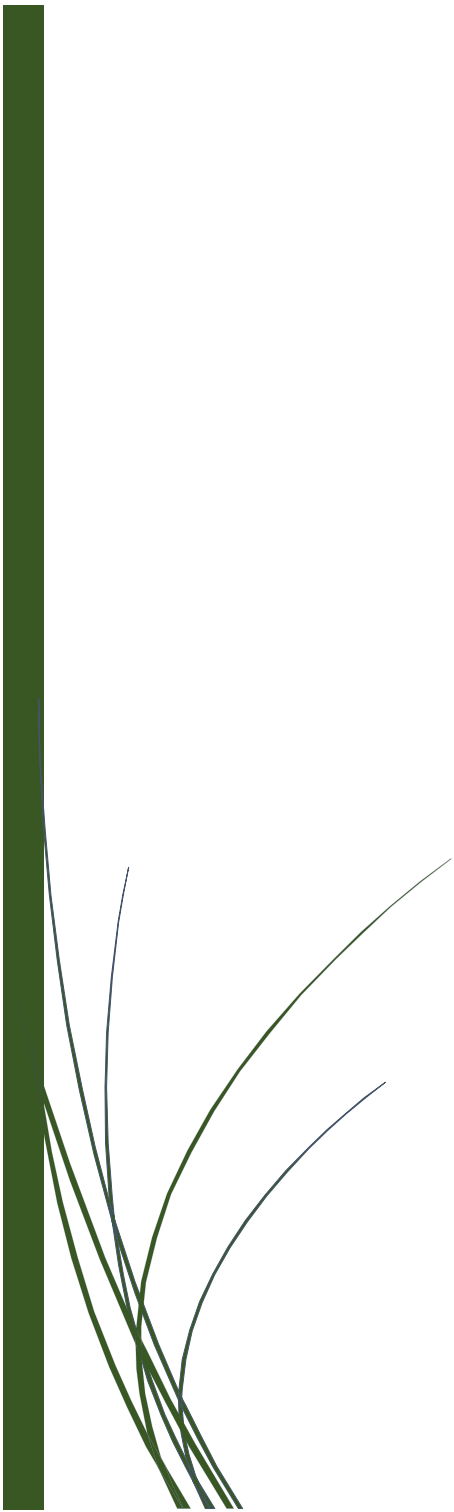


Gordon's Reading Spine – KS2



Our class reading spine has been carefully designed to provide all pupils with a broad, progressive and ambitious experience of high-quality children's literature. These texts are read during whole-class reading lessons, with the teacher modelling fluent, expressive reading and appropriate prosody. Pupils respond through verbal comprehension questions, discussion, prediction, inference and reflection, enabling every child to access and engage with complete texts, including those they may not yet be able to read the texts independently.

The spine has been sequenced to build pupils' reading stamina, vocabulary, comprehension and literary knowledge over time. In Year 2, pupils begin with visually supported texts, shorter chapter books, repeated structures and accessible narratives. As they progress through Key Stage 2, they encounter increasingly lengthy and demanding texts, more complex vocabulary, less familiar settings, multiple perspectives, shifting timelines, symbolism, ambiguity and challenging moral and social themes. This progression prepares pupils for the increasingly sophisticated reading expected towards the end of primary school and into secondary education.

Within each year group, we have deliberately selected a varied range of genres, authors, settings, characters and narrative structures. Pupils encounter classic and contemporary fiction, fantasy, adventure, humour, historical fiction, science fiction, mystery, survival stories, animal fiction, social-issue narratives and texts inspired by different cultures and periods. The spine includes familiar British settings alongside stories set in diverse landscapes, including the Arctic, the Caribbean, the Pacific, the Middle East and imagined fantasy worlds. This ensures that children do not experience reading as a succession of similar books and provides different entry points to engage a wide range of interests.

The selection combines important works of children's literary heritage with contemporary books that reflect modern society and the experiences of today's pupils. Children encounter significant authors such as C. S. Lewis, Roald Dahl, Philip Pullman, Michael Morpurgo, Malorie Blackman and David Almond, alongside newer voices including Onjali Q. Raúf, Humza Arshad, Hannah Gold, Nizrana Farook and Sophie Kirtley. This balance enables pupils to develop their cultural and literary knowledge while also encountering relevant, inclusive and engaging contemporary literature.

Representation has been an important consideration in the design of the spine. Across the texts, pupils encounter protagonists from different cultures, communities and historical periods, including refugees, children experiencing prejudice, characters with disabilities or visible differences, and individuals whose contributions have been overlooked by history. Children meet male, female and non-human protagonists who demonstrate different forms of courage, leadership and resilience. Some characters succeed through physical

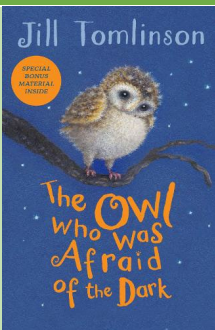
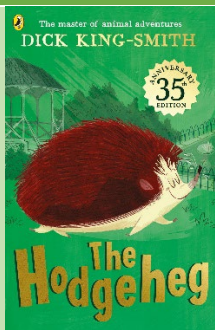
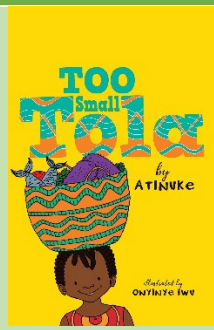
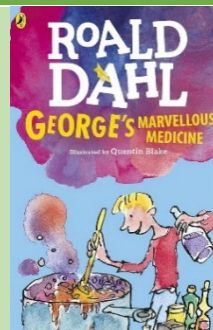
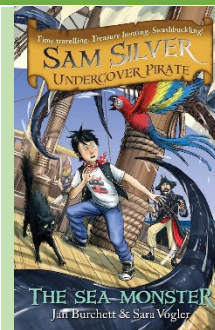
bravery, while others rely on intelligence, creativity, empathy, communication or the determination to challenge injustice. This provides pupils with both mirrors, in which they may recognise aspects of their own lives, and windows, through which they can understand experiences different from their own.

The texts also create safe opportunities to explore important spiritual, moral, social and cultural themes. These include family and belonging, friendship, identity, fear, grief, prejudice, displacement, disability, war, environmental responsibility, justice and the consequences of personal choices. By considering these issues through fictional characters and situations, pupils can discuss sensitive or relevant experiences at an appropriate distance. Teachers can support children to consider different perspectives, challenge stereotypes and develop empathy, while remaining alert to pupils who may have personal experience of the themes being explored.

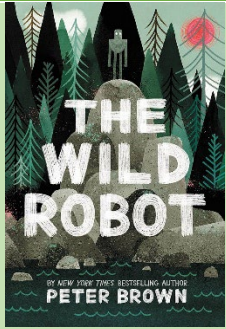
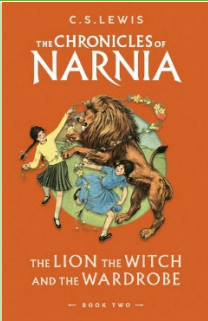
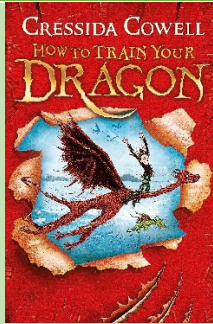
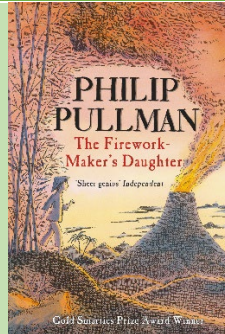
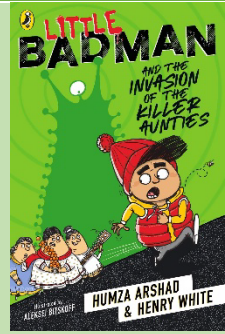
Several books have been deliberately chosen as series starters, allowing pupils to continue reading independently once they have been introduced to the characters and fictional world. Others act as gateway books, opening the door to a new genre, a more challenging type of literature or the wider work of a significant author. This ensures that the reading spine supports not only curriculum comprehension but also reading for pleasure, helping children discover authors, genres and series they may choose to explore beyond the classroom.

Overall, the spine balances accessibility with ambition, enjoyment with challenge, and literary heritage with contemporary relevance. Through expert teacher modelling and rich whole-class discussion, all pupils are given access to books that broaden their vocabulary, deepen their understanding of narrative, develop their knowledge of the world and encourage them to see themselves as thoughtful, confident and enthusiastic readers.

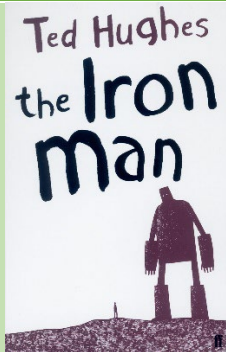
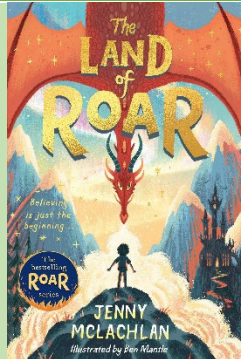
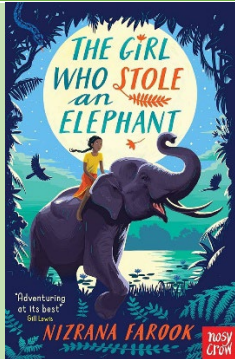
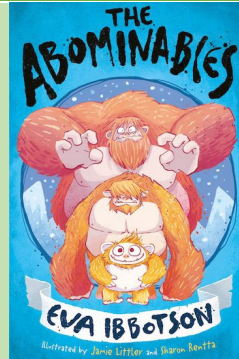
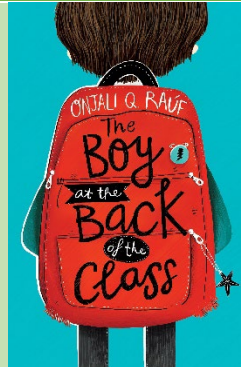
Progression of Class Reader

Year 2	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Book:						
Genre and Form:	Picture book, Humorous adventure, Epistolary fiction	Classic animal fiction, Episodic short chapter book.	Classic animal fiction, Humorous adventure,	Contemporary realistic fiction, linked short stories, family and community stories.	Comic fantasy, mischievous adventure, children's classic.	Historical fantasy, time-travel adventure, illustrated series.
Why it was chosen:	A high-quality book where pupils must examine postcards, flaps, facial expressions and background details to understand Sunny's journal fully, developing their visual literacy, inference and close observation. The repeated journey structure supports prediction and retelling.	An effective bridge between picture books and sustained chapter-books. It introduces the idea that characters can change their attitudes over time. It also creates meaningful links with emotional literacy and resilience..	The Book acts as a gateway into Dick King-Smith's extensive animal fiction. Max's speech offer opportunities to explore phonology, word order and playful language. It is an early problem-solution narrative vented on an unlikely hero.	Set in Lagos, Nigeria. Atinuke's warm, humorous stories introduce pupils to a resourceful girl whose size does not limit what she can do. The book broadens the spine through its Nigerian setting and the perspectives of author Atinuke and illustrator Onyinye Iwu. It is also a series starter.	A gateway into Roald Dahl's wider body of work. Pupils can examine how language creates humour, disgust and suspend. It is an introduction into critical reading – pupils can enjoy the fantasy whilst recognising his behaviour is morally complicated.	An accessible entry into historical fantasy. The book is a pacy book with time travel, action and unlikely adventure. As the first in a sequence of ten books, it is a good series starter.
Themes:	Home, family, belonging, independence, exploration.	Fear, courage, resilience, changing perspectives, the natural world.	Perseverance, road safety, courage, leadership, wild life protection.	Family, community, determination, helpfulness, recognising strength.	Imagination, invention, revenge, consequence, power, scientific curiosity.	Courage, friendship, loyalty, survival, identity, teamwork, trust,
Estimated Audiobook time:	Approximately 8-12 minutes	55 minutes	55-70 minutes	1 hour and 9 minutes	1 hour and 20 minutes	1 hour 50 minutes

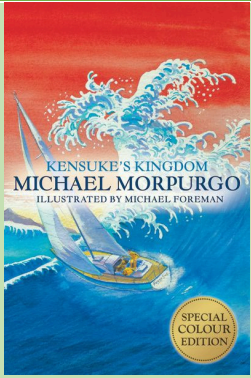
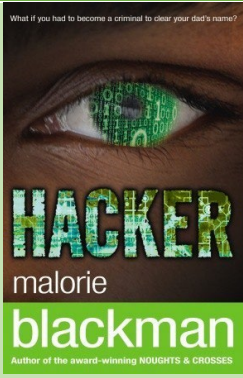
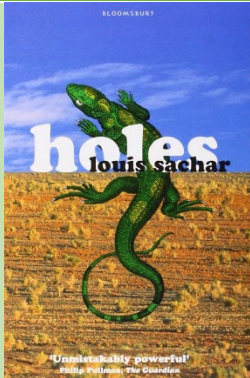
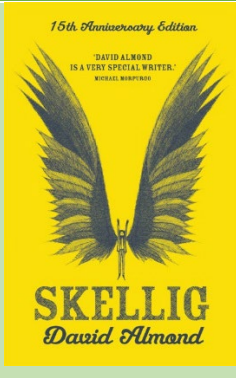
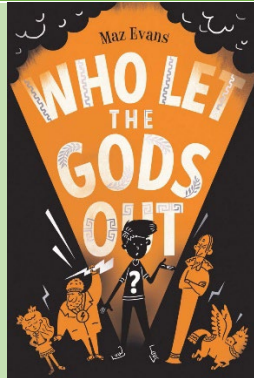
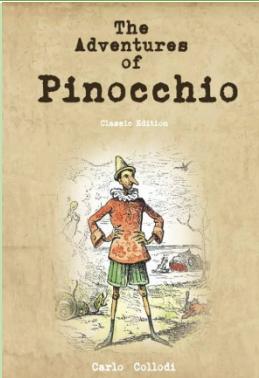
Progression of Class Reader

Year 3	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Book:						
Genre and Form:	Science fiction, environmental fiction, survival adventure.	Classic fantasy portal fantasy, quest, allegorical fiction.	Comic fantasy, Viking-inspired adventure, illustrated series novel.	Fantasy adventure, quest narrative, fair-tale style story.	Contemporary comic fiction, science-fiction adventure.	Time-slip fantasy, historical adventure, survival story
Why it was chosen:	The Wild Robot combines science fiction, animal fiction and a survival narrative. This book adds contemporary speculative fiction, environmental thinking and philosophical questions about humanity and technology. It is also a series starter, being the first book in a series.	The novel gives pupils access to a foundational work of modern children's fantasy and provides literary heritage. There is ambitious vocabulary, symbolism and significant cultural reference points. Edmund's decision provides rich material for character study and nuanced discussion about wrongdoing and remorse.	Hiccup is an unconventional hero which challenges stereotypical ideas about masculinity, power and leadership. Pupils must interpret visual and written information together. It is also a series starter of an extensive series from a renowned modern author.	This book introduces a formal quest narrative (goal, journey, obstacles, helpers and personal transformation), strengthens female representation and gender stereotypes and acts as a gateway into Philip Pullman's writing. The globally inspired setting also broadens pupils' literary experience.	The novel centres on Humza Khan, a contemporary British Pakistani Muslim boy, allowing more pupils to encounter culturally recognisable experiences. It's comic first-person narrative and humour provides opportunities to study informal language, comic timing and narrative voice. It is also a series starter.	The novel combined a contemporary family story with a journey into the Stone Age, linking well to year 3 history. It introduces a more complex narrative structure through the time-slip structure and is emotionally sophisticated, exploring Charlie's fears surrounding a seriously ill baby sibling.
Themes:	Nature and technology, identity, empathy, parenting, community.	Good and evil, temptation, betrayal, redemption, oppression.	Heroism, leadership, friendship, courage, communication.	Ambition, determination, gender expectation, courage, independence.	Identity, family, friendship, community, ambition, stereotypes.	Family, fear, courage, hope, compassion, survival, friendship.
Estimated Audiobook time:	4 hours 14 minutes on Audible UK	4 hours and 22 minutes	Around 3 hours 29 minutes	1 hour 44 minutes on Audible,	Around 5 hours 44 minutes	Around 5 hours and 6 minutes.

Progression of Class Reader

Year 4	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Book:						
Genre and Form:	Classic Science fiction, Myth-like adventure Modern fable,	Portal fantasy, humorous adventure, quest narrative.	Contemporary animal adventure, environmental fiction.	Adventure, thriller, coming-of-age fiction, animal adventure.	Humorous fantasy, adventure, myths and legends.	Contemporary realistic fiction, social-issue fiction, adventure.
Why it was chosen:	The Iron Man adds a concise but linguistically ambitious classic. It develops pupils' understanding of science fiction, symbolic characters and stories in which an apparent monster becomes the hero. It is a gateway into Ted Hughes' wider writing.	The land of Roar is a contemporary portal fantasy, furthering children's understanding of conventions of portal fantasy. Arthur and Rose's relationship provides a meaningful exploration of sibling conflict. It is also a strong series starter.	The Last Bear adds environmental fiction, an Arctic setting and a strong female protagonist. It balances scientific and geographical connections with emotional depth through exploring grief and loneliness.	The novel is set on a fictional island inspired by the landscapes and cultures of Sri Lanka, exposing children to diverse landscapes and globally inspired settings. It is a political adventure with a bold female protagonist and a morally complex central conflict.	A journey narrative allowing pupils to compare contrasting settings. It supports discussion about many contemporary topics such as conservation and exploitation. It also introduces pupils to an important twentieth- century children's author.	The book adds a contemporary refugee perspective and allows pupils to explore a complex global issue and children's rights through a recognisable school setting. The text provides valuable links to PSHE. It is also a gateway novel.
Themes:	Fear of the unknown, prejudice and acceptance, self-control, friendship.	Growing up, sibling relationships, memory, rediscovering confidence, memory	Climate change, conservation, loneliness, grief, hope, natural world,	Justice and inequality, morality, courage, poverty, rebellion, social change,	Kindness and compassion, outsiders and prejudice, conservation, greed.	Refugees, friendship, prejudice, war and conflict, activism, children's rights.
Estimated Audiobook time:	1 hour and 15 minutes	6 hours and 8 minutes	4 hours and 50 minutes	4 hours and 24 minutes	5 hours and 17 minutes	5 hours and 6 minutes

Progression of Class Reader

Year 5	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Book:						
Genre and Form:	Survival adventure, island story, contemporary classic.	Technologically thriller, mystery, crime adventure.	Coming-of-age novel, mystery, adventure, dark comedy.	Contemporary fantasy, magical realism, coming-of-age fiction,	Mythological fantasy, comic adventure,	Classic fantasy, moral tale, episodic adventure,
Why it was chosen:	This is a classic survival story with a sensitive exploration of memory, war and cross-cultural friendship. It introduces a Japanese perspective on WW2 and broadens pupils' historical understanding beyond a British viewpoint.	Hacker introduces a contemporary technological mystery with a resourceful black female protagonist. This novel challenges stereotypes about who is associated with technology and prompts important discussions about ethical computing.	Develops advanced comprehension through multiple timelines, interconnected plot symbolism and social commentary. The novel blends humour with serious issues, demonstrating how a text can be entertaining without avoiding difficult moral questions.	Skellig is a contemporary classic which offers a deliberately ambiguous reading experience requiring pupils to develop interpretations supported by evidence. The sparse poetic prose exposes pupils to a very different authorial style and exploration of symbolism.	The novel brings figures from Greek mythology into a contemporary comic adventure, allowing pupils to consolidate knowledge of myths whilst seeing how authors adapt traditional characters for new audiences. Its humours makes serious issues accessible. It is also a series starter.	Pinocchio gives pupils access to an internationally recognised children's classic which has influenced literature, theatre and film. The episodic structure exposes children to an older form of storytelling. It supports discussion of identity, conscience and free will
Themes:	Survival, friendship, trust, longlines, war, cultural understanding, conservation, respect.	Justice, family loyalty, technology, problem-solving, prejudice, ethical decision-making	Justice, racism, friendship, fate, family history, punishment, exploitation.	Life and death, illness, hope, friendship, transformation, spirituality, education.	Family responsibility, mental health, friendship, courage, mythology, honesty	Honesty, temptation, freedom, education, identity, personal transformation.
Estimated Audiobook time:	3 hours and 20 minutes	5 hours and 11 minutes	4 hours and 37 minutes	3 hours and 30 minutes	7 hours and 16 minutes	3 hours and 17 minutes.

Progression of Class Reader

Year 6	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Book:						
Genre and Form:	Historical fiction, Holocaust literature, first-person narrative.	Animal adventure, survival fiction, coming-of-age story	Contemporary realistic fiction, school story, multiple-viewpoint.	Biographical history fiction, adventure	Tragedy, drama, literary heritage text	Contemporary realistic fiction, refugee narrative
Why it was chosen:	Once provides an age-appropriate first-person historical fiction. It is a powerful exploration of story-telling. The use of dramatic irony requires pupils to infer meaning. It is a series starter, following Felix's life.	The novel extends animal fiction into a more mature and emotionally demanding survival narrative with an animal viewpoint. The novel explores human cruelty and kindness and is an opportunity to discuss trust, trauma, found families and the meaning of home.	Wonder is a modern classic which explores school and family life through a child with a facial difference. The novel provides disability representation and a nuanced exploration of inclusion. It's shifting viewpoints show pupils that the same event can be experienced and interpreted differently.	The text introduces pupils to Matthew Henson, a Black American explorer whose contribution to Arctic exploration was not recognised equally during his lifetime. It supports pupils in questioning traditional versions of history.	Macbeth allows pupils to experience literature as performance. The play provides rich language study. It introduces to Shakespearean language and one of the most significant works in English literary heritage.	The novel adds another contemporary refugee perspective which uses a complex structure connecting memory with present experience. The use of dance broadens the curriculum by showing art as a source of identity and communication
Key Themes:	War, persecution, antisemitism, innocent, hope, friendship, loss, survival, storytelling.	Abandonment, loyalty, friendship, cruelty, trust, survival, belonging, hope.	Kindness, disability, appearance, prejudice, bullying, friendship, family, belonging.	Exploration, racism, perseverance, injustice, courage, recognition, ambition, historical erasure.	Ambition, power, guilt, fate, free will, loyalty, betrayal, appearance and reality, violence and supernatural.	Refugees, displacement, family, trauma, identity, prejudice, friendship, hope, resilience, art.
Estimated Audiobook time:	3 hours and 6 minutes	5 hours and 50 minutes	7 hours and 9 minutes	1 hour and 54 minutes	42-55 minutes	5 hours and 10 minutes

Progression of Class Reader