



# See Myself in Books

Delivery guidance and resources for primary schools

In partnership with

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National  
Literacy  
Trust

Change your story



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL



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**'Books create belonging. They help us see each other and understand one another. They shine a light on the world. It's vital that the books we read in our formative years reflect the rich diversity of the society we live in.'**

**Penguin Random House – Lit in Colour**

## Introduction

Read Manchester has created a mini library of 25 books for primary aged children to reflect the ethnically diverse communities that go to make up Manchester. The books within our '*See Myself in Books*' collection are written by authors of colour and their central characters are children from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds. These aren't the only books of course and you may have your own favourites. *See Myself in Books* is designed to prompt debate and discussion in the classroom and support you in diversifying your book collections in school.

In this guide, you'll find information about the books within the collection, as well as teaching resources to support you in exploring the books with your classes.

## Why See Myself in Books?

Research shows how important it is for children to see themselves reflected in the books they read, yet the publishing industry has some way to go to redress the imbalance.

- Research by the [National Literacy Trust's \(2023 Reading Trends report\)](#) showed that 1 in 3 children and young people aged 8-18 said that being given books or having books that represent them would make them want to read. Furthermore, in our 2022 research, we found that 2 in 5 (38.9%) of children and young people say they find it difficult to find books with characters or people like them, increasing to 1 in 2 (53.1%) children aged 8 to 11. Yet 2 in 5 (38.9%) children and young people agreed with the statement, "Reading about characters that are like me makes me feel more confident about myself".
- A lot of work has taken place to improve the representation of racially minoritised characters in children's literature. As reported in [CLPE's Reflecting Realities report 2023](#), the percentage of UK children's books published in 2022 that featured a main character from a racially minoritised background, has increased to 14%, compared to



9% in 2021 and 1% in 2017. It is vital that we reflect this improvement through our school reading collections and continue to champion this progress.

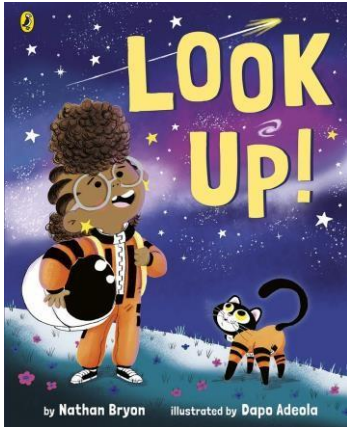
- As highlighted in The Reading Framework (DfE, 2023), it is crucial that children are exposed to a wide range of literature that offers the opportunity for both:
  - mirrors: to encounter characters, situations and viewpoints that mirror their own to ensure they feel recognised, represented and valued.
  - windows: to encounter characters, situations and viewpoints outside of their own lived experiences to build both understanding and empathy for the lives of others. Books create a sense of empathy and help us to put ourselves in other people's shoes.

Read Manchester's approach is to give these free collections to both schools with a high proportion of children from an ethnic minority background and to schools which are less ethnically diverse. We believe that it is important for all children to see and understand more about other people, their cultures, beliefs and differences, and also their similarities.



# The See Myself in Books Collection

\*=Accelerated Reader



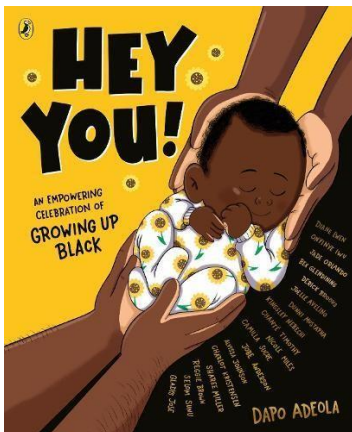
## Look Up! By Nathan Bryon (KS1) \*

Bursting with energy and passion about space and the natural world, this heart-warming picture book will reignite your desire to turn off those screens and switch on to the outside world.

### Teaching Resources:

KS1 PowerPoint – Picture Book Inspo: Look Up! (Puffin Schools) – practise inference skills and start class conversations about big topics.

<https://www.puffinschools.co.uk/resources/ks1-powerpoint-picture-book-inspo-look-up/>



## Hey You! by Dapo Adeola (KS1)

This book addresses--honestly, yet hopefully--the experiences Black children face growing up with systemic racism, as well as providing hope for the future and delivering a message of empowerment to a new generation of dreamers.

### Teaching Resources:

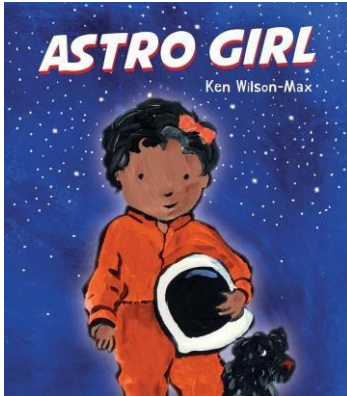
KS1/KS2 Reading, Art and PSHE Resource Packs (Puffin Schools)

<https://www.puffinschools.co.uk/resources/ks1-ks2-resource-packs-hey-you/>



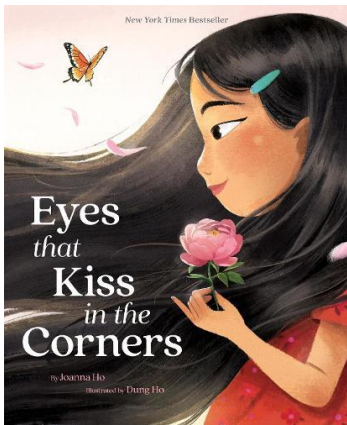
## Coming to England by Floella Benjamin (KS1) \*

A picture book story about the triumph of hope, love, and determination, *Coming to England* is the inspiring true story of Baroness Floella Benjamin: from Trinidad, to London as part of the Windrush generation, to the House of Lords.



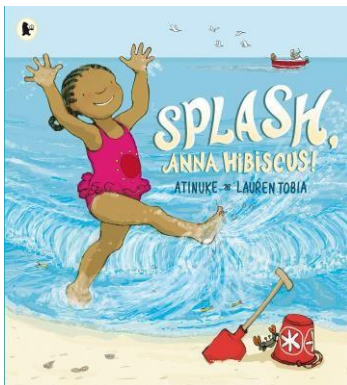
### **Astro Girl by Ken Wilson Max (KS1)**

A charming story about a little girl who longs to go into space, and be just like her mum! In this charming introduction to space and space travel, one little girl dreams of going on missions into outer space.



### **Eyes That Kiss in the Corners by Joanna Ho (KS1)**

This lyrical, stunning picture book tells a story about learning to love and celebrate your Asian-shaped eyes, in the spirit of Hair Love by Matthew A. Cherry, and is a celebration of diversity.



### **Splash! Anna Hibiscus by Atinuke (KS1) \***

Anna has left her mango tree and she's at the beach. Phew, it is hot! But what better way to cool off than by playing in the jumpy, splashy waves?





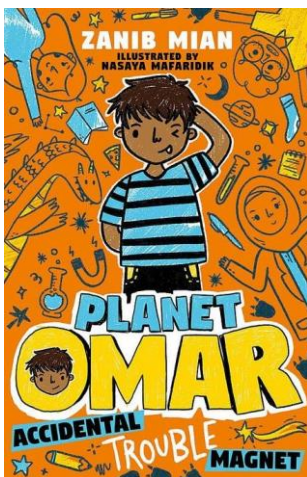
## When Secrets Set Sail by Sita Brahmachari (KS2)\*

Secrets from the past are the keys to the future...if two children can find them. Bold adventure, timely themes and breath-taking writing from award-winning author, Sita Brahmachari.

### Teaching Resources:

When Secrets Set Sail – Teacher's Pack (Hachette)

<https://www.hachette.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/When-Secrets-Set-Sail-Teachers-Pack.pdf>



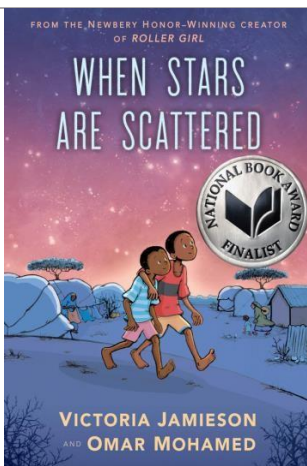
## Planet Omar, Accidental Trouble Magnet by Zanib Mian (KS2) \*

Welcome to the imaginative brain of Omar! A funny book about the trials and tribulations of starting in a new school. Omar's funny, relatable narrative is the perfect answer to the call to fill bookshelves with diverse stories.

### Teaching Resources:

Notes for KS2 Teachers & Librarians (Hay Festival) – discussion and activity ideas.

<https://www.hayfestival.com/schools/downloads/2021/zanib-mian-planet-omar-teaching-resources.pdf>



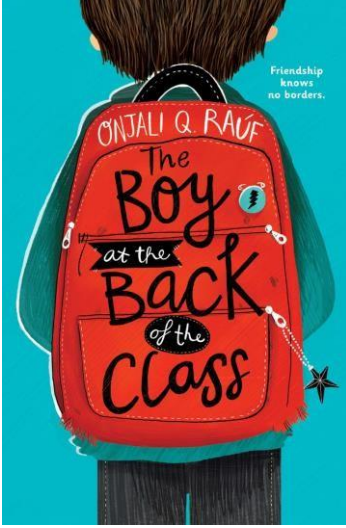
## When Stars Are Scattered by Omar Mohammed and Victoria Jamieson (KS2) \*

Heartbreak, hope, and gentle humor exist together in this graphic novel about a childhood spent waiting, and a young man who is able to create a sense of family and home in the most difficult of settings. It's an intimate, important, unforgettable look at the day-to-day life of a refugee, as told to *New York Times* Bestselling author/artist Victoria Jamieson by Omar Mohamed, the Somali man who lived the story.

### Teaching Resources:

Educator Guide (Victoria Jamieson) – includes discussion prompts

<https://www.victoriajamieson.com/educato/>



## The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Rauf (KS2) \*

Told with humor and heart, 'THE BOY AT THE BACK OF THE CLASS' offers a child's perspective on the refugee crisis, highlighting the importance of friendship and kindness in a world that doesn't always make sense.

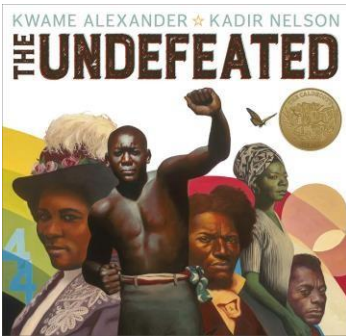
### Teaching Resources:

KS2 teacher and librarian guide (Hay Festival) – includes discussion questions and activity ideas

[http://www.hayfestival.com/schools/downloads/Onjali-Q-Rauf\\_The-Boy-at-the-Back-of-the-Class\\_Teachers-Notes.pdf](http://www.hayfestival.com/schools/downloads/Onjali-Q-Rauf_The-Boy-at-the-Back-of-the-Class_Teachers-Notes.pdf)

KS2 resource pack (The Grand Theatre Blackpool) – includes reading, drama and cross-curricular activities

<https://www.theboyatthebackoftheclass.co.uk/>



## The Undefeated by Kwame Alexander (KS2)

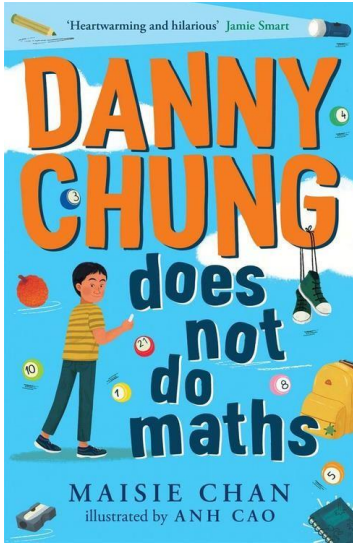
*The Undefeated*'s purpose is to inspire and encourage black communities via a tribute to black Americans of all past occupations. The poem describes the toughness black Americans faced during times such as slavery and segregation in America. Nelson's illustrations provide a visual for the meaning of the poem.

### Teaching Resources:

Teaching Notes (Andersen Press/CLPE)

<https://www.andersenpress.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/TheUndefeated-CLPE-teaching-resource.pdf>





## Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths by Maisie Chan (KS2)

Eleven-year-old Danny Chung loves drawing - more than maths, which is what he is 'supposed' to be good at. He also loves having his own room, so he is put out when his non-English speaking, ex-maths champion grandmother comes to stay from China. Nai Nai shares his room and Danny must look after her during his holidays. Before long, it becomes clear that there is more to Nai Nai than meets the eye, and that they have more in common than he thought possible.

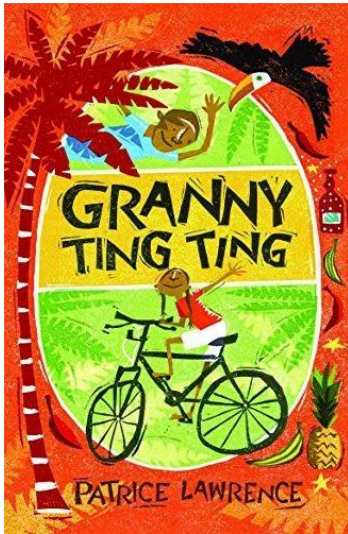
### Teaching Resources:

School Resources (Maisie Chan)

<https://www.maisiechan.com/school-resources/>

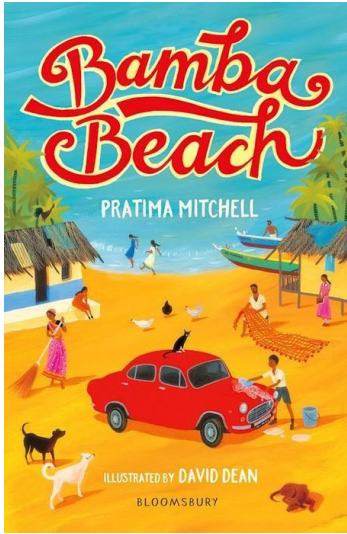
Activity Ideas to Support Classroom Use of the Book (Scottish Book Trust)

[www.scottishbooktrust.com/uploads/store/mediaupload/6345/file/Danny%20Chung%20Does%20Not%20Do%20Maths.pdf](http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/uploads/store/mediaupload/6345/file/Danny%20Chung%20Does%20Not%20Do%20Maths.pdf)



## Granny Ting Ting by Patrice Lawrence (KS2) \*

Nine-year-old Michael visits his grandmother, who is recovering from a difficult operation, in Trinidad from London. A rivalry develops between him and his cousin Shayla... When Shayla tells her mum that she feels Michael's life is more exciting than hers in Arouca, her mum reveals a plan that will make Shayla realise her own good qualities and cheer up her granny in the process!



### **Bamba Beach by Pratima Mitchell (KS2) \***

Hari's family are fisher folk, but with no fish in the bay times are hard. To catch the ones further out they need a new and improved boat, but to buy one they need capital, and for this they need to sell fish... Hari strives to help his family and show everyone that family feuds and village superstitions are better off forgotten in this contemporary Indian story set in Goa.



### **Boy, Everywhere by A. M. Dassu (KS2) \***

Sami and his family are forced to flee their comfortable life in Damascus, via a smuggler's den in Turkey, to an uncertain life beyond. A story of survival, of family, of bravery ... and of how thin the line is between "them" and "us".

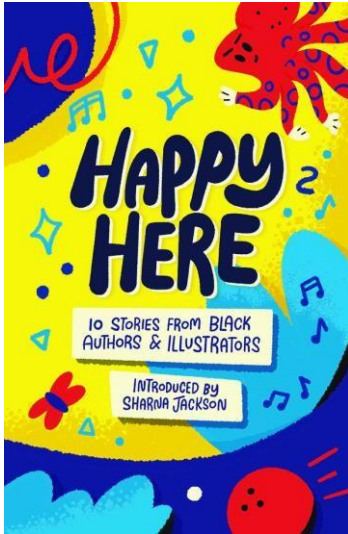
#### **Teaching Resources:**

Teaching resource (MMU/Read Manchester)

[www.mmu.ac.uk/media/mmuacuk/content/documents/mcbf/blog/boy-everywhere-teaching-resource.pdf](http://www.mmu.ac.uk/media/mmuacuk/content/documents/mcbf/blog/boy-everywhere-teaching-resource.pdf)

Teaching Resources (A M Dassu)

<https://amdassu.com/boy-everywhere-resources/>



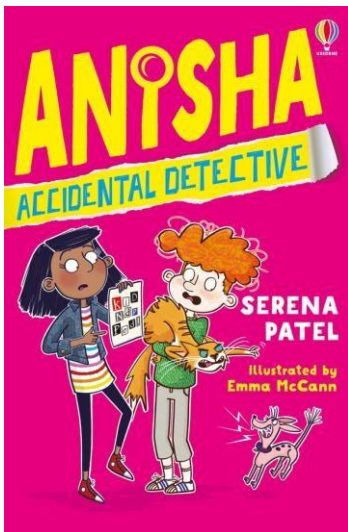
## Happy Here: Ten Stories from Black British Authors and Illustrators by Sharna Jackson (KS2)\*

Exploring themes of joy, home and family through a range of genres and styles, each author has been paired with a different illustrator to spotlight Black British talent. Stories by Dean Atta, Joseph Coelho, Kereen Getten, Patrice Lawrence, Theresa Lola, E.L. Norry, Jasmine Richards, Alexandra Sheppard, Yomi Sode, and Clare Weze.

### Teaching Resources:

Teaching Notes and learning sequence (CLPE)

<https://clpe.org.uk/books/book/happy-here-10-stories-black-british-authors-illustrators>



## Anisha, Accidental Detective by Serena Patel (KS2) \*

Anisha is all set to be a (reluctant) bridesmaid at Aunty Bindi's wedding...until a secret ransom note arrives. Bindi's groom has been kidnapped and will only be released IF THE WEDDING IS CALLED OFF! With best friend Milo, mischievous Granny Jas, a runaway lobster, a kitten-loving giant, and some super skills of logic and observation, it's up to Anisha Mistry to find her uncle, before the big family wedding of the year becomes a big disaster.

### Teaching Resources:

Diwali Gift Box Activity (The Reading Agency)

<https://readingagency.org.uk/resources/5537/>



## Using the books in the classroom

When reading and exploring the books, it will be important to bear in mind your own pupils, considering whether the texts could support individuals to explore similar situations to their own, or whether it's a text that might offer a window into social and cultural backgrounds or viewpoints that differ from their own.

Below are some ways you could use the books in your school.

- **Exploration and recommendations during class 'Bookclub' time** You could provide teasers by revealing the front/back covers, reading the blurb, providing your own summaries and thoughts about the characters or plot, or even reading aloud a teaser chapter/extract. Afterwards, you could add the text to your class book corner or have a sign-up sheet for borrowing the specially selected titles.
- **Personal pupil recommendation** You may discover a book that you feel would speak to a particular pupil because of a shared interest, a similar book/author they enjoy or to offer something totally new to try. Personal recommendations for your pupils can be powerful, but of course you need to have a strong idea about your students' interests, reading habits and abilities.
- **Class read aloud** Read and share the books with pupils as part of your reading for pleasure time. Encourage and foster booktalk!
- **Reading lessons** You might discover a book that you feel would be suited well to read in your English lessons – perhaps it links to a topic or theme you're exploring, or is one that has potential for brilliant reading and writing outcomes.
- **To add to a reading spine** The DFE's Reading Framework (2023) recommends that each year group has a core reading list of different texts that can be used in English lessons and story times, as well as in foundation subjects. These lists should not remain stagnant, should be reviewed yearly and allow scope for teachers to add their own choices and those that speak to their pupils' interest.



# Resources to support your See Myself in Books work

## Reading Response Framework (See Appendix 1)

Our Reading Response Framework is designed for you to use with your pupils when exploring picture books, providing the opportunity to reflect on the following:

Observations: I notice that ...

Feelings: ... makes me feel ...

Connections: It reminds me of ...

Questions: I wonder ...

For younger students or for those who need more support, you may decide to complete this as a whole group, focus on just one section of the grid or offer the option of drawing their responses to the prompts. Allow for interpretation and avoid the notion of a right answer. As students begin to look more closely at the illustrations, and the ways in which they interact with the text, discussions will arise. Allow time for the students to share their thoughts and to answer, to build upon or even contradict each other's ideas.

## Tiered Critical Literacy Question Prompts (See Appendix 2)

Critical Literacy is an approach that encourages readers to challenge what they read by exploring the reader-author relationship, examining issues such as why the text may have been written, how the author chose to represent information, and what information they chose to include or exclude. Critical literacy therefore encourages all readers to think more deeply about representation and diversity in what they read, as well as author intention.

Embedding critical literacy practices when reading texts will enable students to further challenge what they read and critique representation in texts, whilst building on their existing comprehension skills. We have included some questions you might like to use to foster critical thinking and discussion when reading the books in the collection. When exploring the questions, encourage students to justify or explain their thinking, using textual evidence to support their answers. In turn, this will support their development of reading comprehension skills such as inference and language analysis as they return to the text.





## Further references

### Manchester Libraries

Manchester Libraries hold a wide range of books by diverse authors and dual language picture books in a variety of languages so that parents can share these with their children. Additionally, Libraries have ensured that these authors are represented in their extensive programme of class visits which are free to all Manchester schools, and which are a mix of online and also in-person visits. These are advertised on the Schools Hub in the Read Manchester / Manchester Libraries Update.

For more information, please contact Cheryl Pridgeon at [cheryl.pridgeon@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:cheryl.pridgeon@manchester.gov.uk) or Margaret Duff at [margaret.duff@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:margaret.duff@manchester.gov.uk)

### National Literacy Trust

Find out more about diversity and children and young people's reading here - [Seeing yourself in what you read: diversity and children and young people's reading in 2022 | National Literacy Trust](#)

Find more resources around [Promoting diversity through literacy | National Literacy Trust](#)

[Diverse Libraries webinar recordings | National Literacy Trust](#) are a series of recorded webinars discussing diversity in children's literature and more widely.

### Book Trust Represents

[BookTrust Represents](#) is a programme created to promote and improve the representation of people of colour in children's books so that all children read a range of books that reflect them and their wider communities. Their website has an extensive range of research and free resources to support your work in school.

### Centre for Literacy in Primary Education

Find out more about the Annual Reflecting Realities research reports here:  
<https://clpe.org.uk/research/reflecting-realities>





## Lit in Colour

Lit in Colour was created in 2020 by Penguin Books UK and race equality think tank, The Runnymede Trust. Lit in Colour's aim is to support schools to make the teaching and learning of English literature more inclusive. This includes commissioning research to better understand barriers and possible solutions, as well as providing practical support including book donations, free teaching resources and more.





## What next?

Our See Myself in Books programme is very much a work in progress. We would be very interested in hearing from schools and organisations who have been involved. How can we develop the programme and continue to extend the reach of See Myself in Books?

Please contact Cheryl Pridgeon at [cheryl.pridgeon@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:cheryl.pridgeon@manchester.gov.uk) or Margaret Duff at [margaret.duff@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:margaret.duff@manchester.gov.uk) with your thoughts and ideas.



# Appendix 1: Reading Response Framework

 <p><b>Observations</b> I notice ...</p>	 <p><b>Feelings</b> ... makes me feel ...</p>
 <p><b>Connections</b> It makes me think of ...</p>	 <p><b>Questions</b> I wonder ... / I'd like to know ...</p>



## Appendix 2: Critical Literacy Question Prompts

### Tier 1 – Critical Literacy Question Prompts



Whose point of view  
do we hear/see?  
Whose is missing?  
(Think about both in the  
text and illustrations)

How would the story be  
different if it were told  
from the perspective of  
..... ?

Is there anything  
you'd like to change  
about the story? Why?

Would you like to live in  
the world described in the  
story? Why/why not?



## Tier 2 – Critical Literacy Question Prompts



Who do you want to defend/criticise in the story? Why?  
How have you been influenced?

Who has the power in the story?  
Who doesn't? Why?

Are all the characters treated fairly?

What message might the author/illustrator be trying to convey?



## Tier 3 – Critical Literacy Question Prompts



Has the author/illustrator chosen to represent any groups/communities in the story which we don't often see/hear from?

Why do you think the author/illustrator has chosen to represent these groups of people/communities or this subject?

Would everyone agree with the way in which the groups of people or communities are represented in the story?

Do you think everybody would read and respond to the story in the same way? Why/why not?