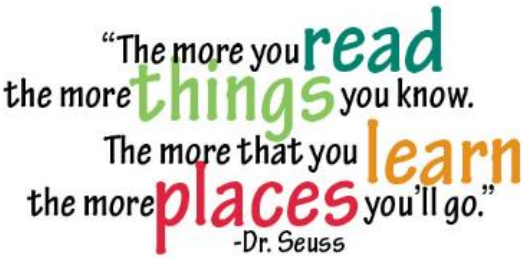


Families Magazine

This was an interesting snippet which featured in the last Families Magazine. We hope that through our regular reading with the children, the promotion of new books in the library and positive book talk from home that we may be able to continue to promote Reading for Pleasure to all children in the school. We thank you for your continued support with this at home.

NEWS

'National crisis' as children's reading enjoyment plummets

Children's reading enjoyment has fallen to its lowest level in almost two decades, with just one in three young people saying that they enjoy reading in their free time, according to a new survey.

Only 34.6% of eight to 18 year olds surveyed by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) said that they enjoy reading in their spare time. This is the lowest level recorded by the charity since it began surveying children about their reading habits 19 years ago, representing an 8.8 percentage point drop since last year.

It is also part of a broader downward trend since 2016, when almost two in three children said that they enjoyed reading. The charity called on the government to form a reading taskforce and action plan to address because it has got the scale of national crisis and needs to be all our responsibilities to address.

For more information visit: www.literacytrust.org

New Books

In 3V we always get excited when an unexpected, thick brown envelope is delivered to our room. It can only mean one thing – a new book. Although adults and children are as excited as each other to see what is inside, we must wait to the end of our lesson to open it and reveal the contents, otherwise we know we would become too distracted!

Our School Council Library Group requested a wider range of books for the library so this term we have borrowed 30 graphic novels suitable for all ages from the County Library. These are now in the library for the children to read and enjoy. These will be returned at the end of term and swapped with another set of books from another genre – what will they choose I wonder.

Ziyaan from Year 4 recommended Dog Man and Bunny V Monkey so I am sure he will be one of the children who will enjoy these.

We will be opening the library up after school for you to come and choose a book with your child. Further information will be sent in due course.

Heathlands Visited the Library

Keen to share our love of reading, Heathlands visited our library where some of our older children read to them. They all had a lovely time, and we hope to repeat this experience regularly for the budding book lovers!

Reading Quest will return for Summer 2025

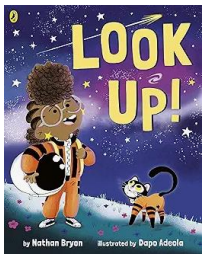
Get involved in our summer reading programme for children, open to all ages and all reading abilities.

We will send information on this near the end of the Summer Term.

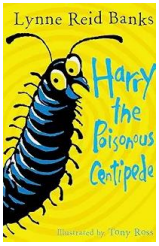
Class Reads

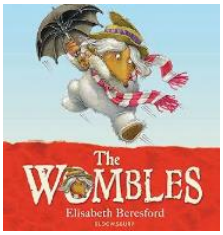
This term's suggested class reads are:

Year 1



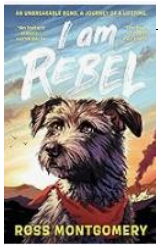
Year 2



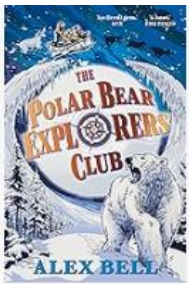


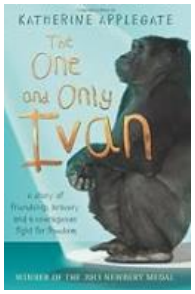
Year 3

The shortlists books

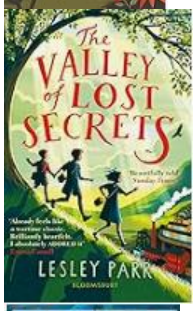


Year 4

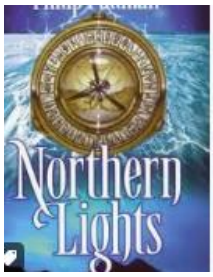


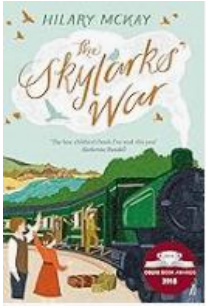


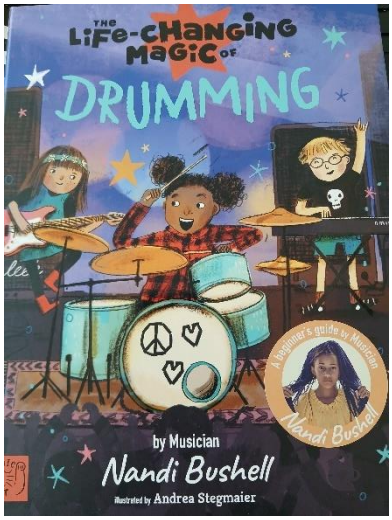
Year 5



Year 6



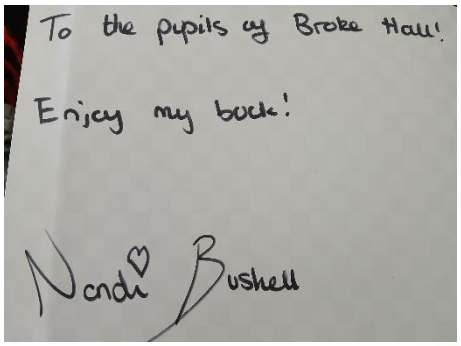




Nandi Bushell Book Launch Visit

The children who went to visit Nandi had a fantastic time meeting this young inspirational musician.

The book is now in the library for the children to borrow during their library time.



Children's Book Award
The Federation of Children's Book Groups
Registered Charity 268289

The shortlist has arrived.
The following have made it onto the current Children's Book Award shortlist, and we will soon be voting for our favourite picture and longer chapter books. Briony will be thrilled to see Turtle Moon has made it (see the recommendations in this newsletter).
We will let you know which books are our overall favourites in the next newsletter.

Mystery Books – Reviewed

I have been impressed with Year 4 and their Mystery Books! They have managed to keep them so secretive that even the teachers are unsure who has read them so far. They have enjoyed the secrecy and opportunity to read something they may not have chosen before and for them to just enjoy with no follow up questions asked.

Now, we would like to give parents and carers the opportunity to do the same. We will provide you with a children's book (suitable for Upper Key Stage 2) in a thick envelope (to keep it secretive) for you to read and comment on before returning it so it can be passed onto the next adult. ***If you are interested, please email the front office with: FAO Miss Varden – Mystery Book, in the subject line.***

Recommendations

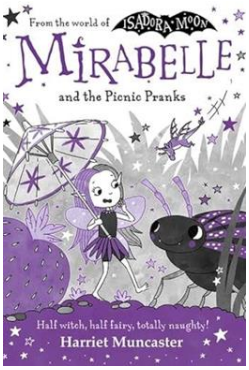
If your child has any recommendations they would like to share in the newsletter, please ask them to pass them onto Miss Varden

Briony from Year 6 has recommended the books of Hannah Gold. After reading The Last Bear, Briony says: The Last Bear is the first book of the series and is about an 11-year-old girl called April who is going on a 6 month meteorological research trip with her Dad. This turns out to be an incredible adventure demonstrating a beautiful bond between a child and an animal. April encounters a real polar bear who no one else knew was there and who is alone on the island, starving. It is quite a moving story that shows no one is too young to make a difference. It is a heartfelt story that I loved so much I can't wait to read all the other books in the series.

This is certainly a popular author in Upper Key Stage 2 where children often talk keenly about her writing.

Her 5th book, THE LONE HUSKY will be released on October 23rd 2025.

Alice from Year 3 reviewed this book and said:



I enjoyed the book because it was funny and joyful. The character starts doing pranks on people who are mean to her. It all turns out happy.

There are a few of the Isadora Moon books by Harriet Muncaster and they certainly seem a popular choice for Year 3.

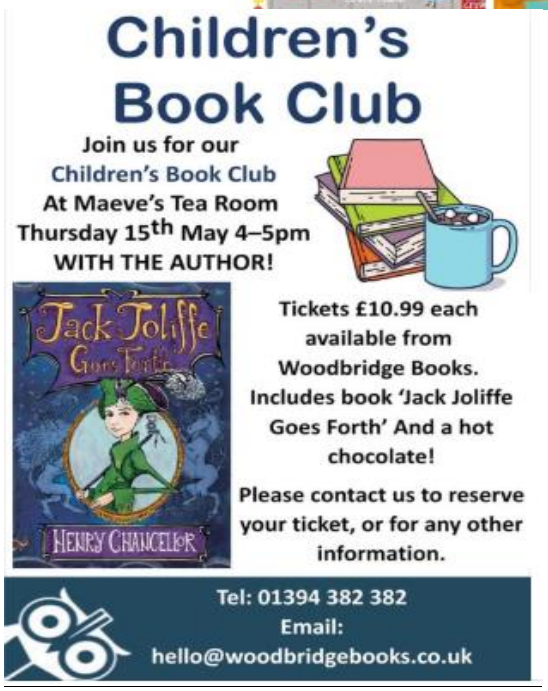
Recommendations for EYFS

This feature of board books for your youngest readers have been provided through the Federation of Children's Books link to a blog by samjdthomas.

https://samjdthomas.home.blog/2025/04/11/beautiful-board-books-april-2025-part-one/

https://samjdthomas.home.blog/2025/04/13/beautiful-board-books-april-2025-part-two/

It's never too early to encourage children to enjoy reading.



Dial Lane Books
Sunday 22nd June at 3pm

Dial Lane Books hold regular book groups and this term they are reading Clem Fatale Has Been Betrayed by Eve Wersocki Morris.

The author will be at this event to join in with the discussions. It is always exciting to have the opportunity to meet authors in person, especially with newly published books.

(Review by https://myshelvesarefull.com/2024/10/03/clem-fatale-has-been-betrayed-by-eve-wersocki-morris/).

This is a 1950's gangster story for children! What a fantastic character Clem is. She is part of her father's notorious gang, The Spiders. They Rob from the rich but that is all she knows. Jimmy, her dad, has a green book with all the details of heists, rich folk and priceless gems. This book is what every other gangster in town needs and covets!

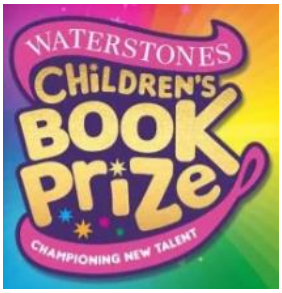
When a heist goes wrong, and Jimmy goes missing, it is only Clem who is determined to find her father. The Spiders have decamped into hiding at her mother's vast house and don't seem interested, or are they hiding something from her?

Clem with the help of kidnapped new friend Gilbert head back into the bombed-out streets of London in search for answers and perhaps a traitor!

This is a rip roaring and rousing adventure- short, sweet and filled with brilliant scenes that only come from a wonderful imagination! Gangsters dressed as sharks and lobsters, water pistols, cakes flying through the air and all sorts of dangerous situations are sure to keep readers entertained and left wanting more.

Clem and Gilbert are an amazing duo and their new friends are perfect, as is the truth behind the heists! I really hope there will be more Clem Fatale stories!

It's certainly on my book list now!



Waterstones Children's Book Prize

The winner has been announced of the award as:

The café at the Edge of the Woods.

Inspired by a game Mikey Please played with his wife and son during lockdown, The Café at the Edge of the Woods is a timeless comic tale about a café owner and her trusty waiter's attempts to serve a particularly picky customer. Told in witty rhyming text and adorned with evocative illustrations reminiscent of Jon Klassen and Maurice Sendak, children will adore this laugh-out-loud funny stew of the heartwarming and the grotesque, as a little imagination and creativity ensure that a visiting ogre gets just the monstrous meal he requested.

The winner for younger readers is: Rune: The Tale of a thousand Faces

A gorgeously quirky, magical and inclusive graphic novel, Rune finds two friends pursued by bullies escape into an untrodden forest and pass through a portal into another realm, where a whole new adventure begins.

Waterstones provides a little more information including the topics covered in these tales and a little more about the stories at:
https://www.waterstones.com/blog/a-parents-guide-to-the-waterstones-childrens-book-prize-winners-2025

Author and Illustrator Focus

As winner of the Waterstones Book Award we are spotlighting Mikey Please. Mikey Please is a Bristol-based BAFTA-winning and OSCAR-nominated writer, director, animator, and illustrator. An alumnus of the Royal College of Art (MA Animation) his music videos and short films have garnered over 60 international awards. In 2023 he was appointed as a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The Café at The Edge of the Woods, his critically acclaimed debut picture book, has landed on many best-book lists.

Right now - 2025 - he's busy writing books, developing animation and getting ready for the arrival of The Expanded Earth, his debut novel, which comes out in April (Corsair). Closely followed by The Cave Downwind of the Cafe (Harper Collins), his second solo picturebook in September.

Ipswich Book Festival – 3rd-5th October

Many towns and cities have their own book festivals and Ipswich is no different. The promotional information says:

A brand-new chapter begins! Ipswich Book Festival is making its debut, and we're celebrating the magic of firsts; from debut authors to the wonder behind a book's very first cover. Join us as we journey from manuscript to publication, discover fresh voices, and honour the moments that shape readers and writers alike. Our festival will bring books, authors, and readers together in a joyful celebration of new beginnings.

They have announced their first headliner Larry Lamb, a British actor and presenter, best recognised for his acting roles in the BBC soaps Triangle and Eastenders, and the sitcom Gavin & Stacey, who will talk about his debut fiction novel "All Wrapped Up" with Camilla Barnes, author of "The Usual Desire to Kill" on Friday 3rd October with tickets going on sale in June.

What a positive way to promote Reading for Pleasure with your children by showing them how reading interests you and how exciting it is waiting to visit authors or read newly published books.

I was very excited to see this initiative from Penguin Books.
Reading brand new books, with the unmistakable 'new book smell', being another in a long line to read a popular book from the library, or finding an intriguing looking cover in a charity shop book bin gives everyone the opportunity to enjoy books in their own way. When out walking or cycling, I can't resist stopping at the 'telephone box book stops' or a selection in a wooden box at the end of someone's drive. You never know what wonders you will find.

Penguin says: Our Little Book Stops aim to celebrate the joy of reading and the people who make reading happen for their communities. We believe in the power of books to create connections between us and that each day, all over the UK, there are people who champion reading. Librarians, teachers, community leaders, parent groups, book sellers, youth workers, carers – the list goes on! Maybe it's even your neighbour who is always recommending your next read.

If you'd like to celebrate a local reading champion or bring the joy of books to your local community, apply for one of our 90 Little Book Stops today.

I wonder if we have one within our community?

Dyslexia Friendly Books

SUFFOLK LIBRARIES

As we can all understand, reading can be challenging for some readers. The font may be difficult to read, or the lines to closely printed together to be able to clearly see the words. It doesn't mean that the joy of reading and losing yourself in a good story should be any less accessible to them.

Suffolk Libraries have printed a list of Dyslexia Friendly books which can all be borrowed from them. The list contains some fantastic authors too that I hope will ignite a real passion for storytelling.

https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/book-lists/dyslexia-friendly

New Books

Suffolk Libraries advertise the new books they have in their catalogue on their website.
https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/book-lists/new-childrens-books-for-april-2025
It is always exciting to be the first person to read these new books when you order them via their website.

Have a section not only with seasonal lists (see the link below) but also Best Books This Month. This is a great way to help keep your child excited about reading and looking forward to the new books they may be able to find.
https://www.booksfortopics.com/booklists/books-of-the-month/best-books-this-month-april-2025/
Interesting that Clem Fatale Has Been Betrayed has featured (see the link to this in the Dial Lane section of this newsletter).

Have you been to GET Free Books Ipswich in the town centre? It is exactly as it says – free books. You can take up to 3 a day. As it is run on donations, you never know what exciting stories you may uncover and what will appear next time you visit. It is volunteer led so to avoid disappointment, find their opening times on Facebook.

Reading Well for Children

Reading Well for children provides quality-assured information, stories and advice to support children's mental health and wellbeing. Books have been chosen and recommended by leading health professionals and co-produced with children and families.
The booklist is targeted at children in Key Stage 2 (aged 7-11), but includes titles aimed at a wide range of reading levels to support less confident readers, and to encourage children to read together with their siblings and carers.
The books are available to borrow from your local library. Selected titles are also available to borrow as e-books and audiobooks. Visit your local library website to find out how to join the library and access books electronically. Click here for the link to the book lists available:
https://readingagency.org.uk/get-reading/our-programmes-and-campaigns/reading-well/reading-well-for-children/

Suffolk libraries are an invaluable resource. Visiting the library with your own library card is a gateway to new worlds and knowledge. It is easy to borrow eBooks, audiobooks and physical copies enabling you to have a steady stream of new or recommended reads throughout the year, absolutely FREE!! Ideal for the long car journeys over the summer holidays.

Suffolk libraires have a collection of picture book recommendations, about books! These may inspire your little ones to visit the library to read more.
https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/book-categories/childrens

Kesgrave Library does offer a Sunday craft session which is a great opportunity to visit the local library and occasionally have a Lego Club too.

Join the Blue Peter Book Club — you don't need to sign up. Just visit their website, take the quiz to find out which of the current Book Club titles would suit you best and get reading! By sharing reviews of the books you have read, you can win a special Blue Peter Book badge.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/joinin/blue-peter-book-club

The Reader Teacher: https://www.thereaderteacher.com/

The Book Channel with Nikki Gamble
Book blasts – each month a new blast of books she recommends for children.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzhe7u7cSAM-gWTm_FMuUjQ