

LGBT Book List



Primary Schools

This list contains a selection of books which feature LGBT voices and identities but is not meant to be exhaustive. The books were chosen as they are easily available and are good starters for conversations, activities and learning journeys around LGBT inclusion, equality and diversity.

With all books you read in class there are literacy activities you would, naturally, complete – discussion on content, thoughts and feelings of characters, context and relevance, new vocabulary, writing to match the style – and these are no exception. LGBT voices and identities should be discussed in schools from the start in order to allow our children to accurately understand the world around them; this is especially true if they have LGBT people in their family, or know, or are friends with people who do.

There are other activities which lend themselves easily to working with picture books in school:

- art - drawing panels for sections of the book which aren't illustrated, drawing your own version of characters as you imagine them citing evidence from the book, drawing parts of the book using different artistic styles
- drama – acting out sections of the book, or the before or after sections.
- music – adding sound effects or composing a score to go with the book, chapters or scenes

If you have any further recommendations, comments, questions or queries, please contact us at info@lgbtyouth.org.uk

NB. Some of these books are from North America and use American spelling for words like 'Mommy'.

Title	Author	Age	Content	Recommendations/Notes
Mommy, Mama and ME	Leslea Newman	Early Years	Rhythmic text and illustrations with universal appeal show a toddler spending the day with its mummies. From hide-and-peek to dress-up, then bath time and a kiss goodnight, there's no limit to what a loving family can do together.	This is a superb, simple day in the life of a young child who has two mums. You may want to do activities where the children learn actions to go along with words, or try to create their own ' day in a life of me ' book. It can also just be a lovely story book in which the child has two mums. Introducing this concept early, and as no big deal, is a really nice way of ensuring you establish an inclusive learning environment .
The Family Book	Todd Parr	Early Years – P3	The Family Book celebrates the love we feel for our families and all the different varieties they come in. Whether you have two mothers or two dads, a big family or a small family, a clean family or a messy one, Todd Parr assures readers that no matter what kind of family you have, every family is special in its own unique way.	A lovely book to introduce the concept of every family being different . It's inclusive and has a strong message of support and love. Loss is mentioned as well as same-sex parents . Overall though, this would be a book to use in work on understanding your own family and the families of the people around you.
And Tango Makes Three	Justin Richardson	P1-4	Roy and Silo are just like the other penguin couples at the zoo - they bow to each other, walk together and swim together. But Roy and Silo are a little bit different - they're both boys. Then, one day, when Mr Gramzay the zookeeper finds them trying to hatch a stone, he realises that it may be time for Roy and Silo to become parents for real.	This is probably the most famous children's book featuring LGBT content. It is currently the 3 rd most banned book in America and there are seemingly annual news articles about its use in American classrooms. There is so much you can do with this book. Scientifically , you could look at the life cycles of penguins, or the habitats of the Antarctic. You could look at the role of fathers in species' which differ from the human role (seahorses, frogs, clown fish etc). From a HWB point of view you could look at <i>parenthood</i> education and discuss what a human father is like. It could be a stimulus to discuss what type of care roles men normally inhabit. You could also use it to talk about a child's 'basic needs' and link this to the UNCRC and children's rights . It could be used as a basis to talk about what love is and what it means. You may wish to use it to discuss different types of family set ups – same sex, foster, grandparents etc.

Dad David, Baba Chris and ME	Ed Merchant	P1-4	This brightly illustrated book for children aged 5-10 years old tells Ben's story about his ordinary life. Ben was adopted by his gay parents – Dad David and Baba Chris, and they live happily together in an ordinary house, on an ordinary street and do ordinary things. When Ben starts junior school his ordinary life is turned upside down because some children begin to tease him because he lives with two dads. Now Ben is worried that he is not so ordinary anymore. Baba Chris and Ben's school teacher Miss Patel help Ben to understand that children live in all kinds of families and that what matters most is that children are loved and cared for.	A great book to talk about adoption , but also anger management and how words have power . You may want to focus on the fact that the parents are of mixed race rather than the fact it's two dads; that could just be secondary to the focus of your lesson/activity. If you were to focus on the emotional aspect you could do a session about what makes everyone special , and what commonalities everyone in the class has (they are all in your class for a start!).
The sissy duckling	Harvey Fierstein	P1-4	This is a heart-warming tale about learning to embrace the special qualities we possess. Instead of building forts and playing sports like other boy ducklings, Elmer wants to bake cakes and put on the halftime show. He is great a big sissy. But when his father is wounded by a hunter, Elmer proves that the biggest sissy can also be the greatest hero.	Another book which looks at both gender stereotyping and what it is to be special . Scientifically you could use this within a sequence about migratory birds and discuss what really would happen to ducks left behind. You could also use it to unpack the bullying incidents in the story and the resolution to the relationship between Elmer and Drake – is it realistic? You could also use it to look at father/son relationships .
William's doll	Charlotte Zolotow	P1-4	William wants a doll - to hug, to feed, to tuck in, and kiss goodnight. "Don't be a creep, " says his brother. "Sissy, sissy, " chants the boy next door. His father buys him trains and a basketball - but not the doll that William really wants. Then one day, someone comes along who understands why William should have his doll.	There are bullying incidents in this story which are never really resolved – it could easily be used to set up a scenario in which your class unpack what should have/should happen with the brother and his friend. You could also use it to discuss building life skills – men need to be able to care too, especially if they become fathers, but also brothers, uncles etc. A good activity might be to update this story – it was written in 1972 – what terminology might be used now? (This could get into the use of the word 'gay' as an insult so you need to be ready to confidently explain how inappropriate that is). How do children learn about being

				parents in the 21 st century if not from playing with dolls? How do boys learn about being fathers? What role models do the boys in your class have?
Two Dads:	Carolyn Robertson	P1-4	Having Two Dads is double the fun! Many families are different. The family in this story has Two Dads. A beautifully illustrated, affirming story of life with Two Dads, written from the perspective of their adopted child. Two Dads is a book about LGBT parents and adoption.	The simple narrative and illustrations depict just how very normal LGBT families are. It is a funny and tender representation of family life. This story is a very accessible story of adoption and parental love . It is poetic and easy to follow – an extended writing task might be to use this as a base for the children to write the own rhyming poem or story about their own family and what their parents do which is special.
No More Kissing!	Emma Chichester Clark	P1-P4	Why does there have to be so much kissing? That's what Momo wants to know. Everyone's kissing boo-boos, kissing babies, and worst of all, kissing him. So he decides to put an end to it. "No more kissing!" he declares. But when Momo gets a little brother, will he be able to follow his own rule?	A book which introduces the concept of affection but also consent and personal space . You could also use it to discuss masculinity (in broad terms) and whether boys and girls show the same affection and are shown the same affection by adults – why? Why not?
Oliver Button is a sissy	Tomie dePaola	P1-P4	Oliver Button is a Sissy, a children's picture book written and illustrated by Tomie dePaola, is the story of a boy who stands up to bullies, not by fighting, but by staying true to himself. The story, based on the childhood experiences of Tomie dePaola, is a simple one. Oliver Button doesn't like sports like the other boys do. He likes to read, draw pictures, dress up in costumes, and sing and dance.	A book full of bullying incidents which you could certainly use to discuss what Oliver Button could have done and if such behaviour happened in your school. A good activity is to ask the class to imagine what it would be like if Oliver Button joined your class – who would he be friends with? Why? This could be acted out – hopefully with more kindness than in the book! You could talk about activities which are ' cool ', what makes them 'cool' and what it means for people who don't like that?
Hello, Sailor	Ingrid Godon	P1-P4	A moving story of hope and friendship. Matt lives in a lighthouse. He watches the sea every day...for ships and for his friend, Sailor. Matt is so forlorn that Sailor has gone away that he almost forgets his own birthday. But, his friends say Sailor will never come back, but Matt doesn't give up	This book can be used as a conversation starter about keeping secrets and why that's difficult when it's about who you love . You could ask what your class thought the relationship of Matt and Sailor was, and what the villager's might have thought their relationship was. You could talk about historically how same-sex relationships were kept secret and denied and now are more open (at least in some areas) and note celebrity couples like Tom Daley and Dustin Lance Black,

			hope. And, after his birthday party is over, his patience is rewarded, when Sailor finally returns.	Ellen Degeneres and Portia DiRossi, Elton John and David Furnish.
Felicia's Favorite Story	Leslea Newman	P1-P4	It's bedtime, but before Felicia goes to sleep she wants to hear her favorite story, the story of how she was adopted by Mama Nessa and Mama Linda. And so Felicia's parents tell her how they flew off in a big silver airplane to meet the baby girl who was waiting for them, and how they loved her from the very first moment they saw her.	If you were looking at South America , this story would fit into that context. It's also a fun starter if you are looking at the meaning of names . Overall, it's another great book looking at adoption and same-sex parents .
My Princess Boy	Suzanne DeSimone Cheryl Kildavos	P1-P4	Dyson loves pink, sparkly things. Sometimes he wears dresses. Sometimes he wears jeans. He likes to wear his princess tiara, even when climbing trees. He's a Princess Boy. Inspired by the author's son, and by her own initial struggles to understand, this is a heart-warming book about unconditional love and one remarkable family. It is also a call for tolerance and an end to bullying and judgments. The world is a brighter place when we accept everyone for who they are.	This book is the most direct in addressing the fact that some children express gender differently from how society expects them to. The book itself directly asks: will you laugh at him? Will you call him a name? Will you play with him? Will you like him for who he is? This book will introduce children to (probably) new ideas and you should be ready to talk about the fact that some children identify more with a different gender than the one they are assigned at birth. The real question to ask with this book though is – how does it affect you? They may feel uncomfortable seeing a boy in a dress, but why is that? What impact is that child's behaviour having on them?
The Princess and the Treasure	Jeffrey A Miles	P3-7	In the magical kingdom of Evergreen, beautiful Princess Elena is suddenly whisked away by an old woman. Undeclared champion Gallant and shy bookworm Earnest go on a quest to find "the greatest treasure in the land" so one of them can save and marry the princess. Along the way, Earnest and Gallant realize "the greatest treasure in the land" is not what they expected. (It's the love they have for	This book follows all the major tropes of a ' fairy tale ', especially as a quest. This does, however, also mean there is some sexism and negative reinforcement of beauty stereotypes. Specifically the role of the princess being an object to be won, or given away by her father and the ugly witch (who is bad) turning into a beautiful enchantress (when she is good). This doesn't mean this book doesn't have merit – the quest Earnest and Gallant go on is full of lessons in rational thinking, fears, teamwork and competition and the story itself is, other than the two boys falling in love, very standard.

			each other)	The easiest way to get maximum impact from this tale is to read up the point where they both lift the cup (the final treasure) and get your class to write the end , having already looked at how fairy tales are written. Your class will almost certainly have the princess picking one of the boys for one reason or another, or have the king do it, or, commonly, the boys have to fight for her hand in marriage; it would be great if someone did write the boys fell in love, but either way, finish the story and have the discussion about why it was a surprising ending.
Bill's New Frock	Anne Fine	P4-7	A classic children's story from one of our best-loved authors, former Children's Laureate Anne Fine. Bill Simpson wakes up to find he's a girl, and worse, his mother makes him wear a frilly pink dress to school. How on earth is he going to survive a whole day like this? Everything just seems to be different for girls . . . Anne Fine's fun school stories have been delighting children for more than 20 years, winning her awards such as the Smarties Book Award and Carnegie Medal along the way.	This book, when it first appeared, was read for laughs: as a joke. There are still scenes which are funny and will garner laughs from your class but these can also be used a learning opportunity to discuss gender norms and gender stereotyping . You could use this book to get the class to think about gendered objects and activities, talk about their comfort levels around them and challenge stereotypes . Historically , you could use this when looking at when women started wearing trousers and arguments which were made against them doing so. You could use this as a starter for their own piece of writing about waking up in a different body – not necessarily a different gender, though if they did you'd need to address any discriminatory concepts they included, if any – and what challenges they'd face. (A particularly interesting one to do is waking up in the body of a teacher – it really shows what your class thinks you do all day!)
The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler	Gene Kemp	P4-P7	Wherever best-friends Tyke Tiler and Danny Price are, there is usually trouble - stolen money, a sheep's skeleton, fights in class - and it's usually trouble that Tyke has to sort out. Their last term at Cricklepit Combined School is full of the usual fun and madness, but then Tyke learns that much more is at stake. Is it possible to keep hapless Danny out of trouble? And what final surprise does Tyke have in store?	This is a fantastic book to read with your class. A great activity to do is to use it to build a story board – have the children sequence events and draw pictures to match. As the big reveal isn't until the last page (Spoiler alert) – that Tyke is a girl – the majority of your class will more than likely draw her as a boy owing to her ' masculine ' behaviours. Not only is this a great way to discuss writing twists in your stories but you can also use it to discuss stereotyping, gender and gender expectations . More generally you could use the book to look at rules, behaviour and the impact on learning.

			Mischief and astonishment abound in this hilariously funny classic story from award-winning author Gene Kemp.	
Two Weeks with the Queen	Morris Gleitzman	P6 – S2	<p>'I need to see the Queen about my sick brother.'</p> <p>Colin Mudford is on a quest. His brother Luke has cancer and the doctors in Australia don't seem to be able to cure him. Sent to London to stay with relatives, Colin is desperate to do something to help Luke. He wants to find the best the doctor in the world and visits the best cancer hospital in London. There he meets Ted, whose lover Griff has AIDS. Colin is determined to ask the Queen for her advice.</p> <p>Fast paced and sensitively written and very funny.</p>	<p>This book touches on a lot of issues affecting young people today. It can be looked at to a view of discussing terminal illness which affect children, role reversal and child carers, dealing with grief and anger and HIV/AIDS. This is done sensitively and appropriately but it is <i>vital</i> you read the book first and are thoroughly prepared to talk about the messages in the book and how you are going to present them to your class. Remember, for many children this may be the first time mortality, loss and terminal illness have been brought up and that these issues can be distressing.</p> <p>You can use this opportunity though to discuss the myths and stereotypes around people with HIV/AIDS and challenge outdated and discriminatory messages. There is also an incident of a character being physically attacked because he is gay; this can be used as a learning opportunity to show where prejudice can lead if it is unchallenged. While it may sound very depressing, and in some ways it is, this is a worthwhile, memorable and enjoyable book if presented correctly and discussed openly and fully.</p>