

We received a reply to our email from Benjamin Zephaniah!

“Here are the answers, and I hope they make sense.

Good luck with all that you do, and give my regards to the class.

Benjamin”

### **1. What is your favourite poem you have written and why?**

I have a poem called Who's Who, which is very short, but it says a lot about what we think girls should do, what we think boys should do, and what some people think of poets.

Who's Who

I used to think nurses Were women,

I used to think police

Were men,

I used to think poets

Were boring,

Until I became one of them.

### **2. Do you think poetry can change the World? If so, how?**

There's no one poem or poet that can change the world, but poetry can change the way people see the world, and we can spread love instead of hate. If we change one person, that person might go on to change, another, and so on. That's the way we change the world together.

### **3. Which poets have you been influenced by?**

I really like Spike Milligan, and my mum. My mum would never call herself a poet, but she knew lots of old Jamaican poems, and she was always making up little poems for me.

### **4. Where do you go/what do you do to gather inspiration for your poems?**

There is a room at the back of my house which is like a little library. Through the window you can see fields as far as the eyes can see. I love going there to write. I like being home.

### **5. What inspired you to start writing poetry in the first place? How old were you?**

I just loved rhyme and playing with words. My mum said as soon as I started speaking I was making up short poems, but my first performance was in church, when I was 8 years old.

**6. Do you prefer writing poetry or acting? Why?**

I like both, but if I had to pick one it would be writing. Acting is speaking the words of other people, but when I write it's my own words. I'm expressing my own feelings.

**7. How do you think your poetry has changed over the years?**

When I younger I was always trying to write in different ways, and it was all new. Now I when I write I'm trying not to repeat something I said years ago. Most writers have to think about this as they get older. I write less poetry now, but better poetry, because I have had so many more experiences.

**8. Who/what inspires you the most today?**

I am still inspired by animals, I love playing with words, and I still want justice for people who can't get justice, and world peace. That's all.

**9. What do you think are the most pressing issues faced in the World today?**

The environment. When I say the environment I mean global warming, and pollution, but I also mean the way we deal with animals. if we keep cutting down rain forest to make land for cows so that we can have more burgers, we are going to come across more rare animals that should not mix with us. So, what does that mean? Well, it means more corona viruses. We have to change our ways.

**10. If you were Prime Minister for a day, what would you do?**

I would make sure that all school children had at least one trip abroad, to a country that was very different from ours, so they could experience another culture and make friends. If you have friends in a country it will be more difficult to go to war agaisnt them. You would have to sit down and talk to them, until there was peace.