



WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL for Boys
UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

LIFELONG READERS

Lifelong Readers

“THERE IS MORE TREASURE IN BOOKS THAN IN ALL THE PIRATE'S LOOT ON TREASURE ISLAND.” -WALT DISNEY

Pupils join Westcliff High School for Boys with the aim of unlocking their potential. They want to develop their intellectual curiosity and global awareness, to become lifelong learners and effective communicators. They want to prepare themselves for a happy and successful future. There is no better way for them to achieve these aims than by becoming a lifelong reader.

Extensive research has shown that reading provides a host of benefits: It improves skills of writing and comprehension, general knowledge, empathy, and develops a better understanding of other cultures. Being a lifelong reader grants you important cultural capital, and being a good reader makes you a good learner. But these are not the reasons a lifelong reader reads.

Reading is one of the most enjoyable and enriching hobbies a person can have. There is nothing like picking up a page-turner or finding an amazing new series of books to steam through. Lifelong readers read because they love it.

The aim of Lifelong Readers is to instil a love of reading within the pupils of WHSB. The books chosen are from the literary canon and have been picked for their variety of themes and topics, and because they are challenging. The books will introduce pupils to new vocabulary and develop their confidence as readers. They will give pupils insight into other worlds and cultures and will develop understanding of the 9 protected characteristics: Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Year 7

Autumn Term

Northern lights

Spring Term

**The Curious Incident
of the Dog in the
Night-time**

Summer Term

**I Am Malala: Teen
Edition**

Year 8

The Hunger Games

Boys Don't Cry

**A Short History of
Nearly Everything**

As with all literary works, the books chosen include both language and topics that require maturity. Writers deliberately include themes and language which illustrate the society they write about. We have chosen to let the words and themes remain as they originally appeared, without any amendments. We believe that by reading about, exploring and debating these themes we can ensure that our pupils develop both spiritually and morally.



Autumn Term

NORTHERN LIGHTS (1995) BY PHILIP PULLMAN

What is this book about?

Lyra lives in a world much like our own, but with a few big differences: Every person goes through life with an animal companion, their daemon, who shares their thoughts, emotions and secrets. Everybody is subject to the rule of the Magisterium – a religious organisation whose fear of knowledge puts scholars and explorers in danger. Finally, rumours of strange creatures and peoples reach Lyra in her safe home of Oxford. Witches are flying through the arctic skies, and armoured bears are said to be at war in the North.

This first book in the acclaimed His Dark Materials trilogy is built on our classical literary heritage. Inspired by Milton's Paradise Lost, it deals with difficult philosophical and ethical questions, packaging them in a beautifully written adventure story. Lyra is a realistic and fierce protagonist, whose mistakes and achievements are learning opportunities for all readers.



Why has this book been chosen for Year 7?

- Adventure story
- Characters of the same age (child-centric)
- Strong-willed parents
- Lyra's journey reflects developing maturity
- Inspirational (determined, morally strong protagonist)

“Hope holds you fast like an anchor, so you don't give way.”

PHILIP PULLMAN



Includes the following themes and ideas:

- Love (with emphasis on an appreciation of life)
- Anti-authoritarianism
- Religion
- Child abandonment
- Kidnapping for experimentation
- Daemons/Soul outside of the body
- Class system
- Travel/exploration broadens the mind
- Alternate history
- Witches

Discussion Points:

- Animal rights
- Historical tests (Nazi experiments)
- Separation and wholeness
- Slavery
- The nature of the soul
- The price of technological advancement
- Myths and reality
- The two sides of curiosity and knowledge (progress/beauty and risk)

Questions arising from the book:

What is the message of the book?

What lessons can be learned from Lyra's journey?

How important is religion?

What role should religion have in our lives?

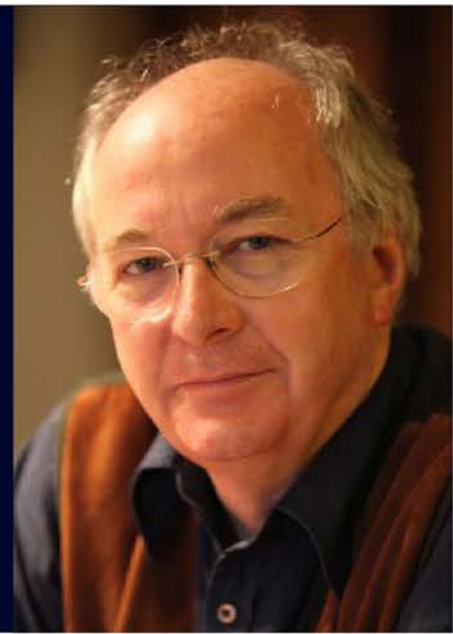
What is a soul? Do we have one?

Can good people do terrible things?

Would you want to live in Lyra's world? How is it different to ours?

About the author:

Sir Philip Pullman (born 1946) is an English author of many best-selling books, including the His Dark Materials trilogy and follow-up series, *The Book of Dust*. After graduating from Oxford University, Pullman became a teacher of children the same age as Lyra. Since publishing *Northern Lights*, Pullman has won a host of awards, been knighted and, in a BBC poll, named the 11th most influential figure in British culture. *The Times* has listed Pullman as one of the "50 greatest British writers since 1945."





Spring Term

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME (2003) BY MARK HADDON

What is this book about?

One of the most powerful tricks a book has is to put you in someone else's shoes, and this murder mystery story does it like no other. The tale is told through the eyes of Christopher, a boy with Asperger's syndrome and self-appointed investigator of a local dog's murder, who soon discovers what he thought would be an open-and-shut case is far more complicated.

Christopher's condition makes it difficult to communicate and connect with others, and the book is as much about the relationship Christopher has with the people in his life as it is a detective story. His parents blame their marriage's failure on Christopher's condition, and Christopher thinks people who do not function like him are stupid, including other disabled children at his school. The story features clashes with authority figures who do not understand and cannot accommodate Christopher's needs.



Why has this book been chosen for Year 7?

- Teenage boy character
- Explores disability and difference
- Explores acceptable and unacceptable actions
- Encourages empathy
- Engaging writing
- Mathematical ideas

“I think prime numbers are like life. They are very logical but you could never work out the rules, even if you spent all your time thinking about them”



Includes the following themes and ideas:

- Logic and mathematics
- Social disability
- Relationships
- Marriage
- Independence
- Coping with loss
- Chaos and disorder of life
- Multimodality (using other ways to tell a story beyond text)

Discussion Points:

- Disability and the effect it can have on a person's life and relationships
- Autism and Asperger's syndrome
- The concept of death
- The use of acceptable language
- How to behave in social situations
- Logic versus emotions
- Different ways to tell a story (pictures/maps/diagrams)

Questions arising from the book:

Is this story told in a confusing way? Why is it confusing?

Why has the author chosen to tell the story in such a different way?

Can this story help us to understand people with autism and other disabilities?

What are the positives and negatives in Christopher's life?

Is it possible to forgive Christopher's parents for what they have done?

Why is it easier for Christopher to trust his mother than his father?

Was the novel engaging? Were you satisfied with the ending?

Does the novel change how you see people and the world?

About the author:

Mark Haddon (born 1962) is a British writer best known for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, which has won prizes for competitions celebrating both adult and children's literature. He is a graduate of Merton College, Oxford, where he studied English. When talking about *Curious Incident* he said "I didn't read much about Asperger's because I think there is no typical person who has Asperger's syndrome, and they're as large and diverse a group of people as any other group in society. And the important thing is that I did a lot of imagining, that I did a lot of putting myself into his shoes in trying to make him come alive as a human being rather than getting him right, whatever that might mean."





Summer Term

I AM MALALA: TEEN EDITION (2015) BY MALALA YOUSAFZAI

What is this book about?

Malala is a Pakistani girl who spoke out against the Taliban's oppressive rule and their ban on the education of girls. As a result, she was targeted and attacked by the Taliban and, after surviving, has become an internationally acclaimed human rights and education activist. The book begins with Malala's early life in Swat Valley, detailing the changes that she experienced as the Taliban took hold of her town. It paints a chilling picture of living under the terror of extremists, and the shows the bravery of those who dare to defy them. This teen edition focuses more on the experience of Malala herself and less on the political situation in Pakistan. Nevertheless, Malala's first-person narration evocatively depicts every-day life in a middle eastern society under threat.



Why has this book been chosen for Year 7?

- Emphasis on the value of education
- Appreciation for learning
- Tolerance of different cultures
- Positive role model
- Access to complex vocabulary
- Cross curricular links to RS

"One child, one book, one teacher, one pen can change the world."

MALALA YOUSAFZAI



Includes the following themes and ideas:

- Women's rights
- The power of education
- Islam and its interpretations
- Goodness
- Fame
- Role models
- Family
- Self-confidence

Discussion Points:

- The understanding of cultures and religions
- British global values
- The Taliban and religious extremism. This relates to the UK's 'PREVENT' strategy
- Democracy and women's increasing involvement
- Education as an important right for all

Questions arising from the book:

How do Malala's parents support her?

How does Malala's courage compare to her father's?

The terror Malala and her family experience becomes normal after a while. Is there anything unpleasant in our society that might be the same?

Malala talks about hiding her identity. Is she a superhero?

What are the different communities Malala is a part of, and how do they affect her life?

What cultural traditions do we have that might surprise Malala?

Could the Pakistani government have done more to help Malala?

About the author:

Malala Yousafzai (born 1997) is the world's youngest Nobel Prize laureate, winning the prize for her work as an activist for female education. Her childhood blogs detailing life as a young girl under the influence of the Taliban gained world-wide recognition, leading to interviews with the BBC and New York Times. Her outspoken advocacy for the right of girls to have an education conflicted with Taliban ideology, and she received many death-threats. When she was 15 the Taliban held up her school bus and shot Malala. She was eventually airlifted to a hospital Birmingham and, after recovering, Malala has become a figure of international renown and importance, campaigning on a number of topics and speaking regularly to world leaders and other influential people.

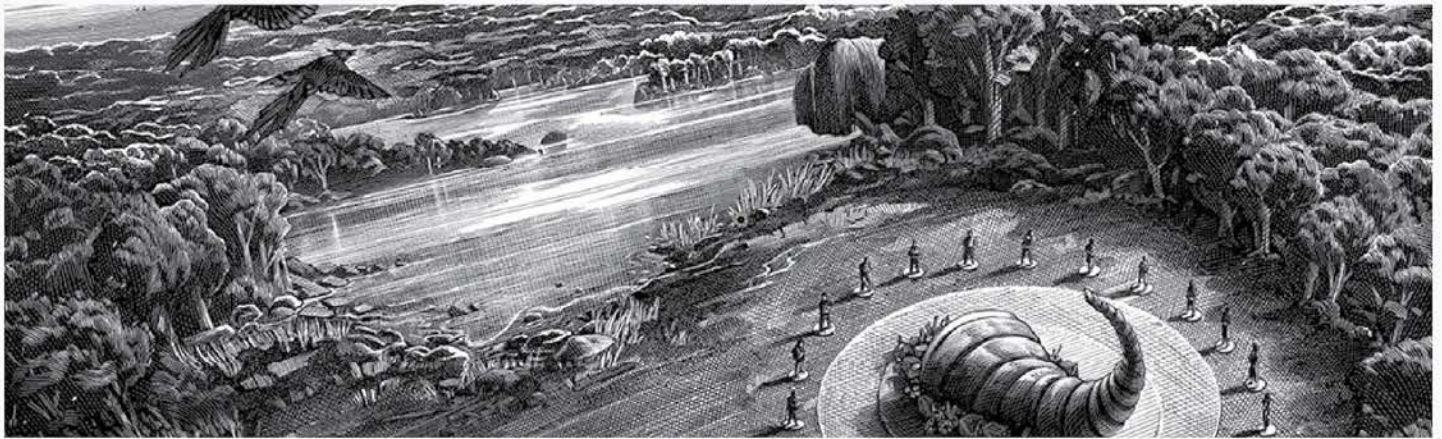


Autumn Term

THE HUNGER GAMES (2008) BY SUZANNE COLLINS

What is this book about?

Set in a post-apocalyptic America, this story is written from the perspective of Katniss Everdeen, an impoverished teenager living under a totalitarian government. Katniss is forced to participate in the wealthy Capitol's annual televised 'Hunger Games', a contest in which twenty-four young people must fight to the death until only one remains. Much of the story features Katniss struggling to deal with the morality of her position, and her difficulties projecting a media-friendly image that contradicts how she views herself.



Why has this book been chosen for Year 8?

- Adventure story written for young adults
- Teenager protagonist
- Morally complex character choices
- Discusses universal ethical issues
- Resilient and inspirational characters

Includes the following themes and ideas:

- Realistic depictions of violence
- Friendship
- Compassion and empathy
- Extreme poverty
- Perseverance
- Social inequality
- Amputation and disability
- Depression and PTSD
- Fascism

"As long as you can find yourself, you'll never starve."

SUZANNE COLLINS



Discussion Points:

- Wealth inequality – The disparity between the wealthy Capitol and impoverished districts
- Gender norms – Katniss is the main provider for her family at home, but in the district is forced to assume a feminine stereotype
- Social media – Katniss is forced to constantly consider the image she projects. This pressure could be linked to social media use today
- Satire – this novel could be seen as a satire of popular reality shows
- Resilience and integrity – Katniss and Peeta show remarkable perseverance, and attempt to stick to their moral code

Questions arising from the book:

How does the behaviour of the Capitol's citizens compare to those of the districts?

While the story is set in the far future, can any links be made to our own time?

Are there any wilderness survival tips someone reading this book could learn?

How does Katniss manipulate her public image, and how might this affect her self-esteem?

Are there any choices characters make that you disagree with?

Why is this story so popular?

What helps to keep Katniss going when things get tough? What and who helps you to keep going when things are hard?

About the author:

Suzanne Collins, born in 1962, is an American author who studied Theatre Arts and Dramatic Writing to Masters level at university. Collins was a writer for children's television before publishing *The Hunger Games*, and she also wrote a successful series of books called *The Underland Chronicles*. The massive success of the *Hunger Games* series, inspired by Greek mythology and her father's career in the Air Force, led to Collins becoming a household name. She was prompted to write the first book when flicking through TV channels and seeing the invasion of Iraq and reality TV shows "begin to blur in this very unsettling way." The series has sold millions of copies and been adapted into a hugely popular film franchise.





Spring Term

BOYS DON'T CRY (2010) MALORIE BLACKMAN

What is this book about?

At 17 years old, Dante's big dreams of going to university and becoming a journalist are cut short when he discovers he is the father of Emma, a baby girl. The story charts Dante struggling to come to terms with this new responsibility, as well as his family's efforts to incorporate Emma into their lives. Things are complicated by the homophobic abuse suffered by Dante's younger brother, Adam.



Why has this book been chosen for Year 8?

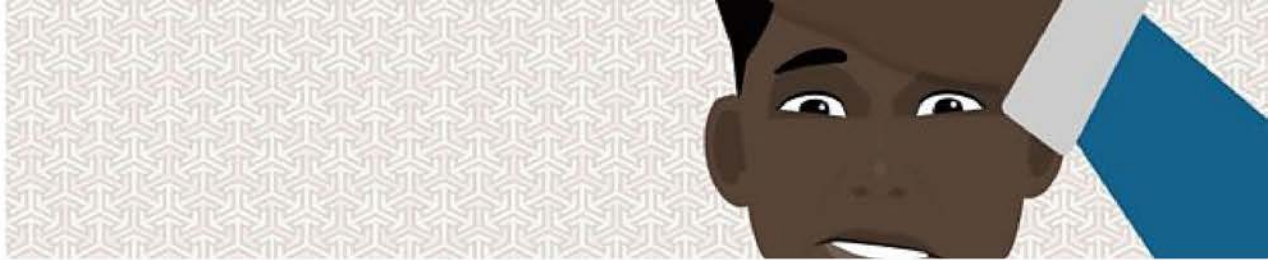
- Diverse characters
- Teenage male protagonists
- Realistic narrative
- Characters making difficult choices
- Responsibilities associated with various relationships
- Positive family dynamics

Includes the following themes and ideas:

- Independence
- The importance of family
- Supporting one another
- Teen pregnancy (17 years old)
- Single parenting
- The loss of a mother
- Resilience and adaptability
- Homophobic language and violence
- Allusions to alcohol use
- Attempted suicide (overdose)

“Boys don’t cry, but men do.”

MALORIE BLACKMAN



Discussion Points:

- Gender roles – Blackman states that teenage pregnancy is usually written from the point of view of the mother. This book examines masculinity from the perspective of a young father
- Discrimination – Dante's brother, Adam, is subject to verbal and physical homophobic abuse
- Relationships – the book explores the ties between friends, family, and romantic relationships
- Responsibility – Preceding the start of the narrative, Dante fails to act responsibly and must face the consequences (Emma). He becomes more responsible and thoughtful as the novel progresses

Questions arising from the book:

Was it fair of Mel to expect Dante to look after their baby?

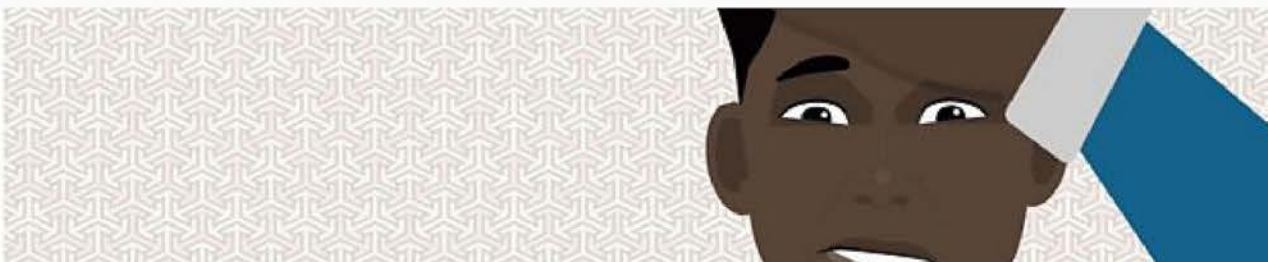
Did reading this book change how you view being a parent?

Is Dante a good dad?

Who is responsible for the homophobia Adam experiences?

Does Dante's age make parenting easier or more difficult for him? What struggles does he face?

Why does Blackman write this book from a first-person perspective? Is there a different character whose perspective you'd like to see?



About the author:

Malorie Blackman, born in 1962, is a well-known British writer, famous for her science fiction work including the acclaimed *Noughts and Crosses* series. Novels such as *Pig Heart Boy* and episodes of *Doctor Who* are examples of Blackman's writing for young people; she was Children's Laureate from 2013-2015. Nevertheless, her work deals with complex social and ethical issues: *Boys Don't Cry* examines the dynamics of different relationships such as fatherhood, brotherhood, and friendship. Blackman handles these topics with sensitivity, making the novel perfect for young readers.





Summer Term

A SHORT HISTORY OF NEARLY EVERYTHING (2003) BY BILL BRYSON

What is this book about?

A Short History of Nearly Everything attempts to explain everything we have learned about our planet and the universe including topics such as chemistry, palaeontology, astronomy and particle physics. Bryson explores time from the Big Bang to the discovery of quantum mechanics and considers the development of human knowledge and understanding through such topics as evolution and geology.



Why has this book been chosen for Year 8??

- Inspires passion for STEM careers
- Develops scientific understanding
- Develops concepts learned in Science lessons
- Builds appreciation for the development of knowledge
- Develops understanding of human progress
- Discussions of morality

Includes the following themes and ideas:

- Science
- Discovery
- Wonder and inspiration
- Progress (scientific/equality)
- Existence and survival
- Challenging views of religion (The Big Bang, Evolution)

“Protons give an atom its identity, electrons its personality.”

BILL BRYSON



Discussion Points:

- The democratising of science – how it initially benefited the few, but now is for the many
- Understanding of modern life – how science has allowed for more accessibility and convenience
- Perspective and humankind's place in the universe – the book considers the philosophical consequences of our existence, so limited in the enormity of space and time
- Individual genius – how individuals can change the world through their discoveries
- Changing gender roles – how equality has allowed for more scientific discoveries
- The benefits of collaboration

Questions arising from the book:

How old is the universe and how did it begin?

How big is the universe, and is there anything beyond it?

Where did the elements come from?

Can life exist on other worlds, or is it unique to Earth?

Where is Earth in the universe?

Has everything been discovered? What's next?



About the author:

Born in America in 1951, Bill Bryson has spent most of his life in the UK and was chancellor of Durham University from 2005 to 2011. Bryson frequently writes books on travel and *A Short History of Nearly Everything* was a departure from this topic. He wrote the book because he was unsatisfied with his own scientific knowledge, and wanted to ignite a passion for science that is sometimes lost in a textbook. The book has won a number of awards and is considered an engaging example of nonfiction.



Recommended Reading

Pupils are expected to always have a reading book with them. Once they have finished the term's book, pupils should pick a new one. If they are unsure of where to start, they should use the departmental reading lists, excerpts of which are below. All of these books are available in the School Library.

Art

- The Goldfinch by Donna Tart
- Art Matters by Neil Gaiman
- Yayoi Kusama - From Here to Infinity by Sarah Suzuki

Computing

- Once Upon an Algorithm by M Erwig
- Lauren Ipsum by C Bueno
- Algorithmic Puzzles by Levitin & Levitin
- Brown Dogs and Barbers by K Beecher

Design and Technology

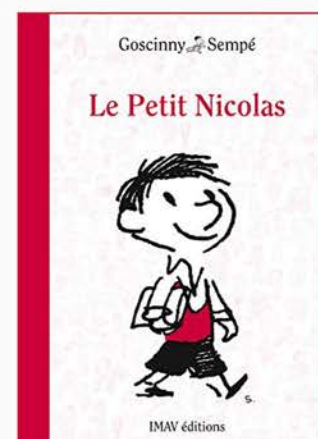
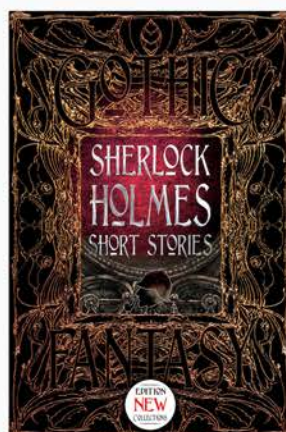
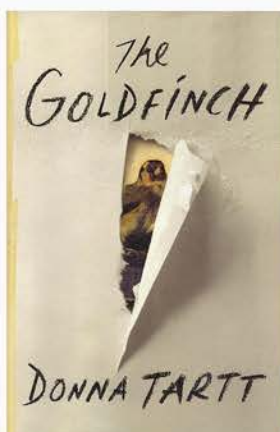
- World of Food: A Delicious Discovery of the Foods we Eat by Sandra Lawrence
- Woodworking Manual by Jackson Day
- Choosing and Using Hand Tools by Andy Rae

English

- The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie
- Sherlock Holmes Short Stories by Arthur Conan Doyle
- Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes
- We Should Hang Out Sometime: Embarrassingly, a True Story, Josh Sundquist

French

- French Short Stories for Beginners by Lingo Mastery
- Le petit Nicolas J'aime Lire by Bayard Jeunesse
- Weird and Amazing Facts about French History and Culture, George Kennedy



Recommended Reading

German

- The Flying Classroom by Erich Kastner
- Ink Heart. By Cornelia Funke
- German Stories for Beginners

Geography

- Pigeon English by Stephen Kelman
- Thin Air by Michelle Paver
- Running Wild, Michael Morpurgo
- Touching the Void by Joe Simpson
- How Bad Are Bananas? by Mike Berners-Lee

History

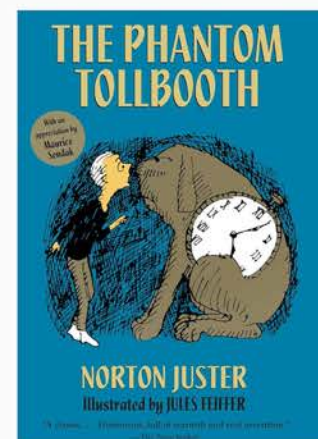
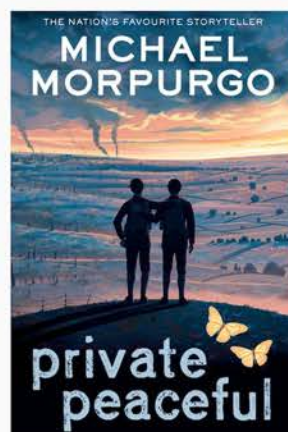
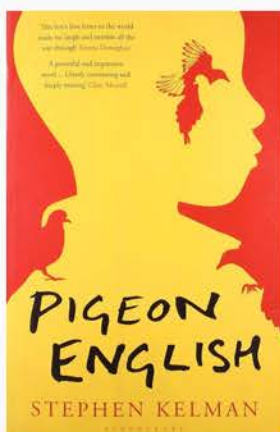
- Private Peaceful by Michael Morpurgo
- Goodnight Mr Tom by Michelle Magorian
- Time Traveller's Guide to Medieval England by Ian Mortimer
- The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
- The Ruby in the Smoke - A Sally Lockhart Mystery by Philip Pullman

Mathematics

- The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster
- Alex's Adventures in Numberland by Alex Bellos
- The Time and Space of Uncle Albert, Russell Standard
- The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage, Sydney Padua

Music

- The Lucy Variations by Sara Zarr
- Rhythm Ride: A Road Trip Through the Motown Sound by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad by M Anderson



Recommended Reading

Physical Education

- The Crossover by Kwame Alexander
- Kicks, The Great American Story of Sneakers by Nicholas Smith
- Shoe Dog by Phil Knight
- The Greatest by Matthew Syed

PSHEE

- 50 Fantastic Ideas for Mindfulness by Tammie Prince
- Upcycling and Recycling - Small Steps to Save The World by Robin Twiddy

Religious Studies

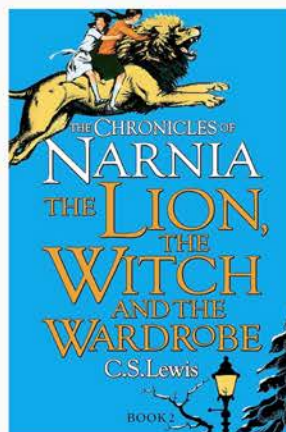
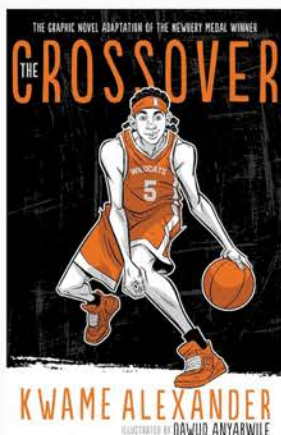
- The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S Lewis
- Hitler's Canary by Sandi Toksvig
- Refugee Boy by B Zephaniah
- Amazing Muslims who Changed the World by B Islam

Science

- The Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson
- The Fault in Our Stars by John Green
- Greta's story: the schoolgirl who went on strike to save the planet by Valentina Camerini
- Stuff that scares your pants off - the Science Museum book of scary things by Glenn Murphy

Spanish

- Muerte en Buenos Aires by Paco Ardit
- The Island by Ana María Matute
- Campo de Fresas by Jordi Sierra i Fabra
- Don Quixote by Cervantes and Davis (graphic novel)





Westcliff High School for Boys
UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

Headmaster: Mr M A Skelly M.A.

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