

Quickfire questions for Katrina Reay, Head of English and Drama at Russell House

What is your favourite book and why?

Asking for my favourite book is like asking for my favourite type of chocolate – there is a different one almost every day, depending on my mood! Amongst my favourite authors are Kate Mosse, Anthony Horowitz, JRR Tolkien, JK Rowling/Robert Galbraith, Stephen Fry, Natasha Pulley, Erin Morgenstern and Philip Pullman. The book that I come back to time and time again like a comfort blanket is *Beloved* by the late Toni Morrison. It is beautiful, terrible, haunting and it gripped me from the first time I read it, back at school.

What do you hope that your pupils say about your school when they leave?

We are always happy that our pupils are ready to leave at the end of Year 6 and that we have filled them with the confidence and enthusiasm to move into secondary education. So although we miss our leavers as they move on, we know they are well-prepared and we hope they will remember the encouragement they were given to follow their own paths.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child?

Believe in yourself, make the most of opportunities, never stop asking big questions and always look for the positives.

Your pet hate?

As an English teacher, it has to be grammatical, really, doesn't it? I am always picky about misused apostrophes and when people muddle up 'fewer' and 'less'.

Where would you time-travel to?

I love history and I sometimes yearn for a simpler time without mobiles and social media. To be a fly on the wall in the royal courts of Tudor England would be fascinating, although I would make sure I kept my head down, or I might lose it!

If you were to have a different career, what would it be?

I would love to work as a linguist. I enjoy languages and learning about their etymologies, as well as trying to get across the power of words to the children I teach. So perhaps I would be a psycholinguist or even a speech writer.

Why did you want to become a teacher?

It wasn't really a choice for me. From an early age I said that I wanted to be a teacher and although I tried other jobs early in my career, I always managed to find myself in a teaching-style role within each. Training as a teacher was just an obvious next step and now, teaching English, I am in my absolute element!

If you could have one superhero power, what would it be?

Ironically, as I am scared of being on planes, it would be the ability to fly! I love rollercoasters and I imagine that the freedom and exhilaration of being up in the sky, independently and under your own control, would be incredible.

