

Book Publishing Project

Exploring culture, imagination, mobility and belonging.

STEP

About the Project

This creative publishing project brings together two internationally acclaimed professional artists, an award-winning author, and a university committed to inclusive literacy, working alongside hugely creative children from schools across Scotland to publish a brand-new picture book that centers on authentic representation of culture and identity. Led by Richard O'Neill MBE and in partnership with STEP, Michelle Russell, and Shamus McPhee, this **Trails of Tales** publishing project is built around an original picture book story written by Richard O'Neill (MBE) *My Friend Lives in a Spaceship*. Rooted in lived Traveller experience and told through the imaginative lens of childhood friendship, the story explores movement, belonging, and the power of seeing the world differently. The national project invites a group of core schools, and many more following the journey online, to step inside the real publishing process, from manuscript to finished book.

"We want children from minoritised and marginalised communities, especially those from Traveller communities, to see themselves positively reflected in literature, and to go one step further by having a hand in creating that positive representation."

— Richard O'Neill MBE

This project places that belief at its heart, inviting young people not only to recognise themselves in stories but to shape how those stories are told. Through monthly creative tasks, author visits, illustration workshops, and opportunities to shape the book's visual world, children become genuine contributors to a professionally produced picture book launching during **National Storytelling Week 2027**.

This is inclusive literacy in action: a celebration of creativity, culture, and the belief that children are not only readers of stories, they are makers of them.

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