



Good Reads 241

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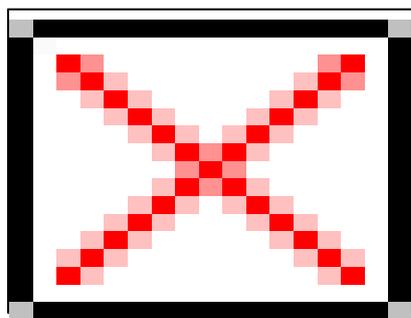
Good Reads

Byline:

Empathy-inspiring reads chosen by pupils at **St Matthews CE Primary School Birmingham**

The **Good Reads** in this issue have been chosen by pupils at **St Matthews CE Primary School** in Nechells, Birmingham, and have a special empathy theme. Head teacher **Sonia Thompson** is one of the panel of experts at **EmpathyLab** who selected the books that make up the **2020 Read for Empathy Book Collection**. **St Matthews** regards empathy as a core life skill, and a revolutionary force for social change.

[Race to the Frozen North](#) [2], Catherine Johnson, Barrington Stoke, 978-1781128404, £6.99 pbk

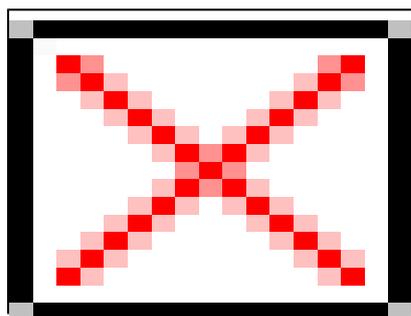


This book is about an adventurous boy named Matthew Henson who wanted to achieve his dream career at sea but faces many hardships and disadvantages. I love Janey and Captain Child because they motivated Matt when he had nowhere to go. I think without them he would not have achieved what he did.

This book made me feel that nothing is impossible when you have courage and try your best. It also made me feel very sad because due to the colour of his skin, Matthew didn't get the recognition he deserved. Despite this, it is an amazing adventure book to read and one I would certainly recommend.

Nejah, Year 5

[Two Sides](#) [3], Polly Ho-Yen, illus Binny Talib, Stripes, 978-1788950626, £7.99pbk



The book I read, **Two Sides**, was about a friendship between two girls; Lula and Lenka. Although they are best friends, they are total opposites. Lula is a very messy and loud girl, while Lenka is a shy and tidy sort of person. One ordinary day, the two girls fall out. They keep away from each other and never talk to one another. They are both upset.

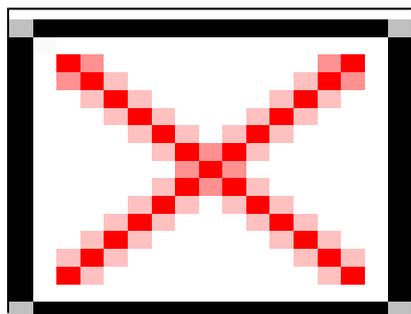
This book made me feel happy and proud as it celebrates difference and spreads a powerful empathy message. As soon as Lula and Lenka were no longer friends it made me feel very concerned about their friendship.

I enjoyed that at the start of the book Lula is very unorganised and is always late for everything. It reminded me of me. As soon as she falls out with Lenka, she has a huge shift in personality. Lula is suddenly on time for school and is a little bit shy and alone. Despite this, she still hasn't lost a trait; her loudness.

I would recommend this book to children in Year 3 or maybe Year 2 as the ideas are not really complex. Overall, I enjoyed reading this and I hope the people I think this story is targeted at share my opinion.

Aseel, Year 5

Planet Omar (Accidental Trouble Magnet), Zanib Mian, Hodder Children's Books, 978-1444951226, £6.99 pbk



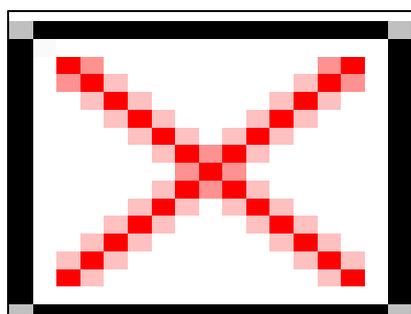
This book is about a boy called Omar, who moves houses and schools and tries to fit in. One thing stops him, and that is the stinking class bully, Daniel.

My favourite character has to be Maryam because she always likes to correct people, just like me. My favourite scene is when Daniel (class bully) and Omar get lost together on a trip, and actually become friends.

This book made me feel like I was in Omar's shoes. It made me feel kind of lonely since he gets bullied. It was also a very funny book and used humour well to talk about some challenging things.

Canaan, Year 5

Owen and The Soldier, Lisa Thompson, Barrington Stoke, 978-1781128657, £6.99 pbk



This book is about a boy named Owen, whose mum and himself are struggling as they are the only ones at home. Owen is keeping his worries to himself but one day he discovers a crumbling stone soldier, it feels like he finally has someone to talk to. However, the town can't see how important the soldier is and they want to remove him.

Owen is scared that he'll be left on his own again, he needs to save the soldier before it's too late. Owen likes to visit the local memorial garden where he talks to a stone soldier statue after losing his dad and his mum becoming withdrawn and depressed.

I feel like this book is sweet, simple and a very touching tale and I would recommend it to KS2 children. I would also recommend this to older readers, young adults, as they might relate to this story. As a reader, it shows how important

soldiers are and allows us to walk in their shoes. This book also reminded me of the one-minute silence we have for the soldiers who have died in World Wars and why we need to not forget what they did for us.

Amirah, Year 5

Find out more about EmpathyLab on [their website](#) [4] and in this [BfK article](#) [5]. The [2020 Book Collection](#) [6] of 50 books is listed here.

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