

NO

OUT

SIDERS

*'All different. All welcome.'*

**We Belong Here**

## **A guide for parents and carers**

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# **No Outsiders: 'We belong here'**

## **A guide for parents and carers**

Foreword by Andrew Moffat, CEO and founder No Outsiders charity

I visit many schools across the UK to deliver No Outsiders training. Often, I spend a day in a school, teaching half hour sessions in every class and sometimes I meet parents and carers.

In September 2020 I visited a school in Cheshire for a training day and the Head Teacher invited parents in to watch the lessons I delivered. Some parents who came to the first lesson in the morning were so enthusiastic about what they saw that they ended up staying for the whole day to watch every lesson and in the afternoon we sat down for a chat about how they could support the No Outsiders ethos at home.

The parents I met that day were inspirational and they suggested that the No Outsiders charity produced a guide specifically for parents and carers. The guide would spell out exactly what No Outsiders was about and would provide suggestions for follow up activities that families could enjoy at home.

The aim of this guide is to engage families in No Outsiders so that together we can build a better future for all our children.

This is the second edition of the parent / carer guide, updated to include new texts from the 2024 scheme, "We belong here". I hope you find it useful, do let us know any suggestions you have by emailing us via our website [info@no-outsiders.com](mailto:info@no-outsiders.com).

Best wishes,

Andrew Moffat MBE

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CEO, No Outsiders

[www.no-outsiders.com](http://www.no-outsiders.com)

## What is No Outsiders?

What is an outsider? Someone who feels left-out, who feels like they don't belong and is not welcome. We want schools to be teaching that there are no outsiders because everyone is welcome. A four year old understands what it feels like to be left out and does not want to be left out. We need to create classroom environments where no child feels left out; every child needs to be taught that they belong.

As children grow up, they can sometimes learn that difference is a barrier to friendship. Our aim is to remove that barrier; to quote the Ofsted handbook (2023), we want children to see "difference is a positive, not a negative". After all, we are all different; none of us is

exactly the same; we are all unique. As they move through school, we want children to explore their differences so that they feel comfortable in their own skin. Children should know who they are and feel proud to be who they are, and also know that they are accepted without judgement. No child should feel they have to change who they are in order to fit in.

So how do we do this? We have an ethos that is backed up by language and behaviour. All children are taught from their first year in school that we are all different and we like that. Wouldn't the world be boring if we were all the same? In Reception and Year 1 we use picture books where characters are different, and we show that they are also friends and they play together. We make sure there are characters that look different and the hope is children will see themselves reflected in those books; "I am different too and that's ok"

As children move up the school in to Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, we explore reasons why some people might feel left out. After all, it is a fact that prejudice and discrimination exist, and children are going to experience it at some point.



We need to prepare them, give them confidence to disagree when they hear prejudice and show them that they are not alone.

No Outsiders language gives children a way to challenge prejudice and show acceptance. Not only will they feel safe knowing they belong, they can show others they too are safe; "I will be your friend; you belong here. You don't have to change, there are no outsiders."

## **The Equality Act 2010: British law**

Difference is protected under British law; there are very clear aims in the Equality Act that provide guidance for schools. As public bodies, we need to:

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

And who are those different people? The Equality Act references nine 'protected characteristics'; these are groups of people. No one should face discrimination because of:

- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Age
- Disabilities
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage of civil partnership

So how do we talk about these different groups in an age appropriate way to young primary school children? We use picture books that show different people in stories and we make sure children understand no matter who you are, you are welcome in our school.

Consider for a moment whether we should miss out any of the nine protected characteristics when talking about equality in primary school? Are primary school children too young to know about gender reassignment, disability or sexual orientation? How about race or religion? When should we introduce



these concepts to children?

This is why No Outsiders works so well in a primary school setting. The lesson plans do not explore the individual protected characteristics; there is not one lesson on race, a different lesson on religion and another on sexual orientation.

What is discussed in all the lessons, through the picture books used, is difference. All the characters we see in the books are different and they all exist together, side by side.

There are 43 picture books from well known authors used to take a child on a journey at school from Reception to Y6 where they will meet a huge range of different characters in different situations; characters with different race, age, religion, gender, disabilities, and who live in different families. The books are carefully chosen to represent a wide world of diversity.

We are not encouraging any child to question their race, religion or gender identity; rather we are encouraging children to explore, know and accept the person they are, and we will show they are welcome without judgement in school.

The next chapter is adapted from the schools' guide, "No Outsiders: We belong here" (Moffat, 2024) so you can see every book that is included in the No Outsiders scheme and understand how it supports the ethos. You might choose to purchase some of the books; they make great bedtime stories and your children will love seeing the books they use at school read by you too; it will show them we are all on the same page; we all agree no-one should be left out.

# Picture books used in "No Outsiders: We belong here"

## Reception

*You Choose* encourages children to consider choices; they are presented with colourful pictures of different objects and asked, 'which would you choose?' for your house, for your mode of transport, to eat, to wear etc *You choose* provides the first step in teaching children it's ok to have different opinions; we can accept that we disagree over a favourite car or dinosaur. This concept is explored further in *Red Rockets and Rainbow Jelly* we see characters Nick and Sue liking different things all through the text (ducks, socks, cats...) but remaining friends by the end. *Hello Hello* shows different animals with a range of shape, size and colour all saying "Hello" to each other. No one is left out. *The Family book* shows children that families come in many different shapes and sizes and in the lesson we all draw our own family. In *Blue Chameleon*, the chameleon is lonely and tries to make friends by changing shape and colour. Chameleon thinks you have to look like someone to be their friend; is that true? Finally *Super Duper You* is a wonderful celebration of all things that make us unique. We are not one thing; there are lots of ways you are you; we need to recognise "all the brills you got".

## Year One

*Elmer* is a different colour elephant who tries to change so he can fit in but learns to be proud of his difference at the end of the story. In *Going to the volcano*, Dwayne and Janye are really good at making sure no-one is left out as they travel to the volcano taking everyone with them. All their friends are different and that is what makes the trip so successful. In *Errol's Garden*, Errol discovers that having neighbours who are different and have different skills, enables him to build his dream garden. *I love me* follows on from themes explored in year 1; it's a brilliant book of affirmations for young children to build their confidence and self-esteem; "I am brave, I am strong... I love me". I first used *The boy who loved everyone* during Covid to explore ways to be friends without hugging, but three years on I can see lots of ways this story links to no outsiders as a little boy struggles to make friends and is often turned away for reasons unclear to him. Finally *Bathe the cat* is a joyous story showing a family trying desperately to tidy up the house before nan arrives. The family



has two dads, although that's never mentioned in the text, which is the best way to remind children that all families are different, but at the same time all families sweep the floor and scrub the dishes sometimes, no matter who is in that family.

## Year Two

*Can I join your club* explores how Duck feels when other animals exclude him because he makes a quack noise which is different to the noise they make. Duck sets up his own club where all animals are welcome regardless of their noise. *How to be a lion* shows Leonard being told there is only one way to be a lion, which means being fierce and chomping ducks. But Leonard's best friend is a duck and he likes to write poetry. Should he change? I was overjoyed to find *Amazing* as it's a snapshot of friendship where the main character uses a wheelchair, which is never mentioned in the text. The disability is not the issue in this story. *Splash* tells the true story of a Paralympics GB Gold Medallist. Claire Cashmore has a stump and says in the preface that she wanted to be treated in exactly the same way as her sisters. I love *Is that your mama* which tells a story about Josie who looks different to her mum, dad and siblings. People always ask Josie, "Is that your mama?" but Josie learns all families are different. The maths teacher in me couldn't help being excited by *The Perfect fit* which I can use to teach about shape in year 2. Triangle tries to fit in with other shapes but just can't do it. Triangle learns that different shapes can still work together.

## Year Three

*This is our house* is a perfect story to introduce a No Outsiders ethos to a school. George shuts people out and gives each person a reason: they are a girl, they wear glasses, they are too short. When it is pointed out to George that he has red hair and could also be excluded, the penny drops. George makes sure that his game is for everyone. *We're all wonders* is a beautiful story about a boy who looks different. He is bullied and dreams of running away. What would happen at our school? What do we say about difference? We talk about choosing to be a bystander or choosing to stand up. Stereotypes are explored in *The truth about old people*; what is a stereotype? How do we recognise a stereotype and how can we respond? *Nefertiti* explores the importance of names. Is it ok if I choose to call you by a shortened version of your name? This is a super, empowering story that we can use to talk about identity and also challenging assumptions. *Aalfred and Aalbert* tells the story of two aardvarks getting together helped by a bird who identifies things they have in common. The focus is recognising loneliness and considering how it affects mental health, choosing to help others, finding common ground. *Shulin's Grandpa* tells the story of a little girl starting school with little English. She looks different to the other children and struggles to fit in. Her grandpa visits the school for an art session and his art is transformative for the class, and for Shulin.

## Year Four

In *Red: a crayon's story*, a crayon who looks red can only colour in blue. This is very distressing for him as he knows he really should be red, and he has always been red before... what should he do? *When sadness comes to call* explores how to recognise feelings of sadness and their impact. The lesson plan focus is on good mental health and how it can be achieved. *Julian is a mermaid* tells the story of a small boy who wants to be a mermaid. The key is Nan's attitude towards her grandson; the reader is led to believe she is going to be angry about his dressing up, but instead she is loving. This is a heart-warming story of difference and acceptance." *My beautiful voice* tells the story of a nervous child who talks in whispers. The teacher helps the child to find their voice. It's a story of perseverance, language and bravery. *Remixed* is an honest look at families changing. The story starts with different colours falling in love, but later they split up, not because they are different colours, but because sometimes families change. However, new families emerge



because, “Families don’t always stay the same, sometimes they re-mix.” *My brother George* is the first text in the resource that explores gender expectations. It is a very gentle story narrated by a girl about her brother George who looks different and is often thought by strangers to be a girl. The conclusion is, “I love my brother George and I’ll always be there for him no matter what”.

## Year Five

I wanted to include both *The Girls* and *The Boys*; two different books but both exploring themes of friendship through a different gender lens. The books recognise the significance of companionship in our lives and can be used to reference mental health. There are also subtle LGBT references in both texts. *Mixed* is a wonderful vehicle to discuss racism and our responses to racist behaviour. The story shows the Reds, Yellows and Blues first getting on and then segregating because the Reds say they are best. But then a yellow and blue fall in love... can colours mix? I have been using *And Tango Makes Three* since 2006 but I can’t imagine ever replacing it because it is a perfect way to talk about different families and also adoption. The lesson plan focuses on the book being banned in some places around the world which enables us to explore homophobia and discrimination. *My shadow is pink* is a beautiful story about a dad’s response to his young son’s difference. There is a clever moment in the

middle of the story when we see Dad make every effort to show his son he is loved. This story is about being yourself in a world where sometimes you feel you should be something else. *Milo imagines the world* is a fantastic story that explores the way people make assumptions about each other. Milo sits on a train and imagines the lives of the other passengers but at the end there is a big surprise both for Milo and for the reader.

## Year Six

*The Island* is a powerful study of the power that one group has over another and the dire consequences of unchecked prejudice. *Introducing Teddy* is a wonderful tale of a teddy who comes out as trans. All of Teddy's friends accept her as Tilly; no one questions or asks Tilly to justify her actions. There are many forms of discrimination and prejudice and *The proudest blue* focuses on responses to a young girl who chooses to wear a hijab for the first time at school. The story is a beautiful way to teaching children to be proud of the person they are. *You need to chill* is a response to anyone who might worry about the person they are. Here we are exploring responses to someone transitioning. Being trans is just another way we are different to each other, as is disability and I think *You're so amazing* is such an important picture book and one of the best to explore disability that I have seen. The focus of the story isn't on Joe and his disability; the focus is on reactions from other people, who keep saying to him, "You're so amazing!" But Joe is not amazing, he's actually just Joe. *Saving the butterfly* is an honest depiction of a young refugee arriving in a country without parents and feeling responsible for her younger brother. The brother adapts well, but the older sister struggles. This story is teaching empathy, resilience and hope. *A day in the life of Marlon Bundo* give us a fantastic opportunity to talk about democracy (one of the British values) and its impact. A rabbit in the White House wants to marry another male bunny but is told by the animal in charge that boy bunnies can't marry boy bunnies. The animals decide to hold an election and there is a super ending. What is democracy and how does it work?

## **Making sure children feel safe: How to talk about the world around us**

The world can be a scary place for a young child. Our children are not wrapped in cotton wool, nor are they cocooned from the world around them. As they grow they make judgements and form reasoning about everything they see and hear; adult and older sibling conversations, TV and radio news, youtube videos and social media content... every day our children are exploring and making sense of the world around them.

So how do we show children the good that exists around the world? We cannot shield our children from all the negative stuff, but we can counter it by filling their world with stories of community cohesion, acts of kindness, empathy, hope and confidence in a world filled with diversity and difference, where they belong. Our aim is for children to leave school confident that they have a contribution make to that world.

So how do we do it? It's not rocket science; we simply find real-life stories children can relate to and demonstrate the world is full of great stories where different people get along and help each other.

The picture books are a great start; they build a foundation where an understanding of difference is accepted. But we also need real-life stories to demonstrate those positive stories aren't just in books. Here is where the assembly pictures come in. We provide weekly assembly pictures to schools that are also accessible (free of charge) to parents at home with discussion points to help explore community cohesion. The aim of the pictures is to show No Outsiders is everywhere!

Topics for assemblies are wide ranging; it all starts with a picture which is often taken from a good news story from the week. The top 10 most downloaded assembly plans for 2023 were as follows:

- A picture of a gender reveal party with blue and pink balloons (used to explore gender stereotypes).
- A picture of a puppy looking after abandoned kittens in an animal rescue centre (used to challenge stereotypes and explore kindness).
- A picture of a rabbit and cat who defied expectation to become

inseparable best friends in an animal shelter (used to explore friendship and difference).

- A picture of Blackstock St in North London which was recognised as a street that represented the whole world (used to explore community cohesion).
- A picture of a wheelchair-accessible beach in Greece (used to explore disability and inclusion).
- A picture of Pride month cards on a supermarket shelf (used to explore Pride month).
- A picture of Ranjit Singh, a bus driver in West Bromwich who made a video showing him and his work colleagues performing a Bhangra dance to a song about working together "All the different countries and nations drive together as friends" (used to explore community cohesion).
- A picture of a blind football fan in the crowd at a match with his friend telling him what is happening so he can enjoy the game (used to explore inclusion)
- A picture of a baby giraffe born without spots (used to explore difference and families who look different to each other)

We can also use No Outsiders to navigate challenging and difficult conversations around tragic events such as terrorist attacks. Children hear about terrorism, some may be directly or indirectly affected, so how do we explain to a child the reasons behind an attack while retaining hope and a confidence in the child that 'it will be ok'?

A child in a Y5 school assembly once asked me, "Why do the terrorists kill? Why do they want to hurt us," to which I replied, "Because not everyone understands about no outsiders yet. Not everyone agrees with us, they don't understand yet that it's ok to be different; they weren't lucky enough to go to a school like ours where we talk about being different and we love being different. Some people think that we should all be the same – same skin, same religion; the same kind of person. That's the opposite to us; we know it's great

to have different skin, different religion, be different kinds of people, but the person who carried out the attack hasn't heard that yet – they don't understand."

"So, what do we do about that? This is why it's really important that we tell everyone we meet about how we love difference and we're not scared of it. And if we hear someone say, "You can't be friends with them because they are different," or, "You don't belong here because you are different," we stand up and say that that's not true! We tell them about our school and it's brilliant because we are all different and we all get along."

"But in the end, it's important to remember that one person caused the attack; just one person didn't understand. But there are thousands, millions of people who do understand and who are with us. Millions of people who would love our school and our No Outsiders ethos. Those are the people we need to remember, not the one person who didn't understand. There are many, many more people who are with us."

The assemblies like the ten listed above make great family discussions and it's wonderful for children to be able to talk at home about what they have discussed in school. There are over 500 of these pictures and plans freely available to use on the no outsiders website – just go to the Assembly pictures link.

## **Answering difficult questions from children**

Children are often very matter of fact about diversity and difference. Children have an innate sense of justice that shines through when they talk about being different and being left out. As adults we can complicate issues by over thinking them where actually the answer to what we perceive as difficult or embarrassing questions is a very simple one. The following are questions you may be asked by children about issues covered in No Outsiders, with suggested answers.

### **Why does he have different skin colour to me?**

Because we are all different; isn't that great! Imagine how boring the world would be if we all looked the same. We all have different amounts of melanin in our hair, skin and eyes, which give them their colour. We all have differences: freckles, hair type etc. Skin colour is just another brilliant way we are different.

### **Why can't she walk, why does she have to have a wheel chair?**

Because her body works in a different way; we are all different and that's great – we can still be friends.

### **What does gay / lesbian mean?**

Gay is where two people who are the same gender love each other. Men and women can be gay and there is also the word 'lesbian' for when two women love each other.

### **I love my dad, we are both male, does that mean we are gay?**

No, that's different. Gay means when two men love each other like a mum and dad who love each other.

### **Why does she have two mummies?**

Why doesn't she have a mum and dad? Because all families are different. Some families have a mum and dad, some have just a mum or just a dad, some children are looked after by their grandparents, some families have two mums or two dads.

### **How can two men have a baby?**

There are lots of different ways of having children; for example some babies are adopted or fostered. All families are different. The most important thing in a family is love. It doesn't matter who the parents are.

### **Chloe used to be a boy but now he says he's Chloe. Can you change from a boy to a girl?**

Fantastic! Good for Chloe that she can finally be herself. Chloe hasn't changed - she used to think she had to try to be a boy but now she knows she can be Chloe. I'm really pleased for her. We're all different aren't we; we just need to make sure Chloe knows we accept her now she's being true to herself.

## **FAQs**

### **How does No Outsiders fit in with the RSE guidance?**

The RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) guidance is statutory for primary schools. The focus of RSE is relationships; "In primary schools we want the subjects to put in place the key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships"

No Outsiders teaches children to acknowledge difference while forming

respectful relationships and friendships. The aim of one of the first lessons in EYFS based on the book, "Red Rockets and Rainbow Jelly" is to understand that we can like different things and we can still be friends. The key theme runs through the scheme. We are teaching children to be non-judgmental, accepting and welcoming.

### **Can I withdraw my child from No Outsiders lessons?**

Why would you want to? Look at all the beautiful picture books we are using and read the aims of these lessons from the resource:

It's ok to like different things / To make a new friend / To think about all the brills I've got / To talk about different families / To like the way I am / To join in / To ask for help / To welcome different people / To know I can be what I want to be / To think about what makes a good friend / To know I fit in / To have self-confidence (Lesson aims in EYFS/ Y1/ Y2)

To understand what discrimination means / To understand what a bystander is / To recognise a stereotype / To show respect / To find common ground / To look after my mental health / To be proud of who I am / To speak up / To understand how families change / To consider how my language affects others (Lesson aims in Y3/ Y4)

To explore friendship / To check in with people / To exchange dialogue and express an opinion / To consider responses to racist behaviour / To find self-acceptance / To try not to judge by appearance / To show acceptance and non-judgement / To consider how new experiences affect us / To consider attitudes towards disability/ To consider how democracy works (Lesson aims in Y5/ Y6)

### **Are you teaching children to be gay or to be trans?**

No, we are teaching children to be proud of who they are and to accept others. We teach non-judgement and acceptance. Everyone is welcome in our school. We are preparing children for life in modern Britain where the Equality Act is law, and we can't pick and choose which bits of the Equality Act 2010 we are comfortable with and which bits we are not comfortable with. Equality is for all people.

### **Aren't children too young to be taught about this?**

Some children have two mummies or two daddies and there is nothing confusing about this; children are very accepting of each other and their differences and will encounter those differences as they grow up, whether it is

taught in schools or not. There is no sex in no outsiders; it is all about community cohesion and difference being a positive not a negative.

### **Are you indoctrinating children?**

We do not teach children what to think, rather, we teach children the skills to think and reason; to form an opinion and speak their mind; how to agree and disagree respectfully. It is ok to hold different opinions to your friend; it is also ok to hold or to understand two views at the same time. Not everyone has to agree. No Outsiders lessons are very neutral; children are encouraged to make their own mind up.

### **How will you take in to account my faith?**

We recognise that there are different beliefs in the world about LGBT+ equality and the No Outsiders lessons in Y5 and Y6 reflect that. For example, the aim of the lesson in Y5 based on "And Tango makes three" about two male penguins that fall in love is, "To exchange dialogue and express an opinion". In this lesson we acknowledge that this book has been banned in a few countries in the world because some people believe children should not see examples of same sex families. We talk about why that is and children are encouraged to develop their own responses. At no point are we telling children what to think; we are teaching children to acknowledge that there are different views in the big wide world and not everyone thinks in the same way.

There is an emphasis on accepting and embracing difference in No Outsiders rather than "celebrating" difference. This is a key concept; we are teaching children that it's ok to hold different and even opposing views and we can still have respect for one another; we can co-exist.



**For more information on No Outsiders go to [www.no-outsiders.com](http://www.no-outsiders.com)**