



**NORTH LONDON FESTIVAL OF
MUSIC, SPEECH & DRAMA**

North London Festival of Music, Speech & Drama

Syllabus for Speech & Drama competitions
on
Sunday 15th November 2026



Syllabus for Speech & Drama competitions on Sunday 15th November 2026

Adjudicators:

Louise Manders and Cally Foster

Enter online via the website — www.northlondonfestival.org.uk.

The Closing Date for entries is **Friday 16th October 2026**.

The Festival would like to thank Susi Earnshaw and The Bull Theatre for hosting this year's competitions. The competitions will be at:

The Bull Theatre, 68 High Street, Chipping Barnet, Barnet EN5 5SJ -

only 400m from High Barnet Tube

thebulltheatre68@gmail.com

There is a car park in Moxon Street directly behind the theatre. There is no charge to park there on Sundays.

Enter via our "Play & Perform" site, which can be accessed from the Speech & Drama page of the Festival's website — northlondonfestival.org.uk.

For all enquiries regarding syllabus and timing please do not hesitate to contact the Festival via rmtreasurer.nlf@gmail.com. We can't wait to see you all perform in November!!

For each class, the entry age is strictly that on **1 September 2026**.

Candidates must provide a clean copy, handwritten or typed **not** photocopied, of their prose or script for the Adjudicator. Copies of set verse are included in this syllabus.

All performers will receive a certificate from the Festival and the winner of each class will receive a £15 book token as well as a medal. We are hoping also to be able to provide some books and holiday camp vouchers as prizes.

If a class has fewer than three entrants, the Festival will amalgamate the class with the next or the previous class in order of age.

If you have any queries, please always feel free to email the Festival at rmtreasurer.nlf@gmail.com.

Louise Manders LLAM ALAM GODA MSTSD (Adj)

Louise was born in Westcliff on Sea and first trod the boards when only five days old and has never looked back. Her varied and interesting professional theatrical career began with Haymarket Stage Productions progressing from stage management to acquiring her Equity card as an actress. She enjoyed touring the UK and appearing in all aspects of theatre including repertory and musicals, as well as appearing on television and in films.

Louise is presently not only an adjudicator for the British and International Federation of Festivals and the Guild of Drama Adjudicators but is also an adjudicator member of the Society of Teachers of Speech and Drama. She was Artistic Director of the Phoenix Youth Theatre in Southend, formerly the New Focus Theatre for many years. Louise's extensive work as an adjudicator has taken her all over the UK and abroad. She has adjudicated for festivals in Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and Canada. During the pandemic, Louise also adjudicated online.

She runs workshops and master classes, directs plays (including open air productions) and musicals, devises original drama compositions, writes poetry and has written many musical plays for children, students and adults. She teaches speech, drama, musical theatre, mime and dance drama to all ages of students, including adults, and specialises in the LAMDA examinations. Louise is an experienced theatre director and even finds time to dance flamenco!

A festival is a celebration and enables all entrants to bring their creativity and enthusiasm to fruition. Louise is really looking forward to visiting the North London Festival and sharing in these celebrations.



Cally Foster LLAM FSTSD

Since her first appearance in a festival at the age of five Cally has been committed to the festival movement and has pursued a career as a speech and drama specialist. She was the principal of her Buckinghamshire based drama studio for more than 20 years, combining that role with travelling extensively in the UK, Europe and Internationally as an Examiner for LAMDA and as an Adjudicator. Cally also delivers workshops on all aspects of communication and performance and is on various Speakers' Panels. She is an Adjudicator member of the British and International Federation of Festivals, a former Speech & Drama Representative on the Adjudicators Council as well as a former Chairman of the Society of Teachers of Speech and Drama.

Cally believes performing in festivals not only encourages an appreciation of the Arts but also develops the communication and presentations skills so important in today's world. She is delighted to be returning to the North London Festival and wishes everyone an enjoyable as well as a positive experience

Dan Collins was the Administrator of the Speech & Drama section of the Festival, but sadly, he passed away in April 2024. Over recent years he had put so much energy, time, enthusiasm, skill, joy, and care into his organising of the Speech & Drama classes, giving many young people opportunities to develop their talents. He is greatly missed. We are proud that we will award the **Dan Collins Trophy** to a performer demonstrating exceptional flair and entertainment.

All verse speaking to be performed from memory. All verse speaking copy is included in this syllabus. For each class, the entry age is strictly that on **1 September 2026**.

	Verse Speaking	Time (mins)	Fee £
902	Verse Speaking - Year 3, 7-8 years. <i>One More Story</i> by Julia Donaldson or <i>In the Rain</i> By Alison Chisholm or <i>The Cat Next Door</i> by Trevor Harvey	N/A	12.00
903	Verse Speaking - Year 4, 8-9 years. <i>Our Foul Fridge</i> by Steve Turner or <i>Four O'Clock Friday</i> by John Foster or <i>The Secret Place</i> by Dennis Lee	N/A	12.00
904	Verse Speaking - Year 5, 9-10 years. <i>Beneath My Bed</i> by Darren Stanley or <i>The Midnight Skaters</i> by Roger McGough or <i>The Book</i> by Michael Rosen	N/A	14.00
905	Verse Speaking - Year 6, 10-11 years. <i>Timothy Winters</i> by Charles Causley or <i>Sky in the Pie!</i> by Roger McGough or <i>The Visitor</i> by Ian Serrailier	N/A	14.00



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All own choice verse speaking may be acted but must be performed from memory. Please name the poem to be performed on the entry form.

For each class, the entry age is strictly that on **1 September 2026**.

Verse Speaking - Own Choice		Time (mins)	Fee £
906	Year 1, 5-6 years.	2	12.00
907	Year 2, 6-7 years.	2	12.00
908	Year 3, 7-8 years.	3	12.00
909	Year 4, 8-9 years.	3	12.00
910	Year 5, 9-10 years.	3	14.00
911	Year 6, 10-11 years.	3	14.00
912	Year 7, 11-12 years.	3	14.00

Performance

An extract from any play, novel, film, radio, or TV script written after 1910 to be performed from memory.

	Time (mins)	Fee £
913 Solo Modern Acting - Years 3 & 4, 7-9 years.	3	12.00
914 Solo Modern Acting - Years 5 & 6, 9-11 years.	3	14.00
916 Solo Modern Acting - Years 7 & 8, 11-13 years.	4	14.00
918 Solo Modern Acting - Years 9 & 10, 13-15 years.	4	14.00

Prose Reading Own Choice

An extract chosen from a book of candidate's own choice to be read aloud.

	Time (mins)	Fee £
920 Prose Reading - Year 4, 8 - 9 years.	2	12.00
921 Prose Reading - Year 5, 9 - 10 years.	2	14.00
922 Prose Reading - Year 6, 10 - 11 years.	3	14.00

Notes for Teachers, Performers and Parents

1. Time limits given are the maximum allowed and will be strictly adhered to. The Adjudicator will stop adjudicating 10 seconds over the allotted time and the performance may be stopped. Unless otherwise specified, we will allow 2 minutes setting up time per group. If you go over this time it will be deducted from your allotted performance time.
2. Copies of pieces to be performed should be submitted to the Adjudicator before the start of the class. These should be handwritten or typed, **not** photocopied.
3. All candidates are reminded that they are creating a performance. They should announce their pieces to the audience clearly and present themselves appropriately.
4. Simple costumes, make-up, and props can be used, but no extra marks will be awarded for these. Chairs and tables will be available at the venue, and there are changing facilities within the building.
5. In all Group competitions the age of the oldest competitor determines which class to enter. Age limits refer to the child's age on 1st September 2026.
6. During the Festival no performance may be recorded or videoed.
7. Volunteers are always needed to help on the day. If you are interested and can spare some time, please contact rmtreasurer.nlf@gmail.com.

Set Poems for North London Festival 2026**Class 902 - Year 3:*****One More Story* by Julia Donaldson**

One more story – you’ve only told me one.
Tell me the one about the runaway bun!
How about the dragon who never learned to roar?
One more story – just one more!

One more story – you’ve only told me two.
Tell me the one about the dinosaur poo!
How about the monster behind the secret door?
One more story – just one more!

One more story – you’ve only told me three.
Tell me the one about the champion flea!
How about a story I’ve never heard before?
One more story – just one more!

Why aren’t you answering? Did I hear you snore?

***In the Rain* by Alison Chisholm**

We’re playing football in the rain,
But I don’t care- I love the game.

My mum will not be very pleased –
There’s mud all over both my knees

Mud’s in my eyes and up my nose.
Mud’s oozing out between my toes.

Mud’s up my arms and in my hair
And down my shorts and everywhere;

And when mum sees my yellow shirt
She’ll scream with rage at all that dirt.

But I don’t mind- I’ll take the blame-
‘cause football’s still my favourite game.

***The Cat Next Door* by Trevor Harvey**

The cat from next door
Is as quiet as a mouse;
If your front door's ajar,
Then she'll enter your house;
She will creep up the stairs;
And she'll search high and low;
When she's seen all she wants,
She'll just turn tail and go.
Unless you're around
You're unlikely to know
That the cat from next door
Who's as quiet as a mouse
Has enjoyed a good sniff
Through the whole of your house!

Class 903 - Year 4:***Our Foul Fridge* by Steve Turner**

In our house the fridge
Is never kept clean
The marmalade is murky
And the yogurts are green.

The milk has gone mouldy
With a nice yellow skin
And there are spotty sausages
With a very strange grin.

There are bunions on onions
And salads with scum
There are cheeses with sneezes
With noses that run.

There are pork pies in poor shape
Being sick on the butter
And leftovers now
Lying dead in the gutter.

It's so very disgusting
It's a terrible scene
To see this foul fridge
Which never looks clean.

Four O'Clock Friday by John Foster

Four o'clock Friday, I'm home at last,
Time to forget the week that's past.
On Monday, in break they stole my ball
And threw it over the playground wall.
On Tuesday afternoon, in games
They threw mud at me and called me names.
On Wednesday, they trampled my books on the floor,
So Miss kept me in because I swore.
On Thursday, they laughed after the test
'Cause my marks were lower than the rest.
Four o'clock Friday, at last I'm free,
For two whole days they can't get at me.

The Secret Place by Dennis Lee

There's a place I go, inside myself,
Where nobody else can be,
And none of my friends can tell it's there –
Nobody knows but me.

It's hard to explain the way it feels,
Or even where I go.
It isn't a place in time or space,
But once I'm there, I know.

It's tiny, it's shiny, it can't be seen,
But it's big as the sky at night ...
I try to explain and it hurts my brain,
But once I'm there, it's right.

There's a place I know inside myself,
And it's neither big nor small,
And whenever I go, it feels as though
I never left at all.

Class 904 - Year 5:***Beneath My Bed* by Darren Stanley**

I can't go out. My mum just said.
Her eyes are fire. Her face is red.
I have to stay indoors, instead,
Until I've cleaned beneath my bed.

I did the shelves. I've done the floor,
The window-ledge and every drawer.
I scrubbed the crayon off the door.
Could any mother ask for more?

I wonder, has she peeped and seen
A mouldy plate or magazine,
Or pants or socks? There can't have been!
It's beautiful – all fresh, and clean.

There are no bugs, or mugs, or mice.
No toenail bits, or chips, or rice.
It's heaven there. It's neat. It's nice.
Since I was three I've cleaned it twice!

I said, "Oh mum, come on, play fair;
Don't waste your time- there's nothing there."
She frowned: "explain these books, this bear,
This brush, all clogged with crumbs and hair,
That bread, those boots..."

I didn't dare.

I can't go out. My mum just said.
Her eyes are fire. Her face is red.
I have to stay indoors, instead,
Until I've cleaned beneath my bed.

***The Midnight Skaters* by Roger McGough**

It is midnight in the ice rink
And all is cool and still.
Darkness seems to hold its breath
Nothing moves, until

Out of the kitchen, one by one,
The cutlery comes creeping,
Quiet as mice to the brink of the ice
While all the world is sleeping.

Then suddenly, a serving-spoon
Switches on the light,
And the silver swoops upon the ice
Screaming with delight.

The knives are high-speed skaters
Round and round they race,
Blades hissing, sissing,
Whizzing at a dizzy pace.

Forks twirl like dancers
Pirouetting on the spot.
Teaspoons (who take no chances)
Hold hands and giggle a lot.

All night long the fun goes on
Until the sun, their friend,
Gives the warning signal
That all good things must end.

At eight the canteen ladies
Breeze in as good as gold
To lay the table and wonder
Why the cutlery is so cold.

***The Book* by Michael Rosen**

I opened a book
and a hand fell out.
I turned a page
and heard a shout: *
I'm lost in a wood;
my mother's no good'
I couldn't bear to look
so I closed the book.

But the girl called out:
'Don't leave me here;
I need you to help me.'
I was cold with fear
so the book stayed shut.
I put it back on the shelf;
put it out of my mind
but then -
it opened itself.
Right there in front of me
it opened up wide
and I heard a voice say,
'Come inside.'

The hand that fell out
jumped back in the book,
the girl inside
gave me a long cool look
and before I knew it
I was in that wood,
running and running
as fast as I could,
running and running
as fast as I could,
running and running
as fast as I could ...

Class 905 - Year 6:***Timothy Winters* by Charles Causley**

Timothy Winters comes to school
With eyes as wide as a football-pool,
Ears like bombs and teeth like splinters:
A blitz of a boy is Timothy Winters.

His belly is white, his neck is dark,
And his hair is an exclamation-mark.
His clothes are enough to scare a crow
And through his britches the blue winds blow.

When teacher talks he won't hear a word
And he shoots down dead the arithmetic-bird,
He licks the pattern off his plate
And he's not even heard of the Welfare State.

Timothy Winters has bloody feet
And he lives in a house on Suez Street,
He sleeps in a sack on the kitchen floor
And they say there aren't boys like him anymore.

Old Man Winters likes his beer
And his missus ran off with a bombardier,
Grandma sits in the grate with a gin
And Timothy's dosed with an aspirin.

The welfare Worker lies awake
But the law's as tricky as a ten-foot snake,
So Timothy Winters drinks his cup
And slowly goes on growing up.

At Morning Prayers the Master helms
for children less fortunate than ourselves,
And the loudest response in the room is when
Timothy Winters roars "Amen!"

So come one angel, come on ten
Timothy Winters says "Amen
Amen amen amen amen."
Timothy Winters, Lord. Amen

***Sky in the Pie!* by Roger McGough**

Waiter, there's a sky in my pie
Remove it at once if you please
You can keep your incredible sunsets
I ordered mincemeat and cheese

I can't stand nightingales singing
Or clouds all burnished with gold
The whispering breeze is disturbing the peas
And making my chips go all cold

I don't care if the chef is an artist
Whose cavasses hang in the Tate
I want two veg. and puff pastry
Not the Universe heaped on my plate

OK I'll try just a spoonful
I suppose I've got nothing to lose
Mm... the colours quite tickle the palette
With a blend of delicate hues

The sun has a custardy flavour
And the clouds are as light as air
And the wind a chewier texture
(With a hint of cinnamon there?)

This sky is simply delicious
Why haven't I tried it before?
I can chew my through to Eternity
And still have room left for more

Having acquired a taste for the Cosmos
I'll polish this sunset off soon
I can't wait to tuck into the night sky
Waiter! Please bring me the Moon!

***The Visitor* by Ian Serraillier**

A crumbling churchyard, the sea and the moon;
The waves had gouged out grave and bone;
A man was walking, late and alone...

He saw a skeleton on the ground;
A ring on a bony finger he found.

He ran home to his wife and gave her the ring.
"Oh, where did you get it?" He said not a thing.

"It's the loveliest ring in the world," she said,
As it glowed on her finger. They slipped off to bed.

At midnight they woke. In the dark outside,
"Give me my ring!" a chill voice cried.

"What was that, William? What did it say?
"Don't worry, my dear. It'll soon go away."

"I'm coming!" A skeleton opened the door.
"Give me my ring!" it was crossing the floor.

"What was that, William? What did it say?
"Don't worry, my dear. It'll soon go away."

"I'm reaching you now! I'm climbing the bed."
The wife pulled the sheet right over her head.

It was torn from her grasp and tossed in the air:
"I'll drag you out of bed by the hair!"

"What was that, William? What did it say?
"Throw the ring through the window! THROW IT AWAY!"

She threw it. The skeleton leapt from the sill,
Scooted up the ring and clattered downhill,
Fainter... and fainter... Then all was still.



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For venues, a full list of competitions and an online entry form, visit

www.northlondonfestival.org.uk