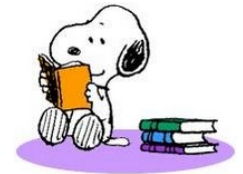




RGS: Bonkers About Books!

November 2021



Hello!

I don't know about you, but I always find November a bit of a funny month: Halowe'en is over, the shops are full of Christmas decorations and the adverts have started on TV (as I type this, I'm actually sat waiting for the virtual reveal of this year's Fenwick window!). However, it still feels a bit early to start mentioning the C word! But here I am openly discussing it! Am I getting old, or does the Christmas season start earlier every year?! Having said all of that, I have realised that there is very little time in school in December so I thought I would include some Christmas reading recommendations in this month's edition - I've put them on the back page so if you decide it's too early for the tinsel, then you can stop reading and save that page until the festive spirit hits you! Happy reading everyone!

Mrs Wall

Show us Who You Are - Elle McNicoll

This book details the life of Cora, a twelve-year-old autistic girl who struggles to fit in at school. She befriends a boy called Adrien who does not attend school but has a lot of energy and enthusiasm and has no insecurities about being himself.

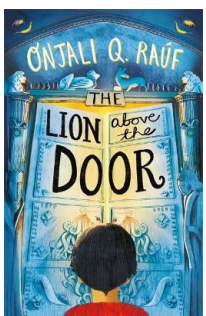
Through Cora's brother she learns about Pomegranate, a secret organisation where Dr Gold creates holograms of people to sell to the public. Is there more to this organisation than what meets the eye?

This book keeps you turning the pages and is an excellent addition to Some Kind of Spark, McNicoll's first novel.

Miss Hobson



The Lion Above The Door - Onjali Raúf



Whilst on a school trip to Rochester Cathedral, Leo discovers finds a name on a war memorial that is identical to his own and he begins to wonder who this other Leo is. A class project for a TV programme allows him and his friend Saneetha to investigate Leo and other forgotten heroes from World War II, heroes from different countries whose stories need to be told.

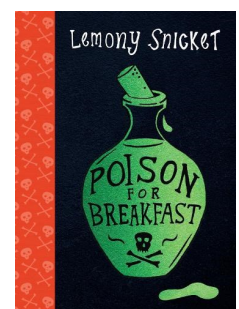
This is another powerful book from Onjali which expertly tackles the subject of racism and bullying, as well as looking at friendship and those whose stories need to be told from WWII. The characters are realistic and relatable, and will help children to understand issues that are relevant in the world today. It's a great book for Year 5 & 6.

Poison for Breakfast - Lemony Snicket

This short novella details Lemony Snicket's reflections on philosophy and the way he views the world. It is written in the first person and the audio book is currently included in an Audible membership. The narrator is Patrick Warburton, an actor who played Snicket, the narrator in 'A Series of Unfortunate Events', the series on Netflix. His voice is expressive and dark, adding to the atmosphere of the reading.

In classic Lemony Snicket style, the book repeats key elements of the story such as items the character had for breakfast and definitions of complex words are included as the story continues to unfold. I would recommend this book and 'A Series of Unfortunate Events' due to their captivating writing style, the latter of which are a thirteen part series and are available to borrow in the RGS school library.

Miss Hobson



Top 5 Tips For New Writers by Vivian French

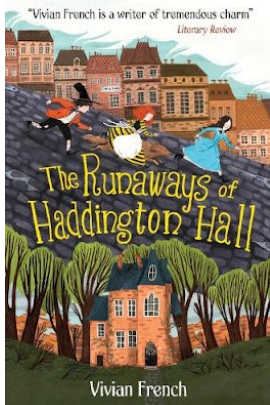


It was my absolute pleasure to have welcomed author Vivian French to my blog a few weeks ago where she shared her top tips for writers, so I thought I would share them here so you could all see them. I particularly like tip number 5!

1. PLAN your story before you begin! It's boring but it really helps! Think of the beginning, then the end - and then the middle. That works much better than beginning, middle, end.
2. Invent a problem for your main character that has to be solved, and make sure it's the main character that solves it! (It's cheating if someone comes in from the outside to make it all ok.)
3. Start with someone saying something like... 'OH NO!' 'HELP!' 'IT'S NOT FAIR!' That'll get your reader interested.
4. Try writing in different ways.
 - o 'Seb sneaked out of the classroom. No one was watching as he crept down the corridor...'
 - o 'I sneaked out of the classroom. No one saw me as I crept down the corridor...'
 - o 'Seb sneaks out of the classroom. No one is watching as he creep down the corridor...'
5. Read read read read READ! The more books you read, the more you'll absorb new ways to write.

Vivian's latest book is

The Runaways of Haddington Hall.



Minnie O'Sullivan spends her days helping her mum who is a Victorian washerwoman, that is until she finds herself on the wrong side of the Reverend Obadiah Marpike who sends her to Haddington Hall, a home for wayward girls. Life gets tough very quickly as the home's owner, Mrs Haddington takes an instant dislike to Minnie and insists she spend long days doing chores in return for nothing more than scraps of food. However, Minnie is spirited and is determined to prove that there is fowl play at work.

Minnie is a brave and strong character who isn't afraid to fight for what she thinks is right. Family is important to her, as is friendship. She copes with so much during the course of the book but her family are never far from her thoughts. She is feisty and won't let Mrs Haddington get the better of her, despite the fact that she named Minnie 'Mangle' as soon as she set eyes on her, and clearly treated her unfairly from the very beginning.

It is obvious from the start that Marpike has ulterior motives and he manipulates everything to his own means. He is a truly evil character disguised as a very 'polite' Victorian vicar.

The Runaways of Haddington Hall is a great adventure with a wonderful Victorian setting; from humble homes overrun with washing to Haddington Hall and all it promises. Its pacey plot is full of drama with a classic feel.

Theodora Hendrix and the Curious Case of the Cursed Beetle - Jordan Kopy; illustrated by Chris Jevons

Theodore is back and is looking forward to Hallowe'en with the MLM (the Monstrous League of Monsters); however, the arrival of Inspector Shelley puts a spanner in the works. Everybody needs to be on their best behaviour so that Theodora can stay with her family; however, the inspector seems determined to do quite the opposite.

Theodora is just as I remembered her: full of spirit and with a fiery determination that makes her seemingly afraid of nothing! She's also fiercely protective of her unconventional family, as well as her friend Dexter who, although scared by many things, is loyal and braver than he was in book 1 - he is growing!

With wonderfully detailed illustrations from Chris Jevons that add to the atmosphere and the story, this is a monstrously good book that has just the right amount of eeriness, is full of quirky characters (Sherman is still my favourite!) and a chatty narrator who will keep you smiling. This book is perfect for this time of year and will have readers gripped.



Front Desk - Kelly Yang



Mia's family moved to America in search of a better life but the reality is very different and the family are struggling to make ends meet. When Mia's mum sees a job running the Calivista Motel, she jumps at the opportunity, believing that this is the answer to the family's prayers, but the owner proves to be difficult and renegades on many of his promises. Mia, determined to help, begins running the front desk of the motel in the hope of easing the endless hours her parents spend working. As time goes by, Mia's parents begin helping immigrants who are in trouble, hiding them in motel when they can - if Mr Yao finds out, they will lose their job for certain. Mia also has dreams of being a writer, however, as English isn't her first language, her Mum tells her she will never achieve this, encouraging her to

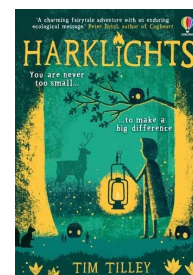
stick to maths instead. Can Mia manage to juggle everything and get through the year whilst keeping her family in their home and their job?

I read this after a glowing recommendation from a friend and I have to say that he was spot on! This is a wonderful book that had me both laughing and crying! I gobbled it up in a day as I just couldn't put it down and was in awe of Mia and her courage and determination. She is a strong young lady who will undoubtedly inspire everyone who reads the book (I know she inspired me!). If you haven't already read this book, I urge you to get hold of a copy immediately! I'm now heading off to get hold of the other books in this series.

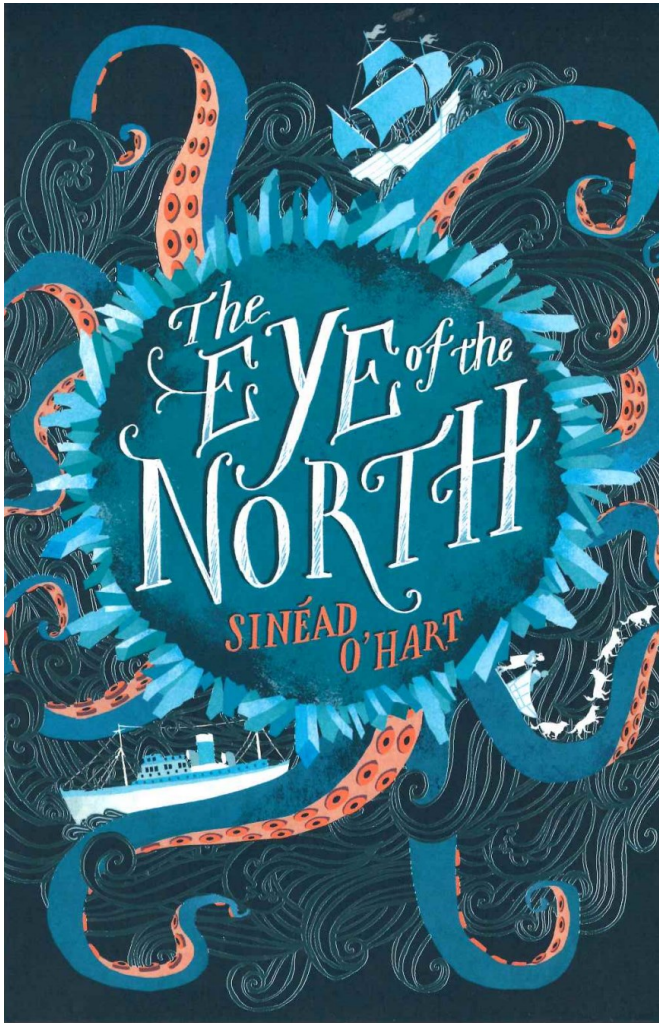
Harklights - Tim Tilley

Wick has lived in the Harklights Match Factory Orphanage for as long as he can remember. Daily life is hard under Old Ma Boggey so when Wick finds a tiny baby in an acorn cradle, he determines to keep it safe. As a thank-you, when the Hobbs (miniature protectors of the forest) come to rescue the child, they offer Wick the chance to escape from the orphanage and to live a new life with them in the forest.

This is a book full of magic with a fairy-tale quality to it. With messages about protecting the forest as well as accepting people's differences, this is a lovely book.



Some lovely messages arrived recently from author Sinéad O'Hart to the Junior School.



To all the Readers, Writers and Storyfinders at RGS Junior School,

Did you know that everyone can be a Storyfinder - yes, even you! Storyfinders are people whose senses are open to the world around them, and who ask themselves questions about the weird, wonderful and "wow!" things they see or hear or smell or touch every single day. There is wonder all around you, and when you notice it, stories will follow! Join me, and give it a whirl. Storyfinders forever!

SJOHart



To Everyone at RGS Junior School,

Thank you for making my books part of your reading life at school. It makes me so happy to think of fantastic readers and Storyfinders like you going on my bookish adventures with me. I hope you'll always find your way through life by reading, because the best and most reliable maps are found inside stories. Never go anywhere without a book for the journey!

Yours in stories,

SJOHart



@SJOHart
 @StripesBooks
 #TheStarSpunWeb
 #TheEyeoftheNorth
 Cover art by Sara Mulvanny

Wishyouwas - Alexandra Page

270 pages

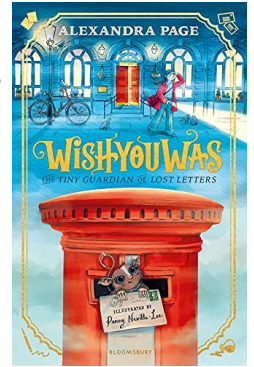
For lovers of Christmas and uncanny situations this book is for you, with shadows around every corner you'll never guess what happens next. The reason why I like this book is because I'm a HUGE fan of Christmas (the presents obviously). Another reason I like this book is because it makes want to read more.

This is going to be tiny sneak peek to make you want to read the book:

It was all dark in the post office, but Penny didn't mind it, she focused on writing the letter to her mother, until she heard a rustle, then it got louder and louder. Penny wasn't sure what it was before she saw the creature's tail, it was a rat. She was thinking of calling her Uncle Frank, but then she heard a tiny squeak in the drawer where her uncle puts the letters that were not able to be delivered. It took Penny a lot of courage to open the drawer, but she managed it in the end. She was prepared for a fight with the... the creature, but what she saw was different.

This is not actually written in ink by Alexandra page, this is just a part of the book in my own words. Thanks for reading this.

Havish



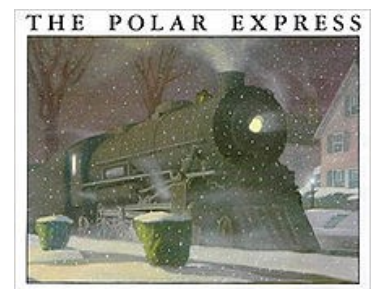
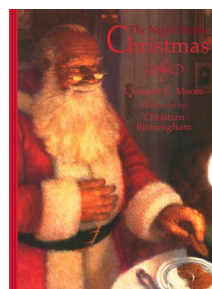
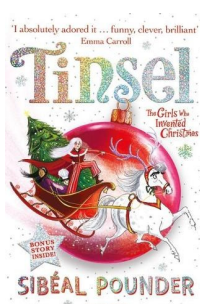
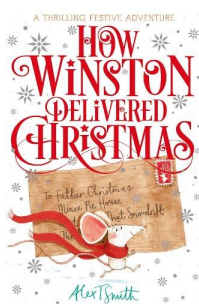
The Christmas Carrolls—Mel Taylor-Bessent; illustrated by Selom Sunu

Holly Carroll and her family are absolutely nuts about Christmas and every part of their life, every day is full of Christmas cheer (including decorations, food and clothing!). When a house comes up for sale on Sleigh Ride Avenue, the family don't even need to view the house before buying it. The move means that Holly will start school for the first time as her parents will be going to out to work to pay for renovations on the house. Holly is initially thrilled at the thought of being able to spread her Christmas cheer with all of her new classmates; however, she finds the reality of school life very different to her expectations. Can Holly get used to being in school and can she find a way to spread a bit of Christmas cheer?

This is a truly wonderful book full of Christmas spirit which oozes out of every page! It's funny and heart-warming and will make you want to eat Christmas dinner and mice pies! I love Holly's enthusiasm for Christmas and the messages the book sends on the importance of being yourself. It also contains wonderful messages about every family being different and respecting those differences. A wonderfully Christmassy book for children (and adults) of all ages that is guaranteed to put a smile on everybody's face.



A selection of other Christmas books I think you will love!



Next time you see me, I'd love to know what your favourite Christmas book is!