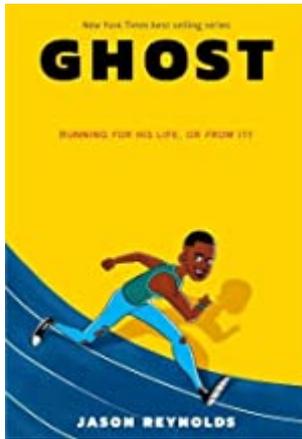


Earlier today, (22nd January), **EmpathyLab** announced the 50 books (33 for primary, 17 for secondary) that would make up the **2020 Read for Empathy** collection. As a teacher at Moorlands Primary Academy in Norfolk and a huge advocate of the importance of Reading for Pleasure in schools, I am privileged to have been a judge on the selection panel for the past three years and feel that the titles selected for the list are some of the best examples of the amazing children's books currently being published.



Being part of the team involved in putting together the primary list meant a huge amount of reading over the summer of 2019, but it never felt like a chore because the overall standard of books submitted was so high. As judges, we are all delighted at the quality and diversity of this year's collection and are confident that each book will help support the development of children's empathy. There is a wonderful variety, with a broad range of emotions, situations and experiences being explored. The fact that 30% of the authors, poets and illustrators involved in creating the books are people of colour is significant, as recent studies have shown that they are still significantly underrepresented in children's publishing. It's also pleasing that 40% of the titles feature characters of colour and will allow more children to see themselves represented in the literature they read.



I look forward to sharing and using many of the books from the primary list over the forthcoming months to help the students at Moorlands become more empathic citizens, which is one of our main goals as a school. Some personal favourites from the collection include **Ghost** by Jason Reynolds, **Can You See Me?** by Libby Scott and Rebecca Westcott and **Race to The Frozen North** by Catherine Johnson, but I would have no hesitation in using or recommending any of the others. Each book has the potential to change a child's outlook on the world, and it's exciting to know that such a fantastic collection of literature will be

having a positive impact in classrooms across the country.

I'm eagerly awaiting the chance to find out about all the creative ways that they'll be used in the run-up to the fourth **National Empathy Day**, which takes place on **Tuesday 9th June 2020**.

To learn more about the pioneering work that EmpathyLab are doing, please visit their website, www.empathylab.uk, and follow **#ReadForEmpathy** on Twitter.



Jon Biddle