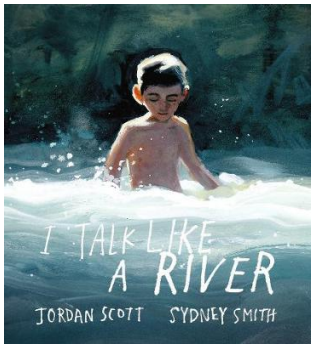
A selection of books especially selected for children in Year 2 (6 - 7 year olds) of average reading ability for the 2021/22 academic year.

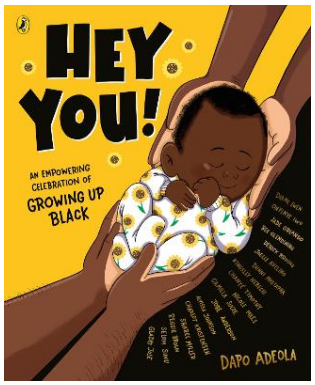
If your child is a competent reader or has read all these titles then try the books from the Year 3 list. Alternatively if these books are a little challenging try books from the Year 1 list. Our overall mission is to promote reading for pleasure with quality texts that are perfectly pitched for the 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.



I Talk Like a River

Author: Jordan Scott **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 10/09/2021
Year Groups: Key Stage 1

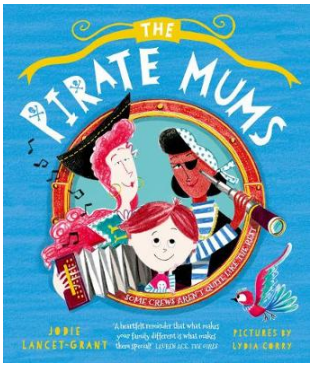
What if words got stuck in the back of your mouth whenever you tried to speak? After a day of being unable to speak when asked, and of being stared at, a boy and his father go to the river for some quiet time. It's just a bad speech day, says Dad. But the boy can't stop thinking about all the eyes watching his lips twisting and twirling. When his father points to the river bubbling, churning, whirling and crashing, the boy finds a way to think about how he speaks. Even the river stutters. Like him. I talk like a river, he says. An incredibly moving picture book that offers understanding rather than a solution, and which will resonate with all readers, young and old. Masterfully illustrated by Sydney Smith, winner of the Kate Greenaway Medal.



Hey You!

Author: Dapo Adeola **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 10/06/2021
Year Groups: Key Stage 1

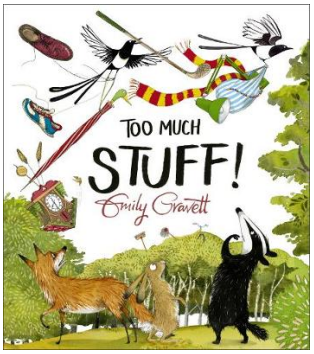
This book is outstanding in its gathering of talent to provide the illustrations to Adeola’s messages. It is a powerful, personal response to the murder of George Floyd and the awakening around the world to the Black Lives Matter movement. It is an honest and very personal letter to Adeola’s younger self, messages he wishes he had seen and heard at a young age, created now for the children of the future. The messages apply to any child – and the illustrations show a diverse range of children and adults; the writing is simple, straightforward and obviously deeply felt, urging children to be themselves, be curious and love the skin you are in. Each double page spread, and the end papers, are all created by one of the eighteen talented black illustrators assembled from all over the world or this book. It is a joy to see so many different yet complementary styles of illustration creating the whole. A book for every classroom and nursery in the country!



The Pirate Mums

Author: Jodie Lancet-Grant **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/06/2021 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1

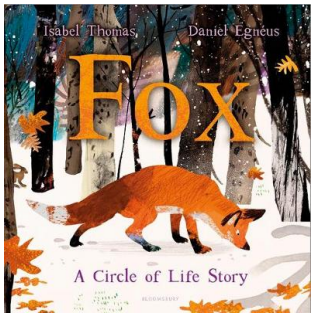
The Pirate Mums is a swashbuckling, high-seas adventure starring Billy and his two extraordinary mums, complete with a bad-tempered parrot called Bird-Brain, a sudden storm, a sea-sick teacher and a captain who gets stuck in the toilet. Billy wishes his family could be a bit more like everyone else's, and just a bit more ordinary. But his mums aren't like other mums. They are pirates. They wear outlandish pirate clothes, insist on dancing jigs and singing sea shanties when Billy's friends come round to play, and they have decidedly fishy taste in home decor. When his mums volunteer to accompany Billy's class on a school trip to the seaside, with a boat trip included (Billy's mums love boats), he makes them promise to be normal. But when the boat gets into trouble, their nautical knowledge and salty sea-legs save the day. Billy discovers that it's what makes his mums different that also makes them – and himself – special.



Too Much Stuff

Author: Emily Gravett **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 15/10/2020 **Year Groups:** Early Years, Key Stage 1

Meg and Ash, two magpies, build a cosy nest in the tallest tree for their four bright blue eggs. But they then start to get worried 'their nest/ Needed more stuff to make it the best.' Written in rhyming verse, we stare in amazement at all the things the magpies collect to add to their nest – until there is no hope of seeing the nest, and we can only see the teetering heap of things that have been added on top! Disaster strikes as the tree gives way! Happily, all the animals around help to clear the mess – and create useful homes and shelters out of all the rubbish! A gentle, funny and very beautifully illustrated poem, with a little frisson of anxiety when the tree collapses, about waste and recycling – a good way to introduce children to the idea of recycling useful things. As ever with Emily Gravett – there is a great deal going on in all the illustrations – lots to see and talk about, all beautifully laid out across the double-page spreads. The end papers are particularly fun, containing adverts for some of the items in the book – and also an advert for libraries! I particularly liked the 4 'R's of Recycling right at the back of the book! This will become a class and personal favourite for many people – children and adults alike – and could provide the basis for class projects on recycling, too.



Fox

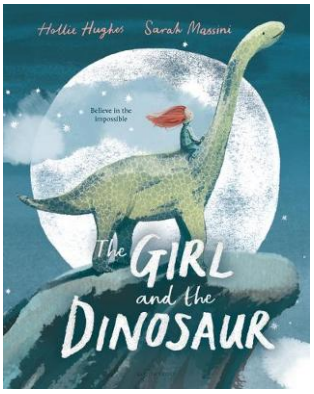
Author: Isabel Thomas **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 01/10/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1

Longlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2022 Information Books 3-14 Life is everywhere, we read at the close of this exceptional picture information book, and every page prior is brimming with it, so vividly depicted in Daniel Egnéus' illustrations that you can almost hear the yapping and gekkering of the fox cubs, their mother's barks, and all the constant bustle and hum of the natural world. Even in death we see there is life: the mother fox is hit and killed by a car but immediately tiny creatures get to work. As the seasons roll round and winter turns to spring, new life grows again and the particles that made up the fox become something else. Text and illustration together explain the circle of life with an extraordinary clarity while retaining a sense of the sheer wonder of it all. Share this with children who want to know what happens when something dies, or who just want to understand our world better. You can find more wintry & festive stories in our Best Books for Kids this Christmas collection!

The Little War Cat

Author: Hiba Noor Khan **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 17/09/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1

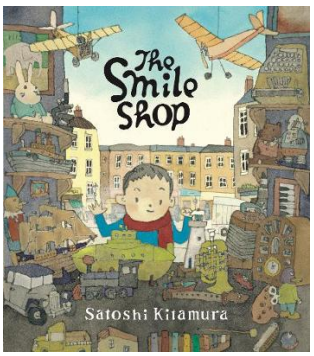
Longlisted for the UKLA Book Award ages 3-6 Inspired by a true story, The Little War Cat is a moving tale of hope amidst conflict, written by debut author Hiba Noor Khan and beautifully illustrated by the astonishing Laura Chamberlain. The Little War Cat follows the story of a little grey cat who is caught up in the BANGS and CRASHES of the humans in boots, who have changed the city of Aleppo she knew so well into one that's harder to recognize. She is roaming the streets looking for food and shelter when an unlikely friend appears. He shows her that kindness is still there when you look for it, and soon the little grey cat knows exactly what to do to made a difference herself.



The Girl and the Dinosaur

Author: Hollie Hughes **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 03/09/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1

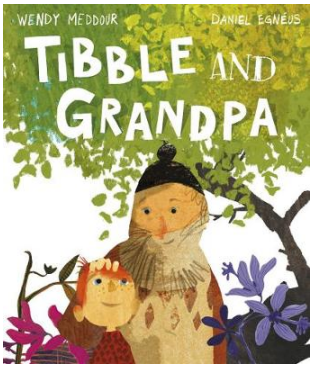
A masterpiece of storytelling with evocative and stunning illustrations, destined to be read for years to come.



The Smile Shop

Author: Satoshi Kitamura **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 01/08/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1

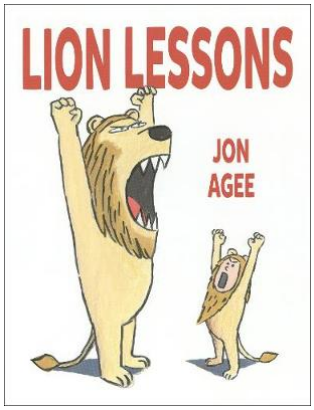
A small boy has saved all his pocket money and visits the market with high expectations. When disaster strikes and he loses his money, he feels devastated. But wait, what's that? A Smile Shop? He could really do with a smile. What will happen if he goes in?



Tibble and Grandpa

Author: Wendy Meddour **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 21/05/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1

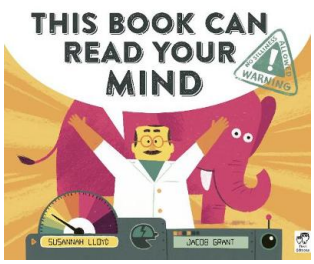
Highly Commended in the UKLA Book Awards 2021 A touching intergenerational story of love and resilience. Tibble loves talking to Grandpa. But Grandpa has stopped listening. Mum says just give him time. But Tibble wants to talk to Grandpa now. . . So Tibble tries his favourite game -TOP THREES! And something amazing happens. Grandpa starts talking again . . . A moving story about love, loss, and the wonder of families.



Lion Lessons

Author: Jon Agee **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 06/02/2020 **Year Groups:** Early Years, Key Stage 1

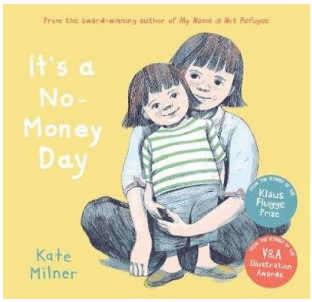
Thanks to Scallywag Press, the wit and wisdom of Jon Agee is becoming more familiar to UK audiences and this delightful picturebook will only add to his growing reputation. The tale is told with characteristically few words and his distinctive black line that outlines the setting and characters, filled with soft-coloured chalk pastel washes. Comical details pepper each spread, whether in the background (for example, a certificate from Harvard School of Claw) or through the expressive faces of the characters. Lions are a popular picturebook character from Ed Vere's How to be a Lion to The Lion Inside by Rachel Bright and so one can see why our young hero might choose to take Lion Lessons rather than violin or karate. Most of the boy's attempts to master the essential characteristics of a ferocious feline, such as speed, agility, the loudest roar, and the ability to pounce, end with less than satisfactory results, "The lion checked my scores. 'This is not very promising.'" The lion's wry expressions and droll criticism: "We do not eat spaghetti", provide lots of laughs for both adult and child readers. Everyone will be rooting for the little boy who channels his inner big cat to save a little kitten from the bully neighbourhood dog, as he triumphs in the last lesson of Looking Out For Your Friends. Another Jon Agee treat to enhance your picturebook collection.



This Book Can Read Your Mind

Author: Susannah Lloyd **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 07/01/2020 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1

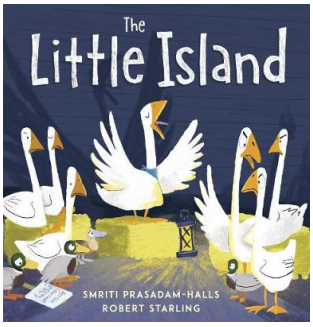
January 2020 Book of the Month With a concept based entirely upon the universal truth that as soon as somebody tells you not to think of something, you immediately do so and the quite philosophic concept of visualisation of language heard or read, this book will have young(and old) readers in stitches. Stamped with a No Silliness Allowed warning on the front cover, we can anticipate plenty of silliness ahead despite the firm instructions from the very serious scientist introducing the amazing book that has the power to show a picture of the reader's thoughts. Sadly, it all goes wrong for him as soon as he uses pink elephants as an example of what not to think about and quickly escalates as he thinks of more terrible scenarios involving elephants, mice, panties and their bottoms. The explosive finale causes him to order the reader to put the book down and "Don't even think about" picking it up again.....This is bound to be instantly disobeyed in every home and classroom! The zany illustrative style is perfectly suited to this story and the clever use of the only white space being within the speech bubbles immediately emphasises the instructional and increasingly shouty nature of the scientist's words. Both great fun and a creative inspiration, this is a must have purchase!



It's a No-Money Day

Author: Kate Milner **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 15/10/2019 **Year Groups:** Early Years, Key Stage 1

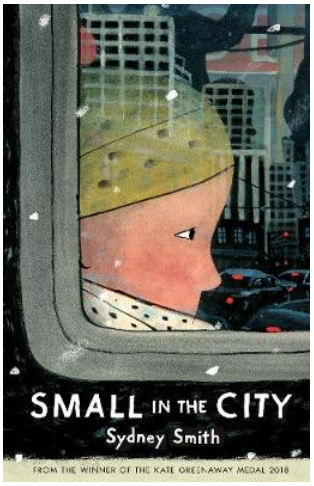
Shortlisted for CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2021 | Shortlisted for the UKLA Book Awards 2021 | October 2019 Book of the Month Kate Milner, winner of the 2018 Klaus Flugge Award for most promising newcomer to children's book illustration has certainly lived up to her laurels with this delicate and subtle picturebook, which packs a real emotional and political punch. It is a cause of great shame to many, in this country and in the 21st century, that more children than ever are living in poverty and that there has been a huge expansion in the use of foodbanks. Mum works really hard and watches every penny, but today is a no money day. Her little girl, who tells the story, takes great pleasure in life from the simple, free activities they share- visits to the library and dressing up in the charity shops. Unlike her humiliated Mum, she loves the visits to the food bank for the drink and biscuits and the kind ladies to talk to. On the way home they play the maybe one day game- dreaming of pets and washing machines and new warm clothes. They go to bed and "because of kind people our tummies are full". Nothing is laboured in text or image- the colours are subdued but still there. The despair and tiredness of the mother is evident in every expression and nuance of body language, but so is the warmth and love between them and so is the irrepressible spirit of a child who knows they are loved even if as the pictures subtly show us, she is clearly malnourished. This is a book which can be used with a very wide range of children and will encourage empathy and discussion of a very current and appalling crisis in our society.



The Little Island

Author: Smriti Prasadam-Halls **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 03/10/2019 **Year Groups:** Early Years, Key Stage 1

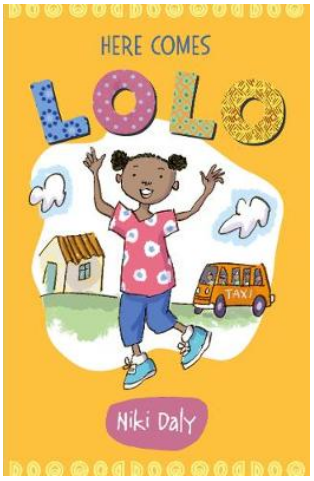
There's a moral to this lively tale for everyone who lives on a small island. The setting is a farm run by animals. At first, all is good: the animals work hard and are friends, free 'to live and work where they chose'. But trouble is brewing. The geese, who reside with the ducks on a lush little island, start to resent the other animals. Their grumbling gets worse until they decide that the best thing for them to do is to leave the rest of the farm and live on their own. Despite the misgivings of the ducks, the geese destroy the footbridge to the farm. 48% of readers may not be surprised to learn that things don't work out as the geese expect, but all readers will be glad that by the end of the book the bridge has been rebuilt. Animal farms traditionally have lessons for readers – Farmer Duck by Martin Waddell and Helen Oxenbury for example – and this one is delivered with impact and charm. A book to get everyone talking, but to leave them smiling.



Small in the City

Author: Sydney Smith **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 05/09/2019
Year Groups: Key Stage 1

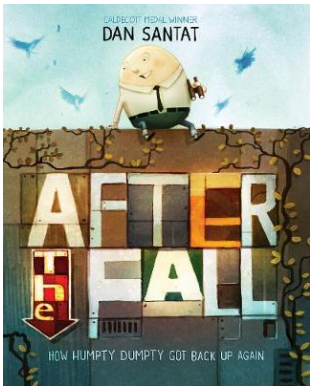
Shortlisted for CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2021 This is the first time that Sydney Smith has written his own text for a picturebook and he demonstrates as much skill with words as with the art which has won so many accolades and reaches even greater heights of excellence in this stunning book. From the unusual thin skyscraper shape of the book to wordless passages of comic panel-style vignettes and full spreads of gridded streets and buildings, traffic lights and crowds, everything sets the tone of a chaotic city in winter. The moody art, mostly inky line and subdued watercolor with some gouache for thicker textures in the snow is intensely atmospheric. Masterful use of scale and perspective shows how terrifyingly small the gender unspecified, all-wrapped-up-for-winter, little protagonist is. “I know what it’s like to be small in the city” the story starts and only gradually do we realise that it is Small who is speaking and only slowly do we realise who is being addressed as advice is given on finding warmth and shelter and dark alleys and dangerous dogs to avoid. There is a wonderful narrative twist which is best left to a first reading so you can fully appreciate the powerful emotional journey, but I can guarantee an immediate re-reading will be demanded so that you can spot all the clues. A truly exceptional picturebook.



Here Comes Lolo

Author: Niki Daly **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 08/08/2019
Year Groups: Key Stage 1

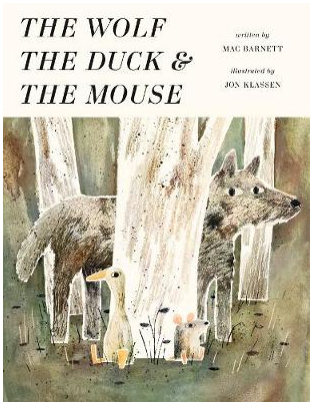
Lolo skips through life, leaving a trail of laughter and a few frowns! She's sure to become your new best friend! In these four easy-to-read stories Lolo, follow Lolo as she gets a gold star at school, longs for a cute floppy hat, finds a missing ring and helps to rescue a dog...



After the Fall

Author: Dan Santat **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 23/11/2018
Year Groups: Key Stage 1

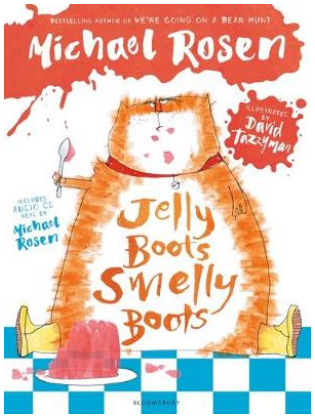
Highly Commended in the UKLA Book Awards 2019 Anyone familiar with the story of poor old Humpty Dumpty will be intrigued by Dan Santat's story of what happens after that fall. In his version the king's men do manage to put Humpy together again but the cracks are still there, and not just on the outside: a shadow of his former self, Humpty is too afraid to climb back up onto the wall where he used to love to sit and watch the birds. At last though he finds a way to enjoy the skies again and in a surprise ending flies away himself. A powerful story of recovery and overcoming fear this will resonate with all readers. The illustrations are full of clever jokes but portray Humpty's emotional state perfectly while the sequence that sees him soar away on golden wings is glorious.



The Wolf, the Duck and the Mouse

Author: Mac Barnett **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 04/10/2018
Year Groups: Early Years, Key Stage 1

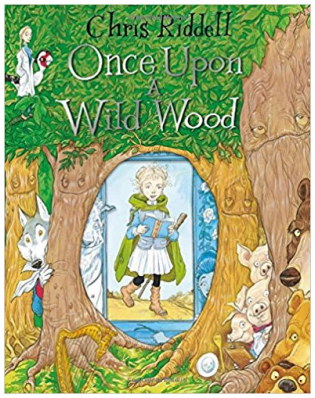
UKLA Longlist Book Awards - 2019 | Shortlisted for the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2019 Award-winning duo, Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen are beloved for their trade mark dark humour in which nasty things happen and some unexpected results follow. Here, the Mouse is swallowed by the Wolf. But being swallowed by the Wolf turns out not to be such a bad thing after all. The Mouse finds the Duck is already comfortably at home in the Wolf's stomach and soon the pair are happy improving their dark but cosy home – with the unwitting help of the Wolf. After all, as the Duck says, "I live well. I may have been swallowed, but I have no intention of being eaten." As ever, Barnett and Klassen amusingly provoke readers to question apparent truths.



Jelly Boots, Smelly Boots

Author: Michael Rosen **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 06/09/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2

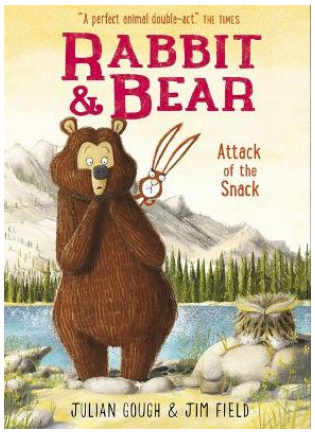
Shortlisted for the CLPE Children's Poetry Award (CLiPPA) 2017 A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month September 2018 | Michael Rosen is the bestselling author of We're Going on a Bear Hunt, along with many other picture books and collections of poetry. Packed with silly rhymes, witty wordplay and thought-provoking story poems, this new collection of poems will delight children of all ages.



Once Upon a Wild Wood

Author: Chris Riddell **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 23/08/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2

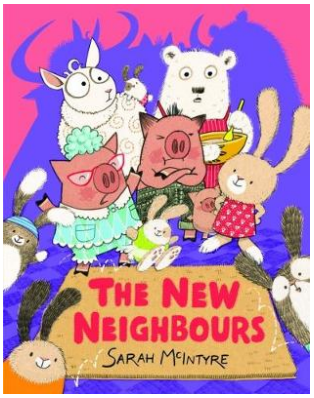
A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month September 2018 Former Children's Laureate Chris Riddell weaves a wonderful fantasy adventure around some of the best loved fairy story characters in this hugely attractive and thoroughly entertaining picture story book. Little Green Cape sets out with a handful of useful things including a strong straight stick, comfortable clumpy boots and an invitation to a party. Once in the wild woods she is in a magical world where even the trees have faces, full of surprising characters. There's a Beast looking for his Beauty, three Bears who are mistrustful of strangers, a talking harp, three little pigs, seven dwarves and many more. Young readers will love both feeling they know the stories being surprised by some of the turns of events.



Attack of the Snack

Author: Julian Gough **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 09/08/2018 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1

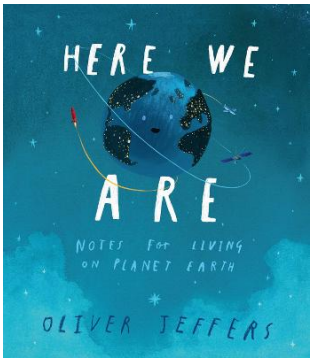
Rabbit and Bear: Book 3 Rabbit and Bear, like Claude, are perfect companions for building reading confidence and getting young children hooked into reading. Laugh aloud text and lively illustrations throughout. Gorgeously illustrated and with a classic feel, this is a brilliantly funny story of a rabbit and a bear who discover that things are always better when they're shared with a friend. Ideal for readers moving on from picture books.



The New Neighbours

Author: Sarah McIntyre **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 01/03/2018 **Year Groups:** Early Years, Key Stage 1

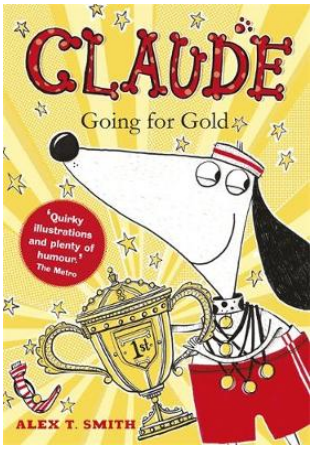
UKLA Longlist Book Awards - 2019 Recommended by Stephen L Holland, Guest Editor, June 2021: An exuberant bundle of wisdom which wittily wraps its warm heart around the welcoming of strangers, this is more a Young Readers picture book than a comic, but the narrative is so image-driven and those pictures are so cleverly controlled that it counts. New neighbours move into some flats; they're rats. That was succinct, wasn't it? I love this book so much that we made a film of me reading from (and reviewing) it which you can watch below.



Here We Are

Author: Oliver Jeffers **Format:** Hardback **Release Date:** 14/11/2017 **Year Groups:** Early Years, Key Stage 1

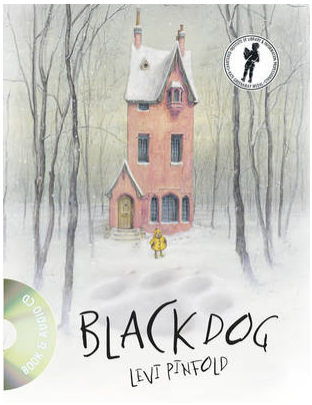
UKLA Longlist Book Awards - 2019 One of Our Books of the Year 2017 | A Julia Eccleshare Pick of the Month November 2017 Inspired by the birth of his son, award-winning Oliver Jeffers has created a deeply touching introduction to the world as a physical space and also as a place that needs to be treated with great care and respect. Subtitled 'Notes for Living on Planet Earth' Jeffers uses richly coloured double page spreads and only a few words of commentary to describe the obvious features of land, sea, night and day but also how time can move both slow and fast and should never be wasted! The perfect gift for all parents to share with their new babies – and each other.



Claude Going for Gold!

Author: Alex T. Smith **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 23/02/2017 **Year Groups:** Key Stage 1

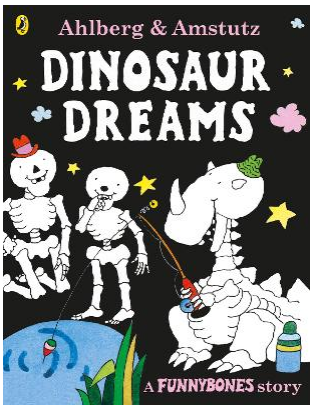
From the World Book Day Illustrator 2014 comes a brand-new tale about Claude, the bestselling beret-clad canine hero.



Black Dog

Author: Levi Pinfold **Format:** Audiobook **Release Date:** 01/01/2014
Year Groups: Key Stage 1

Winner of the 2013 CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal The judges described the book as a "visual treat, full of mood and atmosphere, the beautiful illustrations are full of detail and perfectly in keeping with the story. The use of scale, with the big dog pushing the text off the page, is clever. A timeless, thought-provoking book about facing up to anxiety, fears, and the black dog that visits some of us from time-to-time." This beautifully illustrated edition is now available with an audio cd.



Funnybones: Dinosaur Dreams

Author: Allan Ahlberg **Format:** Paperback **Release Date:** 31/01/2005
Year Groups: Key Stage 1

As popular and succesful with young readers as ever; this is a welcome Funnybones reissue.