

High Quality Texts at Northwick Park

‘Great books build the imagination...A child who is read to will have an inner kingdom of unicorns, talking spiders and a knife that cuts into other worlds. The mind is like a ‘tardis’; it may seem small but inside there are many mansions. Each great book develops the imagination and equips the reader with language.’ Pie Corbett

We believe that children should hear quality texts read to them throughout their school life; an enjoyment of books is a life skill and a vehicle through which many skills can be taught.

To this end, we developed a ‘spine’ of quality story books and poems that children will hear read to them throughout their time at Northwick Park Trust. Each book has been selected for interest, vocabulary development, pleasure and themes that may benefit our children. Pupils and staff were involved in choosing the books. Books chosen represent a range of diverse authors and characters to reflect our pupils’ experiences both within and beyond their own communities.

Nursery, Reception and KS 1

Children in Nursery, Reception and KS 1 have a special box of the same books in each room. These are called the ‘Special Smiley’ books. These books become familiar to the children on their journey through the start of their school careers and act as a secure ‘bridge’ between one year group and another. Teachers read these texts frequently to the children and children may choose to read them themselves (initially learning by repetition). These books were chosen by staff and children and we aim for these books to provide fond memories in years to come.

Our 'Special Smiley' books are:



- Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andeae
- Willy the Wimp by Anthony Browne
- Handa's Surprise by Eileen Brown
- Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
- The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson
- Aliens Love Underpants by Clare Freedman
- Not Now Bernard by David McKee
- Peace at Last by Jill Murphy
- Whatever Next by Jill Murphy
- We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen
- Where the Wild Things are by Maurice Sendak

They are easily recognised in classrooms by their smiley stickers and special boxes.

Key Stage 2 Reading Spine

For each year in Key Stage 2, pupils and staff (with the guidance of the subject leader) worked together to decide which books to purchase for each year. Each year group also has a poetry focus book.

Year 3

Book Title:	Author:	Why is it included?
Sheep Pig	Dick King Smith	Famous author, characters
The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe	C S Lewis	Literary heritage Fantasy, older vocabulary
Cat Tales	Linda Newberry	Difficult family relationships, emotional literacy
The Battle of Bubble and Squeak	Philippa Pearce	A story told from different viewpoints
Hansel and Gretel	Anthony Browne	Retelling of a traditional tale, quality picture book
The Abominables	Eva Ibbotson	Acceptance/differences
The Wolves the Walls	Neil Gaiman	Quality picture book (STAFF CHOICE)
Sam Wu is Not Afraid of Ghosts	Katie and Kevin Tsang	Diverse authors, characters Engaging text (First in a series so children can read further if they wish) Text and supporting illustrations
Anisha Accidental Detective	Serena Patel	Diverse authors, strong characters Engaging text, humour
Poetry		
Utterly Brilliant Poetry	Edited by Brian Patten	Anthology of popular poets' work

Year 4

Book Title:	Author:	Why is it included?
A Dangerous Game	Malorie Blackman	Diverse characters (child with a long-term illness – sick-cell anemia) Bullying, friendship, dyslexia, bravery
By Ash, Oak and Thorn	Melissa Harrison	Natural world, ecological awareness Vocabulary
The Children of Swallow Fell	Julia Green	Building resilience, overcoming adversity
The Boy Who Met a Whale	Nizrana Farook	Diverse author, characters Adventure set in Sri Lanka Thrilling, perilous
The Last Bear	Hannah Gold	Friendship, environmental issues Vocabulary especially description
The Infinite	Patience Agbabi	Diverse characters, author Funny, time-travelling adventure
The Creakers	Tom Fletcher	(STAFF CHOICE) Mystery, adventure, friendship
Poetry		
Quick Let's Get Out of Here!!	Michael Rosen	Poems about families (familiar context)
The World's Greatest Space Cadet	James Carter	Fun and engaging poetry

Year 5

Book Title:	Author:	Why is it included?
Varjak Paw	S. F. Said	Engaging text, characters, vocabulary
The Wolves of Willoughby Chase	Joan Aitken	Historical vocabulary
Wolf Brother	Michelle Paver	Quest – engaging settings, characters, set in the Stone Age, difficult relationships, resilience (The first in a series so children who enjoy it can read more).
Street Child	Berlie Doherty	Historical vocabulary Adverse childhood experiences, overcoming problems, building resilience
The Midnight Fox	Betsy Byars	Vocabulary Relationships between humans and the natural world
Tom's Midnight Garden	Philippa Pearce	Time-shifts Fantasy novel, suspense
FARThER	Graham Baker	Picture book
Stitch Head	Guy Bass	(STAFF CHOICE) Gothic theme, friendships, highly engaging text, humour (First in a series)
POETRY Collected Poems New and Collected Poems for Children	Ted Hughes Carol Ann Duffy	Supportive illustrations, poems on a range of topics Fun and engaging poetry

Year 6

Book Title:	Author:	Why is it included?
Beyond the Bright Sea	Lauren Wolk	Historical fiction, vocabulary Strong characters The theme of family
Once	Maurice Gleitzman	Diverse author Racism, The Holocaust A 'difficult'/challenging read (First book in a series so pupils can continue)
A Web of Air	Philip Reeve	Steampunk, fantasy Vocabulary
Orphans of the Tide	Struan Murray	(First in a series) Adventure, pace, vocabulary A multi-layered text that mixes genres e.g. diary entries within the texts, links to myths and legends
The Skylarks' War	Hilary McKay	Family and friendship against the backdrop of World War One.
When Secrets Set Sail	Sita Brahmachari	Diverse authors, characters Themes of immigration, being a refugee, family Supernatural themes and family relationships
Wonder	R.J. Palacio	Differently-abled characters (facial difference) Overcoming adversity, acceptance (STAFF CHOICE)
The Ickabog	J K Rowling	(STAFF CHOICE) Vocabulary A fairy tale for older children Strong descriptive passages, fun, escapism
Swimming Against the Tide	Jess Butterworth	Eco story (STAFF CHOICE)
POETRY The Works Collected Poems for Children Funky Chickens	Pie Corbett Charles Causley Benjamin Zephaniah	A range of poetry structures and topics Classic poetry and higher level vocabulary Diverse author

