

Peters **Championing diversity**

Diversify your library to revolutionise literacy at your school

Discover diverse books highlighting neurodiversity, LGBTQIA+, disability, family life and more

Reflecting Realities

Key findings from CLPE's study into diversity in children's literature

Auditing checklist

Is your library up-to-date?

Exclusive author interviews

Maisie Chan, Patrick Kane and Oleksandr Shatokhin talk racial stereotypes, human bionics and the conflict in Ukraine

Classroom activities

Talking to your class about poverty and homelessness

Inclusive furniture

Seating and accessories for SEND spaces

Diverse book recommendations

Straight from our School Curriculum Advisors and Reading for Pleasure Advisors



“I believe that every child can be a reader, and deserves to see their experiences reflected in books, and to feel that they too can be the heroes of their own stories.”

S.F. Said
Award-winning children’s author
CLPE *Reflecting Realities* report, 2022



Diverse books change lives

Despite challenging budget cuts, teachers are admirably finding ways to introduce pupils to new diverse books – and we’re right behind you. School libraries should be a place where children can find stories that reflect their experiences, where they can encounter new perspectives, and where they can engage with ideas and cultures that are different from their own.

When pupils encounter these stories, they are exposed to new ways of thinking and can gain a deeper understanding of people from diverse backgrounds. This can help to break down stereotypes and promote tolerance, respect and inclusivity.

Despite this, only 11% of published fiction books feature minority ethnic characters, according to the CLPE’s 2022 *Reflecting Realities* report. This can

make it difficult and time-consuming to find high-quality, diverse titles – which is where we can help.

As the UK’s leading specialist supplier of children’s books to schools and libraries, Peters is immensely proud to be working with publishers to get diverse books into schools and into the hands of children. Teachers and librarians are a vital part of this journey, and we hope this magazine gives you some tips and inspiration for diversifying your own collection as well as some fun activities you can enjoy with your class.

If there’s anything else we can help with, just get in touch!

Anna Rushall
Schools Team Manager



Changing life stories

We were thrilled to donate over £500 of books to Birmingham Stories’ Afro-Manga book club after fundraising on World Book Day. Delivered in partnership with the National Literacy Trust and the Black Heritage Support Service, the club is raising literacy levels and changing the life stories of young people across the city.



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Contact our schools team for bespoke selections and advice by emailing hello@peters.co.uk or calling us on **0121 666 6646**.

You can also discover our full diverse primary books selection online by scanning the QR code on your smartphone or visiting peters.co.uk/browse-diverse-and-inclusive-books-primary.



We’d love to get your feedback!

Email hello@peters.co.uk with any topics you’d like to see covered in the next issue.

Connect with us on social media



Diversity in children's literature: the research



CLPE's annual *Reflecting Realities* report is the first UK study to explore diversity in children's literature. It tracks the extent and quality of the ethnic representation of minority characters featured in picture books, fiction and non-fiction titles for ages 3-11 published in the UK.

Key findings from the 2022 report include a significant increase in books featuring minority ethnic characters from 4% in 2017 to 20% in 2021. However, minority representation in fiction remains low at 11%, lagging behind picture books and non-fiction.

The report also noted concerns about the quality of portrayals of characters of colour, stating that they '...tend to sit on a spectrum of vague at worst to great at best.' It stated that readers should encounter characters '...with agency, who are identifiable, relatable, nuanced, varied and are central to the narrative.'

A particular absence of diverse characters was identified in horror and science fiction titles. CLPE proposed that these genres can '...add new dimensions and texture to a child's reading experiences, broadening their appreciation of how books might thrill, delight, shock or intrigue us.'

Exposing children to a wide variety of high-quality diverse books is central to enabling young readers to feel affirmed, inspired and entertained. The report stressed that '...striving for quality, balance and consistency is key.'

"We know that a child's life chances are improved by their access to and enjoyment of quality literature, and that their engagement with literature is improved when they can see themselves and their experiences reflected in a meaningful way."

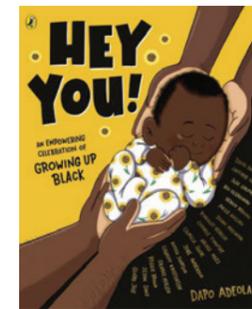
Sarah Crown
Director of Literature at
Arts Council England

Less than **4%** of children's books feature a Black main character, dropping to under **1%** for Asian, Chinese and Arab main characters

Reflecting Realities

Featuring multidimensional characters and sensitive portrayals of cultural topics, these reads were praised in CLPE's 2022 *Reflecting Realities* report.

Save up to **26%** on all titles at peters.co.uk*



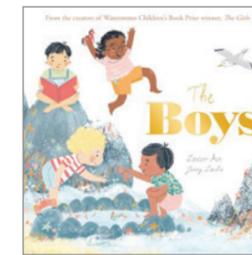
Hey, You!

by Dapo Adeola

This award-winning picture book addresses Black children's experiences of systematic racism. It's fantastic for classroom discussion

ISBN: 9780241521946

Peters price £5.91 RRP: £7.99



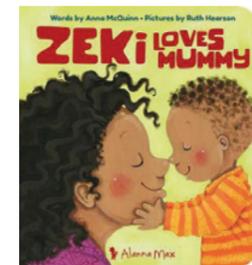
The Boys

by Lauren Ace

Exploring the importance of male friendships, this touching book presents themes of individuality, grief, togetherness and feelings. Perfect for diversity and inclusion collections

ISBN: 9781838914172

Peters price £5.17 RRP: £6.99



Zeki Loves Mummy

by Anna McQuinn

Zeki and his mum fill their day with giggling, snacking, splashy painting and reading! This is a sweet depiction of a multicultural family with lovely illustrations

ISBN: 9781907825330

Peters price £5.17 RRP: £6.99



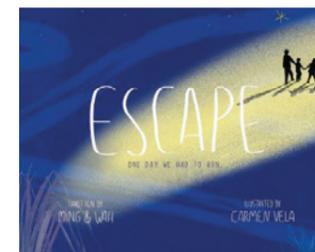
We're Going to Find the Monster!

by Malorie Blackman

A celebration of creativity, fantasy and family, this rip-roaring adventure is a joy to read aloud. Join two intrepid explorers as their imaginations transform their house into a wild wonderland!

ISBN: 9780241401309

Peters price £5.91 RRP: £7.99



Escape: One Day We Had to Run

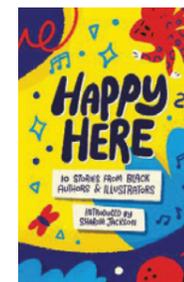
by Ming & Wah

Twelve true stories of 20th and 21st century refugees are recounted in this poignant non-fiction title. Throughout history, ordinary people have been forced to leave their families and homes because of war, famine, slavery, intolerance, economic and political upheaval, or climate change. These remarkable tales of escape from around the world show how people overcome tremendous obstacles in their fight to freedom

ISBN: 9781911373810

Peters price £9.61 RRP: £12.99

More of the report's recommended reads



Happy Here

New stories, poems and illustrations from Black British authors and illustrators

ISBN: 9781913311162

Peters price £5.17

RRP: £6.99



We Have a Dream

by Mya-Rose Craig

Profiles of 30 young, diverse climate change activists and campaigners

ISBN: 9781913520205

Peters price £9.61

RRP: £12.99



Tomoko Takes the Lead

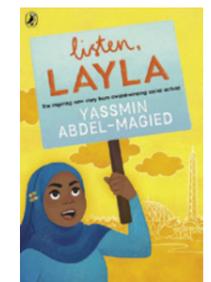
by Kit Rosewater

Shy, introverted Tomoko heads to a roller derby sleepaway camp

ISBN: 9781419762031

Peters price £5.17

RRP: £6.99



Listen, Layla

by Yassmin Abdel-Magied

Reflecting the diaspora experience of a Sudanese-Australian character

ISBN: 9780241524268

Peters price £5.91

RRP: £7.99



“Reading unlocks a world of new possibilities for children, and libraries are a key part of this story.”

Cressida Cowell
 Author and former Waterstones Children’s Laureate
 BookTrust Life-Changing Libraries report, 2022

How to find diverse books on the Peters website

Book packs

Our tried and tested book packs contain a selection of age-appropriate books that have been read and reviewed by our team of Children’s Librarians, School Curriculum Advisors and Reading for Pleasure Advisors.



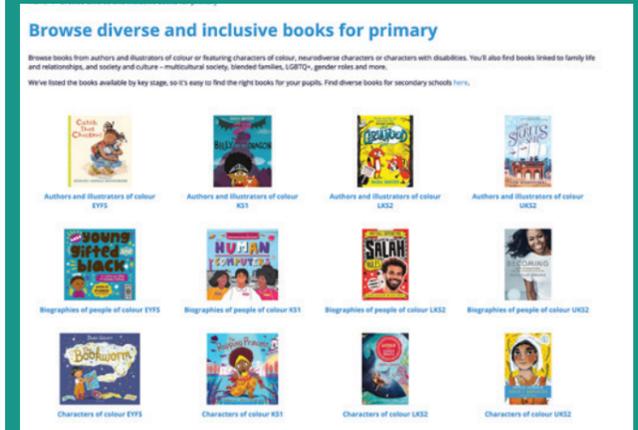
EYFS / KS1			
Authors and characters of colour	ISBN: 9789990207750	RRP £125	Peters price £100
Family life, relationships, society and culture	ISBN: 9789990207798	RRP £125	Peters price £100
History and biographies of people of colour	ISBN: 9789990207736	RRP £125	Peters price £100
Neurodiversity and physical disability	ISBN: 9789990207774	RRP £125	Peters price £100
KS2			
Authors and characters of colour	ISBN: 9789990207767	RRP £125	Peters price £100
Family life, relationships, society and culture	ISBN: 9789990207804	RRP £125	Peters price £100
History and biographies of people of colour	ISBN: 9789990207743	RRP £125	Peters price £100
Neurodiversity and physical disability	ISBN: 9789990207781	RRP £125	Peters price £100

Search tools

Our advisors and librarians are human search tools, but if you’d prefer to do it online, here are some handy features you can use!

Book lists

To make finding diverse books easy, you can visit peters.co.uk/browse-diverse-and-inclusive-books-primary and click on the icons to see books listed by your chosen topic.



There are even more book lists at peters.co.uk/book-lists, where you use our search box to check if we have a list on your desired subject.

Sort by: Shared on 📅

Awards

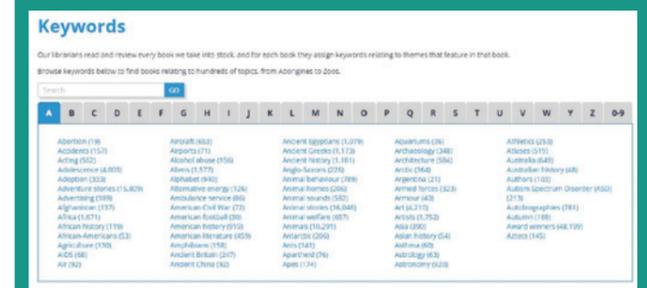
Keep up-to-date with the Jhalak Prize and Diverse Book Awards with our awards timeline.

Visit peters.co.uk/awards-timeline to see winning and shortlisted titles.



Keywords

After creating a free online account, you can also use our keywords feature at peters.co.uk/keywords.



This allows you to filter books by specific phrases, such as 'African history', 'homelessness' or 'racism'.

Peters' recommended reads

Our expert team of Children's Librarians, School Curriculum Advisors and Reading for Pleasure Advisors has delved into our extensive online catalogue and selected their top picks across EYFS, KS1, LKS2 and UKS2. This is just a snapshot of the books we have available! If you'd like to see more, scan the QR code on your smartphone or visit peters.co.uk/browse-diverse-and-inclusive-books-primary.



People of colour

Non-white children – including those from Black, Chinese, Indian, Arab and Romani families – are underrepresented in children's fiction and non-fiction. For teachers trying to encourage reading for pleasure, a diverse book selection can help to entice children who want to pick up a book but have previously been unable to find characters, authors or illustrators who look like them or share their culture.

Save up to **26%** on all titles at peters.co.uk*

Authors & illustrators of colour

EYFS

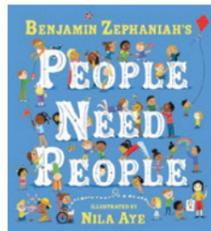


The Kindest Red
by Ibtihaj Muhammad

A story of hijab and friendship that celebrates family bonds and being kind

ISBN: 9781839133039
Peters price £9.61
RRP: £12.99

KS1



People Need People
by Benjamin Zephaniah

Lovely, inclusive illustrations bring this timeless poem about human connection to life

ISBN: 9781408368152
Peters price £9.61
RRP: £12.99

LKS2



Little Badman and the Rise of the Punjabi Zombies
by Humza Arshad

Humza, Umer and Wendy try to save the world from destruction!

ISBN: 9780241509272
Peters price £5.91
RRP: £7.99

UKS2



A Romani Story
by Richard O'Neill

A young Romani boy harbours a secret desire to become a footballer

ISBN: 9781407199580
Peters price £5.17
RRP: £6.99

More authors

- Atinuke
- Joseph Coelho
- Smriti Halls
- John Agard
- Serena Patel

More illustrators

- Nadia Shireen
- Pooja Puri
- Rikin Parekh
- Hatem Aly
- Anjan Sarkar



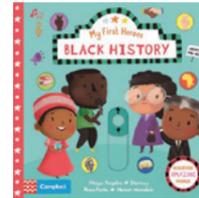
"Books can reflect current concerns for people of colour, or they can just be fun. Quality titles written or illustrated by a person of colour should be included in a classroom or library without fanfare. They simply need to be there."

Zeena Ark
School Curriculum Advisor



Biographies of people of colour

EYFS



Black History

by Jayri Gomez

Use the sliders and wheel to learn about Maya Angelou, Stormzy, Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela

ISBN: 9781529062625
Peters price £5.17
RRP: £6.99

KS1



Coming to England

by Floella Benjamin

A biography of Baroness Floella Benjamin, following her journey from Trinidad to England

ISBN: 9781529009422
Peters price £5.91
RRP: £7.99

LKS2



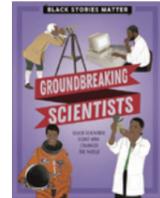
Legacies: Black British Pioneers

by Lania Narjee

Incredible untold stories of the people and places that shaped Black British history

ISBN: 9780241552810
Peters price £7.39
RRP: £9.99

UKS2



Groundbreaking Scientists

by J.P. Miller

The lives, achievements and contributions of inspirational Black scientists

ISBN: 9781526313812
Peters price £7.49
RRP: £9.99

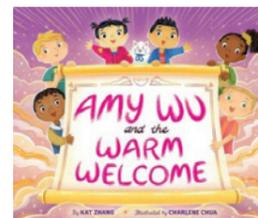


"Biographies are a good way to bring historical characters to life, encouraging children to find out more about a particular event or time period. This can help to build empathy for the people or cultures who have lived through these experiences."

Stephanie Horton
Reading for Pleasure Advisor

Characters of colour

EYFS



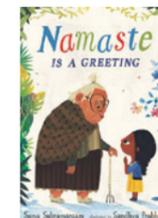
Amy Wu and the Warm Welcome

by Kat Zhang

Amy has a plan for her shy new Chinese classmate: friendship and dumplings!

ISBN: 9781534497351
Peters price £9.61
RRP: £12.99

KS1



Namaste is a Greeting

by Suma Subramaniam

A sweet exploration of the traditional Hindu greeting with gorgeous illustrations

ISBN: 9781529510034
Peters price £9.61
RRP: £12.99

LKS2



Llama on Ice

by Annabelle Sami

Not everyone celebrates Christmas, but we can all forgive. Seasonal fun

ISBN: 9780755503902
Peters price £5.17
RRP: £6.99

UKS2



Onyeka and the Academy of the Sun

by Tola Okogwu

A British-Nigerian girl's hair gives her psychokinetic powers

ISBN: 9781398505087
Peters price £5.91
RRP: £7.99



"It's important to have titles in all genres (including non-fiction) that represent the school population and society as a whole. It's also crucial that characters are relatable and drive the action forward, rather than being 'wallpaper'."

Lucy McConnell
Reading for Pleasure Advisor

Discuss with pupils



Maisie Chan on Chinese representation in children's literature

The British-Chinese author is passionate about challenging character stereotypes. Her book, *Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths*, was the Children's and YA winner of the 2022 Jhalak Prize.

The representation of Chinese children and children of other East and Southeast Asian heritage is still very much lacking. There are different types of Chinese people, so it's also important for readers to see that some might speak Cantonese or Mandarin, some might have dual heritage, some might be Malaysian Chinese and so forth.

I wanted to show that British-Chinese families and characters have the same feelings and emotions as anyone else. They might eat different food sometimes and have a different religion, but underneath that they are just humans.

You can become friends with someone who can't speak the same language and who may not share your culture. Why not? Humans have a knack of getting by and communicating even without a shared language. Kindness is a universal language.

Some books have Chinese characters that are stereotyped and haven't been thought through. If a book mocks a Chinese accent as a 'joke', for instance, then that could translate into a real playground. So along with actual representation, I also want to see better and less problematic representation.

The title of my book, *Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths*, looks at the 'model minority' myth, which is the 'geek' stereotype of Asian children. We don't all become doctors, and we're not all good at maths!

For the cover of my book, I sent my publisher some photographs of real East Asian boys. I also wanted to make sure that the cover wasn't red, black, gold and yellow [colours typically associated with China] and didn't feature Chinese food or chopsticks.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, there has been a rise in Sinophobia [a fear or dislike of Chinese people or culture]. I hope my books, which also include *Keep Dancing, Lizzie Chu*, can have some influence on attitudes towards Chinese people in Britain and in this time of division they can be an uplifting read.

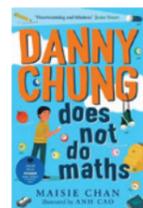
I hope to see more funny books winning big awards, and more writers of colour becoming household names.

Maisie's Asian book recommendations

For younger readers you could look for books by **Viola Wang**, who is also an illustrator.

I also love *The Little Mermaid* by Anna Kemp, which has wonderful illustrations by Natelle Quek that explore the mermaid and her family from a Chinese heritage background.

I would highly recommend the *Dragon Mountain* series (for 9-12 year olds) and *Sam Wu* series (for ages 6+) by Kevin and Katie Tsang.



Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths

by Maisie Chan
ISBN: 9781800780019
Peters price £5.17
RRP: £6.99

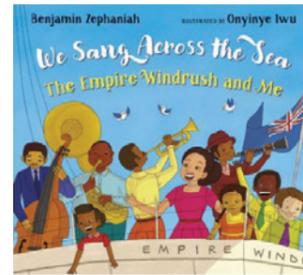


Keep Dancing, Lizzie Chu

by Maisie Chan
ISBN: 9781800781610
Peters price £5.17
RRP: £6.99

History of people of colour

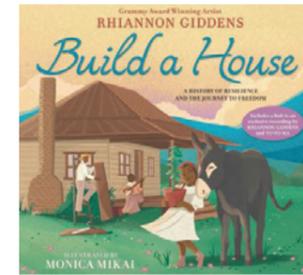
EYFS



We Sang Across the Sea: The Empire Windrush and Me

by Benjamin Zephaniah
Based on the true story of Monica Baptiste, a singer on the HMT Empire Windrush
ISBN: 9780702311161
Peters price £5.17
RRP: £6.99

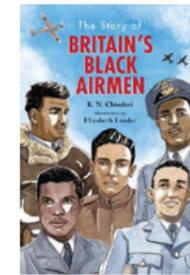
KS1



Build a House

by Rhiannon Giddens
Beautifully written in lyrical text, this explores the suffering, resilience and determination of slaves
ISBN: 9781529509304
Peters price £9.61
RRP: £12.99

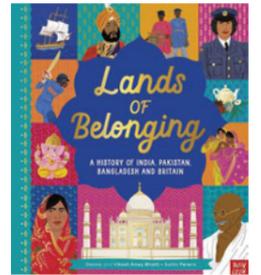
LKS2



Britain's Black Airmen

by K.N. Chimbiri
Rarely-heard stories of Black airmen during the First and Second World Wars
ISBN: 9780702307423
Peters price £6.65
RRP: £8.99

UKS2



Lands of Belonging

by Donna & Vikesh Amey Bhatt
A fascinating and vibrant illustrated history of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Britain
ISBN: 9781839944680
Peters price £11.09
RRP: £14.99

Watch our online Q&A



Caribbean author Alake Pilgrim talks Black sci-fi and West African folklore

Perfect for 9+ readers, Alake's fantasy novel, *Zo and the Forest of Secrets*, follows a young girl as she discovers the Caribbean forests harbour mythological and scientifically modified creatures.



I think that every child deserves to be the hero of their own stories. We're all the hero of our own stories in real life, so why not in books?

I think it's wonderful for kids to be able to see themselves in adventures, in magical worlds and in fantasy, as well as in books that deal with societal issues.

I live in Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean, and the natural environments of the islands – the beaches, forests, caves, hills and swamps – all make their way into *Zo and the Forest of Secrets*.

In addition to actual animals, like the endangered leatherback sea turtles, iguanas and agouti (a large rodent), children can also encounter completely fantastical creatures.

One of them is the X, a centipede-like creature that is also a blend of robotics and AI. And then there are creatures based on the Anansi, a West African folklore story about a part-spider, part-human being.

This book would be great for teachers who want to work with their students on nature and the environment, or those who want to expose their children to multicultural spaces. It's also perfect for children who are interested in travel; it's set on an island where people have come from all around the world.

Alake's diverse and inclusive book picks

I'm influenced by Black sci-fi writers like **Nalo Hopkinson** and **Octavia Butler**. I also love **P. Djèlí Clark**, a speculative fiction author who has won or been nominated for the Hugo and Nebula awards.

Sharna Jackson has a great mystery adventure book out called *The Good Turn*. Then there's Elle McNicoll's *Like a Charm*, which is a beautiful story with a dyspraxic main character, set in a magical part of Edinburgh.



Zo and the Forest of Secrets

by Alake Pilgrim
ISBN: 9781913311292
Peters price £5.91
RRP: £7.99

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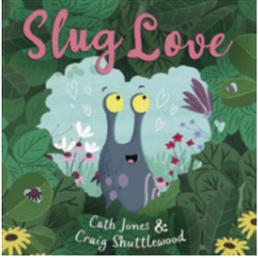
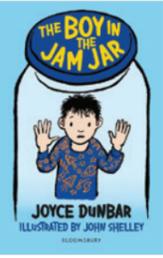
Peters

Physical disability

While you may not have a child with a disability in your current cohort, it is critical for all children to meet characters who manage different conditions and reflect our wider society. In our selection, characters with disabilities are central to the narrative and aren't defined by their disability. These humorous and touching texts encourage children to ask questions to spark meaningful conversations and build empathy.

Save up to **26%** on all titles at peters.co.uk*

Physical disability

EYFS	KS1	LKS2	UKS2
 <p>Slug Love by Cath Jones A slug tries to make friends with a wheelchair-using gardener! ISBN: 9781848868311 Peters price £5.91 RRP: £7.99</p>	 <p>The Boy in the Jam Jar by Joyce Dunbar Dylan feels excluded when his hearing deteriorates, but he learns to cope ISBN: 9781472973931 Peters price £5.17 RRP: £6.99</p>	 <p>The Treasure Under the Jam Factory by Chrissie Sains Scooter has cerebral palsy but can still outsmart the Daffy Dodger ISBN: 9781406396140 Peters price £5.17 RRP: £6.99</p>	 <p>I Got This by Chrissie Sains A young girl with achondroplasia breaks barriers to star in a music video ISBN: 9780702314988 Peters price £5.17 RRP: £6.99</p>

Did you know?

A 2019 Cooperative Children's Book Council study found that only 3.4% of all children's literature has a disabled main character, despite the disability charity Scope reporting that 9% of children in the UK are disabled.

And with many of these books containing harmful stereotypes – including disabled people being a burden to their family or able to 'overcome' their disabilities – disabled children are less likely to be able to see themselves in books or benefit from the empathy and understanding of their peers.



More authors who feature disabled characters

- Cece Bell
- Samantha Cotterill
- Lisette Auton
- James Catchpole
- Rosie Jones
- Tom Fletcher
- Carrie Burnell
- Jamie Sumner

"Reading and providing titles with a disabled character is an act of inclusivity in itself. Don't make a point of saying that the character is disabled. The books you choose should show children with physical disabilities as well-rounded and defined characters."



Dawn Franklin
School Curriculum Advisor



Disability activist Patrick Kane implores children to ask questions

When he was only nine months old, Patrick became a triple amputee after contracting sepsis, a life-threatening infection. His debut book, *Human 2.0* celebrates the remarkable achievements made in medical engineering and offers a glimpse of what the future might hold for humanity.

People are fascinated by disability but don't ask questions

For my first 'show and tell' lesson at school, I brought in a collection of different prosthetic legs to show to my classmates to break the ice. Moments like this have always taught me that people are naturally fascinated by the topic, but they don't always know if they can ask questions. Science holds the answers!

All manifestations of disability are acceptable

It was always obvious to me how many of the superheroes in X-Men and Marvel had disabilities. But while these portrayals fuel imaginations, it's also important that we educate everyone that being a superhero isn't the only acceptable form of disability.

Inspiring role models can change lives

Role models are important for every child, and I think – whether they are disabled or not – children will find it hard not to be inspired by some of the incredible disabled people spotlighted in the book. It is my hope that it will encourage non-disabled people to see disabled people as role models; not because of their disabilities, but because of the moving human truths at the heart of their stories.

Teachers are the key to breaking down barriers

In many ways, this book is an attempt to explain just how 'normal' my own differences are while teaching children everywhere that it is okay to be curious about things that are different from themselves. The better teachers understand these ideas, the more likely they are to feel comfortable discussing them with their students.

Inside the book

Exploring everything from cochlear implants and pacemakers to bionic arms and legs, this empowering title also features spotlights on Paralympians Richard Whitehead and Blake Leeper, plus the world's first 'cyborg' Neil Harbisson.

Illustrated in full colour by Sam Rodriguez, it's a great addition to a library or reading corner for visual learners and reluctant readers.

"I would challenge anyone to not want to learn more about a man with 27 hearts, or a woman who completed a marathon using an exoskeleton!"

BIONIC LIMBS AND IMPLANTABLE DEVICES
A prosthesis can be internal or external to the body. The ways in which people can replace parts of their body can largely be broken down into two groups: bionic limbs and implantable devices.

TEMPERATURE DEVICES
Temperature devices are a broad term describing anything that is surgically implanted inside the body. Because surgery is required to gain access, these devices cannot easily be removed, and are typically designed to stay inside the body forever. Examples of these include pacemakers and cochlear implants.

THE FIRST PROSTHESES
For as long as humans have been around, we have been losing limbs, or are born without them. Whether due to an injury or congenital impairment (a condition that is present from birth), people have been trying to replace missing arms, legs, fingers and toes for thousands of years. Early prostheses were revolutionary for their time, yet their inventors did not have the technology needed to provide better functionality and comfort. Even so, some of these early prostheses closely resemble those that exist today.

Count Götz von Berlichingen
Perhaps the most famous example of an early prosthesis is that belonging to the German knight, Count Götz von Berlichingen, who lost his hand during battle in the early 1500s. Unintended, Count Götz asked local craftsmen to create an iron hand with digits (fingers and thumb) that could lock into place, so he could hold a horse's reins or a weapon. He used the steel in his arm as a fulcrum, that some people believe inspired the phrase, 'to rule with an iron fist'.

Human 2.0
by Patrick Kane
ISBN: 9781800781689
Peters price £12.57
RRP: £16.99

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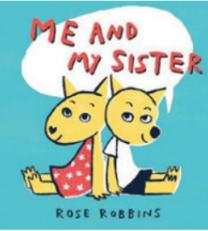
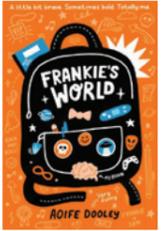
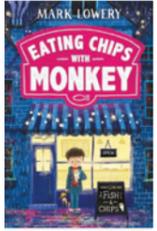
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Neurodiversity and SEND

It is estimated that each UK classroom has at least one neurodiverse pupil, with around 16% of children in the UK requiring EHC support. Conditions may include autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. These children can experience sensory processing difficulties and issues with communication skills, making them targets for bullies. Positive representation can help to change attitudes and encourage self-acceptance.

Save up to **26%** on all titles at peters.co.uk*

Neurodiversity and SEND

EYFS	KS1	LKS2	UKS2
 <p>Meesha Makes Friends by Tom Percival</p> <p>Neurodivergent or shy children will love this story about making connections</p> <p>ISBN: 9781526612953 Peters price £5.17 RRP: £6.99</p>	 <p>Me and my Sister by Rose Robbins</p> <p>Exploring the similarities and differences of an autistic girl and her sibling</p> <p>ISBN: 9781912650231 Peters price £5.91 RRP: £7.99</p>	 <p>Frankie's World by Aoife Dooley</p> <p>An autistic girl tracks down her dad in this relatable graphic novel</p> <p>ISBN: 9780702307355 Peters price £6.65 RRP: £8.99</p>	 <p>Eating Chips with Monkey by Mark Lowery</p> <p>10-year-old, autistic Daniel recovers from a car accident with family and fantasy</p> <p>ISBN: 9781848127371 Peters price £5.17 RRP: £6.99</p>



"The very best children's books demonstrate that neurodiverse and SEND children shouldn't be seen as 'less' than other children. These characters uncover mysteries, fight injustice, form friendships and spend time with their loving families."

Laura Hayward
Children's Librarian

Neurodiversity on TV: our review of CBBC's *A Kind of Spark*

Groundbreaking in its portrayal of young autistic women, the 10-part CBBC adaptation of Elle McNicoll's hit junior fiction novel, *A Kind of Spark*, promotes inclusivity for neurodiverse children.

The plot follows 11-year-old Addie as she campaigns for a memorial in memory of the witch trials that took place in her Scottish hometown. Drawing parallels between the outsider status of an autistic young girl and those accused of witchcraft, the book has been translated for the screen with the help of the author, who is herself autistic.

Our Children's Librarian, Katie Merrick, says: "It's a lively, engaging adaptation that readers of the book should enjoy. The clever use of sounds and camera angles shows Addie's experience of sensory overload, and employing an actor with autism makes this more authentic. What could have been an over-the-top performance from a neurotypical actor is subtle and realistic."



A Kind of Spark
by Elle McNicoll

ISBN: 9781913311056
Peters price £5.91
RRP: £7.99

Interior design focus

Sensory range

Reading spaces for neurodiverse and SEND pupils

School can be overwhelming for children with or without special educational needs, so having a safe place to escape to can be hugely beneficial. Sensory seating and accessories are a practical and effective way to create a calming retreat away from a noisy classroom or busy playground, helping overstimulated pupils to understand their emotions and become more engaged.

Different textures encourage children to play, move and explore with other children. This can improve fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and body and spatial awareness. Alongside aiding cognitive development and focus, sensory options like cushions and beanbags can help to relieve stress and anxiety.



Use alongside mood and interactive lighting

Perfect for non-verbal children

<p>Monster emotions cushions</p> <p>W: 34cm, D: 34cm per cushion</p> <p>Ref 13104 Pack of 8 £125</p>	<p>White UV reflective beanbag</p> <p>H: 75cm, Dia: 65cm</p> <p>Ref 13111 £75</p>
<p>Sensory UV beanpods</p> <p>H: 20cm, Dia: 38cm</p> <p>Ref 13112 Pack of 5 £125</p>	<p>Sensory bright fleece cushions</p> <p>W: 30cm, D: 30cm</p> <p>Ref 13102 Pack of 10 £75</p>

To view our full sensory range, visit peters.co.uk/furniture/sensory

How teachers are tackling the impact of COVID-19 on pupil behaviour

A lack of access to vital services has widened the attainment gap for SEND and disadvantaged children

Despite admirable efforts to mitigate the consequences of successive COVID-19 lockdowns, teachers are still dealing with challenging pupil behaviours including anxiety, poor concentration and listening skills, difficulty in regulating emotions, lack of empathy, and reduced readiness to learn.

Dr Patrick Roach, General Secretary of the NASUWT, acknowledged that teachers have gone "above and beyond" for their students. However, a 2022 report from the Education Endowment Foundation stated that the increased attainment gap for disadvantaged children and those with SEND is unlikely to close without intervention.

Alongside practical tools like sensory accessories, teachers are immersing children in literature to build empathy and improve behaviour. Organisations such as **EmpathyLab** provide valuable support and training, plus Reading for Empathy book lists.

Find out more at peters.co.uk/read-for-empathy.

"Teachers and leaders have gone above and beyond for their students."

Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary, NASUWT



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How colour psychology can help children with anxiety or educational needs

Not just pleasing on the eye, stylish colour schemes are scientifically proven to have emotional and behavioural benefits for children. As someone who works closely with teachers to create effective libraries and reading areas, our Interior Designer, Jay Rose, shares his colour psychology expertise for you to implement in your own library or classroom.

Studies have shown that colours like blue and green can reduce overstimulation in children with sensory difficulties caused by ADHD or autism spectrum disorders.

Conversely, classrooms that are too stimulating can lead to increased disruptive behaviour amongst disabled or neurodiverse pupils, including weaker concentration, hand flapping and repeated blinking.

“One way to combat this is to consider colour wavelengths,” says Jay. “If we were to design for a SEN school, we would definitely stay away from using too many long wavelength colours (like red and orange) as these could upset the children or trigger certain behaviours.

“Instead, we would use short wavelength colours (think pastels and blues) to focus and calm the children and create a room or area where they feel safe.”

Jay Rose
Interior Designer



Here's the science!

A 2006 study in the College Student Journal showed that certain colours can increase learning productivity by up to 10%, while research with Alzheimer's patients indicates that colour cues can improve memory.

The impact on neuronal functioning – including IQ, cognition, emotional regulation and motor control – can have a huge effect on academic achievement, morale and absenteeism for both pupils and staff.

One of the biggest impacts is on mood, with colours shown to inspire ideas. Action and a positive outlook on life and learning.



A cosy reading area with colourful sensory touch tags beanbags

Our design for Brooke School in Rugby incorporated seating storage in a calming pastel shade – perfect for EYFS storytime!



Pastel book cushions are fantastic for adding colour and encouraging children to relax with a good book



Interested in learning more about colour psychology? Access our free guides on our blog, or by scanning the QR code! You can also discover some of our successful transformations at peters.co.uk/furniture/case-studies.

Interior design focus

Nature range

Bring nature indoors!

With forest schools and outdoor learning on the rise, more teachers are embracing the power of nature. Teaching outside can bring many benefits for children, including better physical and mental health, increased confidence and even a reduction in stress, anxiety and ADHD symptoms.

Perfect for schools who want to connect with their surrounding natural environments, or inner-city learning spaces without access to green areas, our nature range is inspired by the outdoors. These wipeable seating options feature a variety of prints, including grass, leaves, flowers and tree bark.



“Bring the outside indoors with our inspiring nature-themed range. Our durable soft furnishings help to create calming and focused environments by incorporating natural textures and colours into your library scheme.”

Helena Thornton
Interior Designer

To view our full nature range, visit peters.co.uk/furniture/nature

Family life and relationships

Each child will have a different experience of family life and relationships, and books are a fantastic way to help them to understand both their unique situation, and those of their peers.

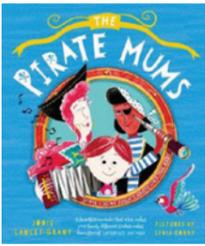
From adoption and foster care to divorce, bereavement, blended and single-parent families, moving house and coping with parental disability, we have a huge range of titles available that deal with complex issues in a sensitive and engaging way. These books also promote teamwork, communication, and healthy family relationships to build resilience and empathy.



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Family life and relationships

EYFS



The Pirate Mums

by Jodie Lancet-Grant

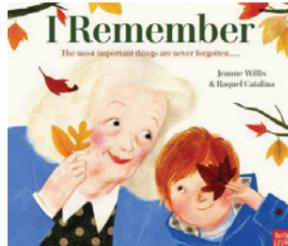
A positive story of a two-mother family with colourful illustrations

ISBN: 9780192777799

Peters price £5.17

RRP: £6.99

KS1



I Remember

by Jeanne Willis

While the mind can forget, the heart will always remember. Touching tale about dementia

ISBN: 9781839942297

Peters price £5.91

RRP: £7.99

LKS2



Everything Changes

by Clare Helen Welsh

Lyrical book about the emotions experienced during a marriage breakup

ISBN: 9781801042956

Peters price £9.61

RRP: £12.99

UKS2



The Night Animals

by Sarah Ann Juckes

Nora's mum has good and bad days but her ghost animal friends can help

ISBN: 9781398510920

Peters price £5.91

RRP: £7.99

Yo-ho-ho and a story of two mums

Children's Librarian Emma McElwee reveals why Jodie Lancet-Grant's swashbuckling book, *The Pirate Mums*, is representation done well.



Having two mums for parents isn't the 'difference' in this title. They're just his mums, who Billy wishes didn't behave and dress like pirates all the time. This is what makes the book stand out – it's relatable (who doesn't get embarrassed by their parents?!) and humorous.

It also makes for a great title to share with a class, with plenty of discussion about people who like to live their lives a little differently. What do their families do that might be different to others? This is representation done well.



Emma McElwee
Children's Librarian

Society and culture

One of the most valuable things a school library or reading corner can do is open children's eyes to cultures and ways of living that don't match their own.

Supporting the PSHE curriculum, books about topics such as refugees, gender stereotypes and the community can help to shape positive pupil behaviour through tolerance and acceptance.

Ideas can also be explored in different formats, including poetry, non-fiction texts and graphic novels.

"Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child and one teacher can change the world."

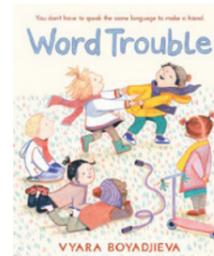
Malala Yousafzai
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate



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Society and culture

EYFS



Word Trouble

by Vyara Boyadjieva

Language barriers, communication and a child immigrant's experience

ISBN: 9781406398755

Peters price £9.61

RRP: £12.99

KS1



Superheroes Always Fight Back...Or Do They?

by Kate Thompson

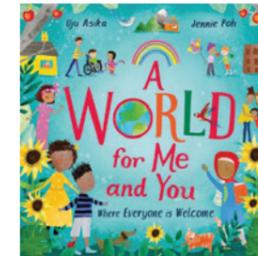
Bright book with pleasing rhyming text. Kindness always saves the day!

ISBN: 9781783128761

Peters price £5.17

RRP: £6.99

LKS2



A World for Me and You

by Uju Asika

Illustrating the power of difference by contrasting identicalness. Great for PSHE

ISBN: 9781526364135

Peters price £5.17

RRP: £6.99

UKS2



The Faraway Truth

by Janae Marks

Zoe gets a letter on her birthday from her prisoner dad

ISBN: 9781912626380

Peters price £5.17

RRP: £6.99



"Education is shaped by societal values and the knowledge we need to operate as part of our surrounding culture. In my experience, teachers and librarians often have a dual role: educating students on cultural ethics and norms and acting as an agent of social change via classroom and home learning. Books are a great tool for this."

Natalie Wise
Reading for Pleasure Advisor

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Discuss with pupils

Help children to understand the conflict in Ukraine with a wordless picture book

Ukrainian illustrator Oleksandr Shatokhin was separated from his wife and young child after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. Now reunited with his family, he has created an emotive picture book to help young children to explore the concepts of war and peace.



Why does the book have no words?

Sometimes, words are superfluous. The story of this book is so telling that I wanted to create a quiet book that would convey this important and terrible story for every Ukrainian with only illustrations and emotional content.

It is also a format that will allow those who do not have this terrible experience of war to empathise with what every Ukrainian feels on one hand, and to feel hope and peace on the other. For me personally, this is an emotional book.

Tell us about the unusual colour scheme

The colours, in my opinion, best convey and emphasise the stages and development of the story. Black conveys tension and devastation to illustrate the anxiety, fear and confusion of the book's protagonist.

Where hope for the good and light arises, yellow appears, which is the colour of bright butterflies. Towards the end of the book, there are colours that are dearly beloved by every Ukrainian: blue and yellow. These are the colours of freedom, life, peace and hope.



Yellow Butterfly
by Oleksandr Shatokhin
ISBN: 9781636550640
Peters price £11.83
RRP: £15.99

Why this book is the perfect classroom read

Guest writer and former SEN teaching assistant, Marie Nae

- Without the potential language barrier, children can focus on emotional responses, further strengthening emotional understanding and management
- The message behind this story is inspiring as it encourages children to look for hope even when they feel anxious
- This book is a great learning tool – the back pages are full of ideas for fun lesson plans and incredible, important conversations to have with children



Ukrainian language books

We are proud to supply a range of texts written in the Ukrainian language. We also have EAL book packs for KS1 and KS2 pupils, along with dual-language titles in languages including Polish, Punjabi, Arabic and Albanian. Email us at hello@peters.co.uk for more details.

Talking to your class about poverty

Due to the cost-of-living crisis, many teachers now frequently support children and their families to meet a wide range of basic needs, including food, clothing and personal hygiene. Our Schools Team Manager, Anna Rushall, has experience of supporting primary school children living in poverty. Here, she shares her advice for approaching the topic with your class.

Let children's voice be heard

Through using **fictional characters**, you have an opportunity to make the 'silences' children may have witnessed or experienced speak. They are given a vehicle through which they can express any concerns about things they have seen or felt about their own circumstances through the safety of shared characters and circumstances.

Role-play work can help children here too, depending on age and preference.

Why role-play?

Role-play allows children to explore the experiences of characters and how they might feel in these circumstances without having to share their own story. In some circumstances, this can help them to understand similar scenarios they have been in, or encourage them to voice any concerns they have to a trusted member of staff.

It's just as valuable to allow those who don't want to participate to observe and reflect. As with adults, we all have our own way of navigating difficult experiences.

Foster trust and honesty

If supported by your senior leadership team, **being honest with your own feelings and experiences** is important. You could give examples of other adults – like **celebrities or historical figures** – to offer insight into different experiences and provide potential pathways for children to consider. **Being available on the playground** after you have shared stories or discussions is key, as it allows children to speak to you 1:1. **Thought boxes** in the classroom can help with this too.

Cultivate meaningful discussions through activities

You can introduce thought-provoking activities that return to issues like poverty in a worldwide or neutral way. One way of doing this is **sharing a photograph** – for example featured by the BBC or The Guardian – that gives a snapshot of someone's day in another part of the world. You can then invite pupils to express their thoughts.

Children don't always have to understand the full issue to have an opinion. A **quote or question of the week that children can respond to** and share with their family at home can broaden questions. It can be useful and reassuring for children who are in tricky situations to realise that there are others out there in difficult (or even worse) situations, and also that things can get better.



Did you know?

According to Child Poverty UK, 30% of children in the UK live in poverty. 33% of children living in poverty fall behind with their education, and 23% of children living in poverty in England miss expected levels of language development by the age of five.

Children from lower-income families are 50% less likely to do as well at school as their classmates.

You can download our guide to discussing poverty and homelessness by scanning the QR code.



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Diverse library audit checklist

If you're starting out on your diversification journey or simply in need of a library refresh, here's an easy checklist to get you started!

	Tick here		Tick here
1	Are diverse characters meaningful and an accurate representation of UK society?	5	Are a range of character types and personalities represented?
2	Are diverse characters central to the narrative, or are they 'wallpaper'?	6	Are diverse characters multidimensional or do they just signify a vague nod to inclusion?
3	Are diverse characters defined only by their 'otherness' or are additional themes explored?	7	Are the books written or illustrated by diverse creators, and are their stories and voices authentic?
4	Do diverse characters have agency? Are they characters or caricature?	8	Have you considered the National Education Union's advice on decolonisation, including accurate representation of the British Empire?



"Library collections ideally shouldn't be separated in a manner that 'others' diverse characters. Research shows that authors should be aiming for an 'any child' approach to stories, whereby the child's diverse factor is no way central to the plot. These 'any children' are essential to the plot and move the narrative forwards."



Lucy McConnell
Reading for Pleasure Advisor



We can help to diversify your school library



Alongside our book lists, book packs and bespoke selection service, we also offer an expert auditing service where we can come to your school to audit your library for you.

Or if you'd prefer to come to us, our bookshop at Peters in central Birmingham holds over 40,000 unique titles for you to browse at your leisure.

To keep up-to-date with the latest news in diverse children's literature, make sure you're subscribed to our newsletter and following us on social media.

Subscribe to our newsletter at peters.co.uk/latest-news-from-peters.



"I made Peters aware that we wanted a diverse range of texts to reflect the intake of the school. They made a special effort to find a range of texts to reflect different race, gender, religion and disability experiences so that all children were represented in books."

Olivia Forshaw
English Lead, Kensington Primary Academy

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Peters Ltd

120 Bromsgrove Street,
Birmingham,
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hello@peters.co.uk
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