



Diverse and Representative Literature at Our Lady Catholic Primary School

The school has taken purposeful action to ensure that the literature pupils encounter reflects the principles of racial justice, equality and diversity and is representative of both the school community and wider society.

In the Summer Term 2024, parents were invited to support the school in purchasing a carefully selected range of diverse and representative texts for each key stage, drawing on recommendations from Herts for Learning linked to its race equity work. This significantly enhanced the range of texts available to pupils, with titles now embedded within both school libraries and classroom collections.

English curriculum maps demonstrate that diversity and representation are considered within curriculum design. Pupils encounter a broad range of authors, characters, cultures, identities and lived experiences through the texts studied in English lessons. This enables pupils to see both **themselves and others represented positively in literature**, while providing meaningful opportunities to explore experiences and perspectives that may differ from their own.

This approach reflects the principle within *The Reading Framework* that stories can provide important opportunities for children to encounter people whose social and cultural backgrounds and values differ from their own. At Our Lady, carefully chosen literature is therefore used not only to develop pupils' reading and literacy, but also to broaden their understanding of the world, challenge stereotypes and foster empathy, dignity and respect for others.

Representation is equally important. The school recognises that pupils should be able to encounter characters, families and communities with whom they can identify. The range of literature available therefore seeks to provide both **“windows” into the lives and experiences of others** and **“mirrors” in which pupils can recognise aspects of themselves, their families and their communities**.

The school continues to review and extend its collection of diverse literature, drawing upon recommendations and resources from organisations including Herts for Learning and the National Literacy Trust. These texts are not confined to individual events or celebrations but are increasingly woven into pupils' everyday experience of reading through English lessons, class reading, independent reading, school and classroom libraries and Library Club.

As a result, diverse and representative literature is becoming an established part of the school's reading culture rather than an isolated aspect of RJED provision. This supports pupils in developing greater awareness of diversity, respect for the dignity of every person and an understanding that difference should be recognised, respected and celebrated. It also contributes directly to the school's Catholic mission by helping pupils to recognise the inherent dignity of every individual and to understand their responsibility to challenge prejudice, discrimination and injustice.