

# Swalecliffe Community Primary School's Reading Newsletter, Term 1



Welcome back Swalecliffe families! The English Team hope that you had a lovely summer! A huge well done to the children who have received their certificates and bookmarks for completing the Summer Reading Bingo.

The English Team hasn't changed this year but let us re-introduce ourselves:



Miss Garton - English Lead



Mrs Back - Phonics Lead



Mrs Hughes - Libraries Lead

The English Team are here to support with any questions or queries that you may have about Reading. There is an information sheet called 'Reading is the Key to Success' accompanying this term's Reading Newsletter to support parents. Below is a guide to some of the phrases and terms that our school uses in our approach to our Reading Curriculum.

**Book Talk** - This is a whole class session that happens four days a week in all classes. In these sessions the children focus on high-quality texts from a range of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. We combine the use of outstanding books with a focus on talk and developing comprehension skills. Children consider the themes of the book; enjoy shared and independent reading; develop reading skills and carry out activities linked to the book they are focusing on. Questioning is key during these session. In Book Talk, we use Jane Considine's 'Reading Rainbow' to help focus on reading skills.

**Guided Reading** - In Year R and 1, some of our children also do guided reading. An adult will work with a small number of children to analyse a text in detail, encouraging children to read words, understand the words and/or discuss the meaning of the text with them. Guided reading is 'small-group reading instruction designed to provide differentiated teaching that supports pupils in developing reading proficiency'. This small group model allows students to be taught in a way that is intended to be more focused on their specific needs, accelerating their progress. When the children have read in a guided reading group, their reading recorded will then be stamped. The book will be a phonics-based reader.

**Phonics** - From the earliest stages, we believe in building the vital foundations for our children with the teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics. At our school, we use the Twinkl Phonics scheme. From Year R, the children are taught discrete phonics every day with their class teacher and in smaller groups for those who need more support. Twinkl Codebreakers is used in KS2 for any of our children who continue to need some extra support with phonics.



These are some really useful links for parents to help support with the phonics your children are learning in school -

- Twinkl Phonics Youtube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@TwinklPhonics>
- Level 2 sounds and actions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SzkjubQ-Ok>
- Level 3 sounds and actions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZGwM48Wy5E>
- Level 5 GPCs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ugGQqMmvFA>
- Level 6 GPCs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4s1009coZnk>

This is also the link for the English page of our school website where you can find lots of information about our curriculum: phonics, reading aims, Book Talk, reading book bands and a celebration of reading at our school:

<https://www.swalecliffeprimary.org/english-1/>



After half term, we will be starting the following up again for this year:

- Open Infant Library Mornings before school;
- Lunchtime Book Swap for the whole school run by the English Subject Champions;
- Lunchtime Infant and Junior Library clubs.

I will include details of these in our Term 2 Reading Newsletter and there will be reminders in the Week Ahead so keep an eye out!

A Reading Cafe Club has already started for Years 4-6 and has proved very popular so I will be thinking about how to run another later in the year for our younger children ...



## Exciting News!!!

The lovely Lucy Strange - brilliant children's author of books such as 'Our Castle by the Sea' and the 'Mermaid in the Millpond' - has agreed to be our adopted author for the year. This is such exciting news and we are so very lucky to be welcoming Lucy into the 'Swalecliffe Reading Fold'. Lucy has written our children a letter (below) and is also recording a video message for them.



HELLO all you brilliant young people at Swalecliffe Community Primary School!

I am Lucy Strange and I am OVERJOYED to be your adopted author this year.

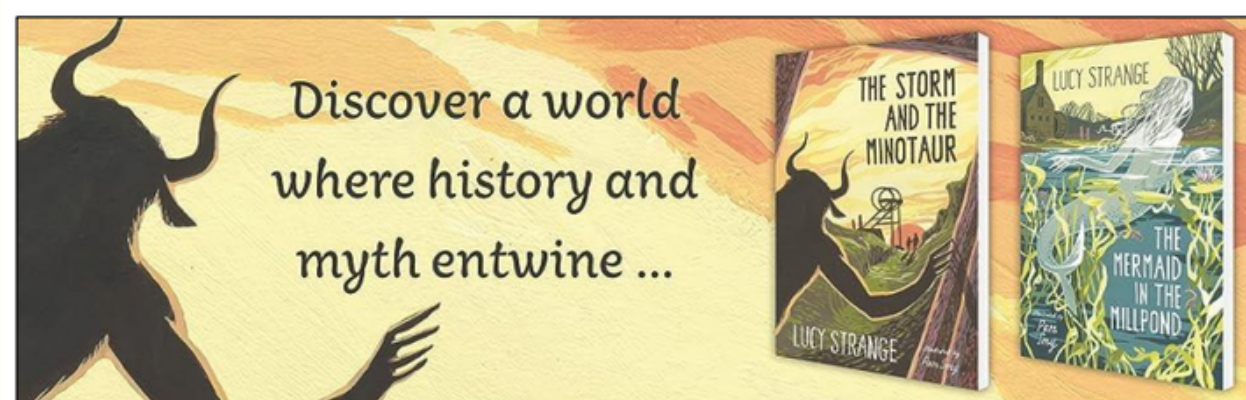
Oh I hope you are excited about all the amazing books you'll be reading over the coming months, both as a class and on your own too.

Sharing stories is a really special thing. You can discuss your predictions, argue about favourite characters (usually the villain for me!), experience those highs and lows and twists and surprises together, and collectively groan when your teacher stops reading at a tremendous cliffhanger.

But there's something really magical about reading a book on your own too. Make sure you allow yourself the time and space to get into it – especially when you're at the beginning and you're trying to work out who's who and what's going on. You'll need a bit of peace and quiet, away from distractions. Be patient, sink into the story and before you know it you'll be immersed in a different world!

Wishing you all the most wonderful reading adventures,

*Lucy Strange.*



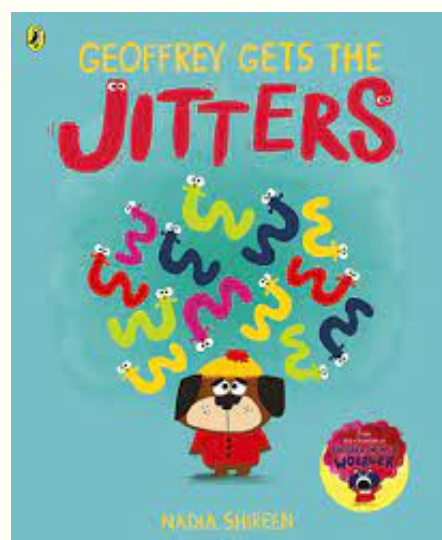
Lucy's latest release is titled 'The Storm and the Minotaur'. I recommend this book for children who are 7+ (KS2). About the book ...

Money is scarce in George's family and so at the age of nine he has to join his father underground, hewing coal in the local mine. It's far from the dreams George had of continuing his education, and it's also a dangerous way to earn a living that has already claimed the life of his dad's older brother.

Not long after he starts work, a summer storm leads to flooding in the mine. Trapped down in the dark, George spots a shadowy figure that seems to be telling George to follow him. Can a ghost from the past lead him back to safety, or will George meet the same fate as his long-lost uncle?

Throughout the book, there are powerful illustrations by artist Pam Smy. 'The Storm and the Minotaur' is published by Barrington-Stoke whose books are expertly designed to help dyslexic and *reluctant readers*.

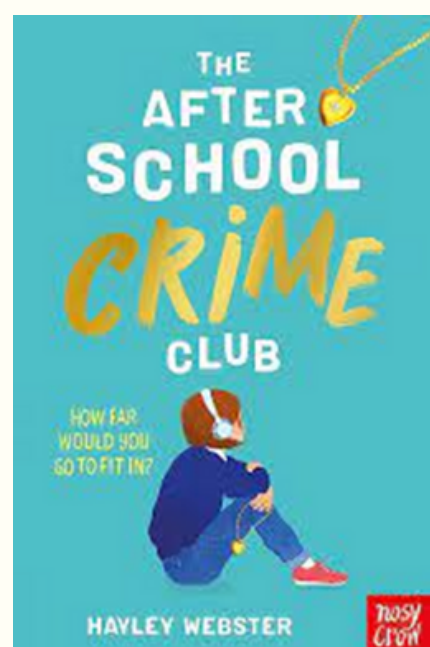
Lucy invited our English Subject Champions to the launch of the book in Canterbury.



## This Term's Book Reviews ...

**Geoffrey Gets the Jitters** by Nadia Shireen  
Puffin, Ages 4+

Another amazing book about feelings: getting children to recognise their 'jitters' and giving them strategies to regulate and feel better. The useful 'Guide to Worries' on the back pages is a particularly great touch to start conversations with children about their worries.

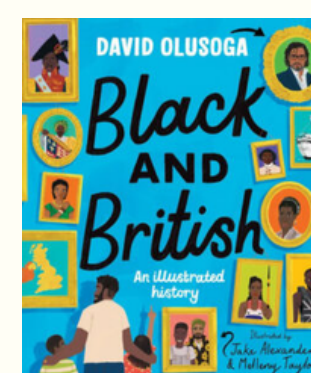


**Peril on the Atlantic** by A.M. Howell  
Usborne, Ages 8+

Howell is an absolute powerhouse in historical fiction so you always know that her books are going to grip the reader. This mystery is set in 1936. As the Queen Mary crosses the Atlantic, Alice and Sonny uncover a sinister plot and race to solve the mysteries that they are uncovering.

**The After School Crime Club** by Hayley Webster  
Nosy Crow, Ages 9+

Mister Bodd (No Shelf Control) believes that this book is going to be a very important book, showing how those who feel like outsiders can get caught up in bad situations. Willow makes some new friends who give her dares in exchange for friendship, but soon she starts to wonder if things are going a little to far.



## Some Reading Dates/Events Coming Up

These are dates that you may find useful to hone in on reading with your child and celebrate the joys of a book ...

**Black History Month, October** - Of course, Black History isn't just for one month of the year but this month is a great chance to share books that celebrate black communities or the lives of key Black British figures. Go to:



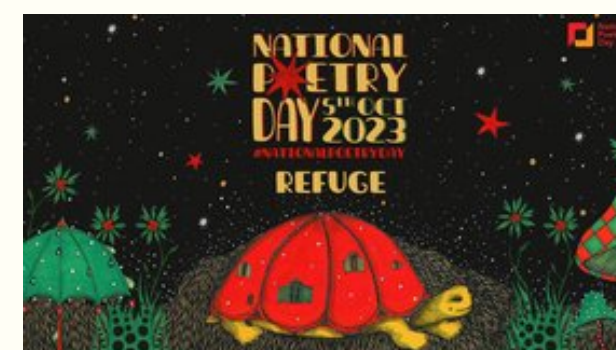
<https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>

<https://www.booksfortopics.com/booklists/topics/history/black-british-history/>

**Libraries Week, 2nd to 8th October** - This year focuses on sustainability and climate change. Visit:  
<https://librariesweek.org.uk/>



**National Poetry Day, 5th October** - This year's theme is 'refuge'.



**World Mental Health Day, 10th October** - Reading is an effective way to help people take care of their mental health and wellbeing.



Change your story

**Reading can help everyone and is a great way to:**



Relax, unwind and boost their mood



Escape from the pressures of life and reduce their stress levels



Improve your memory and concentration



Also the Blue Peter Reading Club is up and running - it looks fantastic with children being able to gain a Blue Peter Reading Badge:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/findoutmore/blue-peter-apply-for-a-book-badge>

Thank you for taking the time to read this term's Reading Newsletter. I hope that you have found it useful. As always, myself, the rest of the English Team and your class teachers are always here to speak with you about how to help with your child's reading.

Here's to a fabulous year of reading at our school!

The kindest regards,  
Miss Garton  
Deputy Head and English Lead

