

Author Visit - Kate DiCamillo

On Monday 25th September Micle, Lateesha, Bisma, Hela, Zaynab, Ella and Eesha went to the Grammar School with Mrs Swift to visit the wonderful author Kate DiCamillo.

She told us that she was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in March 1964. She had an older brother, who is three years older than her. Kate later had pneumonia three consecutive winters and spent this time in hospital.

In hospital, Kate felt very lonely and she felt like life was a train that she could not catch but her father gave her five small, wooden figures - a moon, sun, a farmer, his wife and a cow. Her father laid the wooden figures all on her bed and told her a story and then she would tell it back to her father and only then did she understood what a story was.

Soon after her pneumonia was cured, she, her brother and mother left for Florida, as it is warmer there. Her father left them without warning. While she was at Florida she still got sick she had pneumonia, conjunctivitis 100 times, measles 3 times, impetigo, chicken pocks, mumps and scarlet fever. She was sick all the time. Kate also missed a lot of her education, mum would teach her and she usually stayed home alone.

They had no TV, so her only activity was reading, she read: *'Island of the blue Dolphin'*, *'Abraham Lincoln'*, *'The Borrowers'* and *'Paddington'*. She said "Anything is possible"

Later, she went to the university in Minnesota. Her professor said "You should go to graduate school." She thought I am talented I should become a writer. She had a job at a warehouse, Garry, who was her friend, told her she wasn't a real writer. So she started her book and each day she woke up at 5am and wrote 2 pages before work. She sent the book to the editors but they said NO! After 473 rejection letters she still did not give up. At last she received a phone call to say they would publish her first book *'Because of Winn-Dixie'*. Many other books have followed.

When asked 'Can anyone be a writer?' she replied saying anyone can if they REALLY WANT IT.

Micle, Hela and Lateesha