

# LIBRARY

## NEWSLETTER



ST BERNARD'S  
HIGH SCHOOL

ISSUE 14/07/25

## LIBRARY NEWS

### School's out for the summer!

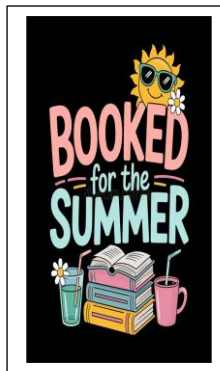
After a busy couple of months with exam season and end-of-term events such as cultural week, summer fete, fun day and Sport's Day, it's finally time to chill and relax and get stuck into a good book, or two.

Find the summer's hottest new reads when you take part in St Bernard's own summer reading challenge or when you sign up for the summer reading challenge online or at your local library.

[Summer Reading Bingo Worksheet in Retro Textured](#)

[Style.pdf](#)

<https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/>



### Winner of the first St Bernard's Writing Prize competition

We are very excited to announce our winner: Nowrin Rahman of 9H.

A massive Congratulations to Nowrin and we are delighted to share the winning piece "**Hope is the light that carries us**" with you all:

Hope is one of those quiet forces in life that often goes unnoticed until it's all we have left. It isn't flashy or loud, and it doesn't always show certainty. But hope is powerful. It's the belief – sometimes fragile, sometimes fierce that better days are possible, even if we can't see it yet. Hope doesn't ignore reality. It doesn't pretend that life is always fair or that things will magically work out. Instead, it lives beside the pain, disappointment and uncertainty and says 'maybe'.

*Maybe tomorrow will be better. Maybe I'll feel okay again. Maybe there's still a way forward.*

And often, that "maybe" is enough to keep us moving. We've all faced moments when life feels heavy. It could be the loss of someone we love, the collapse of a dream or the struggle to simply make it through the day. In those moments, hope isn't always a grand, inspiring force. Sometimes, it's just a flicker – the decision to take the next breath, the next step or to try one more time. And while it might feel small, that flicker is *everything*. Hope shows up in the most human ways. It's in a parent working hard for their child's future, even when the present feels impossible. It's in someone who gets back up after failure, still believing in their purpose. It's in the quiet bravery of a person battling anxiety or depression who still shows up, still fights, still hopes. It's also contagious. When one person holds onto hope, it can inspire those around them. A single story of survival, kindness or resilience can spark something in someone else who feels lost. In that way hope is not only something we hold for ourselves – it's something we can offer each other. A smile, a kind word or simply listening can be a lifeline for someone barely holding on. But hope isn't always easy to maintain. There are times when it fades, when the weight of life makes it hard to believe in anything better. And that's okay – it doesn't mean we're weak – it means we're human. The good news is hope can return. It often does, sometimes in unexpected ways, a conversation, a change, a new day. We don't have to force it, sometimes we just have to leave space for it to come back. Hope is not a guarantee, but it is a guide. It doesn't promise that things will be perfect, but it helps us believe that things can improve. It helps us endure, grow and even dream again. In a world that can be *uncertain, painful and unpredictable*, *hope is the thread that holds us together*.

So, no matter how hard it gets, if there's even the smallest part of you that still hopes, that still believes in a better moment, a better life or a better world – hold onto it. That hope might just be the beginning of something beautiful.

### BLUE PETER BADGE offer!

Aim high and reap double the rewards!

Become a Word Millionaire and Blue Peter Badge Holder! Earn yourself a Blue Peter Badge which rewards you with free entry to many attractions across the country. See link below for more details.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/findoutmore/blue-peter-apply-for-a-book-badge>

When you buy a physical book from [lovereading4kids](#), 25% of the cover price will be given to our school.

Buy something for our library from the Year of Hope wish list! Gift a book today.

<https://www.lovereading4kids.co.uk/>

### WORD

## MILLIONAIRE

### Congratulations to our summer Word Millionaires!

A massive WELL DONE to the following 6 students on becoming **Word Millionaires**:

Abinaya Aravinthal

Poppy Birtwhistle

Matylda Gulczynska

Rosa Manzyukova Telenchana

Stellamaris Onyekush

Lucia Radley

An amazing achievement! Who wants to be the next Word Millionaire?



Thank you to everybody who entered the writing competition. There were some very creative and inspirational pieces.

**NEWSFLASH: THE SCHOOL LIBRARY IS RELOCATING.**  
**WATCH THIS SPACE FOR THE GRAND REOPENING OF OUR NEW LIBRARY SPACE**

**The winners of the Carnegies book award** were announced on 19th June. Drum roll please for the winner of the Carnegie Shadowers' Choice Medal for Writing: **King of Nothing** by Nathanael Lessor. Margaret McDonald was announced as the Carnegie Medal for Writing winner, the youngest in almost a ninety-year history of the award for her novel **Glasgow Boys**. Carry on reading for an insight into a selection of the shortlisted books in book reviews written by some of our Year 9 Reading Leaders:

**Deborah Kolawole writes about the winning book 'King of Nothing' by Nathanael Lessor.** It's about a boy named Anton who thinks he's the coolest kid around. He's always trying to impress people and act like he's in charge, but deep down, he's just trying to figure out who he really is. At first, a lot of people wouldn't really like Anton because he comes across as a bit full of himself. But as the story goes on, you realise he's putting on an act because he's struggling with stuff at home and trying to fit in. This made me feel involved with the characters as I could understand his point of view, and his ways of fitting in. The book is really funny, and the way it's written sounds like how real teenagers actually talk. I liked that it wasn't trying too hard to be serious all the time. But it still had some important messages - like being yourself, not judging people too quickly, and how being popular isn't everything. Lessor did a great job of mixing humour and emotion. I think loads of students would relate to Anton in some way, especially if you've ever felt like you had to pretend to be someone else just to fit in. I definitely recommend this, especially if you like books that are real, funny and with a bit of drama.

**Maja Slowikoska reviews 'The Final Year' by Matt Goodfellow.** A powerful verse novel about a boy called Nate Wilder who's going through his last year of primary school. He's only 10 years old but already dealing with a lot of pressure. His best friend is moved into a different class, which makes him feel alone, and the stress of SATs just makes everything worse. Then things take a serious turn when his younger brother Dylan becomes very ill, and Nate's whole world starts to feel like it's falling apart. With everything building up, Nate's teacher encourages him to start writing down his thoughts and feelings, and that becomes his way of coping and understanding everything that's going on around him. The book looks at important themes like friendship, family, growing up, and how quickly life can change. What really stood out to me was how honest Nate's emotions were. It showed how writing isn't just something you do at school - it can actually help you deal with real-life problems too. I liked that the story didn't feel fake or too dramatic - it just felt like something that could happen to anyone. I recommend The Final Year to anyone who enjoys emotional and thoughtful books. It's especially good if you're going through something yourself or just want to read a story that actually means something.

**Assumpta Ononogbo reviews 'Play' the book written by Luke Palmer** about the experiences of adolescent boys and their journey in navigating their identities, faults, and successes. The book follows Matt, Luke, Johnny, and Mark as they grow up, playing games and getting into trouble, navigating their changing lives, and discovering their identities. Its realistic portrayal of the dangers and joys of boyhood was something I found myself relating to, even though I'm not a teenage boy. I related to their experiences, their sadness and struggle to belong, their changing dynamics and their confusion on who they wanted to be. Their games, although a bit obscure, really showed their creativity. Palmer authored this book in a way that made me connect with the characters and find reason in their faults and mistakes. I would recommend this to anyone who finds themselves lost in the crowd, as it really helped me to think about how easy it is to fall into a young crowd when isolated, and it broadened my world view.

**Zoe Mapi-Ot says 'Play' is a gripping coming-of-age story of four boys.** Different perspectives and a multiple narrative structure makes this a compelling read. Each perspective is even rendered in a different font to distinguish each character. It explores themes of identity, sexuality, friendship and danger and each character has his own story and struggles. I especially enjoyed the emotional and reflective ending. I find it interesting to note that the main characters names each align to that of the four Gospel writers. The book cover may be misleading in the actual contents: the development of boys from their innocent childhood to more rebellious teenage years. Overall, this book explores heartbreak and complex themes and was nothing like anything I have read before making it a very good read. **'The Final Year'** is a beautiful novel and easy read. It explores themes of love, loss, betrayal and personal growth. I personally enjoyed its unconventional structure: poems or words spread out randomly reflecting the narrators emotional state of mind. It teaches readers what can happen in just one year and to value the people in our lives.

Despite the heartbreak, it ends on a hopeful note and is deeply-moving.



### SUMMER SPOTLIGHT:

New to St Bernard's but with many years of librarian experience, Mrs Bloomfield shares her favourite book with us: **Long Way Down** by Jason Reynolds, a verse novel that tells the story of Will, who has to make a crucial decision about an act of revenge during a 60-second ride in a lift.

**"A gripping story of breathtaking suspense about breaking the cycle of violence. Reynolds is an award-winning author of children's and YA books, and I think everybody should read one of his books in their lifetime. Pop into the library to see us".**

### A BIG THANK YOU!

Lastly, a big thank you to our library prefects who help with the smooth running of the library during our busy periods, our reading leaders who have guided younger year 7 readers on their reading journey and also, to our latest additions to the library - our team of library assistants who kindly assist with various duties from shelving, displays, book classification and desk duties. Thank you all for your time and efforts.