

The Power of Reading

There is a reading for pleasure crisis in this country. According to the latest research from the National Literacy Trust (NLT), fewer than 1 in 3 children aged 8 to 18 say they enjoy reading in their free time and fewer than 1 in 5 say they read something daily in their free time. These levels are at their lowest in the twenty years since the NLT began tracking reading enjoyment and daily reading habits.

This may not be surprising considering the other demands on children's time and attention. However, we as adults and educators have a responsibility to create an environment where we encourage the seeds of reading for pleasure to grow and hopefully blossom.

Reading for pleasure has numerous benefits including: supporting reading and wider literacy skills, wellbeing, empathy, confidence and aptitude for learning. Nurturing a love of reading in a child's free time is a tangible way to equip children with the reading skills they need to thrive in school and beyond.

The NTL suggested aligning reading with children's personal interests and media habits to encourage a love of reading. They listed the following key motivators for those who took part in the survey:

- **Books tied to films or TV series**
- **The freedom for children to choose what they read**
- **Hearing recommendations from friends, family or teachers**
- **Encouraging reading through a variety of formats (including digital formats)**



Recently, I was at a conference where an author spoke about her dismay that her son (the son of a published author) didn't enjoy reading. She reflected on why she got so much pleasure from reading and she concluded it was because of its ability to comfort. So she set about trying to establish this for her son - they would have 'Books & Biscuits' in bed on a Saturday morning, she took him to their local library and allowed him to choose any book that piqued his interest. A key message in the author's presentation was that bookworms are not born, they are grown.

Hopefully the summer holidays provide children and families a bit of time to get lost in some books, nurture a reading habit and rekindle that love for reading.



Buy books and support the school

Buy your books from [Love Reading 4 Kids](#) and nominate the school. Not only do you get 10% off but the school receives 25% of the cover price, which we can then spend on new books for the children.

Book Recommendations Infants

Fiction

Gina Karminski Saves the Wolf - Craig Barr-Green (author) Francis Martin (illustrator)



An empowering retelling of 'Little Red Riding Hood' which challenges traditional narratives. Gina Karminski is a confident, autistic character who wants to save the wolf. This book will empower every child to be the hero of their own story.

The Great Unicorn Rescue - Diane Ewen



From the award-winning and bestselling author, a unicorn-filled tale about friendship and fighting your fears. Will Louella be able to conquer her fear of the dark to rescue her friend?

Classics

Ug, Boy Genius of the Stone Age - Raymond Briggs



Ug is an inquisitive and intelligent child who is no longer willing to put up with his trousers made of stone. How uncomfortable! Using many of the excellent learner characteristics (especially being creative), Ug tries to solve his problem. An entertaining book which isn't necessarily historically accurate!

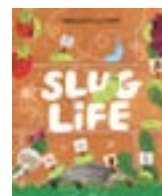
The Velveteen Rabbit - Margery Williams Bianco



A sweet and joyful book with bundles of old fashioned charm. I'm sure that most children have a favourite toy that they love and cherish so much that, to them, it becomes Real. First published over 100 years ago, this book still has universal and timeless morals for children and adults.

Non-fiction

Slug Life - Moesha Kellaway



A fiction/non-fiction hybrid - it is funny and informative. Combining bold and imaginative pictures with fascinating facts, this book will turn even the hardest gardener into a slug admirer. It's truly astounding that slugs have over 27,000 teeth! Look out for the second title in the series: 'Ant Life'.

Get Dressed! - Katy Canales (author) Erin Vanessa (illustrator)



'Get Dressed' is a historical guessing game for fashion lovers. A fascinating book describing the history of fashion from the Ancient Greeks to predicting what fashion will be like in the future via the Tang Dynasty and Roaring Twenties.

Book Recommendations Juniors

Fiction

King of Nothing - Nathanael Lessoro



This is a hilarious and heartwarming teen comedy appropriate for 11+ readers. Anton and his friends are the kings of Year 9 but things change when Matthew, the biggest loser in school, saves Anton's life. It is perfect for those children in Year 6 who enjoyed reading 'Ghost' by Jason Reynolds.

The Girl with Gills - Becca Rogers



A fantasy book awash with adventure. A determined heroine and a sinister villain clash to reveal river lore in a watery world of fantastical creatures and colossal challenges

Classics

The London Eye Mystery - Siobhan Dowd



How could you witness somebody boarding the London Eye and then when the doors reopen, they are gone? This is the mystery that siblings Ted and Kat have to solve because their cousin Salim seems to have vanished. A wonderfully thrilling book which also celebrates neurodiversity.

Skellig - David Almond



A truly beautiful and haunting book. It's a story of love, loss and hope that launched Almond's career as one of the best children's authors. Michael stumbles across a strange creature in the garage - it is a human? beast? bird? angel?

Non-fiction

Elements of the Day - Samantha Lewis (author) Hao Hao (illustrator)



The amazing stories and fascinating facts behind the elements that make every moment of the day possible. Why is breakfast cereal magnetic? Could you turn wee into gold? How does sand help us see? The answers have one thing in common - elements!

Spies - David Long (author) Terri Po (illustrator)



Discover the exciting and dangerous lives of spies and secret agents. Read about twenty-seven of the most courageous and daring spies including Britain's first female spy and a teacher turned saboteur.

Summer Reading Challenge



The Summer Reading Challenge is back and better than ever!

This free holiday activity for children is all about reading for fun, aiming to improve children's reading skills and confidence. The Challenge runs from 21 June and all children aged 4-11 are welcome to take part.

Children can read anything they like and collect free rewards for their reading. There are two ways in which you can take part:

Take part in person at your local library where you'll get a special sticker poster and other incentives. Librarians will also be on hand to help you find suitable books. Or you take part online here:

<https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk> where you will set a reading goal and log the books you've read.

This year's Challenge theme is Story Garden which is an enchanting take on nature and the great outdoors.

Enjoy!

Belleville Book Club

Members of Belleville Book Club met up this term to discuss the shortlist for the CLIPPA, which is the UK's leading award for published poetry for children. Past winners include Carol Ann Duffy, Jackie Kay, Michael Rosen and Valerie Bloom.

This year's full shortlist was 'Wise Up! Wise Down!' by John Agard and JonArno Lawson, 'Let Sleeping Cats Lie' by Brian Bilston, 'Big Red Dragon' by Jane Newberry, 'Colossal Words for Kids' by Colette Hiller (illustrated by Tor Freeman) and 'We Are Family' by Oliver Sykes (illustrated by Ian Morris). It was a wonderful collection of poetry with members of the book club enjoying the variety and creativity of the poems. 'Big Red Dragon' was noted for being an excellent introduction to poetry for Key Stage 1 children.

There was a sense of comfort that the teachers' favourite book, 'Colossal Words for Kids' won the CLIPPA award for 2025. The book defines 75 'colossal' words for children to use in their everyday life, from capacious to voracious, procrastinate to zest. The poems, combined with imaginative illustrations, offer a wonderful way for children to understand and appreciate these delightful words.

