

IMPROVING OUR
KNOWLEDGE OF
CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE

BY HAYLEIGH FARRANT AND LAUREN SMITH

CONTEXT

- We are currently third year students studying BA Primary education at the University of Greenwich.
- Prior to starting this course we both had very different experiences and opinions of reading: one very passionate and the other not having a particularly positive attitude.
- However, life experiences, in addition to this project, have motivated us both to explore children's literature further and to broaden our own knowledge and understanding.



OUR RESEARCH INSPIRATION AND RATIONALE

From the Reading for Pleasure project we chose to focus on the strand: *Teacher's knowledge of children's literature and other texts*. The Teachers as Readers (TaRs) research project found that the teachers involved had a very limited repertoire of children's authors, poets and picture fiction creators they were familiar with.

This inspired us to develop our own knowledge of children's literature so that we would be able to support children to build their own knowledge of a range of literature, as well as encourage them to read for pleasure.

Limited or insufficient knowledge may lead to teachers not being able to develop children as readers and foster reading for pleasure. This will in turn affect children's engagement and response as readers in school.

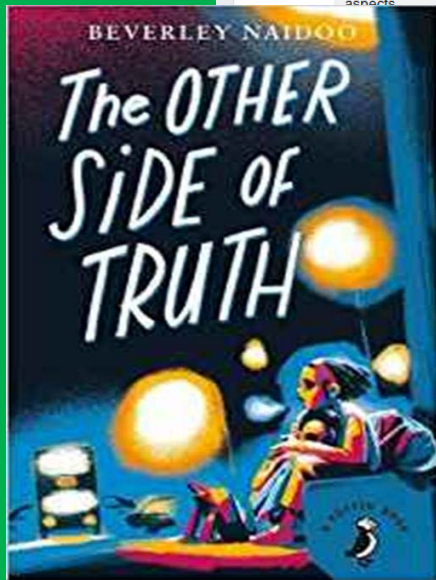
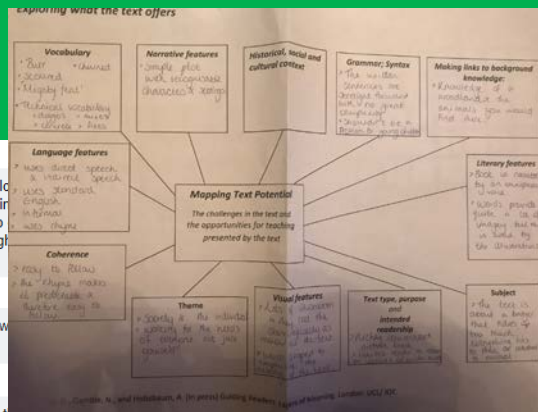
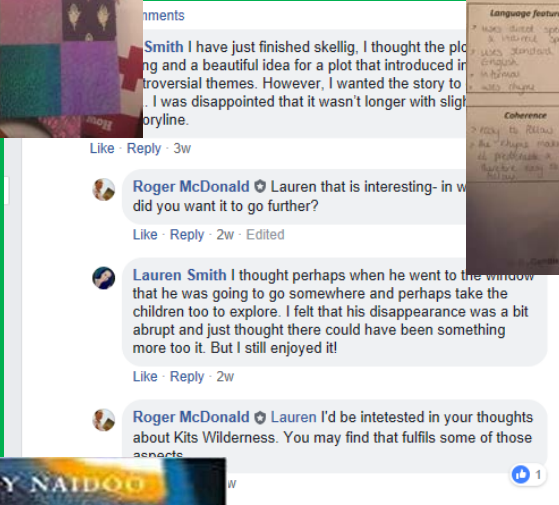


AIM

- Our main aim for this project was to extend our current knowledge of children's authors and so broaden the range of texts which we can use with children.
- We intend to do this by exposing children to a variety of texts and authors and thereby open their minds. We hope this will enable children to become enthusiastic readers.



OUTLINE

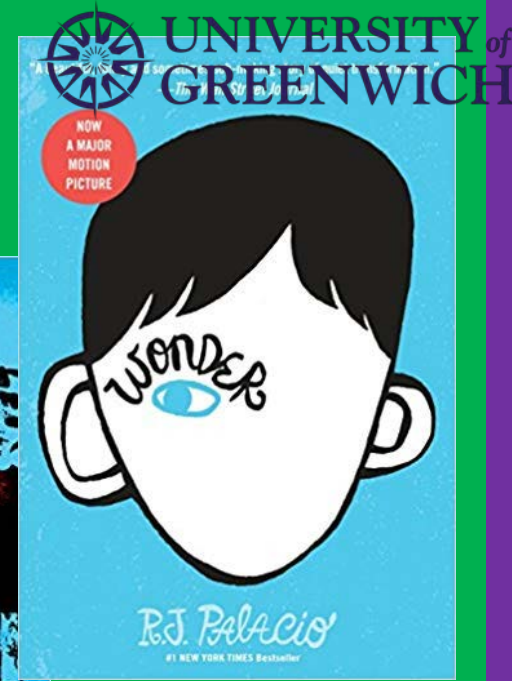
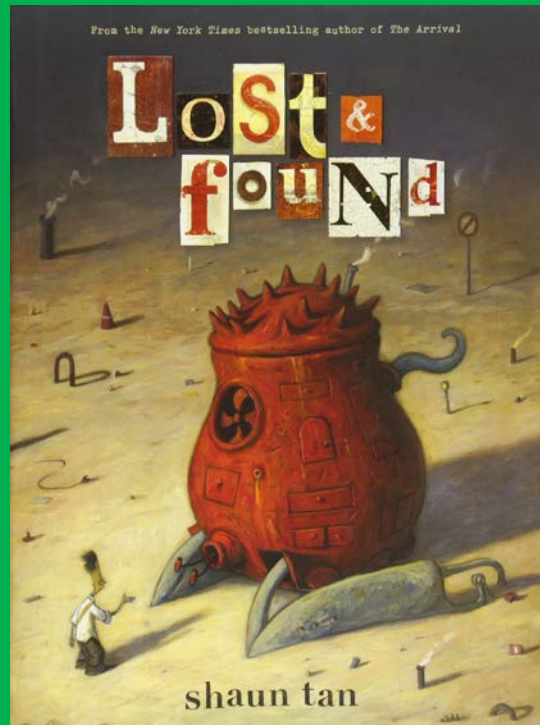


- To improve our knowledge we decided to...
- Participate in the reading community by discussing books online.
 - Read a children's book and study it in detail.
 - Go to the CPLE library to see what we could learn about children's literature across all genres, thus improving our knowledge of poetry, novels and picture books.
 - Look at one picture book and map all the possibilities that the text has to offer as a teaching and learning tool.
 - Consider our own history of reading to reveal what helped shape us as readers and also to clarify which texts we love enough to share with a class.
 - Fill in survey to find out which areas we should be looking at in order to widen our knowledge.

IMPACT

Actively aiming to improve our knowledge of children's literature has made us...

- Take an interest in books and become interested in reading titles that link to authors and topics we have covered in class.
- We are more aware of different books, authors and poets and illustrators working in a variety of genres. For example; Sean Tann and Gary Crew
- We are increasingly aware of the power picture books can have on older children. Studying just one picture in depth can give a large insight into the story and intentions of the author.



REFLECTION

- Through trying to develop our knowledge of children's literature we have been more and more interested in the topics and authors; making us want to read more.
- It has made us more aware of particular poets and illustrators and the powers that picture books can have, even with older children.
- Studying some of these texts in detail has alerted us to the variety of teaching opportunities a book can provide by studying just one small aspect in detail.
- This has also made us realise that there is a vast range of children's, and we will enjoy continuing to explore the different options for reading.
- Increasing our knowledge has given us many ideas for encouraging and enabling reading in classrooms – especially when teaching about difficult topics.