



Kirk Fenton CE Primary School

Reading Newsletter

November & December 2020

What a wonderful first half term we have had! It has been brilliant having the whole school back and having conversations with children about what they are enjoying reading.

In the midst of this pandemic and with so much uncertainty ahead about Christmas and the world in general, we have collated some of the best books to support children with any worries or anxiety and to promote their mental health and wellbeing. This is such an important issue and books can be a wonderful opportunity to open up discussions about feelings and concerns with children, as well as what they are feeling happy and optimistic about, too!

Also in this edition are details of our exciting 'Extreme Reading' competition, a personal message from author Jeremy Strong and poet Joshua Seigal, information about early reading, and, of course, high quality texts from a range of talented authors.

Mrs Cameron and Mrs Fitzpatrick (English co-ordinators)



Source: Children and young people who usually get less than the recommended 9 hours sleep on a school night are more likely to feel that worries get in the way of school work (32% vs 22%), according to a survey of over 1,100 10-11 year-olds and 13-15 year-olds carried out by Place2Be in 2019.

Take over our next reading newsletter...



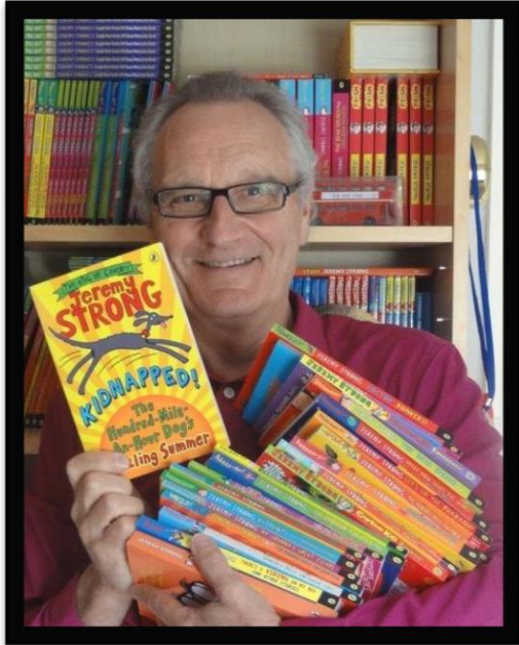
Be featured in our 2021 January/February edition!

What book would you recommend to your classmates? It could be fiction, non-fiction or poetry. What is so brilliant about it? We will select the best book reviews to be featured in our next reading newsletter.

Ask an adult to help you send a book review along with the title and author of your book, to reading@kf.starmat.uk
You could even include a photograph, too!

Author Spotlight

Jeremy Strong



Dear EVERYONE!

I am so pleased and honoured to have been asked to write to you all. Writers LOVE being asked about their writing - and of course themselves! I think we all secretly (and some not so secretly) like talking about ourselves. What do you think?

Anyhow, I am going to plunge straight in and say that this is a message for all you readers and especially for those of you that like writing too. I have a confession to make. When I was aged about 9-11 I hardly read anything at all! That was because of two things. Number one, I had (and still have) a big brother, two years older than me. We quarrelled and fought like two cats with their tails tied to each other.

One day my mother saw my big brother sitting quietly on the sofa and reading. I was sitting on the floor, bored out of my tiny mind. So, my mum looks at Mike and she turns to me and says: 'Look at Michael - sitting there reading. Why can't you be more like him?' Aaaargh! Such poisonous words! Why on earth would I want to be like someone I hated and thought the most stupid person on Earth? I was definitely NOT going to read anything.

So that was the first thing. Here's number two: My teacher when I was in Y5 and Y6 was the same for two years. There were 41 children in my class - quite a lot. Twenty of us were boys - half the class. We had a class reading book in Y5. It was a story called BLACK BEAUTY. It's a classic story and it's about some horses and of course the boys all thought that was girly stuff and WE DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW! We put up with that story for a whole year. Then we went into Y6 and had a new class reading book. Do you know what it was? It was another classic story - LITTLE WOMEN. NOOOOOOOOOO! That was even more girly than horses! (And now I bet a lot of you are thinking - *that's stupid! Just because it's got girls in? Or horses? You didn't read it?*) I'm afraid to say I didn't. But you know children can be a bit odd when they're growing up. Anyhow, by the time I was 15 it didn't matter anymore. I liked everything! I would read ANYTHING, and I still do. I saw the film of LITTLE WOMEN a few months ago and it was brilliant.

You see, stories are for everybody. It's true that some stories are liked more by boys than girls, and it's true that some stories are liked more by girls than boys - but the most important thing is to know if the story is any good and who the author is. Just because a book is written by a man does not mean it's for boys. Because a story is written by a woman does not mean it's for girls. Think J K Rowling! Think Andy Stanton or Julia Donaldson! Think MY stories - I get fan mail from as many boys as I do from girls.

BUT, I am very sorry and embarrassed to say that for two years I hardly read anything. (I blame my big brother mostly!) However, eventually a nice person came along and she put a book in my hand and said: 'I think you might like this.' The book was called MY FAMILY AND OTHER ANIMALS, by Gerald Durrell. It was brilliant! I had to read more, and more – and I haven't stopped reading since. I had been rescued – and you probably noticed that I was rescued by a woman! That was ironic.

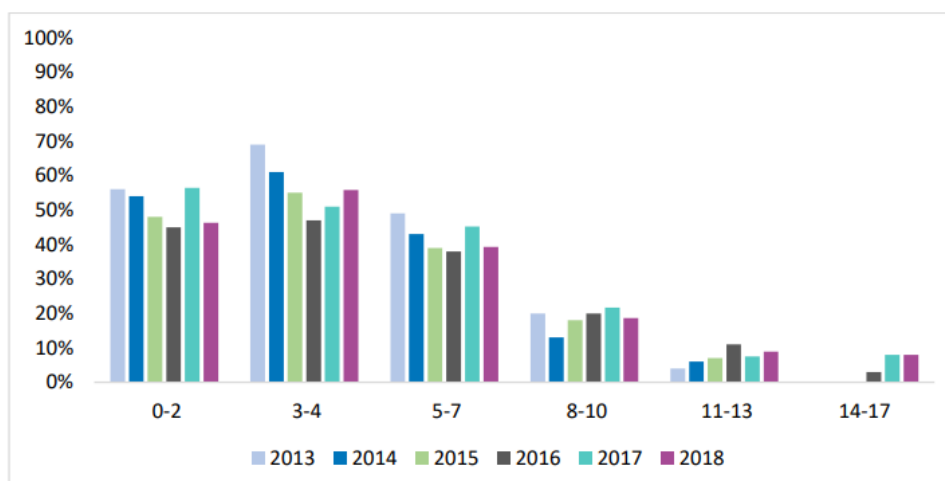
Reading is such an important part of being a writer. You can see how other writers work, how they make their story funny, sad, exciting, terrifying. You can get ideas from reading other books too. Thank you for reading this, or listening to it. I hope you will enjoy your reading and your writing and whatever you do not judge a book by its cover! Turn to the first page and read. One day you'll be still standing there two hours later, still reading – because that book is so amazing. In fact, it's just the sort of book you might want to write yourself.

Bedtime Stories

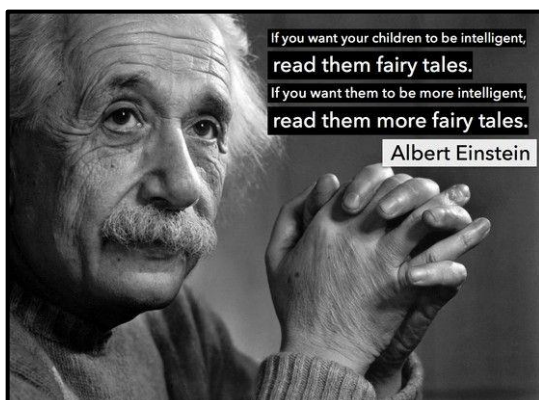
Parents are reading to children less often (nationally)

Reading to children is in decline. 2018 data reveals a decline in reading to 0-2s and 5-10s. There was a small uplift with 11-13s.

Daily reading to children: 6-year trend



Source: Nielsen's Understanding the Children's Book Consumer, 2013-2018



Children are never too old for a bedtime story! Find a high quality book with your child and try to build it into a bedtime routine. Having that quiet time together to share a story is magical and a lovely, calm way to end the day. Plus, you also get to enjoy the story, too! Before long, your child will soon be hooked on books (if they're not already) and will be absorbing a wealth of rich vocabulary that they, in turn, can then try using in their own writing.

Books to support and promote children's mental health and wellbeing

After the Fall (How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again)

By Dan Santat

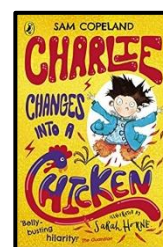
A wonderful book on overcoming fears and anxieties after a difficult experience! It does so well showing how your feelings towards things you used to enjoy can be affected, but how little steps can help you heal.



Charlie Changes into a Chicken

By Sam Copeland

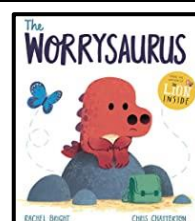
Shortlisted for the Waterstones Children's Book Prize. Charlie Changes into a Chicken is a humorous book, which also sparks a great discussion over how worry presents itself.



The Worrysaurus

By Rachel Bright and Chris Chatterton

A fun and reassuring tale about dealing with worries. This book is beautifully illustrated and will help to open up conversations in a gentle and approachable way.



Find Your Calm

By Gabi Garcia

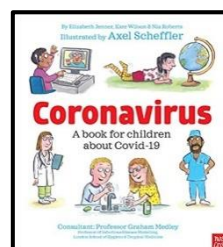
A practical support book which children can follow along, as the young narrator practises what helps her so that the anxiety doesn't take over.



Coronavirus: A book for children about Covid-19

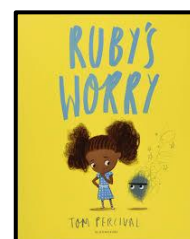
By Elizabeth Jenner, Kate Wilson & Nia Roberts

Available free as a digital copy, or only £1.99 for a paperback copy, this is an approachable book that provides clear explanations about Covid-19 and its effects – both from a health perspective and the impact it has on a family's day-to-day life.



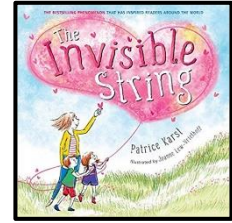
Ruby's Worry by Tom Percival

Ruby loves being Ruby. Until, one day, she finds a worry. At first, it's not such a big worry, and that's all right, but then it starts to grow. It gets bigger and bigger every day and it makes Ruby sad. How can Ruby get rid of it and feel like herself again?



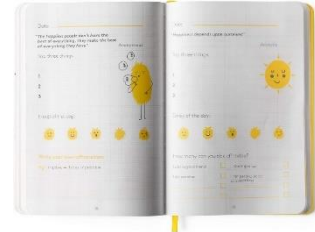
The Invisible String by Patrice Karst

We all have an Invisible String made of love. Even though you can't see it with your eyes, you can feel it deep in your heart, and know that you are always connected to the ones you love. The perfect tool for coping with all kinds of separation anxiety, loss, and grief.



The 'Happy Self' Journal

More of a 'writing' book than a 'reading' book, but this 'journal' can be a powerful tool for children aged 6 to 11, to focus on the positives.



For a HUGE range of quality books on a range of issues including hope, togetherness, fear, kindness, lockdown, social distancing, positivity, coronavirus and so much more, please do take a look at this stunning site:

<https://www.thereaderteacher.com/returning-to-school>

Support Independent Book Shops

In our previous newsletter we shared information about two fantastic independent book shops in York. We are pleased to announce that we now have a working relationship with the Blue House Bookshop in York. Owners Karen and Richard have helped us curate and order 4 'Baskets of Brilliant Books' for each of our EYFS and KS1 classes.

These books represent some of the best picturebooks from our literary heritage, books we feel as a school that everyone has an entitlement to experience. These baskets will make a huge difference to our reading time and are being enjoyed by everyone already!

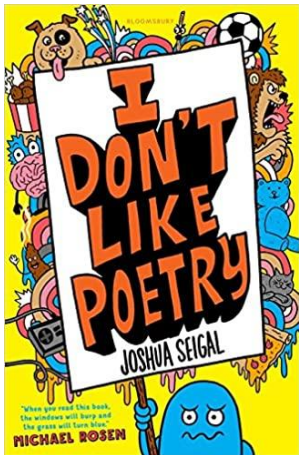


Now that bookshops have had to close, please continue to support independent book shop owners. The Blue House Bookshop takes online orders and even has a range of dyslexia friendly books.

<https://thebluehousebookshop.co.uk/>

Featured Poet

Joshua Seigal



A special message from Joshua Seigal, the winner of the 2020 Laugh Out Loud Book Award...

Hello, my name is Joshua Seigal and I am a poet. I write poems for my job, which is a bit weird but it is very fun. I write poems for several reasons. The first reason is that I sometimes find it hard to concentrate for a long time, and poems are usually shorter than stories! They also don't tend to have as many rules; you can play around with lots of techniques and devices such as alliteration, repetition and of course rhyming, although poems don't have to rhyme.

I also write poems because I love performing, and I think poetry really comes alive when it is performed in front of an audience. I think the main reason I write poetry is very simple: it's because I love words. Poetry is a way of playing with words, of making them do all kinds of interesting things, of making them sing and dance.

My piece of advice to you would be this: even if you aren't too sure about poetry, give it a go! Read a few poems, and maybe use them as inspiration for writing your own. You might be surprised with what you come up with! And be sure to visit my website www.joshuaseigal.co.uk

Poem for Libraries

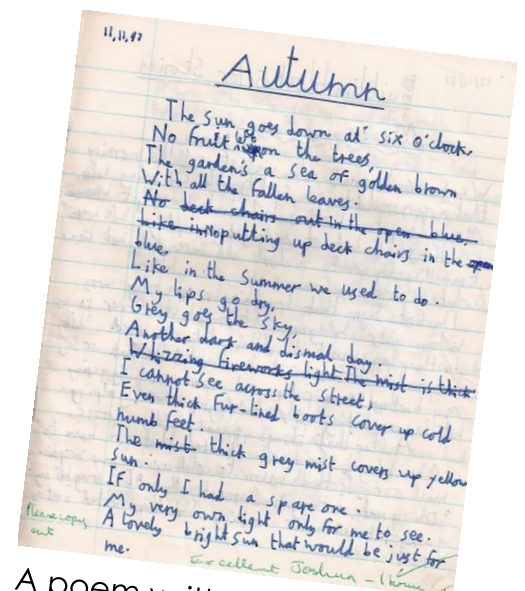
(Shared with kind permission from Joshua Seigal)

Come to a place full of wonder and light
and sparkling stories to brighten your night;
of tales and fables and beautiful beams
that flash in your mind and set fire to your dreams.

Come to a place full of horror and dread,
of demons and dragons that howl in your head;
of terrible tigers with blood-spattered claws
and lives that are shattered by famines and wars.

Come to a place full of dates, facts and figures
and jokes that will have you in stitches and sniggers;
a place you can stroll through the meadows of history,
scaling the sides of the mountain of mystery.

Come to a place that can sate your addiction
to rollicking rhymes and to fabulous fiction;
a place you can travel through time at your leisure:
a library of pages to savour and treasure.



A poem written by Joshua,
age 7.

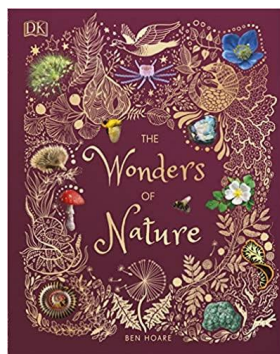
Give a Gift of Reading!

Books make amazing gifts for Christmas. Here are some top picks of truly special books to spark imaginations and be loved for years to come!



Country Creatures by Julia Donaldson

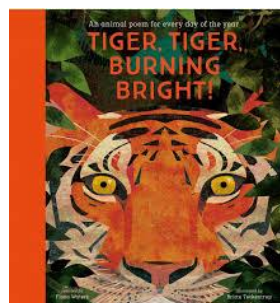
A stunning counting book full of gorgeous baby animals, with amazing flaps to lift and holes to peep through. From Julia Donaldson, bestselling author of *The Gruffalo*. From a leopard with her cubs, to a frog and its tadpoles, young readers will delight in counting each creature's babies and seeing where they live. With rhyming text and a surprise search-and-find game, this is a read-aloud delight and an absolute must for the family bookshelf. A truly beautiful gift.



The Wonders of Nature by Ben Hoare

With a beautiful fabric covering and gold-edged pages, this reference book reveals fascinating animals, plants, rocks and minerals, and microorganisms that will wow children and adults alike. Fantastic photography and illustrations showcase the wonders of planet Earth beautifully.

From opals to orchids and tapirs to toadstools, this beautiful collection brings more than 100 incredible items from the natural world to life. Perfect for all the nature-loving readers on the planet we call home.



Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright: An Animal Poem for Every Day of the Year by Fiona Waters and Britta Teckentrup

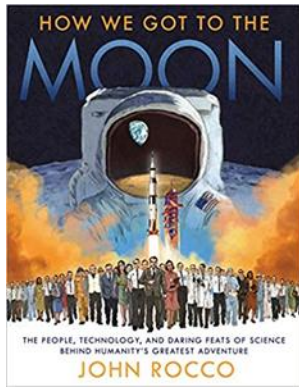
This lavishly illustrated gift book treasury of 366 animal poems - one for every day of the year - ranges from unforgettable classics to contemporary works from around the world. Britta Teckentrup's breathtaking illustrations bring together all the richness and wonder of the animal kingdom, making this poetry anthology a perfect gift that will be treasured by generations.

This book is also one of our Y4 curriculum texts.



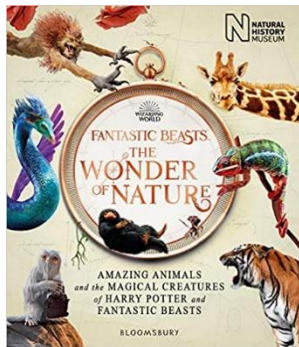
Blue Planet II by Leisa Stewart-Sharpe

This is our Blue Planet: a beautiful blue marble suspended in a sea of stars. Dive into these incredible stories from BBC Blue Planet II. Explore coral reefs that shimmer in a kaleidoscope of colours. Venture to the bottom of the ocean where creatures beyond your wildest imagination live in the dark. Chase sea otters through kelp forest seas, and glide the open ocean with humpback whales. Discover all there is to love about our Blue Planet, the stories of its inhabitants, and realise how you can help protect this wilderness beneath the waves.



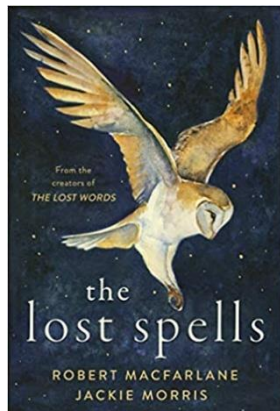
How We Got To The Moon by John Rocco

This beautifully illustrated, oversized guide to the people and technology of the moon landing is a must-have for space fans, classrooms, and tech geeks. Everyone knows of Neil Armstrong's famous first steps on the moon. But what did it really take to get us there? This exquisitely researched and illustrated book tells the stories of the 400,000 unsung heroes--the engineers, mathematicians, seamstresses, welders, and factory workers--and their innovations and life-changing technological leaps forward that allowed NASA to achieve this unparalleled accomplishment.



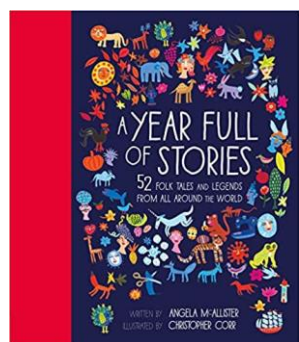
Fantastic Beasts: The Wonder of Nature by Natural History Museum

The magical world of J.K. Rowling's Fantastic Beasts meets the real-world experts of the world-famous Natural History Museum. Fantastic Beasts: The Wonder of Nature is the official book inspired by the spectacular exhibition, shining a light on beasts in all their fantastic forms. Taking inspiration from Newt Scamander, this gorgeous colour gift book invites the whole family to explore the inspiration and links between the magic of J.K. Rowling's creatures and the astonishing real-world wildlife that has roamed the earth, seas and skies of our planet throughout history.



The Lost Words by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris

Dazzlingly beautiful and wonderfully inventive, discover the magical new book from the creators of bestselling, critically acclaimed literary phenomenon, The Lost Words. Written to be read aloud, painted in brushstrokes that call to the forest, field, riverbank and also to the heart, The Lost Spells summons back what is often lost from sight and care, and inspires protection and action on behalf of the natural world. Above all, it celebrates a sense of wonder, bearing witness to nature's power to amaze, console and bring joy.



A Year Full of Stories: 52 Folk Tales and Legends from Around the World by Angela McAllister and Christopher Corr

Celebrate your year from New Year's Day to Christmas Eve with this treasury of 52 best-loved stories from around the world. This rich resource collects together folk tales from home and legends and myths from distant lands to commemorate the changing seasons, cultural events and international festivals throughout the year.

Exciting dates, events and competitions to get involved with!

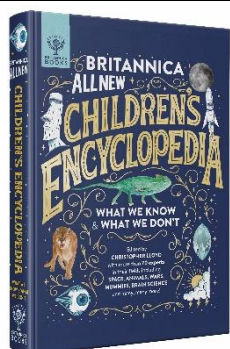
Blue Peter Book Award – Shortlist announced!

Since 2000, the enormously popular and influential Blue Peter Book Awards have been recognising and celebrating the best authors, the most creative illustrators and the greatest reads for children. The short list was announced just yesterday.



Click on the Blue Peter badge to see which books are competing to win the prize in 2021.

November
2020



Britannica Virtual Family Quiz Show

To celebrate the STUNNING Britannica 'All New Children's Encyclopaedia,' author Christopher Lloyd will be hosting a special 'Virtual Family Quiz Show'. Register online and keep an eye out for future events outside of school time, too!

Click the encyclopaedia for a link.

Friday 13th
November
11am

Royal Mail Letters to Santa Deadline

Each year, Santa's elves at the Royal Mail can help you get a letter from Santa, if children write to him by early December.

Click on Father Christmas for a link.



Early
December

Book Trust Story Writing Competition: A Story of Joy and Hope

Smriti Halls, has launched an amazing story-writing competition for the chance to win a special visit and lots of books for your school!

'It could be about anything at all... and be told in all sorts of ways - a funny story, an adventure story, a fairytale, a story full of unicorns, pancakes or porcupines... time travel, wizards or wands... rockets... rollercoasters... rabbits... whatever makes the writer happy.

Click on the picture of Smriti for more information and all the entry details.



Friday 22nd
January 2021