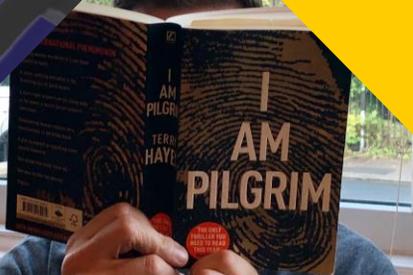




# IAN RAMSEY CE ACADEMY

Together to learn, to grow, to serve

# Reading Newsletter



# this MONTH in history

# DECEMBER

1875	1875	1857	1875	1830	1951	1807
S. E. K. Mqhayi is born.	David Hackett Fischer is born.	Joseph Conrad is born.	Rainer Maria Rilke is born.	Christina Rossetti is born.	Tomson Highway is born.	John Greenleaf Whittier is born.
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1862	1608	1830	1922	1889	1927	1919
Georges Feydeau is born.	John Milton is born.	Emily Dickinson is born.	Grace Paley is born.	Robert Browning dies.	James Wright is born.	Shirley Jackson is born.
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1888	1775	1873	1907	1848	1968	1940
Maxwell Anderson is born.	Jane Austen is born.	Ford Madox Hueffer (later Ford Madox Ford) is born.	Christopher Fry is born.	Emily Brontë dies.	John Steinbeck dies.	F. Scott Fitzgerald dies.
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
1943	1631	1863	1721	1716	1834	1902
Beatrix Potter dies.	Michael Drayton dies.	William Makepeace Thackeray dies.	William Collins is born.	Thomas Gray is born.	Charles Lamb dies.	Mortimer Adler is born.
29	30	31				
1894	1865	1936				
Christina Rossetti dies.	Rudyard Kipling is born.	Clarence Major is born.				

# Welcome

Welcome to our December edition of the Reading Newsletter! I hope you enjoyed our last edition. This month's is packed with even more reading-related information. I hope you enjoy what is included, but if there is anything you want to see that isn't here yet, why not drop the Academy and email and let me know what you would like to be included?

This newsletter is a chance to find out about:

- fiction
- non-fiction
- poetry
- authors and their work
- Vocabulary
- how to help your child with their reading journey
- what's new in reading
- local libraries
- and much more...

So, sit back, grab a cuppa and enjoy our Reading Newsletter.

As always, your support is hugely appreciated,

Mrs Chapman-Jones



# Reading Advent Calendar

It's December! A month of giving thanks for what we have; for celebrating; for spending time with family and friends; and a month of Advent. So, to help celebrate Advent, we have created our very own Reading Advent Calendar.

Each day, pupils will be shown a new reading recommendation. These are all available from the LRC, local libraries, online or in local bookshops. A great idea for Christmas gifts!

These can be found on the reading section of our website.



**Book Advent Calendar 1**  
All books featured are available in the LRC!

**1<sup>st</sup> December 2022** | **'October, October'** | **Katya Balen** | **Age 12+**

**KATYA BALEN**  
*October, October*  
Illustrated by Angela Harding  
WINNER  
2010  
HORNBY  
CARNegie  
MEDAL

A classic in the making for anyone who ever longed to be WILD.

October and her dad live in the woods. They know the trees and the rocks and the lake and stars like best friends. They live in the woods and they are wild. And that's the way it is.

Until the year October turns eleven. That's the year October rescues a baby owl. It's the year Dad falls out of the biggest tree in their woods. The year the woman who calls herself October's mother comes back. The year everything changes.

**Together to learn, to serve, to grow**



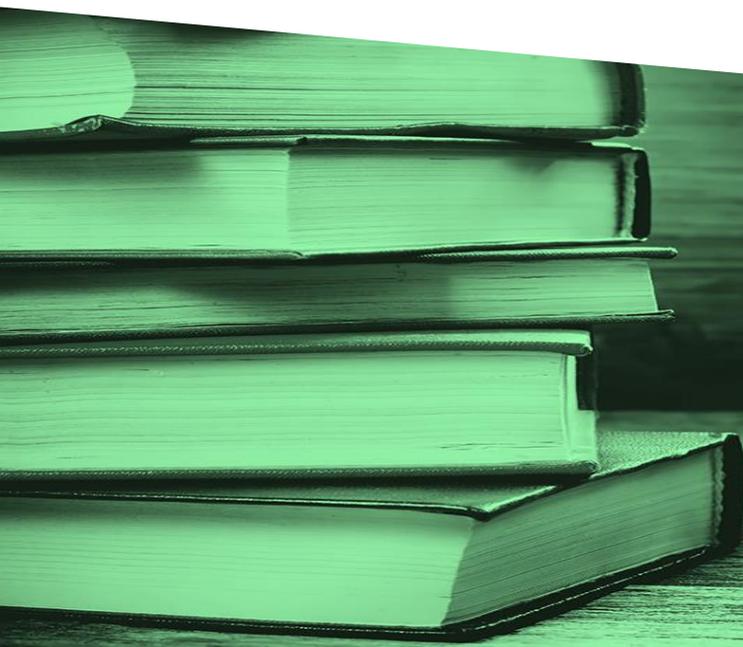
# Author spotlight

## This month's author: Ally Sherrick

Ally Sherrick loves exploring ruined castles and decaying mansions and imagining what it must have been like to live in them without electricity and hot and cold running water – although she's quite glad she doesn't have to herself!

She has a BA in medieval history and French from the University of Newcastle and an MA in Writing for Children at the University of Winchester. She has spent most of her professional career working in public relations and marketing on a whole host of projects from the promotion of Britain to overseas visitors to science festivals and Olympics celebrations. Now, though, she is lucky enough to spend most of her time dreaming up characters and plots and getting them down on paper before they have a chance to escape.

She is married and lives with her husband and assorted garden wildlife in Farnham, Surrey. *BLACK POWDER*, Ally's first novel, won the Historical Association's Young Quills Award in 2017 and also won the North Somerset Teachers' Book Awards in the 'Moving On' category in 2017, as well as being shortlisted for a number of other regional book awards.



# Author to academy



Hi Everyone!

It's so lovely to have been invited to share a few thoughts with you about reading, writing and a little about me and my books too!

When I go in to schools to give talks, I usually describe myself as an 'Author and Time-Traveller'. Some people pull a face when I say that because they don't see how anyone could be a time-traveller, outside of science-fiction books and films anyway. But it's perfectly true. No ... really! I might not have an actual time-machine – though I'd love it if someone bought me one for Christmas! But I can use my imagination, powered by the rocket-fuel of research and lots of reading, to visit the different times and places in the stories that I write.

More of that a bit later. But first up, I wanted to share a secret with you. Though I'm a complete and incurable book-worm now, when I first started going to school, I really struggled to make sense of the words on the page. I spent a lot of time in reading practice guessing what all the black squiggles, dots and dashes were actually saying. I wasn't dyslexic, but it did take a long time for things to start to click into place. And only after I had A LOT of extra help.

I did love stories though, and was very lucky that my parents read to me and my sister, Elisabeth from when we were really quite young. Plus my dad loved making up stories for us too. I think that, plus the encouragement from some brilliant teachers, helped big time in unsticking the reading cogs in my brain. And once I got going, there was no stopping me! I read everything from myths about snake-haired enchantresses and one-eyed, man-eating giants, to time-travel adventures about girls caught up in plots to kill queens and modern fairy-stories about boys living inside giant peaches and girls who trailed carpets of flowers behind them as they walked.



# Author to academy

Why did I enjoy reading so much? I guess because I could go anywhere and be anyone I wanted just by opening a book, reading that magic first sentence and letting my imagination lift me up and carry me away. Books were always top of my Christmas and birthday lists, but we also visited the library regularly too. And that was brilliant, because you could walk (or in my case, stagger) out with a whole pile of books for free!

Once I got the reading bug, then I started to love making up my own stories too. I was lucky to be taught by several brilliant English teachers during my time at school, including one that set us story-writing challenges with titles like: 'Imagine you are a pupil-eating teacher or else a teacher-eating pupil' and 'The war between the bananas and the custard'. This meant that, incredible as it might seem, homework could actually sometimes be fun!

Aside from English, my other favourite subject at school was History. I guess that explains why I love climbing into my virtual time-machine and heading back into the past when I sit down at my desk to write my books.

And what a ride it's been so far! First stop for my debut novel, *Black Powder*, was London, 1605 and the dark and dangerous world of the Gunpowder Plot. For my second book, *The Buried Crown*, I set the dial for a place called Sutton Hoo in Suffolk in the wartime summer of 1940. This was the year after the real-life discovery of a ship buried in the ground stuffed full of priceless Anglo-Saxon treasure. All I needed to do was to throw two brave children and a band of Adolf Hitler's Nazi treasure-thieves into the mix and my story started cooking.

For my next adventure, *The Queen's Fool*, I packed my best gown and petticoats and headed off to 1520 and the court of Tudor king, Henry VIII and his first queen, Katherine of Aragon. It was here that I met up with plucky orphan girl, Cat Sparrow and young French actor, Jacques and helped them uncover and try to stop a traitorous plot.



# Author to academy

For my latest story, *Vita and the Gladiator*, publishing in February next year, I travelled back further still to the time of the great wall-building Emperor, Hadrian in 125 CE. The venue: the great gladiatorial amphitheatre in Londinium. My companions: Roman girl, Vita, her huntress-friend, Brea and a wolf called Col. But to find out what happens to them you'll have to read the book!

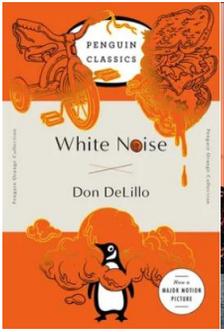
And if time-travel might not be your thing, don't worry! Because the good news is that there are as many types of great books out there as there are people – maybe even more ...

Whatever your next choice of book is, happy reading – and don't forget to let your imagination fly!

Ally Sherrick

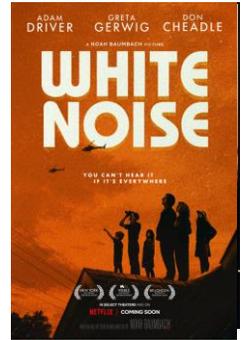


# From page to screen



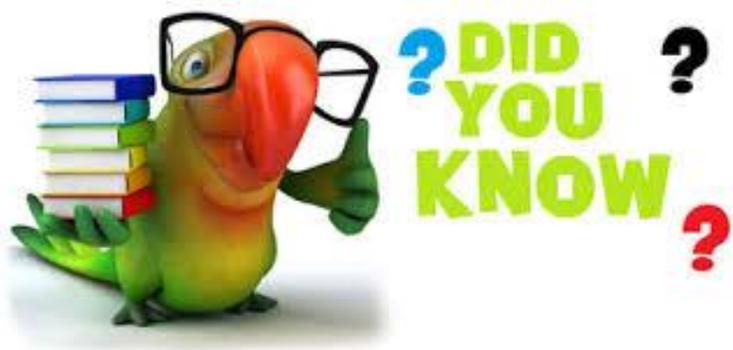
This month's feature is *White Noise*.

Film maker Noah Baumbach returns with a new navigation of the family dynamic in *White Noise*, an adaption of Don DeLillo's career-defining 1985 novel. The family consists of Jack; his fourth wife, Babette; and their four children as they navigate a cataclysmic accident that has shed chemical waste over their town.



With the lethal cloud floating above, the family must confront their mortality and decide what they're willing to sacrifice in order to survive.





*Harry Potter* was rejected by 12 different publishers before Bloomsbury accepted it. J. K. Rowling also had to change her pen name to be more neutral: her publisher believed this would encourage more boys to buy the book.

The Guinness World Record for the largest book in the world was awarded to *This The Prophet Mohamed* in 2012: over 50 people took part in its construction and it weighs over 3000lbs. That's a whole lot of reading!

*Alice in Wonderland* is based on a real 10-year-old girl with whom Lewis Carroll was friends. She was called Alice Liddell, and, whilst out on a boating trip, asked Carroll to tell her a story.

The Biblioteca Joanina in Portugal has an unusual method of keeping their books clean. A swarm of bats live in the library and feed on book-eating insects at night, helping to preserve the 300-year-old building and the many books it harbours.



# 2022 Reading Challenge

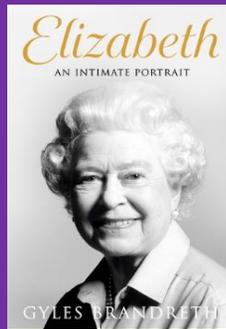
- A book with more than 500 pages
- A classic romance
- A book that became a movie
- A book published this year
- A book with a number in the title
- A book written by someone under 30
- A book with nonhuman characters
- A funny book
- A book by a female author
- A mystery or thriller
- A book with a one-word title
- A book of short stories
- A book set in a different country
- A nonfiction book
- A popular author's first book
- A book from an author you love that you haven't read yet
- A book a friend recommended
- A Pulitzer Prize-winning book
- A book based on a true story
- A book at the bottom of your to-read list
- A book your mom loves
- A book that scares you
- A book more than 100 years old
- A book based entirely on its cover
- A book you were supposed to read in school but didn't
- A memoir
- A book you can finish in a day
- A book with antonyms in the title
- A book set somewhere you've always wanted to visit
- A book that came out the year you were born
- A book with bad reviews
- A trilogy
- A book from your childhood
- A book with a love triangle
- A book set in the future
- A book set in high school
- A book with a color in the title
- A book that made you cry
- A book with magic
- A graphic novel
- A book by an author you've never read before
- A book you own but have never read
- A book that takes place in your hometown
- A book that was originally written in a different language
- A book set during Christmas
- A book written by an author with your same initials
- A play
- A banned book
- A book based on or turned into a TV show
- A book you started but never finished

# What's new?

## Non-fiction

### *Elizabeth* by Gyles Brandreth

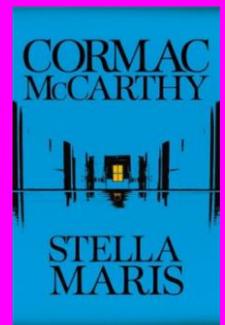
Drawing on records of conversations and meetings the author and raconteur had with Elizabeth II, Brandreth delivers a moving, intimate portrait of the much-missed monarch, laced with his trademark gentle humour and unfailing eloquence.



## Fiction

### *Stella Maris* by Cormac McCarthy

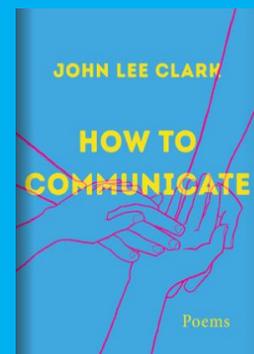
1972, Black River Falls, Wisconsin: Alicia Western, twenty years old, with forty thousand dollars in a plastic bag, admits herself to the hospital. A doctoral candidate in mathematics at the University of Chicago, Alicia has been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, and she does not want to talk about her brother, Bobby.



## Poetry

### *How To Communicate* by John Lee Clark

Formally restless and relentlessly instructive, *How to Communicate* is a dynamic journey through language, community, and the unfolding of an identity. Poet John Lee Clark pivots from inventive forms inspired by the Braille slate to sensuous prose poems to incisive erasures that find new narratives in nineteenth-century poetry.



# Pupil Recommendations



## Wranglestone by Darren Charlton

In a post-apocalyptic America, a community survives in a national park, surrounded by water that keeps the Dead at bay. But when winter comes, there's nothing to stop them from crossing the ice.



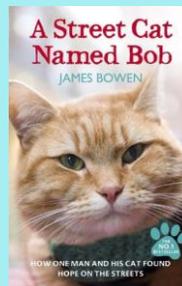
## All About Mia by Lisa Williamson

Mia's two sisters are pretty much perfect, but Mia's life is a series of disasters. Fuelled by alcohol and insecurities, she betrays one of her best friends in the worst way imaginable. But will her little sister going missing finally make her realise making everything All About Mia just isn't going to cut it any more?



## A Street Cat Named Bob by James Bowen

When James Bowen found an injured, ginger street cat curled up in the hallway of his sheltered accommodation, he had no idea just how much his life was about to change. James was living hand to mouth on the streets of London and the last thing he needed was a pet.



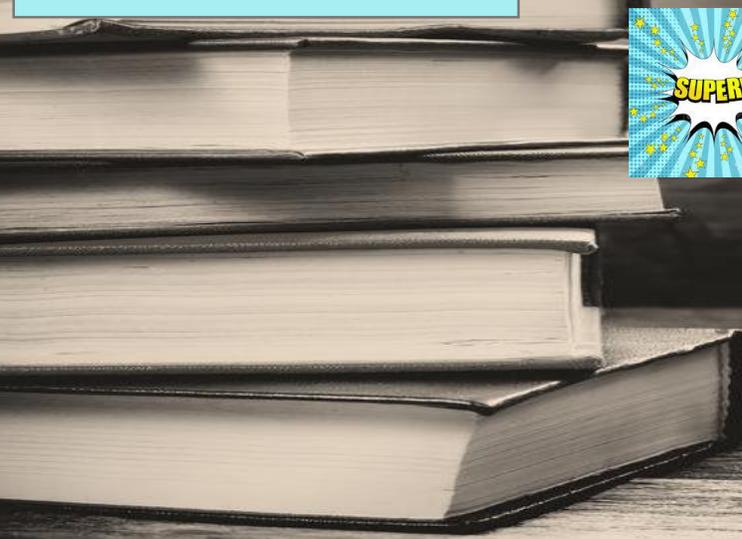
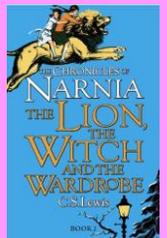
## The Horrible Histories Series by Terry Deary

Packed full of the sort of frightful facts you don't get taught at school, Horrible Histories has been highlighting the quirkiest side of the past for over 25 years.



## The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

Four adventurous siblings—Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie—step through a wardrobe door and into the land of Narnia, a land frozen in eternal winter and enslaved by the power of the White Witch.



# Staff Recommendations



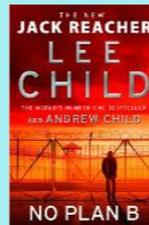
Mrs. Chapman- Jones recommends:  
*Mad Honey* by Jodie Picoult and Jennifer Finney- Boylan

Olivia fled her abusive marriage to return to her hometown and take over the family beekeeping business when her son Asher was six. Now, impossibly, her baby is six feet tall and in his last year of high school, a kind, good-looking, popular ice hockey star with a tiny sprite of a new girlfriend.



Miss. Fox recommends: *No Plan B* by Andrew and Lee Childs

I love the series and the character! Gerrardsville, Colorado. One tragic event. Two witnesses. Two conflicting accounts. One witness sees a woman throw herself in front of a bus - clearly suicide. The other witness is Jack Reacher. And he sees what really happened



Mrs. Jevons recommends: *Carrie Soto is Back* by Taylor Jenkins- Reid

This is fantastic. The character isn't likeable, but you can't help but love her by the end. All of Taylor Jenkins Reid's books interlinks somehow, ever so subtly, and they made for great reading.



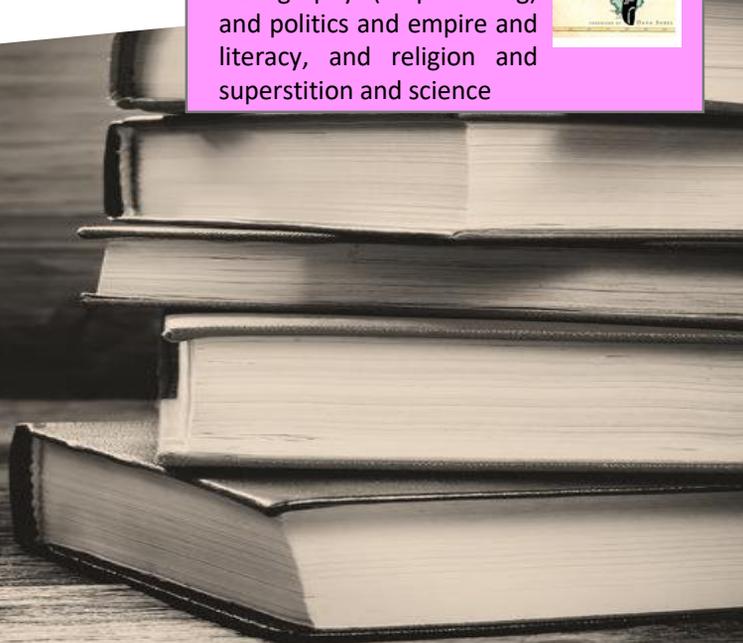
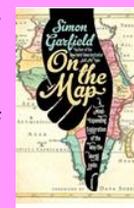
Miss. Booth recommends: *The Keeper of Lost Things* by Ruth Hogan

Never judge a book by its cover. I thought this would be an easy pleasant read and was interested in the idea of finding lost things (like Tinkerbell does).



Mr. Wallace recommends: *On the Map* by Simon Garfield

Another nerdy but fascinating book about why the world is represented the way it is throughout the development of cartography (map making) and politics and empire and literacy, and religion and superstition and science

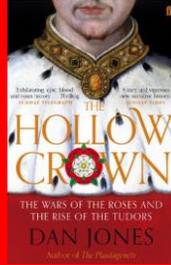


# House recommendation: Bede

## House Captain

Mr Spence recommends:

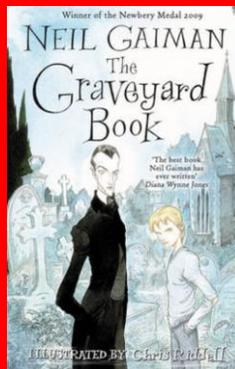
The fifteenth century experienced the longest and bloodiest series of civil wars in British history. The crown of England changed hands violently five times as the great families of England fought to the death for the right to rule. Some of the greatest heroes and villains in history were thrown together in these chaotic years. Yet efforts were made to maintain some semblance of peace and order, as chivalry was reborn, the printing press arrived, and the Renaissance began to flourish.



## House Pupil

Neve recommends:

Nobody Owens, known to his friends as Bod, is a normal boy. He would be completely normal if he didn't live in a graveyard, raised and educated by ghosts. There, living among the dead, Bod discovers that he possesses remarkable magical powers: he can avoid people's notice, scare them, and even invade their dreams. .



# Local Libraries

## The Classical Reader

Sometimes too many options can be a bad thing.

This is a parent-approved, classically-vetted list of books to help you and your child read more and search less!

Using the handy filter tab simply select the level of challenge you would like to see (and any other helpful categories) and start exploring!

When you click on a book, you will be taken to Amazon where you can borrow or purchase your book.

An excellent resource for those of you who are looking for something a little different.



# Live events are back!

After a few months of classroom video meetings, we were thrilled to welcome James Harris for our first author event of the year.

James visited with some of our Year 7 pupils who were buzzing with enthusiasm and questions about what life looks like for an author. We explored different ideas about getting into writing and it was wonderful for some of pupils to get some insight and inspiration.

We were also given a flavour of James' life and what inspired him to start writing.

If you would like to know more about James Harris or check out any of his books, please visit <https://www.theunbelievablejamesharris.com/>

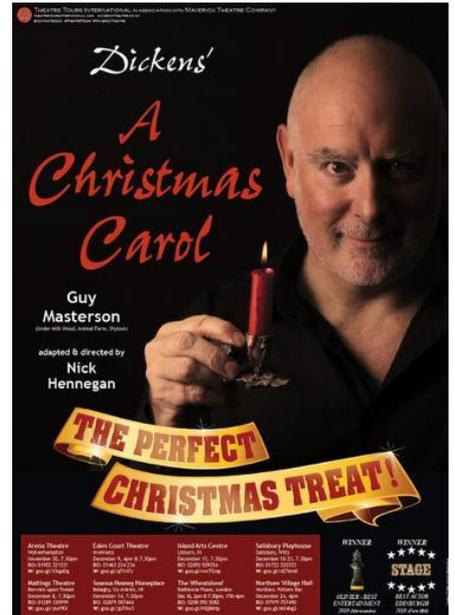


# On the road

Last week, our Year 9 and 10 pupils kicked off the festive season early with a theatre visit to see a performance of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

Pupils were excited about the show as this was the first theatre visit for a few of them.

The role of Scrooge was expertly performed by Guy Masterson who took us through the life of the once miserly Ebenezer Scrooge and showed us how one man's change really can make a difference.



# First liners



Can you guess the title of the book from the first line?

1. Adedayo was fourteen when he discovered that he was magic.

2. Alfie hated going to the dentist.

3. Mickey Starr gazed into the night, feeling restless and apprehensive.

4. It was midnight in Ank- Morpork's Royal Art museum.

5. I don't know how long I walked for.

6. This was the time of day when I most wished I were able to sleep.

7. Harry Potter was a highly unusual boy in many ways.

8. "Are you sure you're going to be alright?" Mum asked.

9. It was the evening of Matteo's eleventh birthday, and he was stealing a cucumber.



# Word of the Month

## Quiddity

(Origin: Latin)

*Quiddity* refers to the essence of a thing—that is, whatever makes something the type of thing that it is. *Quiddity* can also refer to a small and usually trivial complaint or criticism, or to a quirk or eccentricity in someone's behaviour.

When it comes to synonyms of *quiddity*, the Q's have it. Consider *quintessence*, a synonym of the “essence of a thing” meaning of *quiddity*, and *quibble*, a synonym of the “trifling point” use. And let's not forget about *quirk*: like *quiddity*, *quirk* can refer to a person's eccentricities.



# Reading for Pleasure

Reading is a huge part of our academy. Throughout our school, we have implemented a number of reading strategies that will give pupils access to a wide range of literature both inside and outside the classroom.

Our *Reading for Pleasure* lessons have been met with fantastic positivity and enthusiasm from our KS3 pupils. Texts have been specifically chosen that link not only to our curriculum, but to our Christian values as well. This year, pupils will enjoy a range of texts such as:

## Year 7

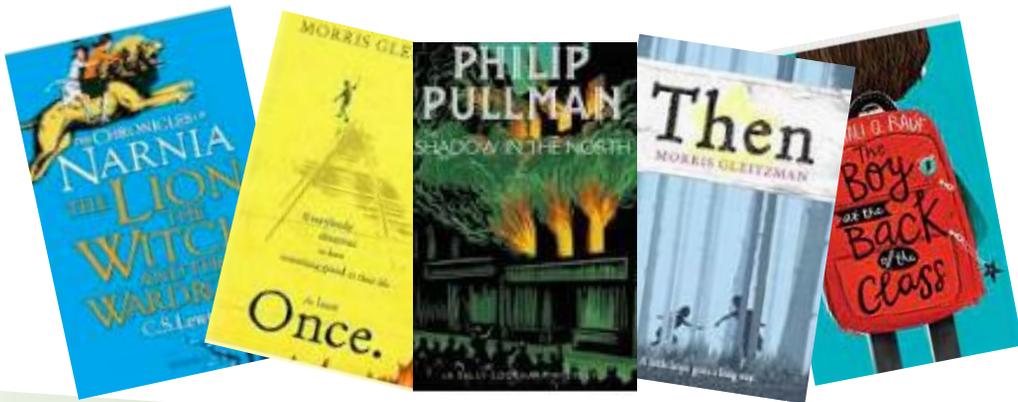
*The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis  
*Once* by Morris Gleitzman

## Year 8

*The Shadow in the North* by Philip Pullman  
*Then* by Morris Gleitzman

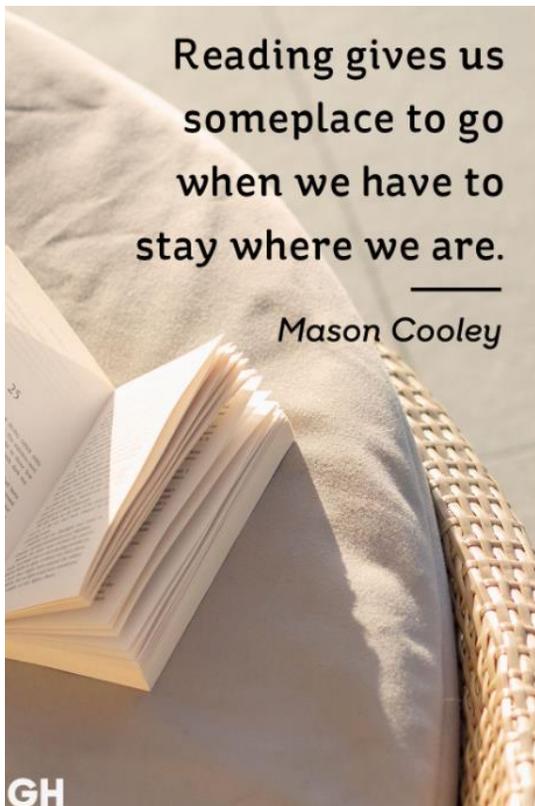
## Year 9

*The Boy at the Back of the Class* by Onjali Q. Raúf



# Final Notes

Reading is so important to our Academy. The key aim of our reading drive is to encourage Reading for Pleasure. I leave you with the words of Mason Cooley:



I hope you've enjoyed reading this month's newsletter. As an Academy, we believe you should never be stuck for reading information and recommendations - visit our dedicated reading section on our website for ideas, competitions recommended lists and more. Click on 'Curriculum' and 'Reading' (or click on this link: <https://ianramsey.org.uk/curriculum/reading/> ) to uncover a world of books and recommendations and challenges including:

- Book recommendations. These change every term and are thematically linked to all the topics covered by each subject that term.
- Reading challenges
- Desert Island Book lists
- Reading quotes
- Recommend a book

I hope you've enjoyed December's newsletter and look forward to sending you January's edition!

\*Answers to First Lines:

1. Skulduggery Pleasant by Derek Landy
2. Demon Dentist by David Walliams
3. Find Them Dead by Peter James
4. Unseen Academicals by Terry Pratchett
5. A Suitable Lie by Michael J. Malone
6. Midnight Sun by Stephenie Meyer
7. Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban by J.K. Rowling
8. Midnight by Jacqueline Wilson
9. Skysteppers by Katherine Rundell

