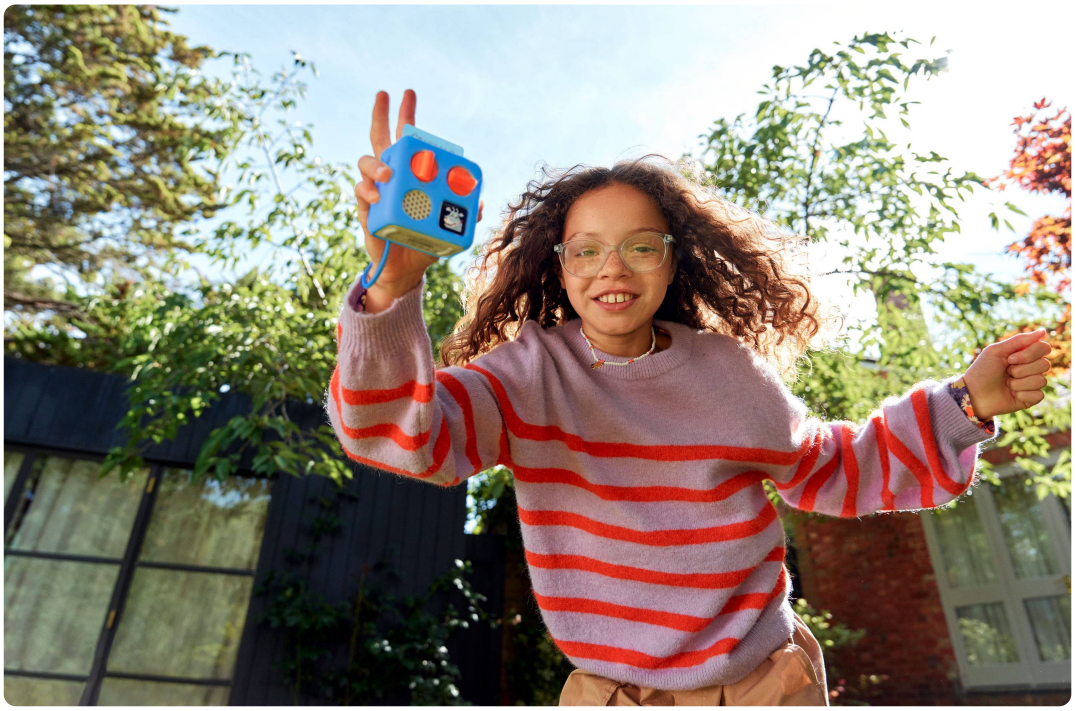
November 25 2026, 10:53 (GMT)

Yoto and Macmillan Children's Books team up for this year's Gruffalo Mission to bring audio storytelling to primary schools

Primary schools across the UK will receive free Yoto Mini audio players and collections of Yoto Cards - including the brand new Gruffalo Granny - to help more children experience the joy of stories



Yoto is donating its award-winning audio players and story content to 80 primary schools, amid declining levels of reading among children and young people. Working in partnership with Macmillan Children's Books and with the National Literacy Trust, the donation plays an important part of the Gruffalo Mission this year, which has seen thousands of Gruffalo books and accessible editions made available to children who do not have ready access to books and stories.

The schools across the UK (including Belfast, Northumberland, Glasgow, Manchester and South Wales) will each receive a free Yoto Mini and a collection of 25 Yoto Cards featuring a diverse range of popular and much-loved stories. Each collection will include Gruffalo

Granny, the first new Gruffalo story from Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler in more than 20 years, which became an instant number one bestseller when it was published in September 2026.

The chosen schools are part of the National Literacy Trust's Libraries for Primaries programme, which has transformed the library spaces of almost 2,000 primary schools, supporting nearly 600,000 pupils to discover a love of reading and trained 3,690 teachers to embed reading for pleasure cultures in their schools. Each school will be able to use the Yoto Mini players and Yoto Cards in classrooms, libraries and during shared listening activities, giving pupils the freedom to choose and enjoy stories independently.

Amy Wallace, COO at Yoto said: "Every child should have the opportunity to discover stories in a way that's accessible and inspiring. We often hear from our Yoto families that listening to stories sparks children's curiosity about books and builds their vocabulary and confidence as readers. Alongside printed books, audio can help bring reading to life and encourage children to keep exploring. We hope this donation helps even more kids to choose and enjoy brilliant storytelling."

The initiative follows National Literacy Trust research, which shows that whilst reading for enjoyment rose in 2026 for the first time in five years, it is still significantly lower than reading enjoyment levels a decade ago (36.1% in 2026 vs 58.6% in 2016). Audio, however, is already deeply embedded in children and young people's everyday lives, with the latest research showing that almost half of children listen to audiobooks and podcasts.

Used alongside printed books, audiobooks can help pupils with different interests and needs engage with stories and information, and can also offer another route into reading in print.

Lucy Starbuck Braidley, Head of School Libraries at the National Literacy Trust said: "Audio is a powerful route into stories, knowledge, and reading for enjoyment. If, in the National Year of Reading 2026, we want every child to see themselves as a reader, we need to ensure that children have the option of high-quality audio forming part of their reading journey – and many of those journeys start in their school library. This partnership allows us to strengthen

the audio support available in Libraries for Primaries alumni schools and support their ongoing commitment to build a lasting culture of reading for pleasure in their school."

The initiative follows the publication of Gruffalo Granny in September. To mark the arrival of the third Gruffalo story, Macmillan Children's Books selected the National Literacy Trust as its lead UK charity partner, supporting the work of its Early Words Matter programme with families and young children.

Alison Ruane, Managing Director at Macmillan Children's Books said: "Gruffalo Granny celebrates the joy of storytelling, imagination and sharing books together. Having already donated 140,000 Gruffalo books to children across the country, we love that Yoto's audio edition offers another fantastic way into reading, helping primary school children to fall in love with stories and building their confidence along the way. We are proud to work with the National Literacy Trust and Yoto to bring Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's latest adventure, alongside other brilliant stories, to pupils across the country."

Participating schools will be invited to share photographs, pupil feedback and examples of how they are using the resources to support reading for pleasure. For more information visit: https://literacytrust.org.uk/information/what-is-literacy/audiobooks-and-literacy/

About Yoto

Yoto is an interactive audio platform designed for screen-free listening that kids control. The company was founded by Ben Drury and Filip Denker, two dads who wanted to create a better way for their children to enjoy audio without needing to use tech built for an adult. Child-first by design, Yoto Players have always been designed for agency without addiction so children could discover, imagine and learn on a device that was built for them.

Since launching on Kickstarter in 2017, Yoto has grown into a global brand loved by families around the world. The launch of the Yoto Player 4th Gen and Yoto Mini 4th Gen in 2026 marked a new chapter in that story: after years of learning from how families actually use their players, from the podcast tune-in every morning, to the last Yoto story at night, the new hardware is faster, tougher and better than ever before, built around the rhythms of real family life.

Yoto has won multiple prestigious awards over the years, including the King's Award for Enterprise in 2025, the FT1000 Europe's Fastest-Growing Companies list in 2026, a D&AD Pencil for outstanding design, and was named one of TIME magazine's Best Inventions in 2020. The Yoto Mini 4th Gen sits in the Henry Ford Museum of Innovation collection alongside the original iPhone thanks to its IDEA Gold award in 2026.

The content library spans over one thousand titles from publishers, labels and top creators including Universal Music Group, Penguin Random House, Roald Dahl Story Company, the BBC and Mattel alongside Yoto's own award-winning Yoto Originals, bringing the world's best stories, music, activities and podcasts to children of all ages in English, French, Spanish and Dutch. Available globally, Yoto is creating a world-class audio experience that grows with children and sits at the heart of everyday family life.

Contact details

Yoto UK Press Office
press.uk@yotoplay.com

Copy link

https://uk.yotoplay.com/press/en-GB/275769-yoto-and-macmillan-children-s-books-team-up-for-this-year-s-gruffalo-mission-to-bring-audio-storytelling-to-primary-schools/