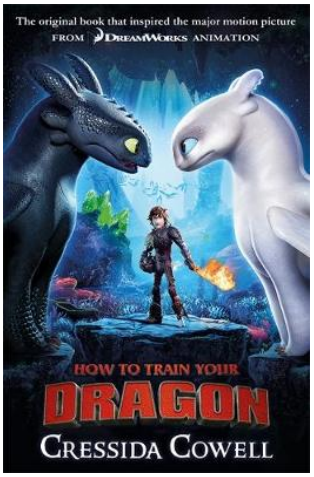
A selection of books especially selected for children in Year 4 (8 - 9 year olds) of average reading ability for the 2018/19 academic year.

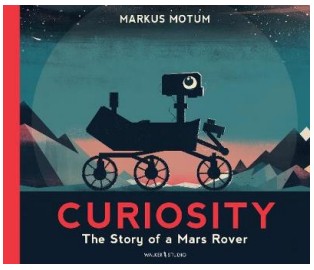
If your child is a competent reader or has read all these titles then try the books from the Year 5 list. Alternatively if these books are a little challenging try books from the Year 3 list. Our overall mission is to promote reading for pleasure with quality texts that are perfectly pitched for the 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.



How to Train Your Dragon

Author: Cressida Cowell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 10/01/2019 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

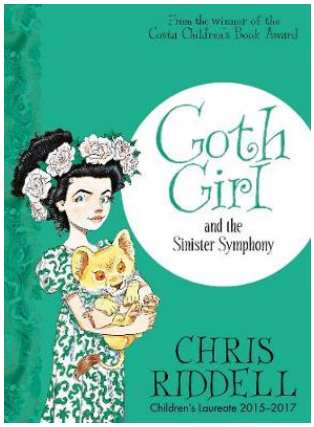
Jokes flow thick and fast from this most original and inventive Viking adventure, which launched the career of a Viking with a difference. Hiccup Horrendous Haddock grew up at a time of dragons but he was not always a hero. He had to learn to fight them. To do so he had to pass the Dragon Initiation Programme, an awesome schedule run by Gobber the Belch, idiot in charge of initiation on the Isle of Berk. Hiccup was by no means a natural high achiever when it came to dragon training but after many hilarious mishaps, he soon got the hang of it and was on the way to becoming a Hero.



Curiosity The Story of a Mars Rover

Author: Markus Motum **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/11/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

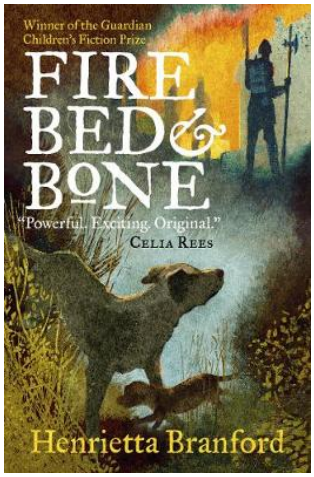
Shortlisted for the 2018 Klaus Flugge Prize | Motum is definitely an illustrator to watch. Though this is an information book, you feel there is a story being told, with pace and animation. His work reminded the Klaus Flugge judges of iconic Czech illustrator M Sasek.



Goth Girl and the Sinister Symphony

Author: Chris Riddell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 20/09/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

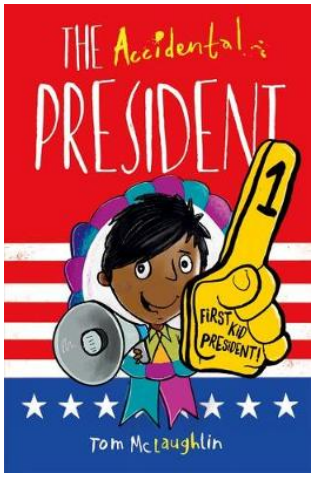
Best-selling Goth Girl is back for an action-packed new adventure in this stunningly produced volume by former Children's Laureate Chris Riddell which has the additional delight of a mini-book, Fable of a Faun, tucked into it. Lord Goth is turning Ghastly-Gorm Hall into the venue for Gothstock, a sensational music festival that will match his home. Naturally, Ada Goth is thrilled at the thought but will it all go to plan? In both words and pictures Chris Riddell creates an amazing cast of characters and the most original escapades in which they are all entangled.



Fire, Bed and Bone

Author: Henrietta Branford **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/09/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

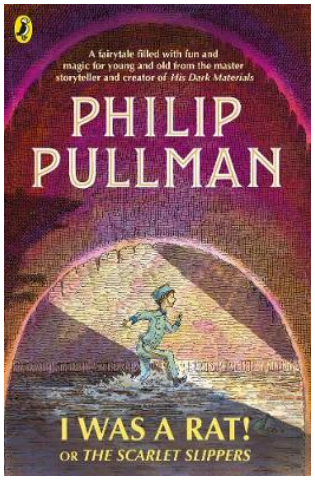
A most welcome reissue of a superb piece of accessible historical writing told from a most unusual viewpoint. Ultimately uplifting, this is an unflinching look at issues of social justice at the time of the Peasants Revolt. Marcus Sedgwick, who won the Branford Boase Award in 2001, says: "Fire, Bed and Bone is one of those very short books that is nevertheless powerful and moving; one of those books which oozes confidence from the first line to the last. With it, Henrietta won the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize, and twenty-two years later I think it would still win. It's far from being the first novel narrated by an animal, in this case a hunting hound witnessing the events of the Peasant's Revolt of 1381, but remains a masterclass in how to pull off that feat successfully. Its prose is robust and rhythmic; flawless in its execution, showing just what complex themes and stories one can address in a 'book for children'."



The Accidental President

Author: Tom McLaughlin **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/07/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

The latest in a justifiably popular and inventive series is highly topical and all the more enjoyable.



I Was a Rat! Or, The Scarlet Slippers

Author: Philip Pullman **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/06/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

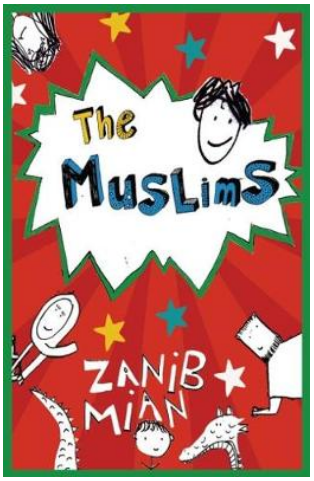
Acclaimed author Philip Pullman turns his hand to a stunning and original story for younger readers. Who is Roger? He says he was a rat - and some of the time he behaves like a rat. But, he is also a small boy. Or, he could be the Monster of the sewers...Everyone has a view – including The Daily Scourge – who tells their own version in screaming newspaper headlines. There is just one person who really knows who Roger is. And she's the princess...Cleverly, Pullman weaves together strands of story from different sources creating a fast-paced and multi-layered adventure.



The Tale of Angelino Brown

Author: David Almond **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/04/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

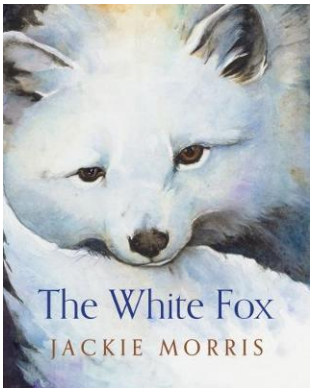
Longlisted for the UKLA 2018 Book Award A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month April 2018 | Award-winning David Almond's new story for younger reader is a delightfully lightly told, warm-hearted story perfect for all those who are willing believe in a little bit of something special. When a little angel turns up in Bert's pocket as he drives the bus all kinds of remarkable things begin to happen. Bert takes Angelino home to Betty and he brings great happiness into their lives. When Betty takes Angelino to school he delights the children too. Only the acting Head Teacher Mrs Mole, her horrible side-kick Professor Smellie and the imposter of a school inspector are untouched by his magical qualities. But who is Angelino? David Almond inspires readers' imagination and raises questions about definitions of good and bad. It is a Wonderful book.



The Muslims

Author: Zanib Mian **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 25/10/2017
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

UKLA Longlist Book Awards - 2019 Winner of the Little Rebels Award this is a witty, natural and authentic story of a British Muslim family. The handwritten Wimpy Kid style of presentation makes this hugely accessible and it is genuinely funny, as well as a great example of inclusion.



The White Fox

Author: Jackie Morris **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 15/10/2017
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

Shortlisted for the UKLA 2018 Book Award Interest Age 8-12 | Full of magic, myth and a wonderful sense of family, and illustrated throughout with Jackie Morris's beautiful, atmospheric paintings, this is perfect winter reading. Sol lives in Seattle with his dad but doesn't feel he belongs, and when an Arctic Fox appears at the docks, he identifies with the small white creature, so alien, so wild. The arrival of the fox brings a change in Sol's life, a return to the wild landscapes of Alaska and a place he can finally feel at home. Jackie Morris recognises perfectly the deep-seated importance to every one of us of wild creatures and wild landscapes, and this is a book to treasure.

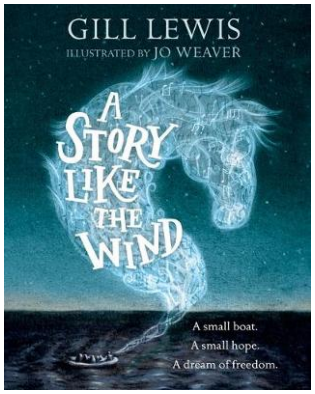


Greta Zargo and the Death Robots from Outer Space

Author: A. F. Harrold **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/09/2017
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

Greta Zargo is an unusual 11-year-old. An orphan she's lived on her own since the age of 8 thanks to an unfortunate but legally-binding error on her parents' otherwise carefully thought-out will. A junior reporter on the local paper, Greta is determined her summer scoop will be solving the mystery surrounding a series of cake thefts. Meanwhile, in outer space a huge space-going robot is heading towards Earth to take over our planet. The two stories zing along in parallel before coming together beautifully at the book's climax, and thanks to another typo on a key document. The comical characters and situations will thoroughly entertain young readers while the author's delight in words ad language

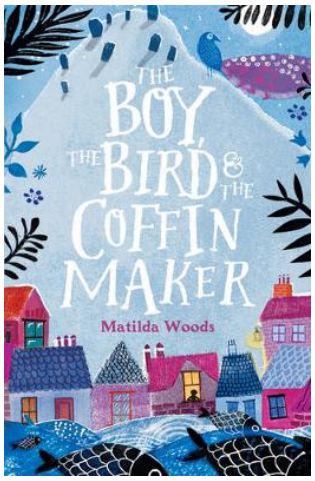
adds another dimension. Readers who enjoy Greta's adventure should look out for books by Andy Stanton and Philip Ardagh, who employ similarly knowing narrative voices, and will also enjoy Norton Juster's classic The Phantom Tollbooth.



A Story Like the Wind

Author: Gill Lewis **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 04/05/2017 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

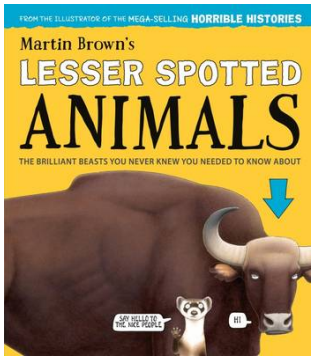
One of Our Books of the Year 2017 | Longlisted for the UKLA 2018 Book Award A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month May 2017 Gill Lewis's A Story Like the Wind, a powerful and lyrical story about contemporary refugees, is fuelled by an ancient tale which tells how throughout history music has crossed barriers and bound people together encouraging them to stand up to oppression and injustice. Rami has nothing but his violin as he sets off on a terrifying journey to try to find safety. Starving and thirsty he takes nothing from his fellow travellers as he has nothing to share. Why did you not sell your violin, they ask? With his violin as an accompaniment Rami swiftly demonstrates why; his inspiring story of freedom from long, long ago unites his fellow refugees and stirs them all to believe in their journey and their hope of a better life.



The Boy, the Bird and the Coffin Maker

Author: Matilda Woods **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/05/2017 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

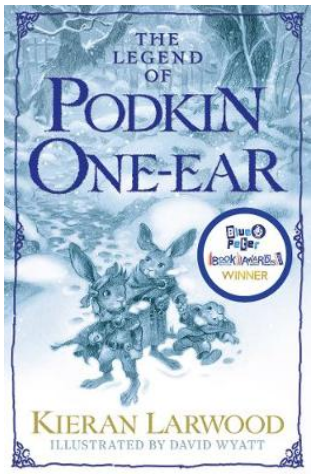
This beautifully written short novel transports young readers to a very different time and place to learn universal truths about caring for others.



Lesser Spotted Animals

Author: Martin Brown **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/04/2017 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

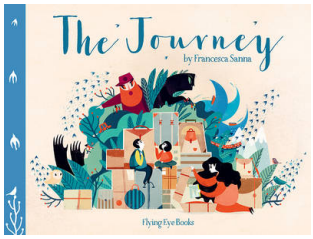
Winner of the UKLA 2018 Book Award 7-11 This is no ordinary animal book, you won't find the usual suspects in its page, no tigers, pandas, bears here. Instead be prepared to be amazed by animals you've never heard of, from the Cuban solenodon (one of the few mammals with a poisonous bite) to the stinky but useful zorilla, aka Africa's pongiest predator. Martin 'Horrible Histories illustrator' Brown celebrates a host of animals that deserve to be better know, in a book that offers a refreshingly different approach to natural history. Each page is packed with fascinating information, cleverly laid out with frequent jokes and cartoon asides adding to the fun. At the same time, there's a serious message about the threat to these creatures from humans, and habitat loss.



The Five Realms: The Legend of Podkin One-Ear

Author: Kieran Larwood **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 08/03/2017 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

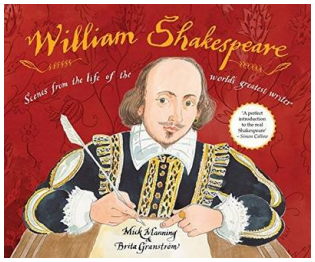
Winner of the Best Story Blue Peter Book Award 2017. A more challenging read, but one which grips the reader in the exciting quest of the eponymous Podkin to save his family from the evil Gorm. A most wonderfully realised society and mythology adds real depth to this series.



The Journey

Author: Francesca Sanna **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 01/04/2016 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

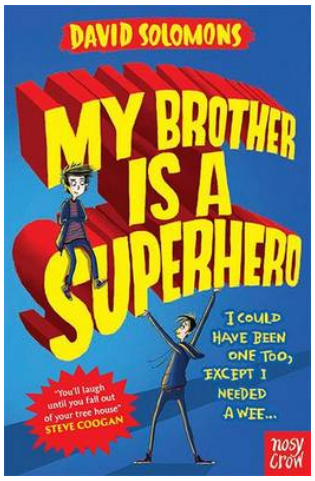
One of Our Books of the Year 2017 | Winner for the 2017 Klaus Flugge Prize | Winner of the UKLA 2017 Book Award | Shortlisted for the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2017 and awarded the Amnesty CILIP Honour A powerful picturebook which teacher judges described as "taking children to new experiences outside their own". What is it like to have to leave everything behind and travel many miles to somewhere unfamiliar and strange? A mother and her two children set out on such a journey; one filled with fear of the unknown, but also great hope.



William Shakespeare Scenes from the Life of the World's Greatest Writer

Author: Mick Manning **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/03/2016 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

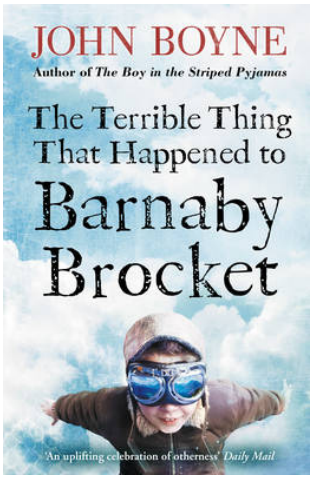
Shortlisted for the English Picture Book Award 2016 Mick Manning and Brita Granström have developed a picture book approach to non-fiction that brings their subjects to vivid life. Beautifully illustrated throughout in coloured pencil and watercolour and with pen and ink for the hand lettering, this is beautiful to look at and packed with information. There is lots on Shakespeare's childhood – stories of the famous as children always catch the imagination of young readers – and the book provides a very clear impression of Tudor life. It explains the 'lost years', when no-one really knows what Shakespeare was up to, and cleverly puts the plays in the context of Shakespeare's life and times. There are retellings in a sort of comic-strip of some of the most important plays – Hamlet, Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream and Romeo and Juliet – while comic-strip style speech bubbles throughout let readers hear Shakespeare's words and world. Children can read this book in so many different ways, and Simon Callow, quoted on the cover, is right when he says this is a perfect introduction to the real Shakespeare.



My Brother is a Superhero

Author: David Solomons **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 02/07/2015 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

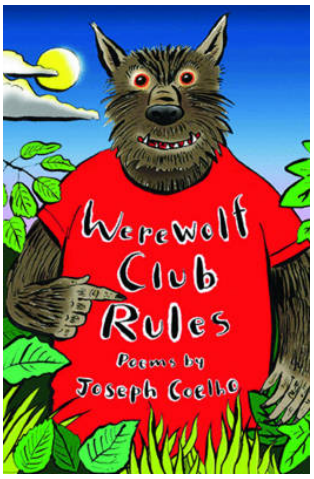
Children's Book of the Year, The British Book Industry Awards 2016 - Overall winner of Waterstones Children's Book Prize 2016 - Shortlisted for The Branford Boase Award 2016. Oh the anguish! Luke is a comic-reading super-hero expert, but he's gone for a wee at the crucial moment when an alien arrives in his tree-house and it's his never-read-a-comic-in-his-life brother Zach who gets superpowers and instructions to save the universe – life couldn't get any unfairer. But even super-heroes need back up, and when Zach is kidnapped, it falls to Luke to save his brother and the world. This is an excellent adventure story with real heart, that's also properly funny, with humour that comes from the characters as well as the situation. A sequel is promised and can't come soon enough.



The Terrible Thing That Happened to Barnaby Brocket

Author: John Boyne **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 28/03/2013
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

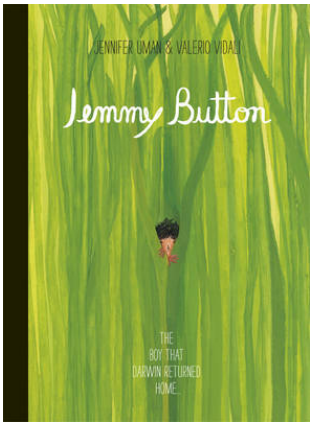
Shortlisted for the Little Rebel Children's Book Award 2013. In an entertaining adventure that is also full of charm and whimsy, best-selling author John Boyne champions the right of children to be different. Barnaby Brocket's parents want only thing – to lead an utterly normal life. But when Barnaby, their third child is born, they know at once that he is very far from normal. The problem is, Barnaby cannot stay on the ground; he floats ever upwards unless weighted down or restrained. Embarrassed by their problem son and the attention he may attract, Barnaby's parents let him go...Now a free spirit and travelling in many different ways, Barnaby's adventures take him across the world where he meets all kinds of people who, just because they are not exactly what their parents want them to be, have been similarly disowned by their parents. ~ Julia Eccleshare



Werewolf Club Rules! And Other Poems

Author: Joseph Coelho **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/08/2014
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

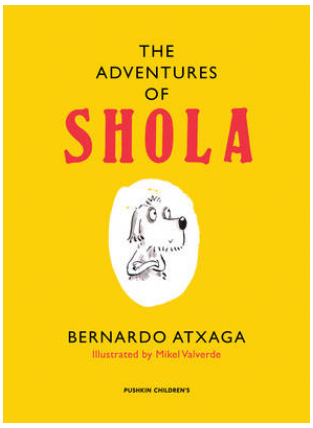
Winner of 2015 CLPE Poetry Award - the only award in the UK for published children's poetry An exciting debut poetry collection from an exciting new voice. The collection includes a wide range of poems, from funny and fantastical to spooky and spellbinding. Find out the mysterious rules of Werewolf Club, how to look like a rainbow, what happens when puppies fall in love - and how to fold up your gran! To see Joseph Coelho perform some of the poems go to his website.



Jemmy Button

Author: Alix Barzelay **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/01/2014 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2

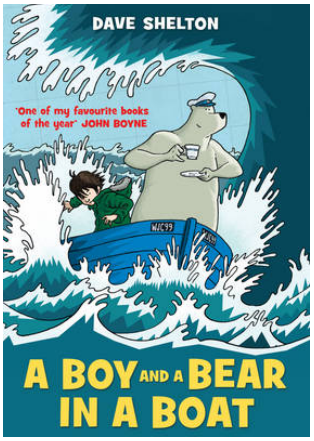
Longlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal 2014 Inspired by the life of Jemmy Button – a native of Tierra del Fuego who was brought to England in the mid-1800s to be 'educated' and 'civilised' by Captain Robert FitzRoy – this book illustrates Jemmy's bizarre encounters and his return back home. Collaborating across continents, without a common language, Valerio's precision and Jennifer's primitive style have resulted in a story unlike any other.



The Adventures of Shola

Author: Bernardo Atxaga **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 10/10/2013 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

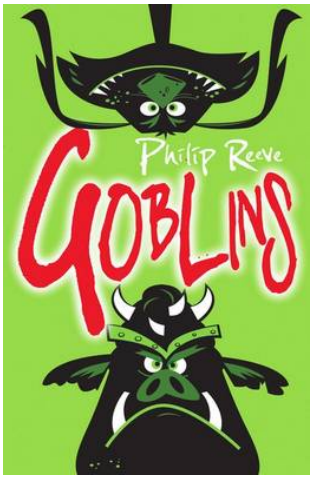
Winner of the Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation, awarded biennially since 1996, was founded to celebrate the best translation of a children’s book from a foreign language into English and published in the UK. It aims to spotlight the high quality and diversity of translated fiction for young readers. Translated by Margaret Jull Costa. Shola is surely one of the most irresistible characters in children’s books! The outside world sees a small, white dog but Shola thinks she is much more than that, nothing less than a highly cultivated creature, with the world at her feet. Her long-suffering companion (don’t ever call him her owner) Senor Grogo puts up with this very patiently, for the most part anyway: Shola’s refusal to admit to any mistake occasionally, and understandably, provokes an outburst! The mismatch between Shola’s staunch self-belief and reality produce all sorts of comic situations in the four different stories contained in this volume. Everyone will have their favourite Shola moment – maybe when she decides she’s really a lion, or when she leads a pack of hunting dogs after wild boar in the mistaken belief that boar are just like sheep, only bigger. Her delight in language entertains too, there’s nothing she likes more than using words like ‘obligation’ or ‘discombobulate’. Thoroughly charming, Shola deserves to be much better known.



A Boy and a Bear in a Boat

Author: Dave Shelton **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 14/03/2013
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

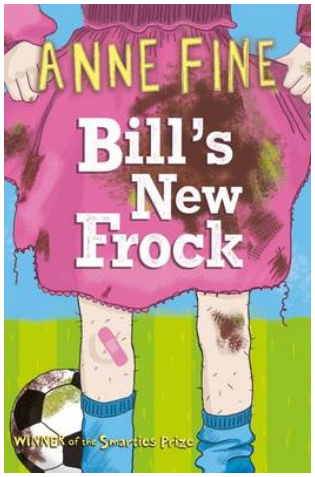
Winner of the Branford Boase Award 2013, the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2013 & the Costa Children's Book Awards 2012 An amazing adventure follows when a boy takes what he thinks will be a short ride in a boat with a boy. But the ride is not a short one... Soon, the boat is in the middle of an empty sea and the bear is struggling with a map and searching the horizon with a telescope. Luckily the boy has brought some food with him as together, the boy and the bear deal with impenetrable mist, a terrifying sea monster and even the remains of a disgusting sandwich in this humorous and gentle journey of survival and self-discovery.



Goblins

Author: Philip Reeve **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 05/04/2012
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

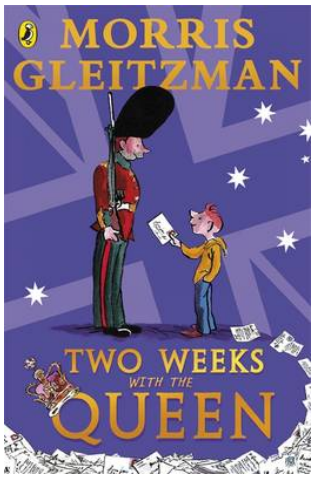
Shortlisted for the Roald Dahl Funny Prize 2012. Fans of Mortal Engines will devour Philip Reeves's richly detailed goblin extravaganza. The dank and dark towers and stairways of Clovenstone Keep are packed full of dirty, smelly, squabbling goblins. As a breed, they all love fighting; none more so than King Knobbler, their ferocious leader who takes a secret delight in soft pink pants. But one day Skarper hatches out of an eggstone. Skarper is different and his differences are bound to lead him into trouble. Sent to the Bumwipe Heaps to keep him out of mischief, Skarper looks beyond the decaying residue and begins to makes sense of the 'lettuce' and the 'worms'. Learning to read is a dangerous business and soon Scarper finds himself bratapulted off the battlements and falling headlong into an incredible adventure. It's worth keeping track of the cloud maidens, trolls, softlings and the rest as they all hurtle through the headlong action as this glorious adventure is full of hidden jokes and meanings.



Bill's New Frock

Author: Anne Fine **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/06/2007
Year Groups: Key Stage 2

Bill Simpson wakes up to find he's a girl, and worse, his mother makes him wear a frilly pink dress to school. How on earth is he going to survive a whole day like this? Everything just seems to be different for girls. Stylishly written and thought-provoking it's a book that's not to be missed by both girls and boys aged around 7+. Anne Fine has a rare genius for building a funny, enriching and moving story around the nuts and bolts of school life. Many of Anne Fine's books are ideal for reluctant readers as they tend to be quite short and also because of the great warmth and humour in her writing. These include The Angel of Nitshill Road, Ivan the Terrible, How to write really Badly, Saving Miss Mirabelle, The Chicken Gave it to me and Anneli the Art Hater. Anne also writes for older readers, the most know of which is probably Madame Doubtfire. Click here to view all titles by Anne Fine.



Two Weeks with the Queen

Author: Morris Gleitzman **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/03/1999 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 2

A favourite of August 2011 Guest Editor Julie Hearn. To writing a moving and funny book, especially for children, about as serious a subject as cancer is a remarkable achievement. Two Weeks with the Queen is a remarkable example of such a thing. Sent away from his home in Australia to stay with his aunt ands uncle in London while his parents nurse his brother Luke through the final stages of cancer, Colin sets out on a mission. If only he can reach the Queen, he reasons, she'll be able to put him in touch with the best cancer doctor in the world and Luke will be made well. But nothing is so straightforward. Instead, Colin meets some remarkable people and, through them, he is able to share some of the universal grief of loosing a person you love. Profoundly moving, deeply serious but also wickedly funny. Click here to see other Morris Gleitzman titles.