

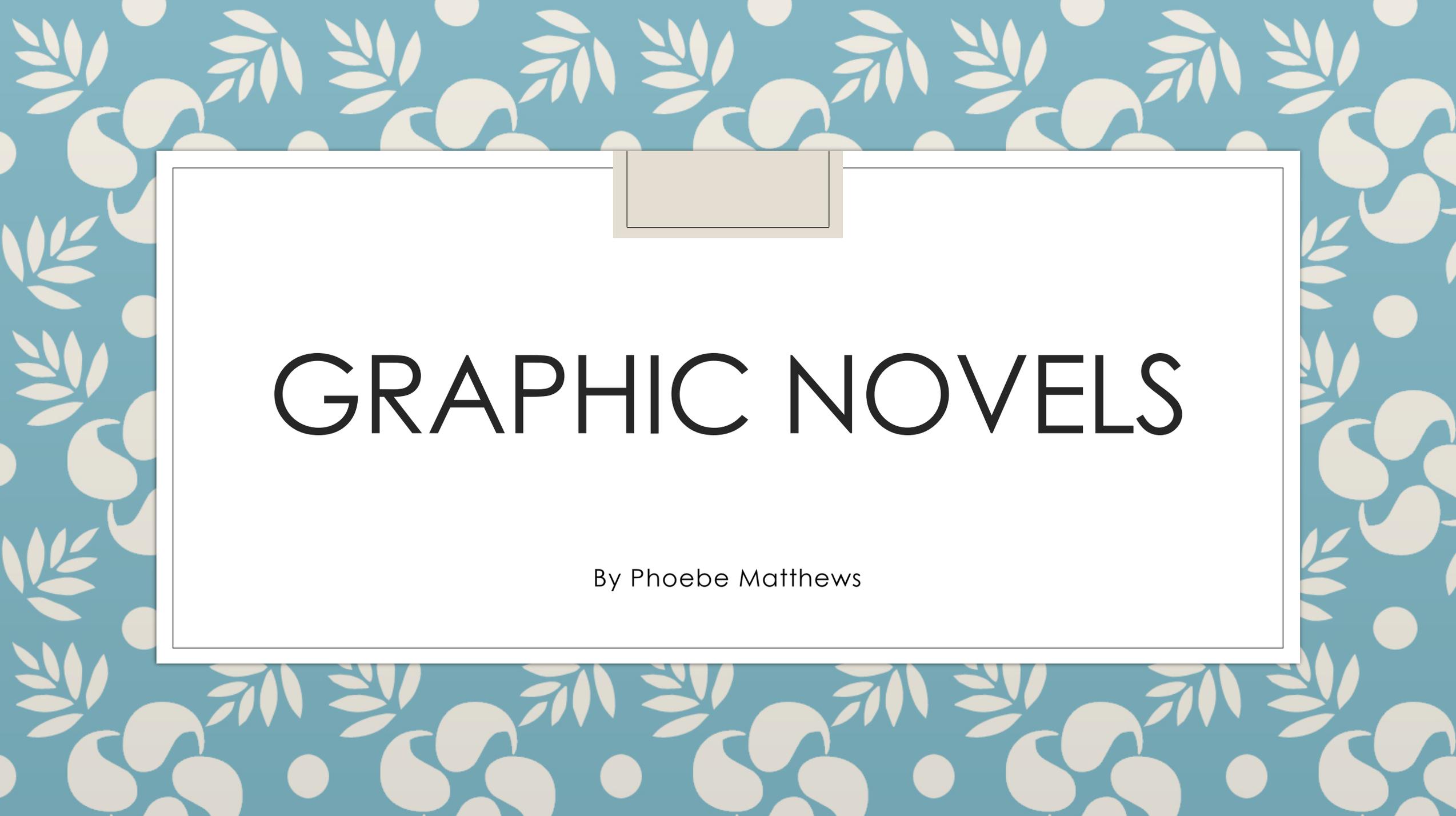
# Building confidence with children's literature as student teachers.

BY PHOEBE MATTHEWS, LAUREN DONACHIE & MEGAN  
DOWIE, WITH JENNIFER FARRAR, UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

- Phoebe, Megan and Lauren joined the University of Glasgow's first **Student Teachers' Reading Group (STRG)** in September 2021.
- The following slides showcase **their professional learning as STRG members** and highlight their views of the benefits of joining such a learning community.
- All three students were **motivated** by the Open University Teachers as Readers (TaRs) finding #1, to develop a:
  - **Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts** (Cremin et al., 2014)

# *Overview of the projects*

- **Phoebe:** Developed knowledge of graphic novels (and rediscovered a love for public libraries)
- **Lauren:** Created a 'Book of Books' by reading UKLA book award shortlisted entries. (The Book of Books idea came from another EoP on the RfP website).
- **Megan:** Created a 'Book of Books' for a placement class that included a book recommendation per pupil, based on their likes and dislikes.



# GRAPHIC NOVELS

By Phoebe Matthews

# Graphic Novels

- **The aims of my Example of Practice (EoP)**

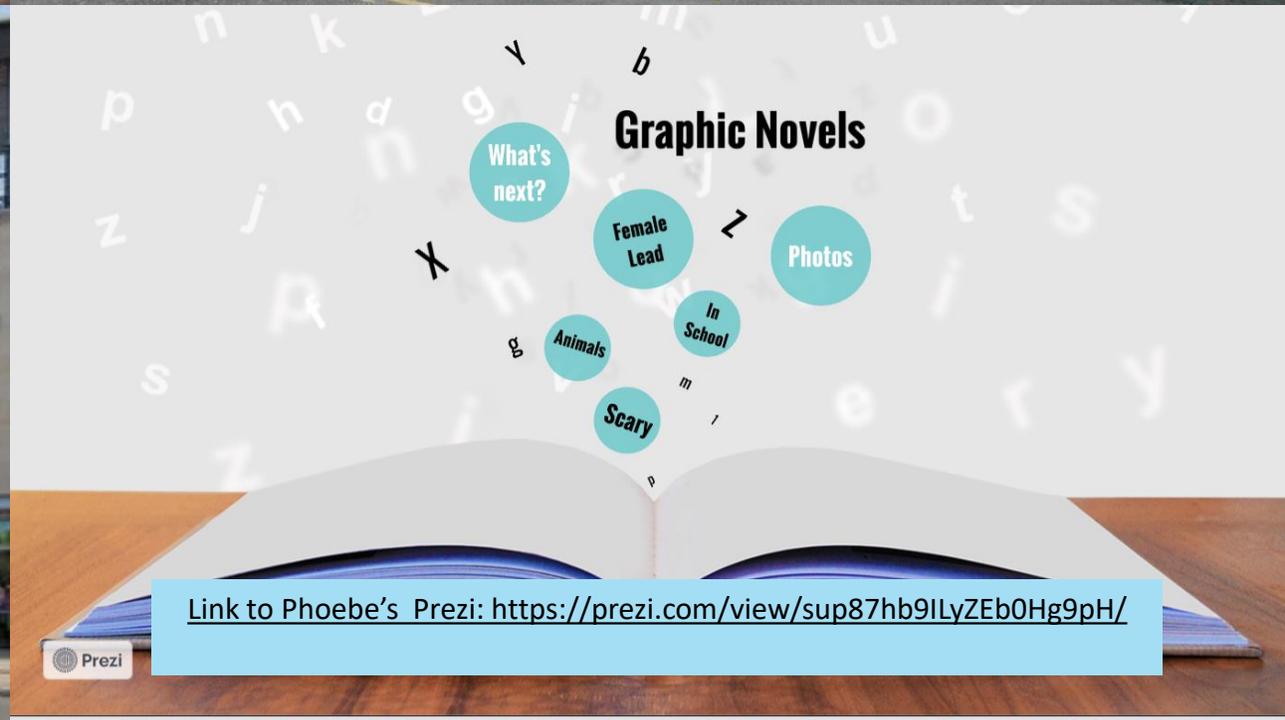
I decided to focus on graphic novels for my project. This was because in my placement school last year the children in my class were very interested in graphic novels, and my knowledge was very limited. I felt that I could not engage with them about this topic. The aim of this project was to expand my knowledge of a genre that I was unfamiliar with. This means that in the future if my class are interested in graphic novels I can share their enthusiasm and passion. Another aim was that I'd be able to recommend graphic novels to my class based on things they are interested in. Lastly, if my class in the future are not interested in this genre then I will hopefully be able to introduce them to graphic novels and discover new things.

- **An outline of what you did.**

I decided to read as many children's graphic novels as possible by going to different libraries in Glasgow. I signed up for a library card and was able to peruse their children's section and they even had a specific graphic novels section. I found this extremely helpful as I could not find many at the University Library and buying them wasn't feasible. I made an overview of the books I read using Prezi: <https://prezi.com/view/sup87hb9ILyZEb0Hg9pH/>

- **Initial thoughts/ reflections.**

My initial thoughts were that the library is such a fantastic resource! I had almost forgotten they existed! I thought that it would be a fantastic way to find books to read to your class without having to buy them.



Link to Phoebe's Prezi: <https://prezi.com/view/sup87hb9lLyZEb0Hg9pH/>

# Phoebe: Reflections and next steps

- On reflection, when making my example of practice, I realised that I tend to steer towards female leads when picking graphic novels to read. In future I will try my best to make a conscious effort to pick books in a different style. Perhaps I need to look more into graphic novels in the fantasy genre such as Avatar and pick more diverse and inclusive books. However, I did notice a shortage of these in the library – not the library's fault just a reflection of the current climate surrounding minority groups' representation in literature.
- In order to expand my future practice, I will move on from graphic novels and expand my knowledge of a different genre. I would love to expand my knowledge in an area such as poetry or non-fiction.
- This project has made me feel much more confident in recommending graphic novels and has given me the ability to talk about graphic novels with my learners and share their passion. Through the medium of graphic novels, I hope I can inspire my learners to have the confidence to pick up a book and not feel daunted or overwhelmed.

# Books of Books

Teachers' knowledge of children's  
literature and other texts

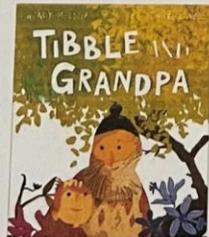
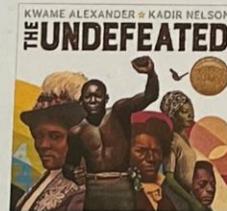
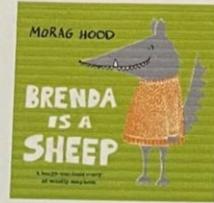
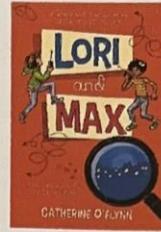
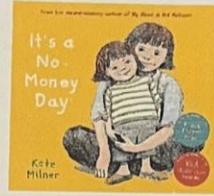
Lauren Donachie



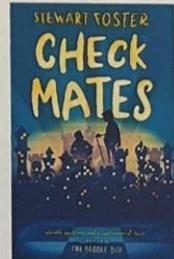
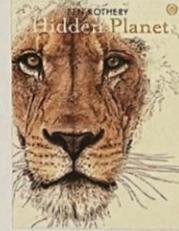
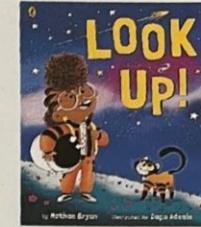
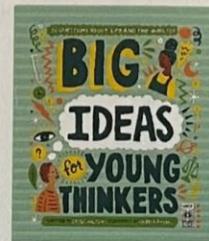
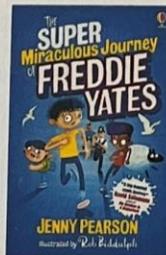
# Aims:

- To enhance my repertoire of children's literature
- To improve my knowledge of contemporary authors and texts
- To be able to recommend suitable and interesting books to individual children
- To be able to make recommendations based on what children have already read and enjoyed





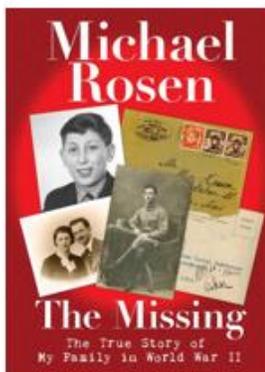
# Miss Donachie's Book of Books



## Outline:

- Over the last few months, I have read through the 2021 UKLA Book Award shortlisted books
- I created an information page for each book including suggestions for similar books to read next
- These were used to produce a physical catalogue of books which I will continue to add to as I further explore children's literature

# Book of books pages



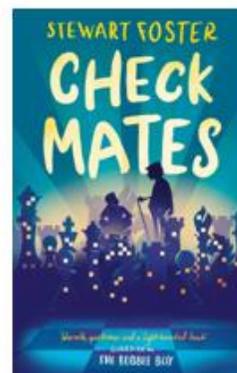
**Title:** The Missing: The True Story of My Family in World War II

**Author:** Michael Rosen

**Suitable age:** 10+

When Michael was growing up, stories often hung in the air about his great-uncles: one was a clock-mender and the other a dentist. *They were there before the war*, his dad would say, *and weren't after*. Over many years, Michael tried to find out exactly what happened: he interviewed family members, scoured the internet, pored over books and travelled to America and France. The story he uncovered was one of terrible persecution – and it has inspired his poetry for years since. Here, poems old and new are balanced against an immensely readable narrative; both an extraordinary account and a powerful tool for talking to children about the Holocaust.

**If you loved this, you might like these...**



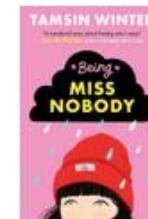
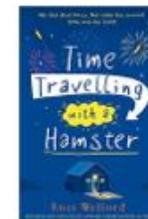
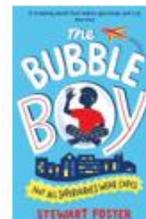
**Title:** Check Mates

**Author:** Stewart Foster

**Suitable age:** 9+

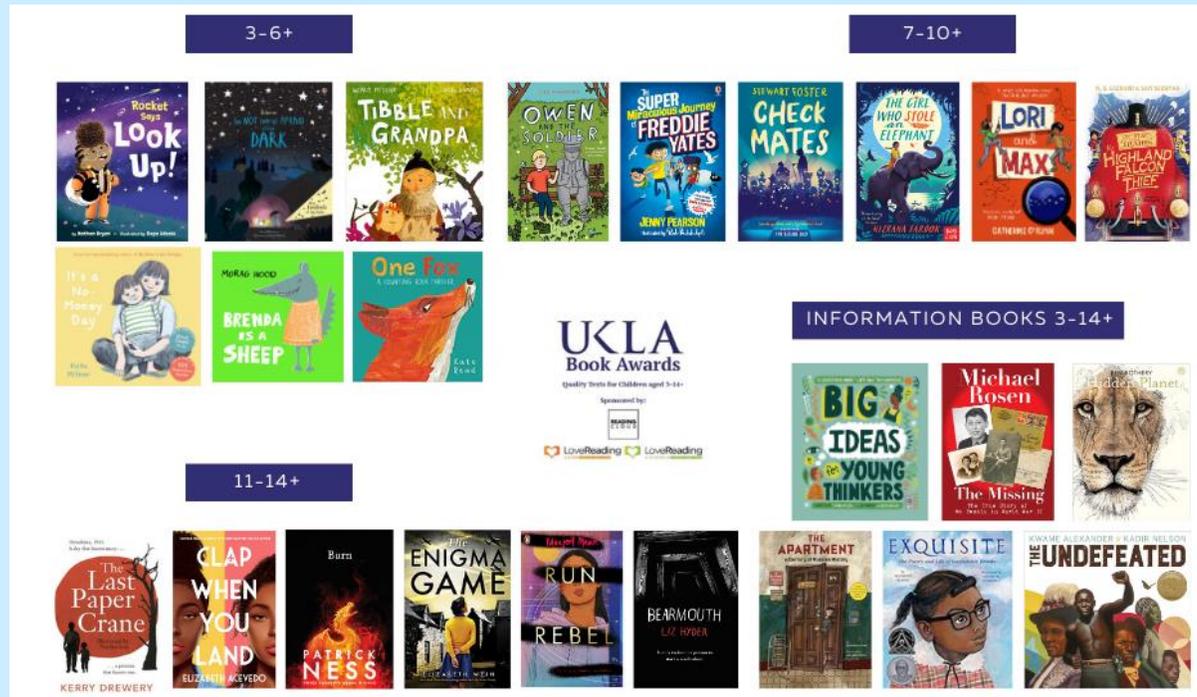
Felix is struggling at school. His ADHD makes it hard for him to concentrate and his grades are slipping. Everyone keeps telling him to try harder, but no one seems to understand just how hard he finds it. When Mum suggests Felix spends time with his grandfather, Felix can't think of anything worse. Granddad hasn't been the same since Grandma died. Plus he's always trying to teach Felix *boring* chess. But sometimes the best lessons come in the most unexpected of places, and Granddad soon shows Felix that there's everything to play for.

**If you loved this, you might like these...**



### 3-6+

- Look Up! By Nathan Bryon
- I'm Not (Very) Afraid of the Dark by Daniel Egneus
- Tibble and Grandpa by Wendy Meddour
- It's a No Money Day by Kate Milner
- Brenda is a Sheep by Morag Head
- One Fox: A Counting Thriller by Kate Read



### 7-10+

- Owen and the Soldier by Lisa Thompson
- The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates by Jenny Pearson
- Check Mates by Stewart Foster
- The Girl Who Stole an Elephant by Nizrana Farook
- Lori and Max by Catherine O'Flynn
- The Highland Falcon Thied by M.G. Leonard and Sam Sedgeman

### Information Books

- Big Ideas for Young Thinkers by Jamia Wilson
- The Missing: The True Story of My Family in World War II by Michael Rosen
- Hidden Planet by Ben Rothery
- The Apartment: A Century of Russian History by Alexandra Litvina
- Exquisite: The Poerty and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks by Suzanne Slade
- The Undeafated by Kwame Alexander

### 11-14+

- The Last Paper Crane by Kerry Drewery
- Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo
- Burn by Patrick Ness
- The Enigma Game by Elizabeth Wein
- Run Rebel by Manjeet Mann
- Bearmouth by Liz Hyder

### **Lauren: Impact:**

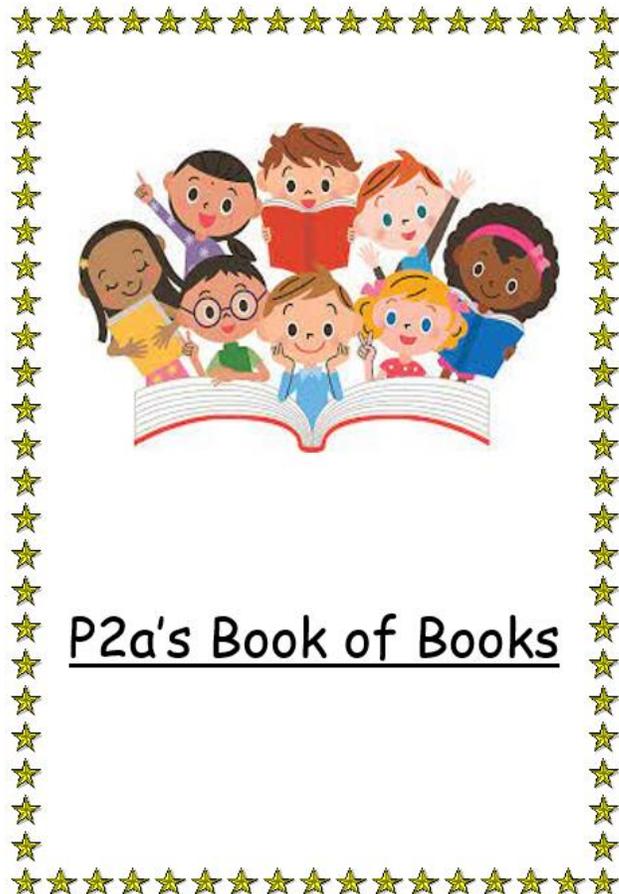
- I have exposed myself to a range of books
- I have enriched my knowledge of more recent texts and authors
- I have made connections between the shortlisted books and other literature
- I have created a valuable resource that can be used in my future classroom



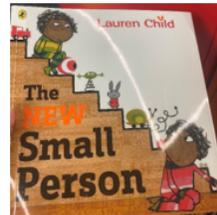
### **Lauren: Reflections/next steps:**

- Having improved my repertoire of children's literature, I hope to be able to make recommendations and encourage pupils to engage in reading for pleasure, particularly those who are reluctant readers
- I would like to explore and read through lists of books from other book awards
- I plan to read more non-fiction and poetry books
- I will further explore the concept of RfP and its place in the classroom – participating in this project has inspired me to choose RfP as my dissertation topic
- I plan to continue adding books to my Book of Books and involve my class in adding books that they have read

# Primary 2a's Book of Books by Megan Dowie



## The New Small Person



What is this book about?

- A new baby sibling.
- Family
- Love

How does this book make you feel?

Use a sticker(s) to describe how this book made you feel.

## Reviews

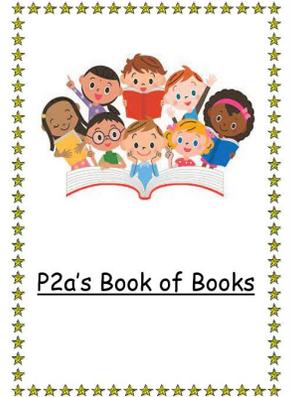
What would you rate this book out of 5? What did you like or dislike about the book? Is there a classmate (or classmates) who you think would enjoy this book?

## Aims of my Example of Practice

- To develop my knowledge of children's literature and other texts.
- To be able to recommend books for each student in my primary 2 placement class.

## Outline of what I did

- Used my knowledge of the students to create a 'book of books' which the students could read to help them select a book; and fill out to help their peers select a book.
- Although I chose a specific book recommendation for each student, these books (and 'book of books') would be available in the classroom for all to read.
- I went to my local library, the university library and used online award winning booklists (such as those from the Scottish Book Trust) to select the books.



### Example



<p><u>The New Small Person</u></p>  <p>What is this book about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A new baby sibling.</li><li>• Family</li><li>• Love</li></ul> <p>How does this book make you feel?</p> <p>Use a sticker(s) to describe how this book made you feel.</p>	<p><u>Reviews</u></p> <p>What would you rate this book out of 5? What did you like or dislike about the book? Is there a classmate (or classmates) who you think would enjoy this book?</p>
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The 'book of books' contains all different types of texts (such as non-fiction books, fiction books, poetry and comic books). Each page is based on a different book and has a section for:

- What is this book about?
- How does this book make you feel?
- Reviews

## Impact on me as a teacher



- I signed up to this group with the aims of developing my knowledge on children's literature and thus, being able to recommend books to my primary 2 placement class. On reflection, I think I have achieved both aims as I have read many children's books over the past seven months and have, consequently, improved my knowledge of children's literature and children's authors.
- Moreover, through creating my 'book of books', I would confidently be able to recommend many books specific to each child in my primary 2 placement class.
- At first, I wanted to make the reading corner in my primary 2 placement class more appealing and attractive. However, linking to Cremin (2019), I realised that teachers could create the most innovative and attractive reading corner in their classroom; however, this alone is not enough to tempt children to become more proficient readers for pleasure.

→ This is because, teachers must regularly update their knowledge of children's literature to become a "Reading teacher" – a teacher who reads and a reader who teaches (Cremin et al., 2009:4) in order to engage children through (for example) setting a good reading example and providing meaningful recommendations.

## Impact on the class



Although I am no longer on placement, I wanted to create 'P2a's book of books' in hope that (if I were still on placement) I would have been able to encourage more of the children to read for pleasure through providing them with meaningful and (hopefully) engaging recommendations, specific to them.

## Megan: Reflections...

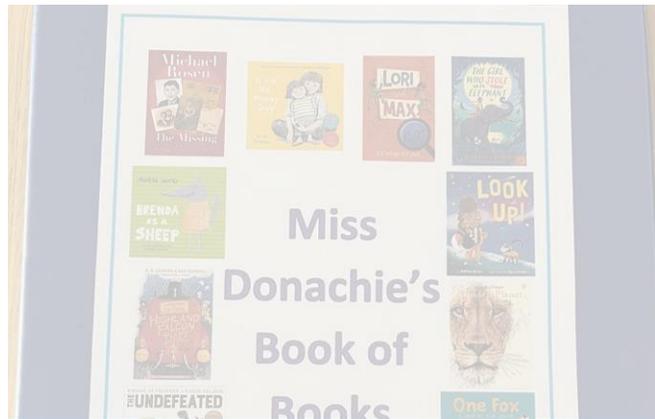


- I am extremely glad that I took part in this reading project as I have learned lots about children's literature. I have learned about the importance of all types of texts (and the importance of incorporating these into your class library) and now feel confident in recommending books in the lower primary school (specifically, to my previous primary 2 placement class).
- In my future practice, I am going to make every effort to create an engaging reading corner with reading for pleasure promoted throughout my classroom - so that all children will (hopefully) develop a love of reading from a young age, in their own classroom, through being provided with tailored recommendations from their class teacher (and peers).

## ...and next steps



- Create a 'book of books' for each primary level (and update them regularly) so that I can improve my knowledge on children's literature for all ages/stages.
- With my future classes, create the book corner/library station together so that it reflects their likes, dislikes and preferences. For example, grouping books in relation to emotions that they (may) make you feel rather than ordering them alphabetically - if my students would prefer this.
- With my future classes, aim to create a classroom environment that encourages regular book talk and, overall, promotes reading for pleasure. This will start with me actively aiming to demonstrate that I am a 'Reading Teacher' – a teacher who reads and a reader who teaches (Cremin et al., 2009).



### Outline:

- Over the last few months, I have read through the 2021 UKLA Book Award shortlisted books
- I created an information page for each book including suggestions for similar books to read next

**Thank you to all the students for their participation and hard work and to the OU/UKLA RfP team for all their help and support.**

