

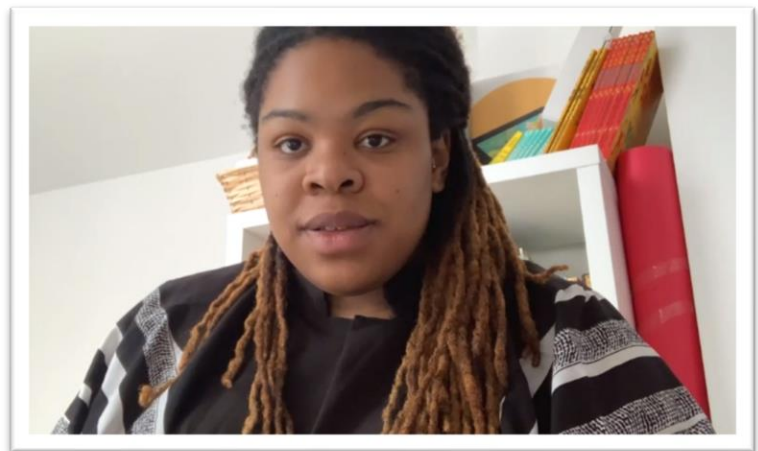


Stockbridge Primary School held our third annual BookFest in March 2022, bringing our school community together to celebrate stories. Our virtual author and illustrator visits, thanks to our Parent Council, were among the highlights of this year's BookFest.

# Onyinye Iwu

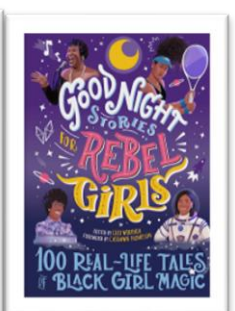
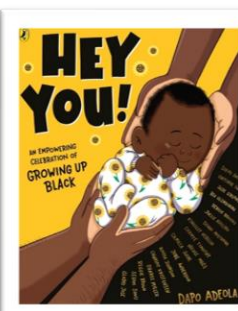
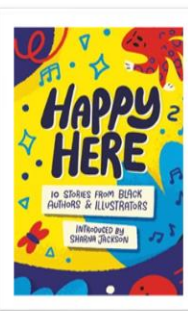
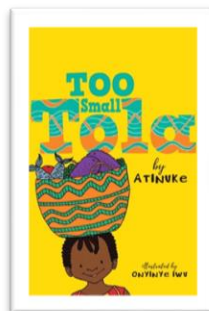
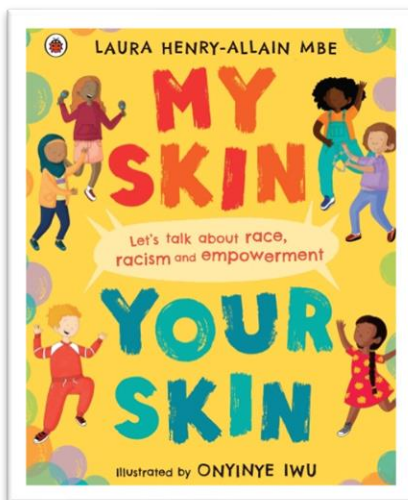
Last autumn our P7 children had been inspired by illustrator Onyinye Iwu's *Queens of Africa* series to create their own artwork. It was therefore an absolute joy to be able to bring the children together with Onyinye herself in this very special BookFest event!

Onyinye's vibrant illustrations can be found in countless books including *My Skin, Your Skin*, the *Too Small Tola* series, *Happy Here, Hey You!* and *Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls: 100 Real-Life Tales of Black Girl Magic*.



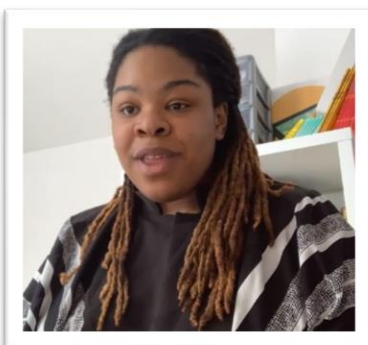
*"I really enjoyed Onyinye's visit because I loved watching her draw, and her style is incredible. I was inspired by what she stood for and I really want to see all her books."*

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Onyinye began by talking the children through some of her books. She then described her own background, from growing

up in Italy to coming to the UK and studying. She showed the children some of the drawings she had done at college when she wasn't much older than they are now.

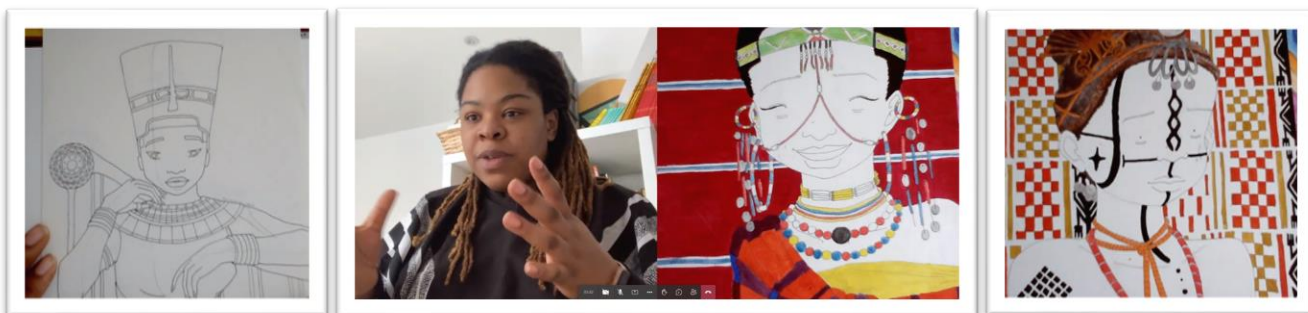


*"It was excellent, I really enjoyed seeing her old drawings!"*

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The *Queens of Africa* series was inspirational for the children last year, so Onyinye showed them how she had created the artwork, from pencil sketches to drawing the background patterns. She explained that she had wanted to celebrate people who haven't been celebrated before.



It was amazing for the children to see how Onyinye had designed and created them, and to hear her talk about her creative process. She gave P7s behind-the-scenes insight into how to work with pattern, from selecting a motif to applying it to their own work.

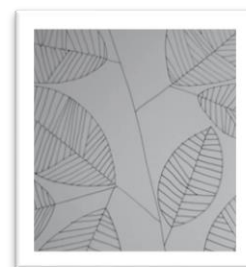


*"Her drawing style was so beautiful."*

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*"I loved the activity and getting to draw in a different art style."*

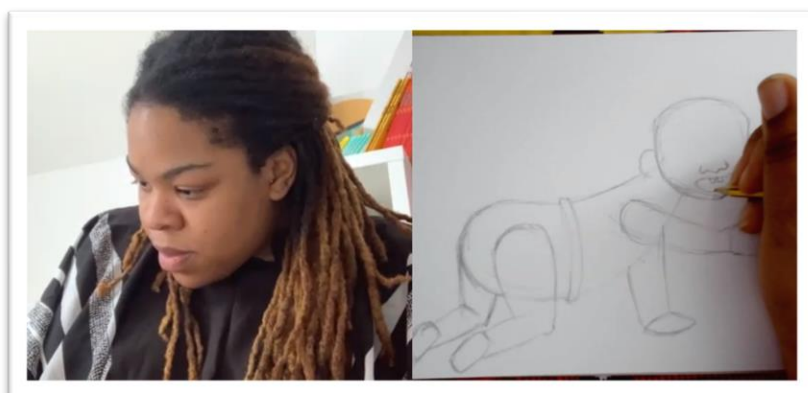
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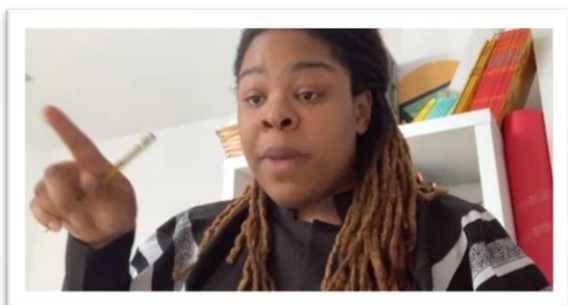
Onyinye led a draw-along with the children, asking them to choose someone important to them to illustrate, whether a family member, friend, famous figure that they connect with or someone else of significance to them.

*"I really enjoyed drawing Sadio Mané in her style!"*

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She worked alongside the children as they drew the figures, then encouraged them to create a relevant background pattern. Our artwork was wonderful!



*"I particularly enjoyed when we got to draw with Onyinye."*

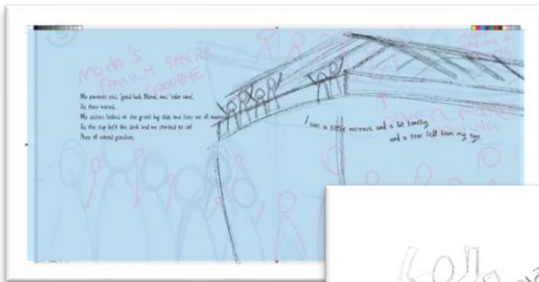
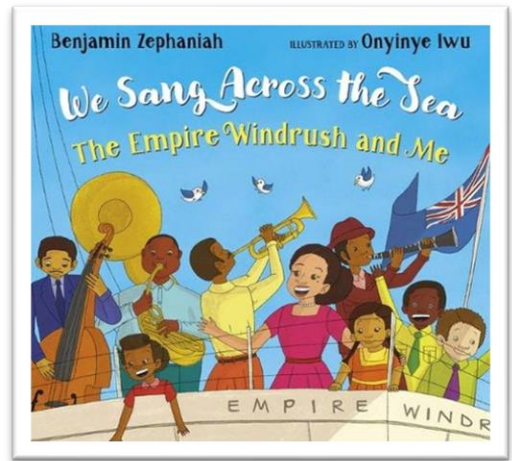
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*"I found it impressive that she doesn't use an eraser in her pictures very often!"*

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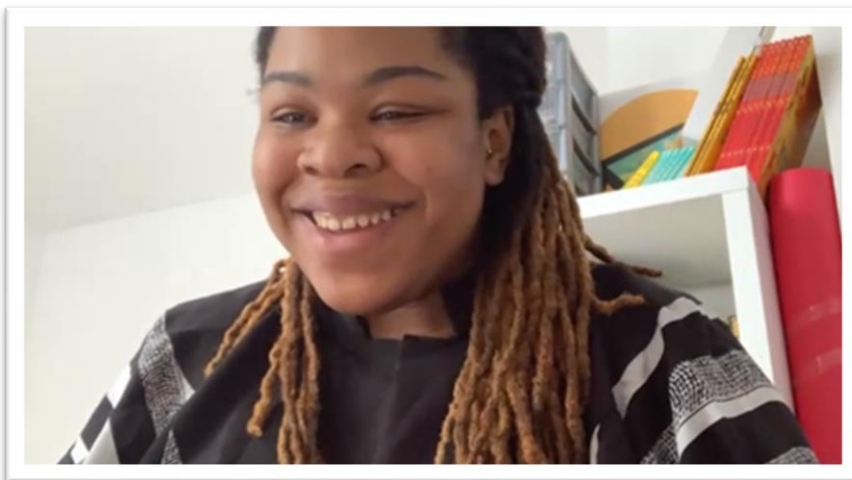
Onyinye's latest book is *We Sang Across the Sea: The Empire Windrush And Me* for which she worked with author Benjamin Zephaniah. Onyinye shared how she worked on the illustrations, showing us step-by-step behind the scenes detail of the computer package she uses to layer up the artwork, add colour and create the finished images. It was a fascinating insight into the work of a professional illustrator.



*"I genuinely enjoyed the lesson and the activity was very inspirational."*  
P7

*"I really enjoyed Onyinye's drawings and it made me think to draw differently."*  
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Finally, the children were able to ask Onyinye their questions in a friendly Q&A packed with advice, interest and insight. Questions included what she does if she ever finds herself lacking inspiration, how long it takes her to create an illustration, whether she feels she has made a change in the world, which artists inspire her and whether she comes from an artistic family.



This was Onyinye's first virtual visit to Scotland – we are so pleased it was with Stockbridge Primary School.

**Thank you for visiting us virtually, Onyinye! We got so much out of meeting you and drawing together!**

Thanks to the Parent Council, we have gifted two copies each of *Happy Here, Too Small Tola* and *My Skin, Your Skin* to class libraries.

*"Onyinye is very inspiring, her art is amazing and I like her style."*  
P7



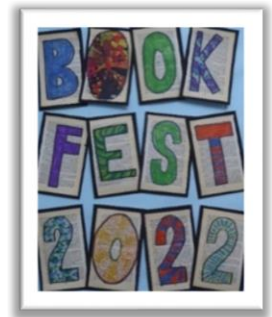
## Stockbridge Primary School BookFest

Stockbridge Primary School's annual BookFest is packed with diverse and innovative ways to celebrate reading – whatever the circumstances!



After two years of the covid pandemic, and against a distressing global backdrop, BookFest brought brightness in dark times. It added excitement and sparkle, lifted spirits and celebrated our international community. BookFest encouraged children to share experiences, to learn and understand more about other countries and other children's heritage, and to revel in our school's diversity as a source of strength. We aimed once again to bring some literary magic to children living through unprecedented times.

BookFest 2022 was a hybrid festival, but we seized the chance to turn the limitations of pandemic restrictions into opportunities. BookFest reached out to authors and illustrators across the UK, with virtual events enabling connections we could never hope to make in person. And just as this year's BookFest drew to a close came a glimmer of hope for the future, as we were able to invite our first illustrators and authors to the school in person.



This year's BookFest was underpinned by our longstanding aim of ensuring that every child can see themselves in a book. We drew upon the school's theme for the year of Diversity and Inclusion, with events championing neurodiversity and dyslexia, celebrations of our multitude of languages, and, as always, a focus not just on the written word but on telling stories through images. We're committed to making sure that not only can every child recognise themselves in book characters and in book illustrations, but that they also see themselves in the authors and illustrators we bring to BookFest.



## Thank You...

- ... to Onyinye Iwu
- ... to Stockbridge Primary Parent Council
- ... to our local independent children's bookshop, Ginger and Pickles
- ... to Miss McMillen and Miss Ferguson, and to Mrs Ashbrook
- ... to our BookFest volunteer organising team: Meredith, Hazel and Jenny

### Stockbridge Primary School

Stockbridge Primary School is a City of Edinburgh non-denominational local authority school and nursery, with approximately 270 pupils aged 3 to 12 years. Stockbridge Primary's Parent Council works in partnership with staff both to fundraise for the school and to deliver events and resources that enrich pupils' experience and the school environment. BookFest is organised by members of the Stockbridge Primary teaching staff, parent volunteers and members of the Parent Council.