Bring a box to share with the children (you could include). Inside the box put objects that have special meaning, which you feel have contributed to your identity e.g. information about your name and its origin, meaning who gave you it etc, a recording of your favourite song, photos of people and places, religious objects, clothing, statements a family member often made when you were growing up. Talk about the contents of the box and why you feel they have contributed to your identity.

Read ‘The Magic Box’ by Kit Wright and ask the children to identify the sights, sounds, smells, tastes the writer puts inside the box. Ask them why they think the writer has chosen these things. Discuss the idea that the poem is about the writer’s identity. Discuss the pattern of the poem and how the last two paragraphs change to become what the box is made from (this could be favourite things) and what the writer will do with the box (this could be a hobby or travel to a place they dream about visiting). As this is a magic box anything can go in it. The children can then write a poem about what they would put in their own box.

Make a class magic box decorating it with a class photos etc. They could then all bring in an object or photo of an object to put inside the box. Use the contents of the box to write a whole class poem – We will put in the box...

The Magic Box, By Kit Wright

I will put in the box
the swish of a silk sari on a summer night,
fire from the nostrils of a Chinese dragon,
the tip of a tongue touching a tooth.

I will put in the box
a snowman with a rumbling belly
a sip of the bluest water from Lake Lucerne,
a leaping spark from an electric fish.

I will put into the box
three violet wishes spoken in Gujarati,
the last joke of an ancient uncle,
and the first smile of a baby.

I will put into the box
a fifth season and a black sun,
a cowboy on a broomstick
and a witch on a white horse.

My box is fashioned from ice and gold and steel,
with stars on the lid and secrets in the corners.
Its hinges are the toe joints of dinosaurs.
I shall surf in my box
on the great high-rolling breakers of the wild Atlantic,
then wash ashore on a yellow beach
the colour of the sun.

Questions you could use with your class to explore the ideas in the poem

What sort of sights would you put in the box?
What sounds, smells, textures would you put in the box?
What sort of dreams and feelings would you put in the box?
Are there things from the natural world, like rivers and mountains?
Perhaps it has a window in it, or a door leading to somewhere else?
You could invent a different kind of box altogether – The Dream Box, The Happy Box....