

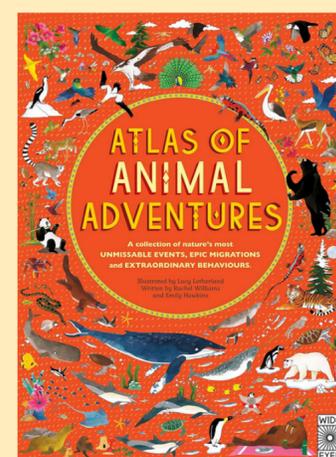
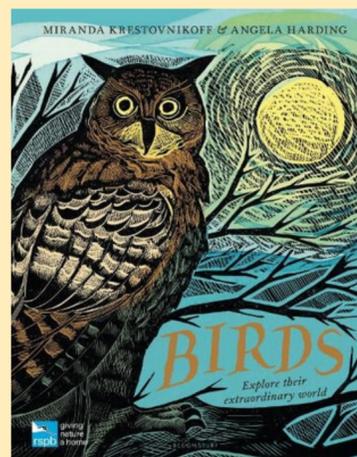
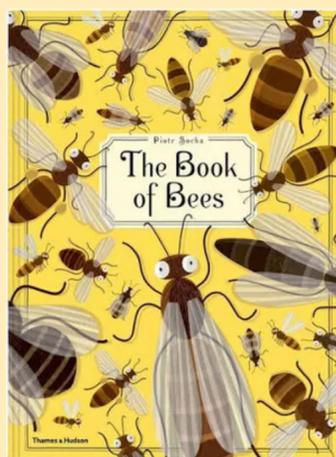
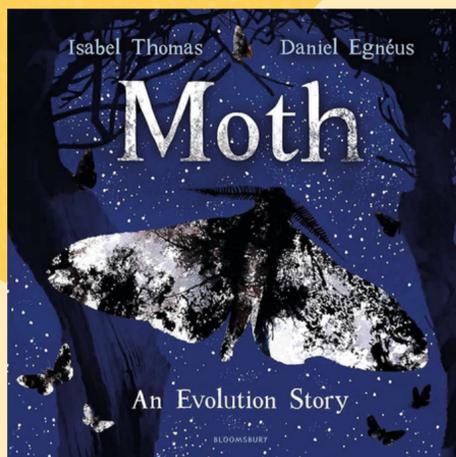
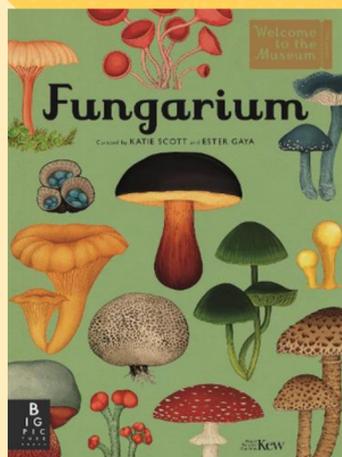
READING NEWSLETTER



Northmead Junior School

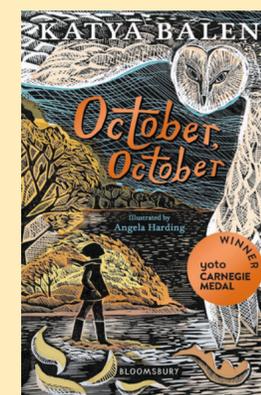
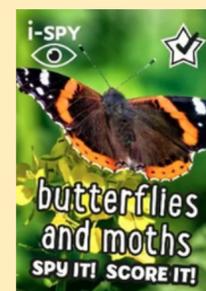
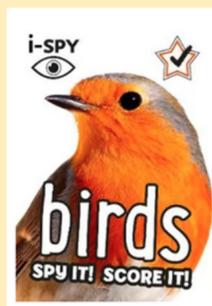
November 2024

At Northmead we understand the importance of children engaging with the natural world. In a world increasingly dominated by technology, time spent outdoors cultivates resilience, social skills, and a sense of wonder, and there is much research which cites the benefits of the natural world on children's mental health. Initially, we have pushed the outdoor teaching agenda in the lower school at Northmead, led by Mr Lewis. To support this learning there are so many beautiful books published about nature which open up a world of wonder igniting children's curiosity. There are some incredible non-fiction books produced for children which combine interesting text with the most beautiful illustrations. Children can explore these over and over again.



Nature books are the perfect jumping-off point for real-life exploration. To help this engagement in the natural world I have always rated the i-Spy series of books. Collins, in association with Michelin, are the publishers of this much loved series, enjoyed by children and adults alike since the 1940s. They are used primarily as a game but also to encourage children to discover the world around them and learn through facts, text and photos included in the book. Children gain points in the book as they spot things in the natural world. Once they've scored 1000 points, super-spotters can claim their official i-SPY certificate and badge.

There are a large number of titles in the series.



In terms of fiction the following books are well worth a read.

October, October by Katya Balen is a beautifully written, emotionally resonant story that explores themes of independence, connection, and the healing power of nature. The novel follows 11-year-old October, a girl who has lived most of her life in the remote forest with her father, away from the modern world. When an unexpected event forces her to leave her beloved forest and move to the city with her estranged mother, October must confront the challenges of adapting to a new life while holding on to her deep love for the natural world. I adore this book, possibly because I have always wanted to live like a wild child, deep in the forest!

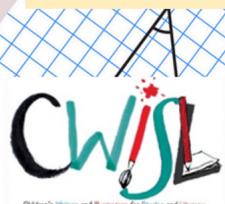


The book *By Ash, Oak and Thorn* written by Melissa Harrison is about a group of three small, ancient creatures—Moss, Burnet, and Cumulus. They emerge from their winter hibernation in the safety of their cherished ash tree home. But when the tree is destroyed, they embark on a journey to find others of their kind. Their adventure takes them from the remote countryside to the bustling heart of the city. Along the way, with help from birds and animals, the trio seeks a way to survive and flourish in a fragile, vanishing world.

A book with a map inside the front cover always draws my attention!

Nature-themed books allow children to explore the beauty and complexity of the world, often in ways that are engaging and interactive. When children read stories about animals in the wild or plants that change with the seasons, they begin to empathise with the living world around them. As they connect emotionally with the characters, whether real or fictional, children are more likely to develop a sense of care and respect for the creatures they encounter in their everyday lives, fostering a sense of responsibility toward the environment. So, books about nature don't just provide knowledge—they inspire action. Many children's books highlight themes like conservation, sustainability, and the importance of protecting our planet.

When we introduce children to nature through literature, we are doing far more than simply teaching them about plants, animals, and ecosystems. We are laying the foundation for environmental stewardship and a lifelong love of the natural world.



On Wednesday 13th November, Mrs Mansfield and I were proud to take a team of Northmead students to represent our school in a book quiz competition held at Tormead School. We competed against teams from many local schools including RGS, Kings College, Merrow Juniors, Holy Trinity, Guildford High.

It was a fun-filled afternoon celebrating books and reading.

Lia, Judah, Pippa and Noah M showed great knowledge, correctly answering lots of questions.

Between rounds we heard readings from a range of authors including Lucy Reynolds, Cath How, Mo O'Hara, Alice Hemming and Margaret Bateson-Hill. I am also pleased to announce that we won a visit from an author which will be organised later in the year.

It was also lovely to see some of our ex pupils representing Kings College, demonstrating that their love of reading hasn't diminished as they have got older.