



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

Year 6

Reading list for families

September 2026

This year our Year 5 and Year 6 children learn together and share the same topics. This list brings together our guided reading and class read texts, favourite stories chosen for Year 6, and new books chosen by BookTrust for 2026–27.

How to use this list

Reading together and alone

Books for our topics

One set for each half-term

Year 6 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

In Year 6, most children read confidently on their own, but sharing books is just as important as ever. Reading aloud to your child lets them enjoy stories and ideas that are a little beyond what they would choose alone.

Reading alone

Chapter books, comics, graphic novels and information books all build independence and stamina. They all count as real reading.

Reading together

Longer or more challenging books are lovely to share. Talk about characters' choices, new words and what might happen next.

Let your child choose

Children read more when they choose books they feel drawn to. Use this list as a starting point, and let your child explore different kinds of books: funny stories, mysteries, poetry and information books.

Year 5 and Year 6 children learn together this year, so the topic books are the same on both year groups' lists. **Guided reading** marks the book your child studies in class, **Class read** marks the book read aloud to the class, and **Writing** marks the model text for writing.

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 What can we learn from William Shakespeare?

Refugee Boy [Guided reading](#) Benjamin Zephaniah

Alem, aged fourteen, is left alone in London while his parents' countries are at war. Thought-provoking; best talked about together.

The Goldfish Boy [Class read](#) Lisa Thompson

Matthew, who rarely leaves his room, is the last person to see a missing toddler. A mystery with a lot of heart.

Mr William Shakespeare's Plays Marcia Williams

Seven of Shakespeare's plays retold as lively comic strips.

Will Shakespeare Mysteries: The Stinky Stolen Toenails Kaz Penney and Sammy Elgie

Young Will Shakespeare turns detective in this silly Elizabethan crime caper. New for 2026–27.

Autumn 2 How was life for children affected during the Battle of Britain?

Digging for Victory [Guided reading](#) Cathy Faulkner

Bonnie wants to be a wartime hero like her brother, and uncovers a secret. A Second World War story told in verse.

Once [Class read](#) Morris Gleitzman

Felix, a Jewish boy in wartime Poland, sets out to find his parents. Powerful; best read with an adult to talk it through.

Goodnight Mister Tom Michelle Magorian

Evacuee Willie Beech is sent to live with gruff Tom Oakley. A classic story of the Second World War.

Letters from the Lighthouse Emma Carroll

Evacuated to the Devon coast in 1941, Olive tries to solve the mystery of her missing sister. Superb historical fiction.

Dance of Resistance Catherine Johnson and Katie Hickey

The true story of Josephine Baker: dancer, star and Second World War hero. In a dyslexia-friendly format. New for 2026–27.

Spring 1 In what ways can rivers shape our landscape?

River Boy [Guided reading](#) Tim Bowler

Jess's grandfather is determined to finish one last painting by the river of his boyhood. A moving, mysterious story.

Holes [Class read](#) Louis Sachar

Stanley Yelnats is sent to Camp Green Lake, where the boys dig holes all day. Clever, funny and full of surprises.

Spring 2 What can we do to keep our body and mind healthy?

A Place Called Perfect **Class read** Helena Duggan

Violet moves to a town where everyone wears special glasses and everything seems perfect. A gripping mystery.

I Tell Myself I'm Awesome Joshua Seigal and Chris Piascik

Poems about every kind of feeling, playing with rhyme and form. Good to read aloud together. New for 2026–27.

Summer 2 **How can I make a change? How have I changed?**

The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse **Class read** Charlie Mackesy

Gentle conversations about kindness, courage and friendship. A lovely book to share as children move on.

The Giant's Necklace **Writing** Michael Morpurgo

Cherry collects shells on a Cornish beach as a storm comes in. A haunting short story, and our model for suspense writing.

The Shell Keepers Truly Johnston

A family of miniature people, and a story about activism and protecting the environment, woven together. New for 2026–27.

Year 6 favourites

High-quality books to read independently or share together. Your local library is a wonderful, free place to find them.

Stories to get lost in

Kensuke's Kingdom Michael Morpurgo

Washed up on a Pacific island, Michael discovers he is not alone. A gripping survival story about friendship and trust. **Classic adventure**

More books to try

- Skellig – David Almond
- The London Eye Mystery – Siobhan Dowd
- Rooftoppers – Katherine Rundell
- Brightstorm – Vashti Hardy
- Overheard in a Tower Block – Joseph Coelho (poetry)
- The Highwayman – Alfred Noyes (poem)

New books for 2026–27

Recently published books from BookTrust's Great Books Guide 2026–27 for 10 to 11-year-olds. Others from the guide appear in our topic lists above.

Moving on to secondary school

Finn's Epic Fails Phil Earle and Al Murphy

Finn's embarrassing first year at secondary school, told as a very funny illustrated diary.

Bím Blake's Hot Takes Tóla Okogwu and Ariyana Taylor

Eleven-year-old Bím's funny diary of starting secondary school.

Mysteries and thrillers

The Street Art Mystery Sharna Jackson

Friends follow graffiti clues across west London to solve a murder on the way to Notting Hill Carnival.

Avalanche Simon Fox

A thriller told almost in real time as an avalanche bears down.

Jamaal Target: PHANTOM Agent Isaac Hamilton-McKenzie

Jamaal suddenly has super strength, and his best friend has been kidnapped. A fast-paced thriller.

How to Steal the Future Christopher Edge

Drew must beat a maze of puzzles and dangers to save his sister. An interactive adventure.

The Ministry of Manners David Solomons

A chilling story of life under a regime where rules are everything.

Thought-provoking and spooky reads

The Night I Borrowed Time Iqbal Hussain

Zubair can travel in time, but fixing his family's problems has consequences. Funny and moving.

Birdlands Anthony McGowan

Three injured birds set out on foot on a journey they may not finish. About hope, friendship and survival.

Dracula & Daughters Emma Carroll

Three girls set out to find a vampire and save a life. Spooky and gripping.

Demon Hunters: Soul Feeder Jennifer Killick and Marina Vidal

A short, scary story in a dyslexia-friendly format, for readers who enjoy horror.

Non-fiction

From AI to Wi-Fi Craig Steele and Terri Po

How the internet and modern technology work, clearly explained.

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 books, audiobooks, eBooks 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

BooksForTopics: Year 6 recommended reads – 50 books chosen for 10 and 11 year olds.

booksfortopics.com

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.