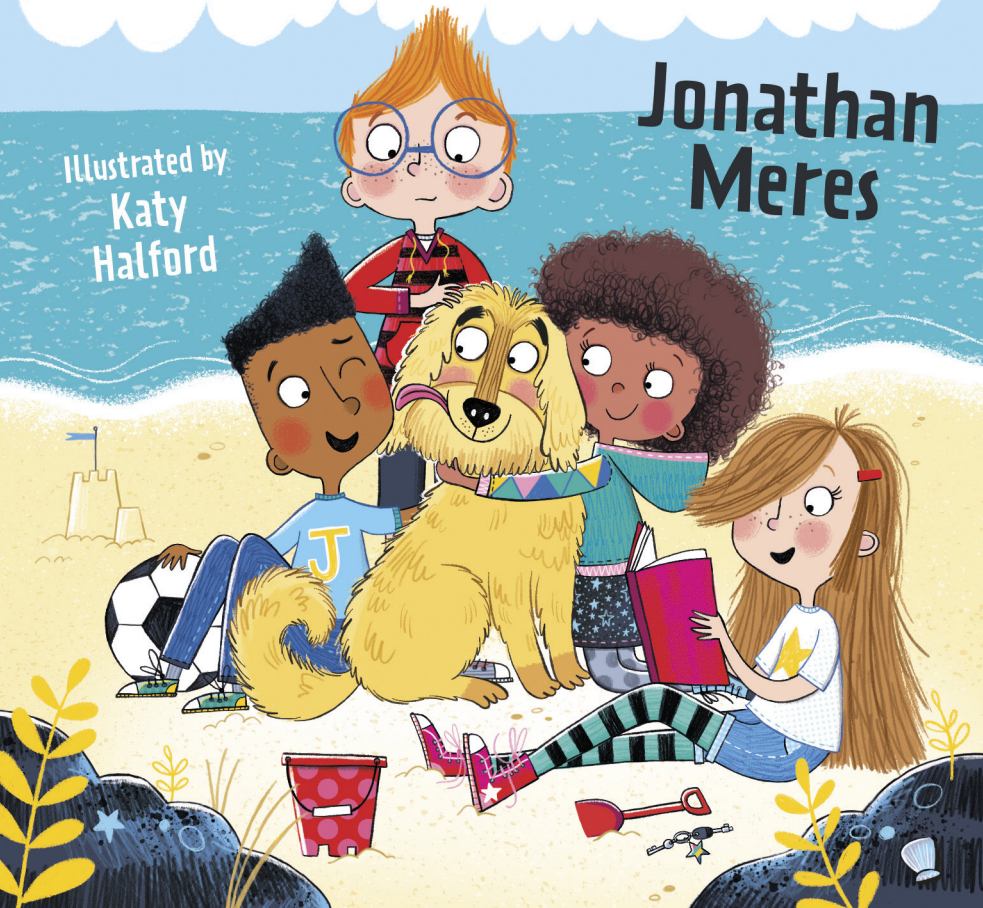
NOODLE the DOODLE

Jonathan Meres

Illustrated by Katy Halford



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Barrington Stoke

For Pablo. But not to eat.

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CONTENTS

1.	New Boy	1
2.	Meet Noodle	8
3.	Your Attention, Please	18
4.	Are We There Yet?	28
5.	Crazy Dog	35
6.	Come Back With That Sausage	43
7.	Ta Da!	51
8.	Oops!	60
9.	Lost and Found	64
10.	Some Kind of Doodle	77

CHAPTER 1

New Boy

The day began like every other day began at Wigley Primary.

"Good morning, everyone!" said Mr Reed.

"Gooooooood mooooooooooorning, Mis-ter Reeeeeeeeeeeeeeed!" sang the children. They stretched out each word so that they nearly ran out of breath.

Mr Reed smiled. Because only he knew what he was about to say next. And he knew

that what he was about to say next would make everyone very excited.

"I have something important to tell you," said Mr Reed.



Outside, a crow cawed and a car tooted its horn. But inside, everything suddenly went very quiet. Everyone was wondering what Mr Reed would say.

"Is it your birthday, Mr Reed?" said Sol.

"No, Sol," said Mr Reed. "It's not my birthday. But that's a very good guess."

Sol looked quite pleased with himself, even though he wasn't right.

"Is it macaroni cheese for lunch, Mr Reed?" said Shakira.

"No, Shakira," said Mr Reed. "It's even *more* special than that."

"Whoa!" said Shakira, who couldn't think of *anything* more special than macaroni cheese. Especially if it came with garlic bread and a little bit of salad on the side.

"Yes, Nora?" said Mr Reed, spotting that Nora had put her hand up.

"Has a new day of the week been invented?" said Nora.

"Don't be so *stupid*!" said a voice before Mr Reed had a chance to answer.

"Now, now, Josh," said Mr Reed. "There's no need for that. That was a brilliant guess, Nora."

Nora grinned.

"Sorry, Nora," said Josh. But he didn't sound very sorry.

"That's OK," said Nora.

"Now," said Mr Reed. "Is everyone listening?"

Everybody nodded. You could tell that they were all desperate to know what Mr Reed was going to tell them.

“Excellent,” said Mr Reed. “Because today we are welcoming a new member of class!”

Everyone gasped. There hadn’t been a new member of class since Abdul arrived. And that was *ages* ago.

“Are you ready to meet him?” said Mr Reed.

There was another gasp. So it was a boy, not a girl. But what would he be like? Everyone began to wonder.

Sol wondered how old he would be. Shakira wondered if he would like macaroni cheese. Nora wondered if he would like science and inventing stuff, like she did. Josh wondered if he would be good at football, like he was.

“Well?” said Mr Reed. “Are you ready?”

“Yes, Mis-ter Reeeeeeeeeeeeeed!” sang the children all together.

"You must be nice and quiet when I bring him in," said Mr Reed. "He's a little bit shy."

"Like you," Callum whispered to Lou. But Lou didn't say anything. Because it was true. She was a bit shy.

"Will you all be nice and quiet?" said Mr Reed.

"Yes, Mis-ter Reeeeeeeeeeeeeeed!" sang everyone together. But they sang it very quietly.

"Good," said Mr Reed as he walked out of the classroom. "I'll be back in a minute."

Everyone waited. But no one said anything. There were too many questions spinning around in their heads. What would the new member of the class look like? What would his name be? Who would he sit next to?

But there was one question *no one* had thought to ask. How many *legs* would their new classmate have?

"Boys and girls," said Mr Reed as he came back into the room carrying a small dog, "I'd like you all to meet Noodle."

"WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!" said the dog, before looking up at Mr Reed and licking his face.