

NO OUT SIDERS

‘All different, All welcome’

A guide for parents and carers

Andrew Moffat

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Foreword by Andrew Moffat, CEO and founder, No Outsiders charity

In the past few years I have visited 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 recently I started offering to meet parents and carers as part of the day so they could ask questions and we could discuss any queries they had about No Outsiders and its aims.

In September 2020 I visited a school in Cheshire for a training day and the headteacher 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. I hope you find it useful. Do let us know any suggestions you have by emailing us via our website or at info@no-outsiders.com.

Best wishes,
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What is No Outsiders?

What is an outsider? Someone who feels left out, who feels like they don't belong and are 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 (2021), we want children to see that '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 that 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 Years 1 and 2, we use picture books where characters are different, and we show that they are also friends and they play together. We make sure that there are characters that look different in the hope that children will see themselves reflected in those books: "I am different too and that's ok."

As children move up the school into 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 gives children the language to challenge prejudice and show acceptance. Not only will they feel safe knowing they belong, they can also show others that 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 or 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 that children understand that 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. In Key Stage 1 there are no discussions about being gay or lesbian and what those words mean; there are no discussions about gender identity or being transgender; there are no discussions about what 'race' means or what it means to be black, white or brown; there are no discussions about the religion a five- or six-year-old may follow.

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 play together. There are no discussions about what sexual orientation means but there is a story that shows two mummies playing with their daughter. There are no discussions about what race means but there are books showing families with black skin, brown skin and white skin throughout the scheme, and there are stories where children of different races are seen playing and working together. There are no discussions about gender identity but there are stories where boys and girls play and work together and where gender stereotypes are challenged. None of these are explained, questioned or challenged; it's just who they are.

As children get older, we do talk about ways we might be different or ways others might be different to us, and within those discussions we encourage children to be proud of who they are. We are not encouraging any child to question their race, religion or gender identity; rather, we are encouraging children to explore 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: Everyone different, everyone welcome** (Moffat, 2020), 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

The No Outsiders scheme uses over 40 picture books to teach about difference and equality. This updated scheme was published in March 2020 but there are wonderful books that can be used to supplement an equality ethos published all the time. Please refer to the 'resources' section of the No Outsiders website – www.no-outsiders.com – for further picture book recommendations.

What follows is a brief explanation of why each book was chosen and how it can be used to support a No Outsiders ethos. Of course, each of the books can also be used as a standalone story book, and much pleasure can be derived from reading them with a child.

EYFS

The aim in EYFS is to introduce the No Outsiders ethos using very simplistic language: we are all different and we are all friends. There is nothing more complicated in the EYFS plans than the message that it's ok to be you and you may be different to me, but that's ok too.

You Choose encourages children to choose their favourite place to live, favourite transport, favourite food etc and shows that we all like different things. This is explored further in **Red Rockets and Rainbow Jelly**, where characters Nick and Sue are shown liking different things throughout the book, but conclude by saying they like each other. **Hello Hello** shows different animals with a range of shapes and colours who all say 'hello' and no one is left out. **The Family Book** shows children that there are many types of family – and then we draw our own family (an exercise I'm sure I would have done in Reception in 1975 – it's nothing new!). **Mommy, Mama and Me** allows children to understand some families have two mums (or two dads); we talk about the things Mommy and Mama do with their child and ask if our own families do similar things (go to the park, drink juice, kiss goodnight). Finally, **Blue Chameleon** shows a lonely chameleon trying to make friends by changing shape and colour; he thinks you have to look like someone else to be friends. At the end, Chameleon realises you can be yourself and you don't have to change.

Year 1

In Year 1 we develop the understanding of difference to consider ways in which we might be different and how that can sometimes make us feel. The classic story of **Elmer** shows an elephant who decides to hide his difference but realises at the end that he should celebrate it. **Going to the Volcano** takes the children on a joyful expedition to an erupting volcano, and is chosen for its perfect call-and-response narrative and obvious role-play opportunity. The images show a huge range of different characters working together so that no one is left out. **Want to Play Trucks?** focuses on conversations between Jack and Alex, one of whom likes to play with dolls and the other with trucks. 'You can't wear a tutu and drive a crane,' argues Jack, and his reasoning is that, 'It wouldn't fit in the driver's seat.' A compromise is made where the doll wears dungarees instead and then Jack and Alex go for an ice cream. This lesson plan teaches children to find solutions to conflict and subtly explores gender expectations at the same time. **Hair, it's a Family Affair!** encourages children to celebrate their family and ways their family might be different. The family in the story (who happen to be African-Caribbean) have different hair styles and the character is proud to belong. **My World, Your World** explores ways two children are different before finding a way they are similar. I saw a wonderful film clip posted by a school on Twitter showing children doing exactly this in response to this book ('I like peas, he likes carrots, but we both like pizza!'). Finally, **Errol's Garden** is a simple celebration of teamwork. I chose it for no other reason than the main character knocks on his very diverse set of neighbours' doors asking for help and everyone joins in!

Year 2

Can I Join Your Club? explores how Duck feels when animals exclude him from their clubs for not being like them. Duck sets up his own club and everyone is welcome, regardless of the animal noises they make. **How to be a Lion** shows children that not all lions behave in the same way. Leo is gentle and makes friends with a duck. This book is the first in the scheme to explore peer pressure to behave in a certain way as the other lions tell Leo to be 'more lion'. Children are encouraged to empathise with Leo and find a solution. **The Great Big Book of Families** is a celebration of diversity in the UK today; there are families represented but there are also houses, schools, jobs, festivals. It's a great way to introduce the word 'diversity' and its meaning. I was overjoyed to find **Amazing** as it's a snapshot of friendship where the main character uses a wheelchair but the disability is never mentioned, allowing us to demonstrate it's not an issue. **What the Jackdaw Saw** is a subtle way to promote awareness of communication needs, as to ensure all the animals can understand him, the jackdaw learns to sign with his wings. Finally, **All Are Welcome** feels like it was written for a No Outsiders lesson; I could not have asked for a better representation of the ethos for six-year-olds! The text shows us a diverse class of children with diverse families who come to school, where everyone is welcome.

Year 3

This is Our House is a perfect story to introduce a No Outsiders ethos to a school. I've used it in many assemblies at the start of term and I'm then able to refer to it throughout the year. In the story, George shuts people out and gives reasons why: because they wear glasses, because they are girls, because they like tunnels. When it is pointed out to George that he has red hair and could also face discrimination, the penny drops – 'This house is for everyone!' he says. **We Are All Wonders** is a beautiful story about a boy with facial disfigurement who is bullied and dreams of running away. 'What would happen in our school?' the children are asked to consider. 'What would we say if we heard someone being unkind?' We talk about people choosing to be a bystander. **Beegu** gives children an opportunity to explore reasons why the main character, an alien crash-landed on Earth, feels like an outsider. Some characters in the story think Beegu does not belong and choose to ostracise the alien; other characters try to make Beegu feel welcome. What would we do if Beegu visited us? Stereotypes are explored in **The Truth About Old People**: what is a stereotype, how do we recognise a stereotype, and what can we do if we hear someone being discriminatory? **The Hueys in The New Jumper** is a story I often use when I do a No Outsiders day in schools to introduce the ethos in Key Stage 2. The Hueys are all the same but one day Rupert knits an orange jumper. This causes much consternation and Rupert is treated as an outsider until Gillespi also wears an orange jumper. Gradually the Hueys learn it's ok to be different. The final Year 3 book is **Planet Omar Accidental Trouble Magnet**, which was originally called *The Muslims*. I love this story and at my school we read it over a half-term of Year 3 assemblies. The children love it and eagerly wait for the next instalment. There is no lesson plan for this text as it can be read over a period of time, but the opportunities after each chapter for discussion about stereotypes, racism, Islamophobia and bullying are boundless. Mental health is also referenced as the central character has an imaginary friend.

Year 4

Along Came a Different provides opportunity to discuss attitudes towards race and racism – the red shapes don't like the blue shapes, who in turn don't like the yellow shapes or the red shapes. At the key point of the story, the shapes draw up a set of segregation rules, which gives a class a basis to work from. What do we think of these rules? How can we rewrite them? **Dogs Don't Do Ballet** teaches children to go for their dreams. Everyone tells a dog that he can't be a ballerina, but he proves in the end that you can be what you want to be. 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 should be red, but he cannot get it 'right'. For us this tale is a fantastic stimulus for discussion about identity and expectations, and for teaching children to be who they are.

Aalfred and Aalbert gently shows how two aardvarks get together, helped by a small blue bird. Some children may realise the aardvarks in the story are two males, but that is not the focus of the lesson plan; rather, the focus is recognising loneliness, choosing to help others, finding common ground and understanding how companionship affects mental health. **When Sadness Comes to Call** picks up from *The Bad Seed* (used in Year 3) and explores further 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 wanting to be a mermaid. The key to the story for me is Nan's attitude to her grandson; the reader is led to believe she is going to tell him off for dressing up, but instead she supports and helps him. It is a heartwarming story of difference and acceptance.

Year 5

Kenny Lives with Erica and Martina is a book that focuses on attitudes towards LGBT people and homophobia to tell the story of a family who are literally made into outsiders when a wall is built to block them from the street. The ending is thought-provoking and enables a class to ask questions about discrimination and form responses. **Rose Blanche** follows a young girl living in Nazi-occupied Poland as she discovers a concentration camp outside her town with people wearing yellow stars on their jackets. Rose decides to help them. **Mixed** leads on from *Along Came a Different* in Year 4, but this time rather than just writing a set of rules to segregate, the colours construct physical walls and fences to separate themselves. When two different colours fall in love, their example serves as a force to alter perceptions. **How to Heal a Broken Wing** is an Amnesty International-endorsed book that shows a boy choosing to help a fallen bird; he is the only one to stop and help. We return to the concept first raised in Year 3 of choosing to be (or not to be) a bystander. I included **The Girls** both as a focus on positive representation of the gender, and also to provide a stimulus for discussing friendship and recognising the importance of companionship. The story therefore offers opportunities for discussion of mental health, and there is also a subtle LGBT moment. **And Tango Makes Three** is a story about a loving family of penguins adopting a chick, and the family happens to consist of two male parents. For this scheme, I have focused on the book being banned in some territories (Hong Kong, Singapore) and ask why. What is it about this book that moves some people to ban it? In doing this, we recognise that there are differences of opinion in the world about LGBT equality. The activity in the plan encourages children to make up their own minds about the situation.

Year 6

The Year 6 books have a theme of acceptance. **King of the Sky** beautifully explores feelings of being an outsider from the perspective of a young refugee boy. He forms a friendship with an elderly man who teaches the boy to work with homing pigeons. Through the pigeons, the boy learns to feel a sense of belonging. **The Only Way is Badger** is truly a book for our times. A badger builds a wall across the forest and instructs the other animals to be 'more badger'. If they fail, they are thrown over the wall. The ending of the story provides much material for discussions about conciliatory behaviour and consequences of actions. **Leaf** describes fears about the unknown and a lack of confidence to find out. A polar bear arrives on an island and rather than talking to him, the other animals hide and talk about him. This theme is revisited in **The Island**, which is a powerful study into the power one group of people have over another and the dire consequences of unchecked prejudice. **Introducing Teddy** is a wonderful tale of a teddy bear who comes out as trans halfway through the story. All of teddy's friends accept her as Tilly, no one questions it, and this is the focus of the plan. The final book in the scheme, **A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo** provides a fantastic opportunity to talk about democracy, prejudice and LGBT equality. A rabbit in the white house wants to marry another male bunny and while all the other animals celebrate the wedding, the leader of the animals says two male bunnies marrying is against the law. The animals have a vote to see if the law should be changed. The focus of the lesson plan is how democracy works.

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 to make to that world.

So how do we do it? It's not rocket science. We simply find stories children can relate to and demonstrate that 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!

We can also use No Outsiders to navigate challenging and difficult conversations around tragic events such as terrorist attacks. Children hear about terrorism, and 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 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 religions, 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 how 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 terrorist 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." On the following pages are two examples of assembly pictures used by schools and the lesson plans with discussion points that go with them. These 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 300 of these pictures and plans available to use on the No Outsiders website – just go to the Assembly Plans link.



- What do you see in the picture?
- Where is it taken?
- What is similar about the two animals?
- What is different?

Explain the story.

Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya has lots of animals including zebras. A baby zebra has been born who is a bit different to other zebras: this zebra has spots instead of stripes. The picture shows the baby zebra standing with its mother.

The zebra is making national news. It is not the first time this has happened but it is very rare. Life might be a little more difficult for the zebra – for example, it may attract more flies as they don't like stripes but won't be put off by its spotted skin. Also the zebra will stand out from other zebras, making it more noticeable to predators.

However, research in South Africa found that in other cases where zebras looked different, they were accepted and they lived happily with the herds.

- What does a zebra usually look like?
- What is different about this baby zebra?
- Has the mother abandoned her baby because it is different? Why not?
- What does this show us about the mother zebra?
- Do you think the other zebras will accept this different zebra?
- Should the zebra try to grow some stripes?
- What would you say to the zebra?
- What can we learn from the zebra herd in this reserve?
- What can we learn from this zebra?
- Why is this a story about no outsiders?



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- What do you see in the picture?
- What do you notice about the children and their dolls?
- Why do you think the dolls look different?

Explain the story.

A doll maker has started making dolls that look 'different' for children who also look 'different'. The doll maker works in a hospital with children who have cancer and uses dolls in her work with the children. But she noticed that the dolls had thick hair and looked healthy in comparison to many of the children she was working with.

The doll maker wants children to understand they are beautiful, but she feels it is difficult to make a child understand they are beautiful when 'they can't see themselves in anything that's supposed to look like them'.

She raised money to fund making the dolls and has been inundated with requests from parents who want their children to have dolls that look like them. The story went viral and lots of messages of support came in. One person on Twitter wrote, 'It allows the children to realise it's ok to be different.'

- What is a doll for?
- Why do children like playing with dolls?
- Why do you think this doll maker decided to make dolls that look different?
- Look at the child in the picture. How do you think she feels about her doll?
- Why do you think she loves her new doll?
- Why is the doll maker trying to make children who look different understand they are beautiful?
- 'They can't see themselves in anything that's supposed to look like them'. What does this mean? How do we fix this?
- What can we learn from the doll maker?
- Why is this a story about no outsiders?

Answering difficult questions from children

Children are often very matter-of-fact about diversity and difference. They 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 when actually the answer to what we perceive as a difficult or embarrassing question 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 gives them their colour. We all have differences: freckles, hair type, etc. Skin colour is just another brilliant way in which we are different.

Why can't she walk? Why does she use a wheelchair?

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 to have children. For example, some children 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 really 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 Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) 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 still be friends. This 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 the lessons:

It's ok to like different things / To celebrate my family / To make a new friend / I like the way I am / To find ways to play together / I share the world with lots of people / To know I belong (All taken from lesson aims in EYFS/Y1/Y2)

To recognise a stereotype / To recognise and help an outsider / To choose when to be assertive / To be proud of who I am / To find common ground / To look after my mental health / To show acceptance (All taken from lesson aims in Y3/Y4)

To explore friendship / To consider consequences / To exchange dialogue and express an opinion / To consider responses to immigration / To consider language and freedom of speech / To consider causes of racism / To consider democracy (All taken from 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 2010 is law, and we can't pick and choose which bits of the Equality Act 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 these 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.

How will you take into account my faith?

We recognise that there are different beliefs in the world about LGBT+ equality, and the No Outsiders lessons in Years 5 and 6 reflect that. For example, the aim of the lesson in Year 5 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 that 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 do we tell children what to think; we are teaching children to acknowledge that there are different views in the big wide world and that not everyone thinks in the same way.

There is an emphasis on accepting 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 when this happens; we can co-exist.

For more information on No Outsiders go to **www.no-outsiders.com**



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