

In-Schools Touring

Primary Arts: Brilliant Box of Books!

Books for your school and book lists curated by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE)

Curated by CLPE's librarian, our book lists contain an inspiring range of books that complement the Primary Arts In-Schools Touring Programme. The lists suggest books from EYFS through KS1 and up to KS2, including picture books, information books and novels.

The books have been chosen to tie in with five themes linked to the 10 performances and workshops on offer this year: **Circus, Carnival and Music Spectacular | Letters and Other Interactive Storytelling | Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice | The Environment and Recycling | Trust, Spies, and Lies.**

And even better – in this brilliant Box of Books, you'll find a selection of these for you to use in your classroom, school library or book corner.

We hope you and your pupils enjoy exploring them!

**View this
resource online**



**A NEW
DIRECTION**



CLPE

The CLPE is an independent UK-based charity. We support schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, enabling children to read and write for purpose and for pleasure. We provide professional development and resources and conduct research into all areas of literacy, using findings to inform practice and contribute to national and international perspectives.

Phoebe Demeger – CLPE Librarian

Phoebe is the Librarian at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE). A former bookseller, she manages CLPE's extensive reference library of children's books, hosts regular visitors to the library, and assists the wider team in their delivery of training programmes and special events. She produces book reviews and recommendations for CLPE, ensuring that the very best titles find their way into schools and classrooms.



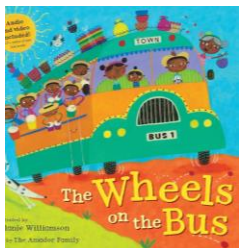
**Wherever you find
this symbol on the
book list, you'll find
that book in your
brilliant Box of Books.**

Circus, Carnival and Music Spectacular



EYFS

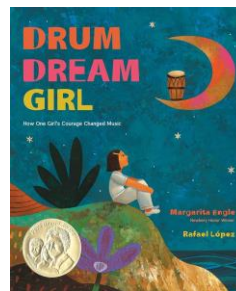
Picture Books



The Wheels on the Bus, by Stella Blackstone, Melanie Williamson and The Amador Family (Barefoot Books)

An adaptation of the popular children's song set in Guatemala, following a bus full of children as it travels through the South American landscape. Includes access to musical audio performed by The Amador Family.

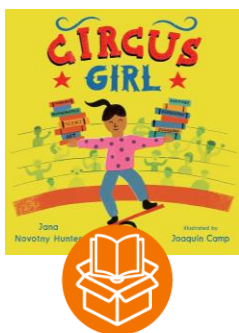
SHOW LINK: world music, set in Central America



Drum Dream Girl, by Margarita Engle and Rafael Lopez (HMH Books)

On an island where only boys are permitted to be drummers, one girl can't help but be inspired by the rhythms all around her, so practises the drums in secret under the moon. Loosely inspired by the childhood of Cuban musician Millo Castro Zaldarriaga.

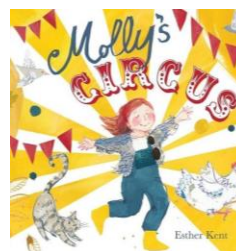
SHOW LINK: drumming, and musical instruments from around the world



Circus Girl, by Jana Novotny Hunter and Joaquín Camp (Child's Play)

A joyous and vibrant picturebook about a young girl from a family of Travelling Showpeople. She dreams of the sights, sounds and smells of the circus by night, attends school in a caravan by day, and at the weekends performs as the star of the circus.

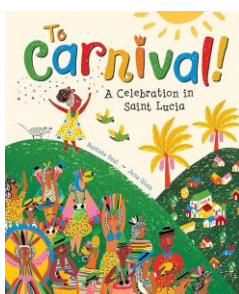
SHOW LINK: theme of the circus



Molly's Circus, by Esther Kent (Little Door Books)

Molly and her mum have lots of chores to do together, but Molly doesn't mind, because the power of her imagination transforms their garden into a circus. A celebration of imaginative play and the relationship between parent and child.

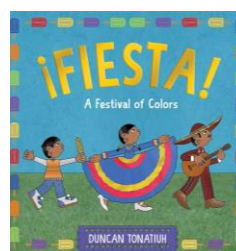
SHOW LINK: theme of the circus



To Carnival! A Celebration in Saint Lucia, by Baptiste Paul and Jana Glatt (Barefoot Books)

Sensory, onomatopoeic language and bold, folk art-esque illustrations bring Saint Lucia and its people to life as we follow one little girl's journey to reach the Carnival parade on time.

SHOW LINK: theme of Carnival (Caribbean)



¡Fiesta! A Festival of Colors, by Duncan Tonatiuh (Abrams)

A bilingual book in English and Spanish, exploring the colours of Latin-American food, objects and cultural items, and cumulating in a vibrant Mexican street festival.

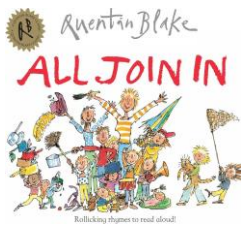
SHOW LINK: themed around a Latin-American celebration

Circus, Carnival and Music Spectacular



EYFS

Poetry



All Join In, by Quentin Blake (Red Fox)

An exuberant collection of poems in picturebook format by a beloved children's creator. The rhymes, rhythms and repetition are perfect for encouraging participation from young children, especially the noisy onomatopoeia of beeps, quacks, and clangs.

SHOW LINK: making music and noises, silliness and joining in

KS1

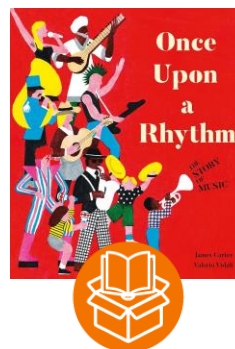
Picture Books



The Acrobat Family, by Anouck Boisrobert and Louis Rigaud (Little Gestalten)

A playful pop-up counting book with an unusual format resembling a circus tent. The rhyming text sees ten acrobats join one after the other to form an increasingly elaborate tower, their performance as impressive as the book's paper engineering.

SHOW LINK: theme of the circus



Once Upon a Rhythm: The Story of Music, by James Carter and Valerio Vidali (Little Tiger Press)

An exuberant, rhythmic, rhyming picturebook tracing the history of music through the centuries. Additional information is conveyed in a closing fact section, presented in acrostic form spelling out 'rhythm'.

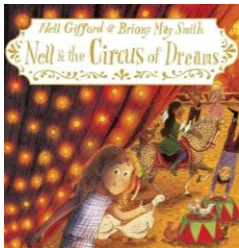
SHOW LINK: music, including global styles

Circus, Carnival and Music Spectacular



KS1

Picture Books



Nell and the Circus of Dreams, by Nell Gifford and Briony May Smith (Oxford University Press)

Nell goes looking for her missing pet chick and stumbles into a circle of caravans, where a family of Travellers are constructing a circus tent. Despite their differences she befriends the family, and girl and chicken are reunited under the bright lights of the circus.

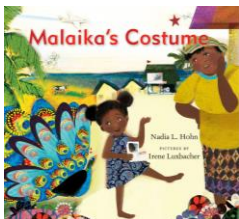
SHOW LINK: partially set in the circus



One Sweet Song, by Jyoti Rajan Gopal and Sonia Sánchez (Walker Books)

Separated by distance, a group of neighbours unite through music by playing instruments from their balconies. The cumulative rhyming text builds to a crescendo as more and more instruments join together in collective song.

SHOW LINK: theme of music and instruments from around the world



Malaika's Costume, by Nadia L Hohn and Irene Luxbacher (Groundwood Books)

Little Malaika is saddened that her mother doesn't have the money for a new Carnival costume, neither does she feel at home in her grandmother's hand-me-downs. Will she find the costume of her dreams? Partially written in Caribbean patois.

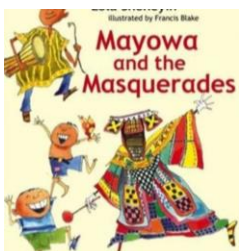
SHOW LINK: theme of Carnival (Caribbean)



I Am a Sensible Gibbon, by Will Mabbitt and Claudia Boldt (Hodder Children's Books)

Our gibbon narrator lays down the law and tries to maintain order amidst a sea of silly animals – this 'successful' mission is celebrated with a giant party. An anarchic rhyming picturebook, perfect for reading aloud.

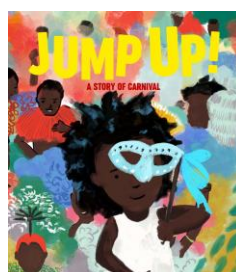
SHOW LINK: silly noises and celebration



Mayowa and the Masquerades, by Lola Shoneyin and Francis Blake (Cassava Republic Press)

Mayowa would rather stay home and play computer games than visit his grandmother in the Nigerian city Ilisan. He is paired up with local boy Denuyi, whose enthusiasm is infectious, and together they experience the sights and sounds of the masquerades.

SHOW LINK: theme of a carnival celebration (African)



Jump Up! A Story of Carnival, by Ken Wilson-Max (George Padmore Institute)

This book explores the origins of Carnival through the eyes of a little girl living in the Caribbean, and the festival thrown by her community to celebrate and honour their histories and ancestral traditions. Closes with an information section on the history of Carnival.

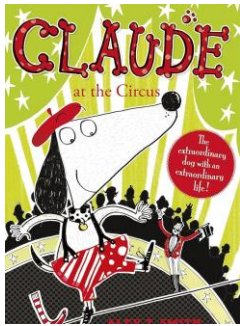
SHOW LINK: theme of Carnival (African and Caribbean)

Circus, Carnival and Music Spectacular



KS1

Novels



Claude at the Circus, by Alex T. Smith (Hodder Children's Books)

The third book in this illustrated early fiction series sees Claude the dog – and his sidekick Sir Bobbysock – visit the circus, but after Claude accidentally sabotages the performers' equipment, he saves the day by starring in the show himself.

SHOW LINK: theme of the circus

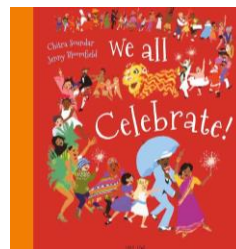
Information Books



Busy Little Fingers: Music, by Eva Wong Nava and Eleonora Marton (Big Picture Press)

Exuberant text and vibrantly painted illustrations lead the reader through a potted history of ten musical genres, including activities and ideas for making your own music.

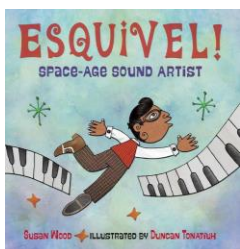
SHOW LINK: theme of world music styles



We All Celebrate!, by Chitra Soundar and Jenny Bloomfield (Tiny Owl)

A guide to a wide range of festivals and celebrations which take place across the world over the course of a year, showing how the act of celebrating has the power to unite people everywhere.

SHOW LINK: includes a section on Carnival (both Brazilian and London)



Esquivel! Space-Age Sound Artist, by Susan Wood and Duncan Tontiu (Charlesbridge Publishing)

A lively illustrated biography of innovative Mexican composer Juan García Esquivel, who experimented with unusual instrumentation – often drawing on the sounds of his hometown – and experimental sound effects, creating a new style of 'space-age' lounge music.

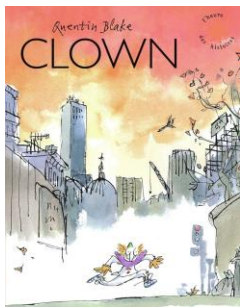
SHOW LINK: biography of a Mexican composer, music technology

Circus, Carnival and Music Spectacular



Lower KS2

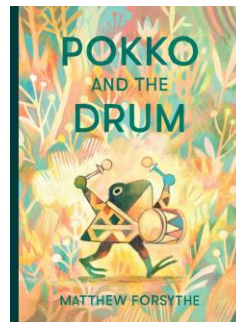
Picture Books



Clown, by Quentin Blake (Red Fox)

A wordless picturebook about the trials and tribulations of an unwanted toy clown, and its adventures through the city in its quest to find a new, happy home.

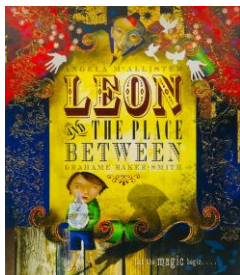
SHOW LINK: protagonist is a clown



Pokko and the Drum, by Matthew Forsythe (Simon & Schuster)

Pokko the frog's parents suggest she take her new drum into the forest to practice (so they can have some peace and quiet). Her playing attracts more and more forest creatures, and soon a whole noisy band has formed, with Pokko leading the way.

SHOW LINK: theme of music and drumming



Leon and the Place Between, by Angela McAllister and Grahame Baker-Smith (Templar)

The sceptical Leon attends a magic show expecting to be disappointed, but when he volunteers to be the magician's assistant he is thrown into a world beyond his imagination. The digitally collaged illustrations and fold-out, peep-through elements make this a surreal, immersive and enchanting read.

SHOW LINK: takes place in a circus/fairground environment

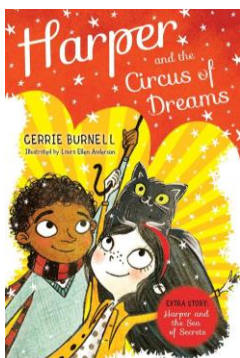


The Midnight Fair, by Gideon Sterer and Mariachiara Di Giorgio (Walker Books)

When a fairground closes its doors for the night, a group of woodland animals sneak in and spend the night enjoying the fair for themselves. A wordless picturebook which makes stunning use of light and dark.

SHOW LINK: takes place in a circus/fairground environment

Novels



Harper and the Circus of Dreams, by Cerrie Burnell and Laura Ellen Anderson (Scholastic)

Written by CBeebies star Cerrie Burnell, a young girl called Harper is whisked away on a magical adventure to a floating circus in the sky, where she meets a vibrant cast of characters and begins to unlock some secrets from her past.

SHOW LINK: set in the circus



The Big Top Mysteries: The Case of the Vanishing Granny and The Great Clown Conundrum, by Alexander McCall Smith and Sam Usher (Barrington Stoke)

A duology about three mystery-solving siblings who also happen to be the stars of their family circus. The short chapters and illustrations make this an accessible and engaging read – publisher Barrington Stoke also specialises in creating super-readable, dyslexia-friendly books.

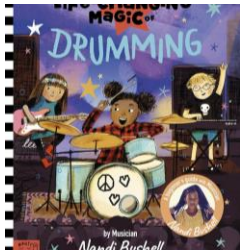
SHOW LINK: set in the circus

Circus, Carnival and Music Spectacular



Lower KS2

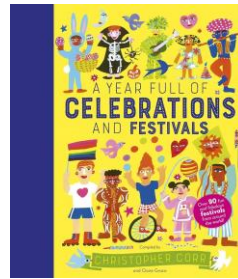
Information Books



The Life-Changing Magic of Drumming, by Nandi Bushell and Andrea Stegmaier (Magic Cat Publishing)

An illustrated guide to learning and playing the drums written by young musician Nandi Bushell, filled with sequential, comic-style illustrations, activities and how-to's, and life lessons to be learned.

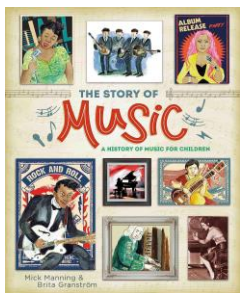
SHOW LINK: music and instruments, especially drumming



A Year Full of Celebrations and Festivals, by Christopher Corr and Claire Grace (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

Illustrated in a vibrant folk-art style, this book spotlights over 90 global celebrations, with sections on seasonal festivals, festivals around a particular theme, as well as notable individual festivals.

SHOW LINK: includes a spread on Carnival (Brazilian)

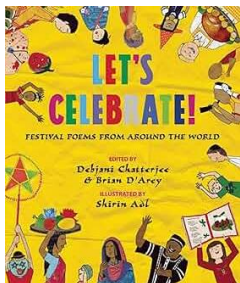


The Story of Music: A History of Music for Children, by Mick Manning and Brita Granström (Franklin Watts)

A comprehensive, chronological guide to the global history of music, beginning with ancient and folk music through to contemporary pop and indie, with photographs and illustrations throughout.

SHOW LINK: includes sections on Latin American and World music

Poetry

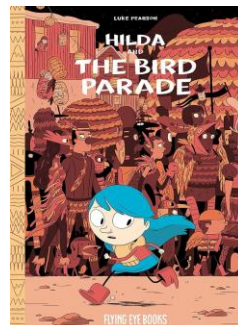


Let's Celebrate! Festival Poems from Around the World, by Debjani Chatterjee, Brian D'Arcy and Shirin Adl (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

Collage illustrations accompany this vibrant anthology of poetry about global festivals and celebrations, arranged according to when each festival occurs in the year.

SHOW LINK: features the poem 'Carnival' by Valerie Bloom

Graphic Novels



Hilda and the Bird Parade, by Luke Pearson (Flying Eye Books)

Hilda is still adjusting to her new life in the big city, when she rescues and befriends a mysterious talking bird who has lost his memory, but might just be connected to the Great Parade happening in town that very evening. The third book in the popular graphic novel series – also available in novel format as *Hilda and the Great Parade* (by Stephen Davies and Seaira Miller.)

SHOW LINK: culminates with a festival/parade

Circus, Carnival and Music Spectacular



Upper KS2

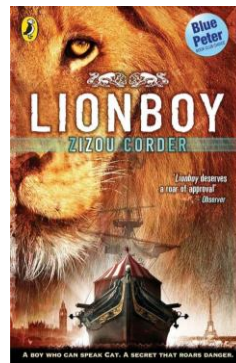
Novels



The Girl Who Walked on Air, Emma Carroll (Faber & Faber)

A historical adventure about a girl who grows up in the circus having been abandoned there as a baby. She dreams of being a tightrope-walker and practises in secret, but she'll need all her bravery and wits to achieve her dreams.

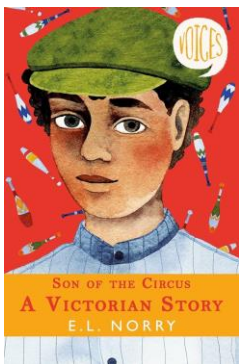
SHOW LINK: set in the circus



Lionboy, by Zizou Corder (Puffin)

A globe-trotting adventure series in an alternative future version of Earth. When British-Ghanian boy Charlie's scientist parents are kidnapped by a mysterious corporation, he finds refuge on board a circus ship and strikes up a companionship with their pride of performing lions, for Charlie can talk to cats.

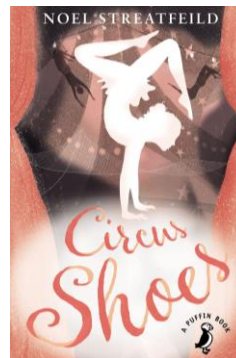
SHOW LINK: partially set in a travelling circus



Son of the Circus, by E.L. Norry (Scholastic)

Part of Scholastic's 'Voices' novel series, which spotlights underrepresented stories and voices from British history. Set in South Yorkshire in the 1860s, this book explores the life of a young mixed-heritage boy who learns that his long-lost father is Pablo Fanque, the first black circus owner in Victorian Britain, and joins his father to lead a new life in the circus.

SHOW LINK: theme of the circus



Circus Shoes, by Noel Streatfeild (Puffin)

When Santa and Peter's guardian passes away, they are sent to live with their only living relative uncle Gus, a clown and trapeze artist from a travelling circus. The children are fascinated by life in the circus, and strive to prove themselves to their uncle. From the author of beloved novel *Ballet Shoes*.

SHOW LINK: theme of the circus

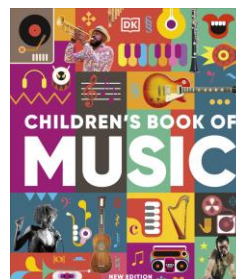
Information Books



Around the World in 80 Musical Instruments, by Nancy Dickmann and Sue Downing (Welbeck Editions)

A comprehensive and inclusive guide to the instruments of the world, which includes: labelled maps showcasing their origins; a particular focus on traditional instruments from various cultures; a stunning fold-out family tree; and a 'make your own' section inspiring the reader to craft instruments from household items.

SHOW LINK: music and instruments from around the world



Children's Book of Music (Dorling Kindersley)

A comprehensive fact file with accompanying photographs that highlights musical styles, movements and instruments from throughout history and around the world.

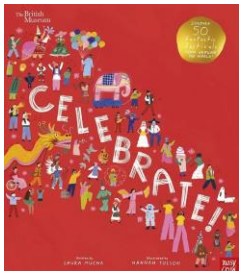
SHOW LINK: music and instruments from around the world

Circus, Carnival and Music Spectacular



Upper KS2

Information Books



Celebrate!: Discover 50 Fantastic Festivals from Around the World, by Laura Mucha and Hannah Tolson (Nosy Crow, with The British Museum)

This beautifully produced gift title travels the world through its many different kinds of festivals, visiting each continent in turn. Filled with informational asides, speech bubbles and intricate illustrations.

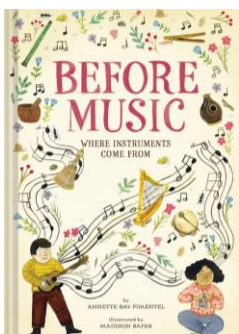
SHOW LINK: includes sections on African and Latin American celebrations, including Carnival



Music: A Fold-Out Graphic History, by Nicholas O'Neill, Susan Hayes and Ruby Taylor (What On Earth Books, with the Royal Albert Hall)

Beginning with a map of ancient music and travelling through the centuries to the present day, this fold-out global timeline explores notable musicians and changemakers, how historical contexts have shaped music, and new developments in instruments, technology and music-making.

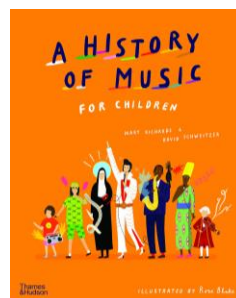
SHOW LINK: global history of music



Before Music: Where Instruments Come From, by Annette Bay Pimentel and Madison Safer (Abrams)

A large-format, lyrical and beautifully produced history of the origins of ancient musical instruments from around the world. Organised by material, many of which from the natural world, and spotlighting particular musical innovators and makers.

SHOW LINK: global history of musical instruments



A History of Music for Children, by Mary Richards, David Schweitzer and Rose Blake (Thames & Hudson)

A brilliantly comprehensive and global guide to music history, exploring many different cultures and contexts and addressing how and why music is made, performed and enjoyed.

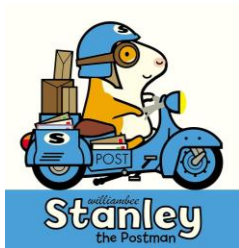
SHOW LINK: theme of world music

Letters and Other Interactive Storytelling



EYFS

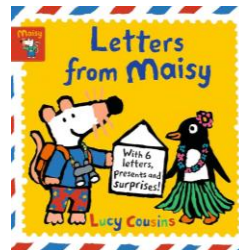
Picture Books



Stanley the Postman, by William Bee (Puffin Books)

Part of a series that sees Stanley the hamster take on a variety of different jobs, with a friendly, 'blocky' illustration style. Here, we follow Stanley as he delivers letters and parcels to his friends.

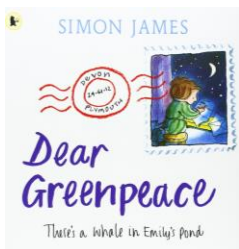
SHOW LINK: theme of the postal service



Letters from Maisy, by Lucy Cousins (Walker Books)

Maisy the mouse is on holiday, and for every location she visits, she sends a letter home to one of her friends. The reader can open each envelope to find postcards, souvenirs and other surprises.

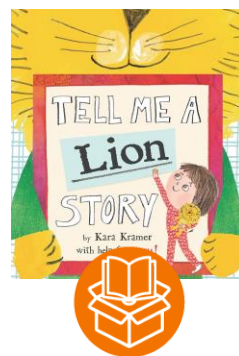
SHOW LINK: interactive letters



Dear Greenpeace, by Simon James (Walker Books)

Little Emily is convinced there is a whale living in her garden pond, so enters a correspondence with Greenpeace about how best to look after him. Also available in an interactive edition, with pull-out letters.

SHOW LINK: theme of letter-writing, with interactive letters



Tell Me a Lion Story, by Kara Kramer (Walker Books)

This interactive picturebook opens with a child requesting their parent tell them a story about a lion, and soon the reader's help is enlisted to add their own choices and flourishes to the tale.

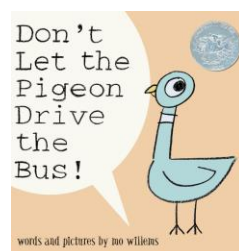
SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling



This is Owl, This is Frog and This is Crab, by Libby Walden, Harriet Evans and Jacqui Lee (Little Tiger Press)

The reader is introduced to and invited to interact with the three animal characters of this picturebook series, with opportunities to call out, make animal sounds, tickle, tap, tip and more.

SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling



Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!, by Mo Willems (Walker Books)

A fourth wall-breaking modern classic about persuasion, in which an increasingly desperate pigeon uses a variety of rhetorical tactics to convince the reader to let him drive the bus.

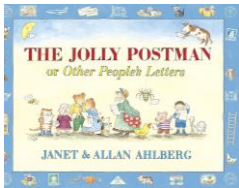
SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling

Letters and Other Interactive Storytelling



KS1

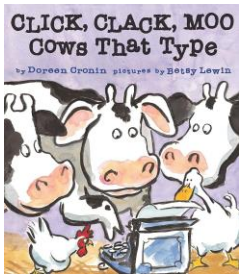
Picture Books



The Jolly Postman, or Other People's Letters, by Janet and Allan Ahlberg (Puffin Books)

This enchanting classic of children's literature uses rhyming text to tell the story of a friendly postman as he delivers letters – with envelopes that can be opened and read – written by and to a range of fairytale characters. Followed by two sequels, 'The Jolly Pocket Postman' and 'The Jolly Christmas Postman'.

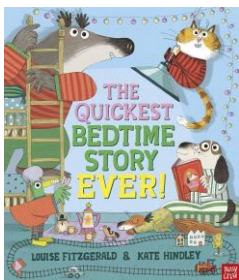
SHOW LINK: the postal service and interactive letters



Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type, by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin (Simon & Schuster)

A comedic book about communication and negotiation, as Farmer Brown's cows type messages to him requesting electric blankets for their barn, and go on strike when he refuses to comply.

SHOW LINK: theme of letter-writing



The Quickest Bedtime Story Ever!, by Louise Fitzgerald and Kate Hindley (Nosy Crow)

There is plenty to do before settling down to hear a ten-word bedtime story, such as a vocal warm-up, a big stretch, and making sure every teddy is tucked in. Filled with interactive instructions that wind down towards bedtime.

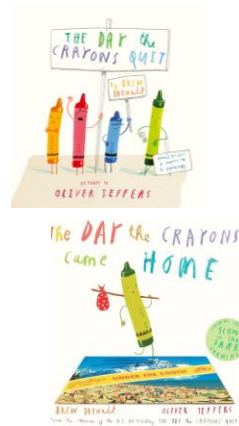
SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling



A Very Late Story, by Marianna Coppo (Flying Eye Books)

Five little characters appear on a blank page and wait for their story to begin, but Rabbit finds waiting boring and takes matters into its own hands. A witty tale of storytelling and imagination.

SHOW LINK: narration, imagination and storytelling



The Day the Crayons Quit and The Day the Crayons Came Home, by Drew Daywalt and Oliver Jeffers (HarperCollins)

Duncan's crayons are fed up with their working conditions, so each writes him a letter to complain, each with their own grievances and distinctly comedic voices. In the follow-up, Duncan's broken, lost and forgotten crayons write letters asking to be rescued, or telling him of their travels.

SHOW LINK: theme of letter-writing



Meerkat Mail, by Emily Gravett (Macmillan Children's Books)

Sunny the meerkat sets off to see the world, staying with various relatives along the way and sending postcards home to his family as he travels. With lift-the-flap postcards, and scrapbook-style collaging.

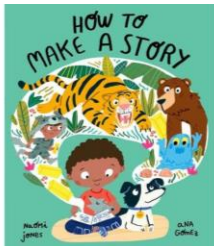
SHOW LINK: theme of letter-writing, with interactive letters

Letters and Other Interactive Storytelling



KS1

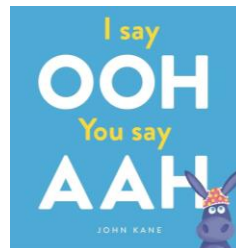
Picture Books



How to Make a Story, by Naomi Jones and Ana Gomez (Oxford University Press)

Through imaginative play, Milo makes up a story, drawing inspiration from his home environment and little siblings. He then uses pen and paper to turn his story into a book – a facsimile of which appears on a double-page spread – ready to be shared with his family.

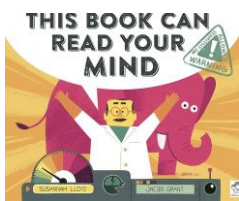
SHOW LINK: imagination, storytelling and book-making



I Say Ooh You Say Aah, by John Kane (Templar Books)

An interactive picturebook with a comedy call-and-response element, and plenty of actions to engage the listener.

SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling



This Book Can Read Your Mind, by Susannah Lloyd and Jacob Grant (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

Narrated by an inventor who has turned the book into a mind-reading machine, this comedic interactive book plays with the notion that if asked NOT to think of something, you will inevitably think of just that.

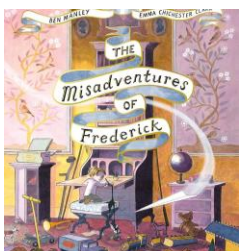
SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling



The Story Machine, by Tom McLaughlin (Bloomsbury)

A boy finds a typewriter in the attic and discovers he can use its letters to make stories, first as words, then as pictures. Eventually he learns that his own imagination, rather than the machine, is the true story-maker.

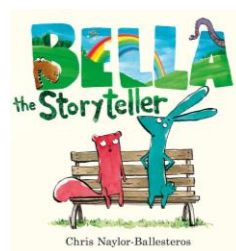
SHOW LINK: theme of writing and storytelling



The Misadventures of Frederick, by Ben Manley and Emma Chichester Clark (Two Hoots)

Presented as a series of letters between the kind and adventurous Emily, and the sheltered and accident-prone Frederick, as Emily tries to convince her friend to spend some time with her in the great outdoors.

SHOW LINK: theme of letter-writing



Bella the Storyteller, by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros (Andersen Press)

Squirrel and Rabbit find themselves at the mercy of an omnipotent narrator, who takes over the narrative and fills it with all sorts of outlandish events.

SHOW LINK: theme of narration and storytelling

Letters and Other Interactive Storytelling



KS1

Picture Books

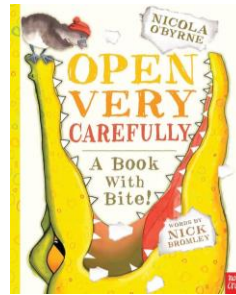
The Book With No Pictures

B.J. Novak

The Book With No Pictures, by B.J. Novak (Puffin Books)

A mischievous modern classic that demonstrates the power of the written word, as whoever is reading the words aloud is encouraged to do so in increasingly silly ways.

SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling



Open Very Carefully, by Nicola O'Byrne and Nick Bromley (Nosy Crow)

What starts out as an ordinary fairytale becomes an interactive, fourth wall-breaking adventure, as the Ugly Duckling and the reader battle against a hungry, word-munching crocodile.

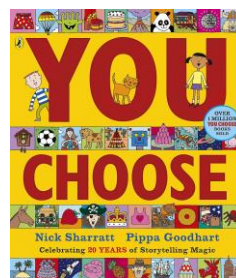
SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling



Once Upon a Fairytale, by Natalia and Lauren O'Hara (Macmillan Children's Books)

Inspired by classic fairytales and accompanied by soft watercolour illustrations, this picturebook can be read in a variety of different ways, depending on the choices the reader is invited to make.

SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling, choose-your-own-adventure



You Choose, by Nick Sharratt and Pippa Goodhart (Puffin Books)

Perfect for encouraging discussion, ideation and imagination, as a series of rhetorical questions and crowded and colourful pictures invites the reader to choose whatever life story they wish.

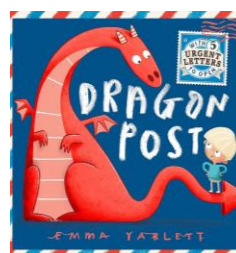
SHOW LINK: theme of imagination and storytelling, choose-your-own-adventure



Dear Grandpa, by Kate Simpson and Ronjooy Ghost (Allen & Unwin)

Henry and his grandfather live over a thousand miles away from one another, but the letters they write to each other, sharing facts, feelings and jokes, allow them to stay close and connected.

SHOW LINK: theme of letter-writing



Dragon Post, by Emma Yarlett (Walker Books)

When Alex finds a dragon living in his basement, he writes a succession of letters to various experts, seeking advice on how to look after his new friend. The experts' responses appear in interactive envelopes.

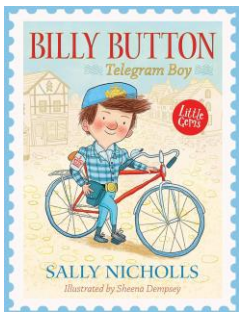
SHOW LINK: theme of letter-writing, with interactive letters

Letters and Other Interactive Storytelling



KS1

Novels



Billy Button: Telegram Boy, by Sally Nicholls and Sheena Dempsey (Barrington Stoke)

Published in a dyslexia-friendly format, this sweet historical chapterbook follows a young boy who delivers telegrams around his village, and helps to unite a pair of elderly sweethearts. Also features a word jumble and a maze in the endpapers.

SHOW LINK: the postal service and letter-writing

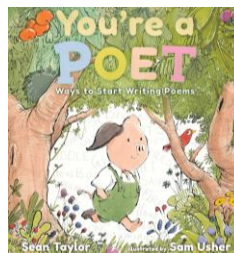
Information Books



Special Delivery: A Book's Journey Around the World, by Polly Faber and Klas Fahlén (Nosy Crow)

This inventive title follows the steps along the global supply chain of a book being printed in a factory, couriered across the world, and delivered by a local postal service, and spotlights all the different types of workers along the way.

SHOW LINK: global supply chains, including the postal service



You're a Poet: Ways to Start Writing Poems, by Sean Taylor and Sam Usher (Walker Books)

Five short, illustrated stories starring a piglet and his friends are paired with five writing activities for creating one's own poems, in this warmly accessible introduction to the world of poetry.

SHOW LINK: storytelling and creative writing, with a focus on poetry

Letters and Other Interactive Storytelling

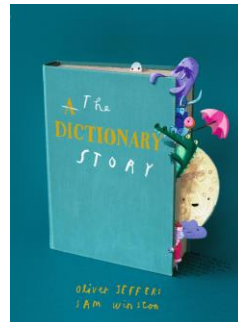


Lower KS2

Picture Books

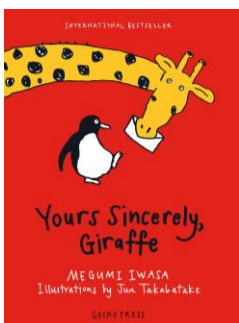


Ten-Word Tiny Tales, by Joseph Coelho and various illustrators (Walker Books)
Created by a former Children's Laureate, this is a collection of imaginative tales told in just ten words, each paired with full-page artwork by a different illustrator. The book closes with tips on writing your own tiny tale.
SHOW LINK: storytelling and creative writing, with a focus on short fiction

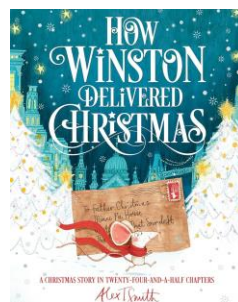


The Dictionary Story, by Oliver Jeffers and Sam Winston (Walker Books)
This book uses playful collage and typography to tell the story of a dictionary who, tired of being just a list of words, decides to bring her pages to life to tell a story of her own, with chaotic consequences.
SHOW LINK: words and storytelling

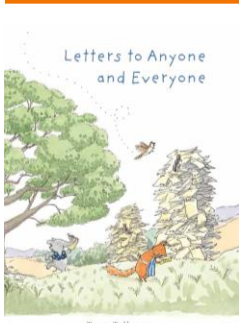
Novels



Yours Sincerely, Giraffe, by Megumi Iwasa, Jun Takabatake and Cathy Hirano (Gecko Press)
A light-hearted chapterbook novella in translation with inked illustrations, about a long-distance correspondence between a giraffe and a penguin.
SHOW LINK: theme of letter-writing



How Winston Delivered Christmas, by Alex T. Smith (Macmillan Children's Books)
Winston the mouse discovers an undelivered letter to Father Christmas, and sets off on a daring mission to ensure it reaches the North Pole in time. A festive adventure told in 24½ chapters, one for every day of December.
SHOW LINK: letters and the postal service



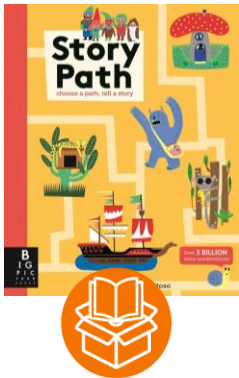
Letters to Anyone and Everyone, by Toon Tellegen, Jessica Ahlberg and Martin Cleaver (Boxer Books)
A beautifully produced collection of gentle short stories in the form of letters exchanged between animal characters.
SHOW LINK: theme of letter-writing

Letters and Other Interactive Storytelling



Lower KS2

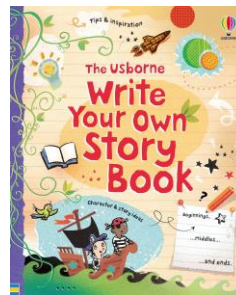
Information Books



Story Path, by Kate Baker and Madalena Matoso (Big Picture Press)

Perfect for inspiring imaginative storytelling, each spread of this book offers a variety of choices for where the story might go, with prompts provided to enable the reader to build their own quest narrative.

SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling, choose-your-own-adventure

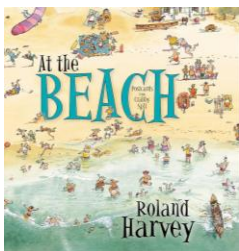


Write Your Own Story Book, by Louie Stowell and Katie Lovell (Usborne)

This accessible and engaging activity book is filled with creative writing tips and activities to inspire young people, including choosing the right words, generating plots and characters, exploring different genres and forms, and more.

SHOW LINK: storytelling and creative writing

Graphic Novels



At the Beach: Postcards from Crabby Spit, by Roland Harvey (Allen & Unwin)

A family writes postcards to their grandmother during their holiday around the Australian coastal town of Crabby Spit, in this humorous travelogue with intricately painted illustrations.

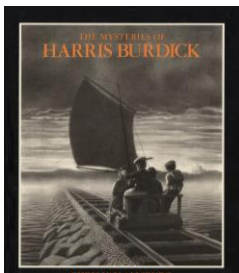
SHOW LINK: theme of letters and postcards

Letters and Other Interactive Storytelling



Upper KS2

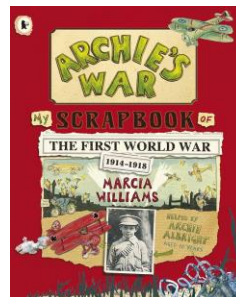
Picture Books



The Mysteries of Harris Burdick, by Chris Van Allsburg (Andersen Press)

The premise of this unique picturebook is that fourteen drawings, each with a title and mysterious caption, were left with a publisher by a man who subsequently disappeared. An imaginative stimulus for creative writing.

SHOW LINK: imagination and storytelling

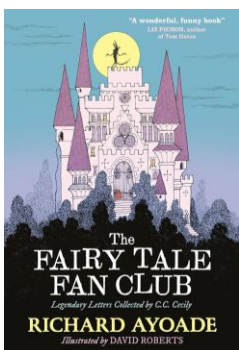


Archie's War and My Secret War Diary, by Marcia Williams (Walker Books)

Presented as a pair of scrapbooks of the lives of two children, these books paint a picture of everyday life during World Wars I and II, using newspaper cuttings, photographs, diary entries, doodles, and fold-out letters and cards.

SHOW LINK: letters, diaries, and ways of storytelling

Novels



The Fairy Tale Fan Club, by Richard Ayoade and David Roberts (Walker Books)

Curated by the imaginary secretary of the titular fan club, this is a witty collection of letters written to notable fairytale characters, and their responses.

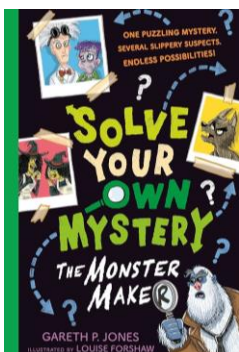
SHOW LINK: theme of letter-writing



Letters from the Lighthouse, by Emma Carroll (Faber and Faber)

In this historical adventure, two siblings are evacuated to the Devon coast during World War II. To make herself useful, Olive takes on work delivering letters, but soon comes across a mysterious coded note that might somehow connect to her missing sister.

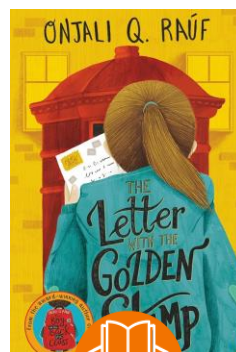
SHOW LINK: letters and the postal service



Solve Your Own Mystery, by Gareth P. Jones and Louise Forshaw (Little Tiger Press)

A comedy-horror choose-your-own-adventure series, in which the reader gets to play detective and decide in which order to approach the narrative to solve the mystery.

SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling, choose-your-own-adventure



The Letter with the Golden Stamp, by Onjali Q. Rauf (Hachette Children's Books)

Set in Wales, this compelling story is at once a love letter to the postal service, and a moving account of a resourceful young carer going above and beyond to look after her mum.

SHOW LINK: theme of letters and the postal service

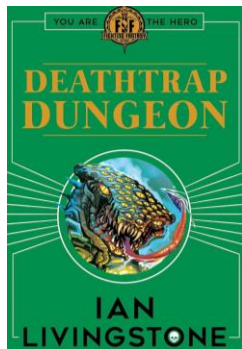


Letters and Other Interactive Storytelling



Upper KS2

Novels

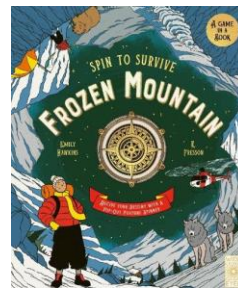


Fighting Fantasy, by various authors (Scholastic)

First published in the 1980s, each book in this role-playing, choose-your-own-adventure series allows the reader to shape how the narrative unfolds by making decisions and rolling a die. The fantasy settings and action-packed quests make this a great pick for young gamers.

SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling, choose-your-own-adventure

Information Books



Spin to Survive, by Emily Hawkins, Giles Sparrow and R. Fresson (Wide Eyed Editions)

Cleverly combining books, gameplay and real-life survival skills, this immersive series invites the reader to consider what choices they would make in order to survive a range of dangerously exciting adventures, from mountains to deep space.

SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling, choose-your-own-adventure

Graphic Novels



Adventuregame Comics, by Jason Shiga (Abrams & Chronicle)

This innovative series combines comics with gameplay and mazes to create a uniquely interactive reading experience. The story unfolds in comic book panels which branch off in different directions, allowing the reader to follow their own path to solve the mystery.

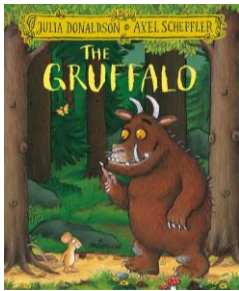
SHOW LINK: interactive storytelling, choose-your-own-adventure

Trust, Spies and Lies



EYFS

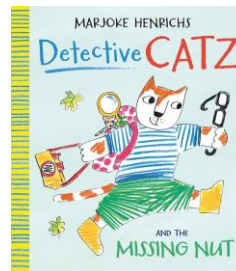
Picture Books



The Gruffalo, by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler (Macmillan Children's Books)

To avoid being eaten by a fox, and owl and a snake, a mouse successfully plants a rumour about a big scary creature who eats foxes, owls and snakes. And when the Gruffalo appears for real, the mouse's quick-thinking saves his skin again.

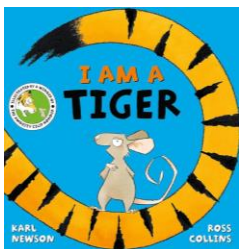
SHOW LINK: using lies and tricks to get out of trouble



Detective Catz and the Missing Nut, Marjoke Henrichs (Sallywag Press)

Catz dreams of being a real detective but struggles to solve his first case – it takes the support of his friends to give him the confidence he needs to keep trying.

SHOW LINK: detective skills



I Am a Tiger, by Karl Newson and Ross Collins (Macmillan Children's Books)

A little mouse convinces a group of animals that they're not a mouse but a tiger, that the big stripy cat that appears on the scene is actually a mouse, and even that the other animals are not who they think they are. A humorous tale about the power of persuasion.

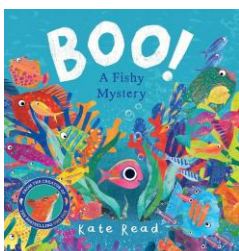
SHOW LINK: lies and persuasion



Finn's Little Fibs, by Tom Percival (Bloomsbury)

Finn accidentally breaks one of his grandmother's ornaments and quickly pins the blame onto his little sister, but his fibs soon grow out of control and make him feel bad. An empathetic story about telling the truth, and part of Tom Percival's 'Big Bright Feelings' series.

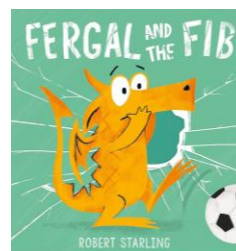
SHOW LINK: theme of lies and truth



Boo! A Fishy Mystery, by Kate Read (Two Hoots)

A tiny pink fish plays a trick which frightens the fish around her and causes a rumour to grow bigger and bigger – but is there something big and scary out there after all? Readers also learn about primary, secondary and complimentary colours in this underwater tale.

SHOW LINK: lies and tricks



Fergal and the Fib, by Robert Starling (Andersen Press)

A relatable and reassuring story about a little dragon called Fergal who sometimes tells small, and mostly harmless fibs, but when one of his fibs gets a friend into trouble, he gets a funny feeling in his tummy, and finds that the only way to make it go away is to tell the truth.

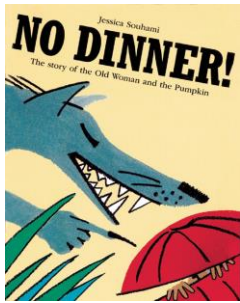
SHOW LINK: theme of lies and truth

Trust, Spies and Lies



EYFS

Traditional Tales



No Dinner!, by Jessica Souhami (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

In this adaptation of an Indian folk tale, an old woman goes to visit her granddaughter on the other side of the forest, and uses some clever lies and trickery to avoid being eaten by the forest's hungry animals.

SHOW LINK: using lies and tricks to get out of trouble

KS1

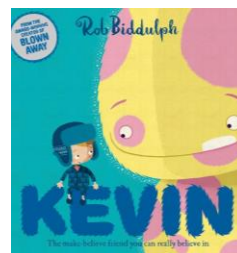
Picture Books



It Wasn't Me!, by Marta Altés (Macmillan Children's Books)

Ellie and Charlie live on an island alone together and share all their belongings, but when things start to go missing one by one, the friends grow suspicious of one another – after all, who else is there to blame? A reassuring story about falling out, and forgiving your friends.

SHOW LINK: theme of lies, trust, and friendship



Kevin, by Rob Biddulph (HarperCollins Children's Books)

Sid makes up an imaginary friend named Kevin on whom to blame for his messes and mistakes, but one night he discovers that not only is Kevin real, but so are his feelings. An rhyming picturebook about empathy, honesty, and imaginary friends.

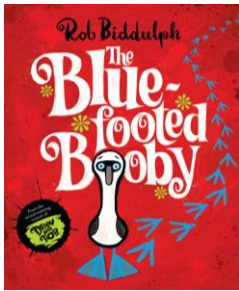
SHOW LINK: theme of lies and friendship

Trust, Spies and Lies



KS1

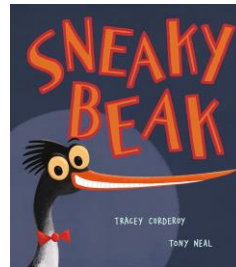
Picture Books



The Blue-footed Booby, by Rob Biddulph (HarperCollins Children's Books)

There's more than one twist in this rhyming crime caper about a group of booby birds who love to bake, but whose cakes keep going missing. A repeated refrain carries the action along in this tale of jumping to conclusions and red (and blue and green) herrings.

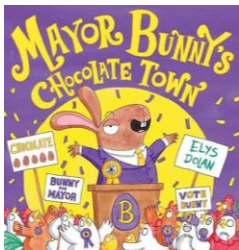
SHOW LINK: detectives and mysteries



Sneaky Beak, by Tracey Corderoy and Tony Neal (Little Tiger Press)

The charlatan sales-bird Sneaky Beak convinces Bear that his perfectly fine belongings are inadequate, and that he must buy the latest items immediately, but Hamster is less easily persuaded. A comedic commentary on consumerism and advertising.

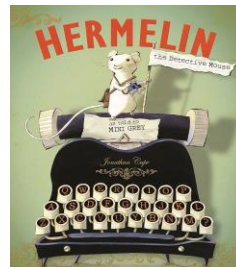
SHOW LINK: theme of lies and persuasion



Mayor Bunny's Chocolate Town, by Elys Dolan (Oxford University Press)

Mr Bunny is determined to be voted in as the town mayor, so uses all sorts of dirty tactics, including empty promises, fearmongering, and a campaign of misinformation against his opponent, to get elected, but he soon finds that being the mayor is harder than it looks.

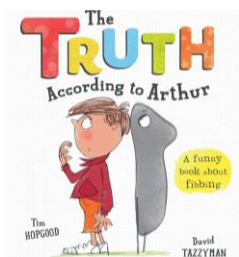
SHOW LINK: theme of lies and misinformation



Hermelin: The Detective Mouse, by Mini Grey (Jonathan Cape)

Hermelin moves into an attic on Offley Street and becomes the neighbourhood's finest detective, solving mysteries for its residents, but how will they react when they discover Hermelin is a mouse? Many types of print feature in the story, from a community noticeboard to Hermelin's typewritten case notes.

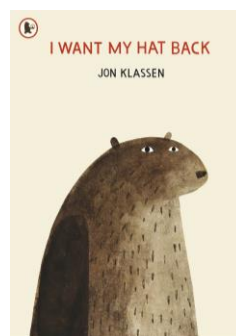
SHOW LINK: detective skills



The Truth According to Arthur, by Tim Hopgood and David Tazzyman (Bloomsbury)

Arthur tells his friends increasingly outlandish stories about how his brother's bike and his mum's car got dented, but soon he'll have to own up to his mum. There is comedic interplay between the words and the pictures, as the blob-like personification of 'the Truth' gets bent, stretched, covered up, ignored, and eventually looked straight in the eye.

SHOW LINK: theme of lies and truth



I Want My Hat Back, by Jon Klassen (Walker Books)

A bear has lost his hat, and asks a succession of animals if they've seen it, including a rabbit who is wearing a rather familiar pointy red hat. The bear's moment of realisation doesn't come until later, marked with a hilariously stark red wash.

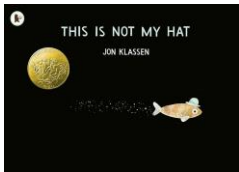
SHOW LINK: a lie propels the narrative

Trust, Spies and Lies



KS1

Picture Books



This Is Not My Hat, by Jon Klassen (Walker Books)

In this deadpan dark comedy, a little fish just stole a hat from a big fish, and is convinced that they're going to get away with it, but the silent, parallel narrative reveals that the big fish knows exactly what's going on, and is in hot pursuit.

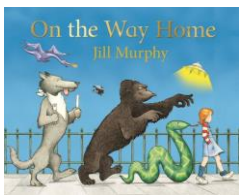
SHOW LINK: theme of lies, and things not being as they seem



Oh Monty!, by Susannah Lloyd and Nici Gregory (Pavilion)

An unseen narrator entrusts her cats to look after her freshly baked cake, but the mischievous Monty has other ideas. There is plenty of silent comedy in the two cats' expressions, as the honest Tiddles tries in vain to convince the owner of Monty's blame.

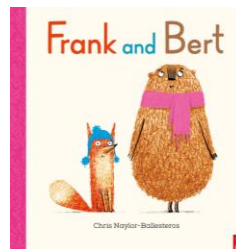
SHOW LINK: theme of lies, honesty and blame



On the Way Home, by Jill Murphy (Macmillan Children's Books)

On her way home to tell her mother about her bad knee, Claire bumps into an assortment of friends to whom she tells various tall tales, involving wolves, witches, dragons and ghosts, about what happened to her.

SHOW LINK: lies and tall tales



Frank and Bert, by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros (Nosy Crow)

Bert isn't very good at hide-and-seek but would love to win, just once – unfortunately, his bright pink scarf snags on a tree and unbeknownst to Bert, leads Frank directly to him. Frank chooses to tell a little white lie, putting his friend Bert's feelings over his own desire to win.

SHOW LINK: lies that preserve a friendship



Beware the Blue Bazzoo, by Karl Newson and Andrea Stegmaier (Happy Yak)

An intrepid detective resolves to get to the bottom of the town rumours about a grumpy, gobbling beast known as the Blue Bazzoo. A charming, rhyming text about fearmongering, kindness, and making amends.

SHOW LINK: misinformation and detective skills



Billy and the Beast, by Nadia Shireen (Jonathan Cape)

Our hero Billy encounters a Terrible Beast intent on making a pot of Terrible Soup, using the forest's inhabitants as ingredients. Billy must use all her wits – and the vast array of items she keeps in her hair – to trick the beast out of eating her forest friends.

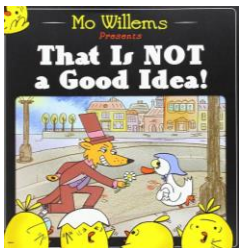
SHOW LINK: using lies and tricks to get out of trouble

Trust, Spies and Lies



KS1

Picture Books



That Is NOT a Good Idea!, by Mo Willems (Walker Books)

This comedic fairytale twist features the unique framing device of a group of goslings watching a silent film about an encounter between a fox and a goose, and commenting with increasing alarm on the unfolding action. It turns out the goose, rather than the fox, is the real trickster.

SHOW LINK: lies and tricks

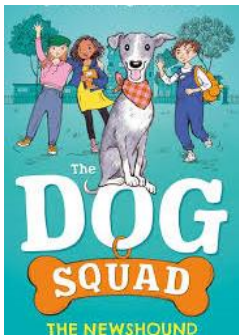
Novels



Stick & Fetch Investigate: Barking Up the Wrong Tree, by Philip Ardagh and Elissa Elwick (Walker Books)

A collection of short stories with bold black, white and yellow illustrations about girl-and-dog detective duo Stick and Fetch. Stick has as much determination as she does imagination, hilariously jumping to conclusions about non-existent cases.

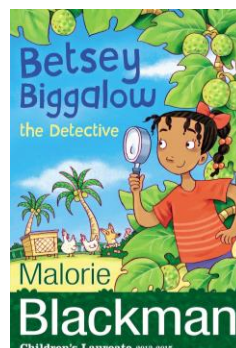
SHOW LINK: detective skills



The Dog Squad: The Newshound, by Clara Vulliamy (HarperCollins Children's Books)

The first in a series about three young reporters who run their own local newspaper. In their first big case, the friends must work together to uncover the origins of a stray dog.

SHOW LINK: detective and journalistic skills



Betsey Bigalow the Detective, by Malorie Blackman and Jamie Smith (Red Fox)

A collection of four short stories about an adventurous young girl living in the Caribbean. In the titular story, Betsey dons her deerstalker and sets out to solve the mystery of her missing teddy bear. A new Puffin edition published in 2024, with new illustrations by Diane Ewen.

SHOW LINK: detective skills

Trust, Spies and Lies



KS1

Information Books



Who Ate All the Bugs?, by Matty Long (Oxford University Press)

The bugs in the garden keep getting eaten, so it's up to an intrepid snail to try to crack the case and bring about justice. A comedic introduction to the food chain, and a hilariously deadpan whodunnit.

SHOW LINK: detective skills

Lower KS2

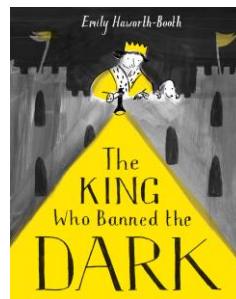
Picture Books



Spider in the Well, by Jess Hannigan (Katherine Tegen Books)

An offbeat and deadpan fable told in three chapters about a mysteriously malfunctioning wishing well, and the helpful newsboy who sets out to fix the problem. Filled with blackmail, manipulation, twisted justice, and a completely untrustworthy cast.

SHOW LINK: lies, manipulation and blackmail



The King Who Banned the Dark, by Emily Haworth-Booth (Pavilion)

A young king is terrified of the dark and launches a campaign of fear to convince his subjects that banning the dark is a good idea for everyone. He succeeds, for a short while, until the people reveal themselves to be less susceptible and more capable of action than he'd believed.

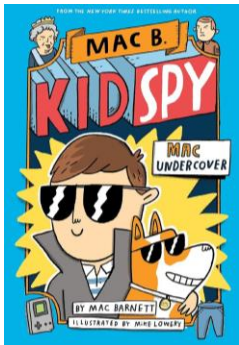
SHOW LINK: theme of misinformation

Trust, Spies and Lies



Lower KS2

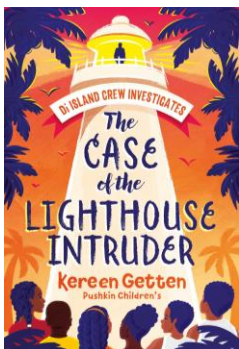
Novels



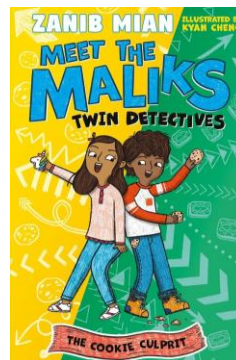
Mac B, Kid Spy: Mac Undercover, by Mac Barnett and Mike Lowery (Scholastic)
Before Mac was an author, he was a kid, and that kid was a spy (or so Mac says). A comedic and pacy detective adventure that plays with notions of truth and fiction, with comic-style artwork throughout.
SHOW LINK: theme of spies and detectives



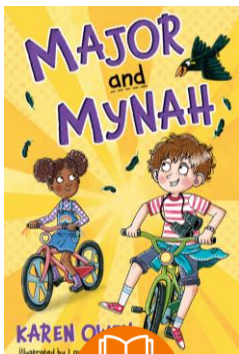
Agent Weasel and the Fiendish Fox Gang, by Nick East (Hodder Children's Books)
Someone's been causing havoc in the United Woodlands, and it's up to Agent Weasel and his sidekick Doorkins the dormouse to put a stop to this mischievous gang. A delightfully silly series with a cast of anthropomorphic animals.
SHOW LINK: theme of spies, detectives and secret agents



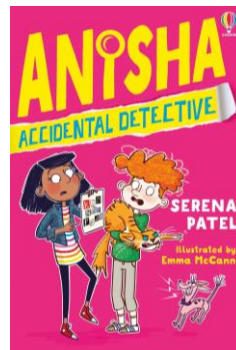
Di Island Crew Investigates: The Case of the Lighthouse Intruder, by Kereen Getten (Pushkin Children's Books)
Fayson loves detective stories and is excited when she gets to take on a real-life mystery of her own. The friendship dynamics are as important as the crime-solving in this Jamaica-set detective series, with some dialogue written in Jamaican dialect.
SHOW LINK: detective skills



Meet the Maliks, Twin Detectives: The Cookie Culprit, by Zanib Mian and Kyan Cheng (Hodder Children's Books)
Twins Maysa and Musa don't always get along, but they find themselves working together not only on a mosque-wide baking competition, but to solve the mystery of who destroyed their cookie sculpture. With cartoon illustrations throughout, and authentic representation of a modern Muslim family.
SHOW LINK: detective skills



Major and Mynah, by Karen Owen and Louise Forshaw (Firefly)
Best friends Callie and Grace set up a detective agency to investigate the thefts of bicycles from around their neighbourhood. They are aided by Bo, a friendly mynah bird with whom Callie can communicate using her new hearing-aids.
SHOW LINK: detective skills



Anisha, Accidental Detective, by Serena Patel and Emma McCann (Usborne)
When her aunt's fiancé is kidnapped the day before their wedding, it's up to Anisha and her best friend Milo to crack the case and reunite the couple. A raucous and heartwarming story starring a British Indian family.
SHOW LINK: detective skills

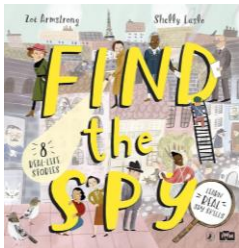


Trust, Spies and Lies



Lower KS2

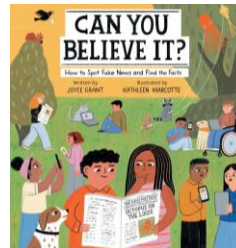
Information Books



Find the Spy, by Zoë Armstrong and Shelly Laslo (Puffin Books)

Co-produced by the Imperial War Museum, this interactive non-fiction picturebook spotlights eight real-life stories of notable spies from history, interspersed with spy skills and activities, and search-and-find elements.

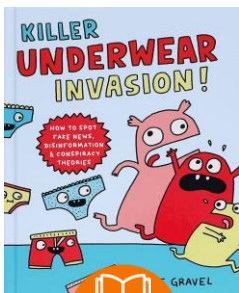
SHOW LINK: theme of spies and secret agents



Can You Believe It?: How to Spot Fake News and Find the Facts, by Joyce Grant and Kathleen Marcotte (Kids Can Press)

A comprehensive and practical guide, with plenty of thought-provoking examples, to misinformation and fake news, and how to tell it apart from real journalism.

SHOW LINK: theme of misinformation



Killer Underwear Invasion!, by Elise Gravel (Chronicle Books)

Presented in graphic novel format, this is a humorous, accessible and informative guide to recognising and confronting fake news and misinformation, perfect for equipping young readers with the necessary critical thinking skills for interacting with media today.

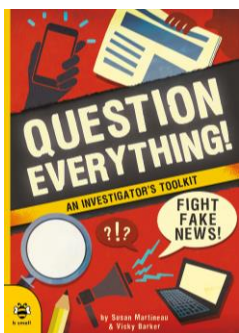
SHOW LINK: theme of misinformation



What's the Issue? Fake News, by Tom Jackson and Cristina Guitian (words & pictures)

A comprehensive introduction to the concept of fake news, examining the role and importance of truth in various types of media.

SHOW LINK: theme of misinformation



Question Everything!, by Susan Martineau and Vicky Barker (bsmall publishing)

Subtitled 'The Investigator's Toolkit', this heavily illustrated book provides an accessible and engaging introduction to issues around fake news, and how to think critically about news and media.

SHOW LINK: theme of misinformation

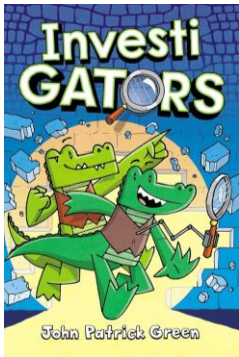


Trust, Spies and Lies



Lower KS2

Graphic Novels



InvestiGators, by John Patrick Green (Macmillan Children's Books)

A fully illustrated comedy caper about two secret agent alligators – in this first instalment, 'gators Mango and Brash work together to investigate the disappearance of one of the city's finest bakers.

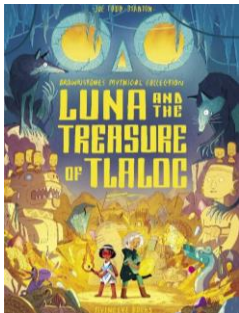
SHOW LINK: theme of detectives and secret agents



Agent Harrier: This Book Will Self-Destruct, by Ben Sanders (Little Tiger Press)

The first book in a hilarious and meta spy-spoof series, starring an eager yet hapless secret agent dog. It playfully sends up the conventions of the spy genre with jokes and twists galore, and comic-book features to create meaning and humour.

SHOW LINK: theme of spies and secret agents

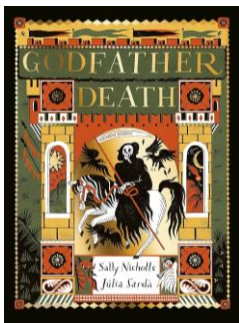


Brownstone's Mythical Collection: Luna and the Treasure of Tlaloc, by Joe Todd-Stanton (Flying Eye Books)

A selfish adventurer named Luna tricks a young girl into friendship in order to steal treasure from an Aztec god, but when a true friendship emerges between the girls, Luna must choose between her own greed and a sense of justice.

SHOW LINK: theme of lies and friendship

Traditional Tales



Godfather Death, by Sally Nicholls and Júlia Sardà (Andersen Press)

A folktale about a poor fisherman who, in seeking an honest godfather for his newborn son, selects Death as the most honest figure there is. The pair then strike up a deal to help the fisherman become rich, but he soon learns that no-one can bargain with, or cheat Death.

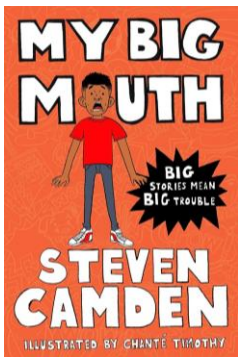
SHOW LINK: theme of honesty and trickery

Trust, Spies and Lies



Upper KS2

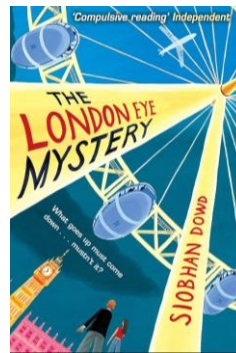
Novels



My Big Mouth, by Steven Camden and Chanté Timothy (Macmillan Children's Books)

Without any answers to his questions about why his father unexpectedly left home, Jay begins to tell a series of lies and increasingly outlandish stories that soon get out of hand. A story about lies and consequences from an accomplished spoken word artist.

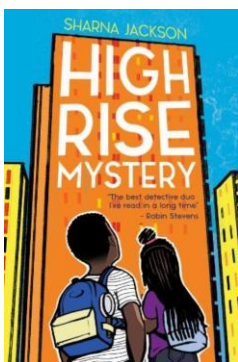
SHOW LINK: theme of lies



The London Eye Mystery, by Siobhan Dowd (Puffin Books)

When Ted's cousin mysteriously disappears from inside one of the pods of the London Eye, it falls to Ted, and his unique way of seeing and understanding the world, to try and crack the case.

SHOW LINK: detectives and mysteries



High Rise Mystery, by Sharna Jackson (Knights Of)

Sibling detective duo Nik and Norva set out to solve a murder that took place in their high-rise estate, and prove their father's innocence. Short, snappy sentences and the logical narration of Nik, rooted in "facts, evidence, deduction", make this a compelling read.

SHOW LINK: detectives and mysteries



Bringing Back Kay-Kay, by Dev Kothari (Walker Books)

When Lena's older brother Kay-Kay goes missing, the police dismiss the case as just another teenage runaway, but Lena knows Kay-Kay better than that and sets out to track him down, beginning with clues from his secret scrapbook of poetry. A pacy story of sibling love, set in India.

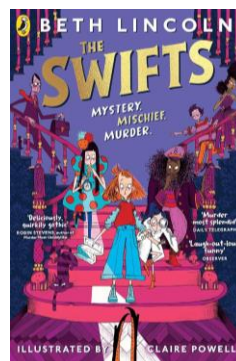
SHOW LINK: gut instinct, mysteries and detective skills



Twitch, by M.G. Leonard (Walker Books)

The first in a seasonal quartet revolving around a group of young birdwatchers, the Twitchers. Here, the skills of observation, awareness and diligence that come from being a birder are seen to transfer neatly onto being a detective.

SHOW LINK: mysteries and detective skills



The Swifts, by Beth Lincoln and Claire Powell (Puffin Books)

The Swifts are an unusual family who don't always get along, and whose destinies are given to them at birth along with their name. But Shenanigan Swift soon finds herself thrust into the role of detective when someone attempts to murder her aunt. Thrillingly written, and filled with wordplay.

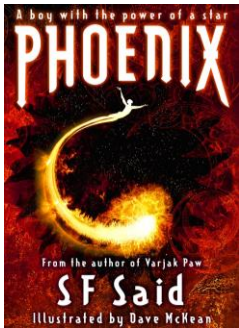
SHOW LINK: mysteries and detective skills

Trust, Spies and Lies



Upper KS2

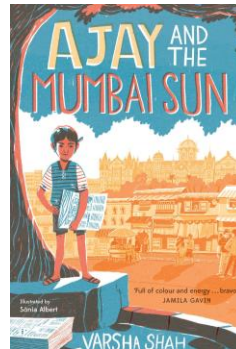
Novels



Phoenix, by SF Said and Dave McKean (Corgi)

An expansive and multi-layered sci-fi adventure, starring a boy named Lucky with unusual powers who finds himself caught in an intergalactic battle. With a compelling message about the use of fear and misinformation to spread hatred and entrench inequalities.

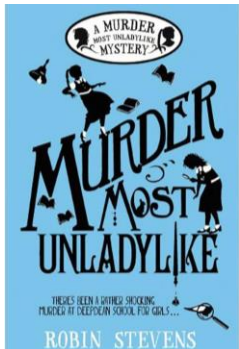
SHOW LINK: theme of misinformation



Ajay and the Mumbai Sun, by Varsha Shah and Sònia Albert (Chicken House)

Ajay lives on the streets of Mumbai and dreams of being a journalist. Along with his friends he starts his own newspaper – the Mumbai Sun – where he soon finds himself investigating high-level corruption in his community. A gripping and heartfelt story with a strong sense of social justice.

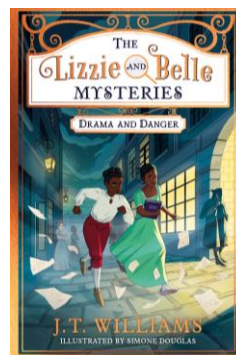
SHOW LINK: detective and journalistic skills



Murder Most Unladylike, by Robin Stevens (Puffin Books)

This series is both a winning pastiche of classic murder mysteries and a compelling adventure in its own right, set in a girl's boarding school and starring a detective duo you can't help but root for.

SHOW LINK: mysteries and detective skills



The Lizzie and Belle Mysteries: Drama and Danger, by J.T. Williams and Simone Douglas (HarperCollins Childrens Books)

Despite their differing backgrounds, Lizzie and Belle share a passion and a talent for solving mysteries. At once an accomplished work of historical fiction, drawing on the lives of real figures from Black British history, and a thrilling detective adventure set in London's theatreland.

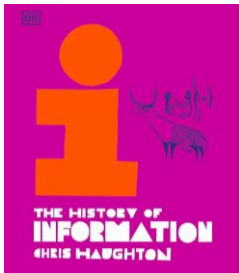
SHOW LINK: mysteries and detective skills

Trust, Spies and Lies



Upper KS2

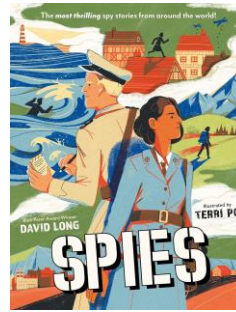
Information Books



The History of Information,
by Chris Haughton (DK)

Broad in scope and incredibly detailed, this landmark publication illuminates the global history of how humans share and record information, with sections on Language, Writing, Science, News, Disinformation, and more.

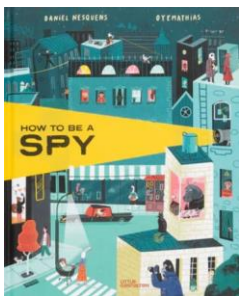
SHOW LINK: theme of misinformation



Spies, by David Long and Terri Po (Faber & Faber)

A large-format compendium of thrillingly told real-life spy stories from World War Two, featuring spies from around the world.

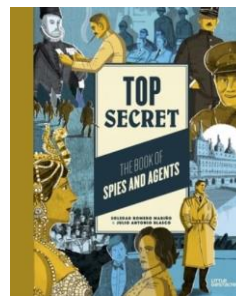
SHOW LINK: theme of spies and secret agents



How to Be a Spy, by Daniel Nesquens and Oyemathias (Little Gestalten)

Beautifully produced and highly engaging, this book elucidates the life of a spy, and teaches the reader all they need to know about the world of espionage, including tips and techniques.

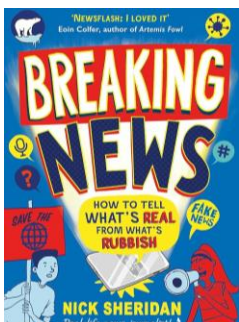
SHOW LINK: theme of spies and secret agents



Top Secret: The Book of Spies and Agents, by Soledad Romero and Julio Antonio Blasco (Little Gestalten)

An attractively presented collection telling the stories of eight notable spies and secret agents from history. The form cleverly reflects the message, with the pages designed and formatted to resemble newspaper.

SHOW LINK: theme of spies and secret agents



Breaking News: How to Tell What's Real from What's Rubbish, by Nick Sheridan (Simon & Schuster)

This practical, interactive and witty guide seeks to equip young readers with the skills to understand and navigate the news, including how to tell facts from fakes.

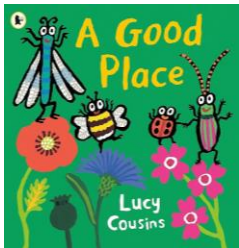
SHOW LINK: theme of misinformation

The Environment and Recycling



EYFS

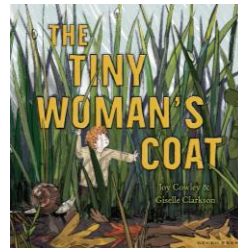
Picture Books



A Good Place, by Lucy Cousins (Walker Books)

A group of minibeasts is looking for a new place to live, but each environment they encounter is beset by pollution or pesticides. Finally, the friends find the perfect wild and insect-friendly garden.

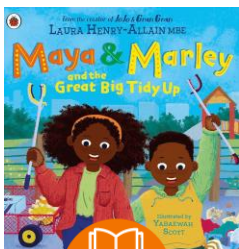
SHOW LINK: gardens, nature and rewilding



The Tiny Woman's Coat, by Joy Cowley and Giselle Clarkson (Gecko Press)

A gentle fable with a patterned structure about a pocket-sized woman who uses materials gifted to her by the natural world to weave a brand-new coat

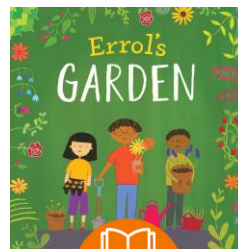
SHOW LINK: nature, natural materials and upcycling



Maya & Marley and the Great Big Tidy Up, by Laura Henry-Allain MBE and Yabaewah Scott (Ladybird Books)

Two children rally their community together to tidy up their local adventure playground, and learn all about recycling in the process.

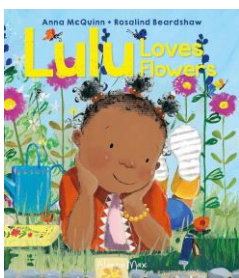
SHOW LINK: theme of recycling



Errol's Garden, by Gillian Hibbs (Child's Play)

A resourceful young boy enlists the help of his neighbours to plant a garden on the roof of his tower block, bringing the community together.

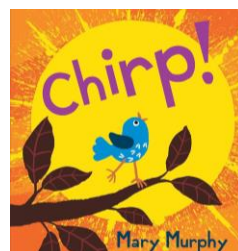
SHOW LINK: theme of gardening and community



Lulu Loves Flowers, by Anna McQuinn and Rosalind Beardshaw (Alanna Max)

Little Lulu reads a poem about flowers and decides to plant a flower garden of her own. With her mum's help, the garden is a success, and she invites her friends round to enjoy it together.

SHOW LINK: theme of gardening



Chirp!, by Mary Murphy (Walker Books)

As the last star fades and the sun slowly rises, a whole host of British birds sings out to welcome the new day. Onomatopoeic birdsong is splashed exuberantly over every page.

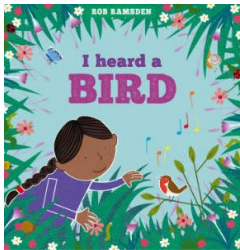
SHOW LINK: theme of nature and birdsong

The Environment and Recycling



EYFS

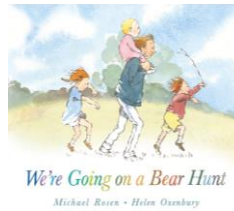
Picture Books



I Heard a Bird, by Rob Ramsden (Sallywag Press)

Sensory language and gentle rhymes and rhythms accompany this story of a little girl who, inspired by a singing bird, takes a mindful moment to slow down, engage her senses and appreciate all the little details of the garden.

SHOW LINK: theme of nature and gardens



We're Going on a Bear Hunt, by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury (Walker Books)

Adapted from an American folk song, this classic picturebook follows a family on their rhythmic adventure through an ever-changing landscape in search of a bear. The onomatopoeic sounds and watercolour illustrations bring to life the sensation of being out in nature.

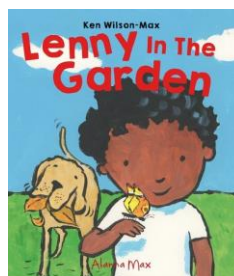
SHOW LINK: theme of nature and its sounds



Can You Hear Me?, by Ekaterina Trukhan (Milky Way Picture Books)

An unseen narrator addresses a child and invites them to engage with nature using all of their senses. The sensory language and bright collaged illustrations make this a gently immersive read.

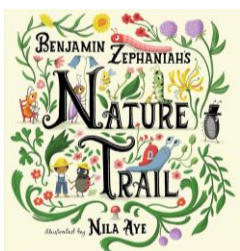
SHOW LINK: theme of nature and its sounds



Lenny in the Garden, by Ken Wilson-Max (Alanna Max)

Little Lenny has fun exploring the garden and encountering all sorts of minibeasts, sights and sounds while his mother tends to the plants.

SHOW LINK: theme of nature and gardens, also contains a singalong element



Nature Trail, by Benjamin Zephaniah and Nila Aye (Orchard)

Presented in picturebook format, this poem by Zephaniah introduces the reader to all the plants and animals that share a home in the narrator's garden, and affirms the importance and joy found in green spaces.

SHOW LINK: theme of nature and gardens

The Environment and Recycling



EYFS

Information Books



Sunflower Shoots and Muddy Boots: A Child's Guide to Gardening, by Katherine Halligan and Grace Easton (Nosy Crow, with the National Trust)

An illustrated guide to indoor and outdoor gardening, filled with fun facts and plenty of activities to try.

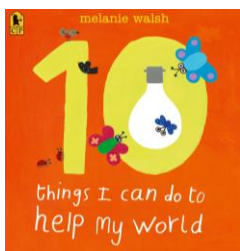
SHOW LINK: theme of gardening



Rubbish? Don't Throw It Away!, by Linda Newbery and Katie Rewse (Otter-Barry Books)

A classroom of children discovers all the wonderful ways that everyday items can be creatively reused and recycled.

SHOW LINK: theme of recycling



10 Things I Can Do to Help My World, and *My Green Day*, by Melanie Walsh (Walker Books)

These two books use friendly paint-and-collage illustrations to share small and simple lifestyle changes that even young children can make to help look after the environment, such as recycling, turning off appliances, and reducing food waste. *10 Things...* also contains large lift-the-flap pages.

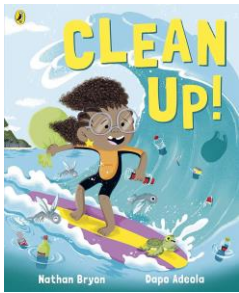
SHOW LINK: looking after the environment

The Environment and Recycling



KS1

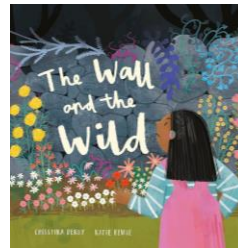
Picture Books



Clean Up!, by Nathan Bryon and Dapo Adeola (Puffin Books)

When Rocket visits her grandparents who run an animal rescue centre in the Caribbean, she learns about the problem of ocean plastic pollution, and her passionate, campaigning spirit helps rally the local community to form a 'clean-up crew'.

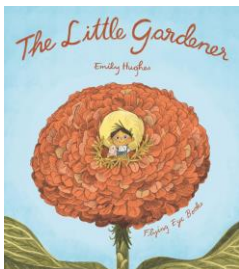
SHOW LINK: plastic pollution, looking after the environment and recycling



The Wall and the Wild, by Christina Dendy and Katie Rewse (Lantana)

A girl decides to plant a garden, insisting that everything be neat and tidy and throwing any 'imperfect' plants over a wall, but while her garden struggles, the wild and diverse ecosystem on the other side of the wall flourishes.

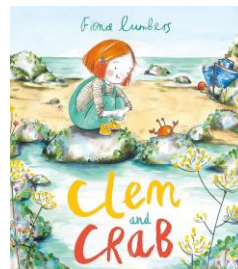
SHOW LINK: gardening and rewilding



The Little Gardener, by Emily Hughes (Flying Eye Books)

A gently fantastical tale about a tiny person who struggles to maintain his garden all by himself. However, hope is at hand as one flower blossoms and is noticed by someone who can help him.

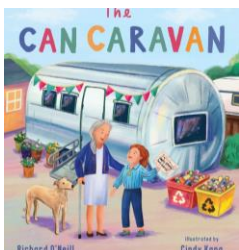
SHOW LINK: theme of gardening and looking after the environment



Clem and Crab, by Fiona Lumbers (Andersen Press)

Clem befriends a small crab she rescues from a tangled plastic bag. She makes a collage of Crab from plastic waste gathered from the beach to tell her classmates about plastic pollution and protecting the oceans – the next time she visits the beach, everyone has joined in to help clean it up.

SHOW LINK: plastic pollution, looking after the environment and recycling



The Can Caravan, by Richard O'Neill and Cindy Kang (Child's Play)

Young Traveller Jamie rallies the skills and expertise of her community to build a new caravan home made of recycled cans for her elderly neighbour.

SHOW LINK: recycling and community



The Secret Sky Garden, by Linda Sarah and Fiona Lumbers (Simon & Schuster)

Funni loves watching the planes from the top of the abandoned car park, but something is missing. Slowly she transforms the space into a beautiful flower garden, and a sanctuary for her and her new friend to share together.

SHOW LINK: gardens, nature and music

The Environment and Recycling



KS1

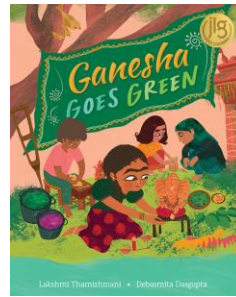
Picture Books



My Must-Have Mum, by Maudie Smith and Jen Khatun (Lantana)

Jake's mum spends her days salvaging, replacing and upcycling objects she finds, but Jake becomes concerned that one day she will be moved to replace *him*. A sweet story about family and change.

SHOW LINK: recycling and upcycling

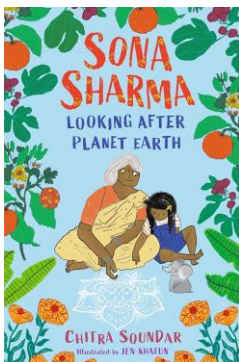


Ganesha Goes Green, by Lakshmi Thamizhmani and Debasmita Dasgupta (Barefoot Books)

Prema's city prepares for an annual festival involving placing status of the god Ganesha into the river, but when Prema learns that these paint-and-plaster statues are harming the river, she comes up with an idea to make her own using natural materials: clay from the river itself.

SHOW LINK: recycling, crafting and looking after the environment

Novels



Sona Sharma: Looking After Planet Earth, by Chitra Soundar and Jen Khatun (Walker Books)

Part of a series of short chapterbooks for young readers set in India about a little girl with a big family. In this story, Sona starts a campaign to help not only her family, but her whole community, become more environmentally friendly.

SHOW LINK: looking after the environment

The Environment and Recycling



KS1

Information Books



A First Book of Nature, by Nicola Davies and Mark Hearld (Walker Books)

An immersive and beautifully produced title, drawing on mixed media illustrations, collage, verse and prose to convey the wonders of the natural world across the seasons.

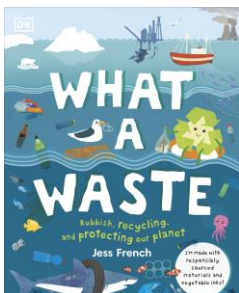
SHOW LINK: nature and the environment



Recycling Day: What Happens to the Things We Throw Away, by Polly Faber and Klas Fahlén (Nosy Crow)

This fully-illustrated title follows the steps along the recycling process, and introduces the reader to all the people and machines who play a part in recycling our rubbish. Features an empowering information section on reducing, reusing, and helping to protect the planet.

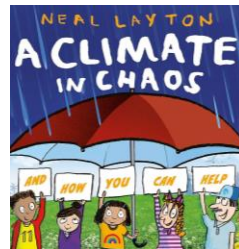
SHOW LINK: recycling, upcycling and looking after the environment



What a Waste: Rubbish, Recycling, and Protecting Our Planet, by Jess French (Dorling Kindersley)

A comprehensive illustrated guide to environmental issues around resources, rubbish and waste, supporting readers to make informed choices and change their world for the better.

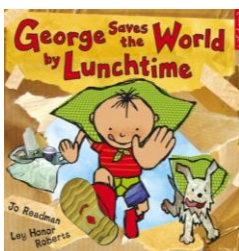
SHOW LINK: theme of recycling



A Climate in Chaos and How You Can Help and A Planet Full of Plastic and How You Can Help, by Neal Layton (wren & rook)

This pair of empowering information books uses engaging and accessible illustrations, diagrams and text to help young children understand not only the problems caused by climate change and pollution, but also the solutions to these problems.

SHOW LINK: looking after the environment



George Saves the World by Lunchtime, by Jo Readman and Ley Honor Roberts (Penguin Random House, with the Eden Project)

George spends the morning 'saving the world' by exploring all the ways to reduce, re-use, repair and recycle in his daily life, showing that even small actions can have a large impact. The book features 'recycled' collage illustrations, and pairs George's story with helpful informational asides.

SHOW LINK: recycling, upcycling and looking after the environment



Growing Green: A First Book of Gardening, by Daniele Sosa (Walker Books)

Contains fifteen edible gardening projects with illustrated step-by-step instructions that can be grown in any space, from an allotment to a tin can.

SHOW LINK: theme of gardening

The Environment and Recycling



KS1

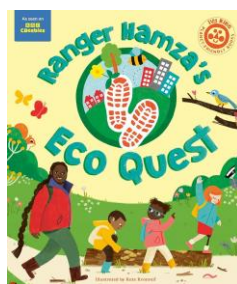
Information Books



Paper Adventures: A Rip and Glue Activity Book, by Aya Watanabe (Templar Books)

A vibrant activity book encouraging both artistic and storytelling skills. The reader is invited to add their own collaged elements to each spread by ripping and gluing from the sheets of patterned, coloured paper at the back of the book.

SHOW LINK: crafting and recycling materials

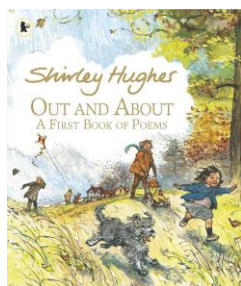


Ranger Hamza's Eco Quest, by Hamza Yassin and Kate Kronreif (Ivy Kids)

Rhythmic, rhyming text sits alongside factual asides and ideas for activities, inspiring young readers to explore and engage with the great outdoors. Created in collaboration with CBeebies.

SHOW LINK: theme of nature

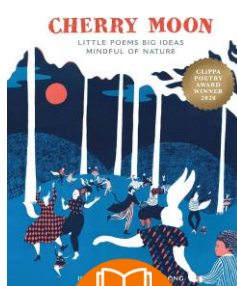
Poetry



Out and About: A First Book of Poems, by Shirley Hughes (Walker Books)

A child's eye view of nature by national treasure Shirley Hughes, in which carefully chosen language brilliantly evokes the sensations of the four seasons. Each poem is given its own page, complemented by painted illustrations.

SHOW LINK: theme of nature



Cherry Moon, by Zaro Weil and Junli Song (Welbeck)

Subtitled 'Little Poems Big Ideas Mindful of Nature', this collection uses a variety of poetic forms to present snapshots of the natural world, which are variously contemplative and playful, and complemented by beautifully surreal screenprinted artwork.

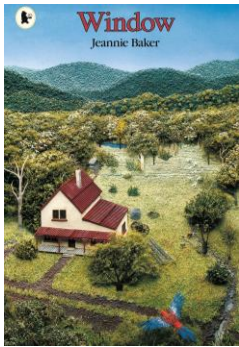
SHOW LINK: theme of nature and the environment

The Environment and Recycling



Lower KS2

Picture Books



Window, by Jeannie Baker
(Walker Books)

Through the view out the window of a family home, the reader observes changes to the natural environment and the lives of its inhabitants as the years go by – some subtle, some sudden. Like all her books, Baker crafts stunningly intricate artwork using collage.

SHOW LINK: theme of nature, the environment and recycled materials



Greenling, by Levi Pinfold
(Templar)

Mr Barleycorn finds a mysterious green baby on his farmland and brings the baby indoors, where all sorts of vegetation begins to grow. A surreal eco-fable, with lyrical language and stunning illustrations.

SHOW LINK: nature and the environment



The Wild, by Yuval Zommer
(Oxford University Press)

The 'Wild' is a personified being which generously supports the life that resides on its back, until one creature – humans – begins to take more than it needs. A beautifully illustrated call to environmental action.

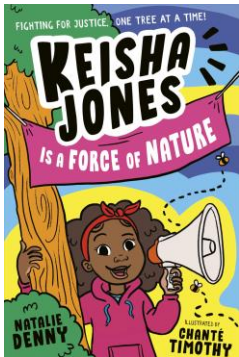
SHOW LINK: theme of nature and looking after the environment

The Environment and Recycling



Lower KS2

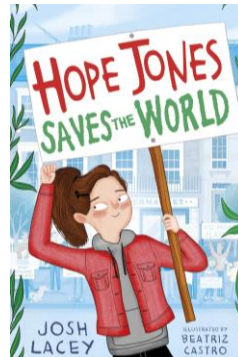
Novels



Keisha Jones is a Force of Nature, by Natalie Denny and Chanté Timothy (Little Tiger Press)

The second book in an illustrated series about an exuberant young eco-warrior, in which Keisha, inspired by her activist great-aunt, launches a campaign to save some local trees from being cut down to make space for a car park.

SHOW LINK: looking after the environment



Hope Jones Saves the World, by Josh Lacey and Beatriz Castro (Andersen Press)

Presented in the form of a blog, this light-hearted and empowering book catalogues Hope's New Year's resolution to give up using plastic, and her ongoing attempts to convince others to join her campaign to help save the world.

SHOW LINK: plastic pollution and looking after the environment



The Boy Who Grew Dragons, by Andy Shepherd and Sara Ogilvie (Piccadilly Press)

In this heartfelt comedy adventure, Tomas agrees to help his grandad out with his gardening project, but soon discovers that the mysterious 'dragon fruit' tree in his garden is bearing not just fruit, but real-life dragons.

SHOW LINK: theme of gardening



A Climate in Chaos and How You Can Help and A Planet Full of Plastic and How You Can Help, by Neal Layton (wren & rook)

This pair of empowering information books uses engaging and accessible illustrations, diagrams and text to help young children understand not only the problems caused by climate change and pollution, but also the solutions to these problems.

SHOW LINK: looking after the environment

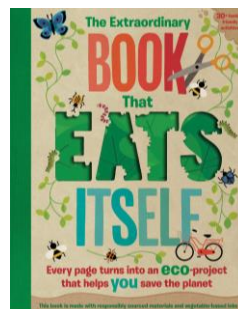
Information Books



Kids Fight Plastic and Kids Fight Climate Change, by Martin Dorey and Tim Wesson (Walker Books)

Written by the founder of the Beach Clean Network, this practical and accessible pair of books uses diagrams and comic-style illustrations to explore the many ways that young readers can combat plastic pollution and the climate crisis through small, 2-minute actions.

SHOW LINK: plastic pollution and looking after the environment



The Extraordinary Book That Eats Itself, by Susan Hayes, Penny Arlon and Pintachan (HarperCollins)

An unusual activity book in which every bit of every page can be repurposed into an eco-friendly project.

SHOW LINK: craft, recycling, upcycling, and the environment

The Environment and Recycling



Lower KS2

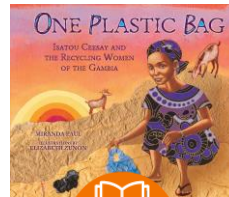
Information Books



Activists Assemble: Save Your Planet, by Ben Hoare and Jade Orlando (Macmillan Children's Books)

An illustrated introduction to a wide range of environmental issues facing the planet, paired with practical and hopeful solutions for what can be done to combat them. Includes brief biographies of prominent environmental activists from around the world.

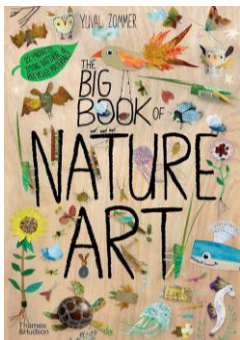
SHOW LINK: looking after the environment



One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia, by Miranda Paul and Elizabeth Zunon (Millbrook Press)

This picturebook tells the true story of Isatou Ceesay, who worked to address the problem of plastic pollution in the Gambia by repurposing old plastic bags into recycled purses, creating a thriving women-led trade and reducing pollution. The illustrations are likewise collaged from recycled materials.

SHOW LINK: plastic pollution, recycling, upcycling, and looking after the environment

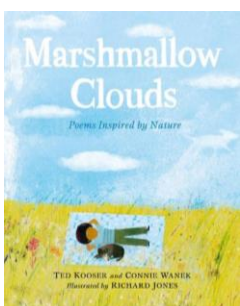


The Big Book of Nature Art, by Yuval Zommer (Thames & Hudson)

A large-format inspiring activity book, with every project built from recycled materials and treasures from the natural world.

SHOW LINK: craft, recycling, upcycling, nature and natural materials

Poetry



Marshmallow Clouds: Poems Inspired by Nature, by Ted Kooser, Connie Wanek and Richard Jones (Walker Books)

The nature poems in this elegantly produced book range from the minutiae to the elemental, with beautifully crafted imaginative – and often playful – verse that shows a real care and attention to the natural world, paired with atmospheric illustrations.

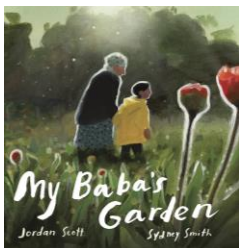
SHOW LINK: nature and the environment

The Environment and Recycling



Upper KS2

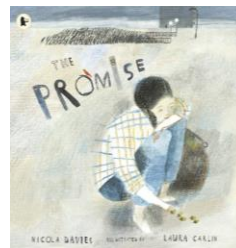
Picture Books



My Baba's Garden, by Jordan Scott and Sydney Smith (Walker Books)

A tender examination of the relationship between a boy and his grandmother – although they do not share the same language, she communicates her love through the food from her garden.

SHOW LINK: theme of gardening

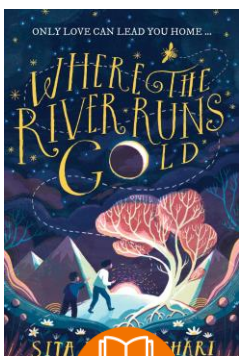


The Promise, by Nicola Davies and Laura Carlin (Walker Books)

A young girl who steals to survive in a harsh urban environment is transformed into a guerrilla gardener, and in turn transforms her world into a lush green paradise, when she makes a promise to an old woman to plant all the seeds in her stolen bag.

SHOW LINK: gardening and the environment

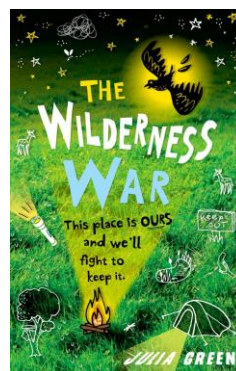
Novels



Where the River Runs Gold, by Sita Brahmachari (Orion)

Set in an imagined future of ecological crisis in which children are employed as pollinators at an intensive and oppressive farming facility, following the extinction of the bees. It is in a secretly planted garden where true hope is seeded.

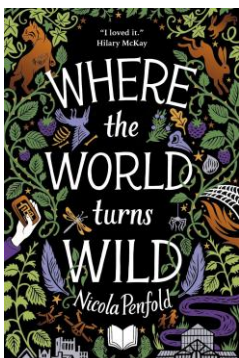
SHOW LINK: gardening and the environment



The Wilderness War, by Julia Green (Oxford University Press)

When the Wilderness, a patch of common ground on which Noah and his friends have always explored and enjoyed nature, is put up for sale, the friends stage a campaign to keep the Wilderness out of the hands of the developers.

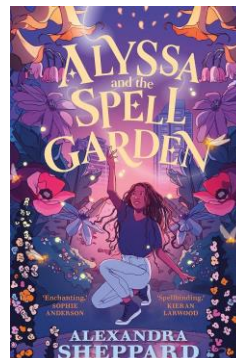
SHOW LINK: natural spaces and defending the environment



Where the World Turns Wild, by Nicola Penfold (Little Tiger Press)

In an imagined future world, human live a sterile existence cut off from nature. One day, siblings Juniper and Bear find themselves thrust into adventure out of the city and into the wild beyond.

SHOW LINK: nature and the environment



Alyssa and the Spell Garden, by Alexandra Sheppard and Bex Glendining (Faber & Faber)

Sent to stay at her mysterious great aunt's home in London, Alyssa discovers her heritage as a keeper of plant magic, passed on by her ancestors who arrived from Jamaica to the UK in the 1960s. A powerful story about community resistance.

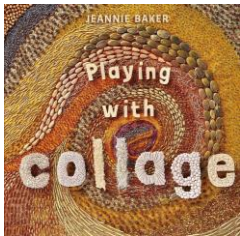
SHOW LINK: plants, gardening and community

The Environment and Recycling



Upper KS2

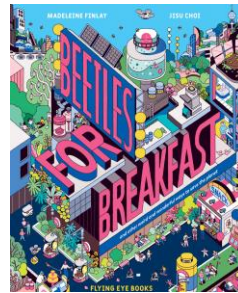
Information Books



Playing with Collage, by Jeannie Baker (Walker Books)

Artist Jeannie Baker shows how to create stunning and thoughtful collage artwork, using a broad range of natural and human-made materials.

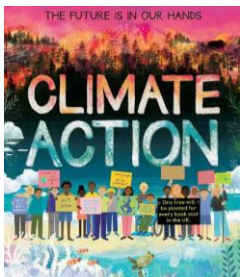
SHOW LINK: craft, recycling, upcycling and natural materials



Beetles for Breakfast, and Other Weird and Wonderful Ways to Save the Planet, by Madeleine Finlay and Jisu Choi (Flying Eye Books)

From biodegradable packaging to new forms of energy, vibrant and intricate illustrations explore the practical, imaginative and futuristic ways that scientists are working on to embed sustainability into every aspect of our everyday lives.

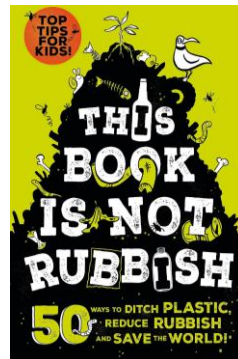
SHOW LINK: sustainability and the environment



Climate Action, by Georgina Stevens and Katie Rewse (Little Tiger Press)

The first two sections of this inspirational book look at the causes and effects of climate change, and the latter sections detail what can be done to bring about positive change. Also includes sections on real-life young changemakers, and green jobs to aspire to.

SHOW LINK: looking after the environment



This Book is Not Rubbish, by Isabel Thomas and Alex Paterson (wren & rook)

A light-hearted and empowering illustrated handbook, exploring a wide variety of practical ways that we can make a difference to our daily lives and help save the planet.

SHOW LINK: looking after the environment

Poetry



Poems from a Green and Blue Planet, by Sabrina Mahfouz (editor) and Aaron Cushley (Hachette Children's Books)

This attractive anthology brings together the voices of both classic and contemporary poets in celebration of our natural world, featuring a wide range of poetic forms.

SHOW LINK: nature and the environment

Graphic Novels



Save Our Forest!, by Nora Dåsnes and Lise Lærdal Bryn (HarperCollins)

Intrepid teenager Bao takes a stand to defend her local woodland from demolition, though she finds it much harder to convince the adults in her life than her fellow teenagers. Closes with an empowering information section on environmental activism.

SHOW LINK: natural spaces and defending the environment

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



EYFS

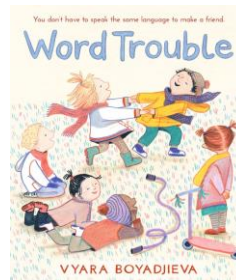
Picture Books



When I'm Big, by Ella Bailey (Flying Eye Books)

A wide-eyed little dinosaur hatches from an egg, and wonders what kind of dinosaur she will one day grow into.

SHOW LINK: self-acceptance and discovering your identity



Word Trouble, by Vyara Boyadjieva (Walker Books)

Ronnie has not only moved to a new school: he's moved to a new country, while a whole new language to learn. A sensitive depiction of starting school with English as an additional language.

SHOW LINK: self-confidence and finding your voice



Jabari Jumps, by Gaia Cornwall (Walker Books)

Jabari decides that today he will jump from the diving board for the first time, no matter how tall and scary it appears. After some gentle encouragement from his father, he finds the confidence to try.

SHOW LINK: self-confidence and being brave



The Littlest Yak, by Lu Fraser and Kate Hindley (Simon & Schuster)

Little Gertie wishes she was big like all the other yaks in her herd, but she soon discovers that there is no one way for a yak to be, in this charming rhyming tale about self-acceptance. Followed by two sequels, 'The New Arrival', and 'Home is Where the Herd Is'.

SHOW LINK: identity, self-acceptance and finding your place



Big Dance, by Aoife Greenham (Child's Play)

Pippa's friends are practising their special moves in preparation for the Big Dance, but will Pippa find the confidence to join in? Brightly coloured characters populate this story about self-expression and going your own way.

SHOW LINK: diversity, self-confidence and self-expression



Dare, by Lorna Gutierrez and Polly Noakes (Tiny Owl)

This empowering rhyming text encourages and inspires young readers to consider the ways they can positively impact their world, and dare to think outside the box.

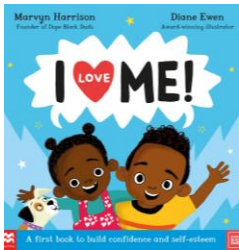
SHOW LINK: finding your voice and taking a stand

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



EYFS

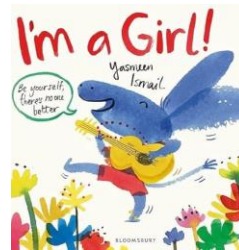
Picture Books



I Love Me!, by Marvyn Harrison and Diane Ewen (Macmillan Children's Books)

Written by the founder of Dope Black Dads, this uplifting book contains a different affirmation for every day of the week to help build confidence and self-esteem in the youngest children.

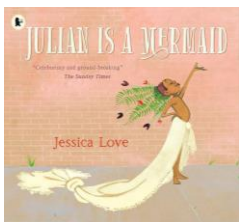
SHOW LINK: affirmations and self-esteem



I'm a Girl!, by Yasmeen Ishmail (Bloomsbury Children's Books)

Joyously messy watercolour illustrations depict an energetic young donkey who, every time her characteristics see her mistaken for a boy, responds with the repeated refrain "I'm a girl!". Perfect for challenging gender stereotypes and celebrating individuality.

SHOW LINK: challenging stereotypes, self-expression, identity and being yourself



Julian is a Mermaid, by Jessica Love (Walker Books)

Inspired by seeing three glamorous women dressed as mermaids on the train, Julian transforms himself into one using items from around his Nana's home. She validates his self-expression by bringing him to a vibrant costume parade.

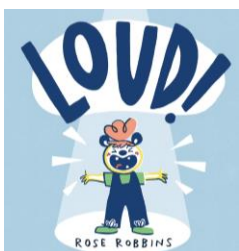
SHOW LINK: self-expression and identity



Whisper, Shout, Let It Out!, by Madhvi Ramani and Anuska Allepuz (Macmillan Children's Books)

A mindful and vibrant interactive picturebook, with rhyming text that encourages children to use their voice in different ways, to be silly and to express their feelings.

SHOW LINK: finding your voice



Loud!, by Rose Robbins (Sallywag Press)

Abigail is restless and finds it hard to focus in the classroom environment, but when she attends her first music class, she finds a way to channel her 'loud' energy and express herself with pride.

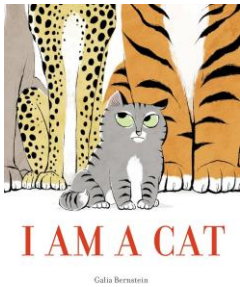
SHOW LINK: self-expression and finding your voice

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



EYFS

Information Books



I Am a Cat, by Galia Bernstein (Abrams & Chronicle)

Lion, Cheetah, Puma, Panther and Tiger don't believe that the small and fluffy Simon is really a cat like them, but he helps them to see that they have more in common than they think.

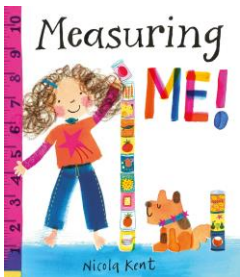
SHOW LINK: diversity, difference and asserting your identity



Tad, by Benji Davies (HarperCollins Children's Books)

The lifecycle of a frog is deftly written into this narrative about Tad, the smallest tadpole in the pond, who overcomes her nerves – and a big bad fish – to grow into the frog she was always meant to be.

SHOW LINK: self-confidence and embracing your identity



Measuring Me, by Nicola Kent (Little Tiger Press)

This book measures the average child's body and the things it can do through relatable comparison with everyday objects, such as being "as tall as ten tin cans". The enthusiastic narration empowers the child reader to reflect on their own amazing bodies.

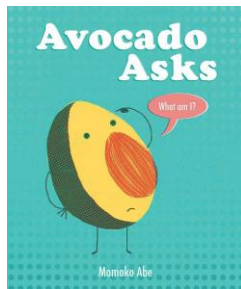
SHOW LINK: self-esteem and self-awareness

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



KS1

Picture Books



Avocado Asks, by Momoko Abe (Orchard)

Avocado experiences a crisis of identity when they realise they don't fit in with either the fruits or the vegetables – it takes an encounter with a tomato to realise that simply being themselves is enough.

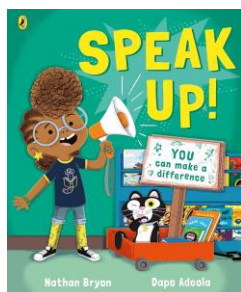
SHOW LINK: identity, diversity and being yourself



I Am Nefertiti, by Annemarie Anang and Natelle Quek (Five Quills)

When Nefertiti's new teacher shortens her name to 'Nef', it throws off her rhythm and shrinks her down into a smaller version of herself. Luckily, her bandmates are on hand to help restore her identity.

SHOW LINK: asserting your identity



Speak Up!, by Nathan Bryon and Dapo Adeola (Puffin Books)

The third in this empowering series about exuberant young Rocket, who uses her voice and her passion to rally the community together in protest against the impending closure of their local library.

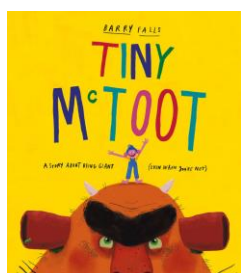
SHOW LINK: using your voice to take a stand, local heroes



My Beautiful Voice, by Joseph Coelho and Allison Colpoys (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

A quiet child writes a poem in class, and with the encouragement of her new teacher she finds the courage to be brave and share her voice with the world. A moving picturebook by a former Children's Laureate.

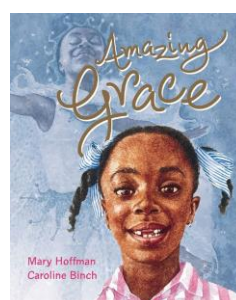
SHOW LINK: self-expression and finding your voice



Tiny McToot, by Barry Falls (Farshore)

In this rollicking rhyming fairytale, Tiny McToot is teased by the other giants for being small – he's only the size of a teaspoon – but his small size and quick-thinking save the day when a humongous, hungry troll appears.

SHOW LINK: unlikely heroes, great things coming in small packages



Amazing Grace, by Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

Grace dreams of playing Peter Pan in the school panto, but according to her classmates her ethnicity and gender exclude her from the role. With her grandmother's support, she comes to believe that she can be and do anything she sets her mind to. An affirming story first published in 1991.

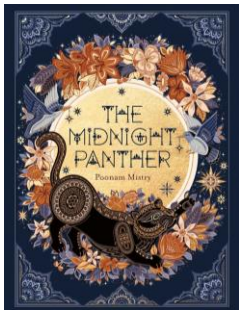
SHOW LINK: diversity, challenging stereotypes, self-confidence and self-esteem

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



KS1

Picture Books



The Midnight Panther, by Poonam Mistry (Templar)

A panther laments that his fur is not as decorated or dazzling as the other big cats in the forest, but receives affirmation from the Moon and the night sky that he is perfect as he is. With distinctive, patterned illustrations.

SHOW LINK: identity and being yourself



The Spectacular Suit, by Kat Patrick and Hayley Wells (Scribble)

Frankie is looking forward to her birthday party but doesn't feel comfortable in any of her party dresses. She secretly designs herself a suit – when her family finds her design, they work together to craft the suit of Frankie's dreams.

SHOW LINK: self-expression and identity



Quiet, by Tom Percival and Richard Jones (Simon & Schuster)

Poetic language and soft illustrations come together to tell this tale of environmental activism, quiet confidence, and the empowerment of having your voice heard, as a shy little bird takes a stand against the diggers that threaten her woodland home.

SHOW LINK: unlikely heroes, self-confidence, using your voice to take a stand



Wellington's Big Day Out, by Steve Small (Simon & Schuster)

When Wellington the elephant is gifted a jacket for his birthday, he wonders whether the jacket is too big, or if he's just too small. He wishes he were big like his father and grandfather, but soon learns to enjoy being small for a little bit longer.

SHOW LINK: feeling small, embracing your identity



How to Be a Lion, by Ed Vere (Puffin Books)

Leonard does not conform to the stereotype of what a lion should be: he is gentle, writes poems, and his best friend is a duck, which the other lions find absurd. A gently empowering read about the quiet power of being yourself.

SHOW LINK: identity and challenging stereotypes

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



KS1

Novels



Marv and the Mega Robot,

by Alex Falase-Koya and Paula Bowles (Oxford University Press)

Marvin is an ordinary boy who loves comics, science and superheroes. One day, he discovers a mysterious suit in his grandfather's attic, and steps into his true superhero identity.

SHOW LINK: discovering your identity, self-confidence, and unexpected heroes

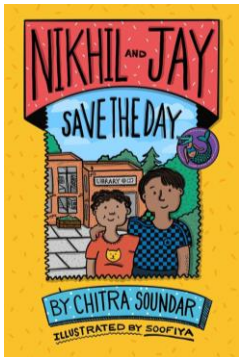


AdventureMice: Otter Chaos!,

by Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre (David Fickling Books)

The start of an illustrated chapterbook series about a little mouse with a big appetite for adventure, determined to prove himself as a worthy member of the seafaring Adventuremice.

SHOW LINK: self-confidence and unlikely heroes



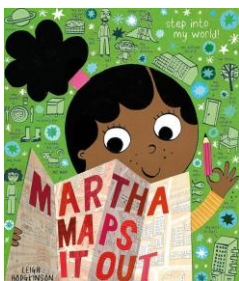
Nikhil and Jay Save the Day,

by Chitra Soundar and Soofiya (Otter-Barry Books)

These four interlinked stories about a pair of British Asian brothers speak authentically to the emotional lives of young children. In one story, Jay learns to accept help and accept himself for who he is, and in another, the brothers launch a campaign to save their local library.

SHOW LINK: self-acceptance and finding your voice

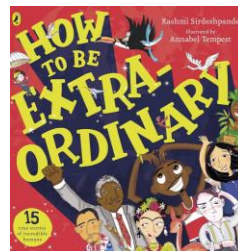
Information Books



Martha Maps It Out, by Leigh Hodgkinson (Oxford University Press)

This innovative picturebook explores every individual's unique place in the world, using maps on an ever-decreasing scale: beginning with the universe, then zooming in on the planet, city, street, house, and finally Martha herself and her inner life.

SHOW LINK: identity and self-awareness, finding your place in the world



How to be Extraordinary and How to Change the World,

by Rashmi Sirdeshpande and Annabel Tempest (Puffin Books)

The dynamic illustrations and engaging text in this pair of illustrated information books introduce the reader to a wide range of inspirational people, who have all changed the world in their own unique way.

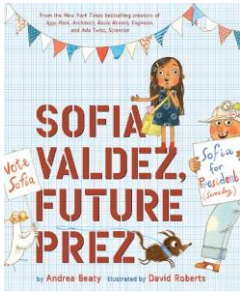
SHOW LINK: heroes and inspirational people, finding your voice and taking a stand

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



Lower KS2

Picture Books



Sofia Valdez, Future Prez, by Andrea Beaty and David Roberts (Abrams & Chronicle)

Part of the inspirational 'Questioners' series, this rhyming picturebook stars Sofia, a young girl with a talent and passion for community-building who bravely launches a campaign to advocate for the rights of her townspeople.

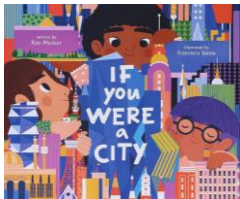
SHOW LINK: self-confidence, and using your voice to take a stand



In Our Hands, by Lucy Farfort (Tate Publishing)

A fabelic picturebook about a mysterious 'dulling' that drains all the colour from the world, and the brave and resourceful children who rally together with shared purpose to raise their voices and make a difference.

SHOW LINK: finding your voice and taking a stand, small heroes

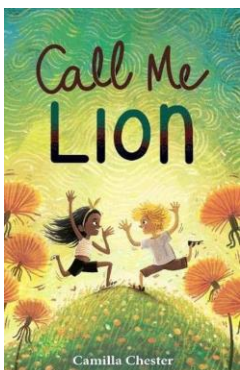


If You Were a City, by Kyo Maclear and Francesca Sanna (Abrams & Chronicle)

Using figurative language and rhetorical questions, and artwork depicting real-life cities, this imaginative book invites the reader to view parallels between people and cities, and to reflect on their own identities.

SHOW LINK: identity and diversity

Novels



Call Me Lion, by Camilla Chester (Firefly Press)

An empathetic story about a boy with selective mutism who dreams of dancing on the West End stage, with themes of self-confidence, friendship and understanding. The first-person narrative means we hear Leo's voice even when he is not speaking.

SHOW LINK: self-confidence, identity, diversity and finding your voice



The Last Dragon, by Polly Ho-Yen and Charis Loke (Knights Of)

With her sister in hospital and facing problems at her new school, Yara has enough to be anxious about without the last dragon on earth entrusting her to look after its only egg. A pacy and moving story about responsibility, righteous anger, and standing up for what's important

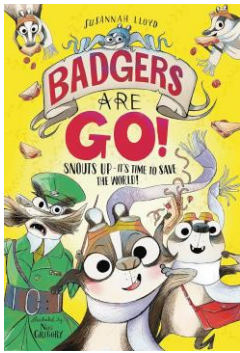
SHOW LINK: unexpected heroes and finding your voice

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



Lower KS2

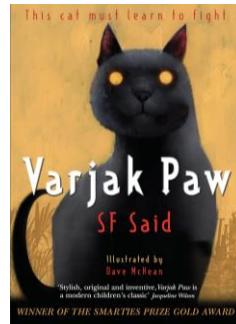
Novels



Badgers Are Go!, by Susannah Lloyd and Nici Gregory (David Fickling Books)

Young badger Lulu lives a quiet life, until she is whisked away into a secret underground society of badgers, where she struggles to prove her place in their world. A hilarious illustrated story about being true to yourself.

SHOW LINK: unlikely heroes



Varjak Paw, by SF Said and Dave McKean (Corgi)

Varjak the cat feels like an outsider within his own family. Through a series of visions, he learns that he is descended from a line of cats who practice an ancient martial art known as the Way of Jalal, and must step into this new power and identity in order to save his family.

SHOW LINK: discovering your identity

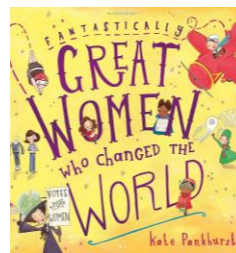
Information Books



Old Enough to Save the Planet, by Loll Kirby and Adelina Lirius (Magic Cat)

This attractively illustrated book spotlights ten real-life child activists from around the world, who are using their voices and taking action to combat climate change in their communities.

SHOW LINK: inspirational people, unlikely heroes, and using your voice to take a stand



Fantastically Great Women Who Changed the World, by Kate Pankhurst (Bloomsbury)

The first in a dynamically illustrated series illuminating the lives of inspirational women throughout history, who often worked within the societal confines of their time to enact change and make a difference.

SHOW LINK: inspirational people, challenging stereotypes, and using your voice to take a stand



People Power, by various authors and illustrators (Walker Books)

Covering Inventors, Activists, Conservationists and Sports Stars, this uplifting series profiles and celebrates diverse icons from particular vocations who have challenged expectations, blazed trails and made a difference within their fields.

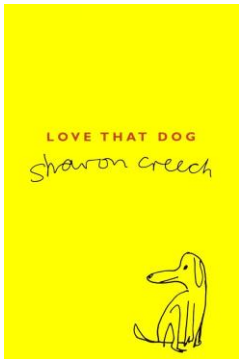
SHOW LINK: inspirational people

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



Lower KS2

Poetry

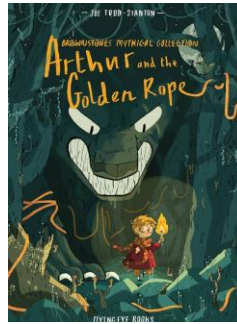


Love That Dog, by Sharon Creech (Bloomsbury)

This highly original text takes the form of a diary set out in verse. Jack struggles to see the point of poetry, but slowly discovers it to be an ideal vessel for his voice and for expressing his feelings, especially about his beloved dog Sky.

SHOW LINK: self-expression and finding your voice

Graphic Novels

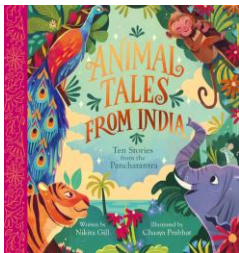


Arthur and the Golden Rope, by Joe Todd-Stanton (Flying Eye Books)

Unlikely hero Arthur sets out on a quest to defeat the gigantic wolf that invaded his village, armed only with the unusual trinkets given to him by the creatures of the forest. A fully illustrated adventure, rooted in Norse mythology.

SHOW LINK: unlikely heroes

Traditional Tales



Animal Tales from India, by Nikita Gill and Chaaya Prabhat (Nosy Crow)

A beautifully produced collection of animal fables from the Panchatantra, with warmly imparted lessons around courage, self-belief, and that heroes come in all shapes and sizes.

SHOW LINK: self-belief and unexpected heroes

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



Upper KS2

Picture Books



A Hero Like Me, by Angela Joy, Jen Reid and Leire Salaberría (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

Inspired by the 2020 toppling of a statue of slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol, and co-written by one of the activists involved in this protest, this urgent and hopeful book invites interrogation of the meaning of heroes, and who we choose to celebrate.

SHOW LINK: using your voice to take a stand

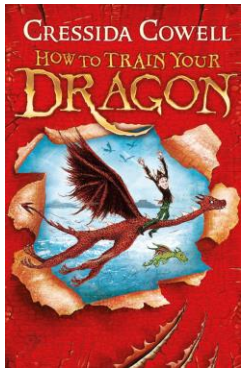


Imagine a Garden, by Rina Singh and Hoda Hadadi (Greystone Kids)

Subtitled 'Stories of Courage Changing the World', this original text combines picturebook with biography and poetry to tell real-life stories of ordinary people performing small yet extraordinary acts of community care and activism.

SHOW LINK: inspirational people, making a difference

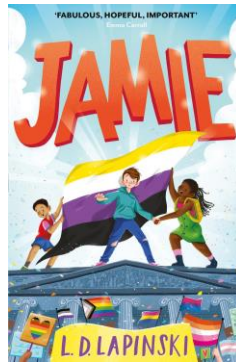
Novels



How to Train Your Dragon, by Cressida Cowell (Hachette Children's Books)

Hapless young Hiccup must catch a mighty dragon to prove himself as a worthy Viking hero, but finds himself saddled with a tiny, toothless dragon instead. Filled with sketchy illustrations by the author which add to the comedy.

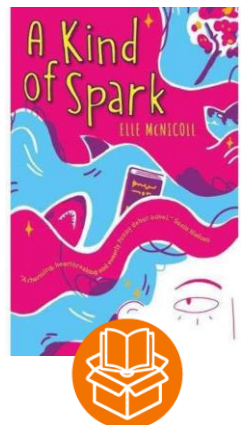
SHOW LINK: unlikely heroes



Jamie, by L.D. Lapinski (Orion)

An empowering and hopeful novel about a non-binary child who, along with their friends, takes matters into their own hands upon discovering that the only secondary schools available to them are for "boys" or "girls" only.

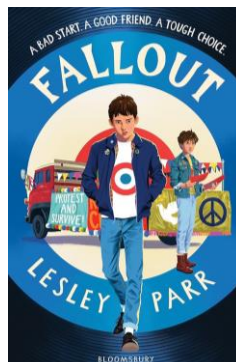
SHOW LINK: identity and using your voice to take a stand



A Kind of Spark, by Elle McNicoll (Knights Of)

When Addie discovers that witch trials were held in her community, she campaigns for a memorial honouring the women murdered for being perceived as different. An empathetic novel about neurodiversity, justice, and having your voice heard.

SHOW LINK: identity and using your voice to take a stand



Fallout, by Lesley Parr (Bloomsbury)

Set in a 1980s Welsh village against a backdrop of punk music and peace protests, this compelling novel follows Marcus, a boy who longs to exit the shadow of his family's bad reputation, and his new friend Emma who believes in justice, peace, and Marcus.

SHOW LINK: challenging expectations, identity, finding your voice and taking a stand

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



Upper KS2

Novels

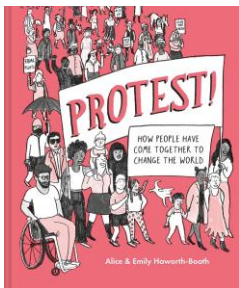


Voices, by various authors (Scholastic)

A ground-breaking series of historical novels that spotlight hidden voices from British history and place the authentically told stories of underrepresented and marginalised groups at the forefront. Series authors include Bali Rai, Patrice Lawrence, Richard O'Neill and more.

SHOW LINK: diversity and amplifying unheard voices

Information Books



Protest!, by Alice and Emily Haworth-Booth (Pavilion)

A comprehensive and celebratory guide to the history of protest around the world, with chronological examples of people raising their collective voices to combat injustice and enact change. Also includes spotlights on specific protest tactics.

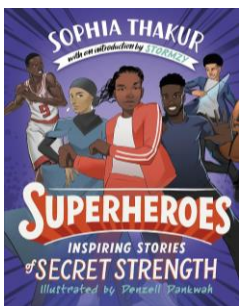
SHOW LINK: using your voice to take a stand



Heroes: Inspirational People and the Amazing Jobs They Do, by Jonny Marx and Gerhard Van Wyk (Little Tiger Press)

Dynamic artwork and snappy text showcase the endeavours of real-life people with all kinds of skills who achieve extraordinary things at their jobs, from teachers and biologists to firefighters and athletes.

SHOW LINK: unexpected heroes



Superheroes: Inspiring Stories of Secret Strength, by Sophia Thakur and Denzell Dankwah (#Merky Books)

With an introduction by Stormzy, this book spotlights over fifty notable British people of colour and their inspirational journeys to success. The comic book style illustrations and thrilling tone of voice paint these figures as real-life superheroes.

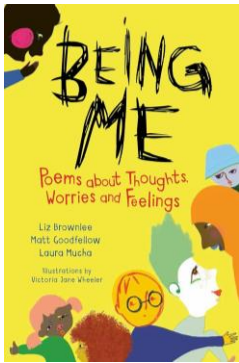
SHOW LINK: inspirational people and diversity

Self-Confidence and Finding Your Voice



Upper KS2

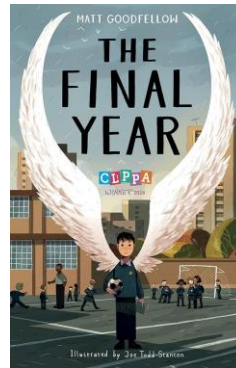
Poetry



Being Me: Poems About Thoughts, Worries and Feelings, by Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow, Laura Mucha and Victoria Jane Wheeler (Otter-Barry Books)

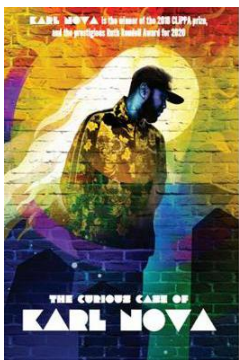
A timely and empathetic collection that articulates and validates a wide breadth of emotions familiar to children, lending them the language to help process them.

SHOW LINK: identity, self-esteem and managing emotions



The Final Year, by Matt Goodfellow and Joe Todd-Stanton (Otter-Barry Books)
Nate is in his final year of Primary school, facing difficult friendship dynamics, managing his anger, and above all a disaster that rocks his family. A compelling and moving verse novel with a profound message about finding your people and finding your voice.

SHOW LINK: identity and finding your voice

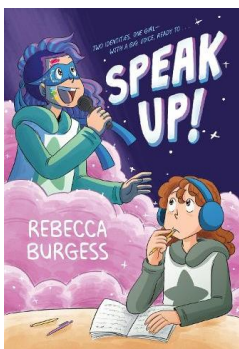


The Curious Case of Karl Nova, by Karl Nova (Caboodle Books)

Performance poet Karl Nova's second collection for children is a personal and compellingly written account of his life journey and his inner world, inviting empathy and reflection from the reader.

SHOW LINK: identity and finding your voice

Graphic Novels



Speak Up!, by Rebecca Burgess (Quill Tree Books)

Mia is autistic, and navigates a world that doesn't always understand or accept her for who she is by creating music with her best friend. Her secret life as internet sensation Elle-Q allows her to speak up and express her true voice.

SHOW LINK: identity, self-confidence and finding your voice

Traditional Tales



Power to the Princess and High-Five to the Hero, by Vita Murrow and Julia Bereciartu (Frances Lincoln Children's Books)

Two beautifully produced fairytale collections that deconstruct many of their tropes, particularly around gender, and with wit and warmth show that there are many ways of being a hero.

SHOW LINK: diversity, challenging stereotypes, and heroes

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About A New Direction

A New Direction is an award-winning charity (1126216) working to enhance the capacity and agency of children and young people in London to own their creativity, shape culture, and achieve their creative potential.

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