



Smith's Wood Newsletter - Autumn Half Term 1

Message from our Principal – Mr Huntington

Dear Parents and Carers,

In September we launched our new school values of Respectful, Ambitious, Resilient. If our students and staff can live these values every day, Smith's Wood will continue its rapid journey of school improvement from its position when I joined in March 2023. I am proud of the staff who have been working tirelessly to improve the quality of education which your child receives, and this community deserves. This has been reflected in the recent FMAT review which was followed by our first Ofsted monitoring visit. We received some very positive feedback from the Ofsted inspectors which acknowledged the progress that the school has made in a relatively short space of time. I look forward to sharing more details from this monitoring visit when we receive the official report.

We have had a strong push on punctuality and uniform this half term. Our gates open at 8.15am and students are expected to be in school at their tutor group line up by 8.30am. This allows for a positive and productive start to the day as students meet as a year group to receive any notices from their achievement leader before heading into their form room to begin their tutor activity. I am excited to see the impact of the tutor time reading programme which will begin after half term. Reading is such a crucial skill for all students. It allows them to access the curriculum and be successful at school and in life. Please do talk to your child about the books they are reading and encourage a love of reading. Your child will reap the rewards of this.

I am proud to see how smart many of our students look when they arrive at school every morning. They will be greeted at the gates with a warm and welcoming smile from a number of staff we have at the gates who will also check that all students are in the correct uniform. Click here for the [uniform policy](#) to see what we expect students to be wearing when they attend our school. Please could I bring to your attention to the section on jewellery and piercings. Please contact your child's tutor and Achievement team should you have any questions.

When walking around school and dropping into lessons I am delighted to see the high-quality learning taking place in a variety of classrooms. To ensure your child can learn effectively in a safe environment we have a behaviour system which rewards students who live our values of being respectful, ambitious and resilient, whilst aims to correct the behaviour of students who may be making poor choices. Please can I remind parents, carers and students that they can use the toilets before school, during breaktime and at lunch. Students should not be leaving lessons to go to the toilet during their lessons unless there is a medical reason to do so. To ensure students are giving themselves the best possible chance of being successful we need them to be in their lesson in front of their expert teacher every minute of every period of the day.

A huge well done to the many students who have taken part in house competitions and also attended our extra-curricular clubs. A strong set of GCSEs is important for a student, but as a school we also want your child to enjoy all aspects of school life. Part of this comes through getting involved with the opportunities outside of the classroom which we offer.

Have a safe and restful half term break. We thank you for your continued support in ensuring that Smith's Wood continues its journey of rapid improvement.

Mr Huntington

Upcoming Events

Friday 27th October – Autumn half term 1 ends
 Monday 6th November – Autumn half term 2 begins
 Friday 10th November – Y7-11 Flu vaccines
 Monday 13th November – Y11 Mock exams begin
 Tuesday 14th November - House Christmas Card competition - 3 - 4pm in CA3
 Friday 1st December – Parent-Principal Coffee Morning - 9.30 - 10.30am
 Thursday 7th December – Music concert – 6 – 7.30pm
 Friday 22nd December – Autumn half term 2 ends

Please see our lunch menu available from our school canteen - [Lunch menu](#) - We will be on the week 3 menu when we return to school on Monday 6th November.

Extra-Curricular Timetable

Day	Lunch – 1.20 - 1.55pm	After school – 3 – 4pm (unless stated)
Monday	Rock Band – Music Art Club – Y7 - CA3	Basketball – All Years – Gym Netball – All Years – Sports Hall Football – Y7 – Astro Art Club – KS3 – 3 – 3.45pm
Tuesday	Board Games Club – Y8 – Careers Zone IT Club – Y8 - W2	Football – Y8 – Sports Hall Fitness – All Years Eco Club – KS3 – H8 Rock Band – Y9-10 - Music
Wednesday	Rock Band – Music Board Games Club – Y7 – Careers Zone	Badminton – All Years – 4 – 5pm – Sports Hall Girls Football – All Years
Thursday	Practice Sessions – Music Chess Club – S5 Board Games Club – Careers Zone	Basketball – All Years – Sports Hall Choir – 3 – 3.50pm Badminton – All Years – 4 – 5 pm – Sports Hall
Friday	Maths Club – KS3 – S2 Languages Club – Y7 - W2	Year 9-10 Football – Sports Hall

We would love to hear what other clubs our students would like us to offer. These suggestions can be put forward to our School Leadership team to discuss our School Council meetings or students can speak to their Form Tutor and Achievement Team.

Attendance Focus

It is vitally important that all students have excellent attendance at school. Research indicates that even a few days of absence can impact negatively on students' performance. At Smith's Wood Academy, we are committed to working with students and parents/carers to achieve the school attendance target of **96%**. Your support in ensuring your child comes to school every day, demonstrating excellent punctuality is vitally important.

Attendance Expectations

- School is open from 8:15am in the morning and students can access the canteen and outside areas from that time.
- Students will begin line-up at 8:30am. The entrance gate will be locked at this time, students arriving after 8.30am will be marked as late, which will result in a detention.
- School will contact home if a child is not in school. This will be in the form of an MCAS message and potentially also a call to ascertain the reason for absence. The school's expectation is that parents/carers support the school by notifying us daily of any absence prior to 8:30am.
- We advise parents/carers to not take their children on holiday during term time and these requests to do so will not be authorised. Any requests should be made in advance and could result in a Penalty Notice from the local authority. There are 175 non-school days per year in which to book Holidays, appointments and shopping days.

Please see the table below which indicates the impact on learning time due to absence (this is based on the attendance for the whole academic year).

Attendance	Days Absent	Weeks Absent	Lessons Missed (1 hour each)
97%	6	1 week 1 day	30
94%	10	2 weeks	50
90%	19	3 weeks 4 days	95
85%	29	5 weeks 4 days	145
80%	38	7 weeks 3 days	190
75%	48	9 weeks 3 days	240
70%	57	11 weeks 2 days	285

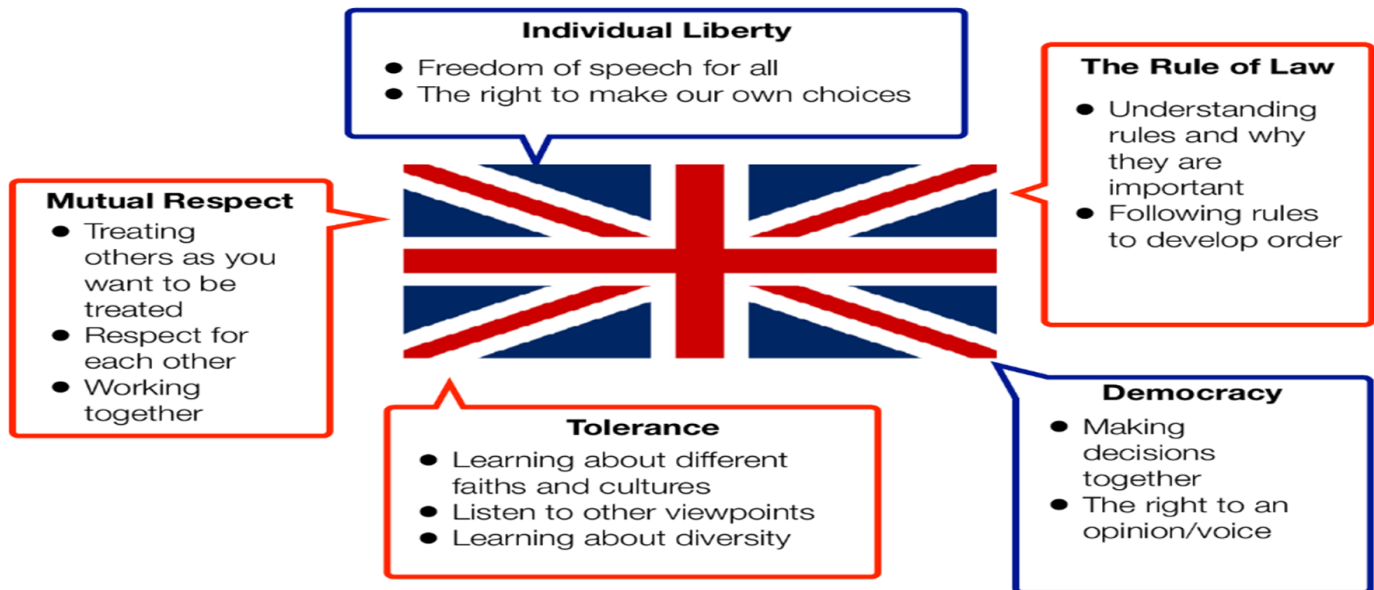
Please see the table below which shows the impact of being late to school by different amounts of time each day.

Minutes LATE Each day	Days Lost
5 Minutes late	3 Days Lost
10 minutes late	6.5 Days Lost
15 minutes late	10 days lost
20 minutes late	13 days lost
30 minutes late	19 days lost

Assembly Focus

Each week students will have an assembly with their year group. We cover a range of topics within our assemblies which aim to develop our students academically, pastorally and holistically. They are a fantastic opportunity for us to communicate our school values and bring the year group together as a community. Assemblies link to our British Values. Teaching British values to children improves their spiritual, moral social, and cultural (SMSC) development. British values underpin what it is to be a British citizen in a modern and diverse Britain and promote moral and cultural understanding that celebrates the diversity of the UK.

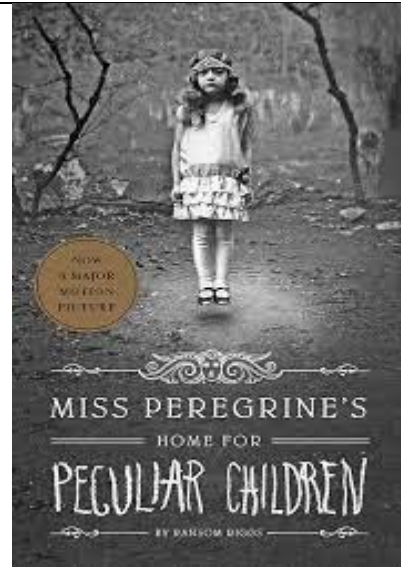
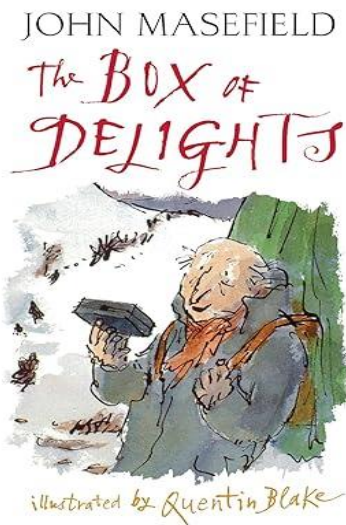
British Values



Assemblies during Autumn Half Term 1:

4/9/23	Welcome Back / Whole School Expectations	Mr Huntington
11/9/23	Expectations / Attendance / Year Ahead	Achievement Leaders
18/9/23	Anti Bullying	Mr Rose
25/9/23	Academic Achievement / Mindset / Study skills	Mr Friswell & Miss Odedra
2/10/23	Safeguarding	Miss Tucker
9/10/23	Anti Bullying & Attendance	Mr Martin
16/10/23	Black History month / British Values / Respect	Mrs Downing & Y11 students
23/10/23	Celebration Assemblies	Achievement Leaders

Book Club



Book Review – Mrs Razak, Teacher of English
Book Title - The Box of Delights

Author - John Masefield

Review - The book I am currently reading is The Box of Delights by John Masefield. If like me you enjoy reading about perilous adventures, magic and mythical figures then you will enjoy the story of Kay Harker. He is the protagonist who finds himself involved in a shocking crime which can only be stopped by a boy with a magical box!!!

Book Review - Mrs East, School Librarian

Book Title - Miss Peregrine's home for peculiar children

Author - Ransom Riggs

Review - When 16 year old Jacob Portman sees his grandfather mysteriously die, he decides to embark on a journey to find out just who his grandfather really was. This adventure takes Jacob to an eerie island, where he happens upon a home for peculiar children. Jacob realises that his grandfather wasn't mad after all, and he has more in common with him than he first thought!

This was an intriguing read with a few twists and turns. I particularly liked the real-life photographs that were included in the book, which had been found by the author. The whole story was created around these creepy photographs.

Recommend reading list

Students - [Year 11 books - a recommended reading list for 15 year olds \(schoolreadinglist.co.uk\)](http://schoolreadinglist.co.uk)

Parents/Carers - [BBC - 100 Books to Read Before You Die - Book Lists - LibGuides at Waukegan Public Library \(waukeganpl.org\)](http://BBC-100Books.com)

Bake off - House competition



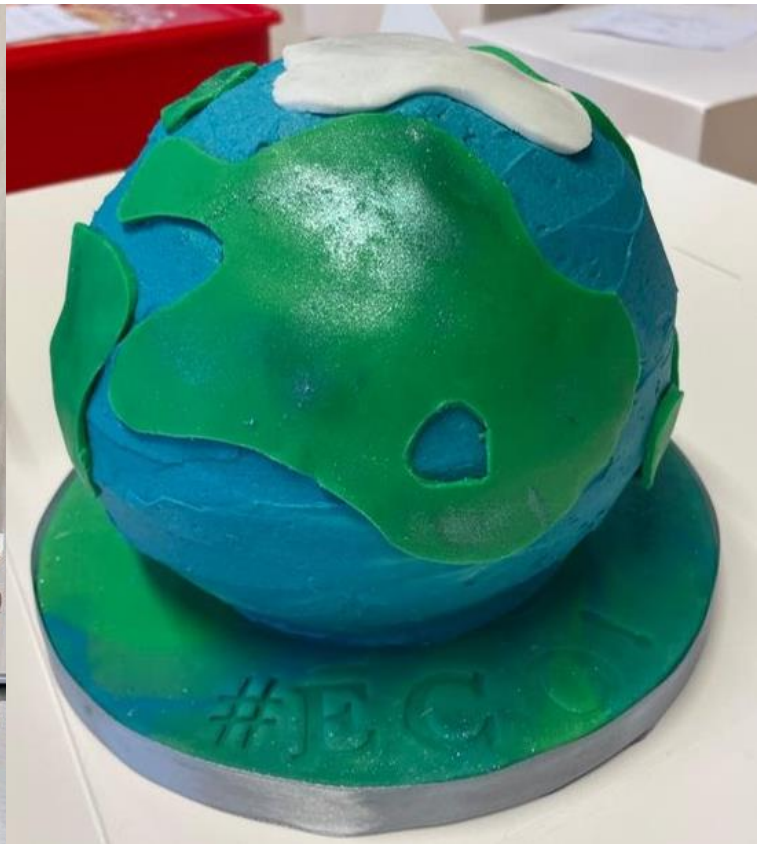
Staff Winner – Miss Beaumont – Parks House



Presentation Winner – Holly M – Hawking House



Taste Winner – Ellie T – Hawking House



Overall Winner – Grace B – Pankhurst House

Cross Country

This half term Smith's Wood students have taken part in 3 cross country events which were held at Park Hall, Langley and our own school fields at Smith's Wood. It was an excellent effort by all students and staff who took part through running the course or assisting in helping the event go smoothly.

Year 7 students:

Lilly-Anne L, Anfal A, Hla A, Saskai H, Lexi-Leigh S, Kasey M

Year 8/9 students:

Lola W, Leah J, Ousmane K, Jamie M, Arinze N, Hasan H, Nicolae B, Omar Y

Year 10/11 students:

Rebekah M, Kylie G, Caisey E

Student and staff volunteers:

Taegan T, Amaya T, Ellie T, Mr Barber, Miss Butcher, Ms Ellis, Mr Rose
Smith's Wood Academy – Year 8/9 boys – 2nd in the borough

There were some great individual performances across all three events which resulted in a strong team final position overall.



The county cross-country trials took place on Saturday 14th October at Himley Hall, Dudley. Smith's Wood students Rebekah M (Year 11) and Jamie M (Year 9) represented the borough of Solihull.

Hopefully, more of our selected runners will race for Solihull in the county championships on Saturday 20th January 2024 at Warley Woods.

Mr McIlwraith

Girls Football

The Girls Football team (Year 7, 8 and 9) took part in the local Satellite Football tournament held at Grace Academy and finished second place. The girls have made it to the next round, if they finish in the top two, they will go onto play in the finals.

All the girls played amazingly, worked well as a team, and scored some cracking goals! Well done, Girls!!"

Representing Smith's Wood were:

Grace B, Charlotte S, Emilia P, Summer B, Leah J, Eva C, Ruby S

Mrs Hamill-Moss

	W	D	L	Points	GS	GP
Lyndon A	3	2	0	13	12	5
Smithswood	3	0	2	11	8	5
John Henry Newman A	2	2	1	11	6	5
Tudor Grange Kingshurst	2	2	0	10	8	4
Grace Academy A	2	2	0	10	7	4
Park Hall A	2	1	2	10	4	5
Coleshill A	2	1	1	9	6	4
John Henry Newman B	1	1	3	8	4	5
Coleshill B	1	1	2	7	4	4
Lyndon B	1	0	4	7	4	5
Grace Academy B	0	0	4	4	0	4



Extra-curricular upcoming fixtures

Under 15 boys' Basketball league on Thursdays.

Matches currently scheduled on:

- 16th November (away at St Peter's)
- 23rd November (away at Tudor Grange Solihull)
- 30th November (away at Arden)
- 7th December (home v. John Henry Newman)

Year 7 Dodgeball on Tuesday 21st November at Grace Academy

Year 7 Netball skills on Tuesday 5th December at Tudor Grange Leisure Centre (1.30pm-3.45pm)

Year 7/8 Table tennis on Thursday 7th December at John Henry Newman

Year 9/10 Table tennis on Monday 11th December at Tudor Grange Solihull

Chess Championship

The inaugural Smiths Wood chess championships have been keenly contested with 22 hopefuls now down to the final two. The keenly anticipated final between John T (below) – Year 9 and Brayden B – Year 8 will take place on Thursday 9th November.

Students who would like to register for next term's tournament should sign up with Mr Trafford.



Year Group Focus – Year 7

It has been fantastic to see how well Year 7 have settled into life at Smith's Wood. We have been dropping into lessons and witnessed lots of our year group living the school values of being respectful, ambitious and resilient.

We will be working on two key areas next half term. Firstly, attendance. We want to work together to keep our attendance as high as possible. We know that the more our students are in school, the more successful they will be.

Our second area is school life. We want to ensure that our students get to experience all the positive benefits that come with moving up to secondary school. We have recently had our form and year group representatives selected by their peers. These students will go on to make key decisions which will help shape the school experience for the fellow students.

We have an exciting and extensive extra-curricular programme which we would encourage all year 7 students to take advantage of. Some of our Y7 students have already embraced some of these opportunities and been involved in the house competitions, such as the bake off. Some have represented Smith's Wood in sporting fixtures and attended various clubs. We look forward to attendance at these activities increasing next half term.

Next half term sees the introduction of our reading programme in tutor time. We hope this will help develop a love of reading across the year group.

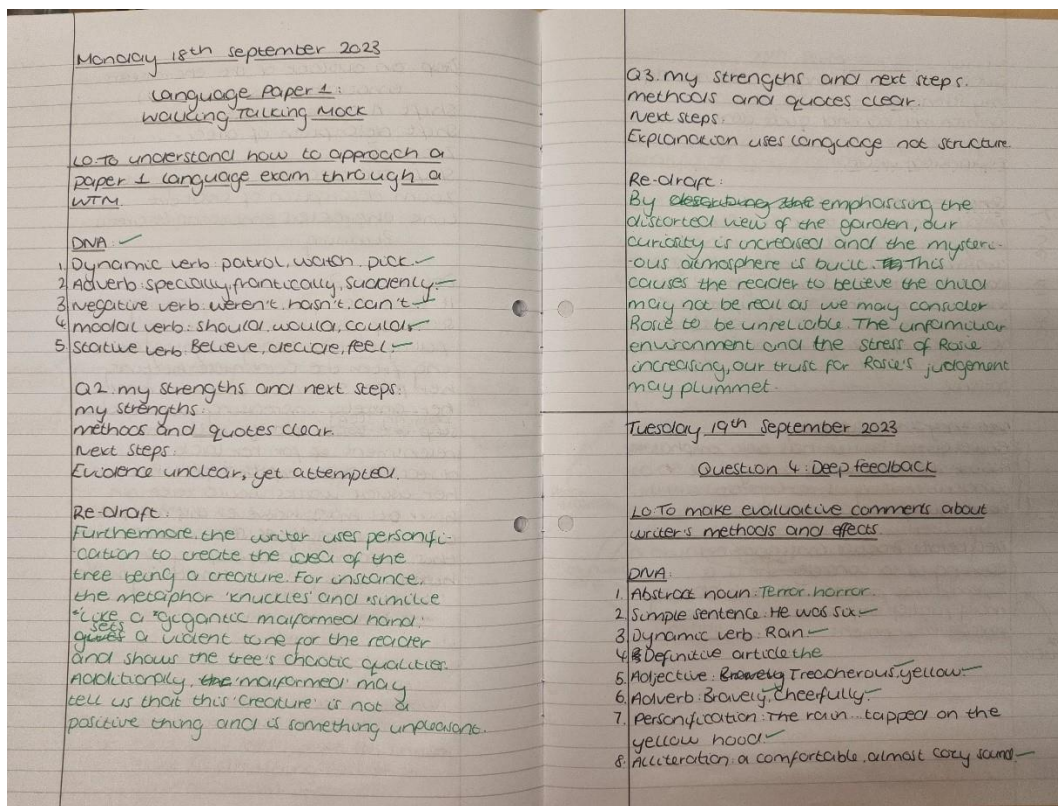
Mr Patterson & Miss Cliff (Achievement Leader & Assistant Achievement Leader – Year 7)

Subject Focus – English

English at KS4

This half term year 11 have been completing a set of walking talking mocks to prepare them for their year 11 mock exams in November. The year groups have been exceptionally committed and have set the gold standard for presentation in exercise books and rigour in lessons. They have sat practice mock papers in the exam hall to build their resilience and exam skills; this will help ensure they don't get nervous during the real exams.

Using year 11 books as the gold standard example, we will be setting high expectations for year 7-10 to follow suit and will share their great work with you. Well done year 11.



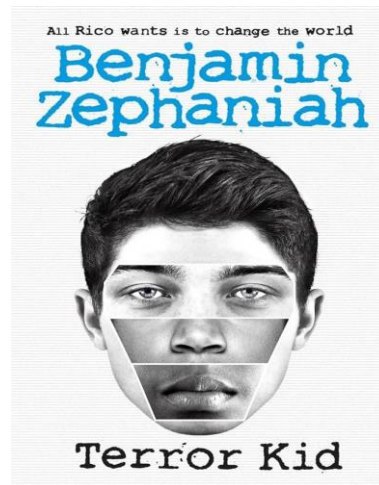
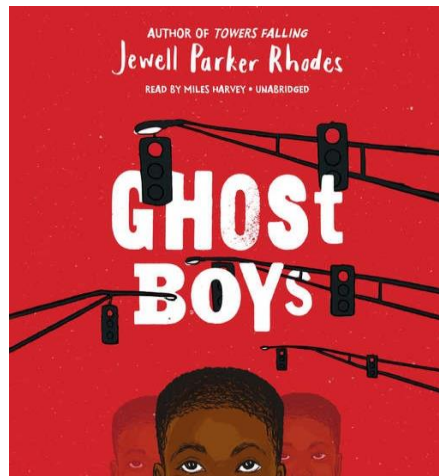
KS3: Reading Novels

One complaint we get as English teachers from parents is 'my child doesn't read!'. With the technological distractions all around us, it is difficult to ensure our children are reading whole novels. The benefits of reading Literature are well known: it increases student's vocabulary, comprehension and their understanding of the world around us. In English lessons we are committed to ensuring all KS3 classes read at least two full novels per year. See the books that students will be reading this year below:

Year 7:

'Ghost Boys' – a tale of a 12 year old African-American child who falls victim to police brutality.

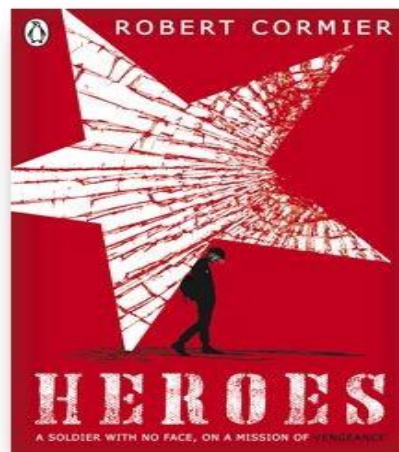
'Terror Kid' – a story about a young man who is tricked into committing a terrible crime – based right here in Birmingham.



Year 8:

'Heroes' – A story about a war hero who has a sinister secret; a tale of revenge and guilt.

'The Hunger Games' – a dystopian thriller where young people are used as violent entertainment. Katniss is our reluctant hero determined to save her sister. The first of three novels that we hope our students will want to continue reading in their own time.



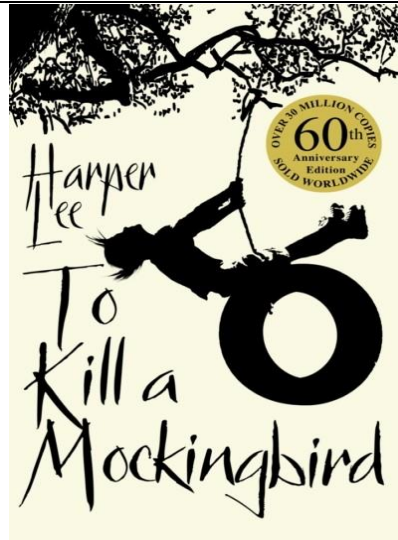
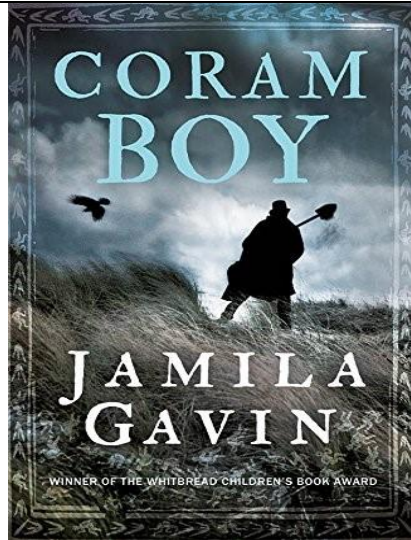
THE HUNGER GAMES



Year 9:

'Coram Boy' – A story that follows an orphan and his best friend; set in the brutal world of 18th C England when children were often treated poorly. This is a sad tale of triumph over evil.

'To Kill a Mockingbird' – a classic American novel based on a coming-of-age story with themes of anti-racism set during the Great Depression.



Mrs Roche (Faculty Leader – English)

You can find out more details about what we study in English and all other subjects at Smith's Wood [Curriculum Plans – Smith's Wood Academy \(smithswood.co.uk\)](http://smithswood.co.uk)

