



BIRCH HILL
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY
Learn, believe, achieve together

Year 1

Reading list for families

September 2026

This year our Year 1 and Year 2 children learn together in mixed classes and share the same topics. This list brings together books linked to each half-term's topic, much-loved classics chosen for Year 1, and new books chosen by BookTrust for 2026–27.

How to use this list

Two kinds of book

Books for our topics

One set for each half-term

Year 1 favourites

Chosen by our teachers

New books for 2026–27

From BookTrust's Great Books Guide

Finding more books

Libraries and websites

How to use this list

Most of these books are for **sharing**: you read them to your child, or read them together. They are not the books your child reads on their own for phonics practice.

A book to read

Your child's school reading book is matched to what they can read independently, whether they are still on Read Write Inc. or have moved on. Read it two or three times to build speed and confidence.

A book to share

The books on this list can be well above what your child can read alone. Sharing them builds vocabulary, knowledge and a love of reading.

Mixed classes, shared topics

Year 1 and Year 2 children learn together this year, so the topic books are the same on both year groups' lists. Picture books and rhyming stories suit everyone; longer chapter books are best read aloud at this age. Let your child choose: children read more when they pick books they feel drawn to.

Tips for sharing a book

- Read with expression, and use different voices for the characters.
- Ask "What do you think will happen next?" and "How do you think they feel?"
- Read favourites again and again, and encourage your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Link books to what your child is learning: the topic books below are a great place to start.

Books for our topics

Each half-term our learning is built around a big question. Reading a book linked to the topic at home helps your child build knowledge and vocabulary, and gives you lots to talk about. Tap a title, where there is a link, to see its cover.

Autumn 1 Why did London burn?

Vlad and the Great Fire of London Kate Cunningham and Sam Cunningham

Vlad the flea and his friend Boxtan the rat watch the fire spread from Pudding Lane. A lively way into the events of 1666.

Toby and the Great Fire of London Margaret Nash and Jane Cope

Toby helps to carry water as the fire spreads, and meets Samuel Pepys. A short, easy-to-follow story.

The Great Fire of London Emma Adams and James Weston Lewis

A beautifully illustrated history of the fire, told day by day.

Sorry, Sammy Scott Rothman and Tom Tinn-Disbury

Sammy's robot has gone rogue, and the story is told through his letters. Hilarious, and great for spotting different kinds of writing. New for 2026–27.

Autumn 2 Should we remember Florence?

Florence Nightingale Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara (Little People, Big Dreams)

The story of the nurse who changed hospitals for ever, told simply for young children.

The Extraordinary Life of Mary Seacole Naida Redgrave and Alleanna Harris

The nurse from Jamaica who cared for soldiers in the Crimean War. Best read aloud together.

The Prince of Stars M. O. Yuksel and Zelma Firdauzia

The true story of a pioneering scientist from long ago: another significant person from history. New for 2026–27.

Simon Gets Sneezed Adam Kay and Henry Paker

Real science about how our bodies protect us, told by a piece of snot. New for 2026–27.

Healthy Me: Keeping Safe Katie Woolley

A simple information book about staying safe and well.

Spring 1 What makes us like other animals?

A First Book of Bugs Simon Mole and Adam Ming

Poems and facts about the brilliant jobs insects do, including helping plants. New for 2026–27.

Ant Life Moesha Kellaway

Part story, part information book about the busy lives of ants. New for 2026–27.

The Fact-Finders Ocean DK

Dive in to discover the oceans and the creatures that live there. A fact-filled, illustrated information book. New for 2026–27.

We Travel So Far Laura Knowles and Chris Madden

The amazing journeys animals make around the world, each told in the animal's own voice.

Tiny: The Invisible World of Microbes Nicola Davies and Emily Sutton

An information book about the microbes all around us, told with wonder.

Spring 2 Where does a plant come from?

Jasper's Beanstalk Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen

Jasper plants a bean and waits, and waits. Lovely for talking about how plants grow.

Oliver's Vegetables Vivian French and Alison Bartlett

Oliver discovers vegetables in Grandpa's garden.

The Flower John Light and Lisa Evans

In a grey city, Brigg finds a packet of seeds and something wonderful grows.

Fairytale Fiasco: Hansel and Gretel Evgenia Golubeva and Myles McLeod

A silly modern twist on the classic fairy tale, with short chapters and bright pictures. Read it alongside the original. New for 2026–27.

Summer 1 What would life be like if flight had never been invented?

Whatever Next! Jill Murphy

Baby Bear flies to the moon in a cardboard box rocket. A much-loved classic.

Sophie Takes to the Sky Katherine Woodfine

Sophie dreams of flying in the early days of aeroplanes. A short chapter book.

Amelia Earhart Caroline Crosson Gilpin

An easy-to-read biography of the record-breaking pilot.

The Search for Our Cosmic Neighbours Chloe Savage

Rockets, scientists and the search for life on other planets. New for 2026–27.

Summer 2 How would life be different if I lived in the Amazon?

The Great Kapok Tree Lynne Cherry

The animals of the rainforest whisper to a sleeping woodcutter, asking him to spare their tree.

The Kingdom of Tigers Felicity Yeoh and Megan Snyders

A tiger searches for a safe place to live as the jungle shrinks. New for 2026–27.

Year 1 favourites

Classic stories, fairy tales and first chapter books, chosen by our teachers for Year 1. Tap any title with a link to see its cover and find out more.

Picture books and modern classics

The Tiger Who Came to Tea Judith Kerr

An unexpected visitor eats everything in the house. Perfect for joining in and retelling. **Classic**

Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy Lynley Dodd

A bouncy, rhyming parade of dogs, and one very fierce cat. Great for reading with rhythm. **Rhyme**

Dogger Shirley Hughes

Dave loses his favourite toy, then spots it for sale at the school fair. A much-loved story of family and kindness. **Classic**

Where the Wild Things Are Maurice Sendak

Max sails away to an island of wild creatures and becomes their king. Wonderful for talking about feelings and imagination. **Classic**

Not Now, Bernard David McKee

Bernard's busy parents don't notice that a monster has taken his place. Short, funny and a brilliant one to talk about. **Classic**

Funnybones Janet and Allan Ahlberg

Three skeletons go out on a dark, dark night to find someone to scare. Repetition makes it great for joining in. **Classic**

Gorilla Anthony Browne

Hannah longs to see a real gorilla, and on the night before her birthday something magical happens. Pictures full of hidden detail. **Picture book**

The Detective Dog Julia Donaldson and Sara Ogilvie

Nell the dog sniffs out clues when all the school's books go missing. A rhyming celebration of reading and libraries. **Rhyme**

The Smartest Giant in Town Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

George gives away his new clothes, piece by piece, to animals in need. A warm story about kindness. **Rhyme**

Traction Man Is Here! Mini Grey

A toy action hero's daring adventures around the house. Full of detail to talk about. **Picture book**

Beegu Alexis Deacon

A little alien, lost on Earth, looks for a friend. Lovely for talking about feelings. **Picture book**

Handa's Surprise Eileen Browne

A walk to a neighbouring village in Kenya, and some very hungry animals.

Tyrannosaurus Drip Julia Donaldson and David Roberts
A duckbilled dinosaur raised by a T. rex family. Rhyming and very funny.

Fairy stories, traditional tales and myths

Magic Beans: A Handful of Fairy Tales from the Storybag Retold by authors including Michael Morpurgo, Philip Pullman and Jacqueline Wilson
Fourteen fairy tales, old and less familiar, retold by favourite children's authors. A story at a time makes a perfect bedtime read. [Collection to share](#)

Little Red Riding Hood Sam McBratney and Emma Chichester Clark
A gentle, beautifully illustrated retelling of the classic tale. Good for comparing with other versions.
[Traditional tale](#)

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith
The wolf tells his side of the story. Read it after the original and talk about point of view. [Tale with a twist](#)

Robin Hood and the Silver Arrow Tony Bradman and Tony Ross
Robin Hood enters the Sheriff's archery contest, knowing it's a trap. A short, lively legend to share.
[Legend](#)

Short stories and chapter books to share

Frog and Toad Are Friends Arnold Lobel
Short, gentle stories about friendship, ideal as your child's reading grows. [Short stories](#)

The Hodgeheg Dick King-Smith
A determined hedgehog sets out to cross a busy road. A first chapter book to share over several evenings. [Chapter book](#)

The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark Jill Tomlinson
Plop the baby barn owl learns that the dark can be exciting. A gentle chapter book to share. [Chapter book](#)

Poetry and information books

Poems to Perform Chosen by Julia Donaldson, illustrated by Clare Melinsky
Poems written to be read aloud with others, ideal for echo reading and learning by heart. [Poetry](#)

New books for 2026–27

Recently published books from BookTrust's Great Books Guide 2026–27 for children aged 6 to 7. Others from the guide appear in our topic lists above.

Picture books and funny books

Super Goat Girl Tracey Baptiste and Dapo Adeola

At her new superhero school, Super Goat Girl feels different from everyone else, until a playground emergency shows what makes her special. **Comic-style picture book**

Super Mega Tortoise Gareth Hopkins and Beatrice Blue

A tortoise who loves causing chaos learns a kinder way to have fun. Great for talking about saying sorry. **Feelings and friendship**

Magpie and the Sparkling Words Lucy Rowland and Craig Shuttlewood

Magpie keeps all the best words for herself, and the wood falls silent. A rhyming story about sharing, with a glossary of rich vocabulary. **Rhyme**

The Future Book Mac Barnett and Shawn Harris

A wonderfully silly look at what the future might hold. **Funny**

The Dangerous Pet Lover's Guide to Sea Monsters Lindsay Hirst and Alice McKinley

A pretend guide to keeping a sea monster as a pet, packed with details to pore over together. **Funny**

First chapter books and comics

Salty Dog and Pals: The Storm and Other Stories Helen Stephens and Katie Chappell

Four short, gentle stories about three friends, with colour pictures throughout. **First chapter book**

The Runaway Tortoise Holly Webb and Ocean Hughes

Ava's tortoise has gone missing. A short, warm story designed for beginner readers, in a dyslexia-friendly format. **Dyslexia-friendly**

Froggy Paige Walshe

A brave little frog sets out to explore the big wide pond. A funny comic-book adventure about friendship. **Comic book**

The Gumdrops: Quest for Bravery Elissa Elwick

Magical guardians create an imaginary friend to help Daisy settle into her new home. Colourful, quirky and full of humour. **Comic book**

Finding more books

You don't need to buy books to read widely. Joining the library is free, and children can borrow lots of books at once.

Your local library – free to join, with picture books, early readers and audiobooks, story times and the Summer Reading Challenge.

BookTrust Great Books Guide 2026–27 – 100 recommended new books across all ages.

booktrust.org.uk/book-recommendations/great-books-guide

BookTrust Bookfinder – search thousands of recommended books by age and interest.

booktrust.org.uk/book-recommendations/bookfinder

Read Write Inc. free eBooks (Oxford Owl for Home) – free eBooks matched to your child's phonics.

oxfordowl.co.uk/read-write-inc-home

Learn, believe, achieve together

Happy reading! If you would like more book ideas for your child, please ask their class teacher.

Birch Hill Primary School and Nursery, part of Maiden Erlegh Trust. September 2026.