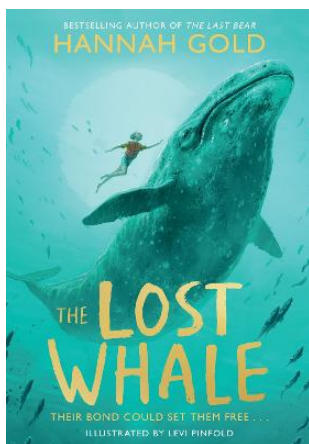


A selection of books especially selected for children in Year 4 (8 - 9 year olds) of average reading ability for the 2022/23 academic year.

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.

**The Lost Whale**

Author: Hannah Gold **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 31/03/2022

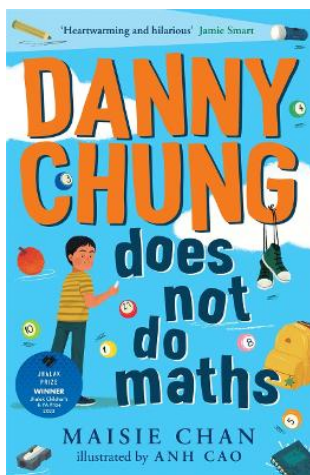
April 2022 Book of the Month Rio is sent to stay with his grandmother in California whilst his Mum is hospitalised back home in the UK. Unfortunately, Rio only met his grandmother 5 years ago so knows little about her or about the area she lives in the US. Grandmother Fran lives by the Pacific Ocean – so life becomes punctuated by the sound of the sea and waves breaking on the shore. Rio feels totally alone, away from friends and his usual surroundings. That is, until he meets Marina by chance on the harbour. Marina and her dad, Birch, live on a boat and run whale spotting trips for tourists. It is this and the finding of his Mum's 'treasure' box that contains drawings of whales, and especially one who somehow seems to draw Rio in – an individual named White Beak – that helps give Rio a focus and a way back from feeling adrift. The story is totally engrossing – once I started reading I had to read it in one go! Gold writes about animal adventures in a completely natural way, combining lots of information with a strong story line and characters which evoke our empathy. It's a story you can literally dive into, enjoying the vicarious thrills of spotting – and along the way – saving grey whales. As I read a proof copy I had no chance to see the illustrations from award winning illustrator Levi Pinfold – but, if the author/illustrator pairing is even half as good as Gold's previous novel *The Last Bear*, then we are in for an absolute treat! A read that appeals to anyone interested in ecological themes.



Peanut Jones and the Illustrated City

Author: Rob Biddulph **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 02/09/2021

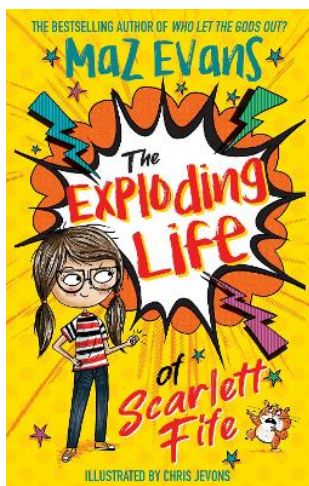
The first novel from the lockdown #drawwithrob hero for schools and families everywhere, is an absolute triumph. The first in what is sure to become a best selling and popular series introduces us to the amazing Peanut Jones. Her artist father has gone missing, and her own love of drawing is being stifled in her new school and not valued by her mother. The discovery of a magic pencil, that literally brings drawings to life, enables her to draw a door and step through into another world, where she hopes she may be able to find her father. Peanut is aided and accompanied by her new science-loving friend, Rockwell, and her genius younger sibling, Little Bit. Together they face many dangers as they travel through the land of Chroma, not least the villainous Mr. White, who wants to extinguish all colour and creativity. Chroma is a superbly imagined world and each district and many of the vivid characters have a distinctly artistic flavour – The Ink District, Warholia, Vincent Fields etc. Little Tail the magic pencil is also known Pencil Number One, the very first pencil created by inventor Nicolas-Jaques Conte. There is actually a glossary at the end of the book to give readers a mini education in Art History and ensure they can appreciate all the references- very useful for parents and teachers! This is a book suffused with the joy of art, by an artist and for budding artists everywhere, but most of all it is a hugely enjoyable, witty and exciting story that will captivate readers of all ages. Highly recommended.



Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths

Author: Maisie Chan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 10/06/2021

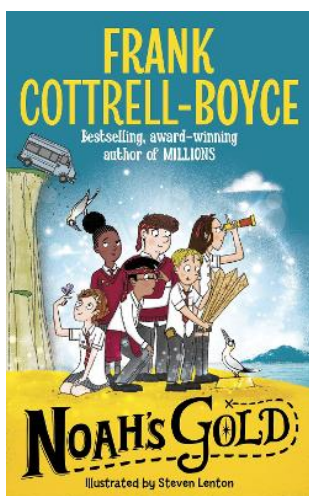
Winner of The Branford Boase Award 2022 | Shortlisted for the Blue Peter Awards 2022 Best Story | Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2023 ages 7-10 Danny Chung loves art. Unfortunately, everyone else – parents and schoolfriends alike - thinks he should love maths. Then his grandmother arrives from China, and she and Danny have to share a bedroom. It feels like a catastrophe, but could funny, intelligent Nai Nai turn out to be his best friend? The Branford Boase judges commented : ‘well-rounded characters and I loved the depiction of the intergenerational relationship’; ‘you could feel the author’s love for the story she was telling’; ‘it provides a really important perspective’; ‘I’ve never read anything that describes the diasporic experience so specifically.’



The Exploding Life of Scarlett Fife Book 1

Author: Maz Evans **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 13/05/2021

Scarlett Fife has BIG feelings. And she's about to get into BIG trouble. From the bestselling Maz Evans comes a heartfelt and hilarious new series, perfect for fans of Roald Dahl's Matilda. Scarlett Fife has BIG FEELINGS. And when she has BIG FEELINGS, they explode out of her like an over-squeezed stress ball. Scarlett's in big trouble after a BIG FEELINGS episode leads to a runaway hamster getting into the vicar's trousers at her aunty's engagement party. If she loses her temper ONE MORE TIME, she's going to miss out on her trip to Mega Awesome Sicky Fun World, the best theme park on the planet. But feelings are like slime in a party bag. No matter how much someone tells you to keep it in, it'll always find its way out. And very soon, Scarlett notices that every time she pushes her feelings down, something explodes. Like ... really, properly explodes. It might be her teacher's slimy green smoothie. A huge pot of purple paint. Or a massive pile of elephant poo at the zoo. And let's hope Scarlett doesn't get mad at Aunty's wedding - that wedding cake is HUGE ... Laugh-out-loud action for every child and parent who has ever lost control of their feelings - this is sparkling, heartwarming and beautifully illustrated throughout by the fantastic Chris Jevons.



Noah's Gold

Author: Frank Cottrell-Boyce **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 13/05/2021

Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2022 ages 7-10 | Boyce is renowned for the humour and empathy in his novels – and this latest is definitely one of the most entertaining, engaging and just plain fun stories. Noah accidentally ends up stowing away on his big sister's school geography field trip. The trip was planned to visit the Orinoco Wonder Warehouse in Letterkenny but, due to the teacher (Mr Merriman) programming the satnav wrongly, the mini-bus he's driving ends up on an island – and what appears to be an uninhabited island at that! Mr Merriman eventually appears to notice the island they are on is not the trip's original destination – and leaves the children on the minibus at the top of a cliff whilst he goes to investigate. Unfortunately, he forgets to apply the handbrake properly! Happily, children being children, they have descended from the minibus just before it falls over the cliff... Having set this wonderful scene we hear how the children survive through a series of amusing letters from Noah to his parents – which he posts in a letterbox on the island. Strangely – as there never appears to be a collection – he gets replies. Whilst on the island it appears that Noah has broken the internet, and no-one has a phone connection – so the children are thrown back on their own ingenuity to survive. Noah also finds a treasure map and they all set off in search of the treasure having adventures along the way. With such a complex plot, with so many threads, it would be so easy for any lesser novelist to lose control

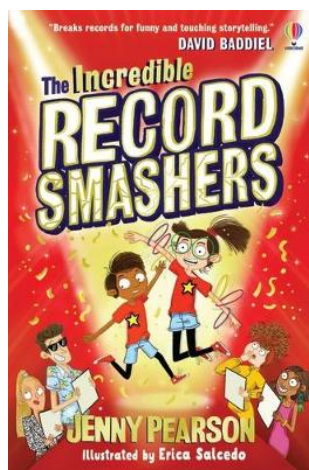
of some elements, but Cottrell-Boyce has no such worries and keeps the reader engaged at all times. The humour is laugh out loud funny, with a heart-warming group of characters who develop throughout the story. Highly recommended – an engaging read that will keep readers spellbound.



A Girl Called Joy

Author: Jenny Valentine **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 29/04/2021

10-year-old Joy's family have always travelled the world – Mum working as a nurse, Dad as a chef with Claude and Joy – sisters but totally different characters – until now. They have returned to the UK and are all crammed into Grandad's house where normality reigns supreme! Both girls have to go to school – for the first time ever – and find it difficult to settle and find life as engaging as it used to be. Joy has always looked for silver-linings but at the moment she finds it incredibly hard to find any, until she meets Benny who becomes a firm friend. She and Benny met beneath an ancient tree in the school grounds – but then the local authority plans to tear the tree down. Can Joy find her silver-lining in such an awful plan? She and Benny start a fight for what they believe in – the future of the ancient tree. Written with all Valentine's usual skill and empathy we are drawn into the world of Joy and her difficult transition to life without the globe-trotting. The characters are clearly drawn, with an authentic family dynamic. The perfect length for readers enjoying a longer read as their next step. This promises to be the first in a series, and I am sure Joy and her family, with their resilience and courage will have many fans.

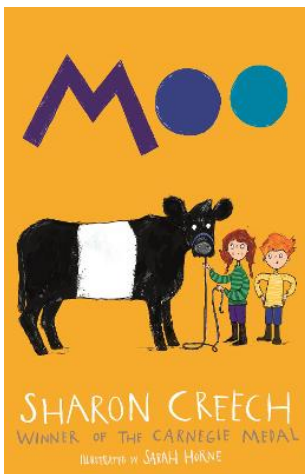


The Incredible Record Smashers

Author: Jenny Pearson **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 29/04/2021

Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2022 ages 7-10 | May 2021 Book of the Month With absolutely no sign of the tricky second novel syndrome following, as it swiftly does, the critically acclaimed Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates, Jenny Pearson shows again her ability to make the reader laugh aloud while also tackling some really emotional 'big' topics. As a primary teacher she knows her audience inside out and creates very real and believable characters even if they are involved in extraordinary adventures. The capacity of children to become obsessed with the Guinness Book of World Records is familiar to every librarian and so the theme of this story is spot on. Young readers will adore that every chapter is headed by ever more outlandish world records (and to read about the author's own favourites at the end) and will relish the antics of Lucy and Sandesh in their record attempts. I love the fact that the text is peppered with Don't Try this at Home warnings too! The lively illustrations only add to the book's already significant shelf appeal. But it is the reason for the World Record attempt that

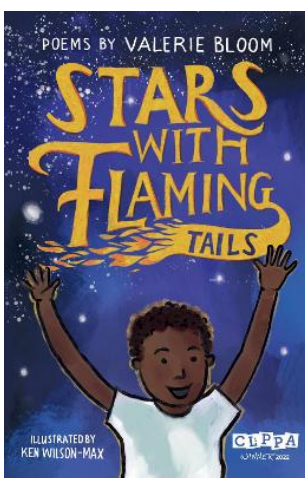
gives the hilarity a much deeper impact. Lucy's single parent Mum suffers from depression and is hospitalised at the beginning of the book. Lucy's poignant quest to find her Mum's happiness tellingly reveals the internal struggles of children faced with parental mental health issues and will provide an invaluable opportunity for other children to empathise or indeed talk about their own difficulties. The fact that Lucy realises that she does have a strong support network with her eccentric, yet wise, Aunt Sheila and with her incredibly loyal friend Sandesh, will provide these children with comfort and hope that things will get better. This novel positively sparkles with kindness, heart and humour and I predict young readers will be fighting to get hold of it!



Moo

Author: Sharon Creech **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/04/2021

Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2022 ages 7-10 Reena and Luke's lives change forever and in completely unexpected ways when they move from New York City to live in Maine. The surroundings and lifestyle are completely different, but the biggest drivers of change are their encounters with a cow called Zora. Sent by their parents to help Zora's owner Mrs Falala, one of the most doughty and memorable eccentrics in fiction, they are pushed and pummelled (often literally) into becoming proficient cow handlers. There is so much more to learn too, not least about Mrs Falala. The story is told in a blend of poems and prose that is perfect for the story, conjuring up unforgettable images of the characters and the setting. Sharon Creech won the Carnegie Medal for Ruby Holler and Moo is just as original and heart-warming. Congratulations to new independent publisher Guppy Books for bringing it to readers in this country.



Stars With Flaming Tails

Author: Valerie Bloom **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/01/2021

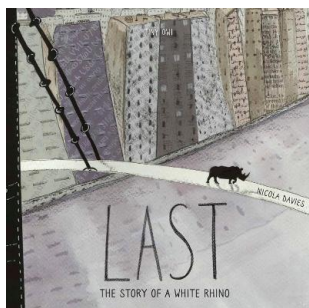
Winner of the 2022 CLiPPA (CLPE Children's Poetry Award) | Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2022 ages 7-10 Poet Philip Gross, chair of the CLiPPA judges, said "Stars with Flaming Tails is like a passport to the whole world, and beyond. This is poetry that can go anywhere, from the personal to the planetary, the surreal to the scientific, with its invitation to us all to look, and to laugh, to listen to our feelings, and to think. And meanwhile, almost without noticing it, we're being handed the keys to the craft of writing for ourselves."



Brand New Boy

Author: David Almond **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 05/11/2020

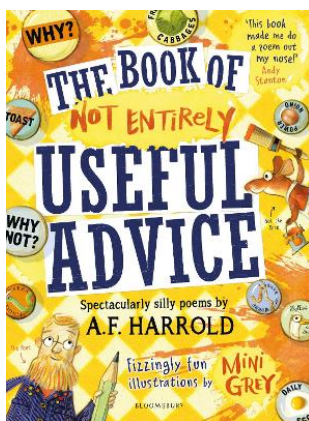
Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award 2022 ages 7-10 A warm and thought-provoking tale from a master storyteller, winner of the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award and author of the Carnegie Medal-winning Skellig.



Last

Author: Nicola Davies **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 24/09/2020

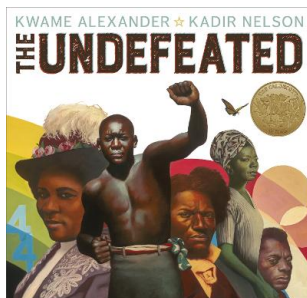
Last evokes a longing for home from the reader and a sense of hope for the future upon its ending. In her debut as an illustrator, Nicole Davies effectively and beautifully portrays the differences in mood and surroundings between the rhinoceros' life before and during captivity through her effective use of colour.



The Book of Not Entirely Useful Advice

Author: A. F. Harrold **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 03/09/2020

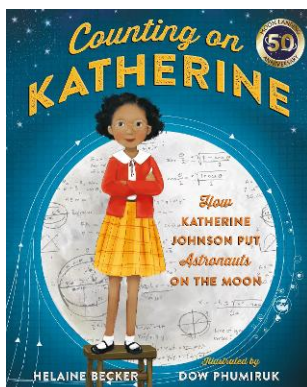
Two phenomenally talented people are united in this book, and it is hard to know which of them – poet A.F. Harrold or illustrator Mini Grey – had the most fun creating it. Either way, the end product is glorious, an entirely essential collection of poems offering unforgettable advice on an extraordinary range of subjects. Scanning through the index will give you an idea of the topics covered, and how: the entry for banana, for example, reads how to identify a ... while that for pencil case is why you shouldn't muddle one up with a lunchbox ... There are three entries for tiger, referring you to very useful poems, including the one that explains just how many tigers it takes to spoil a picnic. Harrold is a master of the absurd, taking ideas or phrases and turning them quite round about and Mini Grey illustrates his poems with an equal delight in the possibilities he conjures up. Most of the poems are wonderfully comic, but there's space for quiet, thoughtful verse too. It's a book to fire the imagination and to make you see things in a whole new way, like a poet in fact.



The Undeclared

Author: Kwame Alexander **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 20/02/2020

Winner of the UKLA Book Awards 2021 | Shortlisted for the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2020 Written for and about “the swift and sweet ones/who hurdled history and opened a world of possible”, for those who “survived America by any means necessary. And the ones who didn’t,” this is an inspiring ode to the author’s forebears and to the world-changing feats of unforgettable Black American figures. Author Kwame Alexander’s initial inspiration for this book came in the year his second daughter was born, the same year Barack Obama became the first African American president of the USA. As a result, Alexander wanted his daughters “to know how we got to this historic moment”, which is exactly what this stirring book does. The chained slaves who kept faith, the elite Olympians, the innovative musicians, the seminal scientists, the courageous activists - people from all walks of life are celebrated in Alexander’s poetically poised words, and gloriously illustrated by Kadir Nelson, with much for young children to ponder and ask questions about. As well as being a wonderful way for parents to explore Black American history with their little ones on a one-to-one basis, this will also work well with older children in a classroom context. Indeed, this is one of those rare and wonderful picture books that defies age boundaries - a radiant, resonant unforgettable tour de force, as befits its theme.



Counting on Katherine

Author: Helaine Becker **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 16/05/2019

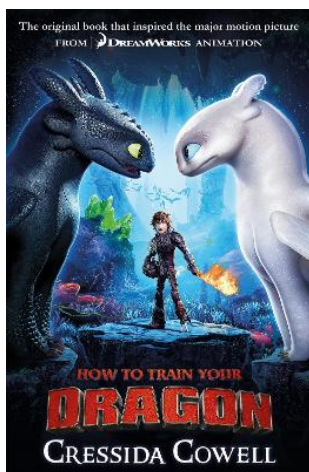
Winner of the UKLA Book Awards 2020 Told with crystalline clarity and verve, and fabulously enhanced by the stylish illustrations, this tells the remarkable against-the-odds tale of Katherine Johnson from her days as an exceptional African American schoolgirl whose “boundless curiosity turned her into a star student”. But despite her brightness, ten-year-old Katherine faced the terrible restraints of segregation - as an African American she wasn’t permitted to study at her local high school. As she “burned with fury”, her family determined to get Katherine the education she deserved and so they moved to a town with a high school for black students. Her path to working on Project Apollo required incredible perseverance, but thanks to that, and to her outstanding mathematical skills, the world could count on Katherine to set the moon landings back on course. Shot-through with a rousing sense of Katherine’s determination and dedication to her work, and with her shining mathematical brilliance, this beautiful book deserves to be on the shelves of every space-loving child.



Asha & the Spirit Bird

Author: Jasbinder Bilan **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 07/02/2019

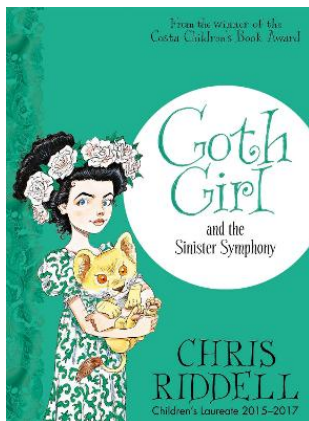
Winner of the Costa Children's Book Award 2019 | Debut of the Month January 2020 | Winner of the 2017 Time/Chicken House Children's Fiction Competition | Longlisted for the Branford Boase Award 2020 Rich in drama, and suffused in the spirituality and atmosphere of the author's native Northern Punjab, Jasbinder Bilan's debut is a delightful, hope-bathed treat for 9+ year-olds. With money tight, Asha's father has gone to the big city to work in a factory, having promised to send money home, and to return to their village in the Himalayan foothills for Diwali. But when the money stops arriving and her mum runs into trouble with a lender, Asha makes a big, brave decision: she will cross the world's highest mountains to find her father. Accompanied by best friend Jeevan, and with the magical, protective presence of her nanijee - her grandmother's spirit bird - Asha sets out on a truly transformative journey of a lifetime. Along the way, the friends encounter dangerous beasts of the animal and human kind, but they never give up hope, with Asha's infectious sense of justice, self-belief and spirituality keeping them firmly fixed on their goal. This is perfect for fans of the Himalayas-set Running on the Roof of the World and the adventure stories of Eva Ibbotson and Katherine Rundell.



How to Train Your Dragon

Author: Cressida Cowell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 10/01/2019

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. Books in The How To Train Your Dragon Series: 1. How To Train Your Dragon 2. How To Be A Pirate 3. How To Speak Dragonese 4. How To Cheat a Dragon's Curse 5. A Hero's Guide to Deadly Dragons 6. How To Twist a Dragon's Tale 7. How To Ride a Dragon's Storm 8. How To Break a Dragon's Heart 9. How To Steal a Dragon's Sword 10. How To Seize a Dragon's Jewel 11. How To Betray a Dragon's Hero 12. How To Fight a Dragon's Fury



Goth Girl and the Sinister Symphony

Author: Chris Riddell **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 20/09/2018

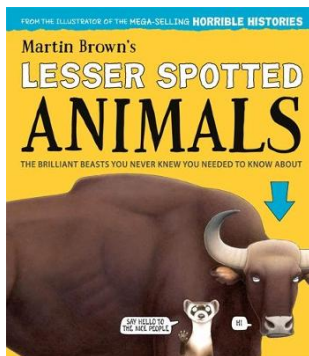
Best-selling Goth Girl is back for an action-packed new adventure in this stunningly produced volume by former Children's Laureate Chris Riddell which has the additional delight of a mini-book, Fable of a Faun, tucked into it. Lord Goth is turning Ghastly-Gorm Hall into the venue for Gothstock, a sensational 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

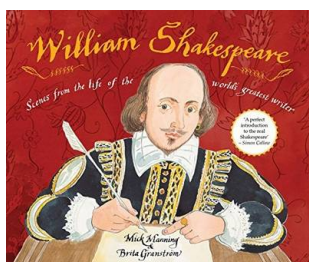
A most welcome reissue of a superb piece of accessible historical writing told from a most unusual viewpoint. Ultimately uplifting, this is an unflinching look at issues of social justice at the time of the Peasants Revolt. Marcus Sedgwick, who won the Branford Boase Award in 2001, says: "Fire, Bed and 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'."



Lesser Spotted Animals

Author: Martin Brown **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/04/2017

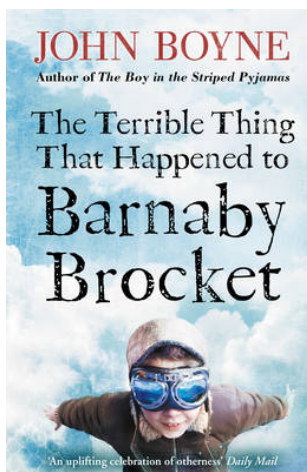
Winner of the UKLA 2018 Book Award 7-11 This is no ordinary animal book, you won't find the usual suspects in its page, no tigers, pandas, bears here. Instead be prepared to be amazed by animals you've never heard of, from the Cuban solenodon (one of the few mammals with a poisonous bite) to the stinky but useful zorilla, aka Africa's pongiest predator. Martin 'Horrible Histories' illustrator Brown celebrates a host of animals that deserve to be better known, 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.



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

Author: Mick Manning **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/03/2016

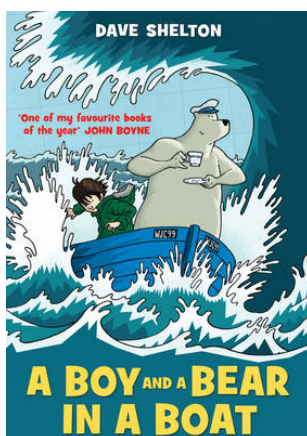
Shortlisted for the English Picture Book Award 2016 Mick Manning and Brita Granström have developed a picture book approach to non-fiction that brings their subjects to vivid life. Beautifully illustrated throughout in coloured pencil and watercolour and with pen and ink for the hand lettering, this 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.



The Terrible Thing That Happened to Barnaby Brocket

Author: John Boyne **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 28/03/2013

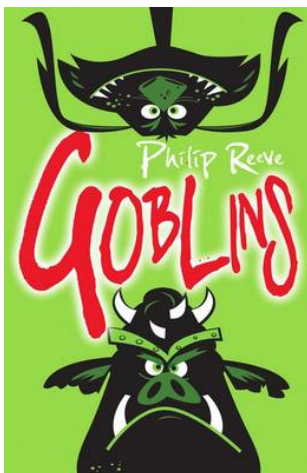
Shortlisted for the Little Rebel Children's Book Award 2013. In an entertaining adventure that is also full of charm and whimsy, best-selling author John Boyne champions the right of children to be different. Barnaby Brocket's parents want only thing – to lead an utterly normal life. But when Barnaby, 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



A Boy and a Bear in a Boat

Author: Dave Shelton **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 14/03/2013

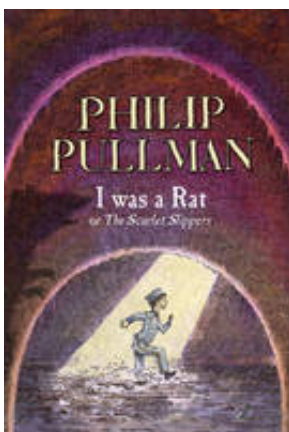
Winner of the Branford Boase Award 2013, the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2013 & the Costa Children's Book Awards 2012 An amazing adventure follows when a boy takes what he thinks will be a short ride in a boat with a bear. But the ride is not a short one... Soon, the boat is in the middle of an empty sea and 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

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 make 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.



I Was A Rat!

Author: Philip Pullman **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/11/2004

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. ~ Julia Eccleshare Perfect for Reluctant Readers as well as keen readers. To view other titles we think are suitable for reluctant readers please [click here](#).