

Autism Awareness Week

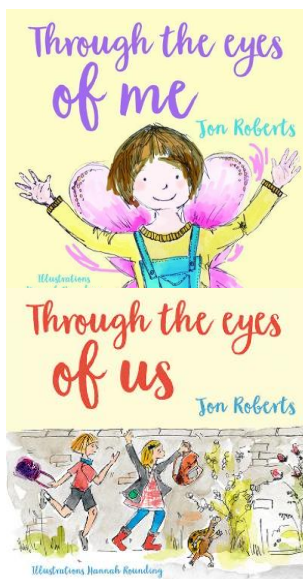
Produced in partnership with [Spa School](#), a [CLPE Associate School](#). A selection of books, both fiction and non-fiction, all about autism and neurodiversity. Created to mark Autism Awareness Week 2022 (28th March – 3rd April).

Early Years / Foundation Stage



The Pablo books by multiple authors
Penguin, multiple ISBNs

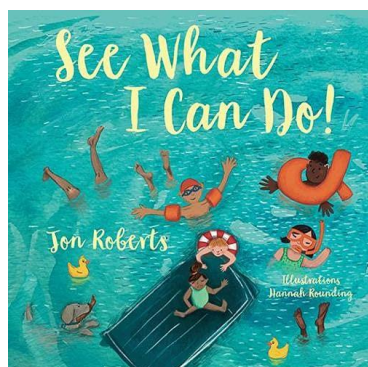
Written by a collective of authors on the autistic spectrum, and grounded in the real-life experiences of autistic children, a charming and relatable picturebook series starring young Pablo and his animal friends. Follow Pablo as he navigates a variety of scenarios from attending a noisy birthday party to figuring out new ways of communicating his feelings – very empathetic, and great for helping very young children understand the world around them.



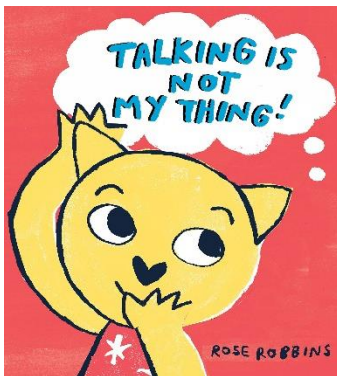
Through the Eyes of Me and Through the Eyes of Us by Jon Roberts and Hannah Rounding
Graffeg, 9781912213009 and 9781912654802

This pair of books by author-illustrator duo Roberts and Rounding are inspired and exuberantly narrated by the author's daughter, as she chronicles her daily life and experiences – the term 'autistic' is explicitly used on the final page. 'Through the Eyes of Us' explores the similarities and differences between a pair of best friends, both of whom are autistic, and is notable for its depiction of different points on the spectrum, acknowledging that there is no 'one way' to be autistic. Closes with a list of useful links and resources.

See What I Can Do! by Jon Roberts and Hannah Rounding
Graffeg, 9781913733896

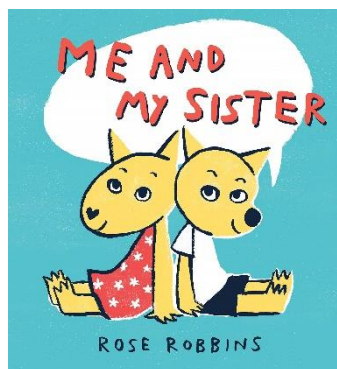


Each illustrated spread of this book focuses on a different group of children, each living with a different disability. The children share their experiences in conversation with one another – the autistic children, for example, converse using different forms of verbal and non-verbal communication, and discuss sensory sensitivity. The book's glossary details each disability in further depth, with a link to online resources.



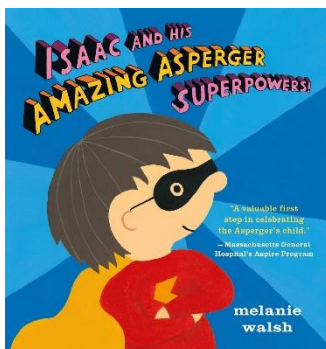
Talking Is Not My Thing! by Rose Robbins
Sallywag, 9781912650224

Explores the everyday life and routines of a young non-verbal autistic girl. She communicates to the reader in thought bubbles – in contrast to her brother, who speaks to her in speech bubbles – and we see her using different types of non-verbal communication, such as flashcards and high-fives. Charmingly illustrated by the author.



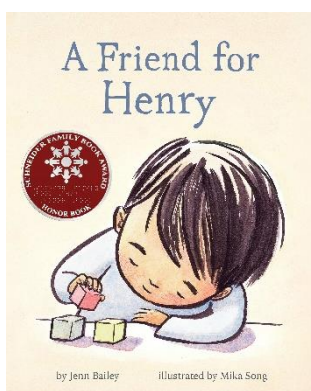
Me and My Sister by Rose Robbins
Sallywag, 9781912650231

A companion picturebook to *Talking Is Not My Thing*, this time told from a sibling's perspective. Eating different foods, going to different schools and communicating in different ways are entirely normalised within this family unit, and though the brother sometimes gets frustrated with his autistic sister, empathy and love always win out.



Isaac and his Amazing Asperger Superpowers! by Melanie Walsh
Walker, 9781406373141

Walsh specialises in boldly illustrated accessible non-fiction for Early Years, covering a range of topics from environmentalism to bereavement. In this title, endorsed by the National Autistic Society, Isaac introduces himself and his “superpowers”, such as remembering lots of interesting facts, and supersonic hearing (sensory sensitivity). Asperger’s and autism are only mentioned by name in the final spread, and the book closes with a list of related resources and organisations.



Key Stage One

A Friend for Henry by Jenn Bailey and Mika Song
Chronicle Books, 9781452167916

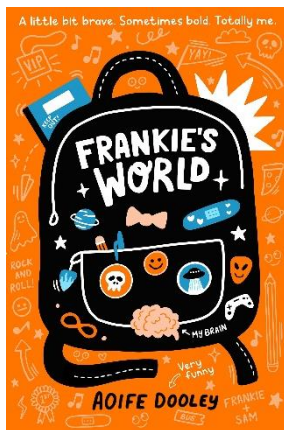
A gentle narrative about a young autistic boy navigating tricky classroom politics in the search for a friend who is quiet, who shares, who listens, and who says thank-you. His hope dwindles, until an unexpected encounter with a little girl who reads storybooks “all by herself”; they bond over their shared affection for the class goldfish. The world of the classroom is brought to life by Song’s evocative watercolour illustrations.



Leo and the Octopus by Isabelle Marinov and Chris Nixon
Templar Books, 9781787416550

A sensitive and beautifully illustrated book on autism and Asperger's, exploring – through a little boy's friendship with an octopus at the aquarium – special interests, empathy, and different ways of approaching the world and making friends.

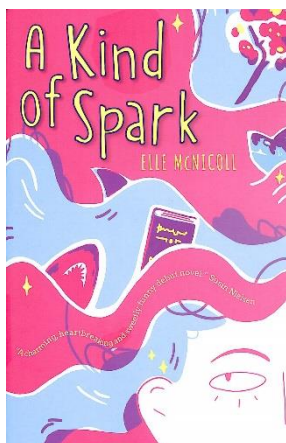
Key Stage Two



Frankie's World by Aoife Dooley
Scholastic, 9780702307355

In this two-colour graphic novel, Frankie goes through school faced with constant reminders of her difference – her sensitivity, her inability to concentrate, her difficulties communicating etc. – thinking only that her brain is “broken” or “weird”. A revelation about her family eventually shows her that she is not alone.

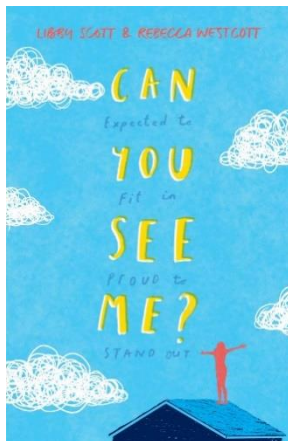
Both a warm, witty and relatable read about the awkwardness of growing up and fitting in, and a specific and sensitive comment on neurodiversity. The book draws on the author's own experiences of receiving an autism diagnosis in her 20s, and closes with a fact file and myth-busting section.



A Kind of Spark by Elle McNicoll
Knights Of, 9781913311056

This award-winning debut novel from neurodivergent author Elle McNicoll follows an autistic girl's campaign to establish a memorial for women murdered as witches in her Scottish hometown. Deeply empathetic, with the protagonist drawing equivalences between autistic people and ‘witches’, targeted because of perceived difference and bigotry. A CLPE [Corebook](#).

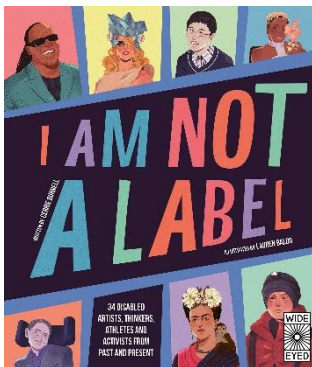
At the time of writing McNicoll has written two further novels with neurodivergent heroes, also published by Knights Of: *Show Us Who You Are*, starring an autistic girl and her best friend with ADHD; and *Like a Charm*, in which the protagonist is dyspraxic.



Can You See Me? by Libby Scott and Rebecca Westcott
Scholastic, 9781407195674

This novel is co-authored by an autistic teenager and an author and teacher. Its chapters, written in third-person prose, are interspersed with first-person diary entries, lending a powerful sense of authenticity to the words.

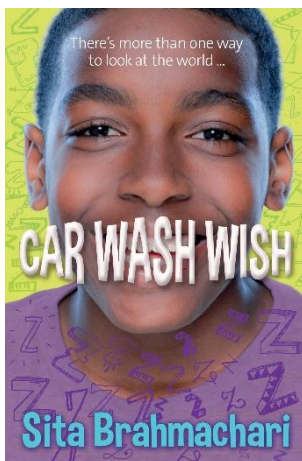
‘Masking’ (a conscious or unconscious decision taken by some autistic people of learning and performing neurotypical behaviours) is a central topic here, encompassing the profound discomfort that comes from suppressing entire parts of yourself to others, and the teenage conundrum of being ‘normal’ versus being yourself.



I Am Not a Label by Cerrie Burnell and Lauren Baldo
Quarto, 9780711263918

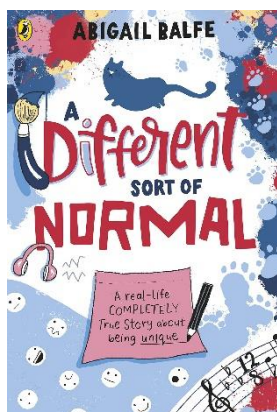
Written by actor, presenter and author Cerrie Burnell, and crowned Runner-up of 2021’s ALCS Educational Writer’s Award, this book uses the ‘illustrated biographies’ format popularised by *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* to tell the potted life stories of 34 trailblazing people with disabilities, from the 1700s to the present day. Includes sections on mental health and invisible disabilities, and features Professor Temple Grandin and author Naoki Higashida as notable autistic role models.

Key Stage Three



Car Wash Wish by Sita Brahmachari
Barrington Stoke, 9781781125236

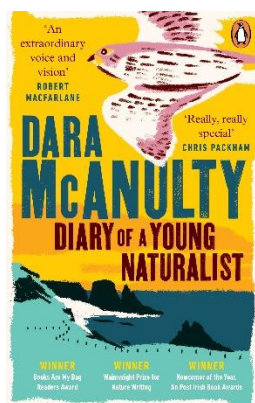
This energetic novella invites the reader into the world of teenager Hudson and his “meandering mind”, narrated in conversational, almost stream-of-consciousness-style first-person, and told to Hudson’s as-yet-unborn sibling. Hudson is open about his Asperger’s diagnosis; the ways in which he relates to other people, their words and emotions; and the social negotiation required to attend a family funeral alongside his divorced parents. Themes of family, communication and love shine through throughout. A CLPE [Corebook](#).



A Different Sort of Normal by Abigail Balfe
 Penguin, 9780241508794

A funny and authentic illustrated memoir, both a personal account of growing up autistic and a general guidebook for autistic people, allies, and “anyone who has ever felt different”. Author-illustrator Balfe imparts information in a variety of ways: full text, textboxes, short comics, doodles, lists, diary entries etc.; and covers an incredibly broad range of information about autism, the science of neurodiversity, tackling misconceptions, how to navigate key life milestones, and more.

Terminology is defined in textboxes throughout, and extensive endmatter covers tips for autistic people and allies, useful resources, a glossary, and a final note from the author.



Diary of a Young Naturalist by Dara McNulty
 Penguin, 9781529109603

Though autism is not the main focus here, debut author and environmental activist Dara McNulty weaves together his experience of living with autism with his fascination with the natural world – part coming-of-age memoir, part natural chronicle, McNulty explores the connections between all elements of nature and the place of humans amongst them. The diary structure follows a year in the life of the teenaged author, “the turning of my world, from spring to winter, at home, in the wild, in my head”.

Further recommendations from Spa School:

It's Raining Cats and Dogs: An Autism Spectrum Guide to the Confusing World of Idioms, Metaphors and Everyday Expressions by Michael Barton

A Different Kettle of Fish: A Day in the Life of a Physics Student with Autism by Michael Barton

My Awesome Autism by Nikki Saunders

Alice: An Aardvark with Autism by Jo North

The Superhero Brain: Explaining Autism to Empower Kids by Christel Land

All My Stripes: A Story for Children with Autism by Danielle Royer

The Lost Diary of Sami Star by Karen McCombie

Anything but Typical by Nora Raleigh Baskin

Autism and Me by Haia Ironside

A Girl Like Tilly: Growing Up with Autism by Helen Bates