

AUG/SEP
2026

 Setanta

BOOK CLUB

THE READING EDIT



YOUR FREE
INTERACTIVE
MAGAZINE



Reading is for Everyone

Think reading isn't for you?
Think again. Exclusive Q&A
with Steve Blackman.

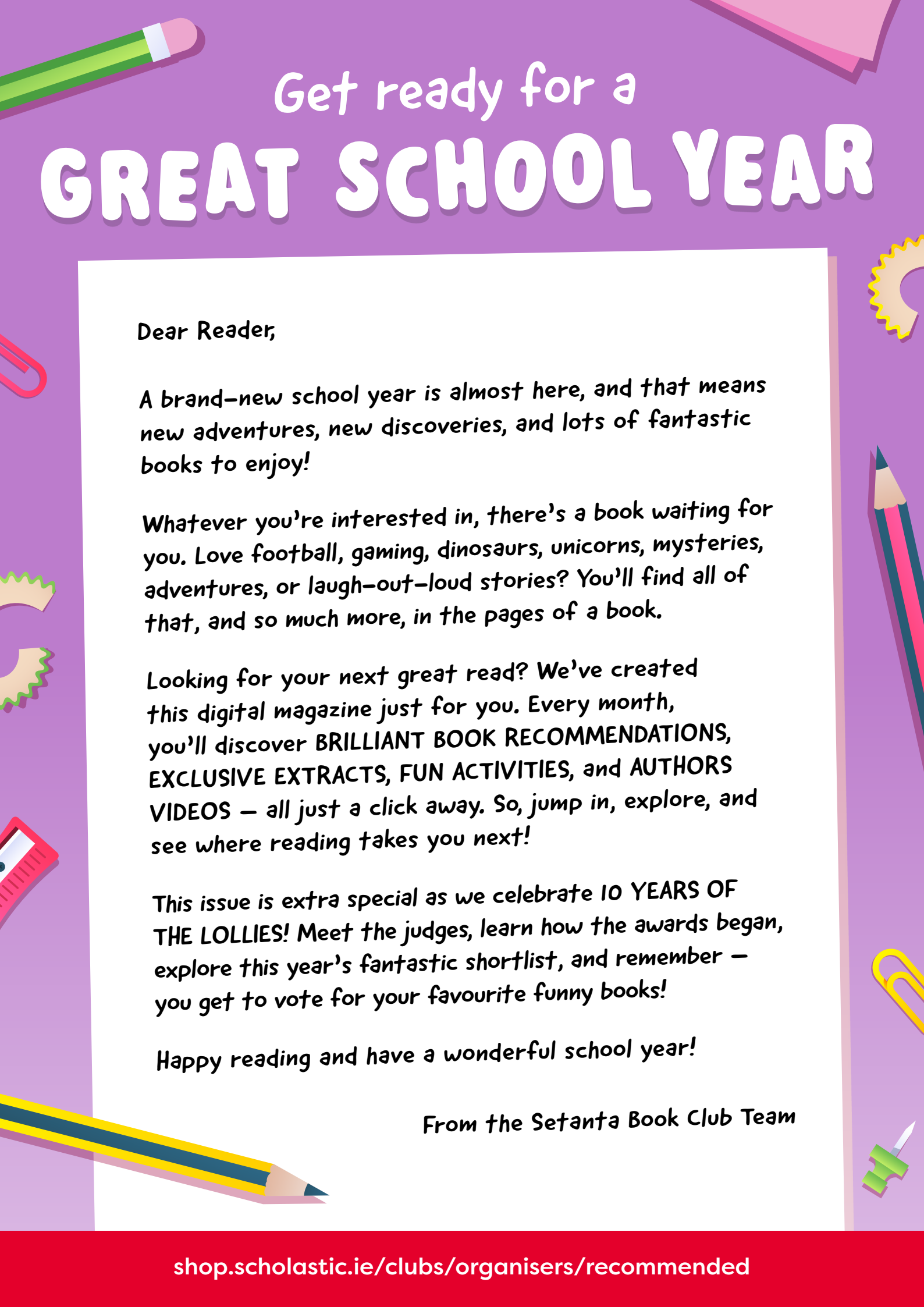


Lollies Mini-Mag Inside!

Discover the
shortlist
and more!



MORE
INSIDE ↓



Get ready for a **GREAT SCHOOL YEAR**

Dear Reader,

A brand-new school year is almost here, and that means new adventures, new discoveries, and lots of fantastic books to enjoy!

Whatever you're interested in, there's a book waiting for you. Love football, gaming, dinosaurs, unicorns, mysteries, adventures, or laugh-out-loud stories? You'll find all of that, and so much more, in the pages of a book.

Looking for your next great read? We've created this digital magazine just for you. Every month, you'll discover **BRILLIANT BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS**, **EXCLUSIVE EXTRACTS**, **FUN ACTIVITIES**, and **AUTHORS VIDEOS** – all just a click away. So, jump in, explore, and see where reading takes you next!

This issue is extra special as we celebrate **10 YEARS OF THE LOLLIES!** Meet the judges, learn how the awards began, explore this year's fantastic shortlist, and remember – you get to vote for your favourite funny books!

Happy reading and have a wonderful school year!

From the Setanta Book Club Team

WHAT'S INSIDE

Includes links
to extracts,
author videos,
activities and
more!

Contents

02 **August's Top Picks**

Discover this month's top book picks including recommendations for **what to read next!**

13 **Reading is for Everyone by Steve Blackman**

Plus, meet Zero, the teenage hacker trying to save the future!

18 **Origami Bookmark Activity**

Follow the steps and create your very own origami bookmark.

19 **Lollies 2026 Mini-Mag**

Celebrating 10 years of the Lollies! Meet the judges, learn how the awards began, explore this year's fantastic shortlist and vote for your funny favourites.

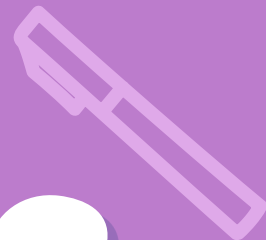
27 **Supporting the Big Move to Secondary School**

Fantastic book recommendations and no-panic starting secondary school checklist.

Head over to page 19 to

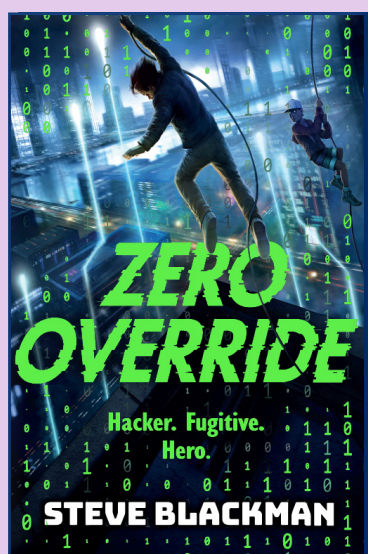
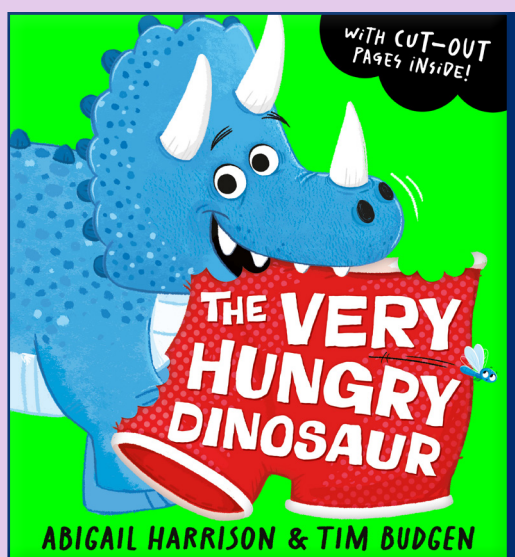
FIND OUT MORE!





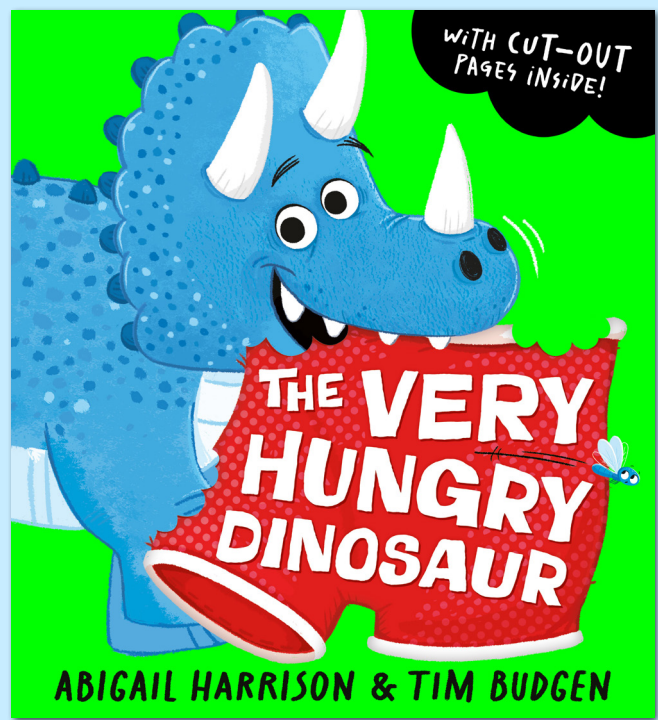
THIS MONTH'S TOP PICKS

Select the covers below to learn more



Suitable For Ages: 3+

THE VERY HUNGRY DINOSAUR



CLICK HERE TO
READ EXTRACT

Free resource:

DOWNLOAD
ACTIVITY PACK

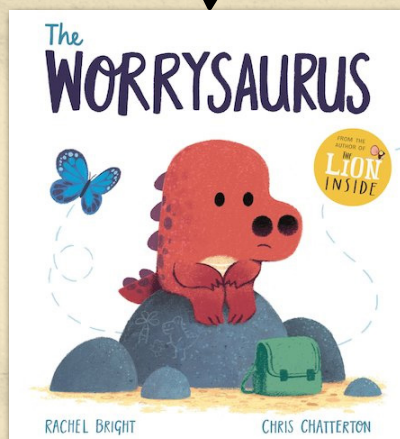
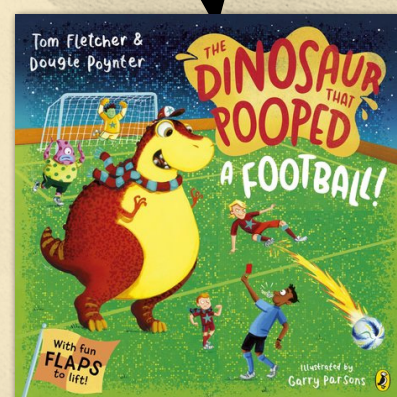
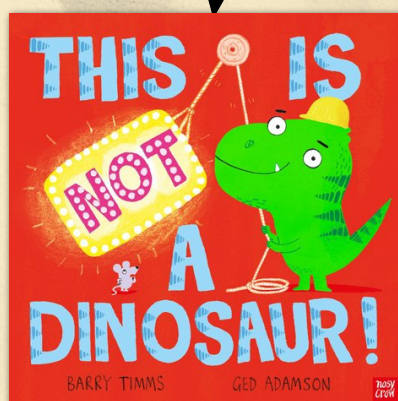
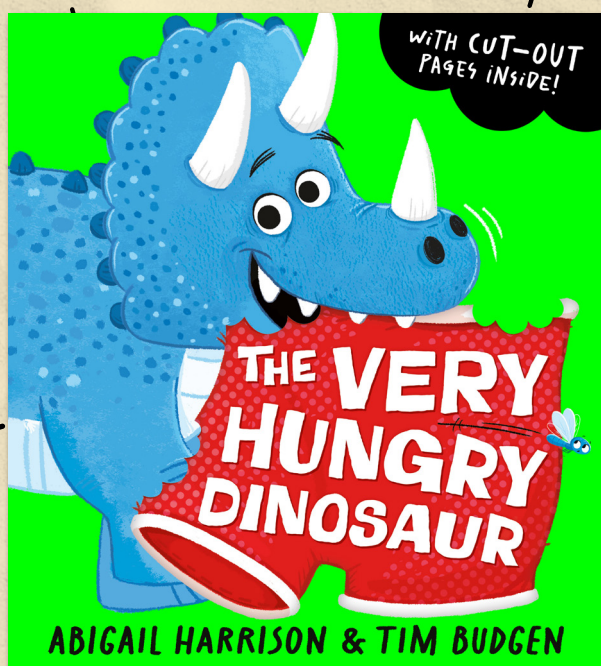
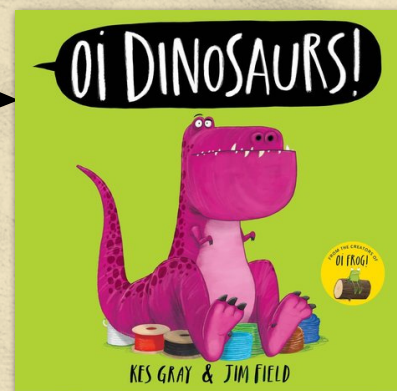
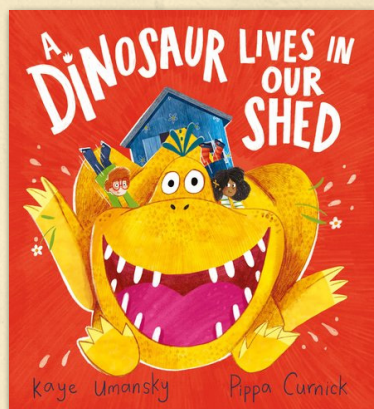
A laugh-out-loud adventure with fabulous cut-out surprises! Dinosaur Dave has a problem - he's very, very HUNGRY. Join Dave as he tries to find the perfect bite to eat - a pear, a plum... a T-Rex's bum?! Uh-oh, perhaps Dave has bitten off more than he can chew...

You'll enjoy this if:

	You LOVE dinosaurs and silly adventures.
	You like books that make you giggle and laugh out loud.
	You enjoy surprises on every page with fun cut-out reveals.
	You enjoy lively picture books that are fun to read again and again.
	You like colourful illustrations packed with personality.

WHAT TO READ NEXT

Dive into more dinosaur adventures with
laugh-out-loud moments



Suitable For Ages: 6+

SQUIRREL SHADY: THE GOLDEN ACORN



[CLICK HERE TO READ EXTRACT](#)

Shady the squirrel is a treasure-loving thief who finds himself pulled into one last giant heist after escaping from prison. Alongside his clever raccoon partner Roxy and a cast of colourful animal crooks, he sets out to steal the legendary Golden Acorn of Destiny – but things don't go quite as planned!

You'll enjoy this if:



You love funny animal characters with big personalities.



You enjoy daring heists, sneaky plans, and clever tricks.



You like stories packed with humour and mischief.



You enjoy teams of unusual heroes (and maybe villains!) working together.



You like fast-paced adventures with lots of surprises.

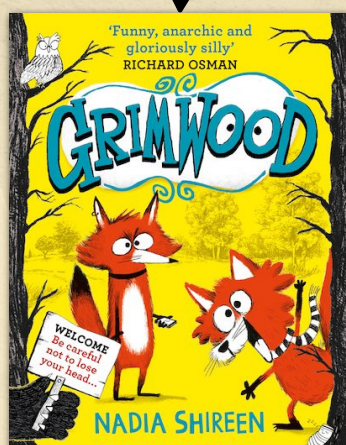
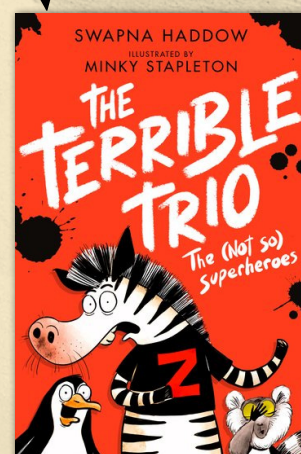
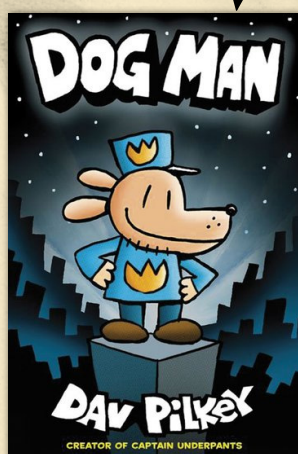
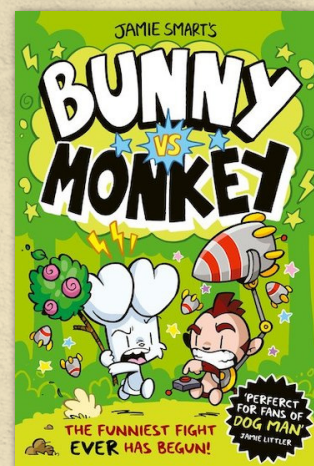
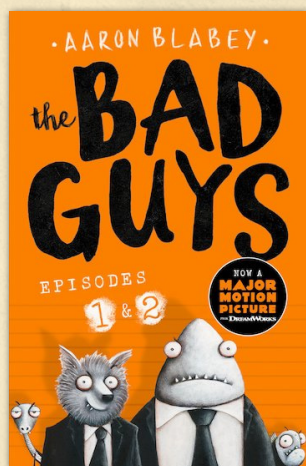
Free resource:

[WATCH
DRAW-ALONG](#)

[DOWNLOAD
CHARACTER
CARDS](#)

WHAT TO READ NEXT

Discover more fast-paced adventures
packed with mayhem and mischief



Suitable For Ages: 7+

GALAXY RUNNERS: JELLO BREAKS THE UNIVERSE

WATCH
ANIMATED
TRAILER



CLICK HERE TO
READ EXTRACT

Kas and Fig are twin space couriers who take on a mysterious delivery and discover Jello, a cute shape-shifting alien with incredible powers. Suddenly, they're racing across the galaxy, dodging dangerous villains and trying to keep Jello safe in a fast-paced adventure full of action, laughs, and surprises!

You'll enjoy this if:



You love exciting space adventures and daring escapes.



You think shape-shifting aliens are awesome (and hilarious!).



You like books that involve action, danger, and outsmarting bad guys.



You enjoy funny moments and silly surprises.



You want to explore strange planets and travel across the galaxy.

Free resource:

WATCH
AUTHOR VIDEO

DOWNLOAD
CHARACTER
CARDS

READ AUTHOR
Q&A

DOWNLOAD
ACTIVITY PACK

SCHOLASTIC
**BOOK
CLUB** LIVE

Create an alien with
James Lancett,
author-illustrator of
Galaxy Runners
[WATCH NOW >](#)

GALAXY RUNNERS: JELLO BREAKS THE UNIVERSE

**GALAXY
RUNNERS**

WHAT JELLO ARE YOU TODAY?!

1. HAPPY



2. GRUMPY



3. HUNGRY



4. BOOTY



5. SAD



6. DANCING



7. DIGESTING



8. POOPING



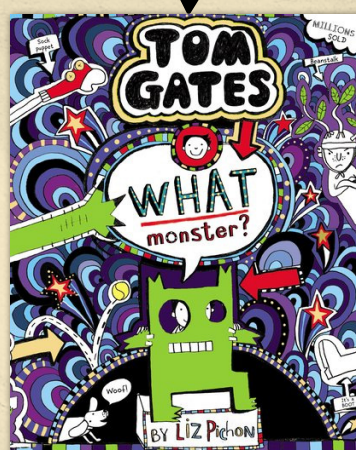
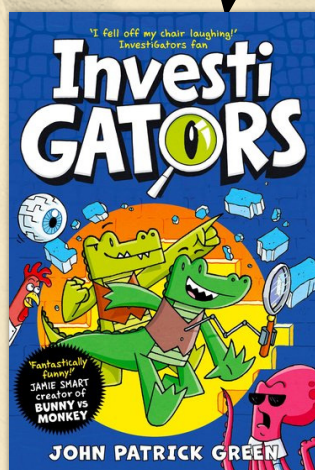
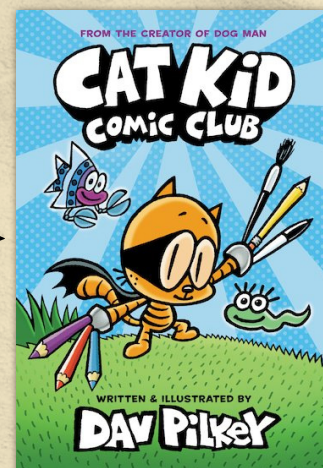
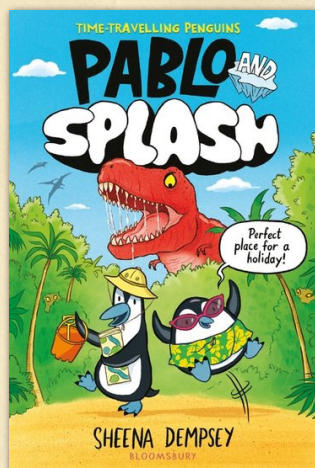
9. HANDSOME



Illustrations © James Lancett, 2020

WHAT TO READ NEXT

Escape into more wild adventures filled with funny moments and silly surprised



Suitable For Ages: 8+

K-POP: MAKING THE BAND



[CLICK HERE TO
READ EXTRACT](#)

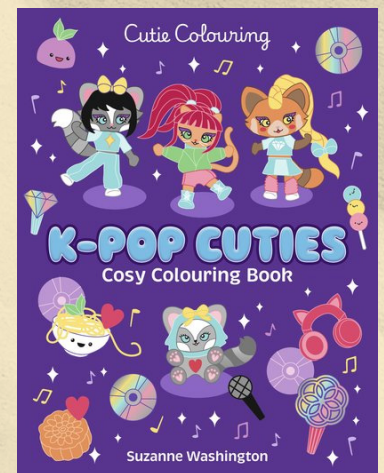
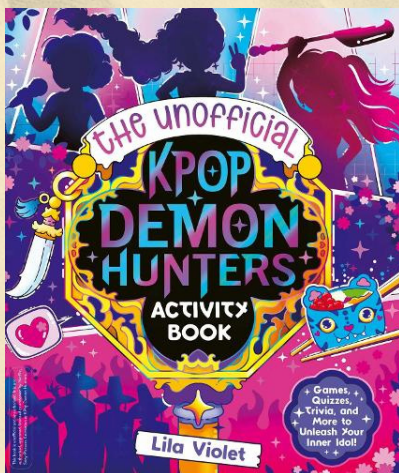
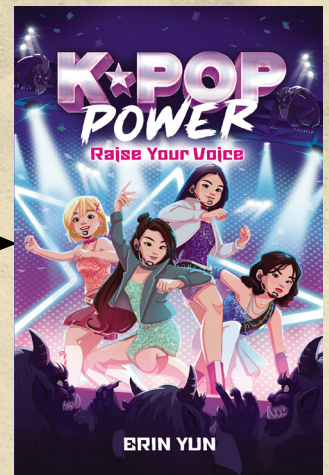
Sammie can't believe her luck when she wins a place at an elite K-pop training camp in LA, where she'll compete for a spot in the new girl group ECLIPSE. But becoming a star is harder than it looks, with intense training, fierce rivals, friendship drama and personal struggles testing every contestant. Can the girls learn to work together and shine under the spotlight?

You'll enjoy this if:

	You love K-pop, music and dreaming of being on stage.
	You enjoy stories about dance practice, performances and competition.
	You love characters with different personalities, strengths and dreams.
	You enjoy drama, excitement and rooting for your favourite contestants.
	You've ever wondered what it takes to become a K-pop idol!

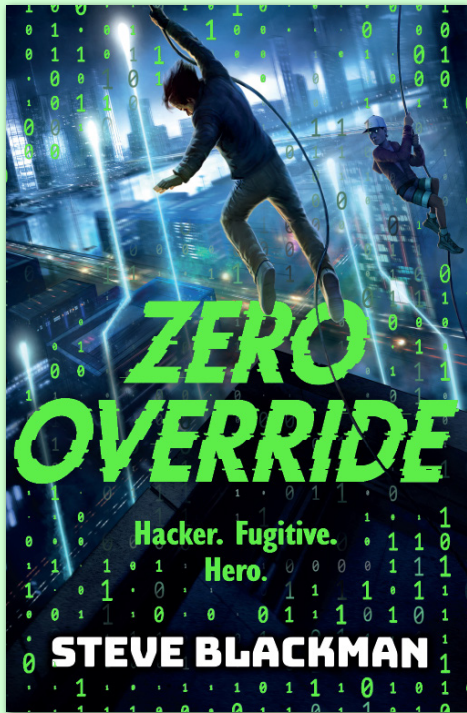
WHAT TO READ NEXT

Love all things K-Pop? We've got you covered!



Suitable For Ages: 10+

ZERO OVERRIDE



[CLICK HERE TO
READ EXTRACT](#)

Free resource:

[DOWNLOAD
ACTIVITY PACK](#)

[DOWNLOAD
CHARACTER
CARDS](#)

In a futuristic London, thirteen-year-old hacker Zero must stop a dangerous computer virus that could shut down every intelligent machine in the country. When his sister's life is put at risk, Zero teams up with a mysterious humanoid bot named Andi, leading to a thrilling race against time filled with secrets, action, and unexpected friendships.

You'll enjoy this if:

	You love computers, coding, and high-tech gadgets.
	You like fast-paced adventures with a ticking-clock mission.
	You enjoy uncovering secrets and solving mysteries.
	You like exciting chases, daring break-ins, and action-packed scenes.
	You enjoy stories about family, loyalty, and protecting the people you care about.

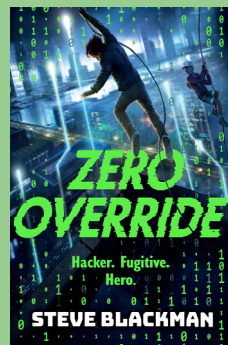
SCHOLASTIC
**BOOK
CLUB** ► LIVE

Robots, Reading, and Revolution!
Introducing Zero Override
[WATCH NOW >](#)

WHY READING IS FOR EVERYONE

PLUS: Meet ZERO, the teenage hacker trying to save the future!

Every year in the UK, around 200,000 new books are published. That includes books for adults and young people, picture books, novels and non-fiction. And of those books, one in every three is sold for children. That's a lot of books to choose from, and it doesn't stop there. These days, reading means much more than books: novels, comics, graphic novels, manga, magazines, newspapers, poetry, audiobooks and fan fiction all count as reading. There's no single way to find a story, no typical reader, and no typical way to read. Everyone has the chance to find a story that speaks to them regardless of their age, background, ability or the stories they enjoy.



#48464257282143209

Reading is a personal experience. Two people can read the same book and take completely different things from it. Whether we're hoping to find knowledge, escape, entertainment, comfort, curiosity or connection, what matters is finding something that makes us want to keep reading. And that's true if we devour books or if we only read a few pages at a time. Reading really is for everyone – we don't have to be bookworms, we just need to find something we actually want to read.

i INSIDE ZERO OVERRIDE

1. Can you tell us about your book, *Zero Override*?

Zero Override is about a thirteen-year-old hacker called Zero, who lives with his little sister Grace in a found family of other hackers. Their world is a near-future London where AI has matured, so humans and humanoid robots live side by side. One day, while hacking the government's servers, Zero discovers a virus that will wipe out all the AI in the country, including Grace's artificial heart. Zero must team up with a bot in a white-knuckle race against the clock to evade capture by MI6 and stop the virus.

It's an adventure story first – the technology is there to make the story exciting, not to teach you about technology. It's also about friendship, loyalty and family as much as hackers and robots. I wanted it to be the sort of book that pulls you through the pages, so there's lots of humour and action. Most of all **I wanted to write a book for young people who might not necessarily think of themselves as readers**, but who love stories, games, technology and adventure.

2. How would you describe *Zero Override* in 3 words?

Fast. Funny. Futuristic.

Continued on next page...

INSIDE ZERO OVERRIDE CONTINUED.

3. Can you tell us more about Zero as a character?

Zero's a brilliant hacker, but he's not always so good at making sensible decisions. He loves old-school technology, distrusts robots and can be snarky and overconfident. But underneath all that, he's fiercely loyal, especially to his younger sister Grace, and he has a strong sense of right and wrong – even when his methods are spectacularly misguided.

I didn't want him to be a flawless child genius. He's clever, but impulsive. He gets things wrong, makes bad decisions and has to live with the consequences. I think that makes him relatable. You might not see yourself in his hacking skills, but you might recognise the feeling of being confident in one part of your life and completely out of your depth in another. Zero's like that – **he makes mistakes, but he keeps going**, and that's what makes him a hero.

4. Why did you want technology to be a big theme in the book?

When I was planning the story, there were lots of conversations happening about AI being bad. A tech company had stolen lots of books to train its AI, which is obviously bad. But I've worked in technology for many years, and **I don't think technology itself is good or bad. It's how we use it that matters.** Technology is just a tool, like a hammer – you can use one to create something beautiful or to destroy it. I wanted to explore that idea, and very quickly realised it would be much more fun if the technology had faces and personalities. Which is why the story is filled with robots.

You're growing up in a world surrounded by AI and intelligent technology, so there are some big questions to explore: Can we trust it? What happens when it goes wrong? And what does it mean to be human in a world filled with intelligent machines? Fiction is a great place to ask those questions in an interesting and fun way.

CHARACTER FILE

ZERO

#103.9754.8012.345.108

AGE **13**

SKILLS

Hacker

STRENGTHS

Loyal, brave, clever

WEAKNESSES

Impulsive, overconfident

MISSION

Save Grace and stop the virus

Error:
Profile
image
not found

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BIG QUESTIONS

- > Can we TRUST AI?
- > What happens when TECHNOLOGY goes wrong?
- > What makes us HUMAN?

Continued on next page...

? WHY READING MATTERS

5. Why is reading so important? What are some of the benefits?

One of the best things about reading is that **it can take us almost anywhere**. We can visit fantasy worlds, outer space or the past, step into a life completely different from our own and see the world through somebody else's eyes. We meet people we'd never otherwise meet and discover ideas we might never have encountered. Books also give us new words, new ways of thinking and a better understanding of how other people might feel.

A story can make us laugh, frighten us, surprise us or make us see something differently. But I think it's just as important to **remember that reading is fun**. We're often told to read because it's good for us, as though every book must teach us something. Sometimes a book can simply give us a couple of hours of being somewhere else. And that's a pretty good reason to read too.

! READING CAN HELP YOU

- ✓ Learn new words
- ✓ Build imagination
- ✓ Explore new places
- ✓ Understand others

YOUR READING CHALLENGE

THIS WEEK:

- ☐ READ FOR 5 MINUTES
- ☐ TRY SOMETHING NEW
- ☐ RECOMMEND A BOOK TO A FRIEND
- ☐ DISCOVER A STORY THAT INTERESTS YOU

REMEMBER:
EVERYONE HAS THE CHANCE TO FIND A STORY THAT SPEAKS TO THEM.

📖 FINDING THE RIGHT BOOK

6. What if I'm not very good at reading? What if I'm a slow reader?

Can I tell you a secret? I'm a slow reader too. Sometimes I need to read a paragraph a couple of times before it sinks in. That doesn't mean I'm bad at reading – sometimes I even notice something new the second time. What really helps me is reading lots of different things until I find something I love and get completely pulled in.

Don't compare your reading speed with anyone else's. Speed isn't the same as understanding, and reading isn't a race – there's no prize for finishing a book fastest. And you don't have to finish every book (unless it's for school or studies). If it isn't working, put it down and try something else. Graphic novels, comics, magazines and audiobooks all count too. I love audiobooks because I can listen while walking or doing chores. Listening to a story is still experiencing a story, after all.

Continued on next page...



FINDING THE RIGHT BOOK

CONTINUED.

7. What if I haven't found the book for me yet?

Keep looking. **Not liking one book doesn't mean you don't like reading.** It probably just means you didn't like *that* book. There are millions of others, so try something completely different. Maybe science fiction, comedy, horror or mystery, or a writer from another country. And **think about what you already love.** If you're mad about football, gaming, space, music or animals, start there. Reading doesn't have to begin with a novel. You could even try reading the screenplay of a film you love – lots are available online. You already know the story, so it can feel like watching the film again, except you get to see what happens behind the scenes, too. You can see the words that were written before the actors, director and music brought them to life. Finding the right writer or kind of story can take time. **The important thing is not to decide you don't like reading.** Keep looking until you find something you do.

8. Can reading help me become better at sports, gaming or my favourite hobby?

Yes, definitely! In fact, if you already love something, reading can be one of the best ways to get better at it. **Whatever you're interested in, there are almost certainly books about it.** Love football? Read about tactics, great players and the history of the game. A gamer? Try strategy guides, game lore or stories set in the worlds you love. If you're interested in science, coding, drawing or making games, you can find out how things work and learn from people who are experts.

Reading also develops skills that are useful in almost anything: concentration, vocabulary, imagination and understanding complicated ideas. And when you're reading about something you already care about, it doesn't feel like learning. You're simply finding out more about something you love. **Reading isn't separate from the things you enjoy. It can take you further into them.**

9. What are some of your top tips for building a reading habit?

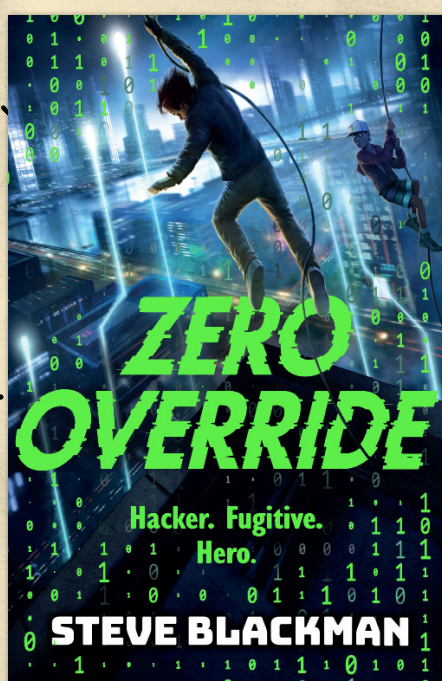
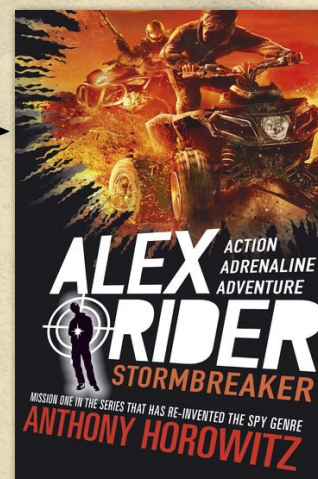
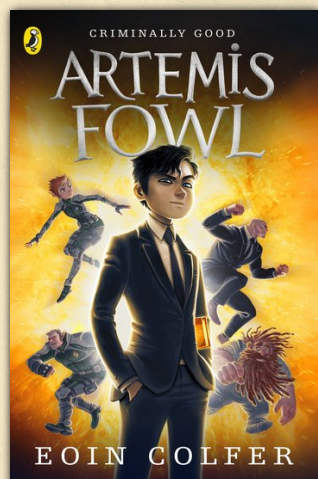
Start really small. You don't need to read for an hour every day. Five minutes counts. A few pages count. Even if you only have a couple of minutes, read something. The more you do it, the easier it becomes. If you can, attach reading to something you already do – after breakfast, before bed, on the bus or after school. And always have something to read nearby, so when you have five minutes to spare, you've got something to pick up.

Most importantly, **find things you actually enjoy.** Try different kinds of books, comics or magazines until you find something that clicks. It can also be fun to talk about what you're reading. Ask friends what they're enjoying – you might discover your next favourite that way.

But the biggest tip is simple: **find something you genuinely want to read.** Once a story grabs you, reading stops feeling like something you have to do and becomes something you want to do. And that's how a reading habit starts.

WHAT TO READ NEXT

Uncover more secrets and solve clever mysteries – your next mission awaits!

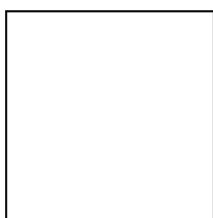


ORIGAMI BOOKMARK ACTIVITY

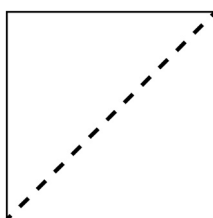
Make Your Very Own Origami Bookmark

Need a bookmark to mark your place in your favourite book? Why not make one with a few simple steps. All you need is a square origami paper (15x15cm is a good size).

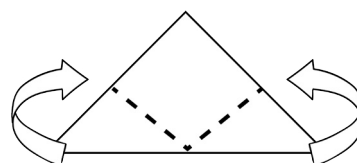
1. Start with a square piece of paper



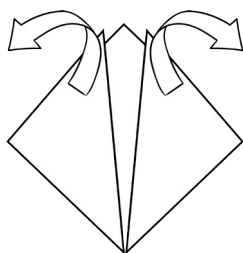
2. Fold the paper in half diagonally



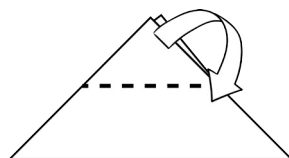
3. Fold the corners up to the top of the paper



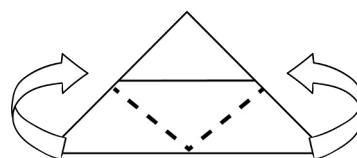
4. Unfold



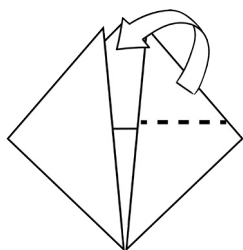
5. Fold the top layer down



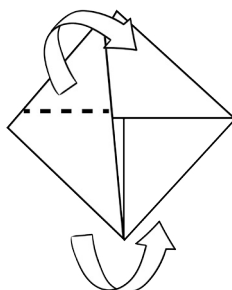
6. Fold the corners back up to the top



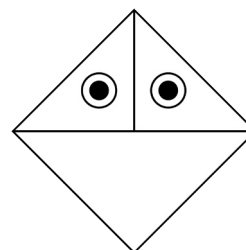
7. Fold one corner behind the pocket



8. Repeat for the other side



8. Decorate!



SCHOLASTIC

Lollies
LAUGH OUT LOUD
2026 BOOK AWARDS

Lollies Mini-Mag

Q&A WITH THE 2026
JUDGES INSIDE

EXPLORE THE
SHORTLIST



CELEBRATING
10 YEARS OF
THE LAUGH OUT
LOUD AWARDS



shop.scholastic.ie/lollies

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF

THE LOLLIES

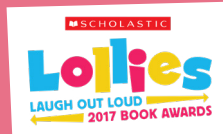
The Scholastic Laugh Out Loud Book Awards (the Lollies) is created to celebrate the funniest children's books in the UK and Ireland. The **first-ever Lollies ceremony** takes place.

2016

SCHOLASTIC

Laugh
Out Loud
Book Awards 2016

2017



The judges had to narrow down the **final 12-book shortlist from over 130 children's book submissions** sent in by publishers! The categories were 'Best Laugh Out Loud Picture Book', 'Best Laugh Our Loud Book for Ages 6-8' and 'Best Laugh Out Loud Book for Ages 9-13'.

The **picture book winners, Michelle Robinson and Tor Freeman**, were presented their award on stage by **legendary children's author Julia Donaldson**.



2020

2018



Scholastic introduced a **free live-streamed awards ceremony**, allowing tens of thousands of school children to watch Michael Rosen reveal the winners live from their classrooms! It was hosted on Valentine's Day to encourage schools to fall in love with reading.

After pausing in 2021 due to lockdown, the **UK's favourite funny book awards came roaring back** with a virtual ceremony on 17th February.

2022

2020/
2021

SCHOLASTIC
BOOK CLUB

We launched our first-ever **virtual Lollies Book Club Live events**, to bring author read-alongs and digital content to students.

The 2024 Lollies featured an expanded lineup of six age and genre categories, plus a special individual talent award for **Laugh Out Loud Illustrator of the Year**, which was won by **Jamie Smart!**



WINNER!

2024

2023

150,000
CHILDREN

The awards expanded to include Poetry, Non-Fiction, and Teen categories to reach a broader audience, including secondary school students. The shortlist showcase week involved over **150,000 children participating** digitally across schools!

The 2025 Awards Ceremony saw Lollies Ambassador **Michael Rosen** and host **Stephen Mangan** compete in an epic **"Scrooge-off"** on stage, with the two of them playfully competing with their best Ebenezer Scrooge impressions!



2025

2026



Celebrating the **10th anniversary of the Lollies!** Including the introduction of the **Graphic Novel** category.

MEET THE 2026 LOLLIES JUDGES

Michael Rosen

Michael Rosen is one of the best-known figures in the children's book world. A former Children's Laureate, he is celebrated for his work as a poet, author, performer, broadcaster and scriptwriter. As an author and anthologist, Michael has been involved with over 140 books. He has been a Lollies ambassador and judge since it began 10 years ago!

Why are funny children's books so important?

I think funny books are amazingly important, I loved funny books as a child, they helped me get into reading! My brother used to read me funny books and I loved it, I used to sit on the other side of the bedroom laughing and wheezing away, I am a big spokesperson for funny books!

What's your favourite thing about being a children's author?

I think back to when I was a boy, and I get a great warm feeling of what it was like - reading books, writing stories, having laughs with my brother and my friends. I go back into that warm bubble of what it was to be the boy I was.



Photo Credit: Dave Stelfox

Jon Biddle

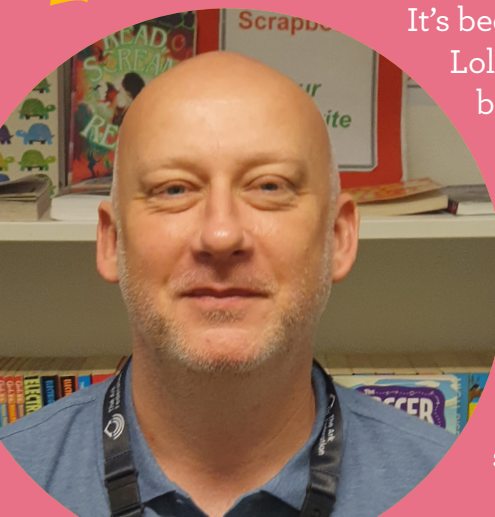
Jon Biddle is a primary school teacher and English lead, currently teaching at Moorlands Primary Academy in Norfolk. Jon is a passionate advocate of Reading for Pleasure. Jon also shares his practice through the Open University Reading for Pleasure site and continues to champion high-quality children's literature, having a particular love of graphic novels and poetry.

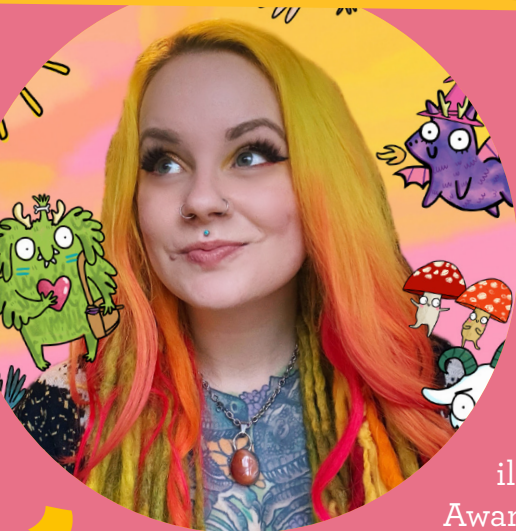
How have you found the Lollies judging?

It's been an absolute privilege to be a judge for the 10th anniversary of the Lollies! I think children need books that are funny – we know there's been a decline in reading for pleasure, but we also know that children love reading funny books and that they're the books that get them talking to each other about books and stories.

What's your favourite thing about funny children's books?

My favourite thing is how they help to build a community in the classroom. They teach children so many things: empathy, representation, there are so many powerful messages from children's books – they're also just lots of fun to read. Class story time is the highlight of the day in my class.





Katie Abey

Katie Abey is a creative human committed to the idea that she might just be able to make a positive difference to the world by drawing perturbed animals and lots of rainbows for a living. Her work is created to uplift and feel supportive, and she is passionate about making people feel proud of their individuality and all the things that set them apart from others. Alongside building her brand and merchandise, Katie has illustrated 50 children's books and counting. Katie won The Lollies Award for 9–12-year-olds for *'How to Survive Time Travel'* in 2024.

How have you found the Lollies judging?

It's been really fun! I feel like as judges, we're all on the same wavelength and it's an honour to have the chance to read so many funny children's books – it's been so inspiring!

What's your favourite thing about funny children's books?

I love that they're whole worlds and that they provide escapism – I think they're really important. Especially funny children's books, as they're so accessible and it's what children want to read.

Alex Falase-Koya

Children's author Alex has been reading and writing since he was a teenager. His debut novel *'Marv and the Mega Robot'* was inspired after Alex struggled to find superheroes in fiction who looked like him. By creating Marv, a superhero whose strengths are kindness and imagination, Alex hopes to have created a character to whom all children can relate. He is also the co-writer of Marcus Rashford's *'The Breakfast Club Adventures'*. A previous winner of Spread the Word's 2019 London's Writers Awards for YA and Children's, Alex lives in Honor Oak with his two cats.

Why are funny children's books so important?

I think that children's books are super important and one of the cool things about children's books, is that you're able to be really out there and funny, and I think it's important to have an award that rewards being funny.

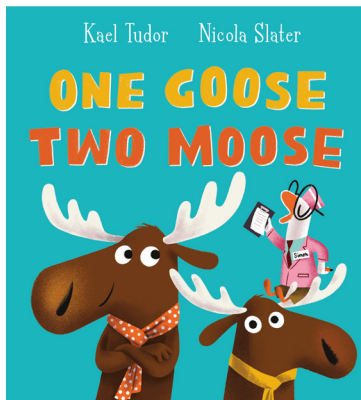
What's your favourite thing about being a children's author?

My favourite thing about being a children's author is when I get to go out to schools and festivals and get a chance to meet the children who have read my books – it's so cool to hear all their thoughts and feelings about the books.



PICTURE BOOK SHORTLIST

Introducing
the Lollies
2026
Shortlist



One Goose, Two Moose by Kael Tudor and Nicola Slater

OK, everyone, line up!
One goose, two moose, three goose, four.
Five goose, six moose, seven goose, more.
WAIT!

Welcome to the ice cream shop, where there's a goose line, a moose line and a slightly bossy goose who wants everyone to be **IN THE RIGHT LINE, PLEASE!** That sounds easy enough, doesn't it?
This brilliantly funny picture book perfectly captures the chaos of queueing up, and features a fun counting element too.

Sleep Tight Disgusting Blob by Huw Aaron

Whether you are a vampire or a ghost, a werewolf or a yeti, a bedtime routine is absolutely essential for a good night's sleep. Adults and children will fall in love with Blob and the whole cast of monsters as they brush their teeth, put on their pyjamas, and get tucked up in bed.

Warm, loving and slimy, this hilarious rhyming picture book is the perfect addition to bedtime reading, ending with a kiss and sweet dreams for all.



All You Need To Know About Dogs: By A. Cat by Fred Blunt

Are you a cat person or a dog person?
Well, this cat thinks cats are the best and dogs are the absolute worst. I mean, dogs stink, they slobber, they enjoy rolling around in cow poo... need I say more? And why are there so many types of dog, too? Hairy... scary... spotty... Scottie... the list goes on!
But when this confident cat gets a very scary surprise, guess who comes to the rescue? Will our cat finally accept that he might have been wrong about dogs all along?

With bright and hilarious illustrations, this picture book will have kids and grown-ups alike laughing out loud. And whether you're a cat or dog lover, the heart-warming ending is sure to put a smile on your face.

My Rice is Best by Selina Brown and Maxwell A. Oginni

Join Shane and friends as they attempt to settle the age-old question of which rice dish is the best!

Shane is convinced that nothing beats a big, delicious bowl of rice and peas – it's the best rice in the world! But when he brings his favourite meal to school, he discovers that his friend Yinka is just as passionate about her jollof rice. What follows is a hilarious and heartfelt showdown to settle the age-old question: which rice reigns supreme?

A laugh-out-loud, heartwarming picture book that brings the joy of food, friendship, and cultural pride to life, *My Rice is Best* explores the playful rivalry between two friends who both believe their rice dish is the ultimate favourite. Through humour and a universal love of eating, the book offers an entertaining way-in to help children embrace new cuisines and celebrate cultural identity and diversity.

My Rice is Best is a mesme-ricing celebration of food, culture and friendship!





Murray and Bun: Murray the Viking by Adam Stower

Meet your favourite new duo: MURRAY AND BUN!

Murray is a cat. Murray loves snoozing, fluffy blankets, and peace and quiet. Bun is a bun. Bun loves... EVERYTHING! And together they are unstoppable! SOMETIMES Murray's enchanted cat flap leads to the garden... but mostly it leads to ADVENTURE! And when Murray and Bun travel through the cat flap and find themselves in a land of VIKINGS, they are given a VERY IMPORTANT MISSION: to travel to TROLL ISLAND and rescue Eggrik the Viking... if he hasn't already been gobbled up by the trolls, that is.



Squirrel and Duck: Mission Improbable by Tom Percival

Squirrel and Duck might seem strange housemates, but they are drawn together by their secret – they are the only two talking animals in the world! When bulldozers arrive to redevelop the abandoned theme park they call home, they run away, taking with them only Mr Spikes, Duck's beloved 'pet' cactus.

When they hear a conversation between two nincompoop art thieves they end up on the trail of untold riches (according to Squirrel) or a great deed to help the nation (as far as Duck's concerned)! Only some surprisingly unhelpful woodland creatures stand in their way! Readers will love this zanily brilliant story, full of unlikely scenarios and laugh-out-loud moments.

The Notwitches by Gary Panton and Dotty Sutton

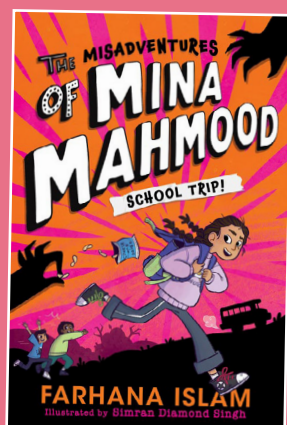
While lots of children have one or two problems, Melanda Notwitch has three: her horrible aunts. They really are the absolute WORST!

Luckily, Melanda meets Mitch, a young witch who knows of a magic spell that might make everything better.

All they have to do is find one special ingredient.

How hard can it be?

- Book 1 in a big-hearted and funny adventure series in the spirit of Roald Dahl
- Brimming with loathsome villains, unexpected heroes, extraordinary set pieces and an almost-talking cat!
- With laugh-out-loud funny illustrations from Dotty Sutton



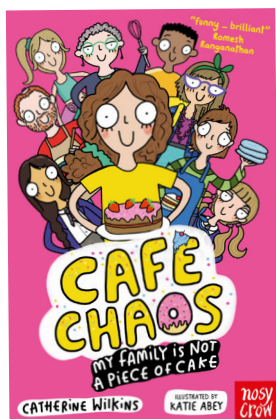
The Misadventures of Mina Mahmood: School Trip! by Farhana Islam and Simran Diamond Singh

Mina, Reema and Mobeen can't wait to go on their school trip, an overnight stay at Shiremoor Oaks Adventure Centre ... until somebody spooks them with stories about Bertie Blackteeth: who haunts the woods, who sharpens her toenails with twigs, who is waiting to skewer her next unfortunate victim all over with cheese-and-onion crisps!

With Bertie Blackteeth lurking and the school bully seeming to have become the teacher's pet – this trip will test their friendship, courage and love of potato chips to the limit.

AGE 9-12 SHORTLIST

Introducing
the Lollies
2026
Shortlist



Café Chaos: My Family Is Not a Piece of Cake by Catherine Wilkins and Katie Abey

Running a bustling café is Hope's family's dream – it's just not hers! While Dad and Gran battle it out in the kitchen, Mum tries to balance the books while serving quiche to hordes of hungry pensioners. Meanwhile Hope's dramatic sister Stacey is determined to turn all of life into a stage and her "wishes-he-was-on-Wall-Street" cousin Connor decides to buy novelty costumes to advertise the business. And then Auntie Rita rocks up...

Café Crumble is tipping straight into Café Chaos! Luckily for her family, Hope is there to save the day, though ideally this wouldn't involve dressing up as a giant ice cream and dancing outside the school gates.

← You'll laugh (a lot), you'll cry (with even more laughter), you'll develop a strange yearning for caroons (whatever they are!). Welcome to Café Chaos!



Shipwrecked by Jenny Pearson and Nick East

Three kids face shipwrecks, survival and pirates in the latest adventure from bestselling and award-winning author Jenny Pearson.

Sebastian Sunrise and his two best friends, Lina and Etienne, are in a bit of trouble. They are stranded on a desert island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, after a rowing race went very, very wrong.

The friends have no idea how long they might have to stay on the island, so they make a plan. They will try to survive, look after the island's baby turtles, and have fun, if they can.

But Sebastian's life has never gone to plan, and they quickly face jellyfish stings, burnt bums and an out-of-control goat. But when a boat arrives, bringing pirates who want to hunt the island's baby turtles, the friends face their greatest danger yet...

Cringe Club by Emily-Jane Clark and Wotto

Welcome to the group chat! It's called Cringe Club because, as you might have guessed, it contains a cringe binge of EPIC proportions.

My name is Kennedy King and I have been FORCED to move to London by The Mother. I have just started Hellington High School (aka HELL HIGH). The only GOOD thing about moving is that The Mother has finally agreed to let me have my own phone (guilt present) so I can stay in touch with my best friends. Enter at your own risk (of cringe) and remember ... what is said in Cringe Club, STAYS in Cringe Club.



Dead Yard: Seeds of Doom

by P.J. Kilburn and Markia Jenai

Budding film-maker Jermaine is at his great-great uncle's Dead Yard, a service for the deceased that lasts the entire night. There's music, tons of people and lots of food, so when Jermaine spots a plate of patties – his favourite snack – he digs in immediately. But upon taking a bite he finds himself in big trouble.

Turns out that at a Dead Yard, a table is set up under a tent with food for the departed loved one. No one is allowed to eat from it before midnight, which is believed to be the time when the spirit passes through.

Jermaine wishes he knew that before 22:53! Now he's got the angry spirit of his Uncle Carl in his life. ALL. THE. TIME. But that isn't the only creepy happening in town. Kids are suffering from a mysterious illness that sounds A LOT like the Jamaican ghost tales his great gran has told him. With cursed cassava seeds in the house and a strange being lurking in the neighbourhood too, Jermaine and Carl will have to work together to keep the people they care about safe.



GRAPHIC NOVEL SHORTLIST

Nina Peanut is Amazing by Sarah Bowie

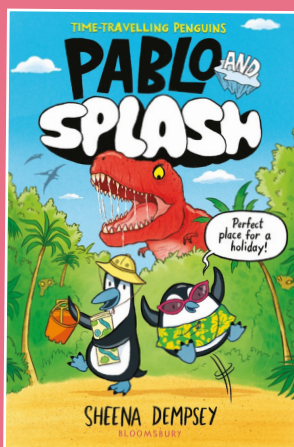
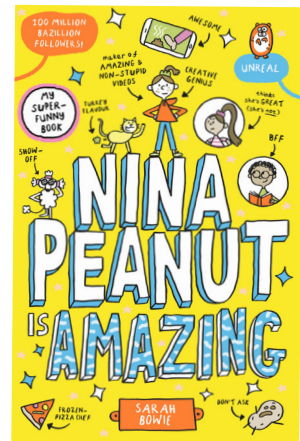
Nina Peanut – super-star in the making, frozen pizza chef, creative genius, owner of the world’s stinkiest cat. The funniest new friend for all kids, everywhere.

Nina Peanut creates amazing videos – so why is it only her nan and best friend Brian who watch them? Surely everyone should be interested in her SERIOUS and NOT-STUPID videos about potatoes with faces?

Nina dreams about being as popular as class queen bee Megan Dunne, who films NOT AMAZING AT ALL content of her pampered dog, Princess Trixie Bell.

So, when Nina’s stinky cat Les wanders into one of Megan’s videos by accident, and goes viral, Nina and Les are suddenly internet famous!

But is overnight stardom as wonderful as Nina always imagined it would be?



Pablo and Splash by Sheena Dempsey

Join time-travelling penguins Pablo and Splash on an unexpected adventure to the time of the dinosaurs in this brilliantly funny full-colour graphic novel. Perfect for fans of Bunny vs Monkey or Dog Man.

Antarctic penguins Pablo and Splash are polar opposites and besties for life. Pablo is a home-bird and a careful planner. Splash is easily bored and hungry for adventure. Sick to her flippers of the harsh, freezing weather, Splash persuades Pablo to go on a holiday with her. But far from the luxury beach destination that Splash has in mind, the pair end up in a time-travel machine that takes them back to the age of the dinosaurs! Suddenly their icy homeland doesn’t seem so dull ...

Supa Nova by Chanté Timothy

Meet Nova! She’s a scientist. Some people say she’s a genius. Some people even call her Supa Nova – get it? Like a supernova. Basically she’s a huge star, exploding right at you with her adventures!

When Nova invents a plastic-eating monster, she thinks she’s solved the world’s pollution problem. But she doesn’t expect her monster to start rampaging through the city! Can Nova find a way to save the day?

It will take a genius to figure it out!



Looshkin: Honk If You See It! by Jamie Smart

You never know what to expect from Looshkin – except that it will be very, very funny!

Follow the continuing adventures of the maddest cat in the world as he defeats vampires with chicken nuggets, accidentally turns into a duck, becomes a high-flying entrepreneur and gets caught in a time warp. Sometimes all at the same time! It’s an explosion of pure comic comedy joy!

Read the
shortlist
and cast
your vote!

Supporting the BIG MOVE to SECONDARY SCHOOL

Starting secondary school is a big step that can come with a mix of excitement, nerves and big questions. New routines. New friendships. New expectations. But with the right support in place, we can make their transition smoother.

Books have the power to reassure, inspire and equip children with the confidence they need to step into this next chapter feeling ready.

Here are the perfect reads to help the transition:

MUST-READS FOR A CONFIDENT START:

Moving Up

A reassuring, practical guide that answers the big questions about secondary school life and helps children feel prepared, calm and excited for what's ahead.

Fearless

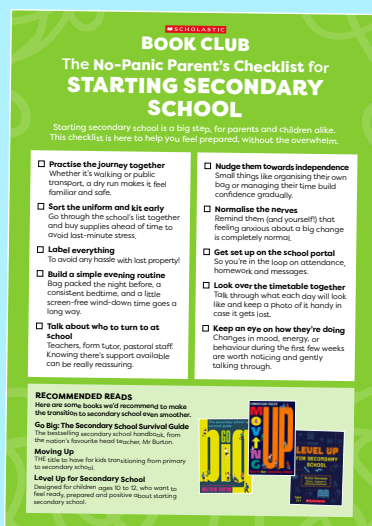
An empowering read packed with encouragement and strategies to face new challenges with courage. Perfect for easing worries and building bravery.

You Are Awesome

A powerful confidence boost in book form. Full of humour and growth mindset thinking to help children believe in themselves from day one.

Go Big: The Secondary School Survival Guide

From your first day to your final exams, this handbook will have you achieving, succeeding and being the best you can be. Find great friends, boost your confidence, work hard and start building toward your brilliant future.



Our FREE **'No-Panic Starting Secondary School Checklist'** is designed to support children through the transition with practical, reassuring advice, including:

- ☒ Practising the journey to school
- ☒ Building routines and organisation
- ☒ Supporting confidence and wellbeing
- ☒ Recommended books and resources
- ☒ Simple tips to help your child walk into Year 7 feeling calm, capable, and prepared.

DOWNLOAD CHECKLIST



READING FUN BEYOND THE PAGES

Our Kids' Club is packed with activities and videos that bring your pupils' favourite books to life, keeping the joy of reading flowing long after the pages.

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SCHOLASTIC

BOOK CLUB ▶ LIVE

CELEBRATE READING WITH YOUR FAVOURITE AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS!

Join us for our programme of virtual events for schools. Featuring writing workshops, drawalongs and more, there are regular events running for all ages throughout the school term.

Each event is completely free to attend, and if you can't join us at the advertised time, a recording will be available afterwards for registered attendees.

[Browse all upcoming events](#)



▶ **FREE VIRTUAL
BOOK EVENTS**

▶ **FOR SCHOOLS**

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We'd love to hear them! Tell us what you'd like to see in upcoming issues, your ideas can help us keep this magazine fun, fresh and relevant for every reader.

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