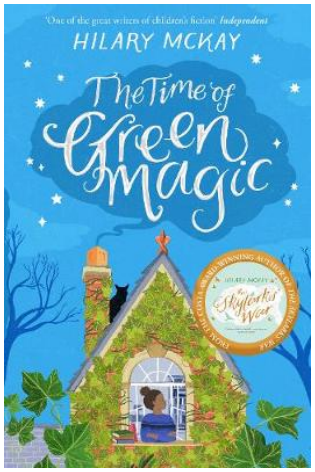
A selection of books especially selected for children in Year 6 (10 - 11 year olds) of average reading ability for the 2020/21 academic year.

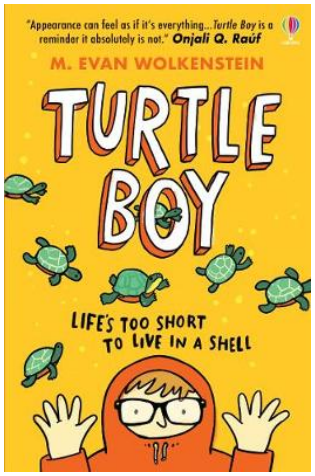
If your child is a competent reader or has read all these titles then try the books from the Year 7 list. Alternatively if these books are a little challenging try books from the Year 5 list. Our overall mission is to promote reading for pleasure with quality texts that are perfectly pitched for the age group and the curriculum. We have particularly avoided blockbusters, classic or set texts, known to everyone, so that we can include poetry, stunning information texts and inspirational books in which all children and young people can find themselves reflected.



The Time of Green Magic

Author: Hilary McKay **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 20/08/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

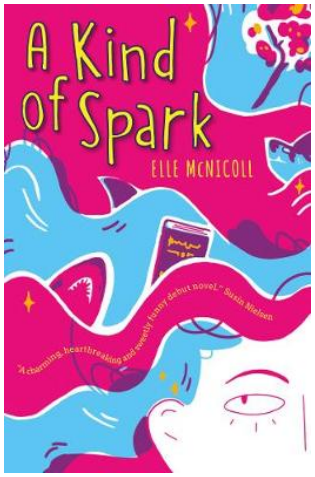
A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month September 2020 When Abi's newly forged family moves to an eccentric new home which is totally covered in ivy, strange things begin to happen to her and to her step-brothers Louis and Max. With their parents either away or too busy to notice, Abi finds herself falling into the books she is reading – she can feel the damp of the sea and taste the salt on her fingers - while Louie tempts an unusual and dangerous animal companion into his bedroom from the ivy. Can Abi and Max help Louie get rid of his dangerous new friend and will things get back to normal when their parents come home? Hilary McKay's storytelling is vivid; she makes magic seem real while also showing why believing in it is so important.



Turtle Boy

Author: M. Evan Wolkenstein **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/08/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

August 2020 Debut of the Month Will Levine has two passions in his life, the local wildlife reserve behind his school and the turtles he has found there. The rest of his life is a bit of a disaster in his eyes – he is given an unkind nickname at school, due to a facial difference, he has to cope with an upcoming Bar Mitzvah, and he has a community service he needs to fulfil for a boy who is confined to a hospital room. Then, to make matters worse, the county plans to sell off the nature reserve. Plus, there is a looming surgical procedure for Will – who hates having blood tests, never mind anything else. How can he make these things work for him – how can he survive it all, when all he really wants to do is look after his turtles and hide away. Slowly Will responds to the needs of RJ who is stuck in the hospital, and they build a strong and wildly adventurous friendship that takes Will away from his comfort zone and helps RJ experience things he would never have chance to do himself. As well as the obvious empathy the book elicits from its readers there is a wonderful amount of humour, and some passing knowledge gained about turtles too! A wonderful story for all of life's outsiders – offering hope and new perspectives.



A Kind of Spark

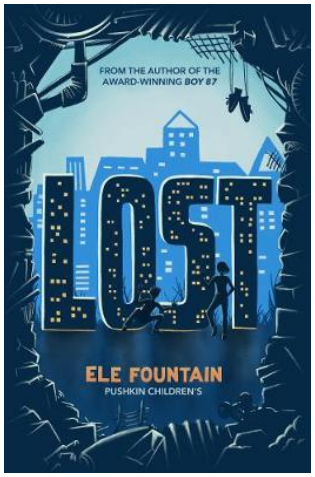
Author: Elle McNicoll **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/06/2020
Year Groups: Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

A Kind of Spark tells the story of 11-year-old Addie as she campaigns for a memorial in memory of the witch trials that took place in her Scottish hometown. Addie knows there's more to the story of these 'witches', just like there is more to hers. Can Addie challenge how the people in her town see her, and her autism, and make her voice heard? A story about friendship, courage and self-belief, perfect for fans of The Goldfish Boy.

The List of Things That Will Not Change

Author: Rebecca Stead **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 07/05/2020
Year Groups: Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

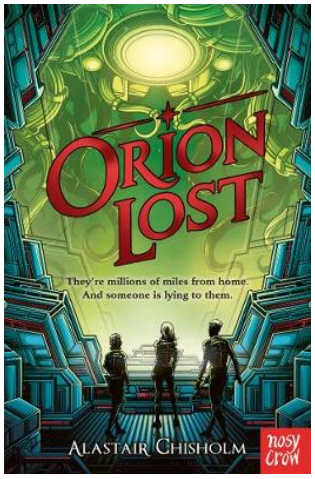
Newbery Medal winner Rebecca Stead writes books that are rich with ideas and acknowledge her readers' intelligence and intuition. Eight-year-old Bea is the central character in her latest novel, and, typically, there's lots going on in her life. She divides her time between her mother's and father's homes following their divorce and visits a therapist who helps with her anxieties. The story culminates in her father's wedding to his new partner, Jesse. As ever, we move back and forth in time, and discover much about Bea's inner life as well as her daily routine in New York. Relationships with family and friends propel the story and there are some real shocks and surprises for readers, plus a gradual understanding of the things that will never change for Bea. It's beautifully written, a thoughtful, sensitive account of growing up and growing resilience and trust. Fans of Rebecca Stead will also enjoy Kate DiCamillo's books and Susin Nielsen's.



Lost

Author: Ele Fountain **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 12/03/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

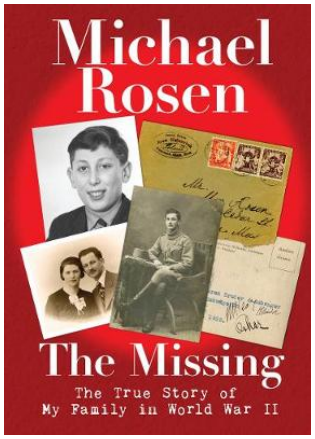
An amazing story of two siblings and their descent into extreme poverty and the resoucefulness with which they escape it by the multi-award-winning, Waterstones Children's Book Prize-shortlisted author of Boy 87.



Orion Lost

Author: Alastair Chisholm **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 09/01/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

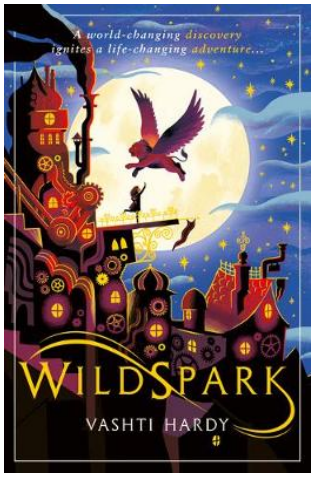
If you like Star Wars, you'll love Alastair Chisholm's space adventure. The action takes place on board the transport ship Orion as it heads out from Earth to a new colony far away. Reaching their destination requires ship and passengers making a series of Jumps through space and time, and surviving a Jump means entering a state of deep suspended animation. Emerging from one of these, Beth discovers that none of the adults can be woken, and that she is now acting captain with a 'crew' of fellow youngsters. There are tensions between the children, some alarming encounters with aliens and – much more terrifying – space pirates, all made worse when Beth begins to suspect that the ship itself may not have their best interests at heart. It all makes for a terrifically taut and entertaining page-turner, with twists and surprises galore. Don't miss!



The Missing

Author: Michael Rosen **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 12/12/2019
Year Groups: Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

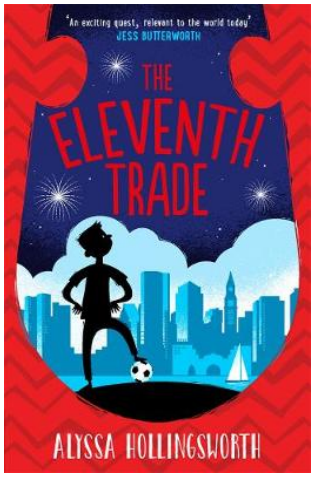
The True Story of My Family in World War II A personal, powerful and resonant account of the Holocaust by one of this country's best-loved children's authors. By turns charming, shocking and heart-breaking, this is the true story of Michael Rosen's search for his relatives who went missing during the Second World War - told through prose, poetry, maps and pictures. When Michael was growing up, stories often hung in the air about his great-uncles: one was a clock-mender and the other a dentist. They were there before the war, his dad would say, and weren't after. Over many years, Michael tried to find out exactly what happened: he interviewed family members, scoured the internet, pored over books and traveled to America and France. The story he uncovered was one of terrible persecution - and it has inspired his poetry for years since. Here, poems old and new are balanced against an immensely readable narrative; both an extraordinary account and a powerful tool for talking to children about the Holocaust.



Wildspark

Author: Vashti Hardy **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/05/2019
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

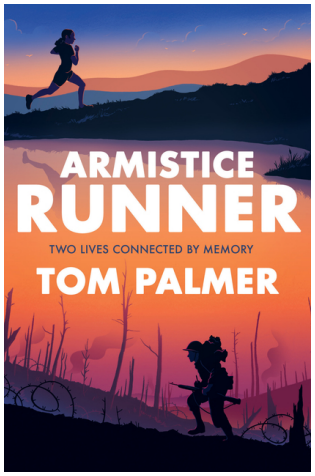
Winner of the Blue Peter Book Awards 2020, Best Story category | Shortlisted for the Children's Book Award 2020 Prue is a young farm girl whose older brother, Francis, had a natural talent for engineering. But after his untimely death, the family have been shattered by grief. Everything changes when a stranger arrives at the farm. A new, incredible technology has been discovered in the city of Medlock, where a secretive guild of inventors have found a way to bring spirits of the dead back into the world, capturing their energy and powering animal-like machines. Unaware that Francis has died, the Ghost Guild wants him to join them as an apprentice. Prue poses as "Frances" and goes to Medlock to learn the craft - but she's on a mission of her own, to bring her brother back home. And to find Francis, she needs to find a way to help the ghost machines remember the people they used to be. But if she succeeds, the whole society could fall apart.



The Eleventh Trade

Author: Alyssa Hollingsworth **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 18/09/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

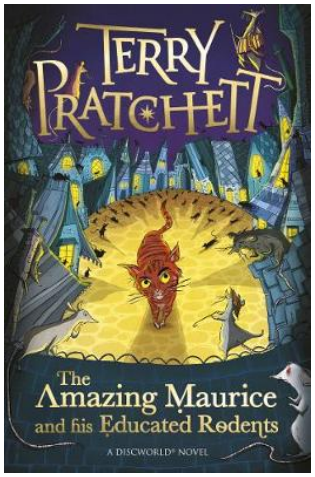
Winner of the UKLA Book Awards 2020 Sami gets by in Boston on the money his grandfather makes on the street playing his rehab. When the instrument is stolen, Sami needs to find $700 to get it back. All he has is a man United key ring. It’s only going to be possible if Sami is prepared to accept help. This is a great book for readers not quite ready for YA fiction. It is raw, relevant but full of hope.



Armistice Runner

Author: Tom Palmer **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/09/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 3

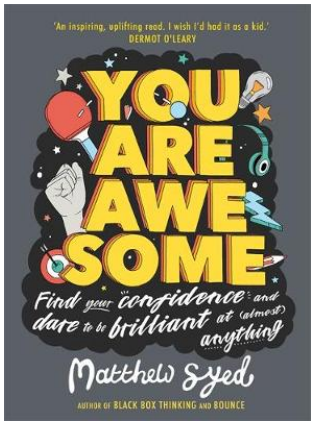
Shortlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2020 | Shortlisted for the Children's Book Awards 2019, Books for Older Readers Category Interest Age 8-10 Reading Age 8 | World War One remains a subject of fascination for readers of all ages, but Tom Palmer finds an original way in to the topic in this poignant new story. Lily is a keen fell runner, though she’s fed up of coming in as runner up in races. A visit to her grandparents reveals a surprise: her great-grandfather ran on the fells too. His experiences are recounted vividly in his diary, both his runs in his beloved Cumbria and his experiences as a soldier, recruited to run between positions on the front line, carrying crucial information to the allies. Their shared experiences form a powerful connection, and help Lily to understand herself better, and also to help her grandma when she needs it most. Today and yesterday are seamlessly woven together in a story that will move readers in lots of different ways.



The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents

Author: Terry Pratchett **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 26/04/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

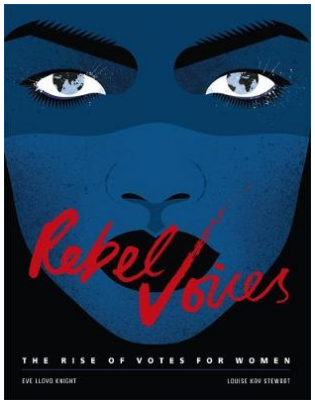
A Carnegie Medal winner that is the perfect introduction into the comic, yet thought-provoking, Discworld created by the late lamented Sir Terry Pratchett.



You Are Awesome

Author: Matthew Syed **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 19/04/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

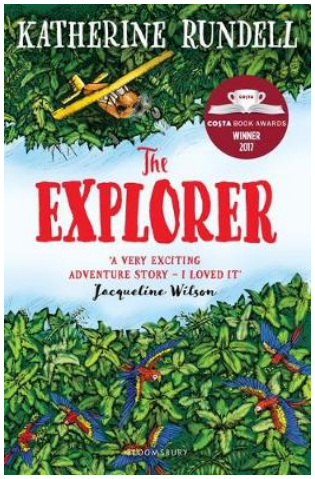
Table tennis champion Matthew Syed offers his very best advice on how all children can help themselves to become better at anything they put their hand to. Divided up into stories, visuals, charts and brief inspirational messages Matthew Syed is inspiring and uplifting as he address his readers. He stresses the importance of creating a confident mindset and argues that, armed with self-belief, anyone can achieve amazing things both mentally and physically. A book to browse and revisit again and again for the useful ways it exhorts and coaxes all readers to make the best of themselves.



Rebel Voices

Author: Louise K Stewart **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 11/01/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

Visually stunning, brief but inspiring vignettes of campaigners for women's rights around the world.



The Explorer

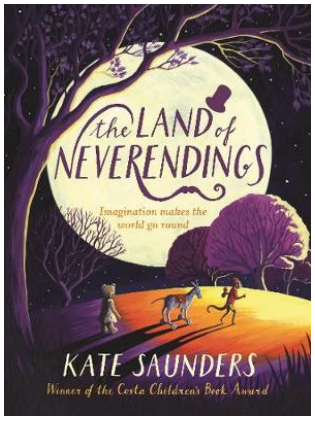
Author: Katherine Rundell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/01/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

Winner of the UKLA Book Awards 2019 | Winner of The Costa Children's Book Award 2017 After crashing hundreds of miles from civilisation in the Amazon rainforest, Fred, Con, Lila and Max are utterly alone and in grave danger. They have no food, no water and no chance of being rescued. But they are alive and they have hope. As they negotiatethe wild jungle they begin to find signs that something - someone - has been there before them. Could there possibly be a way out after all?

The Song from Somewhere Else

Author: A. F. Harrold **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/11/2017 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

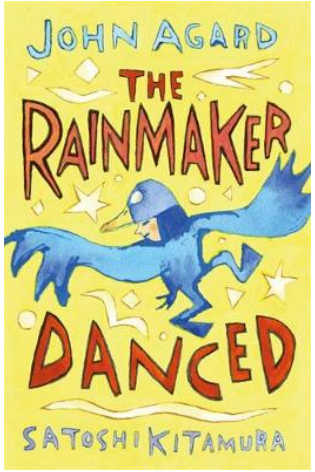
Awarded the Amnesty CILIP Honour from the Kate Greenaway Medal shortlist 2018 | Shortlisted for the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2018 | A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month November 2017 | Longlisted for the UKLA 2018 Book Award Award-winning A.F. Harrold blends reality and imagination in a moving and thought-provoking story about friendship, loneliness and being brave when things are difficult. Bullied at school and unsupported at home, Frank makes an unusual friendship with Nick, the weird boy in her class who everyone else shuns. After Nick rescues Frank from the bullies, she goes round to his house where she discovers something very unusual. What should Frank believe about what she sees? And should she keep Nick’s secret? Levi Penfold’s illustrations add to the illusory feel of this story that tests imagination and belief and leaves the reader wondering. J



The Land of Neverendings

Author: Kate Saunders **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 05/10/2017
Year Groups: Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

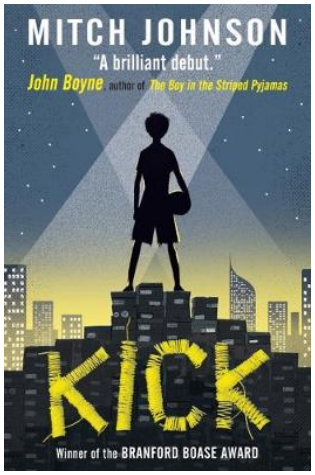
One of Our Books of the Year 2017 | November 2017 Book of the Month | A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month October 2017 Award-winning Kate Saunders takes readers on a wondrous fantasy adventure in the best tradition of children's stories in which there is another world to ours in which strange and silly things can and do happen. The story is tinged with sadness as the adventures stem from beautifully conveyed feelings of grief that it is often hard to express. Mourning the death of her much-loved sister, Emily finds herself having the most curious dreams in which soft toys came alive and do the most extraordinary things. When Ruth, a neighbour whose son died as a child, dreams the same things, the pair begin an adventure in which the worlds of reality and storytelling and make-believe seem to flow together effortlessly and the absurd becomes the everyday. For both Emily and Ruth, learning to laugh again at the happenings in the imaginary world of Smokeroon provides them with exactly the comfort and imaginary release they so badly need.



The Rainmaker Danced

Author: John Agard **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 21/09/2017
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

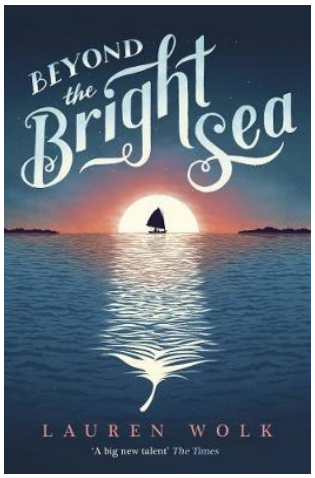
This collection from John Agard, winner of the Queens Medal and the Eleanor Farjeon Award, explores the wonders of the world - inviting your child to ponder life's questions with lots of fun along the way!



Kick

Author: Mitch Johnson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/09/2017
Year Groups: Key Stage 3

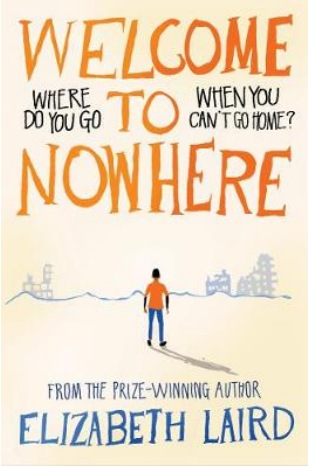
Shortlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2019 | Winner of the Branford Boase Award 2018 Like lots of kids in this country, Budi lives for football, training with his friends whenever he can, following his team with a passion and dreaming about playing at the top level. But Budi lives in Jakarta and works ten hours a day making the football boots his sporting heroes wear, and earning just pennies for doing it. The descriptions of his working conditions will shock readers, but Budi's acceptance of them as inevitable is almost more upsetting. Lively, funny, always optimistic, Budi will win readers' hearts and his positivity ensures the book remains an accessible page-turner even as his life gets very bleak indeed. A vividly told story that has lots to say about the world, and the importance of hope and fate, represented here by Real Madrid.



Beyond the Bright Sea

Author: Lauren Wolk **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/05/2017
Year Groups: Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

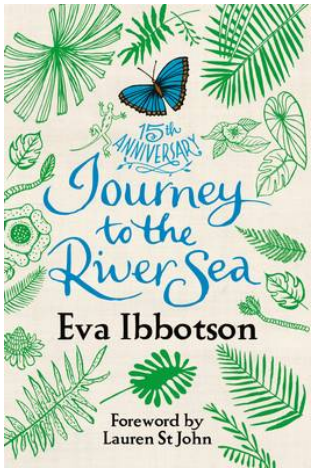
A search for identity and possible fortune that allows us to discover that the real treasure is to find love and a secure home. Evocative and powerful storytelling at its bext.



Welcome to Nowhere

Author: Elizabeth Laird **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 12/01/2017
Year Groups: Key Stage 3

In a nutshell: the lives of a Syrian family brought vividly and sympathetically to life for young readers | This is an excellent book for young people who want to know what is happening in Syria and why – serious, thoughtful, sympathetic to the ordinary people caught up in the war; in a highly readable story it gives a real insight into their lives, and how quickly they have changed from something very similar to our own, to something incomprehensible. Readers meet Laird's fictional Syrian family at the beginning of the civil war when life is good, particularly for her central character Omar, a young boy already dreaming of running his own business. But as protests against the government spiral into war, the family are forced from their house, then their country. Omar stays upbeat, even in their refugee camp where hope is in very short supply, a lively, reassuring narrator. Unlike his older brother, he's not interested in the protests, just wants things to be back the way they were; though the book ends with Omar, his mother and sisters escaping the refugee camp, we know that their lives have changed forever. ~ Andrea Reece Elizabeth Laird says, "We in the west, in the comfort of our homes, with our NHS, our free schools, our benefits and all our privileges, find it hard to grasp the fear and desperation of people who have lost everything, including their hope for the future. These people are people like us, with professions, lifestyles and families like ours. Unfortunately we are often encouraged by some of our politicians and our media to see them only as potential terrorists, as scroungers, as threats to our way of life. I wanted to show a family behind the statistics, parents and children caught up in a desperate civil war, coping in impossible circumstances in the best way they can. I wove into Welcome to Nowhere the accounts of many different people who told me about their own experiences, and urged me to write their story." Belinda Rasmussen, Publisher, Macmillan Children's Books says: "Elizabeth Laird has succeeded again in writing an incredibly powerful novel, this time about one of the biggest humanitarian crises of our age. We are extremely proud to be publishing this book to help foster understanding, empathy and support for those who have lost everything and can't go home."



Journey to the River Sea

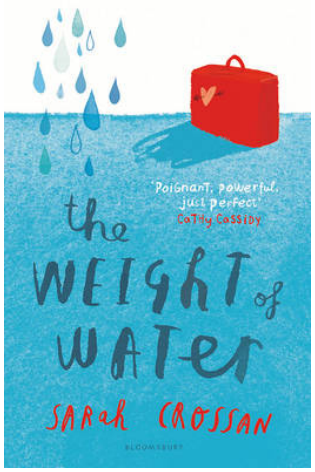
Author: Eva Ibbotson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 25/08/2016
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

A special 15th anniversary edition of this award-winning classic adventure from Eva Ibbotson in which orphaned Maia travels from England to the Amazon with her governess.

Beetle Boy

Author: M.G. Leonard **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/03/2016
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

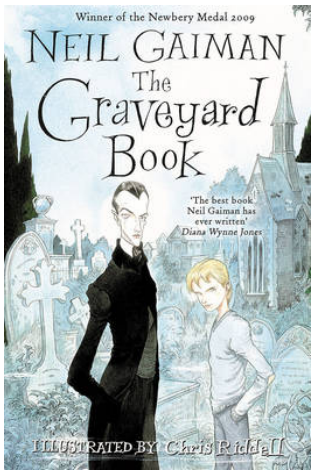
Winner of the Branford Boase Award 2017 | One of our Books of the Year 2016 | Shortlisted for the Children's category of the Books are My Bag Readers Awards 2016 | Longlisted for the UKLA 2017 Book Award and March 2016 Julia Eccleshare's Debut of the Month A rollicking adventure spiced up with fascinating information about beetles, this debut novel fuses science, survival and sleuthing! Darkus’s life is turned upside down when his father goes missing. Darkus refuses to accept that his father is dead and he is determined to find out what happened for himself. Sent to stay with his uncle, he discovers the strange neighbours have a yard full of junk – and beetles. Darkus is befriended by a handsome, giant beetle who seems to understand Darkus and is also connected to his dad’s disappearance. What is going on? And who is Lucretia Cutter, one of the best villainess since Cruella de Vil?



The Weight of Water

Author: Sarah Crossan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/01/2013 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

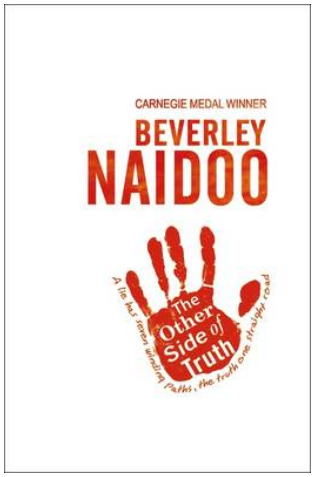
Shortlisted for the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2013 The Weight of Water is a startlingly original piece of fiction written in verse; most simply a brilliant coming of age story. First love, friendship and quiet courage combine in this spare and beautiful story that will leave you sad, happy and wanting more from this fantastic new voice in children's fiction. It tackles the alienation experienced by many young immigrants. Moving, unsentimental and utterly page-turning, we meet and share the experiences of a remarkable 12 year old girl who shows us how quiet courage prevails. A truly special and remarkable read that should not be missed and, Bloomsbury the publisher has done a wonderful job on the book itself - the best things come in small packages - and this is abslutely no exception, so buy the physical book and not the ebook.



The Graveyard Book (illustrated by Chris Riddell)

Author: Neil Gaiman **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/10/2009 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3

11+. Winner of the Carnegie Medal in 2010, shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal in 2010, winner of Best Novel at the Hugo Awards 2009 and of the prestigious Newbery Medal. Spooks galore in this brilliant and fantastic story of life in the graveyard. When Baby Bod escapes a murderer intent on killing his whole family, he is taken in by the graveyard ghosts. In eight chapters, each of which depicts every other year of Bod’s life, a separate story of Bod’s life unfolds and always in the background there is the sinister, haunting presence of a killer. Bod’s curious tale is a masterpiece of original, absorbing and unstoppable storytelling.



The Other Side of Truth

Author: Beverley Naidoo **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 27/04/2000 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4

This is the story of 12 year-old Sade and her brother Femi who flee to Britain from Nigeria. Their father is a political journalist who refuses to stop criticising the military rulers in Nigeria. Their mother is killed and they are sent to London, with their father promising to follow.Abandoned at Victoria Station by the woman paid to bring them to England as her children, Sade and Femi find themselves alone in a new, often hostile, environment. Seen through the eyes of Sade, the novel explores what it means to be classified as 'illegal' and the difficulties which come with being a refugee.