Education Library Service
Recommended Primary Fiction
Autumn Term 2016

Beasley, Cassie  Circus Mirandus
Chicken  Pbk  6.99  9781910002575
Interest age:  10+  Reading age:  10+

Micah's grandfather Ephraim, is gravely ill. He tells his grandson about a mysterious magic circus he visited as a boy, where he was promised a miracle by a man who can bend light. Micah is determined to find out the truth of the Circus Mirandus before it's too late, but he'll have deal with some obstacles and his wicked aunt. Story told with some flashbacks to Ephraim's past which are not signposted in the chapter headings but are pretty clear to the reader. Warmly told story, especially the scenes with Micah and Ephraim. Good minor characters.

Bradman, Tony  The Boy and the Globe
Barrington  Pbk  6.99  9781781125038
Interest age:  7+  Reading age:  7+

Young Toby lives on his wits. An orphan and street-child, he navigates Elizabethan London like an old hand. Meanwhile the city has lost its charm for Will Shakespeare, the playwright from Stratford. Beset by troubles personal and professional and suffering from writer's block, he has grown to hate the drama business. But when Toby stumbles into the Globe, the boy's energy and enthusiasm remind Will of the magic that first inspired his love of the theatre, and the two set to work on a new entertainment for Twelfth Night.
A very entertaining, fast paced easy to read story which will interest both boys and girls.

Callaghan, Chris  The Great Chocoplot
Chicken  Pbk  6.99  9781910002513
Interest age:  9+  Reading age:  9+

Jelly and her family live in Chompton-on-de-Lyte, where everyone loves a Blocka Choca bar made at the local factory. So when the end of chocolate – the chocopocalypse – is announced, she can't believe it. She decides to investigate whether or not the predictions are true for her science project, and at the same time she turns her attention to the suspicious Garibaldi Chocolati, otherwise known as Choccy Biccy.
A very silly story which uses many puns and chocolate-related jokes. There is a small element of toilet humour which would probably appeal to the intended audience.
Simon Thorn is 12 and lives with his uncle in New York and has few friends apart from the wild animals and birds he can talk to. However, when his mother visits him and is then kidnapped, Simon discovers that his whole family are Animalgams - people who can change into an animal at will. He then becomes embroiled in the life or death struggle between the five Animalgam kingdoms for total control as he tries to find and save his mother.

Good roller-coaster adventure tale for boys, good characterisation, set in America with US spellings throughout but this does not detract from the story.

The Bolds are a family of hyenas living as humans in a suburban house. But now their kindness to animal waifs and strays has become legendary, and more and more animals keep turning up to stay. The Bolds have a challenge on their hands to teach the animals to pass as humans, and find them gainful employment.

Second in this humorous imaginative David Walliams-style series with excellent line drawings throughout which enhance the text. Not necessary to read in order. Easy to read and would appeal to both boys and girls.

Calypso is ten. Her mum died from cancer, five years ago. Gradually Calypso has become a child carer for her father who has acute depression. Calypso retreats into her own world of books and fiction. When a new girl, Mae, arrives at school, Calypso quickly develops a strong friendship with her, as she also has a passion for reading. As time goes on Calypso realizes she is happy and that Mae has filled a gap she did not know she had. Her contentment is shattered on discovering that something is wrong with her father, and that he has developed an unhealthy obsession with lemons. Her father starts counselling and Calypso has to keep a constant eye over him one weekend as he takes to his bed refusing to eat. Although the book ends on a hopeful note it is clear that there has been no magical ending.

A well-written sensitive and moving story about dealing with the process of grieving and depression through the magic of reading and friendship. The issue of mental illness is handled well as is the subject of children as carers.

Sydney lives with her older sister Jade, and her mum in a flat in London above their furniture shop. Sydney’s dad died five years ago and Sydney can’t remember much about him, apart from the fact that he was a dwarf, and he used to teach Sydney tricks to help her stay small. Sydney’s mum, who also has dwarfism, has been struggling to keep their bespoke furniture business going, and eventually the family has to move to Portsmouth where Sydney’s grandmother lives. Sydney doesn’t like Portsmouth, her teacher is horrible to her, the neighbours make fun of her mum, and Jade has a horrible new boyfriend and keeps bunking off school. To make matters worse, despite keep doing the tricks her dad taught her, Sydney is now taller than their mum, whom she always considered to be a perfect height. Eventually, after a failed attempt to win enough money to be able to move them back to London, the family all realise that it’s love and friendship that counts, not where you live.

A heart-warming story told from 8 year old Sydney’s point of view.
Mouse is desperate to be a superhero as well as get some attention from his very busy parents who are struggling to cope with his five younger brothers. When mum foils a jewellery shop robbery while on duty as a lollipop lady, she and Mouse are treated as superheroes which attracts four more misfit crime-fighters to join them. However, one of these is a foiled jewel thief out for revenge and Mouse is the only one who is not taken in.

Second tale set in the town of Seacross. Excellent engaging characters, plenty of humour and mild jeopardy, could be enjoyed by both boys and girls. Would make a good reading group book.

Joe loves his Italian heritage however, it's hard to celebrate his Italian roots in Bryn Mawr, South Wales, where his mam is sick of running the family's tatty cafe. Money is tight and Dad's income from being an electrician is keeping the cafe open. Just like his great-grandfather who opened the cafe in 1929, Joe is an entrepreneur. He vows to save the family business, and to spice up the High Street with a little Italian flavour! Joe's grandfather becomes ill and tells him more about the background to the family setting up the cafe. In a series of flashbacks from events of WW2 Joe knows that he must fight for his family and his community. Joe's Grandfather recounts events of loss, heroes and bravery and how a community came together to protect one of its own.

An enjoyable story to read which I found compelling with a warm feeling and realistic characters.

Amelia is getting used to the idea of her dad having a baby with his new girlfriend, and doesn’t even mind her mother having a date with someone in her book club. Amelia has more important things to worry about, like why her best friend Lauren keeps skipping school, and doesn’t want to audition for the school carol concert. Whenever she tries to ask her, Lauren becomes evasive. To make matters worse, Lauren’s mum thinks Amelia is upsetting Lauren and won’t let her visit. Eventually Lauren admits to having Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, which Amelia doesn’t really understand. After a talk with her dad, Amelia realises how Lauren must be feeling, and tries to be more positive when she sees her. This results in her being allowed to help decorate Lauren’s new bedroom and being invited to have a sleepover with her.

A light-hearted look at family life, with likeable characters, which touches on a few issues. Second in series but stands alone.

Troublesome twosome Nell and Freddie go on a school trip to a farm, where they pet the animals and learn about how they live, and Freddie smuggles a piglet out in his backpack. He thinks he’s saving it from becoming sausages. So Nell keeps it in her bedroom, gives it a bath and gets it involved in bringing a local crime wave to an end.
**Huckerby, Mark & Ostler, Nick**  
*Defender of the Realm*  
Scholastic  Pbk  6.99  9781407164236  
Interest age:  10+  Reading age:  10+

First in a series. Alfie thought he knew his destiny. He is fourteen and heir to the throne. His dad dies suddenly and Alfie becomes the King and to his surprise, The Defender – a legendary superhero, fighting a secret, ancient battle to protect the nation from monsters and super-villains. An ordinary girl, Hayley Hicks, finds herself fighting alongside Alfie in a desperate struggle to stop a fearsome new enemy, the Black Dragon.

An exciting story full of fast-paced action and adventure with magic and monsters too. Alfie is a reluctant and likeable hero and I think the story will appeal to both genders.

**Leonard, M.G.**  
*Beetle Boy*  
Chicken House  Pbk  6.99  9781910002704  
Interest age:  9+  Reading age:  10+

Darkus's dad has disappeared, but his new friend, a giant beetle called Baxter, is some consolation. Together, boy and beetle set out to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance. But Lucretia Cutter, a fashion designer with a penchant for beetle jewellery, has kidnapped Darkus's dad and thrown him in a dungeon. It will take the cooperation of lots of beetles and humans to thwart her evil plans for Baxter and his beetle friends.

Good young characters and evil "Cruella de Ville" style villain. Dahl - like in some aspects. There is to be a sequel.

**McAllister, Margi**  
*Storm Cat*  
Scholastic  Pbk  6.99  9781407165226  
Interest age:  9+  Reading age:  9+

Fourteen-year-old Libby is not thrilled to find herself stuck on a Highlands holiday with her mum, her mum's new boyfriend and his 6 year old son, Cam. With her mum behaving like a teenager, and Cam sulking, a trip to the wildlife park is the only thing that animal-loving Libby is looking forward to! When Libby and Cam get lost in the wilderness, the snow becomes a blizzard, and they stumble across an abandoned wildcat kitten, suddenly a fun day out turns into a life-or-death situation.

A good easy to read story which is well written and would appeal more to female readers. The family relationships are well described and realistic. The plot’s tension keep the narrative rattling along.

**Martin, Laura**  
*Edge of Extinction*  
HarperCollins  Pbk  6.99  9780008152895  
Interest age:  10+  Reading age:  10+

First title in a series. Humans have been driven underground by dinosaurs brought back from extinction two hundred years ago. Sky Mundy is an 11-year-old girl who has only known compound life, but when clues about her father's mysterious disappearance, five years earlier, point to the outside world, Sky and her best friend Shawn resolve to run away to find him. Heading into the unknown, they discover a world of surprises and learn that the dinosaurs stalking their every move are not the most dangerous predators out there. An exciting dystopian adventure story which is easy to read.
Arianwyn fails her assessment to become a witch, and so is sent as an apprentice witch to the sleepy town of Lull. Here she runs into Gimma - a girl from school who had always made fun of Arianwyn. Unbeknown to everyone, Gimma has been struggling with her work as a witch and has been sent to help Arianwyn. Unfortunately she opens a rift through which some dangerous, dark creatures emerge. Arianwyn soon realises that Gimma is not as good at magic as she makes out, and that she will have to save the town herself.

Dark overtones give this novel an edge which makes it more interesting and appealing than other witch stories for this readership.

First in a series.

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8 year old Tom finds a Mini-Dragon called Pan in the beansprouts delivered by the local Chinese takeaway. Pan is supposed to be in Mexico with his aunt, but as he has learnt English on the boat from China, and has become friends with Tom, he decides he would like to stay. Tom realises this is a mixed blessing as he gets into trouble with his parents when Pan messes up his room by trying to fly, and also eating his school uniform. On the other hand, Pan can flame-burp the alphabet, and has helped Tom’s dad’s football team win its first match with his amazing tactics. Will Tom be able to keep Pan a secret from his parents, and not get into any more trouble?

Fun, humorous story told from Tom’s point of view. Plenty of black and white illustrations throughout.

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Hamish sets out to London in search of his missing father, but soon discovers that an evil genius called Scarmarsh from a parallel universe London is bent on taking over the world. Hamish and his friends then seek out their alternative selves and have a race against time with monstrous Terribles and clanking Hypnobots to save the world. Brilliant sequel to "Hamish and the Worldstoppers" with plenty of action and humour. Would be enjoyed by both boys and girls. Not essential to have read the first title.

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All the goldfish are going missing in the seaside town of Bitterly Bay. Freddie Taylor decides to investigate and discovers that Spangles McNasty and Sausage-Face Pete the sailor are stealing them because they think they are actually made of gold. Freddie goes in hot pursuit on a jet-ski with the pier’s fortune teller and candy-floss seller.

Marvellous mad-cap and humorous romp for LKS2 readers. Well-written with entertaining characters, and could be thoroughly enjoyed by either boys or girls. Could make a good reluctant reading group book.
Wilson, Anna  The Parent Problem

Macmillan Pbk  5.99  9781509801312
Interest age:  9+  Reading age:  9+

Skye Green is in year eight and her mum is driving her insane. When she's not posting embarrassing pictures of Skye online or experimenting with odd clothing, she's forever taking up new hobbies, the latest being ballroom dancing. Skye's younger brother is wildly enthusiastic about wearing Mum's sparkly new outfits! If this wasn't enough, Skye's mum has also enlisted the new neighbour's son to come and 'babysit' when she's at dance class, and he's only a year older than Skye! Skye's best friend, Aubrey is there to help Skye cope with her family's madness. They've been friends since before they can remember. However, the two girls are growing up.

First in a series which is a compelling read with realistic family, friend and school situations. Useful for readers who like stories such as Wilson and Cassidy.

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