



Diversity Through Children's Books

Why not use the International Day of Literacy (8th September 2023) as the impetus to review your texts in school, whether in the library or through sharing class texts? This is a day for celebrating the contribution literacy makes on an individual, community and national level. We know that reading can have a huge impact on a child's educational outcomes, but did you know about these additional benefits?

Challenging Prejudice

We know that contact between different groups in childhood is critical for formation of attitudes that continue into adulthood, and that friendships across different groups are one of the most powerful prejudice reduction tools (Wolfer et al, 2016). We promote schools getting out to meet children from other schools and communities, but this can be challenging, especially in times of higher costs for things such as transport. Fortunately, there is evidence that meeting diversity through children's books (or other media) can have a positive impact on children's attitudes to difference, including resulting in:

- More inclusive friendships
- Reduced stereotyping and prejudice
- Increased perceptions of similarity

These books can either be:

- 1) stories about children from different groups being friends (cross-group friendships) – these show successful examples of cross-group friendships and show it is possible
or
- 2) books about characters from different groups and backgrounds that allow the readers to identify with these characters.

Identity Texts

Another benefit of diverse texts is that children from all backgrounds can see themselves reflected in what they are reading (books as mirrors). If children from minority backgrounds don't see themselves reflected in books, this gives them the message that their experiences and stories are less valid. Furthermore, we know that children are more engaged in their learning when they see themselves reflected in books and lessons.

Hopefully these reasons have convinced you that it is essential to review the books you use in school to make sure they are representative of wider society. To find out more about this, have a look at articles and resources below.

[Lit in Colour | Supporting inclusive reading in schools \(penguin.co.uk\)](https://www.penguin.co.uk/ideas-resources/lit-in-colour/supporting-inclusive-reading-in-schools)

[Teaching diversity through reading in primary schools \(schoolreadinglist.co.uk\)](https://www.schoolreadinglist.co.uk/teaching-diversity-through-reading-in-primary-schools)

[Promoting diversity through literacy: our resources | National Literacy Trust](https://www.national-literacy-trust.org.uk/promoting-diversity-through-literacy-our-resources)

[Diversity Book Audit | Kingsway Junior School \(kingswayjm.herts.sch.uk\)](https://www.kingswayjm.herts.sch.uk/diversity-book-audit)