

2016's best books for children...





One to make you laugh

The Accidental Secret Agent

by Tom McLaughlin

(OUP Children's)

A book about...a clumsy 13-year-old boy called Kevin, who is mistaken for a secret agent and ends up getting armed with an arsenal of James Bond-style gadgets to tackle a supervillain.

“This book is amazing. Full of humour and laughs, with the epic adventure of a boy whose life changes when he meets a shady character.

“When I read this book, it lured me in like magic. I could not wait for the next page, and when my mum told me to go to sleep I was really annoyed, as I was extremely wrapped up in the story. I would really recommend this book to my friends.”

Aidan, 9

“This book was so funny that my cheeks started hurting two pages before chapter one (there was a hilarious note at the beginning). If you ever wished James Bond would be funnier, you will love this.”

Griff, 9

“This book is about a normal schoolboy who is always daydreaming and then accidentally becomes an adventurous secret agent who has lots of futuristic gadgets and gizmos. The book is extremely funny and hard to put down. In fact, I read it in one go! I hope there will be another book of new adventures.”

Alexander, 9

These pupils are from Years 3 and 4 at Whitchurch Church of England Primary, Hampshire



One for animal lovers

Malkin Moonlight

by Emma Cox, with illustrations by Rohan Eason

(Bloomsbury Children's)

A book about...a small black cat who falls in love and then battles to bring peace to a recycling centre full of other cats.

"I liked that Malkin the cat was named by the moon, after being thrown in the river with his siblings. Malkin and Roux were my favourite characters because I liked that they got married. It reminded me of Varjak Paw and I would recommend it to young readers."

Frances, 9

"I really enjoyed this book and it was very 'popping'. My favourite part was when Malkin and Roux travelled to the recycling centre. I would recommend this to a confident reader."

Shreyas, 9

"The book is very well written and good, but the beginning is a bit depressing. (It gets a lot better though!) I would recommend this for all ages."

Jamie, 9

These pupils are from Chalk Ridge Primary School, Hampshire

One for fans of action-adventure

Steven Seagull, Action Hero

by Elys Dolan

(OUP Children's)

A book about...a bird, closely modelled on the actor of a similar name, who saves Beach City from all sorts of miscreants.

“Steven Seagull steps back into the working world owing to mysterious sand holes popping up all over the beach. The children had oodles of suggestions as to how Steven might solve this mystery.

“‘He’s got to try to look for clues!’ said Reuben. ‘Or spy on people!’ exclaimed Martina, while Toby thought he should just ‘hop into the sea’.

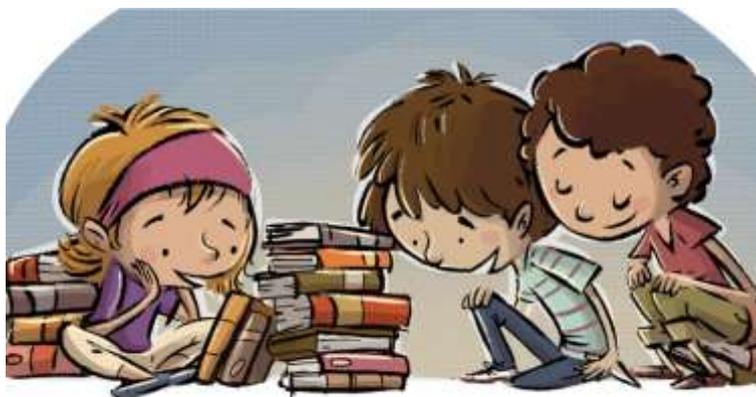
“The book poses interesting questions, such as ‘Who on Earth would need so much sand?’ Ellie quickly suggested ‘a queen’ and Alexander thought it could be someone who ‘has a crown like a king’, Samip realised it must be ‘a crab’ from the crab emblems on the sand castle.

“When I asked the children if they enjoyed the story, Leon called out: ‘Ding! It’s a tick!’

“Across the board, the children scored this 10/10 on their hands.

“Well done, Steven Seagull. You have made it onto the Butterfly Class’ favourites shelf. And you made this teacher laugh a lot, too.”

Alice Edgington is deputy headteacher at St Stephen’s Infant School, Canterbury, Kent



One for the inquisitive



Ada Twist, Scientist

by Andrea Beaty and David Roberts

(Abrams Books)

A book about...the power of curiosity and a child who opts to use science to understand the world around her.

“I recommend *Ada Twist, Scientist* because it encourages people to believe that anything is possible, as long as they try hard and have self-belief.

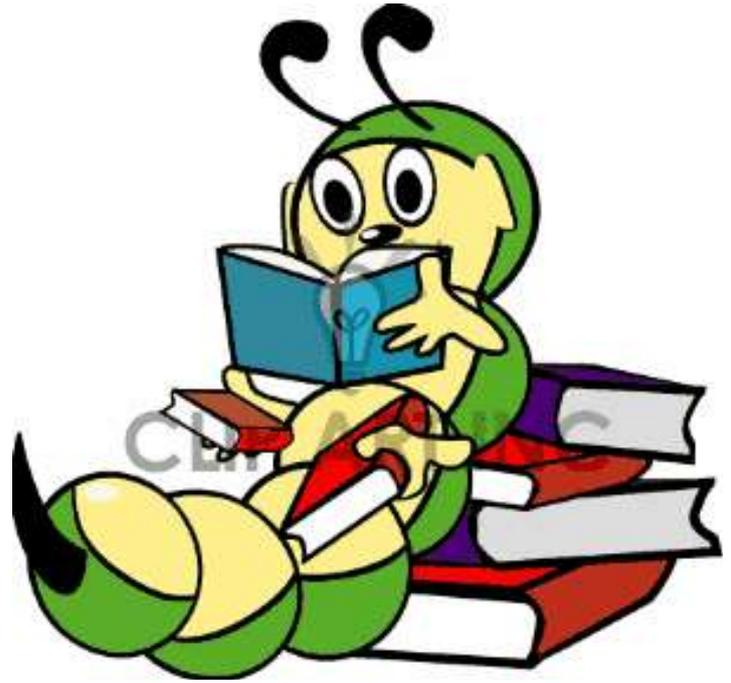
“It makes you think about the world we live in and promotes people asking questions to satisfy their curiosity.

“*Ada Twist, Scientist* is a good book for children, because you start to think closely about life; it questions how scientists use their time and effort to find cures for diseases and illnesses, as well as understanding how the human body works.

“I enjoyed this book, because it made me appreciate all of the scientists’ hard work.

“It also shows you how even young children can love and nurture their interest in science and the world around them. This is why you should check this book out – it will inspire you to do something you love.”

Abbi, 13, from Linton Village College, Cambridge



One for bookworms

Lydia: The Wild Girl of Pride and Prejudice

by Natasha Farrant

(Chicken House)

A book about...Lydia, a girl who falls for a soldier and follows him to Brighton where she tries to find out what she really wants from life.

“When a red-coated garrison arrives in Meryton, Lydia Bennet’s life is turned upside-down. Beneath your typical country-girl personality lies the real Lydia Bennet: boisterous, outgoing, maybe even crazy. She needs to find who she is and what she really wants. Before she realises this for herself, she falls head over heels for the dashing Wickham, a soldier she loves. But is he what he seems?”

“Her love lands her in Brighton, where her intentions were to follow her love and dreams. Twists and turns will be hidden along the way – will she reach her dreams in time?”

“In a fresh take on the fabulous Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Lydia finds herself in a whirlwind of social drama. Natasha Farrant conjures up a romantic atmosphere that might melt your heart. It is a must for all major bookworms out there.”

Teagan McClymont-Dodd, Year 6 pupil at The District CE Primary School, Merseyside

One for comedy fans

Alison Hubble

by **Allan Ahlberg and Bruce Ingman**

(Puffin)



A book about...a girl who suddenly starts creating doubles of herself, and the ensuing chaos that it brings.

“Alison Hubble is the hilarious tale of a little girl who has the unusual habit of doubling. She goes to bed as one person and wakes up as two – what a conundrum for her parents! They send her to school with a note that, as a teacher myself, made me laugh out loud: “Dear Mrs Mott...PS, her extra dinner money is enclosed.”

“Alison then doubles again, making her the school’s best-ever goalkeeper, given that no ball could get past four girls covering the goal line. Her poor parents are shocked to discover that they now have four identical Alisons. The group of children I read the book to felt sorry for the Alisons’ mum, who ended up making four dinners.

“The next morning, with Alison having doubled again in the night, her dad struggles to count the girls and get them off to school. And the poor teacher has no luck calling the register – thanks to some cheeky children who add to the number of Alisons by shouting ‘Here, Miss!’ – driving Mrs Mott to distraction.

“The news crews, local council, professors and experts all step in to help with the ‘Alison problem’. But nothing seems to stop this girl doubling. The end of the book is ambiguous, and the children and I were left wondering what more adventures the many Alisons might get up to next.”

My students gave the following views:

“I liked the book because it was brain-bogglingly weird and cool!”

Scott

“I think that it was double the double the double the fun! It was funny and silly.”

Abigail

“I thought the book was really weird and the best rhyming book I have heard.”

Summer

Kim Duffy is Primary 3 teacher at Auchtermuchty Primary School, Fife