



Reading Matters

@ Thorpe C of E Primary

Issue 3 - Christmas Special



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to this special Christmas edition of Reading Matters @ Thorpe C of E Primary. Dark evenings and the colder weather make a perfect excuse to snuggle up and share a book and Christmas is also perfect for gifting books to children. We hope you find these seasonal recommendations useful and a great reason to get your children reading for pleasure and experiencing the joy of books!

Following the huge success of our recent author visit from Mel Taylor-Bessant, we hope the children will continue to be inspired by her hilarious and empathy filled stories which also spread the joy of Christmas. Mel truly was delighted to meet so many of our children and parents and was very impressed with the enthusiasm and engagement shown by everyone during the Q&A session. She has asked us to pass on this inspirational message,

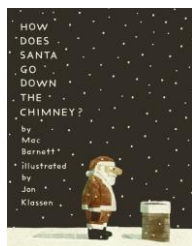
"Reading allows us to do anything, go anywhere, meet anyone and experience anything. Reading is magic!"

Please visit Mel's website to download a selection of free activity sheets to accompany the books. [Resources — Mel Taylor-Bessant \(meltaylorbessant.com\)](http://Resources — Mel Taylor-Bessant (meltaylorbessant.com))

We hope you find the recommendations in this issue useful and maybe inspiration for some bookish gifts.

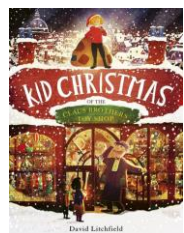
Merry Christmas Reading!

New Releases - Picture Books (age 3-7)



How does Santa Go Down The Chimney? (Mac Barnett & Jon Klassen)

a fun and whimsical take on the age-old question of how Santa Claus manages to fit down the chimney to deliver presents. The book features humorous illustrations that bring the story to life.



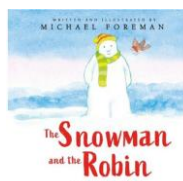
Kid Christmas (David Litchfield)

A magical and heartfelt picture book from best-selling author-illustrator David Litchfield, that centers on kindness, generosity and looking after others.



Luna Loves Christmas (Joseph Coelho)

From award-winning Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho, the fourth book in the Luna Loves... series celebrates separated families at Christmas time and shows the power of giving to bring people together.



The Snowman and the Robin (Michael Foreman) A gentle story of winter magic from national treasure Michael Foreman, in which a snowman comes to life and explores the night-time city with his robin friend.

New Releases - Chapter Books (age 7-11)



The Ice Children (M.G. Leonard) A fresh take on the classic fairytale 'The Snow Queen', this is a fun, wintery adventure with an important message about climate change. Atmospheric illustrations and contemporary themes make this a wonderful celebration of winter.



Step-Father Christmas (L.D. Lapinski) A magical Christmas story about a girl who is convinced her new step-dad is actually Father Christmas. Written in twenty-five chapters (one to read each day in the lead up to Christmas and a bonus one for Christmas day) this is a heart-warming story to enjoy as a family.



The Snow Girl (Sophie Anderson) An enchanting wintry tale based on Russian folklore that shows the power of friendship, believing in yourself and fighting for what's right. Beautifully written, this fairytale adventure is full of ice and snow, love and loss, starlight and mystery.



The Secret of Heltersbruk Manor - A Christmas Mystery (Eva Frantz) A spooky but heart-warming Christmas mystery, featuring an abandoned mansion, mysterious figures and eerie whispers in the night. Told in 24 chapters for each day of advent, this is a perfectly gripping adventure for the run up to Christmas.



Operation Nativity (Jenny Pearson) This is a fast-paced, rollicking adventure with a nod to the original Christmas story that will keep everyone guessing and laughing. There's plenty of mystery in the central story, but the background family drama offers nearly as much mayhem, and a hilarious array of relationships.

A Christmas Gift Idea

Children's book subscription boxes are more than just a fun surprise; they are powerful tools that boost vocabulary and linguistic skills of our young readers. Here is a selection of the most highly recommended subscriptions currently available.

Parrot Street Book Club - An award winning, monthly book subscription designed to encourage young readers (5 to 14-year-olds) to discover the magic of books. Every month subscribers are sent a different and exciting chapter book along with a letterbox-friendly pack containing book club-style questions and exciting activity ideas which encourage kids to spend more time thinking and talking about books. [Join our kids subscription box from the UK | Parrot Street Book Club](#)

Hand Me Down Book Club - This eco-friendly subscription box is a fantastic way to teach children about sustainability and the importance of recycling and reusing. Choose either the 5-8s or the 9-12s box, each one containing four pre-loved books, wrapped up in plastic-free, sustainably sourced, and 100% recyclable packaging. The books are handpicked each month, and you won't ever get the same book twice! [Children's Book Subscription Box | Hand Me Down Book Club \(hmdbookclub.co.uk\)](#)

Torchlight Books - Offering one-off gift boxes, they are a newly established family run service which aims to turn reluctant readers into happy readers. With 3 age group options, each box includes a selection of super readable books which are also suitable for dyslexic readers and include an activity sheet and colouring pencils with an option to include a dynamo torch for reading under the covers! [Torchlight Books - turn your reluctant reader in to a happy reader!](#)

Reading Rebels - Amnesty International UK's book club for curious kids aged 4-10. Each month you will receive a beautiful book and creative activities to help children to explore important values; like kindness, fairness and equality that underpin human rights whilst supporting Amnesty International UK. [Join Reading Rebels \(amnesty.org.uk\)](#)

Local Bookish Events please check websites for more details

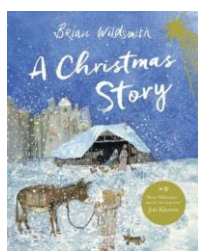
Saturday 9/12 Waterstones Staines - Christmas Crafting with Mel Taylor-Bessent The lovely Mel will be hosting a morning of Christmas Crafting, making tree decorations, and signing copies of her books. This is a free event but booking is required. [Christmas Crafting with Mel Taylor-Bessent at Waterstones Staines Tickets, Sat 9 Dec 2023 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#)

Saturday 25/11 Guildford Baptist Church -Join bestselling and multi award winning author, M.G. Leonard to hear about her new book *The Ice Children*, a modern fairytale celebrating the magic and wonder of winter. [M.G. Leonard - The Ice Children Tickets, Sat 25 Nov 2023 at 15:30 | Eventbrite](#)

3/2 - 22/2 Rose Theatre Kingston - A stage production based on the best-selling novel "The Boy At The Back of the Class". Told from a child's perspective, balancing heart and humour, *The Boy at the Back of the Class* highlights the power of friendship and kindness in a world that doesn't always make sense and reminds us that everyone needs a place to call home. [The Boy at the Back of the Class — Based on the bestselling novel | Rose Theatre, Kingston, London](#)

Surrey Libraries - Details of events available here: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries/news-and-events/regular-events-reading-groups>

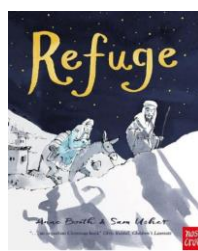
Traditional & Classic Christmas Stories



A Christmas Story (Brian Wildsmith) This is the story of Rebecca, a young girl living in Nazareth, who accompanies a small donkey searching for his mother to a stable in Bethlehem where they both witness a special event. An innocent and child-centered perspective on the well-known Nativity story, with stunning illustrations.



How Winston Delivered Christmas (Alex T Smith) The story follows a mouse named Winston who sets out on an adventure to personally deliver a lost letter to Santa, encountering many obstacles along the way. The book is organized into twenty-four-and-a-half chapters, one to enjoy each day in the lead up to Christmas



Refuge (Anne Booth/Sam Usher) This powerful and evocative picture book tells the Christmas story and what follows, the fleeing of Jesus, Mary and Joseph from Herod's soldiers to Egypt. This retelling of the Nativity has timeless crossover appeal and a poignant message that couldn't be more relevant.



One Christmas Wish (Katherine Rundell) Written with generous helpings of warmth and humour, this is a timeless yet contemporary Christmas story. A young boy's magical wish on a shooting star brings some special decorations to life and together they go on a journey to discover the importance of togetherness at Christmastime.