



We hope you and your family had a wonderful Easter break.

As the summer term begins, we hope this newsletter will provide you and your child with a selection of books to choose from to help inspire their reading. We highlighted in one of our previous newsletters that the report on Children and Young People's Reading in 2024 showed a decline in young people reading for pleasure in their free time – and at the steepest decline seen. We also know, from our work in schools, that some students don't know there are really exciting books out there, exploring topics they're interested in!

The selection of books shared within this newsletter therefore aims to cover a range of interests, topics and reading accessibility to help with this. However, you could of course explore books online or in your local library/book shop too! As part of PiXL's *Let's Talk* programme, we'll be exploring the topics of conservation and the environment as well as empathy this half term. If this is something you'd like to explore through reading with your child, there are a few book recommendations here which may help get you started too.

Please note that unless otherwise stated, the texts shared within this newsletter are suitable from Year 7 and up, but please do research the books before selecting them to ensure that they are appropriate for your child, as these are just the publishers' guide.

If your child is preparing for exams, they will no doubt be spending time revising and preparing for these. Part of this revision will involve reading – but immersing ourselves in the world of a book is also a way to reduce stress and improve mental wellbeing so reading for pleasure may still be beneficial to fit in around their studies.

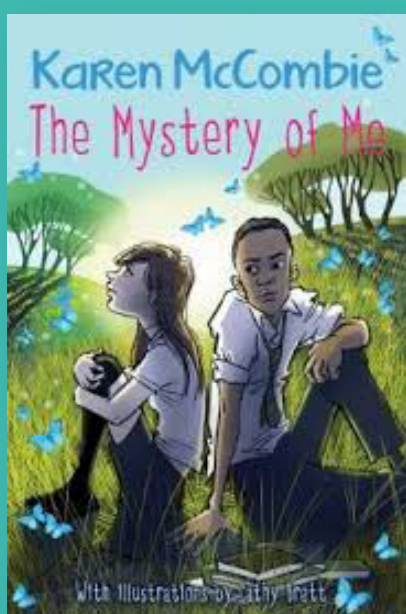
If your child is struggling to read, please do speak to your school about this, and explore ways you could support them at home. For example, by reading with them, to them and encouraging them to find a book which suits their interests as well as their reading level. We hope this selection may spark some ideas. However, it's also worth bearing in mind that some students prefer to 'read' through audio books and that this is still a valid form of them hearing the written word in a fluent and expressive way.

We hope that amongst all these recommendations, you find something which interests your child and we wish you the very best for this half term.



SHORTER-LENGTH READS

The books below are all shorter-length texts, which could be engaging for anyone, but they are published in a dyslexia-friendly font to help make them accessible to all. If your child doesn't have dyslexia, they can still read these books!

**The Mystery of Me**

KAREN McCOMBIE

Ketty doesn't remember anything about the accident, or much from before. The doctors say her memories will come back but, in the meantime, school is a frightening and confusing place. Otis seems to be her only friend – he's kind and caring, funny too. And he may hold the key to remembering the old Ketty – but will Ketty recognise or even like the girl she used to be?

World Burn Down

STEVE COLE

Carlos' mother works for Brazil's Environmental Authority. As head of a specially trained task force, her role is to protect the Amazon from the farmers, loggers and miners who are illegally destroying the precious rainforest. It's a dangerous role and when she upsets some of these land-grabbers, they decide to teach her a lesson by kidnapping her son, Carlos. Taken deep into the Amazon, Carlos manages to escape his captors, only to find himself trapped by the fast-moving fires. Will he be able to outrun the flames as the world around him burns to the ground?

**The Piano at the Station**

HELEN RUTTER

Lacey's smart tongue and quick temper are constantly getting her confined to isolation at school. But there's a lot more to her than most people never see and, when Lacey gets sent to lunch-time music lessons to keep her out of trouble, she discovers a love and talent for the piano that opens up a whole new world for her. Just as she's really beginning to make progress, her music teacher has to leave, which throws Lacey back into turmoil. Will she go back to her self-destructive ways or will music offer her a way to save her from herself?

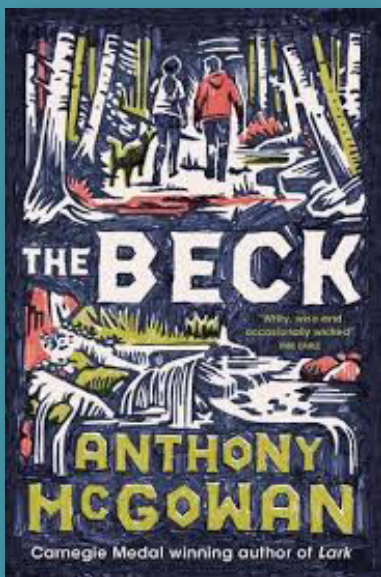




Drowning in my Bedroom

STEVE COLE

Gayla is trapped when floodwater pours into her bedroom in a residential centre for kids with disabilities. The other children have been evacuated while Gayla waited for her father, but now the streets around are cut off and she's all alone with no way out. Junjun's makeshift shack has been washed away in the flood and he needs to find medicine for his sister who's sick after drinking contaminated water. At first, these two young people seem to have little in common and pity each other but, as the waters continue to rise, can they find a way to work together to survive?



The Beck

ANTHONY MCGOWAN

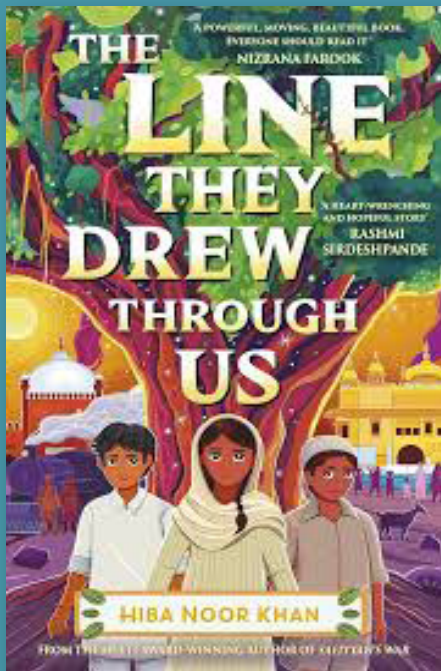
Kyle is less than happy about getting dumped at his eccentric old grandad's on a Saturday afternoon. Embarrassed by his grandad's ratty old Elvis wig and his weird three-legged dog, Kyle thinks the day is going to be a nightmare, until his grandad introduces him to the marvels in the beck at the bottom of his garden. Once filthy and full of rubbish, the stream has been cleaned up and is now home to some amazing creatures! But this magical world is under threat from a new development. Kyle's grandad is determined to stop the builders and has an audacious plan to save the beck but, when he falls ill, will Kyle find the courage to carry it out by himself?

LONGER-LENGTH READS

The Line They Drew Through Us

HIBA NOOR KHAN

Three best friends are born on the same day, under miraculous circumstances. But by their twelfth birthday, Jahan, Ravi and Lakshmi's lives are about to change forever. The British announce Indian independence and draw lines of Partition that tear apart the country, and the friends. One of them flees, one of them disappears and the other is left wondering, could a miracle bring them back together?

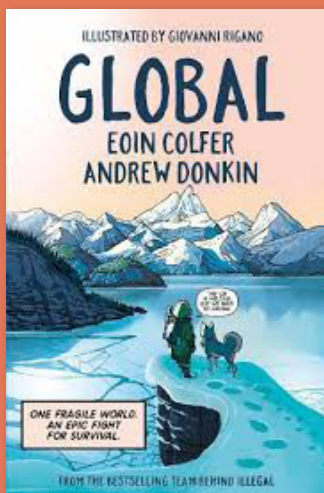


Escape Room

CHRISTOPHER EDGE

When twelve-year-old Ami arrives at The Escape, she thinks it's just a game – the ultimate escape room with puzzles and challenges to beat before time runs out. Meeting her teammates, Adjoa, Ibrahim, Oscar and Min, Ami learns from the Host that they have been chosen to save the world and they must work together to find the Answer. But, as he locks them inside the first room, they quickly realise this is no ordinary game...





Global

EOIN COLFER AND ANDREW DONKIN

A graphic novel adventure about hope in the face of climate change.

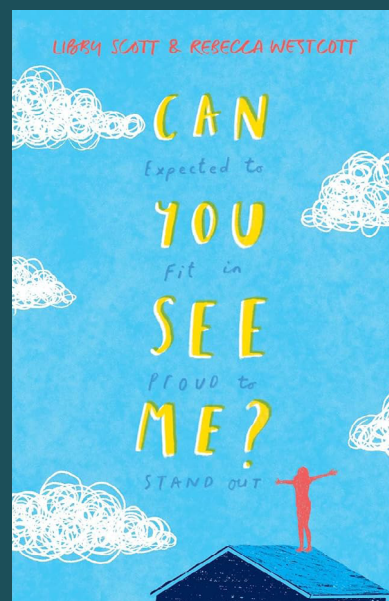
Yuki lives in an increasingly deserted Inuit township in Nova Scotia. One day, she sets out into the wilderness of the Arctic tundra, planning to photograph a rare grolar bear (a terrifyingly grizzly-polar crossbreed created by climate change) – if she can prove it's a grolar, she can protect it from being shot. With only her faithful dog for company, and adrift on a fragment of melting glacier, she finds herself being stalked across the changing wilderness by a starving grolar bear, with only her wits and her harpoon to keep her alive...

Can You See Me?

LIBBY SCOTT & REBECCA WESTCOTT

Written in collaboration with young blogger Libby who is autistic, this is a powerful and relatable story about fitting in and being yourself. Tally's diary entries give an authentic insight into one girl's perspective of being autistic and smashing a host of common assumptions and stereotypes about autism.

Tally is starting secondary school and she's anxious about lots of things. Acclimatising to new surroundings and learning the ways of different teachers is tough. Plus, there's the boy who calls her names, and her friends from primary school who she's always depended on before have started talking about things that just don't interest her and cautioning her when her behaviour is embarrassing. Now, as she enters this new stage in her life, she is painfully aware of the way she is perceived and feeling a pressure to try to fit in. But what exactly are the rules for being "normal"?

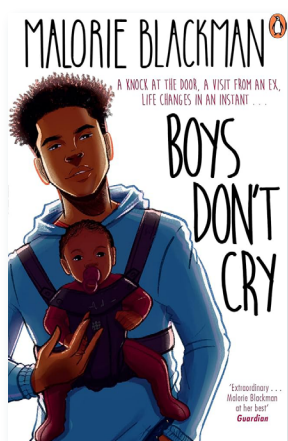


Boys Don't Cry

MALORIE BLACKMAN

13+

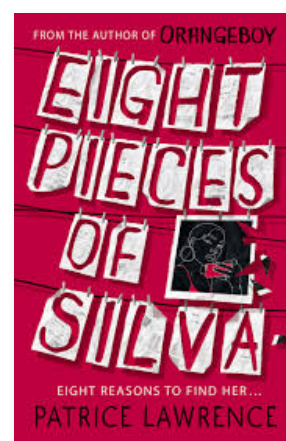
You're waiting for the postman – he's bringing your A Level results. University, a career as a journalist – a glittering future lies ahead. But when the doorbell rings, it's your old girlfriend; and she's carrying a baby. Your baby. You're happy to look after it, just for an hour or two, but then she doesn't come back – and your future suddenly looks very different...

**Eight Pieces of Silva**

PATRICE LAWRENCE

13+

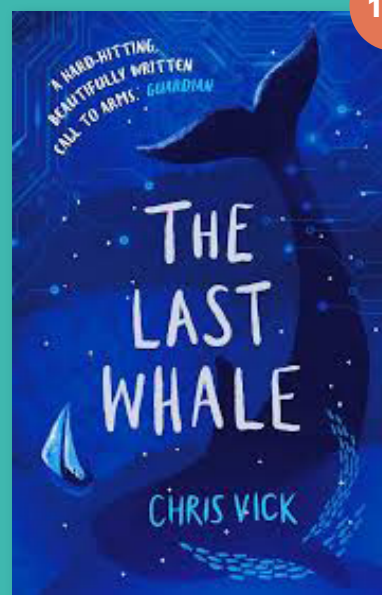
Becks lives with her mum, stepdad and eighteen-year-old Silva, her stepdad's daughter. Becks and Silva are opposites, but bond over their mutual obsession with K-pop. When Becks' mum and stepdad go on honeymoon to Japan, Becks and Silva are left alone. Except, Silva disappears. Becks ventures into the forbidden territory of Silva's room and finds the first of eight clues that help her discover her sister's secret life...

**The Last Whale** CHRIS VICK

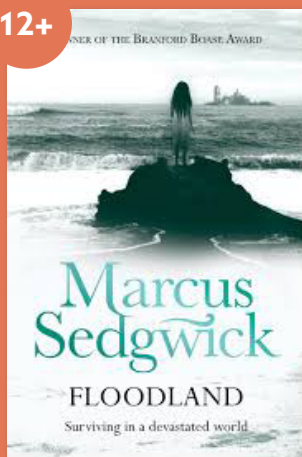
12+

Summer, the Present: Fiery and fierce, computer geek and eco-activist, Abi is holidaying with her grandmother. Having developed and befriended an AI device, Moonlight, she hopes to organise a global protest. She learns her great-grandfather rejected the family's whaling livelihood, instead creating the first whale song recording. Inspired by him, Abi and Moonlight translate the whales' songs and discover their stories. Whales are under threat and Abi is determined to help.

Autumn, 30 years later: The world's ecosystems are collapsing. There is no sight or sound of whales. Abi, her daughter Tonje, and a now almost conscious Moonlight live on an isolated island in the Atlantic. They search for any sign of whales, but so far there is only silence...



12+

**Floodland** MARCUS SEDGWICK

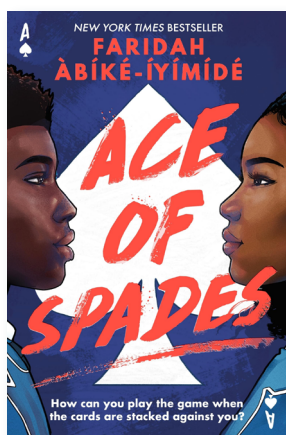
Petra's world is ending. Earth will soon be destroyed by a comet, and only a few hundred scientists and their children – among them Petra and her family – have been chosen to journey to a new planet. They are the ones who must carry on the human race. Hundreds of years later, Petra wakes to this new planet – and the discovery that she is the only person who remembers Earth. A sinister Collective has taken over the ship during its journey, bent on erasing the sins of humanity's past. They have systematically purged the memories of all aboard – or purged them altogether. Petra alone now carries the stories of our past, and with them, any hope for our future. Can she make them live again?

Ace of Spades

FARIDAH ÀBÍKÉ-ÍYÍMÍDÉ

14+

Welcome to Niveus Private Academy, where money paves the hallways and the students are never less than perfect. Until now. Because anonymous texter, Aces, is revealing the darkest secrets of two students. Talented musician Devon buries himself in rehearsals, but he can't escape the spotlight when his private photos go public. Head girl Chiamaka isn't afraid to get what she wants, but soon everyone will know the price she has paid for power. Someone is out to get them both. Someone who holds all the aces. And they're planning much more than a high-school game...

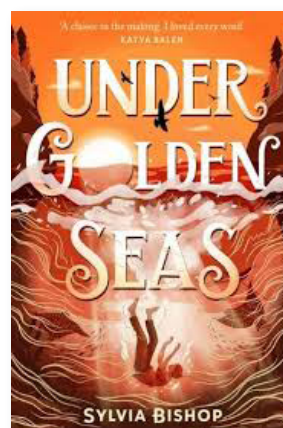
**Under Golden Seas**

SYLVIA BISHOP

12+

**PRE-ORDER FOR
PUBLICATION ON 1ST
MAY 2025**

The sequel to the fantasy novel *On Silver Tides*! Dylan was born with two spirits: human and monster. When he and his family dive underwater, they become wyrms, enormous guardians of the seas. Yet Dylan hates his second spirit and fears he will hurt innocent people. With his family away on a mission to quell a rising danger in the ocean, Dylan takes his chance to change himself for good and feeds his second self to a spirit eater. But things go awry and Dylan is left half-changed, with the creature ever on his tail. Worse, his family need his help. Dylan must set sail to save them and, ultimately, choose what he truly wishes to be...

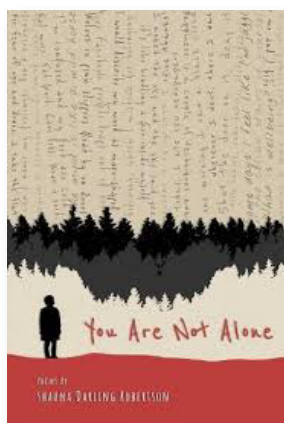


You Are Not Alone

SHAUNA DARLING ROBERTSON

13+

These poems take an in-depth look at mental health and wellbeing. Just like our physical health, our mental health can fluctuate over the course of our lives, or even from day to day. The poems in this collection explore a variety of topics, from diagnosed mental health conditions to the everyday personal challenges faced by young people. The poems are variously thought-provoking, reassuring, heart-breaking, galvanizing, funny and hopeful, reflecting a diversity of perspectives, experiences and voices.

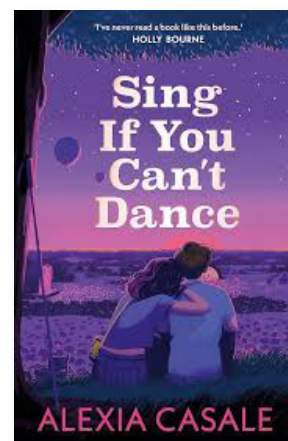


Sing If You Can't Dance

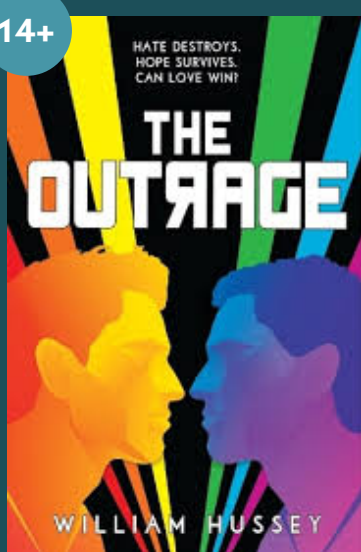
ALEXIA CASALE

13+

Ven has her future all planned out. Her dance group is going places and so is she. Then, she collapses. On stage. In hospital, Ven discovers she has a medical condition – one that threatens to ruin everything. No more dancing...walking is challenging enough. But she doesn't want pity. Ven is determined to have a big, exciting life. Sure, her future might be different, but it's not over... because if you can't dance, you can always sing!



14+



The Outrage WILLIAM HUSSEY

Welcome to England, where the Protectorate enforces the Public Good. Here, there are rules for everything – what to eat, what to wear, what to do, what to say, what to read, what to think, who to obey, who to hate, who to love. Your safety is assured, so long as you follow the rules...

Gabriel is a natural born rule-breaker. His biggest crime of all? Being gay. Gabriel knows his sexuality must be kept secret from all but his closest friends, not only to protect himself, but to protect his boyfriend. Because Eric isn't just the boy who has stolen Gabriel's heart. He's the son of the chief inspector at Degenerate Investigations – the man who poses the single biggest threat to Gabriel's life. And the Protectorate are experts at exposing secrets...

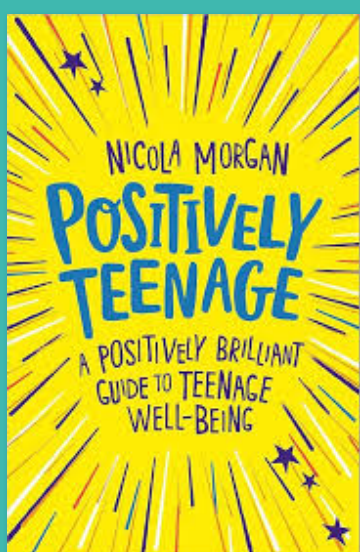
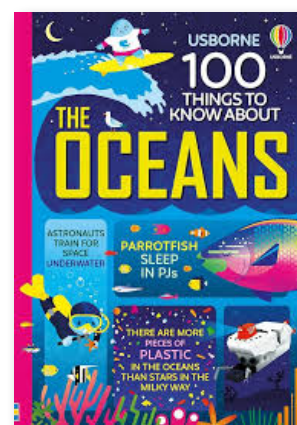
NON-FICTION RECOMMENDATIONS

100 Things to Know About Saving the Planet

How could plastic-eating bacteria help reduce waste? Can a river be given human rights? Could we generate all the power we need from the sun and the wind? How do woolly sweaters help penguins in peril? Would building a giant sunshade in space stop the world from overheating? Find the answers to these questions and more in this book, which is full of big, small and unexpected ways to save the planet!

**100 Things to Know About the Oceans**

Do fish wear pyjamas? What's the sound of an iceberg melting? How many sheep did it take to launch a Viking longship? Which is faster – a tsunami or a bullet train? Find the answers to these and many more questions in a book that explores the history, science, environment and art of our planet's seas and oceans.

**Positively Teenage: A positively brilliant guide to teenage well-being**

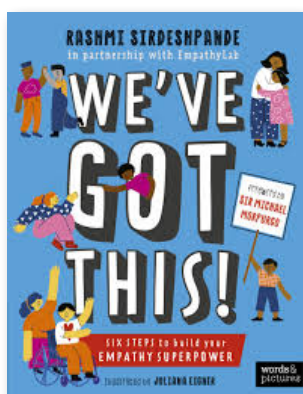
NICOLA MORGAN

The media so often portray adolescence negatively, but this book shows you how to approach these years far more positively so that you can really flourish and be in control. You'll find simple strategies to develop a positive attitude, growth mindset, self-understanding, determination and resilience and you'll see how those strengths will help you cope with any challenges, enjoy life and achieve your potential. This book is full of practical, proven strategies to show you lots of ways to flourish physically and mentally!

We've got this? Six steps to build your empathy superpower

RASHMI SIRDESHPANDE

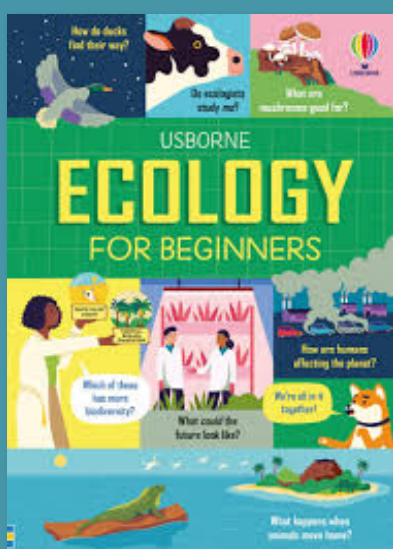
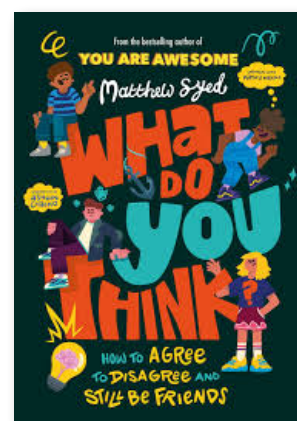
Harnessing empathy and growing their emotional intelligence allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with life's ups and downs as well as to understand and experience other people's emotions, feelings and points of view. In just six steps, readers will be taught how to harness empathy as their human superpower and discover how using this power can change their lives and the world around them for the better.



What do you think? How to disagree and still be friends

MATTHEW SYED

What do you think? will help young readers discover what is influencing their ideas, from peer pressure to fake news. They'll learn how to form and change opinions and how to debate their views with empathy. Readers will see how debates and disagreements can give you new ideas, stronger friendships and help change the world for the better. I know you have loads of incredible thoughts and ideas – and the world deserves to hear your voice!



Ecology for Beginners

Explore the basics of ecology by following a wide variety of real-world examples about how living things cope in all sorts of environments. Learn how eco-systems work, explore how these complicated systems go wrong and discover what we can do to protect our planet in the future. An ideal book to explain to curious minds what ecology is all about and what questions ecologists are trying to find answers to: from how to save dying species to fixing ecosystems through rewilding.

IGNITING LEADERS CHANGING LIVES

PiXLReading

SECONDARY NEWSLETTER

PiXLReading

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