

The University of St Mark & St John

**A Picture-Book Resource Guide as a
Response to an Examination into
Teachers' Knowledge of Children's
Literature Discussing Tender Topics.**

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Glossary of Terms

DfE	Department for Education
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
KS1	Key Stage One
KS2	Key Stage Two
NC	National Curriculum
OfSTED	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PSED	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
US	United States

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Statement of Originality

I confirm that I have fully acknowledged all sources of information and help received and that where such acknowledgement is not made the work is my own.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

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Abstract

Discussing tender topics in the classroom is not optional, it is a statutory requirement reflected in the Citizenship Curricula (DfE, 2013). While picture-books are often viewed as valuable educational resources for young children, it is vital to not undermine the topics some of these literary mediums contain and the impact they can have on personal, social and emotional development. This research project has found that children benefit greatly from reading books that reflect real-life situations and that picture-books are used and valued as a useful resource in introducing such topics.

Analysing 95 questionnaire responses has allowed for an in-depth examination of teacher knowledge around children's literature containing tender topics. The results have demonstrated that the vast majority of teachers and trainee teachers possess a notably poor subject knowledge of children's books and their authors around this subject. This was not a surprising finding because existing research from Cremin *et al.* (2008) formed the same conclusion around teachers' knowledge of all genres of children's literature. However, new and significant findings have identified that the vast majority of teachers see it as their role to discuss these topics with children and when doing so they use picture-books as a resource to support them. This in turn, leaves one question unanswered: if teachers know it is both their role and a statutory requirement to discuss these topics with children and they view books as a valuable tool to support them, why is more not being done to encourage subject knowledge development in this area?

Chapter One – Introduction

1.1 Definition of Tender Topics

There is no existing term that is commonly used when describing children's literature with stories of a controversial nature; where the theme or story calls personal beliefs into question or invokes passionate responses and stimulates debate (Evans, 2015; Woolley, 2010). There are however, many controversial issues discussed within children's literature and for the purpose of this research these will be described as 'tender topics'. 'Tender' because when teachers discuss the topics within these books it is vital they handle the responses and questions from children both sensitively and with care. The themes that sit under this umbrella term are death, dying, terminal illness, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, mixed families, adoption, terrorism, war and all types of abuse.

1.2 Rationale for the Research

Technological advances and the modern world are having a significant impact on children's awareness and understanding of topics that are often deemed inappropriate and beyond their years (Badri, 2016). At the click of a button, children can go online and ask any question, however inappropriate, and have the answer within a matter of seconds. It is reported that 95% of children, under the age of eight, possess or have access to a smart phone and 98% have access to televisions (Common Sense Media, 2017). Although, this may not be a surprising statistic to some, what is surprising, is that only 16% of parents place parental controls on these devices (Kido, 2016). Therefore, what happens when children want to know answers to questions such as: What does dying feel like? Where do bodies go after death? What does 'gay' mean? and What is genital mutilation? Typing these questions into any search engine; when no parental controls have been adopted, will deliver answers and images that are not appropriate for their developmental age.

When considering these statistics, it is fair to assume that children are regularly exposed to the violent and traumatic events that dominate our headlines; watch television programmes with storylines that are often sensationalised and are able to access a plethora of violent and sexual videos on the internet. With such readily

available access to these tender topics, it becomes inevitable that children bring these incidents, their reactions to them, and any questions they may have about them, to school. For that reason, it is more important than ever before, for government and educational settings to identify their role in providing children with an environment where it is safe to discuss these topics, with the understanding that children are free to ask any questions they would like the answers to. Ignoring the influences surrounding children is no longer an option; more has to be done to help them understand the world they are growing in to (Gerver, 2012). Good quality picture-books are one-way schools can begin discussions around tender topics.

Having said that, here lies a major issue and the basis for this whole research project. Technological advances; the modern world and the dilemmas these bring, justifies the publication of children's literature discussing tender topics. Current educational policy and legislation recognises this need, therefore, making it widely accepted that these topics are discussed in schools (see section 2.2 – Chapter 2). Picture books are seen as a valuable tool in introducing these topics, justifying the distribution of them into schools (see section 2.3 – Chapter 2). Yet, analysing existing research of teachers' knowledge in all genres of children's literature suggests that they may have a serious lack of subject knowledge of children's literature around tender topics (see section 2.4 – Chapter 2).

However, this is speculation as there is currently no research into this area. Existing research only investigates teacher knowledge around all genres of children's literature and not tender topics alone. Therefore, this research project intends to identify and analyse teachers' subject knowledge of children's literature discussing tender topics. Its intention is to use these results to inform and support teachers, trainee teachers, ITE providers and the government, in demonstrating the importance of teachers developing a sound knowledge of children's literature; beginning within teacher training programmes. A picture-book resource guide will be produced and provided as a starting point, and aide, for teachers and trainee teachers in developing their subject knowledge of children's literature discussing tender topics.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

2.1 The Controversy Surrounding the Publication of Children's Literature Containing Tender Topics

The changes that have occurred in society; traditions and cultures over the last century are regularly reflected in children's literature. Many picture-books published over the last twenty years have encapsulated an accurate representation of modern day families, gender identification and real-life problems (McCabe and Altamura, 2011; Letterpress, 2018). Consequently, debate around the topics considered suitable and appropriate in children's literature is certainly not a new one. 'And Tango Makes Three' by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell tells the story of two gay penguins in New York's Central Park Zoo, falling in love and hatching an egg together (Richardson and Parnell, 2005). Despite being based on a true story, it was the most challenged book of 2006, 2007 and 2008; and was eventually banned by schools and libraries across the US (Banned, 2010). 'Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin' by Susanne Bosche (1981) is a story of a young girl growing up with her father and step-father, which was vilified as homosexual propaganda by the British press back in 1983. 'Lions and Tigers and Terrorists, Oh My!' by Carole Lieberman (2017) is a story highlighting many ways to protect children in times of terror, which was criticised by the news presenters on GMB in January, 2018 as scaremongering and totally inappropriate for children. These books are just three examples of carefully written children's literature discussing topics that are completely relevant to children's lives today, that have not only been criticised but have been banned from being used in some schools. There are indeed many more examples that instigate such controversy, debate and are a challenge to personal beliefs.

Technological advances have made it easier for the public to express the views they hold regarding these books to a much larger audience thus, creating a new critic of children's literature and forcing children's books off shelves, out of libraries and out of schools (Banned, 2010). The speed at which these books can gain worldwide attention is phenomenal; one negative review can lead to it featuring on national television, as with the case of 'Lions and Tigers and Terrorists, Oh My!' by Carole Lieberman (Lieberman, 2017). However, the adults protesting against these books are doing so because the content within them conflicts with their personal views,

values and beliefs and herein, lies a major discourse within children's literature. Everybody has a personal preference, everybody has different beliefs and therefore, everybody will have different views and opinions about these types of books. Yet, for every person that deems the topic offensive, another would argue it to be completely relevant and appropriate for children to read or discuss.

Interestingly, the banning of these books mainly occurs as a result of the viewpoint of adults. It is adults' opinions forcing these books off shelves and out of schools, and not children's. No research has ever been conducted into children's viewpoints on these books. Educational policy states that children's views and opinions should be valued and respected; 'pupil voice' refers to listening to the opinions of pupils and involving them within decision making (DfE, 2014: 2). Engaging pupils in active participation in their education encourages them to become active participants in society, therefore, surely, it should be the views and beliefs of children that are considered when deeming these types of books appropriate or relevant, and not adults.

It could be argued, that children who are denied access to these types of books in response to an adult's personal belief because they are considered too young to understand, are being patronised. Most children will witness or experience many of the worries and challenges, that they find described within these child-friendly and appropriately written books, within their own personal lives (Evans, 2015). Carole (2005) conducted research to challenge the ideology that these types of books are a 'challenge to innocence' and not only concluded that they were not but advocated the use of them within classrooms to begin discussions around these topics. Therefore, it is vital that children are provided with a variety of mediums to explore real-life situations and events. Technology alone could give a distorted and biased view of certain topics. Children's literature not only encourages children to explore humanity but encourages them to empathise with characters and plot lines that exist outside their norm and in doing so gain an understanding of current issues in society and what it means to be human (Sainsbury and Schagen, 2004; Serroukh, 2015). Books can provide 'mirrors' in which children can see themselves within characters and plot lines, allowing them to explore their lives and personal situations from a different perspective, seeing themselves in literature makes them feel valued and accepted (Serroukh, 2015).

Research demonstrates that children should be free to choose books that are of interest to them, whatever the topic. Pennac (1992) published 'The Rights of a Reader' paper which outlined the ten fundamental rights that every reader should be entitled to; one of them being the right to read anything (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Pennac (1992) Ten Rights of a Reader: Republished in 2006 and illustrated by Quentin Blake.

The influence adults possess in the banning of such books could be argued as being illogical and unfair. Their personal beliefs are essentially deciding what children can and cannot read. Even though, adult's may find some of the topics within these books inappropriate, as they go against their personal beliefs, it is ultimately not their decision to make. Denying children access to books on the views of an adult is limiting a child's free choice and therefore, taking away one of their rights as a reader.

Serroukh (2015) explored Pennac's research further and in conclusion offered an 11th right of a reader: children have the right to be visible in the books they read. Believing if children, with all their individual differences, are reflected in children's literature, it allows them to not only see themselves but also to understand the realities of others, therefore, broadening their viewpoints and developing their personal, social and emotional development (PSED); an intrinsic aspect of education reflected in both the National Curriculum (NC) and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Guidance (DfE, 2013; DfE, 2017a). Considering the research, it is

fair to suggest, the personal, social and emotional benefits of discussing tender topics within the classroom are exponential and therefore, should be explored further.

2.2 Pupil Benefits of Discussing Tender Topics in the Classroom.

The purpose of education is often debated; is it to create the workforce of the future or is it to prepare them for the world that they are growing into? Holistic development is a practical approach that cultivates and enriches the physical, social, emotional and intellectual aspects of a child's life, and is considered invaluable in supporting the development and well-being of the 'whole-child'. Many argue that holistic education is more important than academic education as it develops children into well-rounded and emotionally secure individuals who can handle the difficulties that often arise from realities of life (Lindon, 2005; Daly et al., 2006; Moyles, 2010).

Emotional health and well-being are currently at the forefront of the education agenda; particular regarding children's mental health. This is primarily because it is being promoted and avidly supported by the Royal Family through the Heads-Together charity and therefore, such infamous backing is ensuring that it is dominating the news headlines (Heads Together, 2018). A cynic may argue that such infamous backing and support has triggered the amount of publicity, limelight and support this topic is currently receiving, however, that should never undermine the importance of children's mental health or in recognising the importance of supporting the mental well-being of children within schools. Especially, when we know that research, theorists and their ideologies have long supported the implementation of holistic approaches in schools.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs paradigm for example, demonstrates that children will never achieve self-actualisation if their basic needs have never been met. His ideologies are rooted in the firm belief that having a positive self-esteem has a direct effect on learning in the classroom and that children will only accept the challenge and risk needed to learn when they feel emotionally safe and secure in their environment (Bruce, 2010). Children are not exempt from the realities of life, they all have very different upbringings and will more than likely at some point experience or observe some of the tender topics defined within Chapter 1 – section 1.1. It is therefore, necessary to provide a safe environment where children feel like they can

discuss such difficult topics. A notion supported by Noddings (2002) - an advocate for care within education using holistic approaches - who argues for a curriculum promoting education that reflects the home-lives of children. She believes that children should be given opportunities within education to practice caring, to show empathy and understanding and should be afforded opportunities to discuss and reflect upon these types of situations. This could be achieved through discussions around the tender topics that some children will undoubtedly be experiencing at home. Encouraging them to talk openly and ask any questions they may have around these topics may not only help them understand their feelings but could also challenge their thinking about such difficult topics (Waugh *et al.*, 2016).

Currently, there is a belief that schools are forcing children to leave any questions they may have, surrounding what they have seen at home, online or on television, at the school gates by ignoring the modern world and its rate of technological change (Gerver, 2012). It is fair to say, Maslow's and Noddings' ideologies are becoming increasingly relevant in the 21st Century, especially when considering the technological access children have at home. The current ICT curriculum mainly focuses on the importance of staying safe online and in recognising cyberbullying and grooming. It does not include outcomes that link to the problems that technological advances are thought to engender; such as the emotional impact of knowing too much too soon (DfE, 2013). It could be argued that in ignoring these questions schools and teachers are unconsciously deeming these topics inappropriate, or more worryingly, making them taboo subjects, which could have a detrimental effect on the personal, social and emotional development of our children. If children are experiencing any of the tender topics set out within this research, the last thing we should be doing as teachers is making them think that they are different, or inappropriate or that they should be embarrassed or too scared to share what is happening in their lives. Truthful, concrete and supportive conversations that stem from questions children may bring to school, are extremely important for children's understanding of the world and well-being and therefore, need to happen in a supportive and caring environment.

Social educational research over the past four decades has found that positive personal, social and emotional outcomes are associated with giving pupils opportunities to discuss and explore tender topics in a caring, supportive classroom

environment (Hahn, 1991). Ehman (1977) found that pupils who are given opportunities to express their thoughts have attitudes significantly more positive than those who are not. Research conducted by Durlack (1995) and extended by Durlack and Wells (1997) found that schools who teach personal, social and emotional skills saw improvements within other areas of school, such as a higher attendance rate, an increase in motivation levels and an overall increase in morale. Furthermore, a greater coverage to tender topics has been associated with positive changes in attitudes within social integration. It was found that pupils who are able to consider a wider range of viewpoints are generally better at social integration and are more trusting in society; as they are more trusting of other pupils (Ehman, 1977). This is supported by research conducted by McCabe and Altamura (2011) who also established that socially and emotionally competent children have better relationships, with friends, parents and teachers, whereas, socially and emotionally incompetent children are at risk of withdrawal and behavioural issues. The significance of these findings and the importance of developing PSED in schools is highlighted by The Duchess of Cambridge who said that prioritising the mental health and social development of children can help them build social skills as well as teach them life skills that will last a lifetime (Heads Together, 2018). Reminding, us that developing emotional competency in childhood ensures an emotional competent adulthood.

Equally as important, research has also found that holistic approaches in PSED can have a positive effect on learning and academic success. McCabe and Altamura (2011) also found that supporting the development of PSED has a positive effect on academic attainment, demonstrating that children who are having their emotional needs met enjoy greater academic success and those who do not, often have achievement problems.

Considering this research, which offers ample evidence of the many personal, social, emotional and academic benefits to be gained from discussing tender topics within the classroom, it is surprising to discover that other research has revealed that conversations within schools around these topics are uncommon and sporadic (King, 2009). Badri (2016) suggests that this is because teachers sometimes find it complicated to answer any questions that often arise within these discussions, especially when both children and adults can often have conflicting beliefs and

opinions, acquired through personal experiences, cultures and values. Having said that, he still recognises the importance of such discussions and argues that teachers should put time and effort into planning for discussions on different tender topics. Children's literature is one resource that teachers can use when planning for such discussions, therefore, it is necessary for them to have an awareness of the ways in which these books support discussions.

2.3 Can Children's Literature Support Discussions Around Tender Topics?

Humans have always told stories; way before the technology that exists today they were used to teach children; to pass on family connections; re-tell real events, discuss history and hand down values and customs (Fox-Eades, 2006). Stories are undeniably, a fundamental part of education and have been for many years and although stories are usually thought of within the teaching of literacy, it has been found to be just as important in other curriculum areas. It has been argued that stories can be a stimulus for philosophy and thinking skills and can develop speaking and listening, social awareness and emotional vocabulary (Fox Eades, 2006; Bruce, 2010). Furthermore, they offer a way to introduce, address and support children as they begin to comprehend difficult situations and the emotions these could produce (Wiseman, 2012).

Research has found that there is a need for books that discuss tender topics and that children benefit greatly from reading books that reflect real-life situations (Durlack, 1995; Smith-D'Arezzo and Thompson, 2006; Serroukh, 2015). An American article from Mankiw and Strasser (2013) discussing the exploration of sensitive issues through picture-books; sensitive issues defined similarly to that of the tender topics, is the most significant document found relating to this research. The authors of this article passionately claim that books are a valuable resource in helping explain tender topics to children. They believe that books enable children to use the stories within them to better understand their own experiences, as well as experiences their friends may be going through. Another piece of research by Roberts and Crawford (2009) supports this belief and writes that books deliver information, security, comfort and strategies for coping with life's difficult times. Furthermore, the information given about such tender topics in these books is done at a developmentally appropriate level (Mankiw and Strasser, 2013).

Children's literature also offers opportunities for developing children's language. A good picture-book offers opportunities for listening, speaking and questioning while nurturing their imaginations and broadening their learning (Sharp, 2005). They are excellent conversation starters, in that they give children opportunities to activate prior knowledge, ask questions and explore their thoughts (Lowe, 2009). Research argues that the discussions that arise from these books help children to feel more equipped to meet life's challenges (Roberts and Crawford, 2009; Mankiw and Strasser, 2013). Suggesting perhaps that literature has the potential to give children the language skills, knowledge and empathy to not only discuss this topics with their peers, friends and family, well into their adult lives but to know that discussing these topics is important to their well-being.

However, although Smith-D'Arezzo and Thompson (2006) believe that there is a need for reading books that discuss tender topics and reflect real life situations, it should not be done within a classroom, suggesting rather that it is the role of professionals and parents, not teachers. They argue that teachers do not have the counselling expertise to discuss these tender topics, or to answer the questions that may arise from these discussions. Contra wise, Ablesser (2008) suggests it is plausible for teachers to use books in this way. Bibliotherapy: a term used to describe using picture-books as a therapy tool for children needing emotional support by trained psychologists, can be distinguished into two categories, clinical and developmental. Clinical bibliotherapy deals with children with significant emotional or behavioural issues and should only be delivered by trained professional, however, developmental bibliotherapy should be used by teachers to support normal development (Aram and Aviram, 2009).

When selecting books teachers must be mindful of the quality, range and choice of representation and must be critically reflective about the implicit and explicit messages communicated within them. They must actively choose books that encourage debate, allow children to be self-reflective and better understand their personal realities, as well as gain an insight into the lives and experiences of others (Serroukh, 2015). To be able to choose good quality books, teachers need to have an excellent and secure knowledge of the literature available to them.

2.4 An analysis of the Existing Research into Teachers' Knowledge of Children's Literature.

Even though, Lockwood (2012) believes children's literature is an essential area within English subject knowledge and that teachers need to have a sophisticated, up to date knowledge and understanding of children's books, authors and poets; research over the past two decades has consistently demonstrated that teachers have a lack of subject knowledge in this area (Horn, 2004; Cremin *et al*, 2008; Burgess *et al*, 2012). Cremin *et al*. (2008) surveyed 1200 teachers in order to ascertain teachers' knowledge of children's literature and discovered that teachers have a very limited knowledge of children's authors, poets and illustrators. Just 46% of teachers could name 6 authors; albeit they were infamous authors such as Roald Dahl and JK Rowling. Only 10% of teachers could name 6 illustrators; with 24% unable to name any at all and, 10% could name 6 poets, with 22% naming none at all.

Interestingly, teachers' minimal knowledge of children's literature, authors and poets was highlighted to be the major stumbling block to the implementation of the 'Literacy Hour' in 1998 (Horn, 2004). When David Blunkett introduced this initiative, he made a promise to resign in 2002 if 80% of 11-year olds did not meet the anticipated standard. Research found that the Literacy Hour failed 1.2 million children between 1998 and 2004 (Burkard, 2004). The lack of teachers' knowledge of children's literature was a significant factor within these figures. The project 'Teachers as Readers: Building Communities of Readers' (2007-8) was planned as a response to this research and aimed to improve and widen teachers' knowledge of children's literature. However, this was a small-scale project with only 43 teachers from five local authorities taking part, and even though the findings demonstrated a positive correlation between enhancing teachers' subject knowledge of children's literature and children's attainment, it was recognised there is still much more to be done to address this issue (Cremin *et al*, 2009).

This insufficient knowledge is a serious cause for concern, especially when research has shown that teachers' knowledge of children's books has a direct bearing on teaching practices and pedagogy (Burgess *et al*., 2012; Medwell *et al*, 2017). It seems simplistic, but to be able to provide a diverse range of interesting and engaging literature for children, teachers need a good knowledge of children's

literature themselves (Letterpress, 2018). Research has demonstrated teachers need considerable support to help them widen their reading repertoires and expand their knowledge of children's literature, illustrators and poets. Lockwood (2012) writes teacher subject knowledge of children's literature is an area often overlooked on ITT courses. To ensure the successful use of children's picture books in the classroom, an introduction to children's literature needs to begin during teacher training (Horn, 2004).

Research conducted into teacher's knowledge of children's literature only focuses on their knowledge of **all** genres of picture-books and there is no current research into teachers' knowledge of a particular genre of books. As it has been demonstrated that teachers have a lack of knowledge in all genres of children's literature, it could be assumed that these figures would decrease dramatically if research was conducted into teacher knowledge of books discussing tender topics. This notion will be researched, explored and analysed within Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Chapter Three – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research is the thorough and purposeful search of knowledge and understanding on a specific topic (Kumar, 2008). It is an academic activity where the systematic collection, analysis and evaluation of data is used to generate new knowledge or to answer a particular question (Davies and Hughes, 2014). Methodology refers to the logic of the decision-making process when conducting research; in other words, the ways in which research is planned, organised and executed (Mouton and Marais, 1996). It is necessary when conducting research for the researcher to know the difference between methods and methodology. This enables them to not only know how to apply methods but to justify their decision making. This section will identify the research paradigm and provide a description of the research methodology; explaining the adopted research approaches, research methods, data-collection processes and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Theory, Paradigm and Personal Ontological and Epistemological positioning

We all view, understand and interpret the world in very different ways; ontology, the study of what exists and epistemology, what a person knows and how they acquired that knowledge, are two different ways of viewing research philosophy (Rawnsley, 1998; O’Leary, 2017). This research is framed in Postmodern theory to offer diverse perspectives on the importance of children’s literature discussing tender topics. Postmodernism is a philosophical proposal that claims reality is inaccessible by human investigation; knowledge is socially constructed, and the meaning of words are determined by the reader and not the author (Ritzer, 1997). Barna (1994) writes that in Postmodern theory there are no absolute truths, two people could define a truth in totally differing ways, but both could still be right. In other words, Postmodern theorists view reality as what each and every person makes it to be, furthermore, they draw upon different features of knowledge according to the opinions and episteme of the researcher and the participants (Taylor, 2005).

Personal ontological and epistemological positioning suggest an interpretive paradigm. Ritzer (1988, cited in Harper and Leicht, 2015) describes the interpretive theory as a social construction paradigm and asserts that all interpretive theories are focussed on the way an individual defines their social situations and how those definitions then effect their actions and interactions with others – as with Postmodernism theory. Interpretivists believe that reality does not exist by itself, they argue a Postmodern perspective of it being constructed and given meaning by people. They argue for the exclusivity of human enquiry in which each person's opinions and actions are founded upon their interpretation of experiences (Radnor, 2001). Therefore, the focus is on feelings, beliefs and thoughts, and how people communicate these (Crotty, 1998; Albon, 2011; Bryman, 2016; O'Leary, 2017).

Even though the research conducted was done to identify teachers' knowledge of children's literature discussing tender topics - suggesting a positivist paradigm would have been best suited for this research (Burton et al., 2008) - it was undertaken to ultimately demonstrate an incongruence between teacher views, values and beliefs of discussing these topics in school and their knowledge of the resources developed to support them with this. An interpretivist paradigm is justified on the basis that in order to understand human actions and explanations; people's views, values and beliefs must be prominent within research (Creswell, 2012). Using an interpretivist paradigm allows these views, values and beliefs to be brought to the forefront and therefore, enables new theories to be generated.

3.3 Method

When deciding which research route to take, it was important to know the knowledge that was being sought to make, uncover or construct (Davies and Hughes, 2014).

This research explored the following four key research areas:

- 1) The controversy surrounding the publication of children's literature containing tender topics.
- 2) Pupil benefits of discussing tender topics in the classroom.
- 3) How children's literature can support discussions around tender topics.
- 4) An analysis of the existing research into teachers' knowledge of children's literature.

After critically analysing these areas, research was planned and carried out to identify any connections between teacher beliefs about these topics being published in children's literature; the discussions they then planned for and their knowledge of children's literature to support these discussions. Using an inductive approach; which forms theories as opposed to deductive which tests theories and tries to find the answer to a question, this research intended to generate a theory around teachers' knowledge of children's literature discussing tender topics, (Creswell, 2013).

A quantitative interpretive method was used, despite research claiming interpretivist approaches tend to draw on qualitative sources of data (Punch, 2014; Davies and Hughes, 2014; Bryman, 2016). This method was justified on the basis that qualitative approaches generally adopt methods such as; observations, unstructured or semi-structured interviews and focus groups (Davies and Hughes, 2014). The interaction required for a qualitative method would have meant either only accessing teachers local to the researcher or travelling far and wide to conduct these methods. Time constraints did not allow for such travel and therefore, using this method would have only produced responses from teachers' local to the area, resulting in a regional perspective of teachers' knowledge, rather than the national or international perspective wanted for this research. O'Leary (2017) writes that researchers should adopt approaches that are not based on tradition but on the goal of best answering a well-considered research question. In order to achieve the well-balanced perspective required for this research, a wide-spread collection of data was essential.

Even though a quantitative method is often categorised as an impartial positivist search for truths, relying on hypotheses, variables and statistics, and this did not sit within personal ontological or epistemological positioning; it was still believed to be the best method to use to acquire the best results for this research (Bryman, 2016). O'Leary (2017) believes that questionnaires offer an efficient method in collecting large and reliable amounts of quantitative data. Online questionnaires maximise this potential and therefore, one was created and distributed to several teacher forums on Facebook (Appendix C). However, before creating and distributing the questionnaire, it was necessary to have an awareness of the strengths and limitations to this method and the impact these could have on data collection and analysis.

3.4 Strengths and Limitations of Using Questionnaires

Online questionnaires have increased in popularity over the last decade and it is thought one reason for this is because the results produced can be stored immediately within a database. Furthermore, the online systems used by researchers offer programmes that can instantly perform simple analysis, meaning results can be easily quantified and therefore, save the researcher a lot of time (Newby, 2010; Muijs, 2011; Bryman, 2016; O'Leary, 2017).

Some argue that questionnaires run the risk of a low respondent rate (Punch, 2014; O'Leary, 2017), contradictorily, others say that they have the potential to reach a large number of respondents (O'Leary, 2017). Unfortunately, the participatory rate of any research will always carry that risk; most research will almost always have either a high or low uptake of respondents. Having an awareness of this allowed the researcher to explore the number of teacher forums on Facebook beforehand, making themselves members of approximately 20-25 teacher groups, with the intention of posting the questionnaire within each forum and therefore, receiving a considerable response rate. Other strengths of questionnaires include convenience and optional participation (Cargan, 2007). Participants are able to complete them at a speed and time convenient to them, and the optional participation suggests that whoever responds to the questionnaire does so because the title of the research interests them, demonstrating a willingness to engage in the research and a sincere response.

A general disadvantage of using a questionnaire is the strict and fixed format, which eradicates the possibility of a more in-depth observation (Bell, 2005 and Sarantakos, 2013). There were a couple of questions within the questionnaire where if the respondent answered 'No' it would have been interesting to ask them their reasons why, but this would have only have been purely for personal interest. The answers to the 'why' questions would lead to a different research proposal and therefore, unnecessary for this research. Questionnaires can also produce biased results as the participants may be scared to reveal personal truths about themselves, for example, for this research participants may be reluctant to admit that they are unable to name any book titles or authors as they may think this could reflect badly on them (Popper, 2004). However, as the participants were made aware that this study was completely

anonymous, and it was asked in the introduction to not use the internet to search for answers, it was hoped that the participants would respond truthfully. However, this is relying on an element of trust.

After considering both the strengths and limitations of questionnaires, it was still considered the most appropriate method for this research and therefore, went ahead in an online questionnaire format.

3.5 Research Design

The questionnaire used a number of both open and closed questions; as do most questionnaires (Kumar, 2014) - see Appendix B. The two open questions within the questionnaire were only asked to allow the participant to demonstrate their knowledge of books and authors; and not to acquire any personal views, values or beliefs. Subsequently, this knowledge was used to support the creation of the resource guide for teachers – Appendix F. The remainder questions only allowed for either yes/ no answers or offered a set of options for the participant to choose from. The purpose of these was to discover personal beliefs around books that discuss tender topics and to categorise the participant, for statistical purposes, for example, what type of school they are employed in. Scales such as the Likert, Guttman and Thurstone were purposely avoided as it was felt they did not explicitly state an answer and the scales used could be open for misinterpretation (O’Leary, 2017).

3.6 Participants

Access to research participants was via numerous teacher and student teacher forums on Facebook – Appendix C. Acquiring an acceptable number of participants in quantitative research benefits the probabilities and statistics (Gorard, 2013; O’Leary, 2017). Ninety-five participants responded to the questionnaire, exceeding the expected response rate. All respondents were either teachers or trainee teachers from a variety of settings, in varying types of schools including international schools; meaning this research went beyond the UK.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In order to begin researching, the consideration of ethics was first required. An assessment had to be carried out to ensure that the methods proposed were viable and followed all ethical guidelines (Appendix A). Doing this ensured that the research was conducted in line with British Educational Research Association (2018). The Ethics Board from the University of St Mark and St John approved the research proposal as they considered the intended research to be low risk. No children were involved, and all responses collected were completely anonymous. Only two questions within the questionnaire requested personal information; what year group and type of school the participant was employed in. However, this information was only collected for data analysis purposes and as these questions were completely anonymous they will have in no way revealed the person's identity and therefore, remained ethical. All participants entered into this research freely and willingly; completing the questionnaire indicated their understanding and consent to take part. Punch (2014: 44) describes this as 'voluntary informed consent' which is the practice of ensuring that participants of the research are prepared to do so under conditions that is suitable to both participant and researcher (Newby, 2010).

Chapter Four – Findings, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The findings in this chapter refer to the data collected from ninety-five completed questionnaires from both teachers and trainee teachers, nationally and internationally. All participants responded to the questionnaire freely and were aware that their responses were completely anonymous.

71 respondents were teachers, 21 were trainee teachers and the remaining three were an Early Years Specialist; a retired teacher and HLTA. 41 respondents were employed in State schools; 20 within Academies; six within Faith Schools; six within Independent Schools, six were from the Private sector; ten were trainee teachers not currently on placement and the remaining six came from International Schools (two respondents), a free school, a supply agency, a private day-care unit and a university link tutor. 32 were employed in EYFS, 33 within KS1, 20 within KS2 and 10 were trainee teachers that were currently not on placement.

4.2 Quantitative Analysis

Statistics aid turning quantitative data into beneficial information that can be used to summarise data and explain connections, patterns and relationships. They can be inferential or descriptive; inferential statistics can be used to detect statistically noteworthy differences between groups of data and descriptive statistics can be used to review and analyse data (Unicef, 2014; MEAL, 2018). Descriptive statistics were used when analysing the data collected within this study as it was felt that this method would provide the reader with a clear understanding of the findings that have been uncovered. Within statistics there are two variables (the measurements, questions or information collected) and these are categorical and numerical. Categorical variables contain a group of categories, for example, the role of the participant (teacher/ trainee teacher) and can be arranged into distinct categories and summarised by determining the number of times a category occurs. Numerical variables count numbers such as the number of teachers who have discussed a tender topic (MEAL, 2018). The questions within the survey that produced categorical variables can be found within Appendix E as these have only been used within the

analysis of teachers' knowledge of children's literature to identify any reasons, connections or relationships within the findings. The responses that produced numerical variables will be analysed and discussed within this chapter.

4.3 Teachers' Beliefs Around Picture-Books Discussing Tender Topics

Two main areas of consideration for this research were the controversy that surrounds the publication of children's literature discussing tender topics and teachers' roles in discussing these topics within the classroom (Chapter 2.1 and 2.2). Research suggests that personal views, values and beliefs can have a direct impact on the use of such books in classrooms, therefore, it was considered constructive to ask the participants their personal views on such books.

Findings from the questionnaire show that the vast majority of teachers and trainee teachers (99%) believe books containing tender topics should be published.

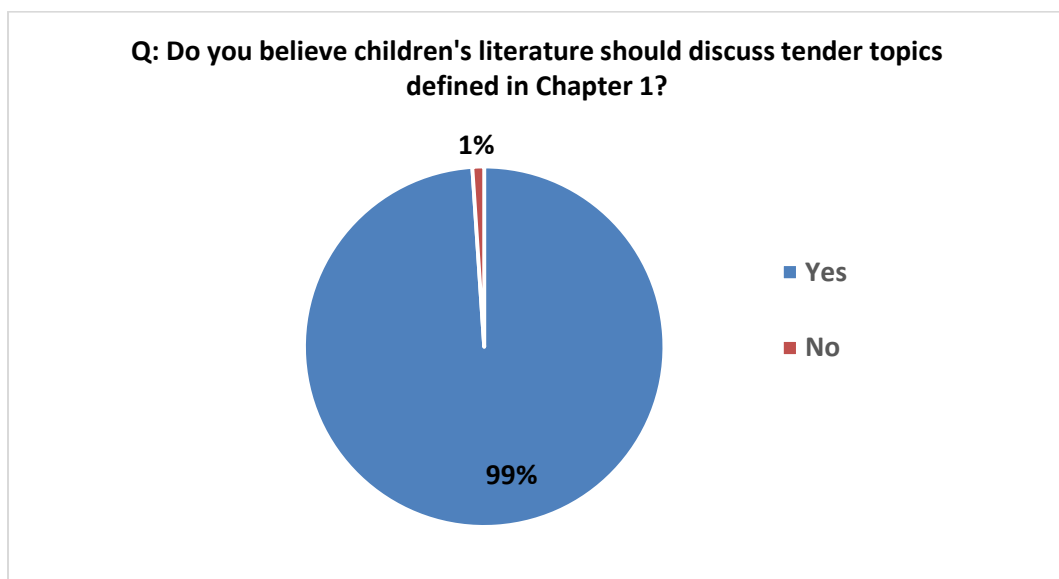


Figure 2 Teacher beliefs around the publication of children's literature discussing tender topics.

Only 1% (one respondent out of ninety-five) felt that children's literature should not discuss tender topics. No option was given for the participant to offer any reasons for this. This was done purposely, as it was felt asking this would lead to personal views, values and beliefs being called into question, which did not sit within the quantitative approach adopted. However, upon further investigation, possible reasons for this soon became apparent. This particular individual was a teacher, employed in KS1 in

a Faith School and not only did they believe these books should not be published, they had also never used a picture-book to discuss any form of tender topic within their classroom. They cited the reason being, 'I couldn't find anything appropriate for the year group I teach.' Surprisingly, even though they said these topics should not be seen in children's literature, they did see it as their role as a teacher to discuss such topics in the classroom (Fig.3). Analysing these responses indicates that this person finds the content within these books inappropriate and as such, has inadvertently revealed that they have allowed their personal beliefs to hinder them in their practice.

91% of participants answered that they believe that it is the role of a teacher to discuss tender topics within their classrooms.

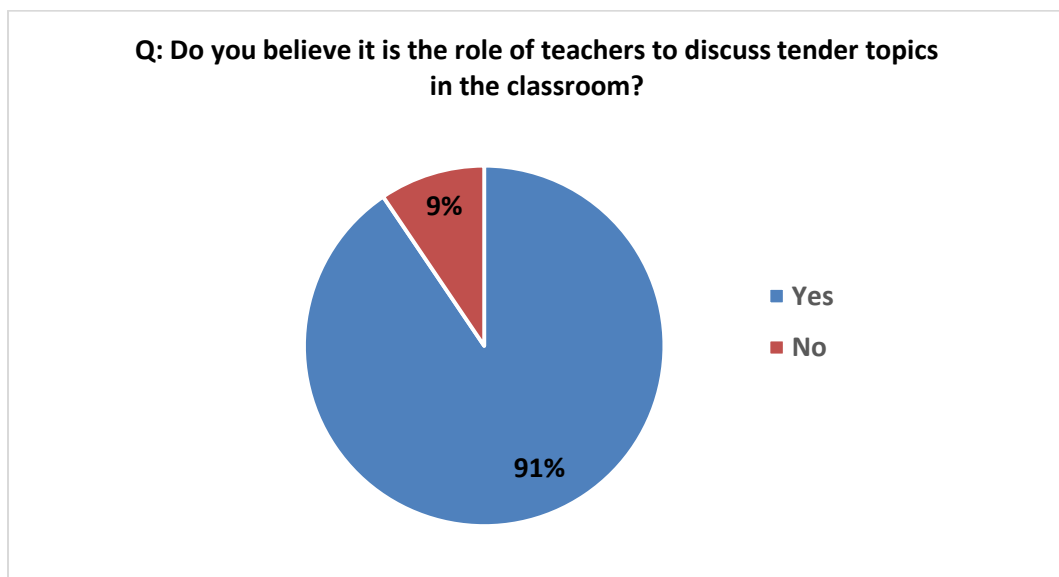


Figure 3 Teachers' beliefs around discussing tender topics in the classroom

However, a significant number (9% - nine participants) believe it is not the teachers' role to instigate such conversations. Nine participants out of 95 may not seem significant but if this survey was completed on a much larger scale these results suggest that 90 out of every 1000 teachers would feel this way. At the last count, there were 503,900 teachers in state funded schools in England alone (DfE, 2017b), meaning if every single one of those participated in this survey, results suggest that 50,390 would believe it is not their role to discuss these topics in school. It is when considering these ideas that these results become more significant.

Once again, as a quantitative method was adopted no option was given for the participant to offer any reason why. The table below has been produced to look at other responses; to different questions, from the nine participants who said no, to see if there are any possible explanations or recurring themes for this. It was hoped that doing this would identify if any personal beliefs had had any direct effect on them discussing tender topics with children.

Table 1: The responses to other questions from the nine participants who believe teachers should not discuss tender topics within the classroom

	R 1	R 2	R 3	R 4	R 5	R 6	R 7	R 8	R 9
Q1	KS1	EYFS	KS2	KS1	KS1	KS1	KS1	KS1	KS2
Q2	Teacher	Teacher	Trainee Teacher	Teacher	Retired Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Q3	State	State	Academy	State	University Link Teacher	Independent School	Private	State	Academy
Q4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

KEY: **Q1:** Year Group they are employed in. **Q2:** Role of the participant **Q3:** Type of school they are employed in. **Q4:** Have they used a picture-book to discuss a tender topic within the classroom.

This table establishes that even though all nine participants believe it is not their role to discuss tender topics in the classroom, all nine have still used a picture-book to do so. These are indeed positive findings as it means despite their personal beliefs they are still adhering to the NC and its statutory requirements (DfE, 2013). None of the respondents were employed in Faith Schools, demonstrating that a religious school ethos did not hinder them in introducing topics that are sometimes considered controversial. Having said that, just because they are not employed in a Faith school does not mean that they do not hold such personal religious views. Therefore, it is deduced that personal beliefs may be one reason why they do not see it as their role to discuss these topics with children. Other possible reasons include, they may feel that they have not had adequate training to support them with this or they may believe it is the role of parents to discuss these topics with their children at a time

when they know them to be emotionally ready to do so (Smith-D'Arezzo and Thompson, 2008). However, this is speculation and for that reason, to obtain a true reflection, further qualitative research would need to be conducted. This would allow for a thorough examination of the personal reasons why some teachers and trainee teachers believe it is not their role to discuss these topics in school.

The data from the last two questions was collected to identify if personal beliefs had had a direct impact on teaching instruction. The findings have proven that they do not hinder or impact on such discussions taking place in schools. Therefore, the next step was to identify the number of teachers and trainee teachers who have used a picture-book as a resource to begin discussions around these topics and their existing knowledge of the literature available to them when doing so.

4.4 The Number of Teachers and Trainee Teachers who have Discussed Tender Topics in the Classroom and the Topics Discussed

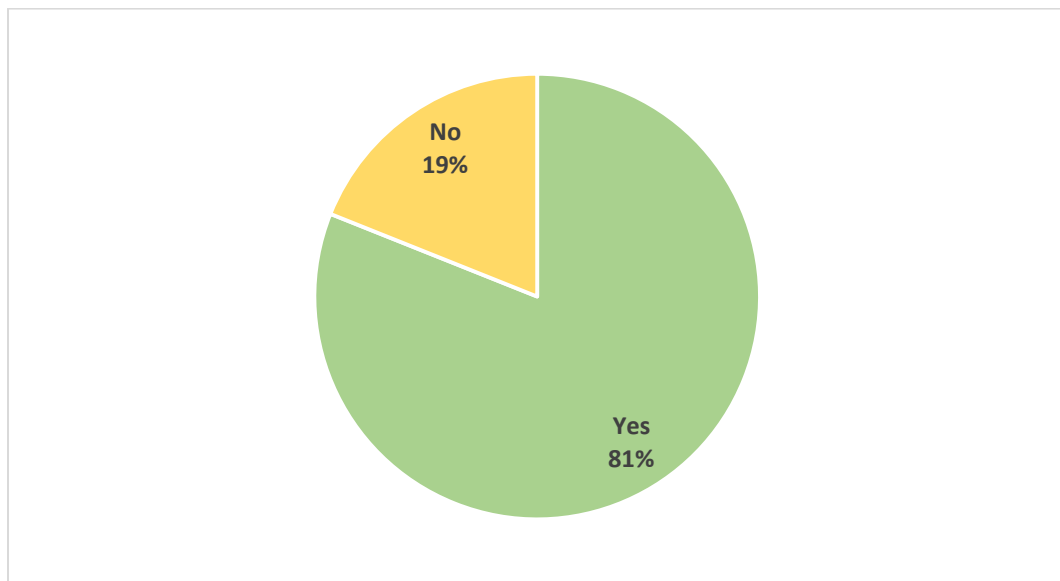


Figure 3 The percentage of teachers who have used a picture book about a tender topic

This pie chart shows that 19% of respondents have not used a picture-book containing a tender topic. When analysing the questions on personal beliefs (chapter 4.3) it was discovered that the 9% who do not think it is their role to discuss these topics, have done so anyway. Therefore, these results demonstrate that 19% of respondents have not used a picture-book to discuss a tender topic even though they have answered previously they believe it is their role to do so.

Unlike before, if the respondent answered 'No' to this question they were then asked to offer a reason why, producing some interesting and also worrying responses. Of the 18 respondents (19%) who said no, 16 offered reasons why. Five stated that they had never needed to address any of the issues defined within the tender topic definition; two were trainee teachers who had not had the opportunity as of yet, three introduced the topic without a picture-book as a resource to support them and the remaining six offered a mix of responses including; 'Never thought of the idea' and 'I haven't found a picture book suitable for Year 6.'

Excluding the trainee teachers who simply have not had the opportunity to do so yet, it could be argued that those who have not discussed any of the topics outlined for this research are neglecting some aspects of the NC or EYFS statutory framework. To gain a deeper understanding and justification of these responses would require further examination, through qualitative research. Nevertheless, as qualified teachers they know it is their role to implement the learning outcomes of the NC and by saying they have never had the need to discuss such topics shows that they are consciously neglecting the PSHE curriculum and they should be held accountable for this (DfE, 2013; DfE, 2017a).

81% of respondents used a picture-book as a tool for introducing a tender topic to children in their classrooms, revealing that the majority of teachers view children's literature as a powerful and useful resource for introducing these topics. Which in turn, supports the ideologies of Mankiw and Strasser (2013) who avidly promote the use of books within classroom discussions.

So far, this research has demonstrated that children's literature should contain tender topics; it is the role of teachers to discuss these topics and that teachers are using picture-books as a resource to aide them with these discussions. The next research question revealed more still needs to be done with regards to discussing tender topics. Findings reveal that teachers and trainee teachers have introduced some topics a lot more than others. It appears the more tender the topic, the less it is discussed.

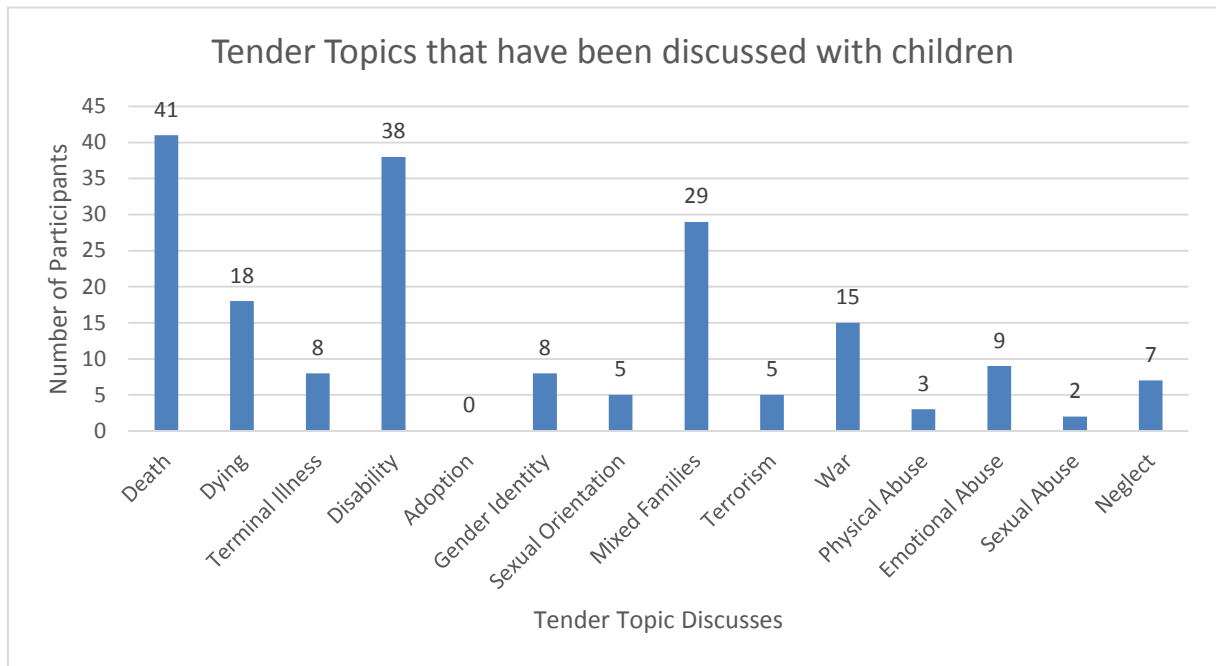


Figure 4 A bar chart to show how many participants - out of 95 - have discussed each tender topic with children in their class.

As shown, death (52%), disability (48%) and mixed families (37%) were the three most discussed tender topics by the 77 respondents who have used a picture-book to introduce a tender topic. The three topics that had been introduced least by the respondents were physical abuse (3%), Sexual Abuse (2%) and adoption (0%). Overall, these findings highlight that the majority of tender topics outlined for this research are rarely discussed with classroom settings.

There will be many reasons why teachers feel comfortable discussing some topics more than others. Those reasons will differ from teacher to teacher and will undoubtedly be informed by personal, values and beliefs. This question was asked to identify and highlight if the respondents found some topics easier than others to introduce, it was not intended to find the reasons why as once more this would have stepped away from the original research question. To speculate reasons for this would be unfruitful and a waste of time. Therefore, further qualitative research would need to be conducted to identify personal beliefs around which tender topics should be discussed in schools.

4.5 Teachers Knowledge of Children’s Literature Discussing Tender topics

The remaining questions produced quantifiable data allowing a true reflection of teachers and trainees teachers subject knowledge of children’s literature to be identified.

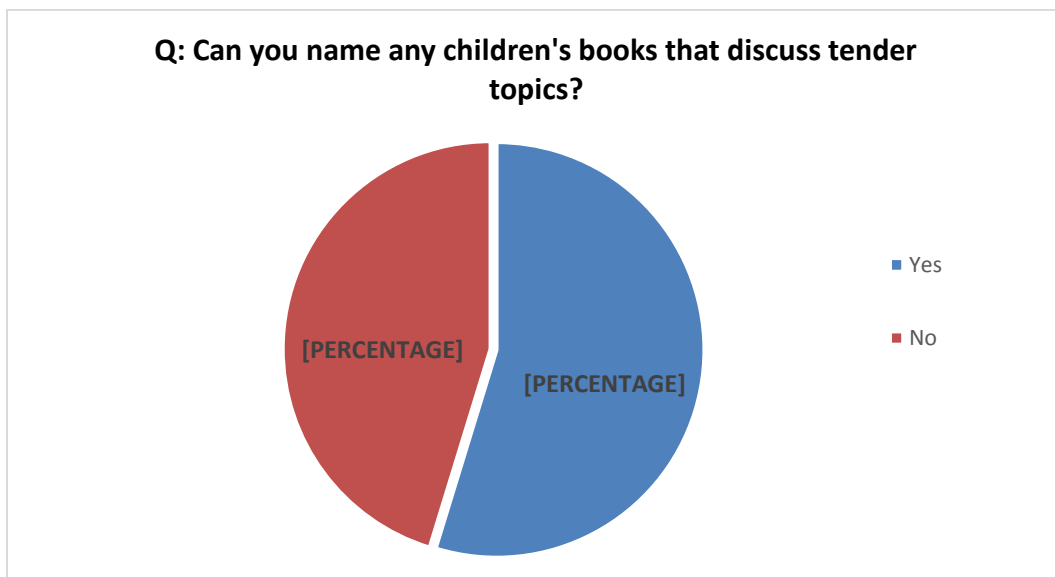


Figure 5 The number of participants who could name a title(s) of children's literature discussing a tender topic.

55% (49 respondents) of participants answered that they could name a title(s) of a book(s) that contains tender topics. If the participant answered yes, they were then asked to list the titles they could recall, without referring to the internet. Results revealed that of 49 responses, 32 (65%) could only name one title and the remaining 17 were able to name two or more.

However, upon closer inspection of the titles offered it was discovered that 12 of them were incorrect; either they do not exist or the topic within them was not one listed with the tender topic definition outlined for this research, for example, 'The Huge Bag of Worries' was offered but this is a book about how to deal with worry as opposed to a tender topic. Therefore, in order to provide a coherent analysis, any book titles offered that were incorrect or not within the tender topic definition were disregarded and not included within the following statistics.

The most popular book title, given by 13 respondents was 'Badgers Parting Gifts' by Susan Varley (1997), a book discussing death: a topic that 41 (51.9%) respondents had discussed in their classrooms. In fact, of the 49 responses the majority of titles offered contained stories around the topic of death (37 responses).

The table below shows the distribution of titles offered in relation to the tender topic.

Table 2 A table to show the distribution of book titles offered

The 'Topic' within the title offered by the respondent	Number of titles offered (responses)
Death (or dying)	37
Disability	6
Gender Identity	5
Sexual Orientation	5
Mixed Families	7
War	8

Although, this table primarily indicates that teachers and trainee teachers have a better knowledge or recollection of book titles containing stories around death than any other tender topic, and by a significant margin; it mainly demonstrates that they also have a significant deficit in knowledge of children's literature around the remaining topics. Not one title was offered around adoption; terrorism; physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect. Excluding adoption, these topics have all been discussed by the respondents; as shown in Fig.4, and therefore, have used a picture-book to introduce these topics, indicating they are not retaining the knowledge of the particular picture-book they used. Consequently, this may suggest that teachers and trainee teachers may simply just require a resource where they can record the details of the books they have used.

Looking at the following data, It could be suggested that they should also record the names of the authors of the books they used.

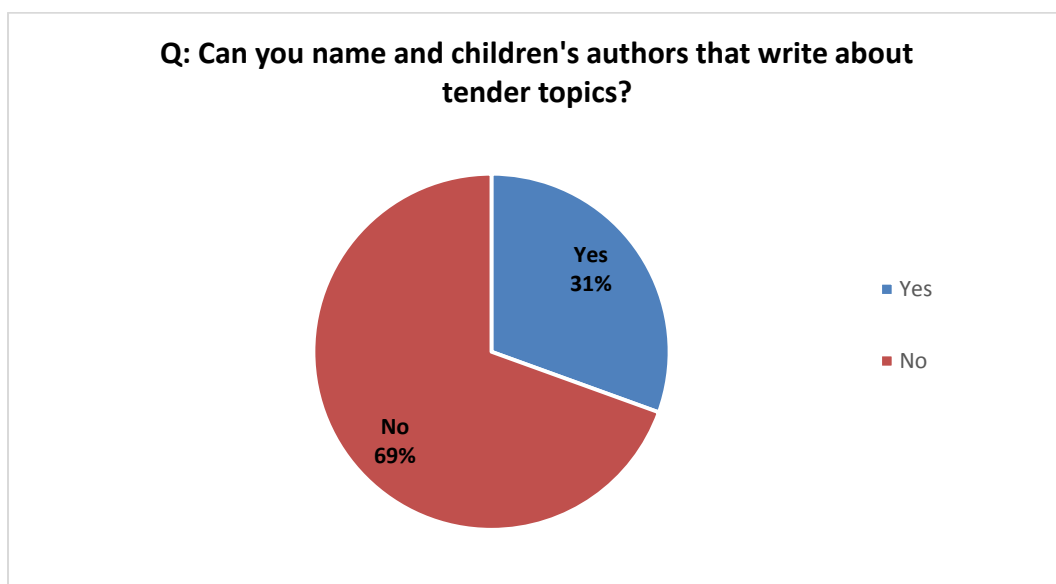


Figure 6 The number of participants who could name an author(S0) of children's literature discussing tender topics

As you can see, even fewer participants (69%) were able to name any authors of books containing these topics. 31% (29 respondents) said they could name an author(s) but of those 29; 28 gave a response, 19 named one author, five named two, three named three and one person was able to list seven authors. Of those 28 responses, several offered authors of books that they had not given the title for in the previous question. For example, Jacqueline Wilson was named six times yet, not one book title from her was offered from the question in Fig.5. Interestingly, her books were centered around a young girl named Tracy Beaker who lived in a children's home and desperately wanted to be adopted, yet, adoption was the one topic where a picture-book had not been used to discuss it (Fig.4). David Walliams was offered three times, as was Michael Morpurgo. All of whom are considerably well-known, famous authors, whose books have been televised or made into theatre productions. Consequently, this signifies that teachers' knowledge of authors is significantly worse than they knowledge of book titles.

The research conducted by Cremin *et al.* (2008) asked participants to name authors of any genre of children's literature. Interestingly, their research had very similar findings. This research revealed that 31% could name an author of a tender topic picture-book, Cremin *et al.* (2008) discovered only 46% of teachers could name 6

authors, with the majority being infamous authors such as Roald Dahl and J K Rowling. This determines that teachers' knowledge of children's literature and authors has not improved since the last piece of research into this subject, nearly ten years ago.

4.6 Strengths and Limitations of these Findings

After completing the research, it was important to evaluate the methods used in order to identify any strengths and limitations of the findings.

The sample size of this study is one of its major strengths. Before the study was conducted, there was the initial concern that using a quantitative method in the form of an online questionnaire, ran the risk of a low respondent rate. Yet, 95 responses were collected in a three-week period and it was felt that this was a significant number of responses to begin analysis and to form conclusions around teacher's knowledge of children's literature discussing tender topics. Another major strength of this research is that the findings are congruent with an existing study from Cremin *et al.* (2008) – Chapter 2.4. Both studies revealed, teachers and trainee teachers have a significant lack of subject knowledge around children's literature and authors.

Conversely, as with all research, there are some limitations to this research and its findings. Quantitative research does not allow for further questioning from the participant. There were instances throughout this research where further questioning, using a qualitative method, would have allowed explanations to have been given which in turn, would have produced responses to provide a clearer analysis of data. For example, when participants were asked if they felt it was their role to discuss tender topics with children, it would have been interesting to hear the reasons why from those who answered no. Similarly, it would have been interesting to find out why participants discussed some tender topics more than others and why some were not discussed at all. The answers to these would indeed support the findings from this study and would allow for deeper analysis of the data.

Another area that may be considered a limitation, is when analysing the 21 responses from the trainee teachers who participated in this study. Analysing the data revealed that some of these had simply not discussed a tender topic because they had not had the opportunity to do so, as of yet. Given time and experience this

is likely to change. Therefore, it could be argued that the findings from this study should have only analysed the data from participants who are practicing, qualified teachers. Having said that, this study argues that teachers' subject knowledge development begins in ITT and therefore, trainees should be developing their knowledge of children's literature during that time and ultimately, possess some knowledge of titles and authors, however limited.

Chapter Six – Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Original Intentions

This research set out to examine teachers' knowledge of children's literature containing tender topics. The literature review sought to explore and analyse the following four research areas:

Research areas:

- 1) The controversy surrounding the publication of children's literature containing tender topics.
- 2) Pupil benefits of discussing tender topics in the classroom.
- 3) How children's literature can support discussions around tender topics.
- 4) An analysis of the existing research into teachers' knowledge of children's literature

It was considered necessary to explore these four areas to ensure that the reader knew and understood the many reasons why teachers' and trainee teachers' need to have an exemplary subject knowledge around children's literature. Knowing this ensured that the reader also understood the justification for the research undertaken.

The research conducted sought to investigate teacher beliefs about these books; focusing on validating the publication of such books and views around discussing tender topics with children. It was hoped to discover if personal beliefs impact on using these books in the classroom or on subject knowledge development. Drawing upon the analysis of existing research and the findings from the study has allowed some conclusions to be made.

6.2 Conclusions and Recommendations for Teacher Development and Further Research

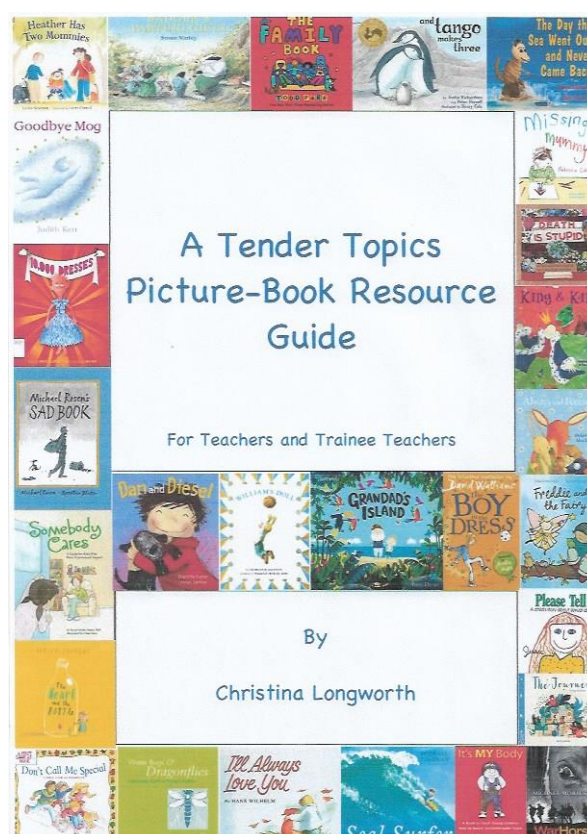
Findings from the research revealed a strong positive incongruence between teacher beliefs around the publication of such books; teacher beliefs around their role in discussing these topics and knowledge of children's literature discussing tender topics. Teachers and trainee teachers believe that these books should be published and that it is their role to discuss tender topics with children, yet a significant number are not adhering to that notion. Discussing tender topics within the classroom is not an option, it is a statutory requirement reflected in the Citizenship Curricula (DfE, 2012; DfE, 2017). This in turn, leaves one question unanswered: if teachers know it is both their role and a statutory requirement to discuss these topics with children and that books are a tool to support them, why is more not being done to encourage subject knowledge development in this area?

In order for change to happen, dissemination of this study is required to ensure that ITT providers, schools, teachers, trainee teachers and government all acknowledge the importance in developing teachers' subject knowledge of children's literature. A recommendation from this study is that subject knowledge development of children's literacy should begin in ITT. Providers of ITT could ensure all trainees are supported in developing their knowledge of children's literature, not just for literacy purposes but to support and develop the PSED of young children. Currently, during ITT, trainees are asked to develop subject knowledge portfolios for Maths, English and Science, therefore, it is being suggested that within the English portfolio there should be a section to support the development their knowledge of children's literature and their authors.

The findings from this study call for further research into teachers' personal attitudes and beliefs into the content of picture-books discussing tender topics. This should be done in order to identify why some topics are discussed more than others, if there are any topics that teachers' feel should not be discussed in schools and the reasons behind those who think it is not their role to discuss these topics. If this was done, it could shine a light on teachers' subject knowledge of children's literature.

As a response to the findings from this study, 'A Tender Topics Picture-Book Resource Guide' has been developed and produced to aide and support teachers and trainee teachers develop their subject knowledge (Appendix F). This guide offers reviews of 63 picture-books containing stories around the tender topics definition.

Table 3 The picture-book resource guide produced as a response to the findings within this research (See Appendix F)



Producing this resource guide called for the revision of the title of this study. It changed from:

'An Examination of Teachers' Knowledge into Children's Literature Discussing Tender Topics'

To...

'A Picture-book Resource Guide as a Response to an Examination of Teachers' Knowledge into Children's Literature Discussing Tender Topics'

6.3 Concluding statement

Children's lives are sadly, often filled with situations, events and experiences defined within the tender topics definition. To presume children's lives are exempt from these realities is not acceptable. Denying conversations in classrooms around the problems and questions that these topics often generate can have a direct impact on children's mental health and well-being. Research has found children benefit greatly from reading picture-books that reflect real-life situations and yet, teachers have a severe lack of knowledge around children's literature. As a consequence, they are unable to provide the rich, developmentally appropriate literary mediums for children in their care. This is no longer acceptable. More needs to be done to support, develop and improve teachers and trainee teachers' knowledge in this area.

(10,784 words)

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Appendix A: Ethics Form

Plymouth Marjon University Initial Research Ethics Checklist for New Applications

Project code (provided by Ethics Panel upon submission)

Version control:

Version	Date	Amendment details

Please complete this checklist as the first step in your application for research ethics review. If you are applying for amendments to an existing study protocol, please complete the checklist found in the Amendment Request Form instead. We recommend you refer to the Checklist Guide when completing this Checklist.

1. TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

A Picture-Book Resource Guide as a Response to an Examination into Teachers' Knowledge of Children's Literature Discussing Tender Topics.

2. INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

Principal Investigator (or Student's Name):

Name: Christina Longworth

Department: BA Primary Education

Institutional e-mail: 20061351@marjon.ac.uk

3. CHECKLIST

Section A	YES	NO
1. Will your research involve research participants identified from, or because of their past or present use of, the NHS and/or Social Care Services?		X
2. Does the research project involve intrusive procedures with adults who lack capacity to consent for themselves or health-related research involving prisoners?		X
3. Will research be led by a researcher at another UK institution?		X

If you answered **YES** to **ANY** question in Section A then your research may require review by the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or another University's Research Ethics Committee. **It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine what means of approval are required and to obtain approval prior to starting the project.**

Please consult our guidance documentation and contact your Faculty Director of Research in the first instance for advice. Once review with NRES or another Research Ethics Committee is complete, please submit a copy of this form and their response for record keeping.

If you answered **NO** to **ALL** questions in Section A please proceed to Section B.

Section B	YES	NO
1. Does the research project involve human biology, or experimental human psychology?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Does the research project involve human participants, or personal data in any way (this includes secondary data e.g. existing survey data, interview transcripts)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Does the research involve non-human animal participants, or non-human animal biology?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If you answered **NO** to **ALL** questions in Section B such proposals will not normally require ethical review. Advice should be sought in cases of doubt. Please complete **Sections 1 to 8** of the **Ethics Review Protocol Submission Form** and submit to your Faculty Director of Research. If you are a student, please submit **Sections 1 to 8** of the **Ethics Review Protocol Submission Form** to your supervisor.

If you answered **YES** to **QUESTIONS 1 AND/OR 2** in Section B please proceed to Section C.

If you answered **YES** to **QUESTION 3** you will need to contact the Research and Innovation Office to ensure your research is compliant with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986).

Section C	YES	NO
1. Does the research involve participants who are unable to give informed consent, considered to be vulnerable, or who lack capacity? (e.g. your own students, children, people with learning disabilities)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Will the research require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups/individuals to be recruited? (e.g. for access to students at school, or to members of a particular organization)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Will the research involve access to records of personal or confidential information concerning identifiable individuals, either living or recently deceased?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Will the research involve the use of administrative data or secure data? (e.g. student records held by a school or college, medical records)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Will the deception of participants (including covert observation in non-public places) be necessary at any time?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Will the research involve discussion of sensitive topics? (e.g. sexual activity, drug use, political behaviour, ethnicity and, potentially, elite interviews)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7. Will the research involve sensitive material that might be linked, or interpreted as linked, to terrorism/matters that the PREVENT policy is concerned with?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

8. Will the research involve members of the public in a research capacity, helping to shape methodology and/or to collect data? (e.g. participatory research)	X	
9. Will the research involve visual or vocal methods where participants or other individuals may be identifiable in the data used or generated?		X
10. Will the research involve any drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins and other supplements) being administered to the participants, or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?		X
11. Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants (deceased or alive)?		X
12. Is the research likely to involve or result in participants experiencing pain or more than mild discomfort?		X
13. Could the research induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences? (both research participants and their living relatives should be considered)		X
14. Will the research involve prolonged or repetitive testing of participants?		X
15. Will data collection involve e-mail, social media, and/or instant messaging services in data collection?	X	
16. Will financial inducements (other than reimbursement of expenses) be offered to participants?		X
17. Will the study involve external organisations to recruit participants?		X
18. Will the research place the safety of the researcher(s) at risk?		X
19. Will the research be undertaken outside of the UK?		X
20. Will the research or its dissemination involve data sharing of confidential information, or the re-use of previously collected data?		X

If you answered **NO** to **ALL** questions in Section C your research may qualify for **LIGHT TOUCH** review.

If you have answered **YES** to **ANY** question in Section C please proceed to Section D.

Section D

Please indicate the Risk Level for the project by checking the intersecting box

		Research Risk		
		Low	Medium	High
Participant Vulnerability	Low	LOW		
	Medium			
	High			

Please justify the research risk and group vulnerability indicated above

- B.2:** For my research project, I will only be interviewing and sending questionnaires to adults, in particular teachers and parents. Any data collected will be anonymized.
- C.6:** My whole research project is centered on the issue of ‘Sensitive Topics’ being discussed in schools. However, I will not be asking my participants any sensitive questions. I am asking the adults opinions on this topic as a support for discussion. The questions asked will not be in any way distressing for the participants.
- C.8:** I will be creating a questionnaire to give to members of public to complete. I am particularly interested in the results from both parents and teachers and will be asking them about their experiences of using picture books to introduce a delicate topic.
- C.15:** I have decided to place my completed questionnaire on teacher and parent Facebook groups in order to gain a wider sample of results. Again, all results will be anonymous.

If the Risk Level for your project is in the shaded box in Section D your research may qualify for **LIGHT TOUCH** review.

If you answered **YES** to **ANY** question in Section C **AND** the Risk Level of your research is **OUTSIDE** the shaded box then your application requires **FULL REVIEW**. If the Risk Level of your research **INSIDE** the **DIAGONALLY STRIATED** boxes your research also requires scholarly review.

Appendix B: Research Questions

An Examination into Teachers' Knowledge of Children's Literature Discussing Tender Topics.

I am a third-year primary education student currently researching teachers' knowledge of children's literature discussing the tender topics defined within the survey. I am doing this via a short questionnaire and am asking for both teachers and trainee teachers to take part. It won't take any longer than 8-10 minutes to complete. If anyone would like to take part I would be incredibly grateful the link to the questionnaire is below.

For this research, the tender topics discussed are: death, dying, terminal illness, disability gender orientation, sexual identity, mixed families, terrorism, war, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.

Please could you answer the questions with honesty and without referring to the internet.

1) Have you ever used a picture book to begin a conversation about a tender topic in the classroom?

YES/ NO

2) What was the tender topic? (Tick as many as appropriate)

Death	Mixed Families
Dying	Terrorism
Terminal Illness	War
Disability	Physical Abuse
Gender Identity	Sexual Abuse
Sexual Orientation	Emotional Abuse

3) If NO to question 1 can you give a reason why?

4) Where did you find the book you used in question 1?

Internet search
Local Library
School Library
Personal Property
Borrowed from somebody else
Other...

5) Can you name any children's books that discuss tender topics?

YES/ NO

6) Can you list the titles of these books?

7) Can you name any children's authors that write about tender topics?

YES/ NO

8) Can you list them?

9) Do you believe children's literature should discuss the topics listed above?

YES/ NO

10) Do you believe it is the role of teachers to discuss these topics in the classroom?

YES/ NO

11) Please identify your role:

Teacher
Trainee Teacher
Other

12) What Key Stage are you currently working in?

Key Stage 1
Key Stage 2
Foundation
Trainee Teacher (not currently on placement)

13) What type of school do you work in? i

Academy	Independent School
Private	Free School
State School	Trainee Teacher (not currently on placement)
Faith School	Other...

Appendix C: Sample Questionnaire

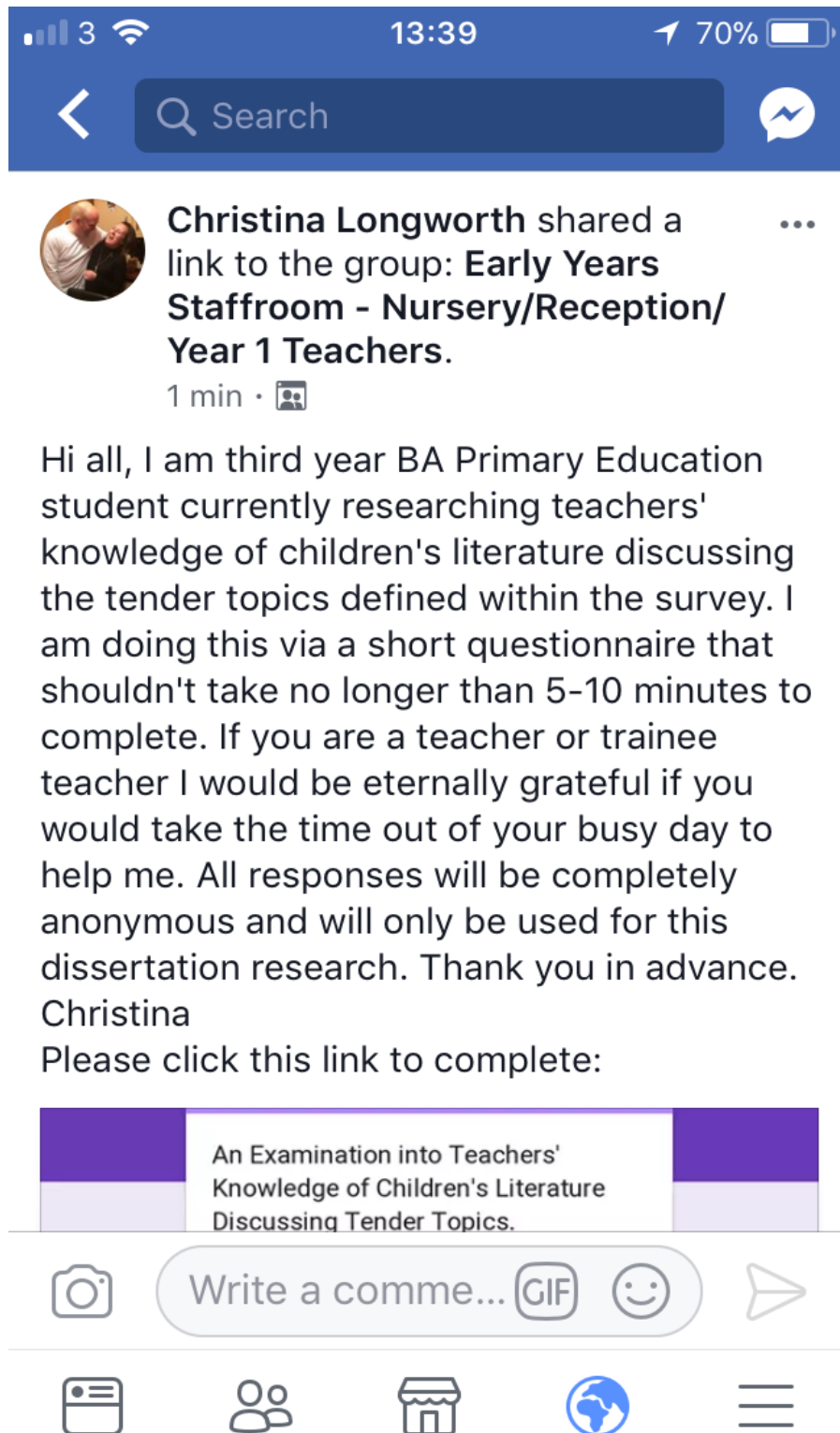


Figure 7 An example of the post shared to numerous Facebook teacher forums

The questionnaire was distributed to the following teacher forums, groups and pages on Facebook:

- Early Years Staffroom – Nursery/ Reception/ Yr 1 Teachers
- KS1 Teachers – Specifically Year 2
- KS1 Teachers- Specifically Year 1
- Online English with UK Teachers
- PlanBee Primary Teaching Resources
- Primary Teachers – Resources, ideas, stress relief!
- Primary Teachers for Primary Resources
- Primary Teachers UK
- Primary Teaching – NQT and Trainee Teachers
- Primary Teaching Ideas
- Teacher Life
- Teachers Resources, Teaching Tips, Teaching Articles
- Teachit Primary
- Trainee Teachers Support Group
- Twinkl Trainee and Student Teachers Group
- Year ½ Teachers

Appendix D: Example of a Completed Questionnaire

An Examination into Teachers' Knowledge of Children's Literature Discussing Tender Topics.

For this research, the tender topics discussed are: death, dying, terminal illness, disability, gender orientation, sexual identity, mixed families, terrorism, war, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.

Please answer honestly and without referring to the internet.

1) Have you ever used a picture book to begin a conversation about a tender topic in the classroom? *

Yes

No

2) What was the tender topic? (Tick as many as appropriate)

Death

Dying

Terminal Illness

Disability

Gender Identity

Sexual Orientation

Mixed Families

Terrorism

War

Physical Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Neglect

If NO to question 1 can you give a reason why?

Where did you find the book you used in Question 1?

- Internet search
- Local Library
- School Library
- Personal property
- Borrowed from somebody else
- Other: _____

Can you name any children's books that discuss tender topics? *

- Yes
- No

Can you list any titles that come to mind?

Hidden

Maya

Can you name any children's authors that write about tender topics? *

- Yes
- No

Can you list them?

Do you believe children's literature should discuss the topics listed above? *

Yes

No

Do you believe it is the role of teachers to discuss tender topics in the classroom? *

Yes

No

Please identify your role: *

Teacher

Trainee Teacher

Other: _____

What Key Stage are you currently working in? *

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 2

Foundation

Trainee Teacher (not currently on placement)

What type of school do you work in? *

- Academy
- Private
- State School
- Faith School
- Independent School
- Free School
- Trainee Teacher (Not currently on placement)
- Other: _____

This form was created inside of Plymouth Marjon University.

Google Forms

Figure 8 Example of a completed questionnaire

Appendix E: Categorical Variable Responses

The charts below show the findings to the questions asked for statistical purposes and to identify any links between teacher beliefs and their position and place of employment.

Chart 1:

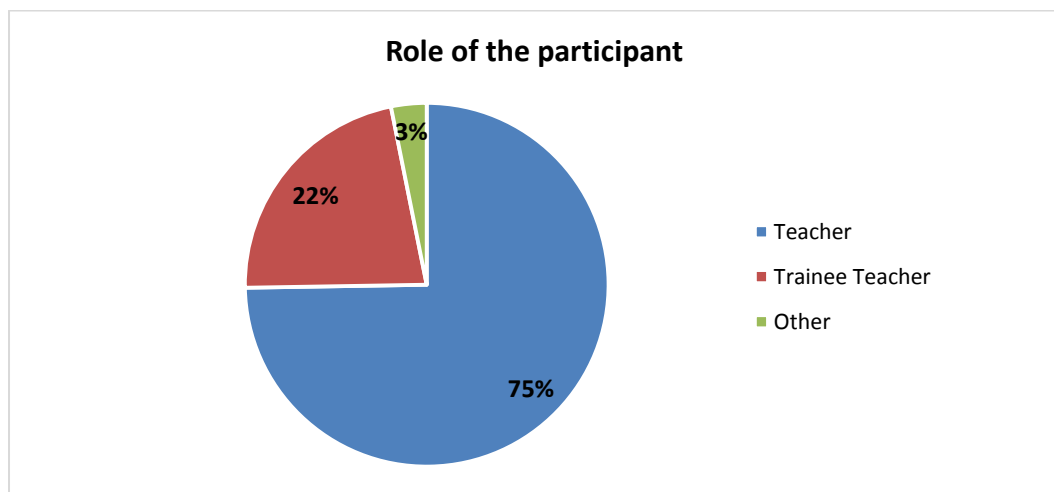


Figure 9 A pie chart to show the role of the participant

This question was asked to identify the number of participants that were qualified teachers and the number that were trainee teachers. This was important to ensure reliability and validity when analysing the data. If the majority of participants were trainee teachers, the findings may have been invalid because some of the participants who answered they have not discussed a tender topic suggested that this was only because they have not had the opportunity on placement.

Chart 2:

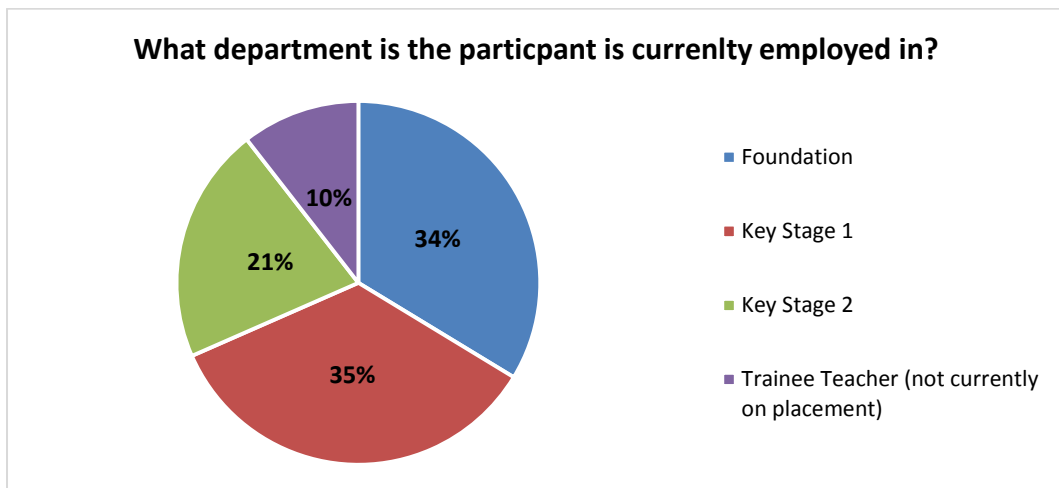


Figure 10 A pie chart to show which department the teacher/ trainee teacher was employed in

This question was asked to identify any links between discussing tender topics and the year group they were employed in. It wanted to see these topics were introduced less if the children were of a younger age. The results show the opposite, 69% of respondents were employed in EYFS or KS1 and therefore, children were not denied these opportunities because of their young age.

Chart 3:

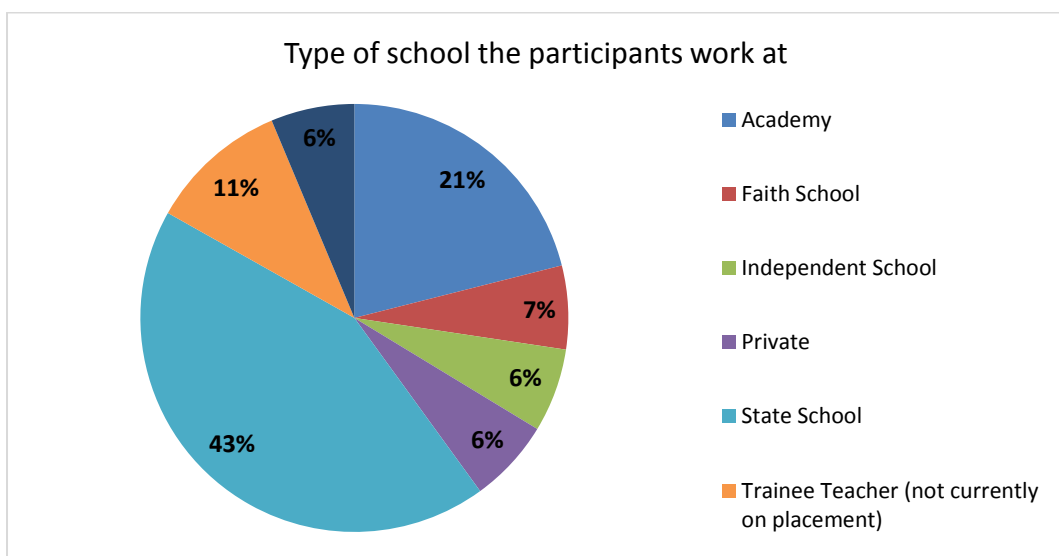


Figure 11 A pie chart to show the type of schools the participant was employed in

This question was asked to examine the if the type of school the participant was employed impacted on them discussing a tender topic with children in that setting. Results show that the type of school has no effect on teachers discussing these topics. It was thought that perhaps Faith Schools may avoid these topics, yet results show that all 7% of respondents employed in Faith Schools had use a picture-book to discuss a tender topic.

Chart 4:

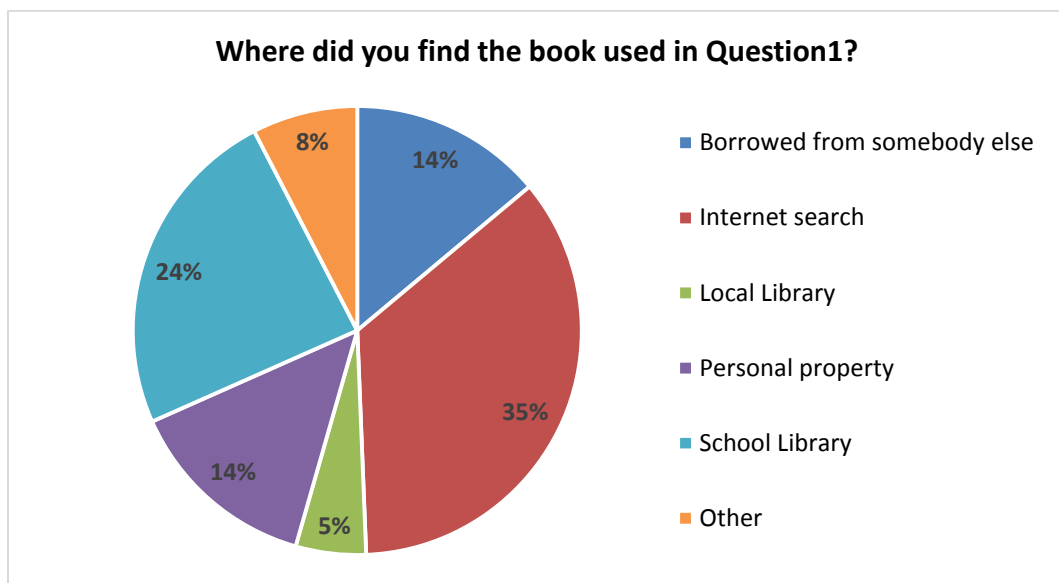
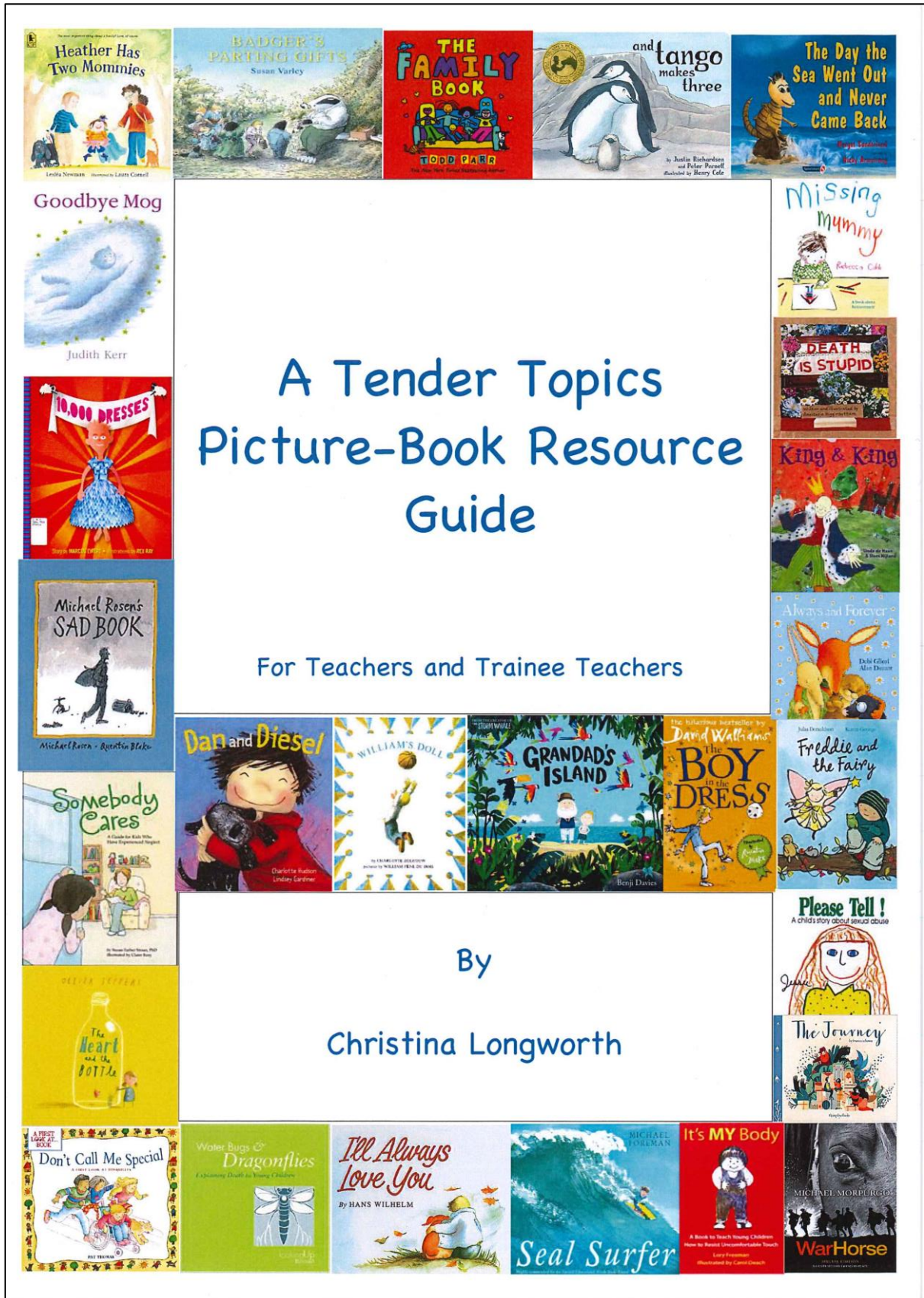


Figure 12 A pie chart to show where the participant found the books they used to discuss tender topics

This question was asked to identify where the respondents acquired the books they used when introducing a particular topic. The results suggest that having a lack of subject knowledge of children' literature limits them in their quest for books. This pie chart show that they rely on a variety of resources in their search for a suitable book. Only 14% used books that were personal property, the majority of respondents referred to the internet (35%) and the remaining got their books from the school library (24%), borrowed from somebody else (14%), the local library (5%) or from somewhere else (8%).

Appendix F: Tender Topics Picture Book Resource Guide



Contents:

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation and Mixed Families....	2
Chapter 2: Death, Dying and Terminal Illness.....	6
Chapter 3: Disability.....	11
Chapter 4: Adoption.....	14
Chapter 5: Terrorism and War.....	16
Chapter 6: Abuse: Physical, Emotional and Sexual.....	18
Extend Your Knowledge.....	21
References.....	22

Introduction:

Recent research conducted into teachers' knowledge of children's literature containing tender topics; where 95 responses were collected, has found that even though 99% of teachers and trainee teachers believe these books should be published and 91% see it as their role to discuss these topics within their classrooms, they sadly have a significant lack of knowledge of the children's literature available to them (Longworth, 2018).

It was shown that 81% of participants had used a picture-book to instigate a tender-topic discussion with their children and yet, only 55% could name a title(s) of a book within this genre and even less (31%) were able to name an author. Of the 55% (49 responses) who could name any titles only 17 respondents were able to name more than one title, the remaining 32 only offered 1. Twelve titles given were not correct; either they did not exist or the topic within them was not one listed in the tender topic definition, for example, *The Huge Bag of Worries*. The most popular book, mentioned by 13 respondents was '*Badgers Parting Gifts*' by Susan Varley (1997), a book discussing death, a topic that 41 (51.9%) respondents had discussed in their classrooms. The results from this research consistently demonstrated that teachers and trainee teachers need support in developing their knowledge of children's literature discussing tender topics.

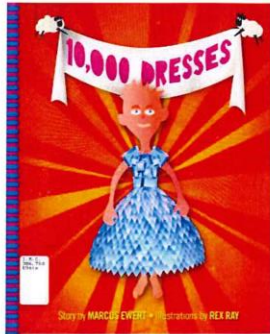
This guide has been produced in response to this research and should be used as a reference guide and aide to support you in developing your subject knowledge of tender topic literature for children. It provides information about books that I have personally read, and includes the books read by teachers and trainee teachers who responded to the online survey for this research. The information and reviews offered are a mix of personal views, the blurbs from each book and occasionally online reviews. The personal opinions offered only aim to offer a quick, simple guide as to what to expect from the book. I fully accept that as professionals, we will all have varying opinions, views and beliefs about these books, and that is perfectly fine. In fact, I advocate and encourage such differing views because it means these types of books are being discussed, thought of and more importantly, being used within the classroom.

Finally, an empty table has been provided on Page 22 for you to continue to add to this list as and when you find a book that is suitable. Enjoy.

Best Wishes,

Christina

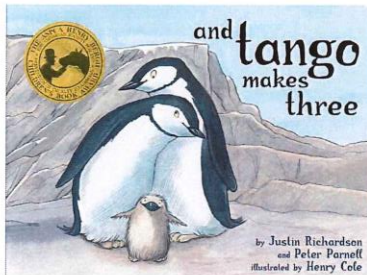
Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation and Mixed Families



Story by Marcus Ewert (2008)
Illustrations by Rex Ray

A heartfelt story highlighting gender identity, acceptance and friendship.

Some people think Bailey is a boy. She knows, as well as the reader that she is a girl. Bailey dreams about dresses but when she's awake nobody wants to hear about her dreams. Until she meets a new friend called Laurel, who shares her passion for dresses. This story describes how some boys enjoy cross-dressing and that it is completely acceptable.



Story by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell (2005)
Illustrations by Henry Cole

This book is based on a true story and could easily be used to introduce and discuss the topic of having male, gay parents.

Beautifully heart-warming, incredibly well-written and a perfect story to introduce and support a difficult topic. Roy and Silo are just like the other penguin families at the zoo, the only difference is that they are both boys who happen to love each other.

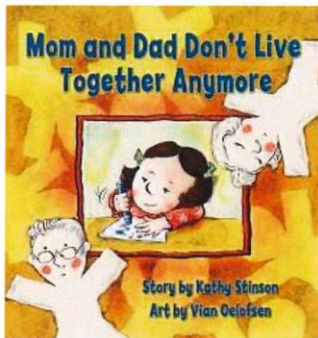


Story by Leslea Newman (2016)
Illustrated by Laura Cornell

A sweet story about a little girl who has two mommies.

On her first day at school, when talking about families, Heather realises that she doesn't have a daddy. The class teacher helps Heather and the rest of the class to see that every family is different and every family is special.

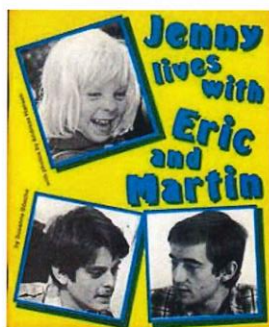
This book will help children to see that the most important thing about a family is that all the people in it love one another.



Written by Kathy Stinson (2007)
Illustrated by Vian Oelofsen

A story to support discussions around **separation or divorce**. The little girl in this book talks about the ups and downs of her parents not living together anymore and how she wishes they would get back together.

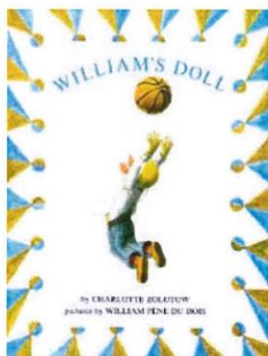
This is written in a positive way about the confusion, insecurity and sorrow experienced by young children whose parents have separated.



Written by Susanne Bosche (1983)
Photos by Andreas Hansen

This photo-book was created as a resource to facilitate discussion with children about **homosexuality**. It tells the story of a typical Saturday morning in the life of a young girl living with her father and his male partner.

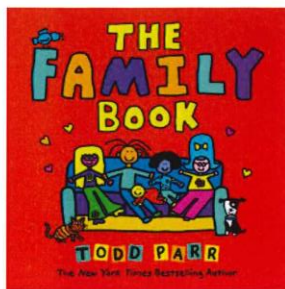
It cleverly highlights the discrimination gay couples sometimes receive and explains that "some people just don't understand."



Written by Charlotte Zolotow (1972)
Illustrations by William Pene Du Bois

This book was first published in 1972 and was one of the first picture books to deal with **gender stereotypes**. It tells the story of a little boy who wants a doll. His brother calls him a 'creep' and another boy calls him a 'sissy.' One day someone really understands William's wish, and make it easy for others to understand, too. William gets a doll, so he can learn to be a loving parent someday.

Perfect for getting young children to understand that toys are gender neutral.



Written and Illustrated by Todd Parr (2010)

A simply written picture-book that describes the different dynamics within families. Perfect for KS1 children as the contrasting ideas on opposing pages are easy to read and get the message across loud and clear - all families are different! All families come in different shapes and sizes!

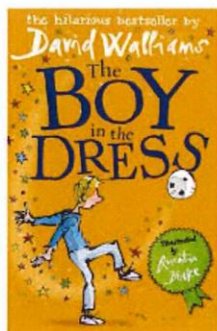
“There are lots of different ways to be a family. Your family is special no matter what kind it is.” - Todd Parr



Written and Illustrated by Linda De Haan and Stern Nijland (2016)

This is a fantastic book to introduce same-sex attraction. It is a contemporary tale about finding true love and living happily ever after, but rather than the traditional prince meet princess, it tells the story of a Prince who marries a man in this fun fairy-tale twist.

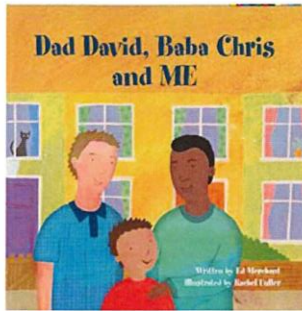
A fantastic story to highlight how we should never presume a person's sexual identity. I particularly like how the prince's mother is accepting of his attraction to men.



Written by David Walliams (2008)
Illustrated by Quentin Blake

This story is best suited for KS2 children. It tells the story of a 12-year-old boy called Dennis who enjoys cross-dressing, and the reactions of his family and friends.

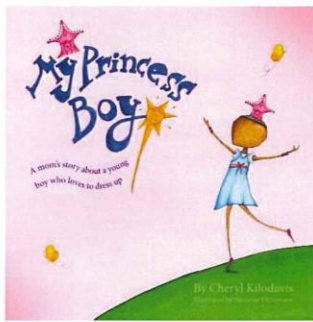
This book teaches children that cross-dressing is healthy and acceptable and not something to be ashamed of. It is a wonderful story of tolerance in today's increasingly intolerant world.



Written by Ed Merchant (2010)
Illustrated by Rachel Fuller

Provides guidance and support to children who are being parented by gay men. It encourages an acceptance of same-sex parents and shows that families come in different shapes and sizes.

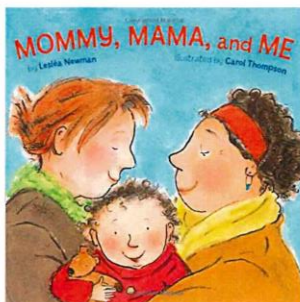
This is a story about Ben who has been adopted by two men and describes the emotional turmoil he experiences when he is first adopted. His emotions manifest themselves in temper tantrums and fits of anger.



Written by Cheryl Kilodavis (2011)
Illustrated by Suzanne DeSimone

This book is about a family and their Princess Boy who likes pretty, pink, sparkly, girly things. People laugh at and make fun of the Princess Boy and it hurts his feelings.

Stressing acceptance, the book concludes by asking, "If you see a Princess Boy, will you laugh at him, call him a name, play with him, like him for who he is?" These are great questions to prompt a conversation about acceptance with young readers and also encourage to think about how their reactions can upset people.

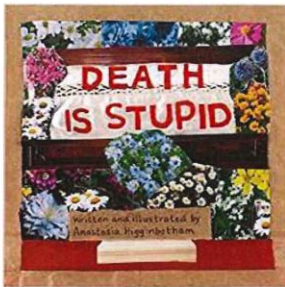


Written by Leslea Newman (2009)
Illustrated by Carol Thompson

A story about a toddler spending the day with its mommies and shares the loving bond between same-sex parents and their children.

This is very a very simplistic introduction to same-sex parents and is recommended for early readers with EYFS and Year 1.

Death, Dying and Terminal Illness

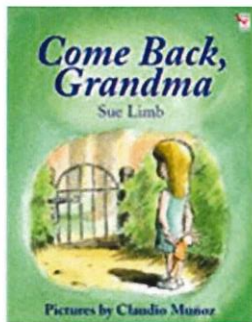


Written and Illustrated by Anastasia Higginbotham (2016)

A fabulous and honest book to share when starting a discussion about death and the big feelings that come with grief.

It lets children know that grief isn't universal and that we will all grieve in different ways.

This book also offers suggestions for activities to remember and honour those that have died.



Written by Sue Limb (1993)
Illustrated by Claudio Munoz

Quite an old book but well worth using when discussing the death of a grandparent.

When Bessie's Grandma died; her favourite, most fun, person in the world, she was told various stories where her grandma had gone. She had gone to heaven; she was part of nature and she might be born again as a bird or an animal. Bessie found herself looking for her Grandma in all those places, until one day, when she grew up and became a mum to a special little girl who looked just like grandma.

Quite an old book but still stunning!



Written and Illustrated by Judith Kerr (2002)

'Mog was tired. She was dead tired'

A touching story that discusses the death of a loved pet in a sensitive manner but doesn't shy away from using the word death and showing the burial. It explains how the family grieved and reminisced about all the things that Mog used to do.

It also looks at the feelings that often arise with the introduction of a new family pet. Highly recommended.

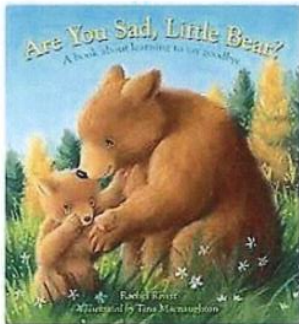


Written and Illustrated by Rebecca Cobb (2012)

'Some time ago we said goodbye to Mummy. I am not sure where she has gone.'

This book is a delicate and sensitive story about the death of 'Mummy' from a child's perspective.

The illustrations perfectly match the complex emotions a child may feel while grieving the loss of their mummy.



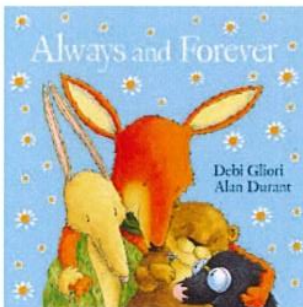
Written by Rachel Rivett (2009)

Illustrated by Tina Macnaughton

'A book about learning to say goodbye'

A story about Little Bear who lost Grandmother Bear the day before.

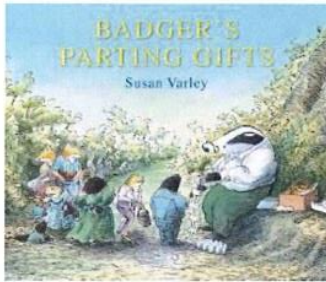
This story says that grandmother waved farewell and walked away forever, like old bears do, which could be a little confusing for some children. Little bear also asks the sun if it dies at the end of every day and if it is sad to leave us. The sun replies, 'No I don't die.... just because you can't see me, it doesn't mean I'm not there.' Again, this is a sweet sentiment but could be interpreted in the wrong way by children and confuse them even more. This is a lovely story to introduce death to children but not one if you want to be factually correct.



Written and Illustrated by Debi Gliori and Alan Durant (2013)

In their hearts and their memories and their laughter. Fox was still there...always and forever.

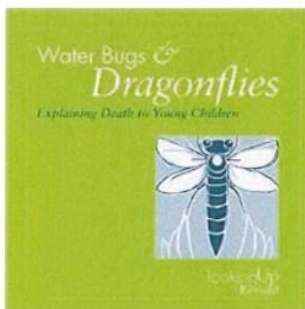
A personal favourite, this story tells the story of the death of a father figure. The beautiful illustrations hint towards what happens with a body after death (Burial). The beautiful words explore the complexity of emotions that are felt after someone you love dies. From complete sadness and not talking about it to sharing memories and building a memorial to sit and remember them. Just beautiful. Completely sensitive and child friendly, with no misinformation or metaphors as to what happens after you die. Highly recommended.



Written and Illustrated by Susan Varley (1997)

A beautiful, heart-warming picture-book that introduces the topics **dying** and **death** in a gentle manner.

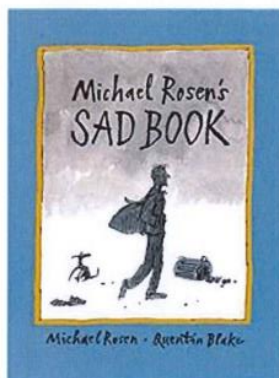
Badger knew he was getting old and that his old age would soon lead to death. After his death his friends reminisced about their good times with Badger. They learn to come to terms with his death by sharing these fond memories, realising they were Badger's parting gifts.



Written by Doris Stickney (2002)
From the Looking Up series

This story was one used by a teacher within my research to discuss death with children. This book's title says, '...explaining death to young children.' However, open reading this book I am not entirely sure it is appropriate. It really presents as a Christian perspective on afterlife and does not necessarily deal with death itself and therefore, could be confusing to children.

The idea is that dragonflies can never return underwater to visit water bugs, just as one who has died cannot return to life. If this is the message you want to discuss then it may be worth a read.



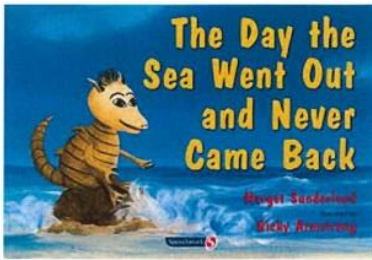
Written by Michael Rosen (2011)
Illustrated by Quentin Blake

"I'm sad not bad"

A story about a father whose son, Eddie and mother have **died** and the sadness that he feels.

Such a beautiful written story that explains the emotions you feel when you are sad. Rosen has put sadness into words and talks about it in an intensely moving way that will help readers, of all ages, struggling with loss to find a way to express their feelings.

Blake's instantly recognisable illustrations work perfectly with the text. A must-have book for schools. Highly recommended.

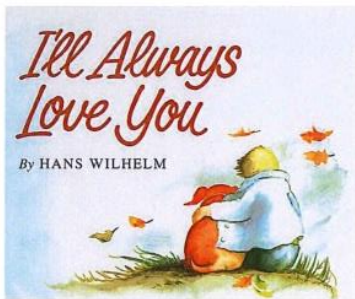


Written by Margot Sunderland (2003)
Illustrated by Ricky Armstrong

A story for children when someone they love dies.

Eric is a sand dragon and loves the sea very much. He loves to watch it going out and coming back. But one day, it doesn't come back.

A lovely story that discusses how Eric comes to term with his loss. However, as the sea is clearly a metaphor for a loved one, this could be confusing for very young children. Still a lovely story though.

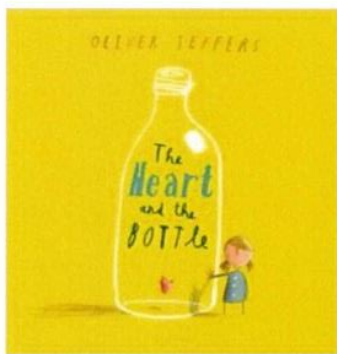


Written and Illustrated by Hans Wilhelm (1985)

A story about Elfie – the best dog in the whole world!

A gently, moving story about the death of a beloved pet. The family grieves and buries her in the garden. The little boy takes much comfort from knowing that he took good care of her in her last days and always said, 'I'll Always Love you.'

Simple but very effective and beautifully illustrated.

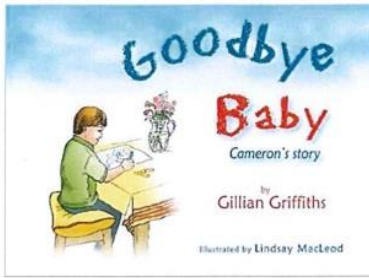


Written and Illustrated by Oliver Jeffers (2010)

This story begins with a little girl whose curiosity is fuelled by her father reading her all sorts of fascinating stories about the stars and the sea and the wonder of our world. The illustrations allow us to envisage these explorations until, we realise that the father is gone, and the girl is facing an empty chair. Her father has died.

This realisation genuinely made me feel bereft, I wasn't expecting it at all. The story then goes on to describe how to stop her heart from hurting she decided to put it somewhere safe and free from hurting, in a bottle. Detailing how she comes to terms with her loss.

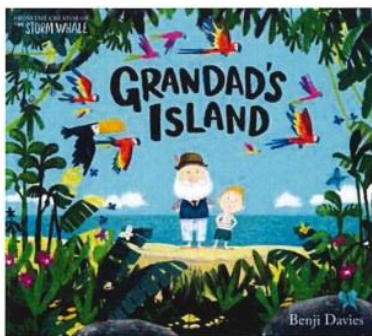
This book is an absolute treasure and should be in every school library.



Written by Gillian Griffiths (2010)
Illustrated by Lindsey MacLeod

This book provides comfort, understanding and reassurance for young children who have been affected by miscarriage.

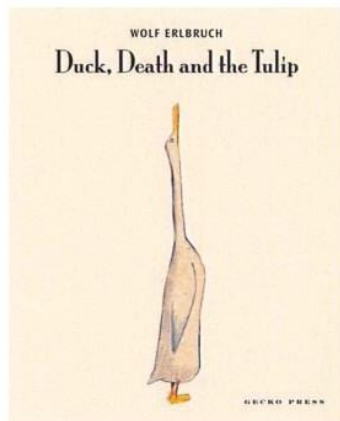
Gillian Griffiths wrote this after she'd had a miscarriage when her other son Cameron was almost three to help her to explain and come to terms with his feelings. What is nice about the book is its practical detail and the fact that the older child has some negative feelings as well as sorrow.



Written and Illustrated by Benji Davies (2015)

This book is described as a story that deals with the emotional topic of the death of a grandparent.

It is a beautiful story about a young boy going on an adventure with his Grandad and when it's time to go home Grandad decides to stay. However, there is no mention of death or dying within this book therefore, some children may not make the connection and it may have to be pointed out to them.



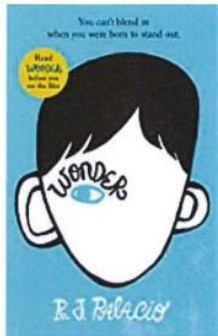
Written and Illustrated by Wolf Erlbruch (2008)

I was genuinely pleasantly surprised by this book. It is an intelligent and imaginative children's book about death and the afterlife.

One day, Duck turns around to find Death standing behind her. Terrified, she asks whether he has come to take her, but he remarks rather matter-of-factly that he has been there her entire life. The two become friends, discussing life, death and what the afterlife may be like. In the end Duck dies and Death carries her to the river, placing her in the water and laying a tulip on her.

A lovely book to introduce a sad and often scary topic with children.

Disability



Written by R J Palacio (2013)

There is no better book, in my opinion, to highlight that you should never judge a person by their appearances. August was born with a severe facial disfigurement and this book tells his story from August's; his sister's, her boyfriend's and her best friend's perspectives. All of which paint a picture of empathy, compassion and acceptance. Definitely a book for KS2. As there are no illustrations in this book, children can only imagine the severity of his disfigurement.

A personal favourite! In fact, it was so good I read it twice! This book has recently been made into a film starring Julia Roberts and could be watched after reading the book.

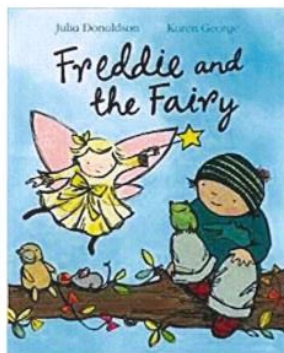


Written and Illustrated by Diana Noonan and Renee Nault (2012)

Standing in his backyard, was an animal that belonged in a zoo. Louis wants a dog and dreams of training it to follow his commands. He believes it would soon get used to the sudden jerks and twists that his wheelchair-bound body keeps making. But Mum says no.

So, what she would say if she could see the golden monkey standing on the grass, in their own backyard? Louis knows it has escaped from a zoo. They are saying it's too wild to tame, and it will be destroyed if it's found. Is it possible that Louis can tame the beautiful animal? But how can he - all by himself and from his wheelchair?

A story highlighting that children with disabilities are capable of doing things people think they can't.

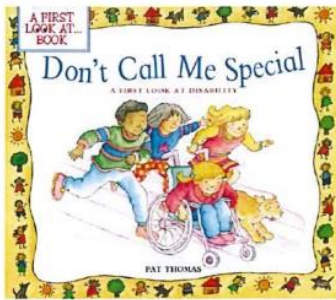


Written by Julia Donaldson (2011)

Illustrated by Karen George

Written in Julia Donaldson's traditional rhythmic style, this book tells the story of Freddie, who after rescuing a Fairy from a tree is granted 3 wishes. However, he does not receive what he wished for because the Fairy is hard of hearing and can't quite hear what he is wishing for.

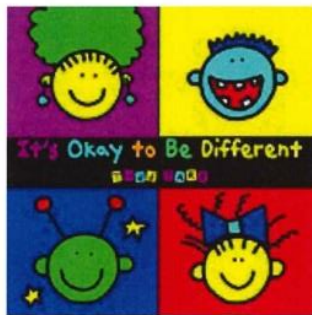
What is really nice about this story is that it gives the reader 3 golden rules on how to speak to a person who has a hearing impairment. Useful, if you have a deaf or hard of hearing child in your class.



Written and Illustrated by Pat Thomas (2010)

This delightful book tells us how you should never assume that a person with a **disability** is unable to do things and that assumptions can hurt their feelings and make them feel left out. A book celebrating uniqueness and how we are all different.

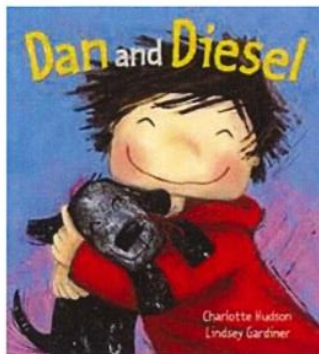
A wonderful addition to this book is the inclusion of questions that you can ask your children in your class to begin important discussions about disability and challenge any misconceptions they may have.



Written and Illustrated by Todd Parr (2009)

This title was provided by a participant in my research and although Todd Parr's recognisable style, which is perfect for foundation and KS1, this book only hints at **disability**, there is a blind child and a child in a wheelchair included within the book. Having said that, this book is perfect for discussing difference and the ways in which we are all different. You could use this to celebrate difference and diversity.

'It's okay to be different. You are special and important just because of being who you are.' – Todd Parr

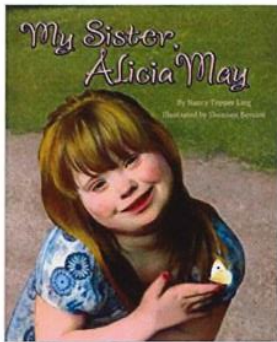


Written and Illustrated by Charlotte Hudson and Lindsey Gardiner (2006)

Oh, My Goodness! I absolutely loved this story! A young boy describes the special relationship between his brother Dan and his dog Diesel. Dan's brother is **blind**, and Diesel is his guide dog. Although, it doesn't actually tell you this explicitly in the story. However, as soon as you start reading it soon becomes apparent.

It also shows what each other's worlds would look like without each other, highlighting some difficulties a blind person may face when alone.

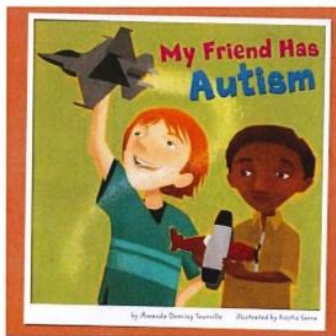
Highly recommended.



Written by Nancy Tupper Ling (2009)
Illustrated by Shennen Bersani

This story is based on the lives of two sisters and expresses the challenges and joys of growing up with a sibling who has special needs. Rachel and Alicia are like any sisters, but Rachel knows her sister is very different and very special because she has **Down syndrome**. Though Rachel occasionally feels frustrations and resentment about having to help watch over her special sister, she most often feels love, acceptance and pride for her.

Beautifully written with illustrations that are exquisite.

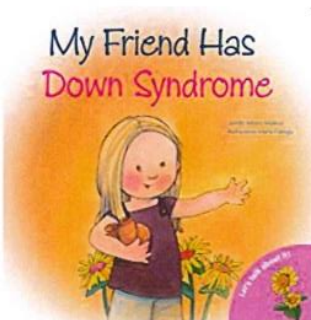


Written by Amanda Doering Tourville (2010)
Illustrated by Kristin Sorra

This is a simple story perfect for teaching children about how their friends with autism are different to them and that it's okay. It contains 'Did You Know?' boxes that give facts about autism which are perfect for beginning discussions about autism.

Nick has a friend with autism named Zack who loves aeroplanes and talks a lot about them, repeating the same facts over and over. When Zack is focused on something it is hard to get his attention. The loud noises at the airport upset him and he doesn't like people to touch him. But, as Nick points out, he's also a good friend who can beat him at video games and share his love of model airplanes.

A lovely book that could be used with all ages.

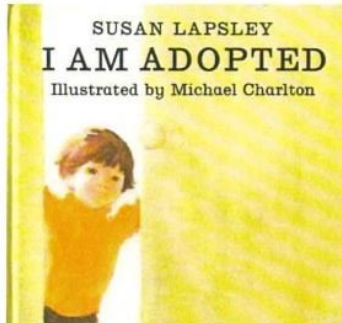


Written by Jennifer Moore-Mallinos (2008)
Illustrated by Marta Fabrega

A story about a little girl and her best friend, Tammy, who she met at Summer Camp. Tammy has **Down Syndrome** meaning she sometimes needed extra help. Through the camp leader this book explains what Down Syndrome is and the difficulties people with Down Syndrome often face.

Children are sometimes puzzled when they meet children with Down Syndrome. This book is written incredibly well and ensures that children explore their feelings as well as deal with a topic that often throws up many questions.

Adoption

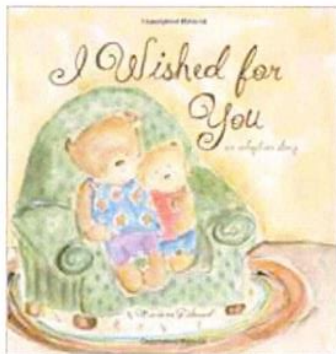


Written by Susan Lapsley (1974)

Illustrated by Michael Charlton

A very old book that gives a simple description of what it means to be adopted.

There is no story and its content is very simplistic, however, this little book is perfect for when a child asks, 'What does adopted mean?'



Written by Marianne Richmond (2008)

A little bear named Barley asks his adoptive mother questions about his adoption.

This story follows a conversation between Barley Bear and his Mama as they curl up in their favourite cuddle spot and discuss how they became a family. Barley asks Mama the questions many adopted children have, and Mama lovingly answers them all.

A great book for facilitating adoption discussions with little children.

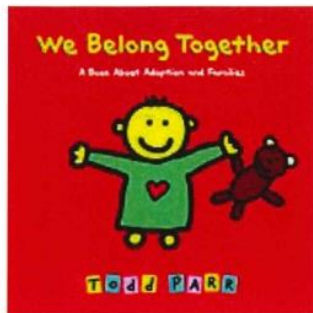


Written by Becky Edwards - 2010

Illustrated by Louise Comfort

This book explores questions that may arise from an adopted child and is centred on why adopted children look different to their adoptive family and why bity parents don't want them.

It gives adopted children the reassuring messages that not only are they very special to their adoptive parents, but that it is okay for them to have mixed feelings about their adoption.

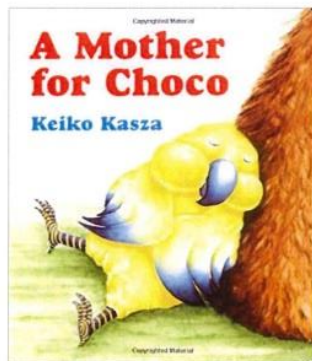


Written and illustrated by Todd Parr (2008)

Perfect for EYFS children to explore families and adoption. As with all his books each page is filled with bright colours, drawing you in.

This book reassures adoptees- not just children but pets too - in various ways, that they were wanted and needed.

A fantastic simple book to introduce adoption.

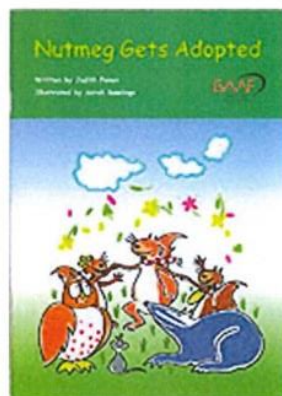


Written and illustrated by Keiko Kasza (1996)

Using animals for characters this book has explains the difficult topic of adoption in a simple and special way.

It is a story about a bird called Choco who needs a mother, looking everywhere to find someone who looks exactly like him. When Choco finds Mrs Bear he knows she cannot be his mother because they look nothing like each other. However, she hugs and kisses like a mum so when she asks Choco if she could be his mum, he says yes.

My personal favourite for discussing this tender topic with children.

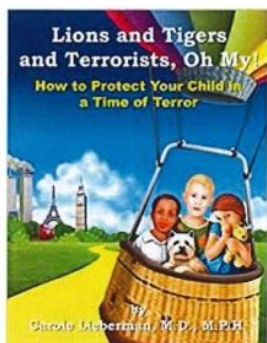


Written by Judith Foxon (2001)
Illustrated by Sarah Rawlings

Again, using animals, this story tells us about three squirrels who had to leave their birth parents and move into a foster family before being adopted by their new mum and dad.

What is particularly good about this book is that there are guidelines within it that offer suggestions as to how to best use this book with children.

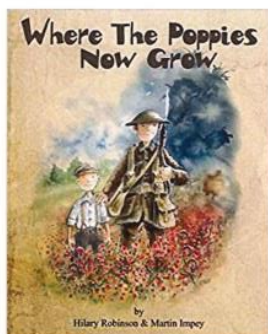
Terrorism and War



Written by Carole Lieberman (2017)

Recommended for KS2, this book tackles the issue of terrorism in the 21st Century. It details how children must learn to become resilient and stay safe. The first half of the book empowers parents and teachers to help children to understand the news that bombards them, without making them feel scared, offering 88 ways to raise happy children in times of terror. The second half is a picture-book to give them a gentle introduction to terrorism, giving 10 things they can do to become stronger and stay safe from a terrorist.

This book featured on GMB in January 2018 and was vilified as scaremongering and inappropriate. However, I think it is entirely appropriate for children of our time and as teachers we are able to choose what content we want to use and share with children.



Written by Hilary Robinson (2015)
Illustrated by Martin Impey

In tribute to poets of the time, this book is written in rhyme and tells the story of Ben and Ray whose innocent childhood games follow them into adulthood, becoming real as the First World War takes place and they join the army to serve their country.

Although, this book manages to capture the tragic nature of war it also tells the story of true friendship whilst approaching the subject of war in a delicate and heart-felt way. A fantastic book.

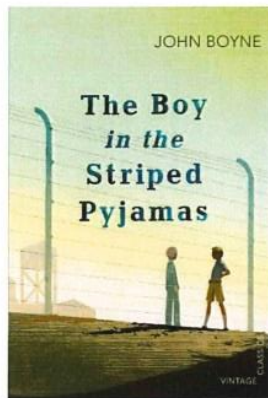


Written and Illustrated by Francesca Sanna (2016)

WOW! This book is a must have in every school. It is a beautifully written and illustrated book that introduces the unimaginable decision to abandon home in the face of war.

It can be used to begin discussions about refugees and what it must be like to live through such a harrowing journey. It also addressed themes such as home, war, fear, change and safety.

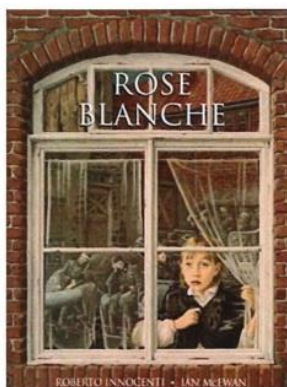
Highly recommended for both KS1 and KS2.



Written and Illustrated by John Boyne (2008)

A book for upper KS2 - Set during WWII this is a story about Bruno, the 8-year-old son of the commandant at a German concentration camp whose forbidden friendship with a Jewish boy on the other side of the camp fence has upsetting consequences.

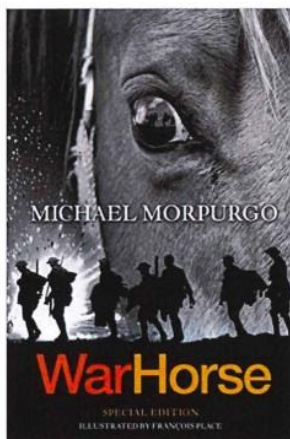
Adapted in to stage and film. A fantastic story that offers ample opportunity to discuss the horrors of war.



Written and Roberto Innocenti (2004)
Illustrated by Ian McEwan

This is one book that I have not personally read. Reviews say that *Rose Blanche* is a picture book about a young girl living in a small town in Germany. One day, some trucks with soldiers [Nazis] show up and take over the town. Then, some people are rounded up and put on trucks that drive them away. Rose, curious about these truckloads of people, decides to follow them and discovers a terrible secret.

A picture-book about the horrors of WWII.

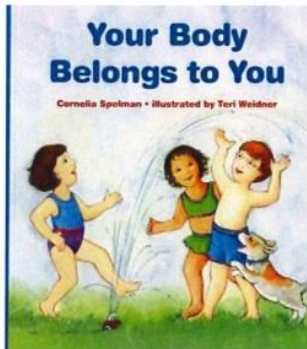


Written by Michael Morpurgo (1982)
Illustrated by Francois Place

Again, one for upper KS2. Warhorse is told through the eyes of Joey, a horse to tell a poignant story with a strong anti-war message.

It deals with war and death and the unfairness of it whilst telling a story of friendship, loyalty, love and survival. Again, much loved and made into a film and play.

Abuse: Physical, Emotional, Sexual and Neglect

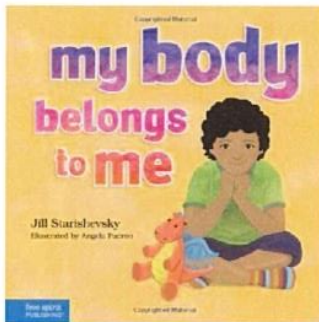


Written by Cornelia Maude Spelman (1997)
Illustrated by Teri Weidner

This book is perfect to discuss with young children how your body is your own and that they have the right to say they don't want to be touched, hugged or kissed.

I particularly like how it sensitively describes your private parts as areas on your body that should never be touched, and these places can be covered by a bathing suit.

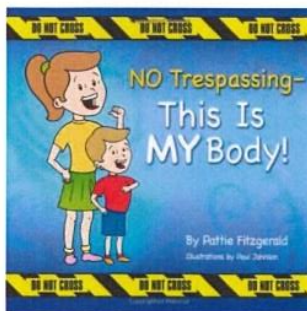
A difficult topic to discuss in the classroom but this book will make it that little bit easier.



Written by Jill Starishevsky (2014)
Illustrated by Angela Padron

This straightforward, gentle book offers a tool for parents and teachers to use to help children feel and stay safe from abuse.

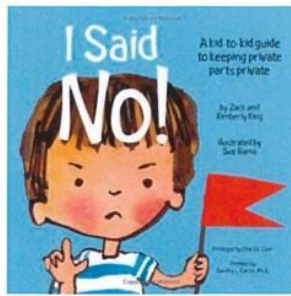
The rhyming story and simple, friendly illustrations provide a way to sensitively share and discuss the topic, guiding young children to understand that their private parts belong to them alone. It explains to children that if someone touches your private parts you should tell an adult, whether that's your mum, your dad or your teacher.



Written by Pattie Fitzgerald (2011)
Illustrated by Paul Johnson

As with the previous two books, this book again highlights personal safety, private parts and how to recognise abuse. It is told through a discussion between siblings Katie and Kyle and their mum, who explains that it is important to have no secrets in their family.

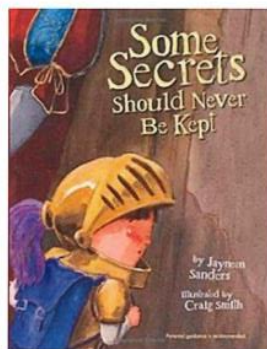
This is an excellent book, written in a simple and easy way for children to understand that opens doors for great discussions around a sensitive topic.



Written by Zack and Kimberly King (2008)
Illustrated by Sue Rama

This book is written by a boy and his mum to teach children how to keep safe from sexual abuse. It provides children with guidance they can understand, practice and use. It also provides an easy-to-use system to help children rehearse and remember appropriate responses to help keep them safe in certain situations such as identifying inappropriate behaviour from anyone, including adults, strangers and friends.

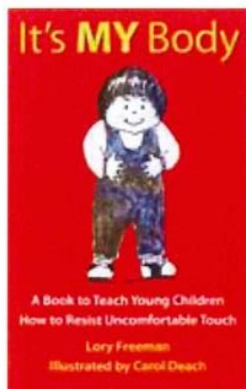
A particular strength about this book is that it also describes what a bribe is, an important issue within this tender topic.



Written by Jayneen Sanders (2011)
Illustrated by Craig Smith

Beautiful illustrations support the difficult to discuss tender topic within this book; sexual abuse. It was written to ensure children are armed with knowledge so if they are ever touched inappropriately; they will know to tell a trusted adult and keep on telling until they are believed.

It is an important book, with an important message and is a book that all children need to hear.



Written by Lory Freeman (1986)
Illustrated by Carol Deach

Recommended for Foundation and Year 1 children. This very simple book discusses the different types of touching and shows young children how to react to unwanted touching.

It explains to children about good and bad touch and that it is okay not to want to things at certain times in their life.

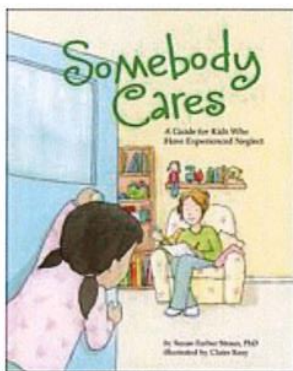


Written and illustrated by Jessie (1991)

A story written by Jessie, a young girl that was sexually abused by a family member.

This book reaches out to other children in a way that no adult can, Jessie's words carry the message, 'It's ok to tell; help can come when you tell.'

Simple, direct and from the heart, Jessie gives children the tools and courage to deal with sexual abuse.



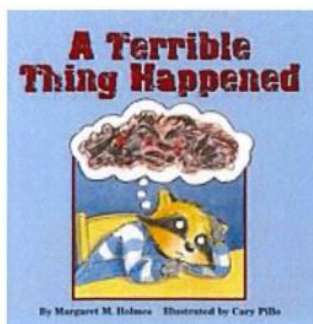
Written by Susan Farber-Straus (2016)

Illustrated by Claire Keay

Somebody Cares explores the feelings and thoughts many children have when they have been neglected.

This book reassures children who have experienced neglect that they are not to blame for what happened and that they can feel good about themselves for many reasons. It offers children ways to feel safer, more relaxed and more confident.

Every child should know that somebody cares!



Written by Margaret M Holmes (2000)

Illustrated by Cary Pillo

This gentle and tender illustrated story is for children who have witnessed any kind of violent or traumatic event, including physical abuse, violence, accidents, homicide, suicide, and natural disasters such as floods or fire.

'Sherman Smith saw the most terrible thing happen. At first, he tried to forget about it, but soon something inside him started to bother him. He felt nervous for no reason. Sometimes his stomach hurt. He had bad dreams. And he started to feel angry and do mean things, which got him in trouble. Then he met Ms. Maple, who helped him talk about the terrible thing that he had tried to forget. Now Sherman is feeling much better.'

A beautiful book that teaches children the value of talking about your feelings. Highly recommended.

Extending Your Knowledge:

It is important to keep yourself up to date with new publications. If you find any books you want to add to this guide, please insert them in the table below:

TITLE	AUTHOR	TENDER TOPIC	BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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