



Robert Smyth Academy

Dear Parents/Carers,

Black History Month

In England, Black History Month was first celebrated in October 1987, as an opportunity to recognise the contributions of African and Caribbean people to life in Britain. People from these communities have been a fundamental part of British history for centuries. However, their value and contribution to society has been often overlooked, ignored, or distorted. Therefore, the aim of Black History Month is to recognise and understand the diverse contributions of these communities and to promote an appreciation of diversity through a broad education about the past.

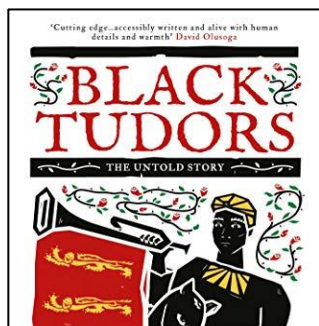
To meet this aim, we have carefully planned our curriculum to give students meaningful opportunities to learn about the importance of Black History Month and associated societal issues, in October. This will include:

- **PSHE lessons about Black History Month and society**
- **Media interpretations of the contributions of black communities to modern Britain**
- **Examples of significant black people from the worlds of politics, sport, music, business, the arts and the military**
- **A-Level History students will learn about the Civil Rights Movement, the experiences of African Americans following World War Two and opposition to the Jim Crow laws**
- **Key Stage 3 and GCSE History students will learn about a range of perspectives through their study of Elizabethan and Victorian Exploration as well as the Cold War**
- **Students have been set key reading homework including: 'Heroes of History' and 'A Medal for Leroy', based on the story of Walter Tull (available in the library)**

In addition to these opportunities, we will be amplifying the voices of black authors through our library. I am delighted to share this note from our Reading Coordinator, Mrs Coxon, who is a powerful advocate of diversity in our library.

Mrs Coxon (Reading Coordinator) recommends...

In all our library lessons during Black History Month, we will be introducing students to a great range of titles we have in our library which reflect the diversity of modern Britain and the contributions that black communities have made in literature and society.



'Black Tudors' by Miranda Kaufmann


This is a fascinating book about the *Black Tudors*, a hidden History.

From long-forgotten records emerge the remarkable stories of Africans who lived free in Tudor England. "That rare thing: a book about the 16th century that said something new." *Evening Standard*, Books of the year.



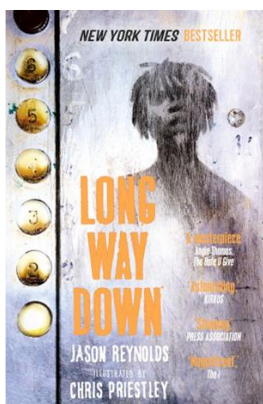
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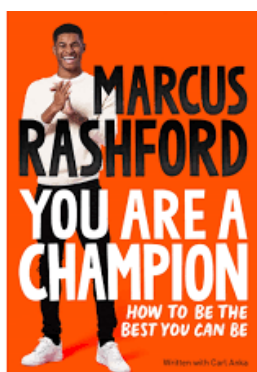
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'Long Way Down' by Jason Reynolds

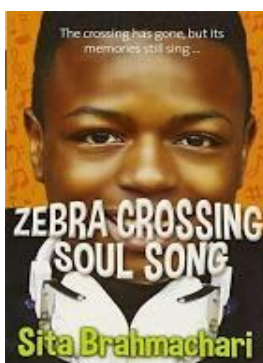
From the author:

"I hope young readers think deeply about the importance of decision making, and how often we make decisions that impact our lives in big or small ways. I also want us all to think about the idea of being haunted. When we say 'haunted', we always think of ghosts, anything that's ephemeral or abstract, but the truth is that all of us are haunted by something. Whether it be your parents' teachings, your education, the bad or good things that have happened to you, we're all being haunted".



'You Are a Champion: How to Be the Best You Can Be' by Marcus Rashford

Marcus Rashford (MBE) is famous worldwide for his skills both on and off the pitch – but before he was a Manchester United and England footballer, and long before he started his inspiring campaign to end child food poverty, he was just an average kid from Wythenshawe, South Manchester. Now the nation's favourite footballer wants to show you how to achieve your dreams, in this positive and inspiring guide for life.



'Zebra Crossing Soul Song' by Sita Brahmachari

Lenny has spent most of his life at the zebra crossing, and for many of those years Otis, the singing 'zebra man', has helped him on his way. But when Otis' sad past comes back to haunt him, Lenny is forced to face his crossroads alone. Only by examining the memories of their friendship can Lenny discover the truth...



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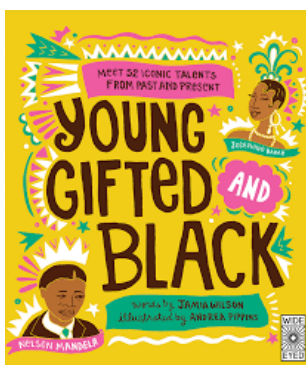


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'Rhythm Ride' by Andrea Davis Pinkney charts a road trip through Motown

Berry Gordy began Motown in 1959 with an \$800 loan from his family. He converted the garage of a residential house into a studio and recruited teenagers from the neighbourhood-like Smokey Robinson, Mary Wells, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, and Diana Ross-to sing for his new label. Meanwhile, the country was on the brink of a cultural revolution, and one of the most powerful agents of change in the following decade would be this group of young black performers from urban Detroit. From Berry Gordy and his remarkable vision to the Civil Rights movement, from the behind-the-scenes musicians, choreographers, and song writers to the most famous recording artists of the century, Andrea Davis Pinkney takes readers on a Rhythm Ride through the story of Motown.

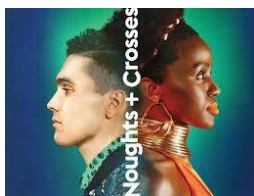


'Young Gifted and Black' by Jamia Wilson

All children deserve to see themselves represented positively in the books they read. Highlighting the talent and contributions of black leaders and change makers from around the world, readers will be empowered to discover what can be achieved.

The 52 icons include: Mary Seacole, Beyonce Knowles, Kofi Annan, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nina Simone, Simone Biles, Stevie Wonder, Nelson Mandela, Louis Armstrong, Rosa Parks, Naomi Campbell, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Muhammad Ali, Shirley Chisholm, Steve McQueen, Zadie Smith and Usain Bolt

Students recommend...



'**Noughts and Crosses**' by **Malorie Blackman** which was a summer reader for students. We had many favourable reviews and recommendations for this book such as:

'An excellent read, made me cry and laugh all at once. Amazing representation for people of colour and racism, a quote that portrayed this was 'Noughts and Crosses don't mix, boy.' The switching perspective gave a good insight into having diminished rights.' - Isla

'Overall, I think it is a very emotional and moving story of two people and how they battle racial prejudice and find love in the midst of it all.' – William



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Virtual Wellbeing Box

We are monitoring updates from Ofqual regarding summer examinations, and we will communicate these with students and parents once we know more about specific dates and times.

Students in the other year groups will not be provided with exam timetables, they will undertake assessments as part of their timetable, in lessons, during the Autumn Term. Class teachers will let students know when these assessments will happen.

Q. The 'RS1' bus service has been late this week. Does the school have a plan to improve this service?

Yes. We have contacted the bus company directly to address this situation and from Monday the new service will mean that students will be on time for school. We apologise for any inconvenience caused

Q. The change to 100-minute lessons has definitely helped compared with 2-hour lessons last year. Would it be possible to build in a short, cognitive break in the final lesson of the day to help us to focus?

Yes. This is something that we will be exploring further with teachers after half-term.

Parent Forum

I would like to thank the parents in attendance at our Parent Forum events last night. We are really grateful for the fantastic feedback, engagement, and discussions. The next opportunity for parents to attend one of these events will take place on **Thursday 26th January at 6.00pm.**

Reminders for the fortnight ahead:

- **Monday 3rd October:** Year 11 and 13 in-class assessment week
- **Thursday 6th October:** Year 7 Parents Evening 4-6.30pm (remote via School Cloud)
- **Wednesday 12th October:** Year 11 Careers Day
- **Thursday 13th October:** Year 7 Parents Evening 4-6.30pm (remote via School Cloud)
- **Thursday 13th October:** Year 7 Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre visit
- **Friday 14th October:** Year 7 Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre visit
- **Monday 17th – Friday 21st October:** Half term

Thank you again for taking the time to read this letter and for your ongoing support.

I hope that you have a good weekend.

Yours faithfully,

Dan Cleary
Principal



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