

## Gypsy and Traveller Books for Primary Schools

Richard O’Neill is a storyteller and author from the Romany tradition. The National Literacy Trust describes his books as: [“Inclusive, inspiring, funny, traditional and contemporary, with strong themes of inclusion, identity, community and ecology.”](#)

The books are an opportunity for Gypsy and Traveller pupils to see themselves reflected in literature and for all pupils to appreciate the wonderful stories and messages in these books. Enjoy!

### Primary School – all ages

Title	Publisher Description	Author	Publisher
The Lost Homework	Sonny devotes his weekend to helping his neighbours and fellow Travellers with a variety of tasks. He uses many skills, from calculating the amount of fuel needed for a journey, to restoring a caravan. In fact, the only thing he doesn’t do over the weekend is his homework – his workbook is missing! What will his teacher say? This new picture book by Richard O’Neill champions the idea that many skills learned at home are as important as those learned at school.	Richard O’Neill	Child’s Play
The Can Caravan	When Janie’s neighbour Mrs Tolen goes into hospital with a broken hip, it looks as though she will have to move out of her old caravan and into a house. Janie is desperate to help, but all seems lost until her school visits a local recycling plant. All it takes from there is imagination, a supportive community, and lots and lots of hard work to transform Mrs Tolen’s old caravan into a safe and secure new home! The latest picture book by renowned Romani storyteller Richard O’Neill celebrates the traditional Traveller virtues of resilience, adaptability, loyalty and independence.	Richard O’Neill	Child’s Play
Polonious the Pit Pony	When Polonius the pit pony escapes from the coal mine he’s worked in all his life, he joins a family of Travellers. Although he enjoys the freedom and the fresh air that their lifestyle offers, he wishes he could give something back to the family in return. When the chance arrives for him to do something to help, he rises to the challenge, and uses his intelligence and skills to save the day. Based on true events and retold by a master of the oral tradition, this story bears witness to the Traveller values of independence, initiative, courage and hard work.	Richard O’Neill	Child’s Play

Ossiri and the Bala Mengro	A Traveller girl creates her own musical instrument from a willow branch and lots of recycled objects. She plays it enthusiastically, but it sounds terrible! Ignoring warnings not to awaken the ogre in the hills, Ossiri goes there to practise playing her instrument. Will she wake the ogre, and will it appreciate her playing? Told by a Romani storyteller and a picture book author, this original tale offers a fascinating insight into Travelling lifestyles and cultures.	Richard O'Neill & Katharine Quarmby	Child's Play
Yokki and the Parno Gry	When a Traveller family experiences a run of bad luck, an imaginative boy called Yokki lifts their spirits with tales of a magical white horse. A traditional Traveller-family folk tale which inspires hope and celebrates creativity. Told by a Romani storyteller together with a picture book author to positively reflect Travelling cultures.	Richard O'Neill & Katharine Quarmby	Child's Play

### Key Stage 1 – learning to read

Title	Publisher Description	Author	Publisher
Halle had a Hammer	<p>Halle and her family are Romani Travellers. They move around and they're very good at fixing and making things. Halle's family visit a village that had lots of problems at their annual running race last year. Can Halle's family, with their truck of tools and wood, help the community avert another disaster?</p> <p>This story from children's authors Richard O'Neill and Michelle Russell is perfect for Key Stage 1 (KS1) children who are learning to read by themselves. It features colour illustrations by Elijah Vardo and provides awareness, understanding and celebration of a travelling community.</p>	Richard O'Neill & Michelle Russell	Bloomsbury Education

### Key Stage 2

Title	Publisher Description	Author	Publisher
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<p>School For Nomads: A parable about half a century of education</p>	<p>Two driven high school Traveller students are eager to teach their teachers about the benefits of traditional nomadic learning. Little did they know - their learnings are not only useful but in a global pandemic, may be essential.</p> <p>School for Nomads is a modern parable spanning half a century of mainstream educational experiences from the 1970's right up to the present day. Told through the voices of three young people, it follows the course of education over half a century and what has changed and what still needs to change in the present and future.</p> <p>Funny touching and heart-rendering, the book highlights previous generations of students who were powerless to effect change in schools. The fictional characters Martha-Rose and Margaret, represent current students who will not be ignored or excluded simply because the education system finds it too difficult to accommodate them and all they bring to it.</p> <p>School for Nomads is both an authentic take on the education system from a Traveller students perspective and a rallying cry for change that will benefit both students and educators across the world.</p>	<p>Richard O'Neill</p>	<p>The Storyteller</p>
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<p>Parade of the Pipers</p>	<p>Collins Big Cat supports every primary child on their reading journey from phonics to fluency. Top authors and illustrators have created fiction and non-fiction books that children love to read. Levelled for guided and independent reading, each book includes ideas to support reading. Teaching and assessment support and eBooks are also available.</p> <p>When a group of Travelling recyclers agree to tidy up a town, their methods of working, their music and stories have a huge impact on the residents making them examine their lives.</p> <p>Emerald/Band 15 books provide a widening range of genres including science fiction and biography, prompting more ways to respond to texts.</p> <p>Pages 46 and 47 allow children to re-visit the content of the book, supporting comprehension skills, vocabulary development and recall.</p> <p>Ideas for reading in the back of the book provide practical support and stimulating activities.</p> <p>Recommended reading age 8-9 years.</p>	<p>Richard O’Neill &amp; Michelle Russell</p>	<p>Bloomsbur y Education</p>
<p>A Different Kind of Freedom: A Romani Story</p>	<p>A gripping football-filled adventure based in the Romani community of 19th-century Sheffield.</p> <p>This action-packed story is told through the eyes of young Lijah, as he navigates life and discovers football and the legendary Rab Howell.</p> <p><i>“Quick history of Rab Howell: born in a wagon on a camp like yours about thirty years ago. He played for United and England, and was one of the best players I ever saw.”</i></p> <p>In this heart-stopping adventure, Richard O’Neill shows us an important and intriguing time in Britain that’s sure to fascinate young readers.</p> <p>Recommended reading age 9-12 years.</p>	<p>Richard O’Neill</p>	<p>Scholastic</p>