



The Magic of Children's Literature

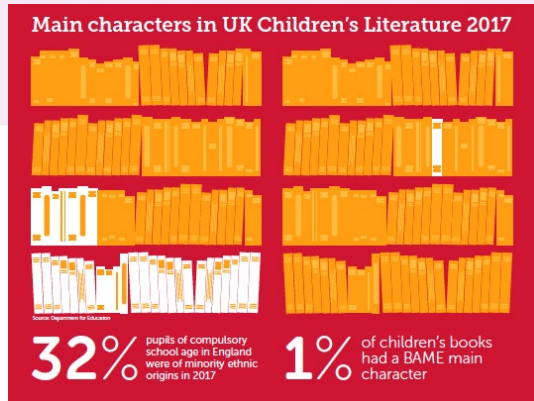
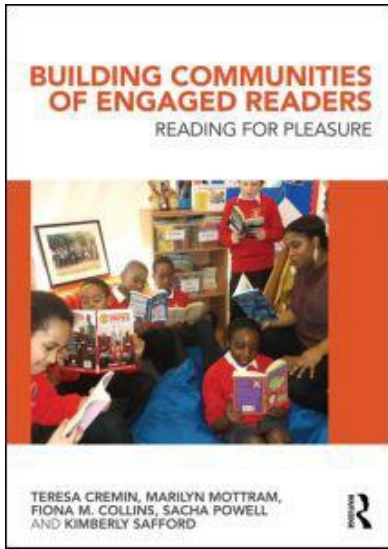
LAURA WATSON AND OLIVIA DYER

Context

- We are final year trainee teachers from the University of Greenwich, located in Avery Hill, New Eltham, London.
- As trainee teachers, we want to ensure we have plenty of knowledge about children's literature, different authors from a range of backgrounds and perspectives, books on a variety of topics that we can use during our future practice.
- We are about to begin our final school experience placements and while on our placement we have tasked ourselves with being far more inclusive in the books we choose and make greater use of children's literature in the classroom.



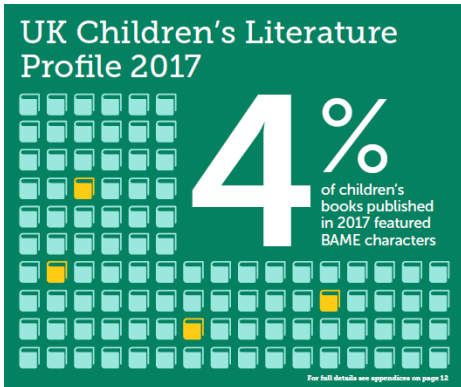
OU Research inspiration and rationale



A study by Cremin et al (2008) revealed huge gaps in teachers knowledge around children's literature. Out of 1200 primary school teachers less than half could name more than 6 authors and only 10% could name more than 6 poets. It also highlighted that the authors being used in primary schools today are not representative of today's society for example Roald Dahl, while he is an incredibly successful author and story teller, he is a middle class white man.

We want our future students to be able to feel connected to the books they read and feel represented within them, through exploring books that explore a range of topics, cultures, heritages and experiences. The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) found that in 2017 only 4% of children's books contained BAME characters, while 32% of students were from BAME backgrounds.

This has motivated us to expand our knowledge of a diverse range of children's literature to introduce and make a regular part of a future classroom teaching.



OU Research inspiration and rationale



Reading has a significant impact on academic success and can even limit the effects of social and economic differences (Topping *et al.*, 2003).

Despite this there has been a decline in reading in the last century, in 2002 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported just 30% of school pupils read for pleasure.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to encourage a greater pleasure of reading for their students. However in today's society literature comes in a variety of forms. This includes; e-books, magazines, comics, drama scripts and many more.

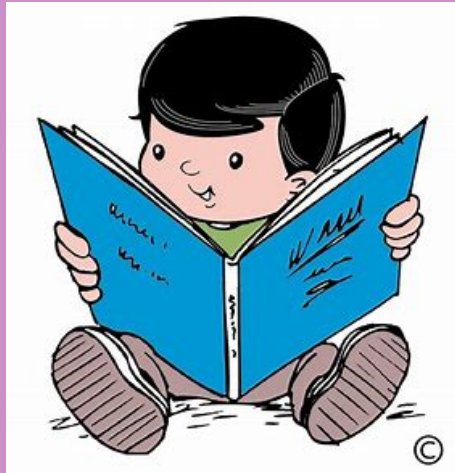


You can find many free ebooks for primary school students on Oxford Owl

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/find-a-book/library-page/>



Aims



- We aim to improve our knowledge of children's literature to become successful reading teachers.
- We aim to promote a love of reading among the children we teach, by sharing our own love of reading and children's literature.
- We aim to change the narrative proposed by Cremin *et al.* (2014), in their research findings on teachers as readers. The research found that teachers had limited knowledge of children's literature, with only 46% of teachers being able to name six children's authors.

Outline

- By studying a range of different texts and authors, we have been able to expand our knowledge of children's literature.
- We have explored children's literature and the curriculum, diversity within children's literature, poetry, the importance of reading aloud and storytelling, picture books and the relevance of children's literature on the refugee crisis.
- When studying poetry, we interacted with a guest speaker from the Centre of Literacy for Primary Education (CLPE). When studying children's literature and the refugee crisis, we met with a speaker from amnesty international.



Children's literature survey

- Before completing beginning our journey into achieving greater knowledge of children's literature we completed a survey to test our awareness of children's authors and poets.
- To begin we could only name 4 authors, one picture book author and no poets. We had a lot to improve in our knowledge of children's literature
- But now....

5. List 6 'good' children's book authors

Shaun Tan	Dr. Seuss
Rosaid Dahl	
J. K. Rowling	

6. List 6 good children's picture book authors/illustrators

Quentin Blake	

7. List 6 good children's poets

Our survey of our current knowledge after completing our children's literature course

We are now able to name 6 children's book authors and 6 good children's book illustrators.

We have improved from being unable to name any good children's poets to naming 4. However, we are still striving to improve our knowledge of children's poetry.

5. List 6 'good' children's book authors

Michael Murpurgo	J.K. Rowling
Michael Rosen	Jacqueline Wilson
Roald Dahl	Shaun Tan

6. List 6 good children's picture book authors/illustrators

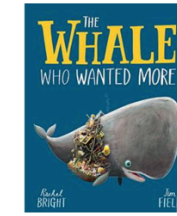
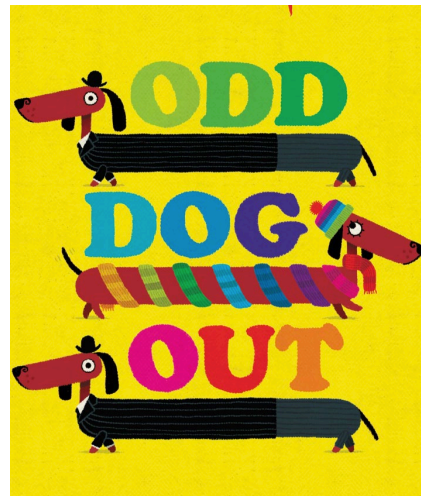
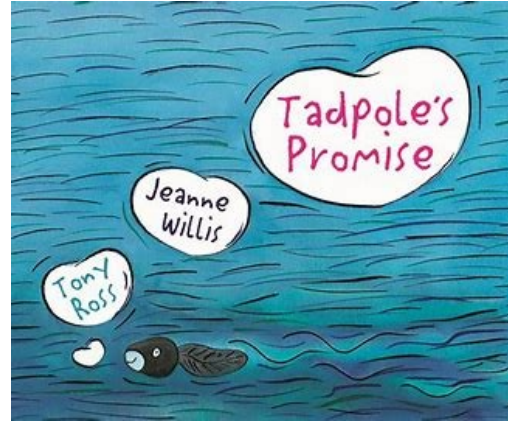
Shaun Tan	Pam Smy
Quentin Blake	Mick Inkpen
Anthony Browne	Francesca Sanna

7. List 6 good children's poets

Benjamin Zephaniah	Alexandra Penfold
Michael Rosen	
Dr. Seuss	

Some of the key texts we have studied...

To also support our knowledge of children's authors we have begun a book log of books we have come across through our children literature seminars and on our school experiences we have used. We include a description of the books, making notes of any key themes and what years they are most suitable for.

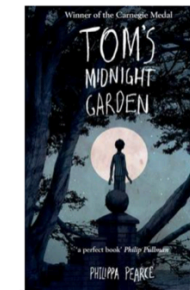


Humphrey the whale travels the sea searching for treasures however he can never seem to be satisfied. Explores the importance of friendship.



Over the shimmering ocean, up the huge, high mountain, through the deep, dark forest... WE'RE GOING TO FIND THE MONSTER!

Join two intrepid adventurers as their imaginations transform their house into a wild wonderland - and their big brother becomes a mighty monster. A joy to read-aloud with its cumulative refrain, and full of funny, relatable characters, this is a contemporary celebration of creativity, fantasy and family.



9 - 12 YEARS

When Tom is sent to stay at his aunt and uncle's house for the summer, he resigns himself to endless weeks of boredom. As he lies awake in his bed he hears the grandfather clock downstairs strike...eleven...twelve...thirteen...Thirteen! Tom races down the stairs and out the back door, into a garden everyone told him wasn't there. In this enchanted thirteenth hour, the garden comes alive - but Tom is never sure whether the children he meets there are real or ghosts...



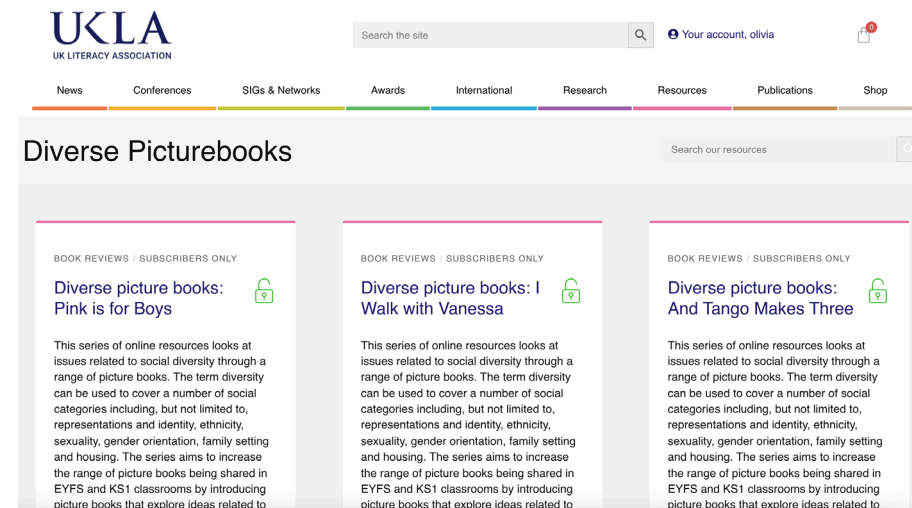
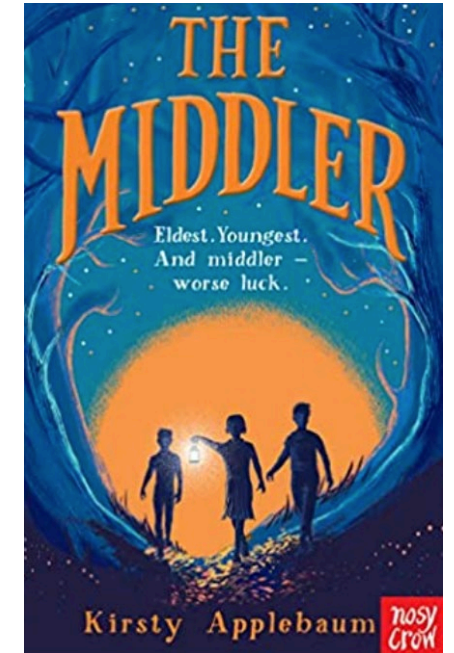
UKLA

- To further support our knowledge of children's literature we became members of the UK Literacy Association (UKLA).
- We explored a range of resources including diverse picture books
- They also provide many great examples of children's literature you can use in primary school from their UKLA annual awards, such as *The Middler* by Kirsty Applebaum.



Great Writers and Good Reads

If you'd like some inspiration for new books to read, come and take a peek at the longlists, shortlists and winners of the UKLA book Awards or read some book reviews. We also have a series of author studies you may be interested in.



What we are reading...

To further support our knowledge of children's books and to gain a better understanding of the experience children have when reading a book, we have read a children's book of our choice.

We also plan to swap books and share our ideas and thoughts for use in our future practice.



Laura's book



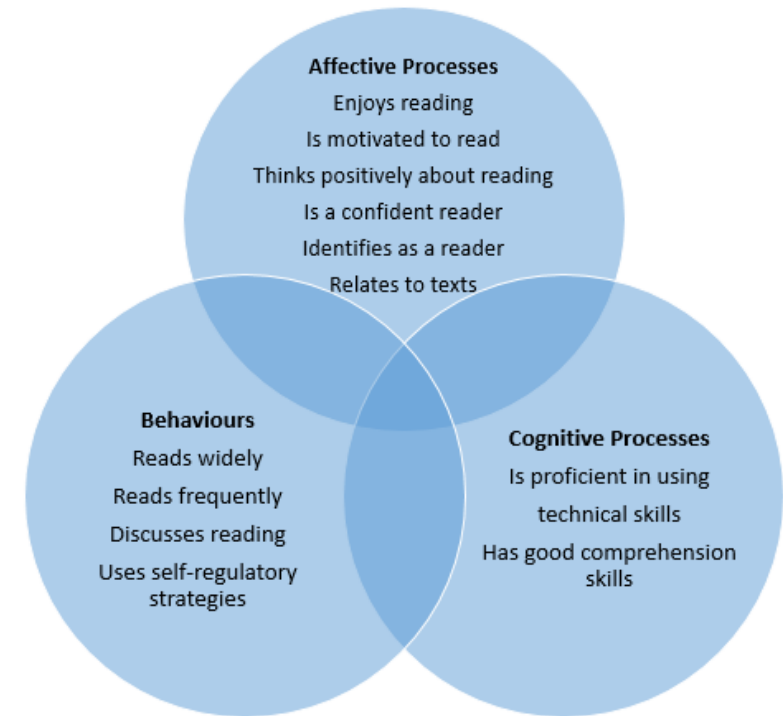
Olivia's book

Impact

The work we have done has had a significant impact on our reading behaviours. For example, we have read widely and had many discussions surrounding the impact of children's literature. We will take these reading behaviours into our classrooms, to promote reading for pleasure among the pupils we teach and widen the literature found in our classrooms.

Through text mapping children's literature, we have improved our comprehension skills. For example, by analysing vocabulary and language features within children's literature. This means that we can pass on these cognitive reading processes to the readers in our classrooms.

Reading...



Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

- The Teachers as Readers research has impacted us immensely, as our newfound knowledge of children's literature will help us promote reading for pleasure among all the pupils that we teach.
- Our knowledge of diversity within children's literature means we can engage all pupils within our class, as children resonate with books that they feel they can relate to. For example, if we had a refugee child in our class, reading 'The Journey' by Francesca Sanna may allow the child to feel that their story has been heard and understood.

