicked Miss V	Miss Shephard	Mrs Nofun Mr Berry Miss Fun Mr J. Cuthbert	May Oak Valhallarama Tara Mr Temponaut Mrs Seson Mrs Jones Miss Blue Mr Bob	Mrs Lucy Grylls Mr D.U.M.B. Miss Faulkness Mrs Cheerily Dobby Lars Miss Jewel	Mrs Darude Mr Bloodhound



# Participant Narratives: Traits and Roles



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# Be inspired

