

# TOM PALMER

## FOOTBALL & FOUL ACADEMY PLAY



Welcome to a pack crammed full of ideas and activities based on Tom Palmer's brilliant Puffin books – perfect to get boys and girls who like football to love reading.

# PUFFIN BOOKS

# Dear Teacher or Librarian

We've put together this bumper pack full of fun activities around Tom Palmer's *Football Academy* (7+) and *Foul Play* (9+) books.

We hope it will be an effective tool in helping you to encourage children to enjoy reading and writing for pleasure. Also, that it is useful to introduce or follow up a visit from Tom.

You are welcome to copy any of these pages you need as well as the free first chapters of all the books at [www.tompalmer.co.uk](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk).

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Happy reading!

# ABOUT TOM PALMER

Tom Palmer is a football fan and writer. He didn't always do well at school, but once he got into reading about football – in newspapers, magazines and books – he decided to be a football writer.

He has written eleven books for Puffin, including four in his popular Foul Play series – with a fifth due in spring 2011 – plus six in the brilliant Football Academy series for younger children. You can download free first chapters of all the books at [www.tompalmer.co.uk](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk).

Tom is also a specialist in promoting reading. He visits hundreds of libraries and schools every year up and down the UK inspiring thousands of young readers.

You can find lots more about Tom on his website [www.tompalmer.co.uk](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk), where he also writes a blog about his writing, his life and the schools he has visited.

# TOM PALMER INTERVIEW

We asked Tom some questions:

1 How did you become a writer?

*I think it started when I got into reading. That was when I was 18. But once I liked to read I started to want to write. To see if I could do it, I suppose.*

2 Where do you get the ideas for your books from?

*From real football crimes. Every day the newspapers have new stories about dodgy dealings in football. I start my ideas there, then exaggerate. If I need to...*

3 How do you go about writing your stories, and how long do they take?

*A Foul Play book takes four to six months to write. The Football Academy books take a month each. I start by going to the places the book is set, make a plan, then I write a first draft. I spend a lot of time making changes to improve it.*

4 Do you base your characters like Danny Harte in the Foul Play books on anyone in real life?

*Sort of. Danny is what I wish I'd been when I was 14, but wasn't. And my villains are based on real people, but if I said who they were some would sue me. Others might have me killed. Honestly!*

5 What books do you enjoy reading?

*Stories. Books about travelling to foreign countries. Crime fiction. Books about football abroad.*

6 Can you recommend any good books for anyone who has enjoyed your Foul Play stories?

*Yes. Keeper by Mal Peet, Young Samurai by Chris Bradford, Stormbreaker by Anthony Horowitz.*

7 What advice do you have for anyone who wants to be a writer?

*Read books by lots of different authors. Write about what you love or hate. And never give up.*

8 What do you do when you're not writing?

*Spend time with my wife and daughter. Watch football. Read. And I've taken up running 10km races.*

9 Which football team do you support, and why?

*Leeds. Because I was born there and I love them.*

# TOM PALMER'S BOOKS

## The Football Academy Series

Ideal for the slightly younger reader, Tom's Football Academy fast-paced series follows the ups and downs of the stars of an under-twelves Academy. Great for turning young sports nuts into book buffs! First chapters are free online at [www.tompalmer.co.uk](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk)

### Boys United

April 2009  
9780141324678 | £4.99  
Jake Oldfield dreams of playing for City, but his lack of height and school bullies stand in his way. Can he make it as a player?



### Reading The Game

July 2009  
9780141324708 | £4.99  
Scoring goals comes easily to Ben Blake, but reading does not. Before he can make it in the game he loves, he must overcome his secret fear.



### Striking Out

April 2009  
9780141324685 | £4.99  
Yunis Khan dreams of playing football for United, while his father wants him to concentrate on his school studies. Doing both is Yunis' toughest challenge yet.



### Free Kick

September 2009  
9780141324715 | £4.99  
Everyone expects defender James Cunningham to be a footballer, but his ambitions lie elsewhere. Before he follows them, though, there's one last tournament to win.



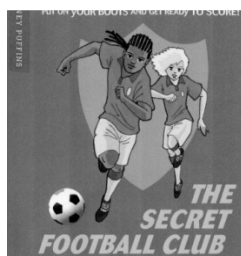
### The Real Thing

July 2009  
9780141324692 | £4.99  
The Academy is off on tour to goalkeeper Tomasz Bobik's home country of Poland, but a bullying captain is making life hard. Can the pair tackle their differences?



### Captain Fantastic

January 2010  
9780141324722 | £4.99  
Skipper Ryan Flynn faces troublesome team mates and a competitive mum. How he deals with problems on and off the pitch could make or break his club's season.



Also by Tom Palmer, in the Pocket Money Puffins range:

### The Secret Football Club

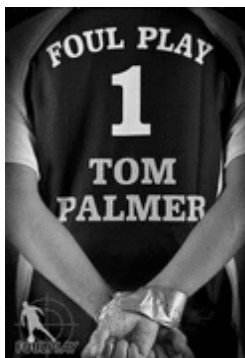
PUBLISHED on 6TH MAY 2010  
£3.99 | 9780141328201

When football is banned from their school playground, a Group of friends have to find a way to carry on playing, and the Secret Football Club is born! This is a special one-off book, published as part of Puffin's 70th anniversary.

# TOM PALMER'S BOOKS

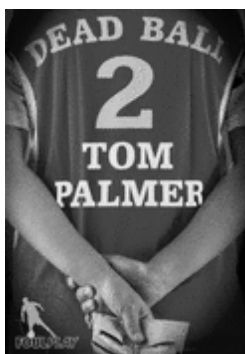
## The Foul Play Series

Perfect for football-mad youngsters aged nine and upwards, Tom Palmer's *Foul Play* series features the gripping adventures of football detective Danny. First chapters are free online at [www.tompalmer.co.uk](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk)



Foul Play  
May 2008  
9780141323671 | £5.99

Where the Foul Play series began! When City striker Sam Roberts is kidnapped outside the club's stadium, Danny realises he was the last person to see him. Now it is up to him to track down the star – but first he must overcome challenges and threats put in his way. Shortlisted for a Blue Peter Book of the Year Award!



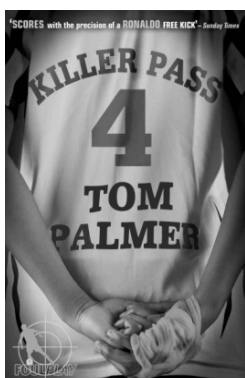
Dead Ball  
August 2009  
9780141323688 | £5.99

England's brilliant goalkeeper is involved in a suspicious car accident soon after a crucial game. The trail leads Danny to Moscow, where he finds himself caught up in a bewildering football underworld of Russian billionaires, criminal gangs and match-fixing. Can he solve the mystery and keep England's World Cup dreams alive?



Off Side  
MAY 2010  
9780141323671 | £5.99

When young Ghanaian star Kofi Danquah is brought to England to play for City FC and then abandoned by his agent, football detective Danny Harte steps in to help. This is a topical and enthralling story full of twists and turns both on and off the pitch.



Killer Pass  
PUBLISHED October 2010  
9780141331188 | £5.99

Someone is breaking in footballer's houses. Danny is not happy that his City FC heroes are being robbed while they are playing away games in Europe. But, in trying to solve this latest football crime, Danny is caught up more than wants to be when a photo fit of a boy is published in the local paper. A photo of Danny...

Own Goal, the fifth book in the series will be published in May 2011.

# PHSE & TOM PALMER BOOKS

*"I particularly liked the parts of the book set in Moscow with descriptions of Red Square, St Basil's Cathedral, the Kremlin, and the marvels of the Moscow underground train network, all of which are evoked convincingly from the point of view of a teenager, and without losing any pace from the plot. I was also impressed by how well-rounded the character of Danny is. The relationships he has with other people, most notably with his father, with his sister and with a schoolfriend on whom he has a gently burgeoning crush, are all more than one dimensional and subtly-drawn. Palmer achieves this whilst keeping his writing and dialogue snappy."* **Write Away web review**

*"I have just read the book in one sitting - I couldn't put it down!! I'm no football enthusiast but the story rings so true. I have worked with severe dyslexics and know the shame some of them experience. Wonderful that you are creating literature for boys that is exciting, age appropriate but simple to read. Keep going! "* **Barbara Lowe Hampshire Dyslexia Association**

*"the prose is excellent - simple, direct and with a vocabulary that is both accessible and ever-so-slightly stretching. The main thrust of the story is the football, and the dreams boys who play it have, which is just as it should be. Underlying the derring-do on the park is the issue of bullying, which is familiar to all readers. And the xenophobia Ryan exhibits adds a prod towards thinking about a slightly more subtle issue that flows through other parts of life and not just soccer."* **The Bookbag**

Shaking Hands with Michael Rooney	Hiding a disability - hand tremors
Football Academy 1 Boys United	Changing schools, Feeling small, Bullying Never giving up
Football Academy 2 Striking Out	Parents not listening School V hobby
Football academy 3 The Real Thing	Polish Racism Realising you're wrong
Football academy 4 Reading The Game	Reading difficulties / dyslexia Truancy
Football academy 5 Free Kick	Making difficult choices Going on a trip away from home Following your own heart / trying to make parents proud
Football academy 6 Captain Fantastic	Parents in prison Pushy parents Coping with secrets
Foul Play 1	Having a parent with a disability Right & wrong
Foul Play 2 Dead Ball	Foreign travel Football club ownership
Foul Play 3 Off Side	Africa Slavery Fair Trade Trafficking children
Foul Play 4 Killer Pass	Burglary Broken dreams
Secret Football Club	Football being banned School Rules Secrets Growing up in the city

# FOOTBALL ACTIVITIES

Letting young football fans test their knowledge of their favourite sport is a great way to get them thinking and talking. So we've put together a fun Football Quiz, Prediction Game and Wordsearch to help find your group's footie brainboxes!

The Quiz has 20 questions ranging in difficulty from the simple to the fiendish so that there's something to interest everyone. All the answers can be found on the next page so you can read them out to your group or mark their completed sheets.

The Prediction Game meanwhile has 10 questions about what will happen in any forthcoming football season. It will work well over a school year and could be the basis for a classroom display around football reading.

The Wordsearch has the 20 Premier League football teams hidden away, and is ideal for younger children to complete. Again, the solution can be found on the next page so you can mark children's efforts or help them out with clues.

For children who want to get creative after reading the *Foul Play* books, we've got activity sheets on which they can write their own short story or draw the hero, Danny Harte. All the sheets can all be photocopied as many times as you like and completed by kids just for fun, either within your group or at home. Or to add to the excitement, how about turning one of them into a competition? You could award prizes for the highest Quiz or Prediction Game score in your group, or the most imaginative writing or drawing – and even open it up to other library users by putting piles of the sheets on the counter or by the door.

## Five tips for winning football competitions

- 1 Publicise. Spread the word about your competitions via noticeboards, flyers, schools, youth groups and local media.
- 2 Use the library. Children might be able to find some of the answers to the Quiz in football books; show them where to look.
- 3 Go online. Helping children hunt for their Quiz answers online is a good way to improve their research skills.
- 4 Get children talking. Use the Prediction Game questions as starting points for discussions about football teams, favourite players and so on.
- 5 Find some prizes. A local sports shop might offer some kit or vouchers in return for publicity, or you could ask a nearby football club if they would provide some match tickets. Tom Palmer's *Foul Play* and *Football Academy* books make great prizes too!



# FOOTBALL PREDICTION GAME

Test your football knowledge with this great football prediction game! It is ideal to run through a football season during the school year. But you can adapt your own quiz so that you can run it over a month or even one weekend's football matches. Also, there are two spaces at the end of the sheet for your class to choose things they would like to try and predict.

Here are Tom's predictions for 2010-2011. See if you can beat him. You can ask him what his predictions are for your class idea by emailing [info@tompalmer.co.uk](mailto:info@tompalmer.co.uk).

Can you predict ...	Your Name ...	Tom's predictions
European Champions League winners		<b>Chelsea</b>
Premier League winners		<b>Chelsea</b>
FA Cup winners		<b>Man U</b>
League Cup winners		<b>Liverpool</b>
Leading Premier League scorer		<b>Drogba</b>
Premier League team with the most red cards		<b>Wolves</b>
Three teams relegated from the Premier League		<b>West Brom</b> <b>Wigan</b> <b>West Ham</b>
Number of Premier League managers to leave or lose their jobs		<b>11</b>
[Your class's idea for something else to predict]		
[Your class's idea for something else to predict]		

# PREMIER LEAGUE WORDSEARCH

Hidden in this grid are the names of all 20 Premier League football clubs. Can you find all 20 in one sitting?

A	B	W	E	H	D	E	L	T	S	A	C	W	E	N
Y	T	I	C	R	E	T	S	E	H	C	N	A	M	M
D	S	G	C	I	T	J	S	P	U	R	S	K	W	A
G	U	N	F	W	I	G	A	N	W	M	L	M	E	H
O	N	A	P	T	N	U	Z	L	O	B	U	A	S	G
Q	D	N	R	A	U	Z	A	T	L	L	O	H	T	N
R	E	R	S	S	R	V	X	C	V	A	Y	M	H	I
W	R	U	X	T	E	T	P	A	E	C	T	A	A	M
M	L	B	Y	O	T	N	H	E	S	K	I	H	M	R
O	A	K	S	N	S	Q	A	S	A	P	C	L	R	I
R	N	C	C	V	E	Y	Z	L	Z	O	E	U	U	B
B	D	A	B	I	H	L	K	E	A	O	K	F	O	K
T	C	L	Q	L	C	M	Y	H	Y	L	O	L	M	P
S	S	B	R	L	N	N	P	C	F	U	T	P	O	L
E	A	L	M	A	A	T	M	Y	O	O	S	T	P	O
W	G	B	Y	E	M	N	U	P	N	H	S	P	J	P

Arsenal  
Aston Villa  
Chelsea  
Spurs  
Newcastle

Stoke City  
Blackpool  
West Brom  
Everton  
Wolves

Liverpool  
Wigan  
Blackburn  
West Ham  
Birmingham

Fulham  
Bolton  
Sunderland

Manchester  
United  
Manchester City

# FOOTBALL QUIZ

This is a selection of 20 football questions for use in or out of the classroom. You may want to use only the first five or 10 with younger groups, as they get harder in each group of five. Some questions are about straightforward football, but others are about football reading. We hope this will encourage children to read about football in newspapers, magazines and books.

- 1 Which football team plays its home games at Wembley?
- 2 Where do you usually find football news in a newspaper?
- 3 Which country has won the World Cup the most times?
- 4 What is the name of the white dot right in the middle of a football pitch?
- 5 Which of these is not a popular children's football magazine?  
(a) Match (b) Goal (c) Kick
- 6 Who was England's manager at the 2010 World Cup?
- 7 In what year did England win their first and only World Cup?
- 8 At which team did Wayne Rooney start his professional football career?
- 9 Which footballer has 'written' the most books?
- 10 Which team has been in the top English league for longer than any other?
- 11 What does the title of the magazine called *FourFourTwo* mean?
- 12 Which country calls football 'calcio'?
- 13 Which footballer's wife has not written a book?  
(a) Beckham (b) Gerrard (c) Rooney
- 14 Before South Africa, how many World Cups had been played in Africa?
- 15 What football team does the author of the Foul Play books, Tom Palmer, support?
- 16 Where was the first ever World Cup held in 1930?
- 17 Where does the word 'soccer' come from?
- 18 Which was the last team to win the English league before the Premier League was born?
- 19 Which African country is featured in Tom Palmer's book, *Off Side*?
- 20 What team is Prince William support?

# ANSWERS

- 1 England
- 2 The back page
- 3 Brazil
- 4 centre spot
- 5 (b) Goal
- 6 Fabio Capello
- 7 1966
- 8 Everton
- 9 David Beckham
- 10 Arsenal
- 11 a team formation
- 12 Italy
- 13 (b) Gerrard
- 14 none
- 15 Leeds United
- 16 Uruguay in South America
- 17 Association Football
- 18 Leeds United
- 19 Ghana
- 20 Aston Villa



# MY OWN FOUL PLAY STORY

There are four great stories in Tom Palmer's *Foul Play* series: *Foul Play*, *Dead Ball*, *Off Side* and *Killer Pass*. Tom is already hard at work on the fifth book, but if you can't wait for your next dose of football adventure, why not try writing your own story?

You can use the space below to write your ideas for Danny Harte's next investigation. Imagine Danny has come to solve a new football crime. What adventures might he have? What mysteries might he have to solve, and what sort of villains might be met along the way? Invent your own characters for your story, or perhaps use some real-life football stars. Be as imaginative as you can! When you've written a summary of your story, try drawing a picture that would look good on the cover of a book.

## **Five real football crime-solving stories to inspire a story of your own**

We've given draft titles but are sure you can come up with better ones for these story ideas. The questions may give you more ideas.

### ***A matter of life and death***

A few days before the last World Cup, a former Italian football player fell from a window in a football stadium.

- Did he jump or was he pushed? Why?
- Can you think up a fan character who could solve the mystery?

### ***They think its all over***

A few years ago in England, floodlights started going out at stadiums in the middle of games and the games were abandoned. Someone was sabotaging the floodlight controls.

- How did they do that?
- What could they get out of it?
- If someone tried to stop the crimes how would they do it?

### ***Death by Football***

In Columbia a footballer was murdered a few days after returning from the World Cup Finals, where he scored an own goal.

- Who did it?
- Was it about more than just football?
- Can you extend the story so even more players are in danger?


### ***May we have our cup back, please***

In 1966 the real World Cup was on show in a shop window. Someone stole it. Days later it was found by a dog under a bush.

- Where else had it been before it was found?
- Who stole it?

# MY FOUL PLAY STORY

- What did they want to do with it?
- Why did their plans fail?



# DRAW DANNY HARTE

Fans of Tom Palmer's *Foul Play* books know all about the brave character of their hero, football detective Danny Harte. But what do you think Danny looks like? Use the space below to draw him. You might like to sketch him in the middle of one of his adventures, or perhaps playing football in his City kit. You could try drawing some other characters from the *Foul Play* books too – like City and England star Sam Roberts, goalkeeper Alex Finn, reporter Anton Holt or the dastardly Sir Richard Gawthorpe.

My *Foul Play* character:



# FOUL PLAY DISCUSSION TOPICS

From unscrupulous football chairmen to fair trade chocolate, Tom Palmer's *Foul Play* books are full of big topical issues as well as rollercoaster adventures, and readers will enjoy the chance to talk about some of the themes in greater detail. Here are ten issues from the books that you could raise with Chatterbooks members, each with some questions to ask to get the discussion going, plus some ideas for further reading if you want to learn more.

**1 Real-life football crimes.** The *Foul Play* stories are all fiction— but you don't have to look far in the sport to find even stranger goings-on! What real-life wrongdoings can children think of? You could talk about some of the problems currently affecting the game—like match-fixing, dodgy chairmen and misbehaving players. What can be done to clean up the game?

Read: *Off Side* has a list of real football crimes at the back of the book.

**2 Slavery.** In *Off Side*, young Ghanaian footballer Kofi is brought to England with promises of fame and fortune, and then abandoned to fend for himself. The trafficking of young Africans to football clubs in Europe via agents is a big problem, and has been compared to other forms of modern day slavery. Is that fair? Or does it prove that slavery is still a problem around the world? What can be done to stop it? You could use Black History Month (in October) as a chance to talk about slavery new and old.

Read: Julius Lester's *To Be a Slave* (Puffin) tells a slavery story brilliantly.

Visit: The official Black History Month website at [www.blackhistorymonthuk.co.uk](http://www.blackhistorymonthuk.co.uk) is packed with useful resources.

**3 African football.** Africa is full of talented players like Kofi in *Off Side*, but no side from the continent has ever won a World Cup? Why is that? Do any African countries have a chance of winning in 2010? See how many real-life African football stars children can name, and use a map of the continent to see if they can identify the countries they come from.

Read: Tom Palmer recommends *Feet of the Chameleon* by Ian Hawkey (Portico) as the best book on African football.

Visit: The Right to Dream charity works to give young Africans a sporting chance in life; you can find more about its work at [www.righttodream.com](http://www.righttodream.com).

**4 Fair trade.** *Off Side* tackles the issue of fair and unfair trade between Africa and richer countries. Are children aware of the fair trade scheme? More and more schools are becoming fair trade schools. Explain the principles behind it, and the difference it can make. Ask children what they think they can do to help.

Read: *The Fair Trade Everyday Cookbook* by Sophie Grigson (Dorling Kindersley).

Visit: Dubble chocolate bars have a great website with info about fair trade, and a 'Dubble Agents' scheme to get children backing fair trade. Go to [www.dubble.co.uk](http://www.dubble.co.uk).



**5 Football club ownership.** *Off Side* begins with a protest on the pitch against City FC's owners and features in *Dead Ball* and *Killer Pass* too. Several big English clubs have had similar issues around their ownership. How many can children name? Do they know who owns their favourite team? Do they think it matters who owns a football club? Should there be more rules about who can own one? Would it be better if fans owned their clubs?

Visit: Ebbsfleet United is a club owned by fans around the world. You can see how the system works at [www.myfootballclub.co.uk](http://www.myfootballclub.co.uk).

**6 Russia.** *Dead Ball* sees Danny travel to Moscow on the trail of a sinister Russian oligarch. What do children know about Russia? Can they name any places there, or any footballers from there?

The Russian oligarch in the book is purely fictional, but children might be able to think of a real-life one involved in football! Have they read any other books about Russia?

Read: *Football Dynamo* by Marc Bennetts (Virgin Books)

Visit: [www.footballinrussia.com](http://www.footballinrussia.com)

**7 Italy.** Tom has set his next *Foul Play* book, *Own Goal*, in Italy. What do children know about this country? How many of them have been there? Have they learnt anything about Italy from books or school lessons? Can they name any famous Italian football clubs? Show them a map of Italy and see if they recognise any of the cities from football. What adventures do they think Danny Harte could have in Italy?

Visit: [www.football-italia.net](http://www.football-italia.net) is a good website about Italian football.

**9 Young people in football.** Both *Off Side* and Tom's *Football Academy* books feature some young stars wanting to make a career in football. How many of the children want to be footballers when they grow up? Why? Do any of them already play for an Academy like the one in the books? Have their experiences been similar to any of those in the *Football Academy* series?

Read: *The Football Academy* series by Tom Palmer.

**10 The *Foul Play* books.** Aside from all the issues, what do children think about the *Foul Play* books themselves? Did they enjoy the stories? How long did it take them to read the books? Which characters did they like? What would they improve about the books? How would they go about writing a *Foul Play* story of their own?

Read: *The Foul Play* series by Tom Palmer.

Visit: Tom's website at [www.tompalmer.co.uk](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk) for much more about the author and the *Foul Play* books.

# BOOK REVIEWS

Write a review of one of Tom's books for one of the book review websites listed below. Puffin have printed book reviews by real children in Tom's books!

Use Write your own Book Review as a starting point.

[www.puffin.co.uk](http://www.puffin.co.uk)

[www.cool-reads.co.uk](http://www.cool-reads.co.uk)

[www.kidsreview.org.uk](http://www.kidsreview.org.uk)

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

[www.mrsmad.com](http://www.mrsmad.com)

[www.borders.co.uk/book](http://www.borders.co.uk/book)

[www.whosreadit.com](http://www.whosreadit.com)

Or comment on someone else's review – did you agree with them?

[www.achuka.co.uk](http://www.achuka.co.uk)

Or fill in the Red House Children's Book Award survey

[www.redhousechildrensbookaward.co.uk](http://www.redhousechildrensbookaward.co.uk)

## Here's Tom's review of his favourite book

**Reader name** *Tom Palmer*

**Book title** *Keeper*

**Author** *Mal Peet*

### What did you think about the story?

*I thought it was exciting and quite moving. I liked the football in it, but also the story about rainforests and ...the ghost.*

### Who was your favourite character and why?

*The boy who became a goalkeeper for Brazil - it was interesting to hear his story from child to man*

# MY BOOK REVIEW

Tell everybody about a book you have enjoyed. What did you like best about it? Which character did you like the most? Did anything surprise you in the story? Did you like the ending?

**Words that may help you** exciting / adventure / brave / danger / thrilling / solving / moving / secret / scary /

**Reader's name**

**Book Title**

**Author**

**What did you think about the story?**

**Who was your favourite character and why?**

**Draw a picture of the favourite part of your story below**

# FURTHER READING

If children enjoy the *Foul Play* or Football Academy stories, you might like to direct them towards the following websites:

## Websites

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/football> – the best place to look for football news and everything else footie-related.

[www.literacytrust.org.uk/reading\\_the\\_game](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/reading_the_game) – the online HQ of the National Literacy Trust's Reading the Game project, which uses football to advance reading and literacy. It's also offering a new football literacy activity pack *Love Football Love Reading 2*.

<http://www.puffin.co.uk/> – everything you need to know about Puffin books and authors.

<http://www.tompalmer.co.uk/> – Tom Palmer's official website.

## Other resources

Don't forget that newspapers and magazines can be great sources of information for children. Keep library copies of newspapers available so that children can read match reports, previews and interviews, or perhaps cut out interesting stories and paste them into a special football scrapbook. You might also like to buy some copies of football magazines for children like *Match!* or *Match of the Day*. Don't underestimate the value of publications like these – many people, Tom Palmer included, became interested in reading in this way before getting hooked on books!