



ENGLISH ASSOCIATION * INCLUSIVE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN CASE STUDY

From reluctant to rapt:

How inclusive books impacted reading across 12 schools

KEY STAGE

EYFS–KS3 · Years 1–7 · ages 5–12

PERIOD

October 2024 – January 2025

INITIATIVE

Curated packs of 10 inclusive children's books for 12 participants across a range of school settings in England

AT A GLANCE

A modest intervention that made a meaningful difference

This collaborative case study between the English Association (EA) and Inclusive Books for Children (IBC) explores what happened when curated packs of 10 high-quality inclusive children's books were provided to 12 participants – headteachers, class teachers and school librarians – across diverse school settings in England, ranging from predominantly white, rural primary schools to multiethnic urban primaries, and alternative provisions. The participants had the freedom to use the books as they saw fit. The packs included a range of fiction picture books and short chapter books curated by IBC, with Black, South Asian, East and South East Asian, Middle Eastern, disabled, and neurodivergent characters.

HEADLINE FINDINGS

- There was a notable gap between participants' confidence in sharing books with pupils generally and sharing inclusive books specifically. Implementation of the inclusive book packs helped to narrow this gap.
- There was a broadly positive effect on reading enjoyment across the school settings.
- Pupils from ethnically minoritised backgrounds, particularly boys, showed notably increased engagement when they encountered book characters that made them feel represented (included pupils who had previously shown little interest in reading).
- In predominantly white-British cohorts, participants reported increased empathy among pupils.
- Several participants plan to embed inclusive books into school development plans, curriculum reviews and reading spines as a direct result of the initiative.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

The EA and IBC invited educators from their mailing lists to participate in the case study. Participants were selected from those who indicated an interest. Therefore, a limitation of this study is that the selection process was not systematic or random. Participants completed online questionnaires before and after the initiative, sharing background information and observations of how pupils responded to the texts and the impact on reading habits, engagement and personal development. The participants' responses also indicated their own attitudes to sharing inclusive books as classroom resources (see Appendix).

The participating schools

A**SCHOOL A**

An ethnically diverse urban primary in the North East with a majority-EAL intake and high levels of SEND pupils.

B**SCHOOL B**

An urban primary in Manchester, predominantly white British but with a number of EAL and sanctuary-seeking pupils.

C**SCHOOL C**

A diverse urban primary in the East Midlands with a high proportion of ethnically minoritised, EAL, disabled and/or neurodivergent pupils.

D**SCHOOL D**

A Coalfields-area primary in Sunderland where fewer than 4% of pupils belonged to minoritised ethnic groups.

E**SCHOOL E**

A rural Church of England primary in Lancashire with high percentages of white British pupils.

F**SCHOOL F**

A year 7 in Tower Hamlets, where the majority of pupils were from South Asian, culturally Muslim backgrounds.

G**SCHOOL G**

A small village primary in the East Midlands with a predominantly white pupil intake.

H**SCHOOL H**

An infant school in Sheffield.

I**SCHOOL I**

An alternative provision specialising in SEMH.

J**SCHOOL J**

An alternative provision specialising in SEMH, where pupils had been permanently excluded, or were at serious risk of exclusion, from mainstream education.

Background

Inclusive Books for Children (IBC) is a UK charity that specialises in reviewing and curating diverse children's books. The English Association (EA) is the leading cross-sector subject association for people passionate about English language, literature and creative writing.

We teamed up to explore and gain insight into how a curated collection of inclusive books would impact a sample of UK primary classrooms, with a particular focus on the following:

- effect on pupils' volitional reading;
- promotion of reading enjoyment and motivation; and
- development of teachers' confidence in sourcing and using inclusive texts, and implementing new reading for pleasure (RfP) strategies.

The inclusive book packs were derived from the IBC *Excluded Voices* report recommended fiction booklist, distilled to books most suited to the classroom. The inclusive book packs reading list is provided at the end of this case study.

Selecting texts for this initiative

The inclusive books used in this case study were chosen specifically with KS1 and LKS2 classes in mind. When evaluating fiction texts as classroom resources, we looked for engaging books that were technically well-crafted, for example books with clearly recognisable/memorable story structures and rich and interesting language/use of literary devices. They also had to feature well-rounded main characters from marginalised backgrounds. Additionally, we assessed whether each book had well-composed, supportive illustrations and design. (See Resources for more detail on how we determined quality of representation in the texts.)

Each book's content was also checked for appropriateness in terms of key stage and age/stage of development, including general levels of emotional maturity (although this could only fully be assessed by the participants, as they know their own pupils best).

We aimed for a diverse, exciting selection of book genres and themes that would match a wide range of pupils' interests, and included some captivating and thought-provoking read-alouds for storytime. We also added some texts to support cross-curricular topics and learning.

The book packs are listed in full on pages 17 and 18.

Before the initiative: state of play

The confidence gap

Most teachers and librarians love sharing books with their classes. But when it comes to inclusive books featuring minoritised ethnic, disabled or neurodivergent main characters, many feel less sure.

Before starting, we asked participants to rate their confidence in sharing books generally, and each of the 12 participants scored themselves a 4 or 5 out of 5. Asked about sharing inclusive books specifically, scores dropped for nearly half the participants, in some cases significantly.

One assistant headteacher rated themselves a 4 for sharing books generally, but just a 2 for inclusive titles. A highly experienced class teacher admitted: 'Sometimes, I feel like I'm the least knowledgeable person in the classroom when discussing some cultures, religions and traditions.'

This gap isn't about a lack of willingness. Every participant in the case study wanted to use more inclusive books with their pupils. The barriers were practical: not knowing which titles to choose, limited budgets and time, a reliance on 'safe' or familiar texts and, for some, a worry about getting it wrong.

Fear of getting it wrong: reading accents and dialects aloud

One Year 1 teacher raised another valid concern about reading aloud a text with dialogue in a dialect, pondering how she should 'approach reading this aloud without being offensive'.

When it comes to presenting and interpreting inclusive texts, being concerned about getting it wrong is a common concern for educators, and perfectly natural, but don't let that stop you trying. Recommendations for overcoming this include the following ideas:

- Practise reading the book aloud in advance. Look up any unfamiliar words to make sure you get the pronunciation right. This is particularly important with names, as stumbling over a name could come across as othering.
- Avoid mimicking an accent that's not your own: stick with your natural way of speaking.
- Varying pitch or speed can be a good way to differentiate voices instead.
- Consider sharing a recording of the book, ideally a video of the author reading the text in the intended accent or dialect.

This advice is from former School Librarian of the Year, **Amy McKay**, who has over 19 years' experience in school libraries and over a decade as The Carnegies National Coordinator.

Lack of suitable inclusive texts

Sourcing high-quality, inclusive children's books can be challenging for educators due to disparities in representation. The IBC *Excluded Voices* report found that in 2024, only 5.5% of children's books for ages 1 to 9 published in the UK featured main characters from minoritised ethnicities, while 30.7% of England's nursery and primary school population are from minoritised ethnicities. Meanwhile, just 7 books with disabled or neurodivergent main characters were published for this age range. For British children today, the literary landscape simply does not reflect the demographic reality.

Schools that strive to diversify their collections also face a daunting legacy problem. As one school librarian explained, children's publishing has historically been even less diverse than it is today; this lack of legacy stock means the 'deficit will take a number of years to address', even with a conscious effort to diversify new purchases.

Barriers to reading for pleasure (RfP)

Many of the participants identified familiar barriers to their pupils' enjoyment of reading books for pleasure:

- limited access to books they like at home;
- lack of parental reading role models;
- competing demands from screens and other technology; and
- low reading confidence, and tight school budgets.

Against this backdrop, the findings of this case study are all the more encouraging, suggesting that a relatively modest intervention can make a meaningful difference, even in challenging contexts.

Impact: what happened

So, how did the teachers and librarians choose to deploy the books? Most used the books for read-alouds in daily or weekly storytime sessions. Many also made the books available for pupils to browse and read independently during free reading time.

- At **School C**, one teacher ran an open carousel, with pupils reading in groups and feeding back to the class about each book and its author's background.
- At **School F**, the librarian kept the books in a box by the storytelling chair and let children choose which one she would read aloud.
- At **School J**, pupils read independently but also shared and swapped books with peers in an example of spontaneous, child-led behaviour.
- Several teachers linked the books to PSHE lessons or school values: at **School E**, *When the Stammer Came to Stay* was used in a lesson on accepting differences, and during National Storytelling Week the books became focus stories, with work displayed on classroom doors. At **School D**, book choices were linked to British Values through democratic voting.
- At **School G**, teachers shared the books in key-stage assemblies as well as in class, ensuring the whole school encountered them.

Book covers and first impressions

Front covers and back cover blurbs played a key role in determining the pupils' book choices. But their reactions to characters they saw on the book covers were perhaps more interesting.

At School B, the Year 4 teacher witnessed something she hadn't seen before. From the moment she introduced the books, displaying the covers and reading the blurbs, she observed that:

'Most of the children showed a marked interest in reading them. I noted that this included many children for whom reading is a big barrier and who often don't show much interest in books. Many of these children were also from ethnic minority backgrounds. Each day after lunch, a group of boys, all from ethnic minority backgrounds, raced to the bookshelf to read *Planet Omar*: *Accidental Trouble Magnet* and *Marv and the Mega Robot*. The competition became so fierce that we had to create a rota for them to all get a chance to read them.'

— Year 4 teacher, School B

Mirrors: *'That book was about me!'*

Some of the most powerful moments came when pupils encountered characters who reflected their own identities — what scholar Rudine Sims Bishop describes as books serving as 'mirrors'.

A key insight was offered by the Director of School Library Services in School F, whose experience across three school libraries gives her a unique vantage point.

She recalled a moment from another school she works in outside of this case study: 'The moment a student came into the room and saw [Marv] he said, "Oh! That boy looks like me!"'

At School F, where children are more accustomed to seeing diverse representation, the impact was subtler but no less meaningful. When the Director of School Library Services read a book that references a Muslim character early on, she noted that 'you could kind of feel a shift in the energy of the room'. She reflected: 'I think sometimes they hear that so little, that it takes them a while to assimilate the fact that their cultural identity is even in a book.'

At School E, a Church of England primary with a high percentage of white-British pupils, a Year 4 teacher reported after reading *When the Stammer Came to Stay*: 'One young boy (with a stammer) said that the book was "about me" and was quite happy about this. Clearly, he felt represented!'

Perhaps the most moving observation came from a teacher who described a pupil who had recently arrived in the UK as a refugee, an Arabic speaker whose English was conversational but not yet fluent, and who had no contact with his father. He came to tell her, unprompted, that he loved *Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet*. When she asked what he liked about it, 'he showed me a picture with the main character and his dad and said that he liked this page'. Asked what specifically appealed to him, 'he said he liked the colours'. His surface answers appeared simple, but the emotional resonance, the teacher felt, ran deeper.

Windows: understanding others

At School H, the Year 2 teacher watched something remarkable unfold after reading *Lizzie & Lucky: The Mystery of the Missing Puppies* to the class, which features a Deaf protagonist and an introduction to British Sign Language. A group of pupils began teaching themselves the signs included in the book during independent reading time. One child mentioned that their mum knew sign language, so the class invited her into school, and she taught them to sign two Christmas songs. 'The children were very keen to learn sign language,' the teacher noted.

At School C, the Year 1 teacher saw a similar effect of linking this particular book with people and experiences in real life: 'Lots of children could talk about people that they knew were deaf and some have gone home and learnt how to spell their name in sign language.'

In settings where pupils were less likely to encounter ethnic diversity in their daily lives, the inclusive books also opened what Sims Bishop calls 'windows' — views into experiences different from their own.

At School E, where the school population is predominantly white-British, the Year 4 teacher described how a Year 6 class responded to a book with a Black protagonist. One child said the character 'looks like' their Black classmate. Rather than shutting the comment down, the class teacher used the pupil's response to facilitate 'quite a mature chat' about race and representation. She felt 'it prompted a needed discussion'.

At School I, an older pupil commented that a couple of the author names 'sounded foreign'. The librarian used this as an opening for discussion about ethnicity and stereotypes, turning a problematic moment into a learning opportunity.



Handling conversations about race arising from reading inclusive books in class

by Liz Pemberton, aka The Black Nursery Manager

In my work with educators, I often draw on my framework, 'The 4E's of Anti-Racist Practice: Embrace, Embed, Ensure and Extend'.

It helps educators think about how anti-racist practice shows up in the everyday moments we share with children, including the conversations that arise when reading books together.

Children can be very candid and do not necessarily subscribe to the same ideas that we, as adults, may have about subjects that make us feel uncomfortable, and conversations about race may fall under this category. This might make adults feel unsure about how to respond but it isn't an excuse to stay silent; these moments are brilliant opportunities for educators to step into their responsibility.

Embrace Resist the urge to shut the moment down out of discomfort. Instead, acknowledge the comment and invite curiosity. You might say: 'Tell me what made you think that?' Understanding a child's thinking allows adults to respond thoughtfully rather than reactively. I would also add that you should never be afraid to let a child know that you'd like to go away and think about an answer and come back to them. It's important to model to children that you don't always have an instant, polished, perfect response!

Embed Inclusive books should not sit as occasional 'diversity moments'. They are part of embedding a classroom culture where identity, culture and difference are part of everyday conversation. Therefore, the more that you have these books within your library, the more conversations about diversity are normalised.

Ensure Adults must take responsibility for guiding the discussion. Children are not born racist, but they do absorb ideas from the world around them. Educators should model respectful language, challenge stereotypes, advocate for children who may be subject to bullying and help children think critically about assumptions.

Extend Use the moment to deepen learning. Conversations about race and identity do not need to be avoided; they need to be handled with honesty, care and clarity. Think about how you can get families involved, and look at ways to engage members of your community by inviting visitors from various faiths, cultures and ethnically diverse backgrounds, for example a Black firefighter to talk to the children about people who help in our community or a Rabbi to lead an assembly about Judaism. Their presence in the space is powerful.

For further guidance and resources on 'The 4E's of Anti-Racist Practice', visit www.theblacknurserymanager.com.

The power of ‘incidental’ representation

The Director of School Library Services in School F observed that the books which landed best were often those where a character’s identity was present but wasn’t the focus of the story (ie incidental representation). This mattered because, as she had discovered when creating a Black History Month display, books from the school’s existing collection featuring Black characters were overwhelmingly ‘about racism and trauma’. Pupils from minoritised ethnic and other marginalised groups are too often seeing themselves only in stories about suffering.

The inclusive book packs offered something different. *Lizzie & Lucky: The Mystery of the Missing Puppies* is a mystery adventure that happens to feature a Deaf protagonist; *Marv* is a superhero who happens to be Black, and so on. The Director of School Library Services at School F reflected on this:

‘I sometimes find it slightly complicated that books with diverse characters tend to be about “issues” rather than fun adventures — this is even more so the case at secondary, so any books like *Lizzie & Lucky* are absolutely invaluable!’

— Director of School Library Services, School F

This echoes the IBC philosophy that it is essential for children from marginalised groups to be represented across genres, for example in stories about robots, mysteries, superheroes and magic. The most popular titles in this study — *Marv and the Mega Robot*, *Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet*, *Lizzie & Lucky: The Mystery of the Missing Puppies* — were precisely those that combined representation with adventure, humour and page-turning plots.

Writing and creative expression

At School H, the teacher noticed something unexpected. After reading the picture book *What Happened to You?*, which pupils had voted to read, she set a writing task based on a different text entirely, asking children to create a new book character. Their new characters were ‘more diverse in terms of languages spoken, skin colour and disabilities (including a character with one leg, one with a hearing aid, a wheelchair user and a blind character)’. For the first time, a child also drew a character wearing a hijab, which was brilliant to see.’

The inclusive books hadn’t just broadened what these pupils were reading. They had broadened who they were imagining too.

Alternative provision: where engagement can be elusive

Two of the participating schools, School I and School J, were alternative provision where pupils had significant additional needs, including social, emotional and mental health, or had been permanently excluded or at serious risk of exclusion from mainstream education.

At **School I**, the librarian reported a 'big positive impact' on motivation. Pupils who had been reluctant readers 'Became more motivated, some coming along to the book club after a few sessions. They enjoyed the social side of being able to discuss and I noted that turn taking and being able to listen to others improved.'

In this case, the books weren't just supporting reading engagement and motivation, they were supporting the pupils' social and communication skills.

At **School J**, where pupil year groups ranged from Years 3 to 6, the Teaching and Learning Lead noted that the positive impact was not only 'largely due to the diversity of the books but also the fact that they were new, and this particular class got to read them first'.

Children were sharing books with peers and swapping them on completion: coveted organic, child-led reading behaviours. School J had only one girl among the participating pupils; the rest were boys. Picture books proved particularly effective: 'they are instantly more appealing for our children'.

For all pupils, but particularly those with additional needs, lower reading confidence or English as an additional language, high-quality picture books can offer an accessible, undaunting way into stories that a chapter book might not.



Further observations

The participants were asked to quantify the perceived impact of the initiative on their pupils' reading habits and personal, emotional and social development. Progress was difficult to measure, particularly over such a short timeframe so we have not presented any data, but it is worth highlighting some broad, discernible patterns.

Enjoyment and motivation improved

Enjoyment and motivation were widely reported as improved. For example in School A, a Year 4 teacher observed that previously disengaged boys were hiding books in their trays to ensure they could keep reading them.

Empathy increased

Empathy was also widely recorded to have increased, with the biggest impact noted in two predominantly white settings.

Teacher confidence improved

Among participants who took part in the initiative, there was a generalised sense of improved confidence about using inclusive books after the initiative. For several, the impact went beyond personal confidence into systemic change.

Staff at **School E** are embedding inclusive books into the School Development Plan for 2026/27; **School D** is linking future English topics to more diverse texts; **School G** is building inclusive texts into a new reading spine; and the librarian at **School I** plans to feature inclusive books as part of a regular reading cycle.

For one experienced school librarian, the book pack served to disrupt engrained habits. Despite a deep commitment to diverse representation, she acknowledged her tendency to reach for familiar titles — 'old favourites ... from an earlier period of publishing when diversity was almost entirely absent'. She admitted that having a ready-made unfamiliar, inclusive selection 'forced [her] hand a bit' and gave her more confidence.

'I don't need to know a book inside out — I can just go for it and start reading.'

— Experienced school librarian

Key takeaways

- 1 A pre-curated book bundle can bridge the gap between intention and action**
— by introducing new texts that educators might not have found alone, and circumventing the pull of well-worn favourites.
- 2 Representation can heighten engagement, especially for reluctant readers**
The most dramatic engagement shift occurred among pupils from minoritised ethnic groups who had previously shown little interest in reading. The combination of authentic representation and high-quality, exciting stories proved irresistible.
- 3 Incidental representation is as important as issues representation**
Books where characters' identities were woven naturally into an adventure, mystery or comedy landed well across the school settings.
- 4 The impact of inclusive books extends beyond reading**
Heightened empathy, sign language learning, more diverse creative writing, and mature conversations about identity were among the ripple effects reported.

Final thoughts

The 12 educators in this case study have demonstrated that diversifying school and class libraries to stimulate pupils' volitional reading and reading enjoyment isn't an impossible goal. It can be as simple as sharing a handful of good quality books with the class and building from there.

Thanks to the headteachers, assistant headteachers, class teachers and school librarians who generously shared their time, observations and classrooms, and to Liz Pemberton and Amy McKay for their thoughtful contributions.

RESOURCES

How to select high-quality inclusive fiction texts: a checklist

- 1 Choose books with inclusive characters**

Select texts that feature prominent characters from marginalised groups, including disabled, neurodivergent, LGBTQIA+, or minoritised ethnic characters. Also, search for stories with non-traditional family structures, or perspectives historically excluded from children's literature.
- 2 Look for marginalised protagonists, not just sidekicks or background characters**

For representation to be meaningful, marginalised characters must have significant agency within the story: they must drive the plot, and have a voice and a name.
- 3 Seek out incidental representation**

Some of the most powerful books in this case study were those where a character's marginalised identity was evident but didn't form the basis of the story plot. Select texts where characters are having fun adventures, not just stories about suffering or being different.
- 4 Look for Own Voice creators**

In Own Voice stories, main characters share the same marginalised identity as the author and/or illustrator who created them, eg a disabled illustrator drawing a disabled main character who shares their disability, or a Black author writing about a Black main character. This is a good indicator of authenticity.
- 5 Think collection, not single book**

No single book can do all the above. The goal is a balanced diverse collection. Legacy stock will almost certainly be skewed towards traditionally dominant groups, and every book purchase going forward is an opportunity to work towards balance over time.

4 easy next steps

Let us do the heavy lifting. IBC exists to make diversifying your book collection easy.

1**Browse and discover**

Visit www.inclusivebooksforchildren.org for double-reviewed inclusive books, and curated booklists by theme, age, and representation category.

2**Get the children excited about books**

The IBC Children's Choice Awards invite children to read the IBC Awards shortlisted titles and vote for their winner. [Sign up](#) to be notified when registrations open in autumn.

3**Apply for free books**

Boxes of 100 inclusive books are gifted to state primaries each year through the IBC Book Box Scheme. [Sign up](#) to be notified when applications open in June.

4**Hear from experts**

Explore the [English Association's events](#) for live webinars and recordings on using high-quality children's literature in the classroom.

Further reading

- Bishop, R. S. (1990). 'Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors'. *Perspectives*, 6(3), pp. ix–xi.
- *Excluded Voices*, annual analysis of Own Voice representation in UK children's book publishing (IBC).
- *Reflecting Realities*, annual survey of ethnic representation within UK children's literature (CLPE).
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1970). *Literature as Exploration*. rev. edn. Heinemann.

Participants chose one of the following book bundles

1 PACK 1

KS1 (picture books) & KS1/LKS2 crossover texts (chapter books and picture books)

KS1 — PICTURE BOOKS

Look Up! · Nathan Bryon and Dapo Adeola

B

Faruq and the Wiri Wiri · Sophia Payne and Sandhya Prabhat

SA

The Brighter I Shine · Kamee Abrahamian and Lusine Ghukasyan

ME

What Happened to You? · James Catchpole and Karen George

D

Gina Kaminski Saves the Wolf · Craig Barr-Green and Francis Martin

ND

KS1/LKS2 CROSSOVER — CHAPTER & PICTURE BOOKS

Marv and the Mega Robot · Alex Falase-Koya, illus. Paula Bowles

B

Nikhil and Jay: Flying High · Chitra Soundar, illus. Soofiya

SA / MH

The Boy Who Grew a Tree · Polly Ho-Yen, illus. Sojung Kim McCarthy

ESEA / MH

Lizzie & Lucky: The Mystery of the Missing Puppies · Megan Rix, illus. Tim Budgen

D

When the Stammer Came to Stay · Maggie O'Farrell, illus. Daniela Jaglenka Terrazzini

ND

B = Black · SA = South Asian · ESEA = East & South East Asian · Me = Middle Eastern · D = Disabled · ND = Neurodivergent · MH = Mental Health · Mu = Muslim



2 PACK 2

KS1/LKS2 crossover texts & LKS2 chapter books

KS1/LKS2 CROSSOVER — CHAPTER & PICTURE BOOKS

Marv and the Mega Robot · Alex Falase-Koya, illus. Paula Bowles

B

Nikhil and Jay: Flying High · Chitra Soundar, illus. Soofiya

SA / MH

The Boy Who Grew a Tree · Polly Ho-Yen, illus. Sojung Kim McCarthy

ESEA / MH

Lizzie & Lucky: The Mystery of the Missing Puppies · Megan Rix, illus. Tim Budgen

D

When the Stammer Came to Stay · Maggie O'Farrell, illus. Daniela Jaglenka Terrazzini

ND

LKS2 — CHAPTER BOOKS

Future Hero: Race to Fire Mountain · Remi Blackwood, illus. Alicia Robinson

B

Sona Sharma: Very Best Sister · Chitra Soundar, illus. Jen Khatun

SA

Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet · Zanib Mian, illus. Nasaya Mafaridik

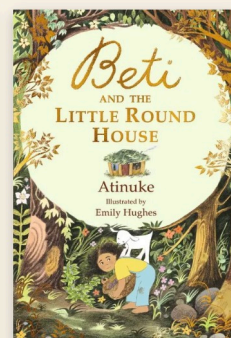
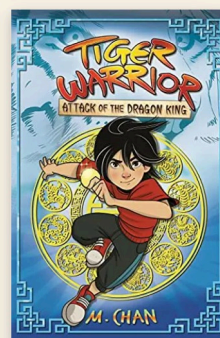
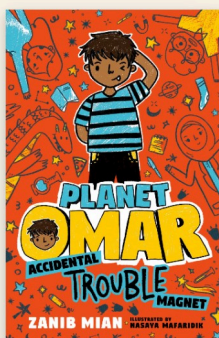
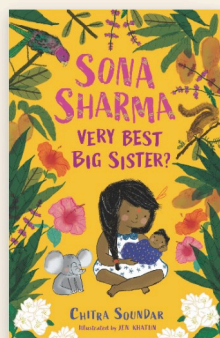
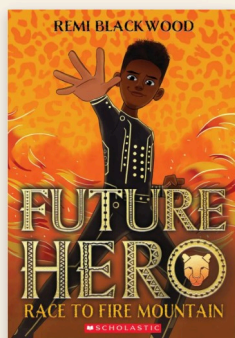
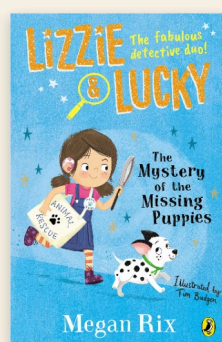
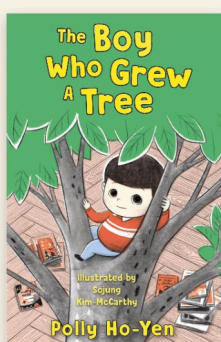
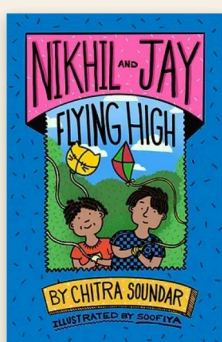
MU / SA

Tiger Warrior: Attack of the Dragon King · Maisie Chan, illus. Alan Brown

ESEA / MH

Beti and the Little Round House · Atinuke, illus. Emily Hughes

B / MH



ABOUT

Inclusive Books for Children (IBC)

Inclusive Books for Children is a UK literacy charity with a free website that helps families, teachers and librarians build more inclusive bookshelves.

We showcase stories that positively represent diverse families, disabilities, different ethnicities and identities, while challenging gender stereotypes or other harmful tropes. Central to our mission is celebrating Own Voice authors and illustrators across everything we do, culminating in our annual IBC Awards.

Among several initiatives, our outreach includes IBC Book Box, a scheme that provides hundreds of free inclusive titles to schools every year. We also conduct evidence-based research into the representation of marginalised voices in UK children's publishing.

Visit us and find your next favourite read:
www.inclusivebooksforchildren.org.

ABOUT

The English Association (EA)

The English Association is the leading cross-sector subject association for people passionate about English language, literature, and creative writing. We connect individuals and organisations from all sectors of education and all areas of English studies.

Through our publications, events, and networks, we promote dialogue, share expertise, and celebrate our discipline. We are committed to working with partners across SHAPE and STEM subjects to create the future through education.

Join the national conversation about English and become a member today:
www.englishassociation.ac.uk/join-us.



APPENDIX · PRACTITIONER QUESTIONNAIRES

Pre-intervention questionnaire

-
- 01** What is your job title?
-
- 02** Which year group(s) are participating in the study?
-
- 03** It's useful for us to understand the demographics of your class (teacher and children), eg home language, ethnicity, SEND. Please briefly describe below (without identifying any individuals).
-
- 04** How confident do you feel in sharing books with your class? (1–5 scale)
-
- 05** How confident do you feel in sharing inclusive books with your class? (1–5 scale)
-
- 06** Will you be able to draw on lived experiences when sharing these inclusive books with your class?
-
- 07** Think about your current classroom setting. What messages around inclusivity and representation do you feel it presents?
-
- 08** What barriers exist around reading for pleasure for children in your class? Do you feel any of these challenges relate to representation gaps in books?
-
- 09** What are your own and your children's current attitudes towards reading inclusive books? (eg Would you choose a book with a Black or disabled character on the front cover to read to the class?)
-
- 10** To what extent are you able to introduce books that are not already agreed in your school curriculum?
-
- 11** Are you already familiar with any of the Own Voice creators or their books in your book pack?
-
- 12** What will you do to prepare for use of the inclusive books?
-
- 13** Are you planning to employ any new reading for pleasure practices to introduce these books to the children? Tick all that apply.
- regular, planned read-alouds, eg storytime
 - drama/drawing to promote extra talk during read-alouds
 - informal talk about the books, eg child-to-child or child-to-adult
 - being a teacher reader
 - school-library visits or Own Voices author/illustrator visits
 - free time and space for children to choose and read books independently
 - child-led/curated, interactive and diverse book displays
 - structured opportunities to read together informally, sharing books and peer recommendations, eg book clubs, book cafes, book 'shopping'
 - family reading sessions in school time
 - Other (Briefly describe any other RfP practices you are planning to introduce)
-
- 14** Please select from the following book pack options.
-

APPENDIX · PRACTITIONER QUESTIONNAIRES

Post-intervention questionnaire

-
- 01** How are the children using the books?
-
- 02** Did children get the chance to take the books home, and if so, did the children reflect on this experience at all?
-
- 03** Did the children have an opportunity to choose the book they wanted to read/hear being read? Did you notice any patterns in their choices?
-
- 04** Did you observe the children talking about the inclusive books? What sort of things did they say? (eg expressions of book preferences, connections to home-life experiences)
-
- 05** Were any challenging or insensitive comments made? If so, how did you handle them?
-
- 06** Did you observe any changes in your children's reading habits or attitudes related to:
- Frequency (*big positive impact / small positive impact / no impact / don't know*)
 - Enjoyment (*big positive impact / small positive impact / no impact / don't know*)
 - Motivation (*big positive impact / small positive impact / no impact / don't know*)
 - Stamina (*big positive impact / small positive impact / no impact / don't know*)
-
- 07** Any additional reflections on changes to your children's reading habits and attitudes? (optional)
-
- 08** Did you observe any changes in your children's personal, emotional, and social skills related to:
- Self-confidence (*big positive impact / small positive impact / no impact / don't know*)
 - Self-esteem (*big positive impact / small positive impact / no impact / don't know*)
 - Sense of belonging (*big positive impact / small positive impact / no impact / don't know*)
 - Empathy (*big positive impact / small positive impact / no impact / don't know*)
-
- 09** Any additional reflections on changes to your children's personal, emotional, and social skills? (optional)
-
- 10** Were there any differences in how boys and girls engaged with the texts?
-
- 11** Which texts had the most impact on your children's reading for pleasure? Why do you think that was?
-
- 12** Would you/your school consider buying more inclusive books for your library/book stock?
-
- 13** Were there any gaps in representation or book genres for your class?
-
- 14** Having now used your IBC book pack, how confident do you feel about incorporating inclusive books into your reading for pleasure planning in the future, and why? (1–5 scale plus free text)
-
- 15** Having now used your IBC book pack, how confident do you feel about sharing books with your class in general, and why? (1–5 scale plus free text)