

World Book Day with a difference

WORLD
**BOOK
DAY**

7 MARCH 2019

Stories are powerful. We use them all the time in teaching; not only for English but also to integrate with other subject areas. A well-chosen book can teach many things at the same time. A key area of the SPHE curriculum is the strand 'Myself and My Family' and a

recurring objective within this is to recognise that not all families are the same. Outlined below are a selection of books that will meet objectives in the language curriculum but also act as positive representation of LGBT+ characters in a gentle and age-appropriate way.

Junior and senior infants

King and King

This beautiful fairy tale tells the story of a Queen who wants her son to marry so he can become King and she can retire. None of the princesses he meets catch his eye, that is until Princess Madeleine arrives with her brother Prince Lee. It is love at first sight and the two princes get married in a very special wedding and become known as King and King.



Kings' story continues in *King and King and Family*.

Written and illustrated by Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland. Penguin Random House, 2003. ISBN 9781582460611. 32pp. Cost: €16.79.

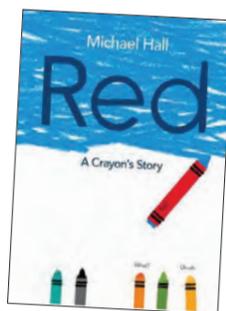
With beautiful collage-style illustrations, this story captures attention immediately and classes really enjoy the unexpected ending. It can be a useful tool, not only for positive LGBT+ representation, but also as a stimulus for discussion about the stereotypes that children may see in books and films. The

Red: A Crayon's Story

Poor Red can't do anything that he is meant to. He can't draw fire engines or strawberries or red traffic lights. One day, he meets a new friend who asks him to draw a blue ocean. He's not sure about it but agrees to try. Success! He goes on to draw bluebells, blue jeans and a blue whale. With that, he realises he was blue

all along and embarks upon his pièce de résistance – a huge blue sky.

This story can act as a metaphor for all children being true to themselves but especially lends itself to introducing issues about gender in a simple and child-friendly way. It's an excellent stimulus for rich and engaging drama lessons and the clever illustrations will help improve visual literacy.



Written and illustrated by Michael Hall. Harper Collins Publishers, 2015. ISBN 9780062252098. 40pp. Cost: €17.99.

1st and 2nd class

The Great Big Book of Families

Families come in all shapes and sizes and this book takes a look at all the different kinds. The tone is set early on as the book begins: 'Once upon a time most families in books looked like this – One daddy, one mummy, one little boy, one little girl, one dog and one cat. But in real life, families come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. In this book are a lot of families living in

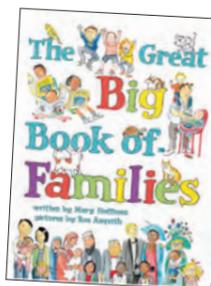
different ways. Perhaps there's one that looks like yours?'

The book offers a realistic depiction of family life and even includes gentle references to negative family experiences like homelessness, unemployment and not being able to afford a holiday. The book is a beautiful starting point for any lesson on family diversity. The book is versatile and could be read through in one sitting or dissected by delving deeper into one of the double page spreads in detail. A must for all classrooms in the junior end of the school!

Written by Mary Hoffman and illustrated by Ros Asquith. Penguin Random House, 2011. ISBN 9781847805874. 40pp. Cost: €13.99.

From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea

In the magical time between night and day, Miu Lan is born. However, they're not just



any child, but one who can change into any shape they can imagine. The only problem is they can't decide what to be: A bird or a fish? A flower or a shooting star? A boy or a girl? Regardless, they find comfort in the loving arms of their mother.

The rhythm of the lyrical text guides the children through a powerful story of finding your place in a new environment as Miu Lan struggles to make friends with their new schoolmates. The book is a beautiful allegory about accepting difference in others and in yourself. Aside from the obvious links to SPHE and gender identity, it could also act as a stimulus for an imaginative Visual Art lesson wherein the children portray different forms that Miu Lan could take or a drama lesson on the playground interactions portrayed in the book.

Written by Kai Cheng Thom and illustrated by Kai Yun Ching and Wai-Yant Li. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2017. ISBN 9781551527093. 40pp. Cost: €16.99.



To celebrate World Book Day on 7 March, the INTO LGBT+ Teachers' Group share their recommendations for LGBT+ inclusive books

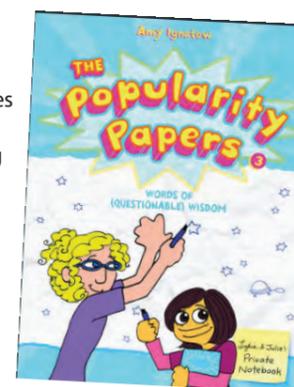
3rd and 4th class

The Popularity Papers

The Popularity Papers is a seven book (to date) series charting the adventures of two best friends, Lydia and Julie as they face the ups and downs of school, family and growing up. The story is drawn in journal format with the two girls writing and recording their experiences from their own perspectives.

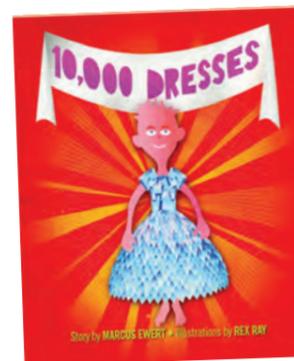
The book is a wonderful addition to any library as it is visually striking, humorous and incorporates positive representation of same-sex headed families, without this being the focus of the story. Book four touches on the issues one of her fathers has with his own family not truly accepting him for who he is.

Written and illustrated by Amy Ignatow. Cost: €9.79.



10,000 Dresses

Every night, Bailey dreams about magical dresses: dresses made of flowers, dresses made of windows... Unfortunately, when Bailey's awake, no one wants to hear about these beautiful dreams. Quite the contrary: "You're a BOY!" – Mother and Father tell Bailey. "You shouldn't be thinking about dresses at all." Then Bailey meets Laurel, an older girl who is touched and inspired by Bailey's imagination and courage. In friendship, the two of them begin making dresses together. And Bailey's dreams come true!



Written by Marcus Ewert and illustrated by Rex Ray. Seven Stories Press, 2008. ISBN 9781583228500. 32pp. Cost: €18.19.

5th and 6th class

The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher

Meet the Fletchers! A family of four boys, two dads and one neighbour who just might ruin everything.

Each of the Fletcher

brothers are finding their plans for success veering off in unexpected and sometimes disastrous directions. At home, their miserable new neighbour complains about everything. The boys learn through hard and often hilarious lessons that sometimes what you least expect is what you come to care

about the most.

A really well-written and gripping book about a family – who just happens to have two dads. The story of the Fletchers continues in *The Family Fletcher Takes Rock Island*. Dana Alison Levy has also written a story around a family with two mothers called *This Would Make A Good Story Someday*.

Written and illustrated by Dana Alison Levy. Penguin Random House, 2015. ISBN 9780385376525. 288pp. Cost: €15.99.

Felix Yz

This book is Felix's secret blog, a chronicle of the days leading up to a risky procedure to undo the effects of a disastrous science experiment. It charts his times with family, run-ins with the school bully and anxiety about his crush. While the crux of the story is on Felix's journey, the book also acts as positive representation of LGBT+ characters with his mother



entering a relationship with another woman towards the end of the story and his Grandy preferring to use alternative gender pronouns. These however are incidental parts of the book, the

real story is the goings-on in Felix's life as he faces the prospect of the procedure.

Written and illustrated by Lisa Bunker. Penguin Random House, 2018. ISBN 9780425288504. 288pp. Cost: €8.99.

