



We hope that you and your family had a lovely Christmas break. As the new year begins, we have collated a range of books that cover a range of reading ages and topics of interest which your child may like to read.

As usual, we're delighted to be collaborating with two fabulous authors to give you an even wider selection of book recommendations. You and your child can watch Darren Simpson and Phil Earle talk about their suggestions by using your phone to scan the QR code next to their photos.

With the wide variety of books showcased here, we hope that you may be able to select some that your child might enjoy as we approach the festive season.

Please note that unless otherwise stated, the texts are suitable from Year 7 and up, but please do research/read the books before selecting them to ensure that they are appropriate for your child.

In addition to exploring the books mentioned in this newsletter, you can encourage reading in other ways too. For example:

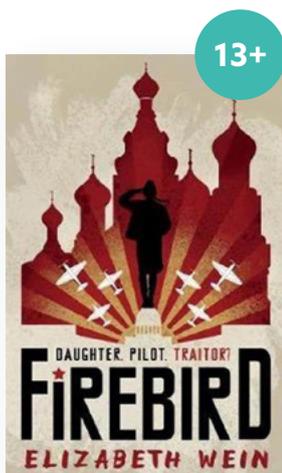
- Find out what your child is curious about, or takes an interest in, and look at books around these topics.
- If your child struggles with reading and this poses an obstacle to their enjoyment, explore the blurbs of books and select a couple to try on audiobook. You can often borrow these for free from your local library too.
- Support your child with reading for purpose. You could read recipes and cook some of these over the Christmas break.

Whatever you and your child choose to read, we hope you enjoy it and we wish you a great start to 2023!

SHORTER-LENGTH READS: Accessible Novels With Dyslexia-Friendly Font And Engaging Stories**Firebird**

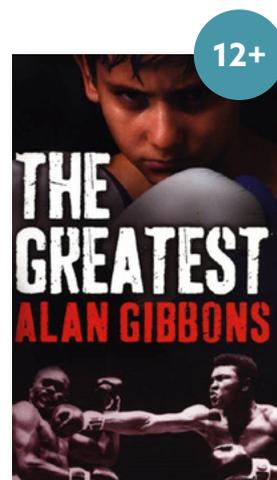
ELIZABETH WEIN

Nastia is no traitor. She is a daring pilot, the daughter of revolutionaries, and now, as the Second World War descends on Russia, she must fight to save the glorious Motherland. But all is not as it seems, and when the battles begin, secrets are revealed and everything that she once knew is challenged...

**The Greatest**

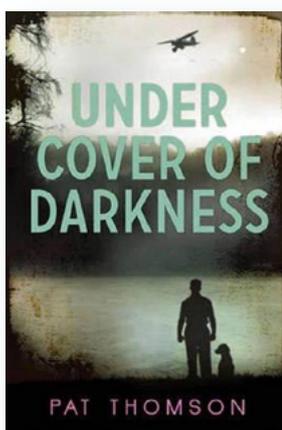
ALAN GIBBONS

When Ali's bike is stolen by a local bully, he turns to the story of Muhammad Ali for inspiration – the greatest boxer of all time, inspiring the fight of Ali's young life. A brilliant read about standing up to bullies and overcoming the odds.

**Under Cover of Darkness**

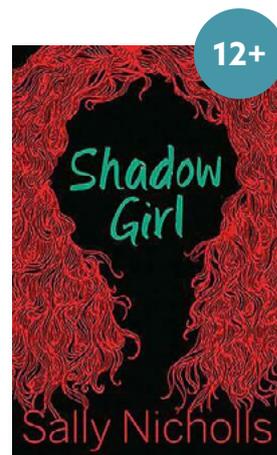
PAT THOMSON

The Nazis have occupied France. Michel knows that there are Resistance fighters in his town and he's desperate to join them. Will his mother agree to it? After all, with his father AWOL, she needs a man around the house. But when someone's injured, Michel gets his chance. Can he help without being shot by the Nazis?

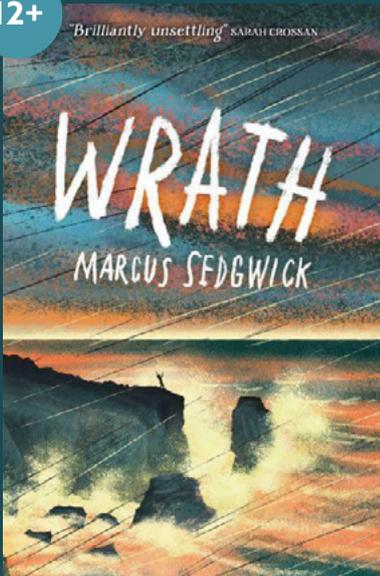
**Shadow Girl**

SALLY NICHOLLS

Clare knows she's at least partly to blame for her problems at school, but she's learned that it hurts to make friends when you're a foster kid and you'll just be moved on again. It's a relief to meet Maddy, who knows exactly what it's like to be in the system. But then Maddy disappears. Clare has opened her heart at last, and she can't let it go – will she find her friend?



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Wrath MARCUS SEDGWICK

Cassie Cotton has always been unusual, a bit different – but this only makes her more intriguing to her classmate Fitz. Cassie can hear a noise that most people don't notice or recognise, and she believes it's a sound that shows the Earth is in distress, damaged by human activity that is causing climate change. When this belief leads to her being ridiculed and bullied at school, Cassie disappears. Fitz is determined to find her, but he has no idea where to start looking, or if he'll be in time to help her...

To watch Marcus talk about Wrath, scan the QR code here:



Survival in Space: The Apollo 13 Mission DAVID LONG

April 1970: Apollo 13 was launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. It should have been the third manned Apollo mission to land on the moon. But when an explosion on board damaged the spacecraft, it became a perilous and near-impossible fight for survival. The crew on board travelled further into space than any other humans before them ... In this gripping retelling of the astonishing Apollo 13 mission, David Long shows how courage, determination and teamwork succeeded in beating all odds to bring the spacecraft home.

PHIL EARLE RECOMMENDS...

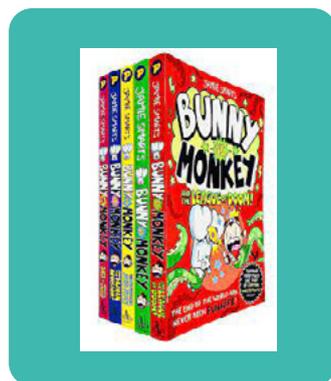
Struggling to get into reading? Have you tried graphic novels?

This half-term, award-winning author, Phil Earle, shares his experience with finding reading difficult and how he got into reading: comic books and graphic novels. To watch his video, and hear his recommendations, scan the QR code:



We are delighted that award-winning author Phil Earle is a PiXL Reading Ambassador this academic year and is sharing his book recommendations and tips for reading. Despite finding reading difficult when he was younger, Phil has gone on to write many incredible books; his most recent novels are *When the Sky Falls* and *While the Storm Rages* and these have been extremely popular.

Looking for something funny?



Like superheroes?



Please note that whilst Phil's message is appropriate for all ages - that comic books and graphic novels are still a form of reading - some of these recommendations do contain adult themes and parents should read or research these books to ensure that they are suitable for their child. These ages are a guide and every child is different.

Want to explore more serious topics?

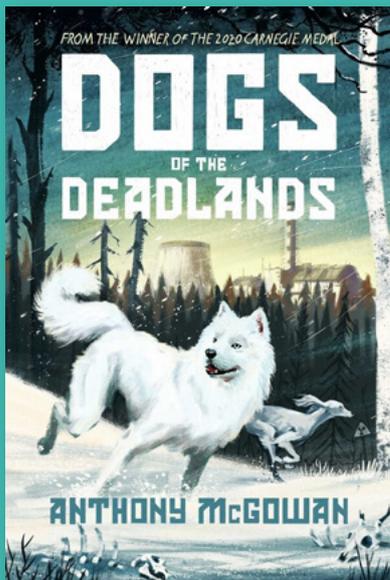


LONGER-LENGTH READS

Dogs of the Deadlands

ANTHONY MCGOWAN

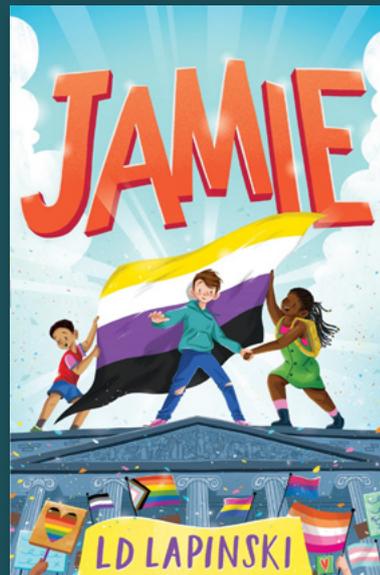
The world is coming to an end. Dragged from her bed in the middle of the night and forced to leave her beloved puppy behind, Natasha has no idea if she'll ever return home. Growing up in the shadow of the ruined nuclear power plant, pups Misha and Bratan need to learn how to live wild – and fast. Creatures with sharp teeth, scythe-like claws and yellow eyes lurk in the overgrown woods. And they're watching the brothers... But will the dogs survive without humans? And can humans live without them?



Jamie

L.D. LANINSKI

Jamie Rambeau is a happy 11-year-old non-binary kid who likes nothing better than hanging out with their two best friends Daisy and Ash. But when the trio find out that in Year 7 they will be separated into one school for boys and another for girls, their friendship suddenly seems at risk. And when Jamie realises no one has thought about where they are going to go, they decide to take matters into their own hands, and sort it all out once and for all... A beautiful and uplifting new story from L.D. Lapinski about making your own place when the world doesn't provide one for you.



The Magic of Endings

TOM AVERY

Jojo Locke's dad disappeared six years ago. And what's stranger still, none of his family can really remember him, there's a hole inside each of them where Dad should be. But then Aunt Pen arrives, a real faerie, with her tricks and wishes. She tests Jojo to see how deep his courage runs and sets him off on a journey to find their memories of Dad, and an adventure far beyond what he could have imagined begins.



A Million to One

ADIBA JAIGIRDAR

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Four friends have stolen aboard the Titanic. They're after the Rubaiyat – a book inlaid with priceless jewels. Josefa is a charismatic thief, Hinnah a daring acrobat, Violet an outstanding actress and Emilie a talented artist.

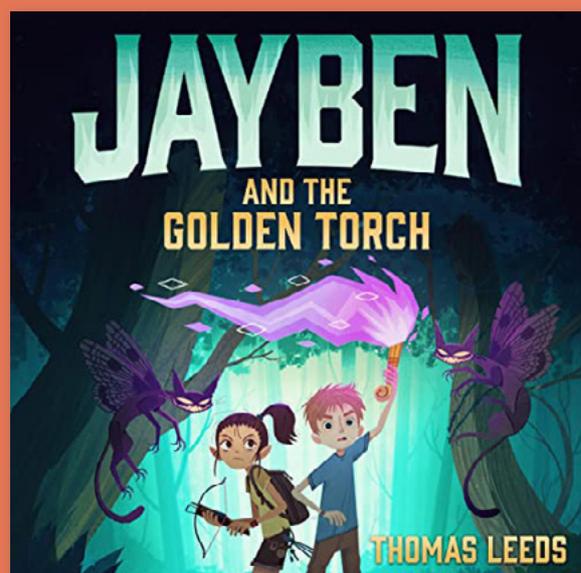
Adiba Jaigirdar gives Titanic an Ocean's 8-style makeover in this nail-biting heist, set onboard the infamous ship.



Jayben and the Golden Torch

THOMAS LEEDS

Jayben discovers that many moons ago, a giant put a dark spell on the golden torch, and the elves forgot everything that had come before. Now they hang precious memories in jars on trees, just to try to remember. But a new darkness grows among them: an evil villain called Null is burning down the forests, hellbent on finding the torch and becoming the most powerful being ever to live...





21% Monster: Ice Giant

P.J. CANNING

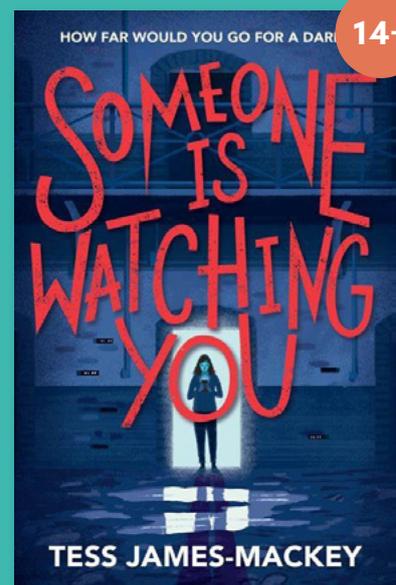
The second action-packed installment in the 21% Monster series. Since Darren Devlin and Marek Masters joined forces, there has only been one thing on their minds – taking down XSP, the secret organisation that transformed them into genetically-modified superhumans. Even with 21% monster Darren’s incredible strength, and 19% alien Marek’s super intelligence, XSP is more than a match for them. But what if there was another survivor of XSP’s experiments? A tall, tough, athletic teen girl able to withstand sub-zero temperatures and track potential predators? A girl who’s 17% sabre-tooth polar bear, and out for revenge...

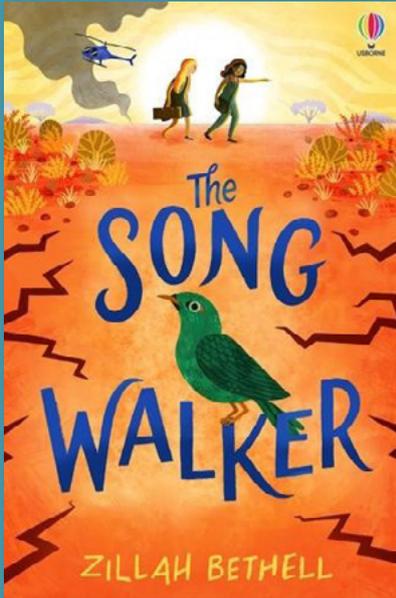
Someone is Watching You

TESS JAMES-MACKEY

PRE-ORDER FOR FEB 2ND RELEASE

How far would you go for a dare? Nia would do anything to win the approval of her boyfriend Scott and his friends, especially mean girl Olivia. Olivia dares Nia to explore an abandoned prison. Facing dark tunnels, distant noises and creepy mementoes left behind by incarcerated criminals will surely all be worth it to finally become part of the group. But it isn’t long before Nia and her little sister, Kayla, find themselves trapped inside. And then Kayla vanishes. Suddenly, this feels like more than a game gone wrong. There is a horrifying secret hidden within the prison’s walls – and now someone is hellbent on making sure Nia and her little sister become its last inmates...





The Song Walker

ZILLAH BETHELL

PRE-ORDER FOR FEB 2ND RELEASE

When a young girl wakes up in the middle of the desert, she has no idea who she is. She's wearing one shoe, a silky black dress, and she's carrying a strange, heavy case. She meets Tarni, who is on a mysterious quest of her own. Together, the two girls trek across the vast and ever-changing Australian Outback in search of answers. Except both are also hiding secrets...

Six Times We Almost Kissed

TESS SHARPE

PRE-ORDER FOR FEB 2ND RELEASE

Six fun facts about PENNY and TATE:

1. They've known each other their whole lives.
2. Their moms are best friends.
3. They are DEFINITELY NOT friends.
4. They keep almost kissing.
5. They don't talk about it.
6. Thanks to their moms, they're moving in together...

But when an almost-kiss goes from almost to I am now wearing your lip gloss, Penny and Tate have no choice but to finally face the music ... right?

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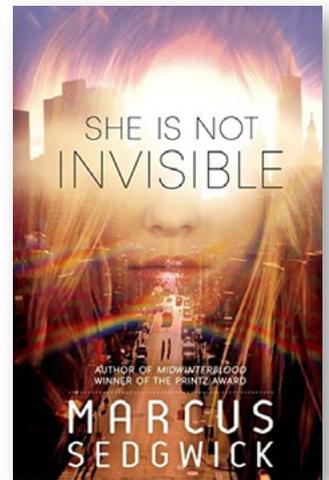
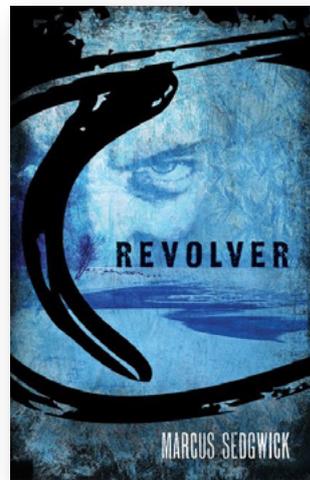
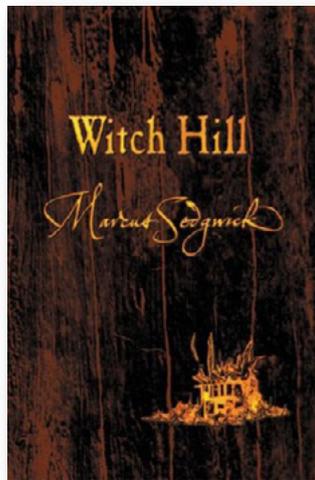


MARCUS SEDGWICK

Unfortunately, on November 15th 2022, award-winning author and PiXL Reading Ambassador, Marcus Sedgwick, passed away very suddenly.

He was hugely passionate about books and the work he was doing with us on PiXL Reading. During his career, he wrote over 50 books and taught writing to share his expertise with other writers and young people. We are so delighted that he spent much of the last two years working on PiXL Reading across the primary, secondary and post 16 sectors. It was an absolute honour to work with him and he will be missed hugely.

To commemorate his legacy and work, we have shared a selection of his books and videos with you below. We hope you will find his books enjoyable and thought-provoking.



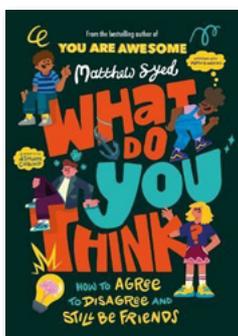
NON-FICTION RECOMMENDATIONS

You may be interested in exploring some of the recommendations below. However, there is such a wide variety of non-fiction texts available to you – about all sorts of topics, issues and interests – so if nothing catches your eye here, do look up books about things that interest you, or ask a teacher/librarian for advice!

What Do You Think?

MATTHEW SYED

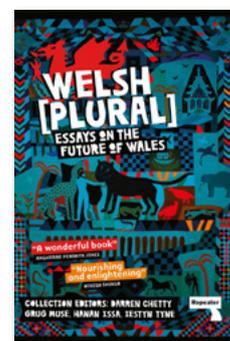
This book will help young readers to discover what is influencing their ideas, from peer pressure to fake news. They'll learn how to form and change opinions, and how to debate their views with empathy. Readers will see how debates and disagreements can give you new ideas, stronger friendships, and help change the world for the better. I know you have loads of incredible thoughts and ideas and the world deserves to hear your voice. I want to know... what do you think?



Welsh (plural): Essays on the Future of Wales

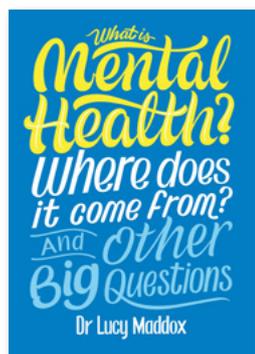
DARREN CHETTY

What does it mean to imagine Wales and "The Welsh" as something both distinct and inclusive? For many people, Wales brings to mind the same old collection of images – if it's not rugby, sheep and rolling hills, it's the 3 Cs: castles, coal, and choirs. Heritage, mining and the church are indeed integral parts of Welsh culture. But what of the other stories that point us toward a Welsh future? In Welsh (Plural), some of the foremost current Welsh writers offer imaginative, radical perspectives that take us beyond the clichés and binaries that so often shape thinking about Wales and Welshness.



What is Mental Health? Where Does it Come From?

This book explains what mental health is, considering how it relates to lots of different experiences, from how we manage really big feelings, to how we get on with each other, how we make choices and how we handle stressful situations. The book thoughtfully examines the things that can help us look after our mental health and the things that might make it feel worse. It has suggestions for the support on offer if we feel we're struggling.



Money for Beginners

An informative introduction to the world of money, covering everything from bank accounts, earning and borrowing to government spending, taxes and inflation. With bright, infographic pictures, a detailed glossary and links to specially selected websites where you can visit a virtual bank, see money from around the world and more.

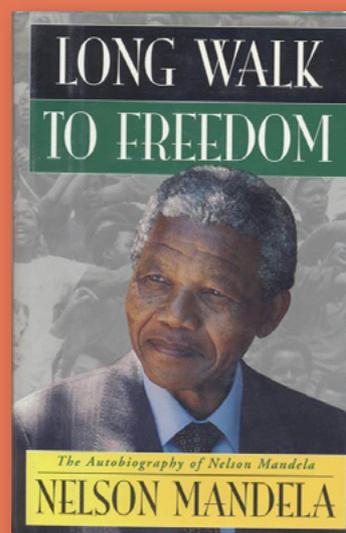


FOR OLDER READERS

Long Walk to Freedom

NELSON MANDELA

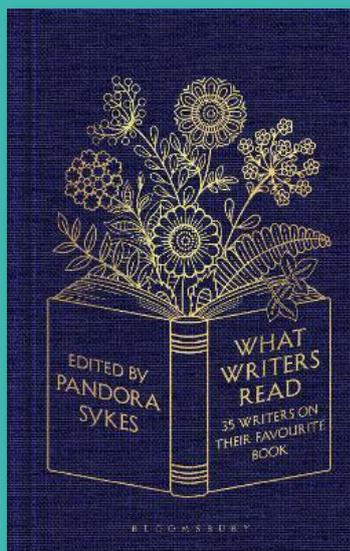
The riveting memoirs of the outstanding moral and political leader of our time, *Long Walk to Freedom* brilliantly re-creates the drama of the experiences that helped shape Nelson Mandela's destiny. Emotive, compelling and uplifting, *Long Walk to Freedom* is the exhilarating story of an epic life: a story of hardship, resilience and ultimate triumph told with the clarity and eloquence of a born leader.

**Lioness: My Journey to Glory**

BETH MEAD

From being placed in the local boys' team as a child because her mum wanted her to run off her boundless energy, to joining Middlesbrough FC's Centre of Excellence and making her professional debut at Sunderland, Beth and women's football have come a long way. Now, Beth shares the challenges that shaped her, what she faced on the journey to the top, and the life events that made her stronger – from being dropped from the England squad and receiving devastating family news, to finding her best form under the guidance of Jonas Eidevall and Sarina Wiegman. Filled with positive lessons and an exclusive account of England's triumphant Euros campaign, Beth offers readers of all ages a heartfelt, behind-the-scenes look into her remarkable journey to glory.





What Writers Read: 35 writers on their favourite book

ED. PANDORA SYKES

In this love letter to reading, curated by Pandora Sykes in aid of the National Literacy Trust, bestselling and beloved writers share their favourite books: the ones they hold most dearly, that they return to time and again and that helped make them the writers they are.

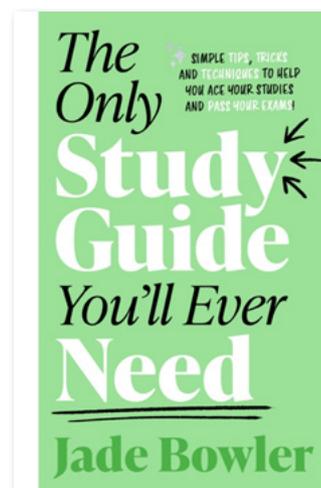
The Only Study Guide You'll Ever Need JADE BOWLER

We've all been there: a new school year starts and there's 8 months till your exams – that's plenty of time, right? Then there's 6 months, 3 months, 1 month and oh, now there's 2 weeks left and you haven't started studying... What happens next is a panic-induced mayhem of highlighting everything in the textbook (without even questioning if it's actually helpful). But I'm here to help you change this!

In *The Only Study Guide You'll Ever Need*, I'll cover a range of different topics including:

- How to get started and pick up that pen
- Learning techniques that actually work (hello, science of memory!)
- The dos and don'ts of timetabling
- And combatting fear of failure, perfectionism, exam stress and so much more!

As a fellow student now at university, I definitely don't have a PhD in Exam Etiquette but this is the book younger me needed. All I wanted was one place that had a variety of tried-and-tested methods with reassurance from someone who had recently been through the education system. *The Only Study Guide You'll Ever Need* is just that, and I have collected the best techniques and tools I wish I'd known earlier to help you get through your studies and smash your exams!





DARREN SIMPSON RECOMMENDS...

Darren Simpson is a fantastic author, and his three books were shared on various newsletters last academic year: Scavengers, The Memory Thieves and Furthermoor. We are so pleased that Darren is a PiXL Reading Ambassador this academic year. He is passionate about sharing book recommendations with students and parents, but also to hear what they think about books he's shared or ones they'd like him to explore, so feel free to use the hashtag #PiXLReading on Twitter to share your thoughts! To watch his video containing several recommendations for students across the Key Stage 3-4 range, scan the QR code below:



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