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How can we use visual literacy (picture books) to impact pupils' understandings of global learning issues?

Ali Galpin
2022

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Abstract

Contemporary society is changing and evolving at a fast pace; children in our society are exposed to a plethora of information, which is both overwhelming and confusing to young minds. It has never been more crucial to help children navigate around the complexities of our world and support them in attaining the essential tools to help them on this learning journey - a toolbox of values, skills and knowledge. Global learning supports children to navigate this complexity.

In this research I look at the relationship between reading books and global learning. There is limited research in this field. The paper responds to four key questions:

1. Which frameworks can be used to help select (and deliver) picture books to support global learning?
2. What common global learning themes are found in picture books?
3. How are picture books used to encourage children to think about global issues?
4. What factors support pupil engagement with global learning using picture books?

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Introduction

Children tend to be inquisitive individuals. We live in a complicated world, a world which is represented and conveyed through numerous channels. Children are exposed to a lot of information, particularly through the media, but have limited understanding of the realities and the truths. Navigating a path through misconceptions, stereotypes and bias is by no means an easy task for an adult – so imagine being a child trying to comprehend 'larger than self' issues? Issues which exist on a global level; issues which are interwoven into contemporary society; issues which threaten the future of mankind and the natural world. There is no greater need than now for education to be at the core of teaching the younger generation about the interconnectedness of our world; helping them to understand the responsibilities we have as global citizens to shape our world for a brighter future; helping to equip children with the fundamental tools to thrive and flourish in modern society. So, how can this be achieved?

Global learning has been an increasing focus in education over the past decade in the UK. Represented predominantly through the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC) focus in the curriculum in England and promoted through the Global Learning Programme (2013-2018) and Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (2018-2021), schools now have a much more substantial role in helping children understand global learning issues. In order to ensure clarity, global learning addresses the need for '*a fair and sustainable world*' (Global Learning Programme, 2017). It is essential that children engage with global issues and have the passion, values, knowledge, and skills to work collaboratively to overcome the challenges which are presented. Embedding global learning within the curriculum is an integral starting point – and this paper explores one method of how this can be done.

Aims of research

Literacy is central to the curriculum; reading is at its core. Texts are deliciously rich in flavour and are a playground to children's curiosity – especially a picture book. Despite the wide use of picture books in home and school, there has been relatively little written about the use of the picture book to support global learning. This paper aims to amalgamate this need for global learning in school with the growing picture book market. It is paramount to seek ways to embed global learning into the curriculum, interweaving it into the primary classroom and the school cultural make-up.

Picture books can be a captive forum for children – and on this basis, this research is centred around how we can use picture books to impact children's understanding of global learning (bigger than self) issues.

This study focuses upon literary pedagogy and looks at the pedagogical approaches of using picture books in a primary classroom. It examines how books can be categorised and selected by practitioners and brings attention to the considerations of 'framing' - and how an awareness of this is imperative. It is hoped that this paper will be of interest to practitioners working in the primary classroom – both in the UK and overseas. The paper aims to support primary

practitioners to integrate and embed global learning into the curriculum by using an extremely well-regarded primary resource – the picture book. The intention is to support the notion that picture books are not only a resource for the youngest children but are also an invaluable resource in the upper junior classroom (ages 9-11). The paper combines literature review with an analysis of previous and current practice.

Research questions

The main research questions represented in this paper are:

- i. Which frameworks can be used to help select (and deliver) picture books to support global learning?
- ii. What common global learning themes are found in picture books?
- iii. How are picture books used to encourage children to think about global issues?
- iv. What factors support pupil engagement with global learning using picture books?

In the next section, I explore the key areas of literature research which support the understanding of how picture books could be utilised by the practitioner. This is followed by a record of the methods used in conducting the research and, finally, an analysis of key findings in this study.

Literature review

There has been limited direct research carried out on global learning and picture books. Literature therefore focuses on three central areas: framing; the Sustainable Development Goals; and critical thinking. Before that I provide a summary of global learning.

Global learning and global competences

Global learning is learning about the wider world in a creative, critical and collaborative way. It supports individuals to make sense of the world and understand the challenges we face. Global learning aims to equip individuals with the skills and values needed to take action to achieve a fairer and more sustainable world. As we are all aware, we are presented with huge global problems; these problems need solutions. It is critical that it is recognised that we have a responsibility to help eradicate inequalities, poverty, environmental degradation and cultural and religious intolerance. Empathy, compassion and a sense of responsibility are at the heart of global learning - as well as an understanding of the need to work collaboratively.

Global learning is not explicitly written into the national curriculum in England, but it is our duty as educators to develop children's character and support them to be the best person they can be – responsible, broadminded, caring, respectful; an active global citizen.

Global competence links to global learning and relates to the skills and values people need to be global citizens. Global competence *'is the disposition, knowledge and skills to understand and act on issues of global significance'* (Hancock, 2018).

Figure 1 illustrates the 4 domains of global competence (Boix Mansilla and Jackson, 2011):

Figure 1: Global competence



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – otherwise known as the Global Goals – are a set of 17 goals set up in 2015 by the United Nations Assembly (United Nations, 2015). The mission statement states that it is 'A blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all people and the world by 2030'. The SDGs are often used in relation to teaching and learning about global issues.

Table 1: The Sustainable Development Goals



Picture books and global learning

Guidance from the Department for Education (2014) states that:

'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:*

- *promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society*
- *prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'*

It is therefore the duty of schools to ensure that children have the skills necessary for later life and understand the 'responsibilities' which embrace this. A common acceptance between educators is that we need to teach children about the interconnected world in which we live – however, it is up to schools to navigate their way in how to exactly achieve this, preparing pupils as global learners, preparing them to become globally competent citizens.

A secure understanding of the world is an integral component in global learning.

'A substantive understanding of the world is the foundation of global competence. Students demonstrate global competence through awareness and curiosity about how the world works—informed by disciplinary and interdisciplinary insights' (Boix Mansilla and Jackson, 2011).

In an ideal world, global learning should be interwoven within the curriculum.

Picture books are one vehicle in which, if used effectively, could drive pupils to develop global competences as using picture books in the classroom allows pupils to *'investigate the world'* and *'recognise perspectives'* (Boix Mansilla and Jackson, 2011). Practitioners are able to take this one step further (and should be encouraged so) to look at pupils communicating their ideas and taking action. I would like to think that picture books could be viewed as catalysts for taking global action, or the stimulus to multi-layered and critical thinking of personal and societal values as well as bigger than self-issues.

Picture books and framing

Framing is a literary technique used in books to convey a variety of meanings. Framing can carry deep rooted messages and shape the readers' viewpoint considerably. How these messages are delivered has a substantial effect on the readers' understanding. Hence, educators need to be mindful of the fact that children are impressionable; it is vital that consideration is given to how books and pictures are shared.

Any particular thing which stands for something else is considered a semiotic:

'Picture books incorporate two main semiotic systems – text (lexical) and images (visual). Both systems carry meaning that the reader must extract. Each system can have multiple meanings and so, can be considered polysemic' (Roche, 2015).

This highlights the complexities of the messages which the picture books hold. To use picture books as a vehicle for global understanding, practitioners must look carefully (and critically) at what both the lexical and visual messages convey to pupils. Adichie's 'The danger of a single story' (2009) clearly illustrates that representation of only one side of a story can not only originate from misunderstanding, but also lead to a great deal of misunderstanding and confusion. Whilst the value of using picture books in the classroom will be clear in this paper, it is vital that educators explicitly understand the importance of how the book is shared with children, and how the teacher facilitates or leads the analysis of its content. In the analysis of Adichie's work, Sawyer (2011) states that:

'if an avid young mind relies on a single story to direct his/her steps in life, that path is the only one that seems feasible. Diversity of stories, intricate possibilities for potential, those are the things that should be read, discussed, explained, elaborated upon and encouraged.'

Critical Thinking / Critical Literacy

Critical thinking is 'the opposite of receiving information passively' (Roche, 2015). In essence, critical thinking involves active engagement with ideas; the act of examining varying viewpoints and providing reasoning in one's thinking. Bourn takes the notion of thinking critically one step further:

'Thinking critically and looking at different viewpoints and assumptions often leads to the learner reflecting upon their own viewpoints, and engaging in dialogue to listen, question and respect different views. This is what could be called critical literacy, as it goes beyond notions of critical thinking to examine one's own assumptions and worldviews.' (Bourn, 2014).

The understanding and role of critical literacy is an essential element in this paper. As referenced previously, it is crucial that picture books are used sensitively in the classroom with the aim to raise pupil awareness and understanding of global learning issues. Roche (2015) reinforces the importance of this:

'We are working with young children: we must choose our texts with care and pose our questions sensitively. We must never destroy their innocence or make them anxious about the world or the future.'

With this in mind, I suggest that educators have a moral duty to ensure that children are supported in making sense of the world and are equipped with the values, skills and knowledge to be the best citizen they can be. Contemporary society is complex, and through mediums such as the media and social platforms, children are overwhelmed with 'bigger than self' issues. Schools have a responsibility to ensure that this information is met with a critical eye and not just passively. According to Vasquez (2007, cited in Roche, 2015) it is immensely difficult to be a young person today:

'Day in and day out children take in multi-modal bits of information consisting of words and images that sometimes conflict and at other times are complimentary. Often this textual information works to position them in ways that offer up ideals for who they can and cannot be in the world today, who they should and should not be as well as what they should and should not do or think. Given this complex world, we cannot afford for children not to engage in some tough conversations if they are to learn to become critical analysts of the world who are able to make informed decisions as they engage with the world around them.'

It can therefore be agreed that critical thinking is an essential component when using picture books in the classroom with the aim of teaching global understanding. This denotes that dialogic teaching is crucial in this process. Fisher (2006, cited in Jones and Hodson, 2006) suggests that this dialogic teaching aimed at improving thinking helps develop 'habits of intelligent behaviour' which include being 'curious (asking deep and interesting questions); collaborative (through engaging in discussion); critical (through giving reasons and evidence); creative (through generating and building on ideas); and caring (through developing awareness of self and care of others)'. This 'can contribute to the development of a thoughtful and deliberative citizenry'.

Philosophy for Children

The idea of critical thinking will be addressed in more detail when looking at the role of Philosophy for Children (P4C)¹ in the classroom as a way to deliver picture books to pupils. According to SAPERE, Philosophy for Children '*is a thorough pedagogy with considerable academic pedigree*'. Its aims and effectiveness as a pedagogy has been evidenced (Yates, 2018) and, according to the founder of P4C:

'P4C aims to help children become more thoughtful, more reflective, considerate and reasonable individuals.' (Lipman, n.d.)

P4C is a pedagogy in which to promote global learning in the classroom through the development of critical thinking approaches and Philosophy for Global Learning approaches.

¹ Find out more about Philosophy for Children at <https://www.sapere.org.uk/>

Methodology

Research conducted for this paper entailed a combination of both empirical and literature-based study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected.

Collection of data

A variety of data collection methods were used throughout the course of this project which were partly determined by constraints imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic. They included:

Questionnaires

Online questionnaires took the form of Microsoft Forms. Microsoft Forms was selected as the most effective way to gather data anonymously, encouraging participants to answer honestly so as to gain an accurate picture in schools. Online surveys are, however, reliant on the participant spending the time and being willing to respond.

Questionnaires were sent out to practitioners in four schools. In total, 21 teachers responded. Two main questionnaires were distributed, addressing the following: The use of picture books in school; and the understanding of the SDGs.

Microsoft Forms was also used to collect data from pupils from the host school. Pupils were selected by class teachers across KS2 (3 pupils per year group) totalling 12 participants in total. Pupils were chosen to include a range of profiles, e.g., academic ability, additional needs, ethnicity, socio-economic status and gender. Questions were read to pupils by an adult to ensure understanding. Questions included: *How often do you look at picture books in the classroom with your teacher? Do you read picture books at home? What makes you want to read picture books (what attracts you)? Do you find picture books exciting/enjoyable? Which age group do you think picture books are best suited for?* The questionnaire concluded with an open-ended question to understand what their favourite things were when exploring a picture book (See Appendix).

Meeting minutes

A small group of teachers took the form of a working party (4 teachers from the host school). Three formal meetings took place in total. The foci of these meetings were: categorising picture books; sharing picture books in class; picture books in curriculum subjects; and identifying next steps to maximise effectiveness.

Six pupils from two year 4 classes were involved in the research project, forming a discussion group. This changed from the initial intention - due to the impact of Covid 19 in schools and the limitations in place for crossing year group bubbles. Pupils included were a mix of gender,

ethnicity and ability. Two meetings were carried out with the pupils to ascertain: the enjoyment of picture books; and how to identify themes. The sessions involved discussion (guided by questions) and practical activities which involved looking at a variety of picture books. It was essential to ascertain the books which the children were familiar with, how they knew them, and how picture books had been shared. Children spent time exploring the factors which attracted them to certain books and how the books could be grouped (what was similar and different about a selection of books).

Minutes of meetings with primary colleagues and pupils were taken. This recorded the key discussion points and agreed next steps (where applicable). A colleague was asked to take the minutes of all meetings to enable myself to freely lead the discussions.

Evaluations from a teacher training session with local schools.

A local multi-academy trust organised a training session for subject coordinators (Humanities) across its 10 member schools. The focus was 'developing a school culture based on global learning' and I led the session. A large focus and practical element of this training session was in fact the exploration of picture books to support global learning. This training took place at the start of the project and its outcomes helped shape the direction of this research paper. 22 teachers attended. Evaluations from the course, as well as observations made during the session, confirmed that teachers clearly understood the importance of global learning in school, but it became apparent that there was a genuine need for further support for teachers with regards to the accessibility and guidance of resources (i.e., books) to help embed global learning.

Sample of schools

Schools were included from the area of Leicestershire near where I am located. 8 schools were contacted in the area with regards to being involved in the project. Aside from the host school (where I am based) three schools expressed an interest in becoming involved. Two schools were local authority schools affiliated to Leicestershire County Council and one school was part of a multi-academy trust. Table 2 shows the characteristics of the schools involved.

The number of schools included in this research was less than provisionally planned due to the pandemic. Despite these changes, the schools who participated represented various levels of engagement with global learning – ranging from: an Expert Centre hub school for Global Learning (under the Global Learning Programme²); a partner school; and two schools

² The Global learning programme was an initiative which ran between 2013-2018, aiming to support global learning in schools for all KS2 and KS3 children. It was managed by a consortium of partners – Pearson, Geographical Association, Royal Geographical Society, Institute of Education, Oxfam UK, SSAT and Think Global. Its aim was to build a network of like-minded schools and provide training to practitioners to embed global learning.

not affiliated to the Global Learning Programme (past or present). Teachers from these schools were involved in the data collection.

Table 2: Characteristics of schools involved in the research project

School	Involved in GLP?	Involved in Connecting Classrooms?	P4C Participating School?	School Type	Overseas partner school
A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Primary LEA maintained	Yes
B	Yes	No	No	Primary LEA maintained	In past
C	No	No	No	Primary LEA maintained	In past
D	No	No	No	Primary Academy	No

Data analysis

Data from teacher training sessions, on-line questionnaires, teacher 'working party' sessions, pupil group sessions and pupil questionnaires were analysed. This helped gauge the overall picture of global learning in schools, how global learning is valued, and to what extent picture books were being used to support pupils in their global learning journey. Themes emerged from the data and links were made to the research questions. Findings of this data and how it informed next steps is explored in the 'Analysis of Findings' section of this paper.

Ethics

All research undertaken respected the privacy of all participants. All participants were made aware of what the study involved, and consent was sought. It was recognised and acknowledged that time and effort was required to either attend a discussion group or fill in an on-line questionnaire. The study adhered to ethical guidance from the British Council. I am grateful to the participants for their time, and respectful of the fact that this research was carried out during a difficult time for many people (educational and societal pressures due to Covid 19).

Limitations

The scale of the project had to be amended due to Covid 19. Whilst involving other schools during the project, conducting face to face sessions was unfortunately not possible. For this reason, and taking into consideration the pressures on schools during this time, I decided to collect data from participating schools via on-line questionnaires. Sessions in school also had to be scaled back to allow all meetings to take place without crossing bubbles and breaking school guidance.

Analysis of findings

I now explore my findings.

Which frameworks can be used to help select (and deliver) picture books to support global learning?

Frameworks used in the selection of picture books centred around two main areas:

- using themes to categorise and select books
- using the SDG framework (Sustainable Development Goals) to categorise and select books.

Using themes to categorise picture books for global learning

In the first section I explore how thematic categories can be used to identify picture books.

Through in-depth discussions with colleagues, it became clear that global learning-related picture books can be thematically categorised. Teachers are confident in selecting picture books for addressing themes such as 'the environment and 'plastic pollution', but agreed, however that this can sometimes be a lengthy process when attempting to find a suitable text to use in the classroom for a particular theme / purpose. Teachers relied on their own personal research, recommendations from colleagues, or simply searching through the books in school.

An activity carried out with teachers was to explore a multitude of picture books, looking at how these could be grouped using themes.

The themes used initially were:

- Developing character and values
- The Environment
- Diversity and celebrating differences
- Hope and positive thinking
- Equality (including gender)
- Cultures and beliefs
- Poverty
- Identity and belonging
- People around the world
- Conflict and peace

It became evident during the process that the section on Character and Values was far too broad and needed further breaking down into: resilience, positivity, kindness and respect, courage, creativity, happiness, community, aspiration, and fairness.

The group encountered another obstacle in the activity, realising that some books overlapped into two, sometimes three categories.

One final question posed from the teacher focus group was centred around the representation of author ethnicity.

'We need more input on (e.g.) black authors and how black and other minorities would LIKE us to promote equality and inclusion in largely white schools. We need to be better at this.' (teacher focus group)

The global 'theme' approach was considered to be very user-friendly, but support in helping teachers to find suitable books was needed. It was agreed that a picture book audit was needed in school, but consideration needed to be given to how the books could be organised for ease of use. Where could the books be stored in school to allow easy access? How could teachers search for available books?

As a result of this process, the final themes entailed the following:

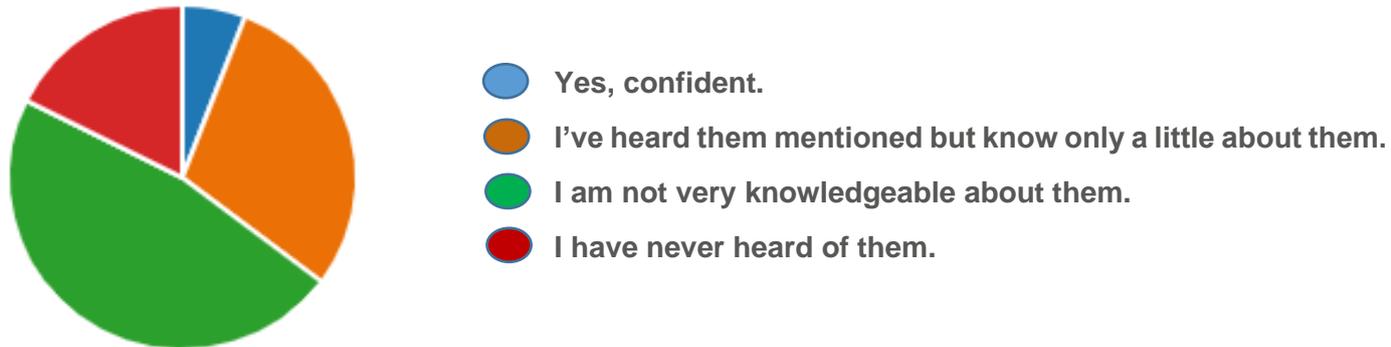
- Developing character and values (largest section – yet important in the development of global learning values and skills)
- The environment (involving sustainable living, pollution on land in in sea, climate, waste)
- Poverty
- Equality, diversity and inclusivity
- Identity and belonging
- Active global citizens
- Migration (including refugees)
- Cultures and beliefs
- Fair trade

Using the SDGs to categorise picture books for global learning

I explore here how the SDGs can be used to categorise picture books.

Data here was drawn from an activity with teachers on the SDGs involving practitioners from a variety of local schools (January 2020). It is worth noting that, at the beginning of the session, as results from my questionnaire show, only 6% of the teachers present at the session were confident in their awareness of the Global Goals; 18% had never heard of them (Figure 2). These statistics were not anticipated.

Figure 2: Response from participants regarding their confidence in their knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals (N=17)



After introducing the SDGs to teachers, an activity was carried out, involving exploring a variety of books and looking at how these could be sorted into one of the 17 goals. It became evident that some goals, such as 10, 13, 14 and 15 (see Table 1) were populated well, with a large selection of picture books addressing that particular goal (10-reduced inequalities, 13-climate action, 14-life below water, 15-life on land). For other goals, it was challenging to find texts suitable for primary-aged children, to address these particular issues. For example, goal 12 – responsible consumption and production, and goal 9 – industry, innovation and infrastructure.

Findings concluded that, despite the potential for the SDGs to be a good framework for sorting and categorising picture books for use in school, there needs to be a lot more awareness and understanding in schools of the SDGs before this could be considered a practical solution for school practitioners.

What common global learning themes are found in picture books?

In analysis of over 100 picture books – carried out with other teachers in the working party discussion group (See Appendix), it was evident that there were particular themes which were most prevalent. It was important to understand how these books could be grouped in a way which was logical and considered to be user-friendly.

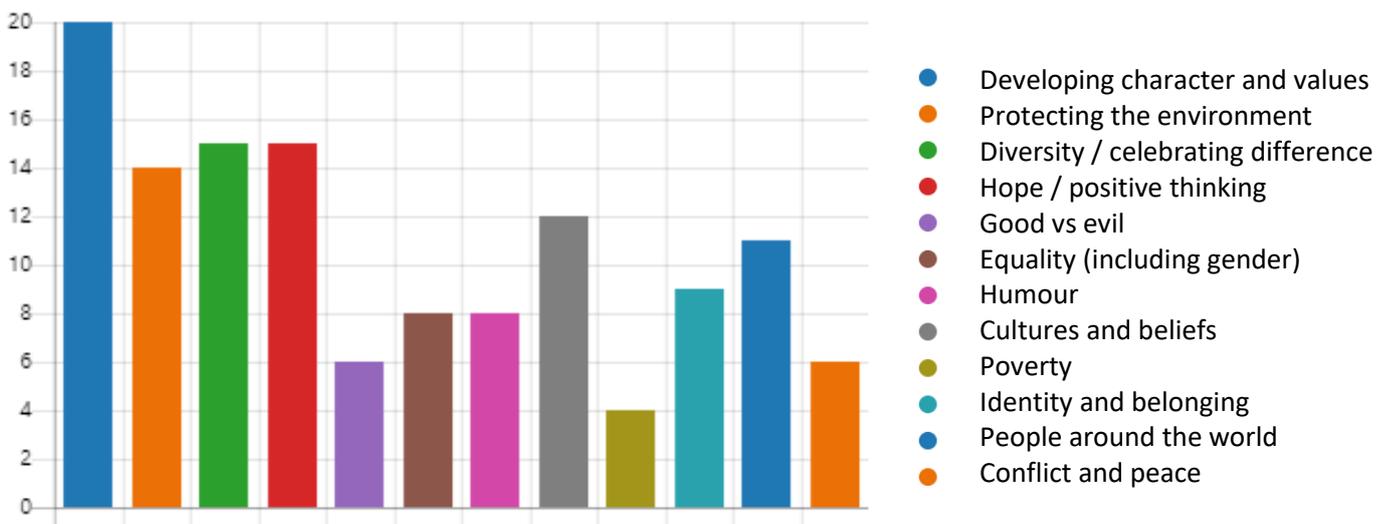
Initial online questionnaires sent out to primary practitioners (represented from 4 schools) asked teachers to select picture books which they use in the classroom from a series of 12 groups (Table 3). The majority of these themes were closely related to global learning, but others, such as 'humour' and 'good vs evil' were not. The rationale behind this was to decipher the most popular types of picture books chosen for use by primary practitioners.

Table 3: Initial thematic categories

Developing character and values	Protecting the environment	Diversity and celebrating differences	Hope and positive thinking	Good vs Evil	Equality (including gender)
Cultures and beliefs	Humour	Poverty	Identity and belonging	People around the world	Conflict and peace

The data in Figure 3 shows that Developing Character and Values was the most widely used theme in schools. Upon analysis, it is also important to note that this group incorporated many themes, ranging from kindness, resilience, to fairness, and was thus rather vast. For this reason, this 'grouping' was then discussed and broken down further in the practitioner study group.

Figure 3: Results from teacher survey about the use of picture books in the classroom (N= 21)



How picture books are used to encourage children to think about global issues

Analysis from both the online questionnaire and the teacher discussion group indicated that picture books are used predominantly by teachers for two reasons: in English lessons (as a stimulus to writing); and for reading/ sharing a book for enjoyment. 65% of respondents to the questionnaire stated that picture books were used in assembly time, compared to 35% of respondents using a picture book in subjects other than PSHE and English.

I asked teachers how they used picture books in different schooling spaces, their responses are discussed below.

Picture books and global themes in English: Picture books are often used as part of the English curriculum. The English unit is usually centred around a particular text, acting as a springboard for pupil study.

Picture books and global themes in PSHE: Picture books with a global theme predominantly come under the 'citizenship' strand of the PSHE curriculum. Picture books are also shared in 'Myself and my relationship' units.

Picture books and global themes across the curriculum: As part of a practitioner focus group, discussions were had around the use of picture books in other subjects. One activity focussed on looking at a wide variety of picture books and matching them to particular subject areas. It was clearly evident that there was increased flexibility of use within the English curriculum, and there was a huge variety of picture books which could be used within areas of PSHE. Perhaps the most surprising conclusion for teachers was that the books could also lend themselves to other subjects as well.

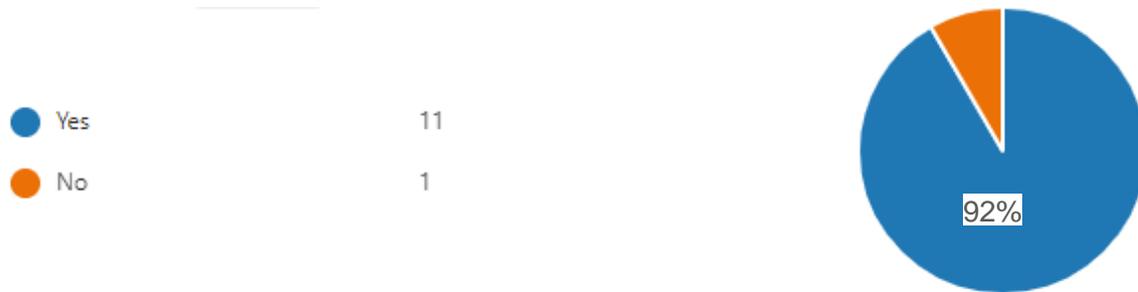
'Two of our Geography topics (in Year 4) are: How can we live more sustainably? And Jungles and deserts – I can already see books in the selection which I would use as part of my lesson to promote discussion. This could be a great P4C stimulus in geography.'

'Could picture books be used in French lessons? Intercultural understanding and understanding French speaking countries is an important aspect of the MFL curriculum. That is something to think about.'

'My geography topics are climate change and fair trade. I use picture books in English, but never in geography lessons. There is a good selection to choose from.'

It is clear that picture books have a place across many areas of the curriculum; teachers perhaps just need reminding of this. According to the online survey, all teachers agreed that children enjoy picture books - so this could be an enjoyable way in for teachers to get children thinking critically about particular themes. This teacher viewpoint, coupled with the fact that 92% of children enjoy sharing picture books (Figure 4), certainly helps to validate the use (and need) of picture books in the primary classroom. Similarly, 92% of children stated that they found picture books exciting, informative, enjoyable and very importantly – accessible (See Appendix).

Figure 4: Pupils' enjoyment of sharing a picture book (N= 12)



Picture books and global themes in assemblies: 65% of teachers in the online questionnaire indicated that picture books were sometimes used in Assembly time (Figure 5). All practitioners in the discussion group believed that further use of picture books to introduce or stimulate thinking global issues in assembly time could be carried out. Could this perhaps be an opportunity in schools to help embed global learning further?

Figure 5: Use of picture books in assembly time % (N= 21)



Picture books and enquiry: Only one of the 4 schools involved in the research was involved with P4C (Philosophy for Children) and picture books were considered by them to be a fundamental source as a stimulus for enquiry. Using picture books in this way ensures that children engage with the texts and consider varying perspectives and viewpoints as critical thinking is at the core of P4C. Its delivery ensures that children are not passive learners and that meaning can be sought through the enquiry process. Only 1 in 4 schools used in this research practised P4C so the question perhaps lies with what other forms of support are given to pupils to help them make sense of the global issues – what other forms of delivery are being used? This is unknown but should perhaps be given sufficient consideration and thought.

What factors support pupil engagement with global learning using picture books?

Questionnaires from pupils confirmed that pupils found picture books '*enjoyable and interesting*' (Figure 4). Pupils enjoyed talking about the issues in the books with their peers and teachers and found the dialogical element instrumental in understanding the interwoven meanings presented in books. Findings from this project also concluded that there was a huge and varied selection of picture books available to share in school for primary aged children - books which addressed a multitude of important global themes. In addition to this, the accepted viewpoint on education in schools (both from the DFE and educators themselves) is that it is the schools' responsibility and duty to equip children with the knowledge, skills and values needed for modern (and future) society. The triangulation of all these aspects led us to our final activity in the teacher discussion group.

Using this information, the final teacher discussion group session centred around how we could maximise the use of picture books and increase pupil engagement. The teacher group came up with a list of the main areas which schools could consider to support pupil engagement in global learning. These are merely suggestions:

- Promote communication between school and home (parental engagement). Could pupils bring home picture books which have been shared in class to promote further discussion at home?
- Integrate picture books into the school's strategy to promote a 'love of reading'.
- Include picture books in the promotion of school values (a picture book representing each value).
- Allow time more time for children to share and explore picture books – independently and in pairs.
- Embedding global learning across more areas of the curriculum – other than English and PSHE (interwoven approach).
- Allow children to complete the global competence cycle, enabling them to communicate and take action (becoming active global citizens).
- Increase opportunities to develop critical thinking skills through the use of picture books. P4C was considered to be an excellent forum for bringing meaning to global issues and promoting global understanding.

Conclusions

There is a mountain of evidence to suggest that picture books have an important place in the primary school classroom. Our young readers are attracted to them; they are accessible to the weaker readers; and teachers certainly value their effectiveness in using them as a stimulus for discussions about important issues (local and global).

The way in which these books are used affects the development of pupils' global understanding. Navigating a way through misconceptions, stereotypes and bias is difficult and complex. It is vital that we recognise the significant relationship between using picture books with children and the need to teach children how to be critical thinkers. Pupils need to consider: the author's intentions, the fact that this is perhaps just one representation, and hidden messages. Children need to be supported in how to engage with this information and be encouraged to empathise and know when (and if) to take action on the information presented.

Philosophy for children is one way in which this could be implemented – and research has proven its effectiveness in developing pupils' thinking skills. The picture book is a worthy stimulus for enquiry. It is paramount that exploration of self and the global is interwoven within the curriculum. Indeed: *'understanding self as a cultural being is at the core of a curriculum that is international'* (Geertz, 1973 cited in Martens et al, 2015).

Upon analysis, it is apparent that picture books are being used in school to support global learning, but it could be argued that there are ways in which this could be embedded further. Communication between parents and school could certainly support this. One suggestion is that books shared in school could be taken home by pupils to encourage shared reading and discussion round global issues at home.

The use of picture books in assembly time could also be further encouraged, helping to support collective values and providing continuity of learning across all year groups. Picture books promoting global learning and SMSC could be linked to assemblies throughout the year, for example, International Day of Peace, Black History Month, and on topics such as plastic pollution.

My final conclusion is concerned with what the next steps should be, based upon the findings. It was agreed (among the teachers in the focus group) that a centralised system enabling teachers to find picture books relatively quickly would be extremely helpful. Teachers were keen on the fact that books could be categorised into themes, but acknowledged that complications arise when books address more than one key theme, thus crossing over. This leaves us with the question as to whether there is the need for a global learning picture book database, enabling practitioners to type into the search bar the desired theme. The database would then bring up the titles of the picture books which could be used by practitioners in school. To improve this further, diversity amongst authors should also be represented, encouraging using books with multiple perspectives. This would certainly help teachers and support in the continued promotion of global learning within schools – which is, of course, the ultimate aim.

A framework to identify global picture books to be used with primary aged children can be viewed in the Appendix. It is hoped this can be built on and developed by teachers and pupils.

Whilst believing that I have answered my research question in this project, it has certainly highlighted the areas which need to be developed further. This research paper was a journey; and, en route, has raised further questions – questions I would like to find the answers to:

- Are my findings representative of other areas across the country?
- How have findings changed since the COP26 summit?
- How will the climate crisis affect the direction of education in terms of statutory requirements?

This paper was written with the primary practitioner in mind. I am confident in my thinking that the suggestions for next steps (as outlined in this paper), would be beneficial for primary schools going forward – after all, the need (and must) for global learning in schools is becoming increasingly clear and understood.

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Appendices

Pupil questionnaire

1	Which year group are you in?	Year 3 Year 4 Year 5 Year 6
2	How often do you look at picture books in the classroom with your teacher?	Often Sometimes No very often Never
3	Do you read picture books at home?	Often Sometimes Not very often Never
4	What makes you want to read a picture book (what attracts you)?	The title The pictures / illustrations The story's message (theme) Recommended by a friend My teacher chooses it for me It is a shorter text so I can read the whole story
5	Do you find picture books exciting / enjoyable?	Yes No

6	Which age group do you think picture books are best suited for?	Age 6 and below Age 8 and below Primary aged children All children All adults and children
7	Can you tell me what your favourite thing is about reading a picture book?	
8	Do you think that picture books help you to learn about people and the world?	No Sometimes I'm not sure
9	Do you enjoy talking about the book with your peers or teacher?	Yes No Sometimes

Framing of picture books

Global Theme	Book
DEVELOPING CHARACTER & VALUES Creativity, Resilience, Hope, positivity, Confidence, Friendship, Kindness, Inner strength.	I promise by Lebron James I dare you by Reece Wykes The Red Tree by Shaun Tan Cicada by Shaun Tan I want my hat back by Jon Klassen

	<p>Wisp – A story of Hope by Zana Fraillon</p> <p>The Owl who was afraid of the Dark by Jill Tomlinson</p> <p>Laura’s Star by Klaus Baumgart</p> <p>What If by Anthony Brown</p> <p>The wonder by Faye Hanson</p> <p>Beautiful Oops by Barney Saltzberg</p> <p>The Dark by Lemony Snicket</p> <p>The Good Egg by Jory John</p> <p>The Bad Seed by Jory John</p> <p>The Cool Bean by Jory John</p> <p>After the Fall by Dan Santat</p> <p>The Koala who could by Rachel Bright</p> <p>The Lion Inside by Rachel Bright</p> <p>Stuck by Oliver Jeffers</p> <p>The most Magnificent Thing by Ashley Spires</p> <p>What to do with a problem by Kobi Yamada</p> <p>What to do with an idea by Kobi Yamada</p> <p>The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds</p>
<p>THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Sustainable living, pollution on land, sea pollution, climate change, waste, recycling, deforestation.</p>	<p>Window by Jeannie Baker</p> <p>Love the World by Todd Parr</p> <p>The Tin Forest by Helen Ward</p> <p>Oi! Get off my Train by John Burningham</p> <p>Flotsam by David Wiesner</p> <p>What a Waste by Jess French</p> <p>A Planet Full of Plastic by Neil Layton</p> <p>The Adventures of a Plastic Bottle by Alison Inches</p> <p>Duffy’s Lucky Escape by Ellie Jackson</p> <p>One Plastic Bag by Isatou Ceesay</p> <p>Tidy by Emily Gravett</p> <p>One World by Michael Foreman</p>

	<p>The Promise by Nicola Davies</p> <p>The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry</p> <p>Into the Sea by Brenda Z. Guiberson</p> <p>Somebody Swallowed Stanley by Sarah Roberts</p>
<p>POVERTY</p> <p>Hunger, homelessness, water.</p>	<p>Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts</p> <p>The Table where Rich People sit by Byrd Baylor</p> <p>The Hard Times Jar by Ethel Footman</p> <p>Still a Family: A story about Homelessness by Brenda Reeves</p> <p>Our World of Water by Beatrice Hollyer</p> <p>The Promise by Nicola Davies</p> <p>The Magic Paintbrush by Julia Donaldson</p> <p>Clean Water Elirose by Ariah Fine</p> <p>The Can Man by Laura E Williams</p> <p>The Secret River by Marjorie Rawlings</p> <p>The Water Princess by Susan Verde</p>
<p>EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY</p> <p>Understanding similarities and differences, respect for others.</p>	<p>Just Like Me by Vanessa Newton</p> <p>The Smeds and the Smoos by Julia Donaldson</p> <p>Eric by Shaun Tan</p> <p>Drum Dream Girl by Margarita Engle</p> <p>Mixed by Aree Chung</p> <p>Red Rockets and Rainbow Jelly by Sue Heap & Nick Sharratt</p> <p>Something Else by Kathryn Cave</p> <p>We're all Wonders by R.J. Palacio</p> <p>All the Colours of the Earth by Sheila Hamanaka</p> <p>It's OK to be different by Sharon Purtill</p>
<p>IDENTITY & BELONGING</p> <p>Rights and Responsibilities, belonging, understanding identity.</p>	<p>The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson</p> <p>Freedom Soup by Jacqueline Alcantara</p> <p>A Life Like Mine by Unicef</p>

	<p>Lost and Found by Shaun Tan</p> <p>And Tango makes three by Justin Richardson</p> <p>The Matchbox Diary by Paul Fleischman</p> <p>Nothing by Mick Inkpen</p> <p>The girl who slept under the moon by Shereen Malherbe</p> <p>Mud Boy by Sarah Siggs</p> <p>For every child by Unicef</p> <p>The Island by Armin Greder</p> <p>A Bad Case of the Stripes by David Shannon</p> <p>Wild by Emily Hughes</p> <p>Here we are by Oliver Jeffers</p> <p>The Invisible by Tom Percival</p> <p>Where are you from? by Jaime Kim</p> <p>The adventures of Beekle by Dan Santat</p> <p>The Bear and the Piano by David Litchfield</p> <p>Beegu by Alexis Deacon</p> <p>Guji by Chih-Yaun Chen</p> <p>Home is a window by Stephanie Ledyard</p> <p>Spoon by Amy Krouse Rosenthal</p>
<p>ACTIVE GLOBAL CITIZENS</p> <p>How to make a difference? How to help?</p>	<p>If the World Were a Village by David Smith</p> <p>101 small ways to Change the World by Lonely Planet Kids</p> <p>Freda makes a difference by United Nations</p> <p>When I coloured the World by Ahmadreza Ahmadi</p> <p>Malala's Magic Pencil by Malala Yousafza</p> <p>Little Things make a Big Difference by John & Monique Nunes</p> <p>What does it mean to be Global by Rana DiOrio</p> <p>The World came to my Place Today by Jo Readman</p> <p>10 things I can do to help my World by Melanie Walsh</p> <p>We are all born free by Amnesty International</p>

<p>MIGRATION</p> <p>Refugees, conflict & peace, seasonal migration, return migration, seeking asylum.</p>	<p>The Arrival by Shaun Tan</p> <p>There's Room for Everyone by Anahita Tehmorian</p> <p>My name is not Refugee by Kate Milner</p> <p>The Colour of Home by Mary Hoffman</p> <p>The Island by Armin Greder</p> <p>Wherever I go by Mary Wagley Copp</p> <p>Tani's New Year by Tanitoluwa Adewumi</p> <p>The Journey by Francesca Sanna</p> <p>Four Feet, Two Sandals by Karen Lynn Williams</p> <p>The Day War came by Nicola Davies</p> <p>Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour</p> <p>The Suitcase by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros</p> <p>The Silence Seeker by Ben Morely and Carl Pearce</p> <p>Wisp by Zana Fraillon</p> <p>Tomorrow by Nadine Kaadan</p> <p>Refugees by Brian Bilston</p> <p>Saving the Butterfly by Helen Cooper</p> <p>Coming to England by Floella Benjamin</p> <p>Welcome by Barroux</p>
<p>CULTURES AND BELIEFS</p> <p>Religions, traditions, rituals, food, language, art and music, society.</p>	<p>Let's celebrate edited by Debjani Chatterjee</p> <p>It's OK to be different by Sharon Purtill</p> <p>Lanterns and Firecrackers by Jonny Zucker</p> <p>Mirror by Jeanie Baker</p>
<p>FAIR TRADE</p>	<p>Juliana's Bananas by Ruth Walton</p> <p>Think Fair Trade First! by Ingrid Hess</p> <p>Food and Fair Trade by Paul Mason</p> <p>Fair Trade First by Sarah Ridley</p>



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Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning is a free and flexible programme for schools around the world based on learning, knowledge sharing and international collaboration. Connecting Classrooms supports teachers to equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to act more thoughtfully, ethically and responsibly as citizens and contributors to society.

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