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Suggested Reads for Children's Reading Groups – Children's Fiction

The following books are all available in multiple copies through your local library. We update the list annually, so please let us know if you read a book you think should be included. You may post your review/notes of your reading group discussion on the Libraries West website, or ask for a reader review card at your library.

The books are listed in alphabetical order by author and are recommended as suitable for children aged between 6-12 years. The list covers a range of genres and styles. This is just a small selection of what's available, most of the authors have written more books. The book details have been extracted from publisher and online bookseller information. For further ideas it's also worth trying www.lovereading4kids.co.uk and also publications such as Who Next? A Guide to children's authors (reference copies available in most libraries)

Anderson, R.J **Knife**
320 pages, 6-12 years

This is no ordinary fairytale; in fact if you're expecting fairy dust don't read this book, as the last thing Knife is likely to wield is a magic wand. She's a feisty heroine but with a dark side.

Asquith, Ros **Trixie fights for furry rights**
Series: Trixie S, book 6. 208 pages, 9-12 years

Trixie's beloved doggy Harpo had puppies and the day has come to find them a new home, much to Trixie's despair. Nothing she says can convince her parents that they really do need to keep all of the extremely cuddly and talented furry friends.

Asquith, Ros **Trixie gets the witch factor**
Series: Trixie S. 176 pages, 9-12 years

Trixie can't believe her luck when she's invited to attend a half-term taster course in witchcraft and wizardry at Conundrums Academy. But her witchy prowess and her inventiveness are tested to the full by the extremely peculiar rules and punishments, and the generally strange goings-on.

Baxter, Andy **Snake Scare**
Series: Beastly! Book 3. 128 pages, 9-12 years

Aimed at boys aged 7-9 years, this series combines a highly readable blend of humour with thrilling adventure. Each exciting story centres on a different species of wild animal.

Bentley, Sue **Cloud Capers**
Series: Magic Puppy, book 3. 128 pages, 6-12 years

Storm is the only young wolf left from his family in the magic Moon-claw pack after the evil wolf, Shadow, wounds his mother and destroys everyone else. With the rest of the pack now scattered, Storm's mother is too weak to protect Storm so she sends him to our world as a magic puppy where his magical powers can grow.

Black, Holly & Tony Diterlizzi **A Giant Problem**
Series: Beyond the spiderwick chronicles, book 2. 176 pages, 9-12 years

Nick and Laurie have a giant problem and it's a lot bigger than they originally thought. When Taloa sent them off to find her sisters, they discovered a single fire-breathing giant, but as it turns out, that one giant is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

Blackman, Malorie **Cloud Busting**
160 pages, 9-12 years

Sam doesn't want to be friends with Davey - in fact, he thinks he's a moron. But one day Davey saves Sam's life and an extraordinary friendship is formed, only to end in tragedy. This story is told in verse.

Blade, Adam **Ferno the Fire Dragon**
Series: Beast Quest, book 1. 128 pages, 6-12 years

Six fearsome beasts have been cast under an evil spell by the Dark Wizard Malvel, and are destroying the kingdom of Avantia. Our hero Tom and his friend Elenna must free the beasts from the spell and save the land. Let the battle commence!

Brittney, L **Nathan Fox: Dangerous Times**
Series: Nathan Fox, book 1. 306 pages, 6-12 years

The Spymaster General has formed an intelligence network to ensure that England remains the mightiest super-power. He is always looking for brilliant new agents, and Nathan Fox has just caught his eye.

Brooke, Lauren **Playing for Keeps**
Series: Chestnut Hill, book 4. 208 pages, 9-12 years

Feisty Lani is excited to be back at school after the Christmas holidays. Then she receives a letter from home: because her marks have fallen her parents think she's spending too much time riding. Lani's heartbroken at the thought of leaving Chestnut Hill. How can she change their minds?

Cassidy, Cathy **Scarlett**
240 Pages, 6-12 years

Scarlett's not red like a sunset; she's red with rage. She cannot believe her mum is packing her off to Ireland to stay with the dad who left them. Surely he's the reason for everything going wrong, her never being able to stay in a school, rules always getting broken? They won't get round her so easily

Chapman, Linda **Rising Star**
Series: My Secret Unicorn, book 12. 160 pages, 6-12

Lauren and Twilight are delighted to learn that Currant, the new foal at Orchard Stables, is also a unicorn, and that Lauren's friend Grace is his special unicorn friend. Now they can have fun together. But Currant soon realises that being a unicorn is not as easy as he thinks.

Cliff, Alex **Tusked Terror**
Series: Superpowers, book 6. 128 pages, 8-12 years

When the walls of Max and Finlay's den start crumbling away, little do the mates know that everything is about to change. Trapped inside the wall is the ancient god Hercules and he needs their help. The friends must complete a terrifying challenge every day for seven days and can choose only one of Hercules's superpowers at a time.

Clover, Peter **Dead Cool**
59 pages, 4-8 years

When Sammy's parents buy him a parrot in an antique cage he gets more than he expected. Soon there are private ghosts all over the house, but only Sammy can see them! He has to help them escape Captain Red Beard the Really Rotten in this swashbuckling adventure story.

Cole, Stephen **The Moo-my's Curse**
Series: Cows in Action, book 2. 160 pages, 6-12 years

Genius cow Professor McMoo and his trusty sidekicks, Pat and Bo, are star agents of the C.I.A. - short for Cows in Action! They travel through time, fighting evil bulls from the future and keeping history on the right track.

Cole, Stephen **Terror Underground**
Series: Astrosaurs Academy, book 3. 128 pages, 6-12 years

Teggs and his friends are practising for a flying display when Damona's jet crashes into Teggs' and they find themselves stuck underground in an icy cavern. But the gang have got more than just getting themselves out to deal with - there's a frozen war hero, rotten raptors and huge creepy-crawlies stuck in the cold too.

Colfer, Eoin **Legend of the worst boy in the world**
96 pages, 8-13 years

Will is desperate to win the Giant Jelly Baby competition and be named 'the best boy in the world'. But his big brother Marty always beats him to it. Then one day Will's wish comes true - he's the best boy in the world at last! Marty is not happy, and decides that something must be done.

Cope, Andrew **Spy Dog**
Series: Spy Dog, book 1. 128 pages 8-12 years

Lara, or GM451 as she is known by the government, is a highly trained special agent, bred by the British Secret Service for use on dangerous missions around the world. But her last mission went wrong and now an evil drugs baron, Mr Big, is hunting her down. She must go undercover as a normal dog.

Corder, Zizou **Lion boy**
352 pages, 8-13 years

Charlie Ashanti can speak Cat. He takes it for granted, but when his mum and dad go missing, the cats are the only friends he can turn to. Setting out to find his parents, Charlie stows away on a circus ship. On board he meets six lions that need his help. They embark on the adventure of a lifetime.

Cowell, Cressida **How to be a pirate**
Series: Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III. 224 pages, 9-12 years

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III was a Viking hero - dashing, brave and ever so hairy. But even Viking heroes have to begin somewhere.

Dahl, Roald **Charlie & the Chocolate Factory**
189 pages, 9-13 years

Charlie Bucket can't believe his luck when he finds a Golden Ticket and wins the chance of a lifetime: a magical day witnessing the miraculous creation of the most delectable eatables ever made.

Deary, Terry **Wall of woe: A Rotten Roman Adventure**
Series: Horrible Histories: Gory Stories. 160 pages, 6-12 years

Emperor Hadrian's great wall separates two terrifying tribes - the Picts and the Scots. Two Gaul soldiers are given the task of keeping the peace and protecting the wall, but with catapults and a brand new ball game to distract them, can they keep their mind on the job?

Diamond, Emily **Flood Child**
384 pages, 8-13 years

Winner of *The Times* Children's Fiction Competition, this original post-apocalyptic fantasy is an action packed debut novel. Determined to find the Prime Minister's daughter who has been captured by bloodthirsty reavers, Lilly sails off carrying with her a talking jewel. Lilly is a delightfully feisty heroine and their adventures take them on a thrilling and unusual journey.

Doder, Joshua **Grk: Operation Tortoise**
Series: Grk, book 4. 240 pages, 9-12 years

Tim and Grk are holidaying in the Seychelles, but their unique crime-fighting skills are needed once more in an adrenalin-filled adventure.

Dowd, Siobahn The London Eye Mystery
336 pages, 9-12 years

When Ted and Kat watched their cousin Salim get on board the London Eye, he turned and waved before getting on. But after half an hour it landed and everyone trooped off - but no Salim. Where could he have gone? How on earth could he have disappeared into thin air?

Funke, Cornelia Inkheart
Inkheart Trilogy, book 1. 576 pages, 8-13 years

Mo, a gentle bookbinder with an extraordinary secret, and his daughter Meggie love books, yet he has not read aloud to her since her mother disappeared years ago. After a mysterious stranger visits them, Mo tells Meggie they must go into hiding. But why? - and from whom?

Golding, Julia Diamond of Drury Lane
Series: Cat Royal, book 1. 424 pages, 9-12 years

Set in 1790's Covent Garden this book whisks you back to a bygone era. The narrator's colourful slang and confident I-will-tell-you-how-it-really-is style, makes the story sparkle on the page. That voice belongs to Cat Royal, an orphan who lives backstage at the well-known Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, London. And hers is certainly a dramatic tale!

Haig, Matt Shadow Forest
416 pages, 8-12 years

Samuel Blink is the hero of this story, but he doesn't know it yet. Right now, he and his sister Martha are in the back of his parent's car. He has no idea a giant log is about to fall from the sky and change his life forever.

Higson, Charlie Double or Die
Series: Young Bond, book 3. 389 pages, 9-12 years

In a North London cemetery a professor is kidnapped at gunpoint. A suspicious letter crammed with cryptic clues arrives at Eton. To decipher the deadly mystery, James Bond must take a series of dangerous gambles. Once the code is cracked, he has just 48 hours to save the professor from the dark forces that threaten to destroy them both.

Horowitz, Anthony Ark Angel
Series: Alex Rider, book 6. 343 pages, 9-13 years

From Cornwall to Cuba, Venice to France, Alex Rider has travelled far and wide as a spy for MI6, facing danger and death at every turn. But in his last mission, fighting the criminal organization, Scorpia, Alex appeared to have finally met his match. Will Alex Rider live to fight another day?

Landy, Derek Skulduggery Pleasant
Series: Skulduggery Pleasant, book 1. 384 pages, 9-12 years

Stephanie's uncle Gordon is a writer of horror fiction. But when he dies and leaves her his estate, Stephanie learns that while he may have written horror, it certainly wasn't fiction. Pursued by evil forces intent on recovering a mysterious key, Stephanie finds help from an unusual source - the wisecracking skeleton of a dead wizard.

Lawrence, Caroline Scribes from Alexandria
Series: Roman Mysteries, book 15. 272 pages, 8-13 years

A desperate quest is taking place in the Romano-Egyptian port of Alexandria. Codes, riddles, anagrams and hieroglyphics lead the search parties down the River Nile to pyramids and sphinxes, temples and tombs, crocodiles and hippos. But what lies at the end of the journey? Treasure? Or death?

Lawrence, Michael Kid Swap
Series: Jiggy McCue, book 10. 240 pages, 6-12 years

Jiggy is horrified to hear that his parents have signed him up for a reality TV show called Kid Swap. He is to move in with another family & everything he does will be filmed. Sadly, most of what he does while the camera is pointing his way is not the kind of thing he wants to share with millions of total strangers.

Lewis, C.S Lion, the witch and the wardrobe
Chronicles of Narnia, book 2. 243 pages, 8-14 years

In this children's classic, Lucy finds that an old wardrobe in a professor's country house is a gateway to a magical land of fauns, centaurs, nymphs and talking animals - but also of the beautiful but evil White Witch who has held the land of Narnia in eternal winter for a hundred years.

Lisle, Rebecca The Boy in the Big Black Box
80 pages, 9-12 years

Wee Willie has been incarcerated in the magic disappearing box by his wicked uncle, but never fear! Joe, Laurie and Theo gallop to the rescue, resolving the half-cast spell, and rescuing Willie.

Lisle, Rebecca The dog in the diamond collar
184 pages, 8-12 years

When a rich little boy disappears from his luxurious home, his parent and neighbours are frantic with worry. But three local children get special help from his dog, and follow a series of unexpected clues to find him in a most unlikely spot.

Lisle, Rebecca Curse of toads
266 pages, 9-12 years

When Reuben's beloved grandmother, Sarah, is burned as a witch, Reuben quickly takes his possessions and runs from the village. For he has the toad-shaped birthmark, the sign of a sorcerer, he will surely be next for the stake.

Macdonald, Alan Trolls United
Series: Troll Trouble, book 2. 128 pages, 6-12 years

Ulrik is desperate to be on the school football team, but he doesn't really understand the rules, and his neighbour Warren Priddle certainly isn't about to explain to the troll next door that wellington boots are not the right footwear, and being fierce and scary will only get you a red card.

Morpurgo, Michael The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips
192 pages, 9-12 years

Set against the backdrop of the Second World War, this story is about lifelong friendship and one adventurous cat! It's 1943, apart from her father being away, Lily Tregenze's life is scarcely touched by the war. Until one day, Lily and her family, along with 3000 other villagers, are told to move out of their homes.

Nimmo, Jenny Midnight for Charlie Bone
Series: Children of the Red King, book1. 416 pages, 9-12 years

Looking at a picture of a couple with a baby and a cat, Charlie Bone suddenly discovers that he can hear their voices. Although he tries to hide his new gift, his great aunts find out and send him to Bloor's Academy.

Poole, Josephine Moon Eyes
150 pages, 4-8 years

Kate, her father and little brother live in an impoverished state in a grand old house that has been in the family for generations. When her struggling artist father decides to go away and paint, he leaves Kate and Thomas in the care of neighbour Mrs Beer and her husband. With only Thomas for company, Kate is terribly alone. So when Aunt Rhoda appears in the quiet village and introduces herself as a relative, Kate is happy to welcome her in. But too soon Kate begins to feel the evil of Aunt Rhoda's presence, and senses the arrival of the great dog Moon Eyes. So begins a deadly struggle for possession—with Thomas as the prize.

Purkiss, Sue Warrior King
272 pages, 9-14 years

The year is 878 AD. The English kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia and Kent have fallen to the Vikings. Only Wessex is left, and its king, Alfred, has been driven into hiding on Athelney, the ancient Island of Princes. How can he, along with his daughter, Fleda, and his closest followers, defeat the dreaded Vikings?

Purkiss, Sue The willow man
168 Pages, 9-14

When his younger sister Sophie has a stroke, 12-year-old Tom feels jealous and guilty, impatient and scared all at the same time. His mate Ash is the only one that seems to understand. But Ash has problems of his own. Sophie believes that the willow man is magical, that he can help them all - her to walk and Ash to read.

Rees, Gwyneth Mum mystery
Series: Esmie, book 4. 240 pages, 8-12 years

Esmie has always longed for a new mum, since her real mother died when she was a baby. Surely it can only be a matter of time before Dad proposes to Lizzie. Esmie discovers her mum's old jewellery box, which contains what seems to be a secret message. Could her mum still be trying to tell her something, and if so what?

Sage, Angie **My haunted house**

Series: Araminta Spook, book 1. 132 pages, 4-8 years

Araminta Spook is just like any girl. She likes bats, ghosts, werewolves and vampires. One of her greatest ambitions is to see a ghost, and living in Spook House with her aunt and uncle there's a fair chance she will.

Snicket, Lemony **The Reptile Room**

Series: A Series of Unfortunate Events, book 2. 208 pages, 9-12 years

Violet, Klaus and Sunny Baudelaire have found a new home and it looks as though they are going to be happy. Their new guardian, Uncle Monty, is a kind man. But then he employs a new assistant, who turns out to be none other than the evil Count Olaf.

Stanton, Andy **You're a bad man Mr Gum!**

Series: Tales from Lamonic Bibber, book 1. 144 pages, 6-12 years

Mr Gum is a truly nasty old man. He's absolutely grim. But this book's not just about him. There's also a little girl called Polly, an evil butcher, heroes and sweets and stuff, and Jake the dog, who must be saved from terrible, terrible evil.

Strong, Jeremy **The hundred-mile-an-hour dog**

Series: The hundred-mile-an-hour dog, book 1. 128 pages 8-12 years

Streaker is no ordinary dog. She's a rocket on four legs with a woof attached, and Trevor has got until the end of the holidays to train her. If he fails, he'll lose his bet with horrible Charlie Smugg, and something very nasty will happen. Originally published: London: Viking, 1996

Strong, Jeremy **Lost! The hundred-mile-an-hour dog**

Series: The hundred-mile-an-hour dog, book 2. 144 pages, 8-12 years

Streaker the dog is lost. And not just a bit lost, but really lost! She wanted to protect some pies from the pie robber and suddenly she's miles from home and two-legged Trevor and she has to make friends with a cat. But it gets a lot hairier when they find themselves face-to-face with a baboon.

Strong, Jeremy **Beware! Killer tomatoes**

144 pages, 8-12 years

Jack's in trouble. Big trouble. Not only is he in hospital with a leg in traction but also he knows the police are coming for him. Because of an accident – a tomato-related accident – involving a supermarket pyramid and an old-age pensioner!

Strong, Jeremy **Chicken School**

160 pages, 8-12 years

Tim thinks he has the most boring family in the world. There's no way that the sparkly Sophie in his class is ever going to look at him. School is boring. And then the graffiti starts appearing - and it's all about chickens. Who is writing it all? Suddenly, boring seems to be very interesting indeed.

Strong, Jeremy **My brothers famous bottom**

96 pages, 8-12 years

Now that the twins have been born, the family needs to earn more money. Dad starts to grow his own vegetables and keep a goat for milking - with disastrous results! Then the twins audition for a nappy advert. They cause chaos.

Strong, Jeremy **Weird**

224 pages, 8-13

Josh thinks Fizz is dentally challenged and fluent in gibberish. Fizz thinks Josh is the Prince of Handsomeness.

They're destined to work together at Marigolds Old People's Home - can Cupid's arrow strike among the Zimmer frames?

Voake, Steve **Dreamwalker's Child**

192 pages, 9-14 years

Sam Palmer hates living in the countryside - he has no friends and life is dull. Until a bizarre bicycle crash leaves his body in a coma. Now he has far bigger problems. Sam wakes in Aurobon, a world similar to his own, and discovers that his accident was part of an elaborate abduction.

Voake, Steve **Blood Hunters**

256 pages, 9-14 years

They know where you are... In the middle of the Mexican jungle a small scientific team prepare to embark on an exploration of the world's deepest sinkhole; a naturally-formed underwater shaft that no one has ever reached the bottom of. What they are about to discover could change the world forever.

Walden, Mark **H.I.V.E Higher Institute of Villainous Education**

Series: H.I.V.E, book 1. 304 pages, 9-12 years

H.I.V.E. (Higher Institute of Villainous Education) is a top-secret school of villainy, where children with a precocious talent for wrongdoing are sent to develop their talents into criminal mastermind. After all, 'villains have the best lines and wear the best costumes'.

Walliams, David **The boy in the dress**

288 pages, 6-12 years

Touching, funny and full of insight, this tender story tells how Dennis decides that everyone does not have to be the same. Bravely, he decides to do something completely different. Taking a risk he reinvents himself and begins to see the world in a whole new way. Quentin Blake's illustrations capture the exhilarating liberation that Dennis feels.

