



Reading Spine

At North Star, we adopt the CUSP (Curriculum with Unity Schools Partnership) reading spine. As children progress through our schools, they read a selected range of core texts to support their development as readers. These texts have been carefully mapped to ensure that a breadth of experiences, authors, genres and themes is addressed across the Primary years.



The tables below reveal some of this mapping, specifically highlighting:

- Where an author has more than one text in the spine
- Heritage texts ('classics')
- BAME (black and minority ethnic) author and/or protagonist (main character)
- Strong female role models
- Specific social, ethical or moral issues

Through this variety and careful mapping, we hope that our reading spine provides children with a mirror in which to see themselves but also a window to the wider world.

Where possible, this reading spine has been harmonised with the wider curriculum, so that a science or history unit might be supported by the core text in reading lessons.

Due to the mixed-age nature of our classes, children might not read the texts in the exact order laid out below. Teachers and leaders carefully plan to ensure that children receive the rich diet of reading that the spine provides throughout their Primary years and their time in our schools.

Key Stage 1

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
<p>Grandad's Island Contemporary narrative picture book Same author as Y1 – Storm Whale Addresses bereavement through story. Vibrant images, gentle narrative Themes of love, family and loss</p>	<p>Paddington Heritage text Classic picture book Essential cultural reference Themes of kindness, family and coping with change</p>	<p>The Quangle Wangle's Hat Edward Lear Heritage poem and seminal poet Archaic language and nonsense words Builds on study of The Owl and the Pussy Cat in Y1</p>	<p>Rhythm of the Rain Contemporary narrative picture book Explores aspects of the water cycle and the circle of life Strong themes of environmental responsibility, belonging and world perspectives</p>	<p>Great Women Who Changed the World Illustrated anthology of biographies of women who have had a significant impact in their lifetime including Mary Anning, Rosa Parks and Frida Kahlo. Themes of bravery, tenacity, resilience and ingenuity</p>	<p>Fantastic Mr Fox Classic short novel An introduction to chapter books Light and humorous Representations of anthropomorphism Strong themes of morality, patience, family, community and tenacity</p>
<p>Aesop's Fables – The Goose that laid the Golden Eggs Heritage text Story with a moral Essential cultural reference. Themes of greed, patience, contentment and foolishness</p>		<p>Coming to England Contemporary narrative picture book Female Black protagonist and author. Tells the true story of Floella Benjamin's relocation to the UK as part of the Windrush generation. Themes of prejudice, coping with change and belonging</p>			
<p>Mrs Noah's Pockets Contemporary narrative picture book Female author and protagonist (Illustrator local to Suffolk) Essential cultural reference Recontextualises the biblical story Themes of kindness, inclusion and hope</p>	<p>The Christmas Pine Julia Donaldson Contemporary narrative poem Told from the perspective of a Christmas tree Celebrates Christmas traditions and values. Includes cultural references to British landmarks</p>	<p>The Street Beneath My Feet Contemporary non-narrative picture book Female author Large, fold out format Documents the Earth from the street to the core High volume Tier 3 Science vocabulary Strong themes of environmental responsibility.</p>	<p>Little People Big Dreams: David Attenborough Illustrated biography Explores the life and work of Sir David Attenborough and the importance of understanding the natural world Specific links to Living things and Animals... science units High volume Tier 3 Science vocabulary</p>	<p>Aesop's Fables – The Sun and The Wind Heritage text Story with a moral Essential cultural reference Themes of pride, vanity and self-awareness</p>	

Key Stage 2

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
<p>Greta and the Giant Contemporary narrative picture book with additional non-narrative section Themes of peaceful protest, climate change and children finding their voice</p>	<p>Leon and the Place Between Contemporary narrative picture book Themes of magic, adventure, friendship and the unknown</p>	<p>Sam Wu is Not Afraid of the Dark Contemporary narrative chapter book Part of a series Humorous adventure story that focuses on conquering fears A good bridge to longer narratives</p>	<p>Operation Gadgetman Contemporary narrative chapter book Black female protagonist and author Crime adventure story Includes themes of gentle humour, friendship, family and tenacity</p>	<p>The Dancing Bear Contemporary narrative chapter book Deeply moving story of a bear who is adopted by an orphan girl. Rich language, with a sad ending Themes of friendship, kindness, dilemmas, bravery, loneliness, animal cruelty and community</p>	<p>The Magician's Nephew Heritage narrative chapter book The first book in the classic Narnia series Essential cultural reference A story of adventure, friendship and bravery Some religious references and representation of an ill parent. Opportunities to explore archaic language</p>
<p>Pebble in my Pocket Contemporary non-narrative picture book Female historian author Narrates the history of the Earth High volume Tier 3 Science vocabulary</p>	<p>'Twas the Night before Christmas Seminal heritage poem Essential cultural reference Some archaic references Themes of Christmas traditions and modern representation of St Nicholas Entertaining and light</p>	<p>My Shadow Robert Louis Stephenson Classic heritage children's poem Told in the first person Some archaic references Entertaining and light</p>			

Key Stage 2 (continued)

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
<p>The Queen's Nose Classic short novel. Notable British author A story of magic, adventure and wishes Entertaining, light humour and a strong female protagonist who challenges stereotypes</p>	<p>The Girl who Stole an Elephant Female Sri Lankan protagonist and author Thrilling adventure story set in Sri Lanka Themes of social equality, justice, morality, friendship, political power and loyalty</p>	<p>Varjak Paw Contemporary narrative chapter book Full of mystery and suspense The story of a cat who must learn the ways of his ancestors to survive Themes of tenacity, bravery, self-belief and adventure. Touches on themes around urban living</p>	<p>The Boy at the Back of the Class Contemporary narrative telling the story of a Syrian refugee arriving in the UK The story highlights the importance of kindness and friendship Themes of bravery, sensitivity, community and a relevant social issue Written by a female author specialising in interfaith projects</p>	<p>Young, Gifted and Black A beautifully illustrated anthology celebrating the achievements of black icons from history and the present day Often detailing hardship, challenges and prejudice, the book offers an opportunity to explore a relevant social issue</p>	<p>The Wind in the Willows Heritage narrative text Essential cultural reference Full of rich, dense and challenging language to explore A classic adventure story about friendship featuring anthropomorphism</p>
<p>The Raven Edgar Allen Poe Heritage poem and seminal poet Archaic and challenging language to explore Implicit reference to mental health A depth study of poetry and seminal poets</p>	<p>The Girl who Stole an Elephant Female Sri Lankan protagonist and author Thrilling adventure story set in Sri Lanka Themes of social equality, justice, morality, friendship, political power and loyalty</p>	<p>Varjak Paw Contemporary narrative chapter book Full of mystery and suspense The story of a cat who must learn the ways of his ancestors to survive Themes of tenacity, bravery, self-belief and adventure. Touches on themes around urban living</p>	<p>The Boy at the Back of the Class Contemporary narrative telling the story of a Syrian refugee arriving in the UK The story highlights the importance of kindness and friendship Themes of bravery, sensitivity, community and a relevant social issue Written by a female author specialising in interfaith projects</p>	<p>Young, Gifted and Black A beautifully illustrated anthology celebrating the achievements of black icons from history and the present day Often detailing hardship, challenges and prejudice, the book offers an opportunity to explore a relevant social issue</p>	<p>The Wind in the Willows Heritage narrative text Essential cultural reference Full of rich, dense and challenging language to explore A classic adventure story about friendship featuring anthropomorphism</p>

Key stage 2 (continued)

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<p>Shackleton's Journey Contemporary non-narrative picture book Narrates the history of the Antarctic explorations of Shackleton and his crew Beautifully illustrated, this book draws on learning from across the curriculum</p>	<p>Secrets of a Sun King Contemporary historical narrative with both female author and protagonist A glorious tale of mystery, intrigue and adventure with great historical references throughout Drawing on learning from Ancient Egypt and Tutankhamun Themes of friendship, family, feminism and tenacity</p>	<p>A Midsummer Night's Dream Heritage classic – an introduction to the work of Shakespeare A magical and simple retelling of the classic story including some simple plot analysis and information about Shakespeare and the Globe Theatre</p>	<p>The Boy in the Tower Contemporary science-fiction narrative telling the story of monster plants consuming buildings in the city Themes of mental health, young carers, friendship, trust, resilience and anxiety Narrating some of the joys and challenges of living in an urban community Moving, thought-provoking and challenging in equal measure</p>	<p>The Explorer Contemporary narrative An adventure story in which four children learn to survive in the Amazon rainforest Exploring the ethics behind human exploration and environmental responsibility. Themes of friendship, adventure and the natural world</p>	<p>Five Children and It Heritage fantasy narrative by seminal author and poet E. Nesbit Five children find a sand fairy who grants them wishes with humorous consequences Full of rich, archaic and challenging language to explore Historical references throughout with the opportunity to explore historical attitudes to gender, race and social discrimination</p>
	<p>If Rudyard Kipling An inspirational heritage poem by a seminal British poet and author A 'guide for life' which explores the idea of coming of age Beautifully written and still relevant to modern living Challenging and archaic language throughout A depth study of the poem and poet</p>	<p>I Am Not a Label A beautifully illustrated anthology celebrating the achievements of modern and historical role models who have overcome disability, mental health issues or wider life challenges A book that challenges stereotypes and assumptions</p>	<p>Daffodils William Wordsworth Heritage poem by a seminal British poet. Challenging and archaic language throughout</p>		

Key stage 2 (continued)

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
<p>Rooftoppers Contemporary narrative set in Victorian times written by acclaimed author Katherine Rundell</p> <p>A beautiful adventure story narrating the quest to find the birth mother of feisty orphan Sophie</p> <p>Themes of friendship, determination, love, ingenuity and those living on the fringes of society</p>	<p>Pig Heart Boy A second contemporary narrative by Malorie Blackman</p> <p>The story of a boy whose only hope of survival is to have a transplant using a pig's heart</p> <p>Ethical issues include animal rights and the quest to extend life through science</p> <p>Themes of illness, friendship, loyalty, family and determination</p>	<p>All Aboard the Empire Windrush Contemporary non-narrative to complement the CUSP Windrush unit</p> <p>Told from the perspective of a young traveller</p> <p>Narrates the history of the Windrush generation and their contribution to British life</p> <p>Themes of change, prejudice, national identity and social history</p>	<p>Skellig Contemporary narrative by acclaimed author David Almond</p> <p>Narrates the story of two friends who find a strange creature who needs their help to survive</p> <p>Representation of an ill sibling. Themes of change, friendship, family, death, fear and adventure</p> <p>Some mild swearing used to convey character</p>	<p>Dare to be You A non-narrative book of empowerment for young people preparing for transition to high school</p> <p>Exemplified through a vast range of role models, this book will help pupils celebrate difference, develop inner confidence and independence</p> <p>Themes of difference, inspiration and kindness.</p>	<p>An Introduction to Dickens (including Oliver Twist) This unit is designed to give pupils an understanding of Dickens and the context of his work, including a grounding in understanding archaic language.</p> <p>Some extracts are used from Oliver Twist to exemplify this but the unit also addresses significant themes such as life in Victorian times, social and historical contexts and the impact of seminal authors on modern British culture.</p>
<p>The Listeners Walter de la Mare</p> <p>A heritage poem full of rich and archaic language</p> <p>This poem tells the story of an unnamed traveller exploring an abandoned house inhabited by ghosts.</p> <p>Themes of the supernatural, fantasy and mortality</p>	<p>How to Live Forever Contemporary narrative picture book, beautifully illustrated</p> <p>Building on the study of Pig Heart Boy, the story explores the ethics and implications of immortality</p>	<p>The Island Contemporary narrative picture book</p> <p>A powerful story of a man who washes up on the beach of an island.</p> <p>Narrative parallels to the themes addressed in the Windrush CUSP unit</p> <p>Themes of refugees, xenophobia, social politics and human rights</p> <p>Haunting but beautiful illustrations</p>			