

Sacred Heart Primary School

Reading Newsletter

Autumn 1 2025



Welcome to our first reading newsletter of the year. Whether your child hasn't been able to put a book down during the summer, or you've struggled to get them to pick one up, this newsletter is for you!

This newsletter is a chance to find out about new, high quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry as well as a chance to get tips and up to date information about helping your child with their reading journey.

As always, your support is hugely appreciated.

The Importance of Reading for Pleasure

HERE'S THE IMPACT OF
READING 20
MINUTES PER DAY!

A student who reads

20:00

minutes per day

A student who reads

5:00

minutes per day

A student who reads

1:00

minute per day

will be exposed to
1.8 MILLION
words per year
and is more likely
to score in the
90th PERCENTILE
on standardized tests

will be exposed to
282,000
words per year
and is more likely
to score in the
50th PERCENTILE
on standardized tests

will be exposed to
8,000
words per year
and is more likely
to score in the
10th PERCENTILE
on standardized tests

Source: Nagy, Anderson and Herman, 1987

 SCHOLASTIC

There is overwhelming evidence that literacy has a significant relationship to people's life chances. Reading for pleasure is more important than either wealth or social class as an indicator of success at school.

If your child isn't a 'book worm' yet, don't worry! There are so many wonderful and exciting authors out there, that there's a book to engage and inspire your child out there... they just may not have discovered it yet!

Author Spotlight

Tola Okogwu



An interview with Tola...

What was your favourite childhood book and why?

I loved the *Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis. I read it at a particularly difficult point in my childhood. I had just moved to the UK from Nigeria and I felt very lost, scared and lonely. Reading about the Pevensies, a family going through a similar situation helped me feel seen and less alone. I still to this day cannot pass a wardrobe without checking to see if there's a way to Narnia inside.

Which of your own books is your favourite and why?

This is always a difficult question which I usually avoid answering as each book is special for different reasons. I will say that *Daddy Do My Hair: Beth's Twist* has an extra special place in my heart as it was the first book I wrote and published, whilst *Onyeka and the Academy of the Sun* means a lot because it stretched me as a writer and opened many doors and opportunities for me as an author.

Why do you choose to read?

Reading is my happy place. I think of books as a sort of passport that allows me to visit the most amazing places and meet the most fantastic characters. When I'm lost in a book, something magical happens and I love that I can be both entertained as well as educated at the same time.

Sheffield Libraries

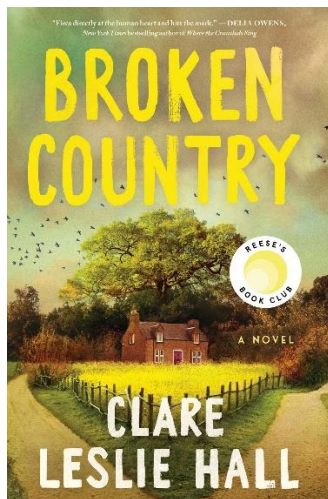
Sheffield Libraries are a wonderful way of accessing a huge range of high quality books absolutely free! Our local libraries can be found in Walkley and Hillsborough or why not try the Children's Library in town.

Like a book on our reading newsletter? Ask them if they have it! If not, they can get it in stock for you to borrow.



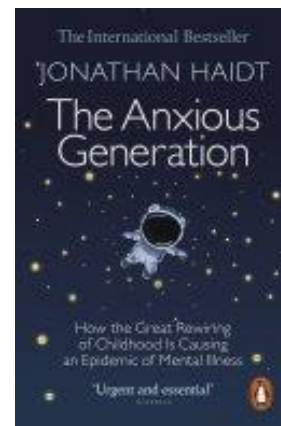
Chinese Proverb

Book Recommendations for Adults



Beth and her gentle, kind husband Frank are happily married, but their relationship relies on the past staying buried. But when Beth's brother-in-law shoots a dog going after their sheep, Beth doesn't realize that the gunshot will alter the course of their lives. For the dog belonged to none other than Gabriel Wolfe, the man Beth loved as a teenager—the man who broke her heart years ago. Gabriel has returned to the village with his young son Leo, a boy who reminds Beth very much of her own son, who died in a tragic accident.

As Beth is pulled back into Gabriel's life, tensions around the village rise and dangerous secrets and jealousies from the past resurface, this time with deadly consequences. Beth is forced to make a choice between the woman she once was, and the woman she has become.

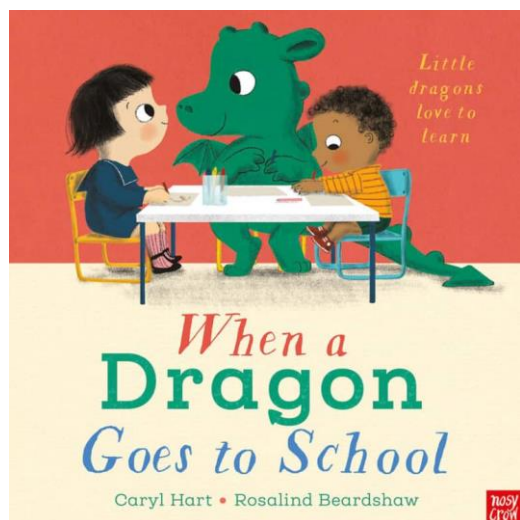


Acclaimed psychologist Jonathan Haidt reveals how the decline of free-play in childhood and the rise of smartphone use among adolescents is changing our world

From 2010, as teens traded in their flip phones for smartphones packed with social media apps, unsupervised time online soared while face-to-face conversations with friends and family plummeted, and so did mental health. This profound shift took place against a backdrop of diminishing childhood freedom and over-supervision in the real world, depriving children of the experiences they most need to become strong and self-governing adults.

The Anxious Generation delves into the latest research to show how this shift from free-play to smartphones disrupts development – from sleep deprivation to addiction – and lays the foundations of isolation and fear that define society today.

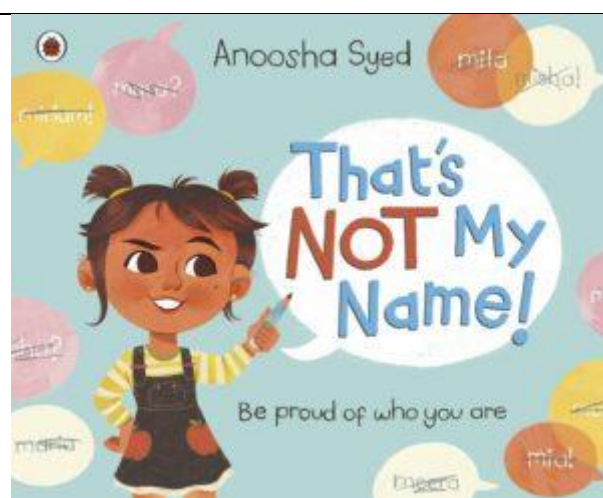
Starting Reception and Returning to School



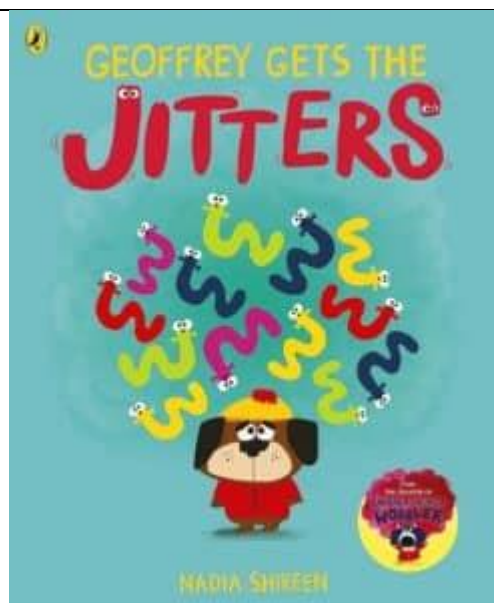
The perfect book for any little dragon (or child) getting ready to start school!

This delightful rhyming follow-up to *When a Dragon Comes to Stay* is full of recognisable behaviour. When a dragon goes to school, will she enjoy a book in the reading den and save her lunchtime treats for a friend? Or will she throw the crayons and refuse to share? She's going to need her friends to help her behave herself . . . she is DRAGON after all!

An uplifting picture book about loving your name, finding your voice and standing up for yourself. Mirha is so excited for her first day of school! She can't wait to learn, play and make new friends. But when her classmates keep mispronouncing her name, she goes home wondering if she should find a new one. When Mama helps Mirha see just how special her name is, she returns to school the next day determined to help her classmates say it correctly. This heartwarming picture book reminds us all just how important our names are!



The ultimate story to chase (and laugh) your worries away. Geoffrey's got the jitters! It started last night when he was thinking about school - a funny, wiggly feeling in his tummy that grew and grew. But when Geoffrey's tummy jitters started talking to him - that's when he knew they were out of control. Geoffrey had to do something...Through a laugh-out-loud story and loveable character, Nadia Shireen shows how to understand and dispel anxieties, one jitter at a time.



Poetry Page



Poet Joshua Seigal shares a special message:

My books are like my children – it's very hard to pick a favourite! My most well known and popular book is probably 'I Don't Like Poetry'. However, I am especially proud of my book 'Who Let the Words Out?' This took a long time to write, and it has a real mixture of funny and sad poems, and I think it is probably my best book so far. It has lots of weird and wonderful words, and really showcases my love of language.



I Don't Like Poetry

BY JOSHUA SEIGAL

I don't like similes.

Every time I try to think of one
my brain feels like a vast, empty desert;
my eyes feel like raisins floating in an ocean;
my fingers feel like sweaty sausages.

I don't like metaphors.

Whenever I attempt them
a hammer starts beating in my chest;
lava starts bubbling in my veins;
zombies have a fight in my stomach.

I don't like alliteration.

We learnt about it in school
but it's seriously, stupendously silly;
definitely drastically difficult;
terribly, troublingly tricky.

I don't like onomatopoeia.

I wish I could blow it up
with a ZAP! and a BANG! and a CRASH!;
a BOOM! and a CLANG! and a POW!;
a CLASH! and a BAM! and a THUD!

And I don't like repetition

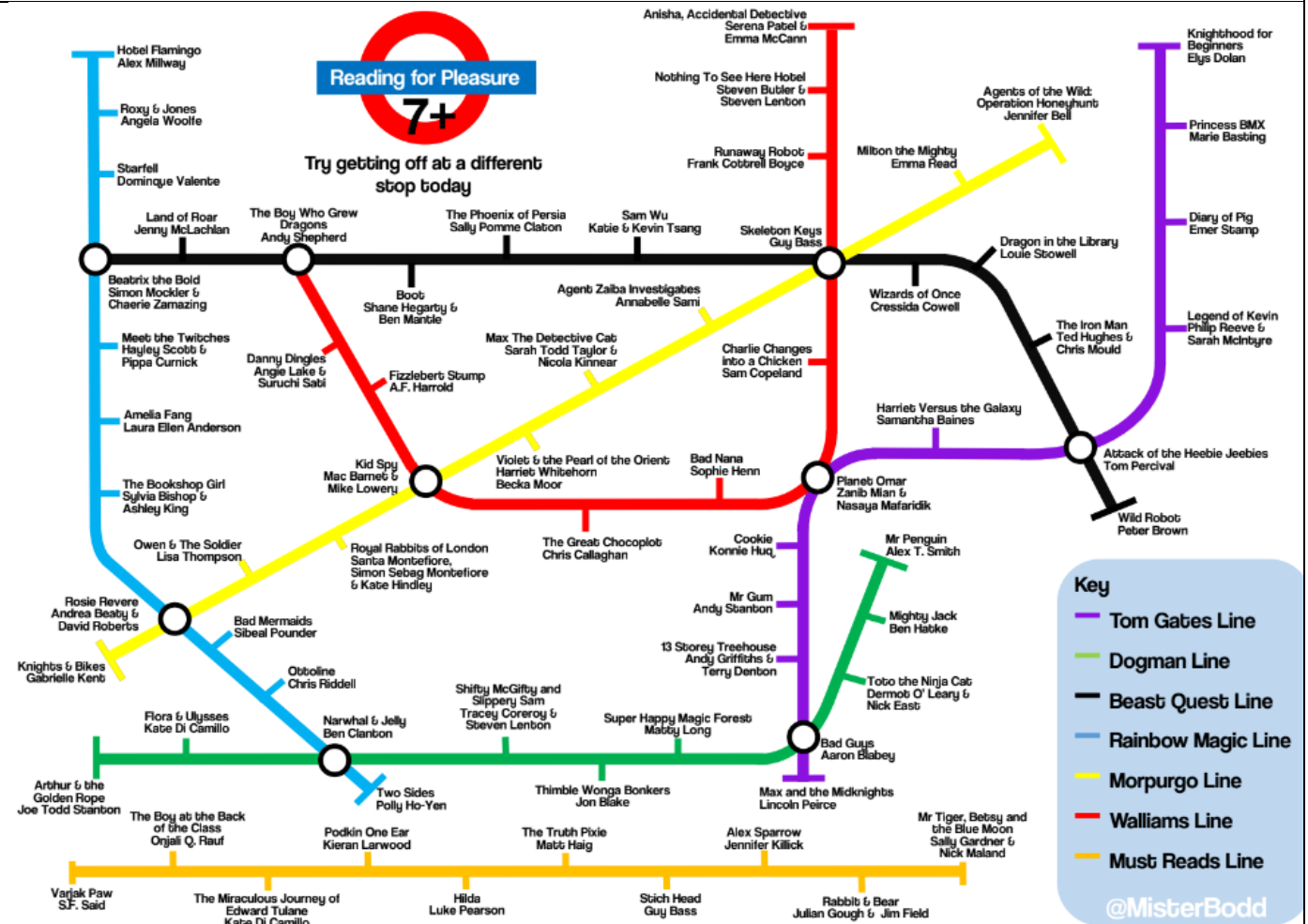
I don't like repetition

I don't like repetition...

Guiding Children's Reading Choice

Does your child always read books by the same author or the same genre of book? Children's choice about what they read is really important, but it's also important that they know what's out there to be able to make an informed choice, with adults guiding them towards quality books wherever possible. Any reading is better than no reading, so it's not worth a battle, but children's series can often contain the same sort of style and vocabulary, making children read more passively (especially if the book has been made into a film that they have seen.)

'Banning' books by certain authors can make the problem worse... so why not offer your child one of these alternatives if they have got stuck on one of the most common series of books? Get in touch if you'd like any further support with this.



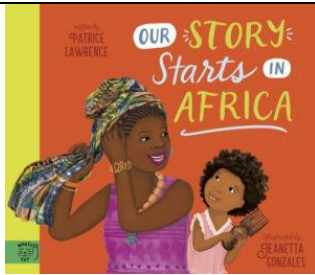
Reading for Pleasure Tube Map by @MisterBodd

Other tube maps can be found here:

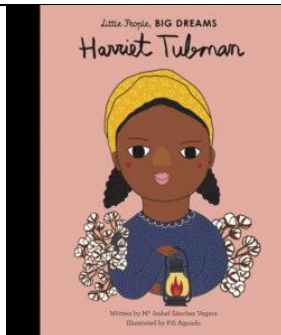
<https://misterbodd.wordpress.com/2020/05/12/reading-for-pleasure-tube-maps-mkii-2020/>

October: Black History Month

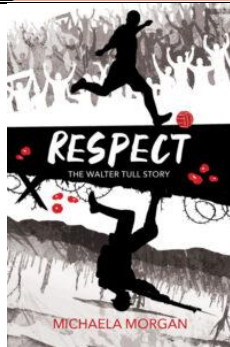
Each year, the whole month of October is dedicated to highlighting the importance of understanding Black History. There are many books available to open up discussions and these are just a small sample. For more about Black History Month, see the official website <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>



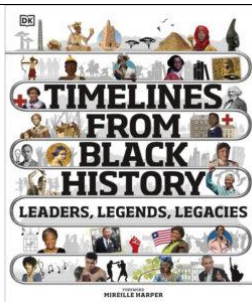
When Paloma goes to visit her family in Trinidad, she doesn't feel that she fits in. But Tante Janet has a story to tell her: An ancient story of warrior queens and talking drums, of treasures and tales that span thousands of years... a story that Paloma shares in, because her story starts in Africa, too.. Join Tante and her inquisitive niece as they share the story of how her family came to the Caribbean



Discover the incredible life of Harriet Tubman, the Underground Railroad conductor who 'never lost a single passenger.' Little Harriet was born into slavery on a plantation in Maryland. Though life was hard, Harriet persisted. She used all of her strength and bravery to escape slavery and journey north on the Underground Railroad. Harriet made the dangerous mission back to the South many times, fighting her whole life to bring others with her to freedom.



Tully and his brother don't have much. But they do have each other. And Tully has an amazing talent. Football. But when the First World War begins, Tully must fight for respect on the battlefield not the pitch ... Based on the amazing true story of Walter Tull, a First World War hero and one of the first black British professional football players.



This important book seeks to begin to redress the imbalance in written history, where very often, significant contributions by black men and women have been overlooked and marginalised. We learn about inspiring, powerful, talented and world-changing figures such as Mansa Musa, Taytu Betul, Mary Seacole and Nelson Mandela. We meet inspirational black men and women from the fields of music, dance, engineering, mathematics, politics and sport, as well as Ancient African rulers and present day activists.



This book seeks to support children in thinking more deeply about their behaviours, like whether it could be racist to copy people's clothes and traditions. It tackles some of the things that children will hear in wider society – why the Black Lives Matter slogan is not the same as saying that not all lives matter. The book also addresses the causes of racism from slavery to fake news and explores questions about our identities and how each of us can play our part in tackling racism.

Book Reviews / Recommendations

We would love to add your book reviews to our reading newsletter. If you would like to write one, please give Ms Tuplin a paper copy or email your teacher for it to be passed on. Good book reviews give a brief overview of what the book is about (no spoilers!) and your opinion of the book – how did it make you feel? Perhaps suggest the type of reader you would recommend the book to.

If you would like to recommend a book for the next newsletter, please let Ms. Tuplin know. The next issue will be looking at Christmas and Remembrance / War themed books.

Reading Challenge

It is not too late to get involved in our 25 in 2025 reading challenge. Read 25 books linked to the challenge to be entered into a prize draw. Challenge sheets have been sent via ParentPay and paper copies are available.

This challenge is a great way to add variety to your child's reading and could be something that you do alongside them too.