

## Diversity – suggested topic books / novels for KS1 and KS2 primary aged children

Diversity, inclusion, and tolerance are topics where books can prove to be an invaluable aid in helping to teach children about different cultures and experiences and understanding a character's point of view. In primary schools, children need to learn about all aspects of diversity and feel empowered to discuss what makes all of us unique, valued and respected in terms of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, education, disability, identity, nationality, religion, sexuality, neurodiversity, social background, and beliefs. This list of books on the topic of diversity aims to provide KS2 (and to some extent KS1) teachers with suitable texts to help generate cross-curricular discussion, empathise with diverse characters, and provide a stimulus for written work. All of these books are available in our libraries across school. They have been chosen using a range of the methods below:

- A mixture of classical and contemporary authors
- The novels selected are from a range of fiction genres e.g., action, drama, comedy, fantasy, horror
- A range of authors taken from suggested reading schemes/websites/spines e.g. Pie Corbett (Educational author)
- Recommendations from local schools and the University of Worcester
- Suggestions taken from staff *and* pupils at Newfield Park Primary Academy



### The Island

*Armin Greder*

A visually powerful picture story about a shipwrecked man who is at first treated with suspicion and fear, and then subjected to blame, prejudice, and hate. The clever progression and downward spiral of the village society's behaviour are beautifully choreographed through the artwork and this is an ideal text to both discuss with 9-11-year-olds in KS2 and use as the basis for modelled writing. A truly thought-provoking and moving book.

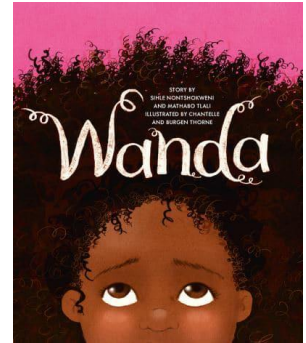




## Wanda

*Sihle Nontshokweni & Mathabo Tlali*

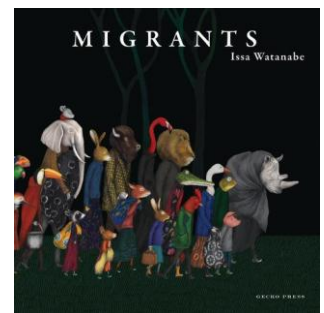
With the help of her grandmother Makhulu, young Wanda learns to embrace and love her hair, despite what other people say about it in this vibrant and moving picture book story for EYFS and KS1 children. Tackling difficult subject matter with sensitivity, such as anti-bullying, self-confidence and heritage, this is a valuable text to read and discuss in PSHE lessons.



## Migrants

*Issa Watanabe*

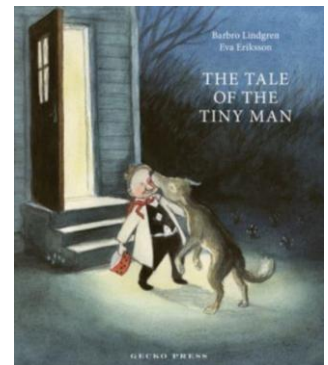
A breath-taking wordless picture book that depicts a group of migrants on a dangerous journey. The animal characters are illustrated in a stark, startling, and colourful – almost camera obscura style. The Vermeer-like level of detail is such that you can pore over each image, each time picking out an unrealised nuance or secret message – imagining what it would be like in their position. This book is perfect for discussion in Years 5 and 6.



## The Tale of the Tiny Man

*Barbro Lindgren*

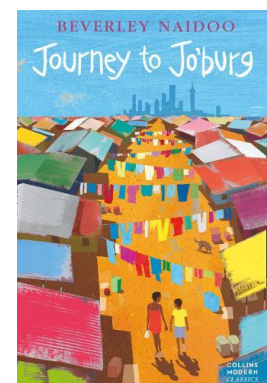
Translated from a classic Swedish folk tale, this charming hardback picture book follows the life of a tiny man who is lonely and in search of a new friend. Thought-provoking and evocative with atmospheric illustrations, this is a memorable picture book story of friendship, understanding, tolerance and eventually acceptance that will resonate with younger readers.



## Journey to Jo'Burg

*Beverley Naidoo*

A compelling story about the power of perseverance and humanity in the face of adversity and racism. Set in apartheid-era South Africa, 13-year-old Naledi runs away to find her mother in Johannesburg, where she works in a white-only area as a maid. A modern classic, this is a moving book readers on dark-red or black book-bands. A brilliant, thought-provoking and mature read.

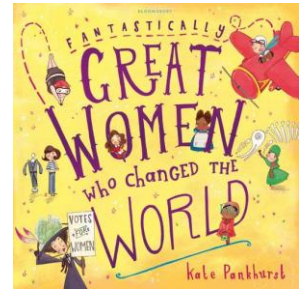




## Fantastically Great Women Who Changed The World

*Kate Pankhurst*

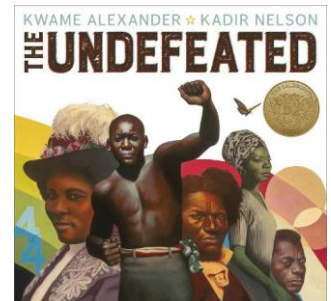
Featuring a diverse and inspiring cast of women who made the world a better place, including the civil rights advances of Rosa Parks, the adventures of Mary Seacole, the exploration of Amelia Earhart, the enduring legacy of Anne Frank and the artistic perception of Frida Kahlo. This brightly illustrated is suitable for any children in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) who want to find out more!



## The Undeclared

*Kwame Alexander*

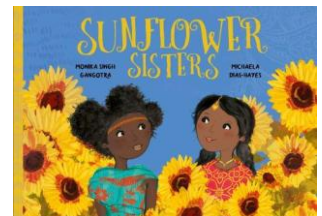
A powerful illustrated black history told through snapshot biographies of key figures and inspirational poetry by leading BAME writer Kwame Alexander; it is used extensively at Secondary Schools but is also appropriate for Years 5 and 6. Covering slavery, politics, segregation, and recent events in America, this accessible and unique picture book is a modern classic and full of interesting *and* inspiring stories.



## Sunflower Sisters

*Monika Singh Gangotra and Michael Dias-Hayes*

Despite comments from their conservative Aunt, Amrita and Kiki are empowered to wear their fabulous outfits to the family weddings. With vivid illustrations and lyrical text, this uplifting story provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to help children discuss how to deal with negative comments and how to celebrate heritage, family and inner strength.



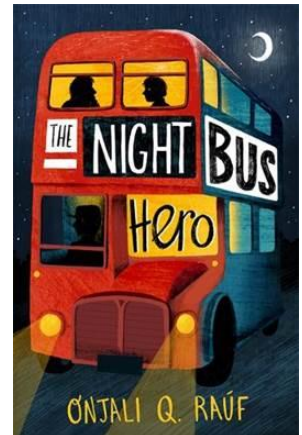




## The Night Bus Hero

*Onjali Q. Raúf*

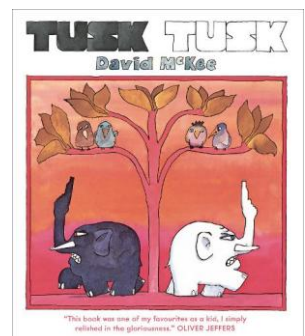
A brilliantly written and totally engrossing story that will help children understand and think deeply about the real human beings whose lives are impacted by homelessness - and also more generally about the power of kindness, friendship, empathy and how everyone has the potential to change for the better. Onjali Q Rauf has written a gripping, realistic, and relatable tale with a strong moral at its heart, perfect for children aged seven and up. Fairly challenging but good for confident Year 4 readers!



## Tusk Tusk

*David McKee*

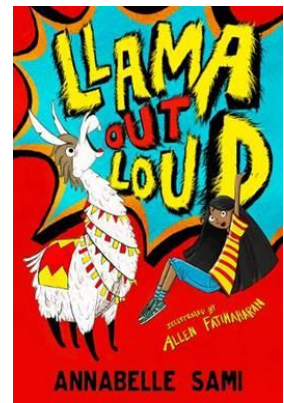
An outstanding picture book, suitable for children in KS1 and further discussion with those in KS2 that depicts two races of warring elephants. This is an invaluable book to help teach children about diversity, reconciliation, and the effects of history. There's also a politically realistic twist at the end. A brilliant book.



## Llama Out Loud

*Annabelle Sami*

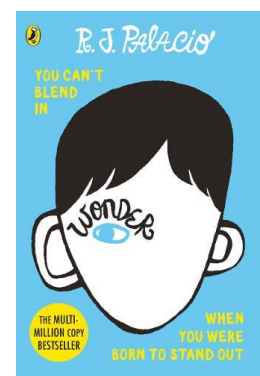
The first of a hilarious and heart-warming new series featuring a mute ten year old girl and her toy llama who does enough talking for both of them, Sami's story is constructed with flawless comic timing! This is a unique novel, with a heroine whose likeable personality comes across although she does not speak a word for most of the book. It would suit readers who like a laugh-out-loud story with a big heart and a spark of magic.



## Wonder

*RJ Palacio*

10-year-old Auggie just wants to be treated like any other child – but after years of home education, he isn't looking forward to going to a school – especially since he fears being targeted due to his facial disfigurement. At times painfully frank, this is a great book to read with year five and six classes to provoke discussion and encourage empathy. Wonder is one of our class-texts at Newfield Park in Year 5.

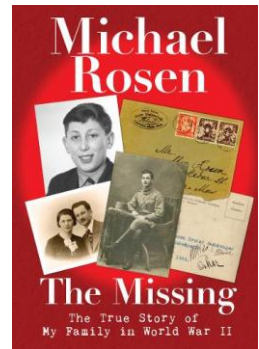




## **The Missing**

*Michael Rosen*

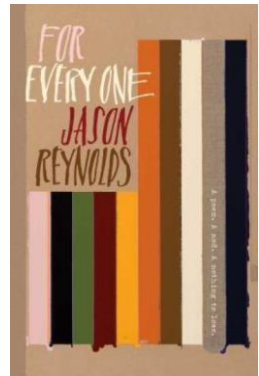
This collection of poems, diary entries, archive records, and narrative presents the personal story of Michael Rosen's quest to trace his family history and offers children an accessible and relatable account of what happened to Jewish families in the Holocaust. An essential resource for children in Key Stage 2 learning about World War 2.



## **For Everyone**

*Jason Reynolds*

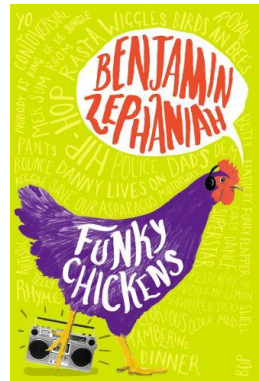
A book for children who imagine, who dream, who think and who have ambition. This book – which comprises of one performance poem spread over pages using graphic design and space to help convey the message – speaks to those who have been put down, denigrated, ridiculed, and made to doubt themselves. This is a great book to read and discuss with confident and mature readers in Year 6.



## **Funky Chickens**

*Benjamin Zephaniah*

A fun and catchy series of performance poems that children aged 7-11 will enjoy reading out loud. The poems cover a range of themes including sewage, the queen, racism, and pollution. Rooted in the real world, these funny, touching, thought-provoking poems cover a diverse range of topics. It's available in the poetry section of our KS2 library!



## **Fly Me Home**

*Polly Ho-Yen*

A tremendous story of isolation, magic, fantasy, and the difficulties of adapting to new and foreign surroundings. Leelu wishes she could fly back home to her father, thousands of miles away. When someone starts leaving magical gifts outside her front door, maybe that dream will become a reality... A distinctive book that is ideal for children in Years 5 or 6.





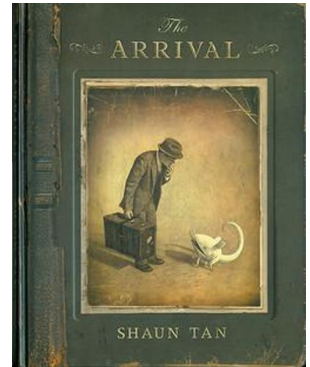


## The Arrival

*Shaun Tan*



A spellbinding graphic novel where the story of a man who leaves his family home to search for better work in a foreign land to support them. It is told entirely through atmospheric and emotive pictures. The total lack of words makes the book particularly accessible to reluctant readers and will provoke discussion, debate, and ideas for writing. Suitable for readers in Years 3 to 6, we use actually use The Arrival as one of our class texts in Year 6.

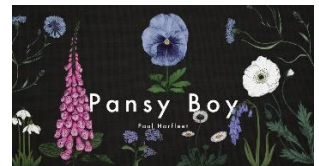


## Pansy Boy

*Paul Harfleet*



A touching and sensitively illustrated picture book that shows the reader the life of a 7-year-old boy who loves the beauty of nature, writing, art, flowers, butterflies, and the awe of birds in flight. Bullied at school, because he isn't like the other boys, he comes up with a plan to overcome the taunts and show that the world can be a beautiful place. This is a great book to tackle themes of toxic masculinity, intolerance, and playground name-calling, and encourage tolerance and acceptance of everyone's interests and perspectives. The book was inspired by The Pansy Project – where pansies are planted at sites of homophobic and transphobic abuse.

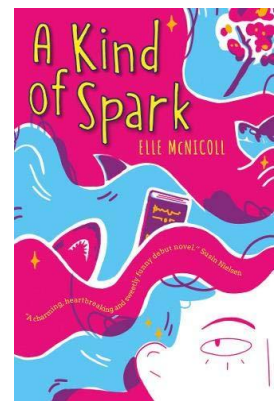


## A Kind of Spark

*Elle McNicoll*



11-year-old Addie tackles people's reactions to her autism by campaigning to right a centuries-old wrong in her home town. Highly recommended for children in year 6 or black-band, and ideal to help discuss disability, neurodiversity, and tolerance in school. This novel offers a convincing and hugely likeable narrative voice. Challenging many a myth and a stereotype, but never



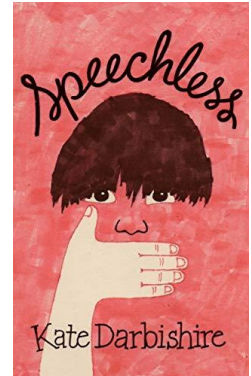


forcing its messages, this is a powerful book with a gentle touch.

## Speechless

*Kate Darbishire*

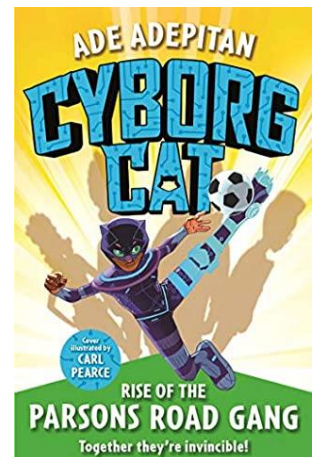
Harriet is bullied because of her disability, a disability that prevents her from walking or talking. With sharply described scenes, this book hits home to deter bullying behaviour and make primary aged children think about how they would react in similar situations. A great book for to read alongside Wonder and useful to prompt children to discuss diversity in their own lives.



## Cyborg Cat!

*Ade Adepitan*

When Ade moves to London from Nigeria, he knows things will be different, but nothing can prepare him for the ups and downs of his Parson's Road adventures. Ade doesn't always feel welcome in his new community; fitting in is hard, especially as he looks different to everyone else. But Ade is brave and takes on the school bullies, surprising himself and the kids on his new street. His heroic acts and super football skills quickly help him make new friends who will always be there for him.

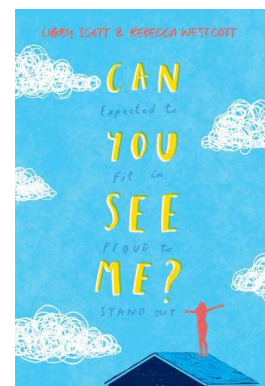
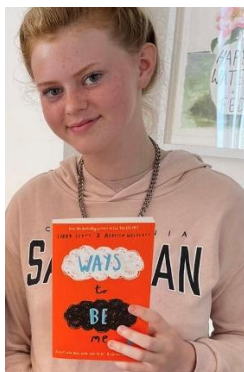


Entertaining and accessible, this is a book that is sure to achieve its goal of inspiring young people to channel their determination and pursue their own goals!

## Can You See Me

*Libby Scott*

An inspiring and warm-hearted story about 11-year-old Tally and how she sees the world from her autistic perspective. A good story to help children in Year 6, and during the transition to secondary school, empathise with children who appear different and who struggle in new





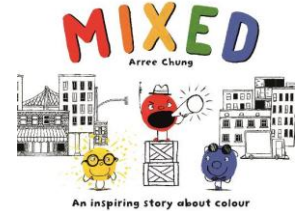


environments due, in part, to neurodiversity. Ideal to read with *A Kind of Spark*.

### **Mixed**

*Arree Chung*

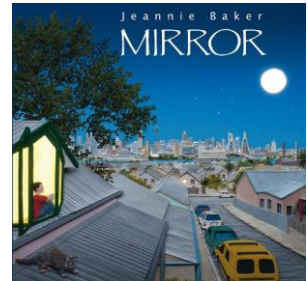
A picture book that helps younger children appreciate that colour not a barrier and draws on children's innate sense of right and wrong to sense the futility of racism and the lack of logic to societal prejudice.



### **Mirror**

*Jeannie Baker*

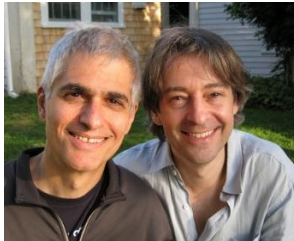
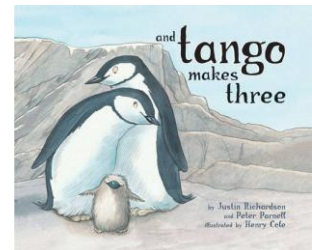
A clever picture book that encourages children to look at a situation from more than one perspective. Great for appreciating and respecting the diversity of different cultures and traditions. Also good for inspiring writing. Jeannie Baker creates two wordless stories designed to be read side by side. Both stories show the daily activities of two boys, one in Morocco and the other in Australia.



### **And Tango Makes Three**

*Justin Richardson*

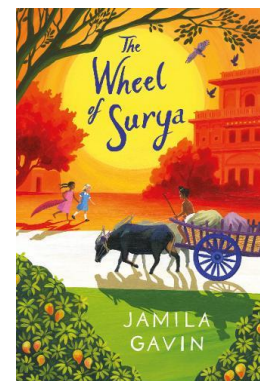
A much-discussed picture book – based on a true story 'And Tango Makes Three' provides a sensitive introduction to help younger children understand that not every family unit is the same, and that the key component is love. This is a good text to help foster ideals of respect and tolerance and suitable from Year 3 upwards!



### **The Wheel of Surya**

*Jamila Gavin*

When Marvinder and Jaspal are split up from their mother fleeing civil war in 1947 Punjab, they are forced to set out on a dangerous journey into the unknown to find their father in England – swapping one hostile environment for another. A modern classic that is suitable for more advanced readers in year 6 i.e. black-band. It was the





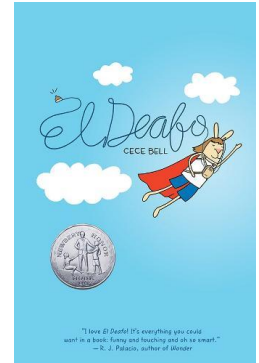


runner up the Guardian Children's Fiction Award!

### **El Deafo**

*Cece Bell*

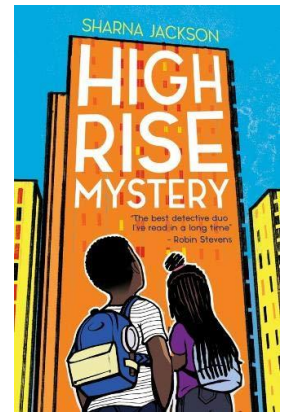
A memorable graphic illustrated biography suitable for children in upper KS2 and KS2. This book chronicles the author's childhood experiences using a hearing aid called a 'phonic ear' and how it affected her life and relationships at school and growing up. A compelling read, and ideal for use in reading groups and for class discussion.



### **High-Rise Mystery**

*Sharna Jackson*

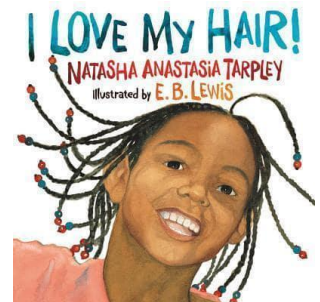
A cracking fast-paced mystery page-turner for KS2 pupils where Nik and Norva set out to solve a serious crime in their tower block before the end of the summer holidays. Ideal for children from dark-blue book band, High-Rise Mystery is one of our class-texts in Year 5. In 2022, we spoke to Sharna Jackson about her writing where she discussed what makes her writing 'tick' and what inspired her to write the book. There are other novels by Jackson in our upstairs library; go check them out!



### **I Love My Hair**

*Natasha Anastasia Tarpley*

A modern classic, this picture book tells the story of Keyana, who learns to embrace and love her hair, and her heritage. Perfectly suited to reading in KS1 and using as the basis for discussion in KS2 about ethnic diversity and embracing differences and distinctiveness.

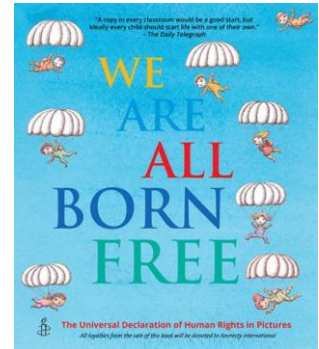




## We Are All Born Free

### *Amnesty International*

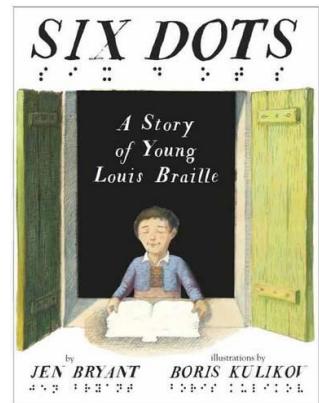
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed on 10 December 1948. It was compiled after World War II to declare and protect the rights of all people from all countries. This beautiful collection, published 60 years on, celebrates each declaration with an illustration by an internationally-renowned artist or illustrator and is relatable to anyone from Year 2/3 onwards.



## Six Dots: A Story Of Young Louis Braille

### *Jen Bryant*

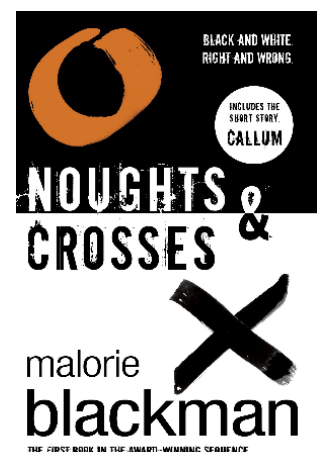
The inspirational story of Louis Braille, who lost his sight at the age of five, and the ingenious system he devised to enable him to read text and books using his fingers. This system – named after him – is used widely across the world by millions of people today. It's filled with the sounds, the smells, and the touch of Louis's world. Boris Kulikov's inspired paintings help readers to understand what Louis lost, and what he was determined to *gain* back through books!



## Noughts and Crosses

### *Malorie Blackman*

In this ground-breaking novel, the population is divided into two: the white Noughts are second-class citizens, and the black Crosses are highly-revered and perceived as the superior race. 15-year-old Callum is a Nought, and his best friend, Sephy, a Cross. The story focuses on their relationship, which is frowned upon by society, and explores the discrimination they encounter at every turn. By reversing traditional racial stereotypes and presenting the White population as the oppressed race, Blackman has cleverly shown racial





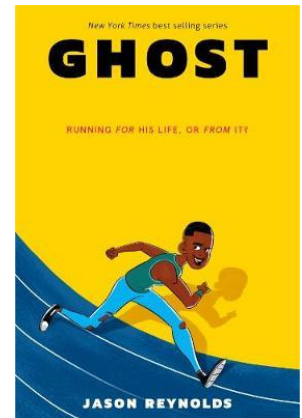


prejudice from a different perspective.  
Suitable for Year 6, black-band readers.

## Ghost

*Jason Reynolds*

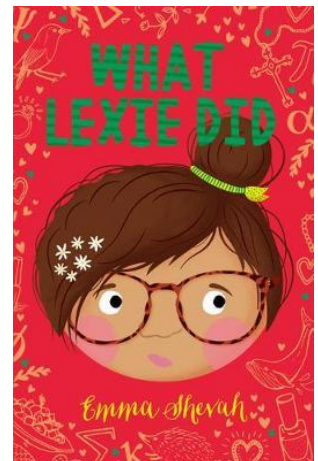
Running. That's all Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. But Ghost has been running for the wrong reasons - until he meets Coach who sees something in Ghost: crazy natural talent. If Ghost can stay on track, literally and figuratively, he could be the best sprinter in the city. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed, or will his past finally catch up with him? Brilliant, exciting read from dark-red band upwards!



## What Lexie did

*Emma Shevah*

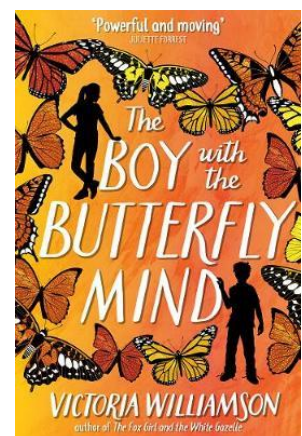
When Lexie lies about a family heirloom and her deceased grandmother's wishes for it, she causes a rift in her close-knit Greek-Cypriot family and her friendship with her cousin. Lexie lives in London with her colourful Greek-Cypriot family - and she's devoted to her fragile cousin of the same age, Eleni, who has a heart condition. But after the death of their grandmother, Lexie tells a terrible, instinctive, jealous lie about an heirloom necklace, a lie that splits the family apart... A great read for children in Years 5 and 6.



## The boy with the butterfly mind

*Victoria Williamson*

A joy to read, a book with a big heart that delves into acceptance, openness, mental health with the main character having ADHD and the complexity of family dynamics. Uplifting and moving, The Boy with the Butterfly Mind is an inspiring story of acceptance, blended families, and discovering that in the end, being yourself is more than enough. It is suitable for children in Years 5 and 6 and is dark-red on our book-band scale.

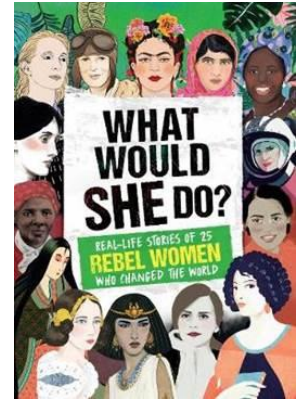




## What would she do?

*Kay Woodward*

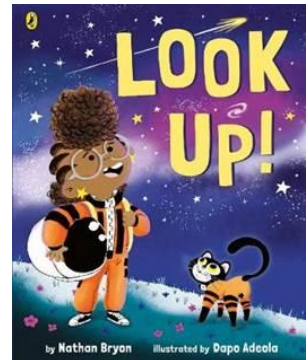
In this collection of women's stories from across history and the present day, Kay Woodward introduces the reader to 25 heroines from around the world: featuring awe-inspiring artists, scientists and political activists, among others. The intimate portraits detail each woman's achievements and struggles, but also considers their (probable!) take on life's more modern dilemmas, too.



## Look Up!

*Nathan Bryan*

Suitable for children in Key Stage One, Rocket wants to be the greatest astronaut, star-catcher and space-traveller who has ever lived, just like Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman in space! Sprinkled with facts about meteors and space, this charming picture book is also a lovely representation of family, sibling relationships and one girl's infectious enthusiasm.



## A Superhero Like You

*Dr Ranj*

Superheroes are everywhere – you might have one living in your house - you've almost certainly passed one on the street! But did you know it's easy for anyone to become a superhero? This beautiful, colourful picture book shows all the different jobs that grown-ups do that help people – from being a doctor to a care home worker or a teacher. Simple text and a diverse range of characters encourage children to be inspired by and appreciate our amazing everyday heroes. Suitable for Key Stage 1.

