

Happy Holidays!

Finished the Christmas shopping yet?

How about buying a book as a gift?



A book makes a fantastic present at Christmas time. The gift of a healthy reading routine is also invaluable. Here at Bushey Meads we continue to foster a love of reading across the school from year 7 students, teachers and right up to support staff. Strong reading skills will carry students through all their studies in school, and reach far beyond that.

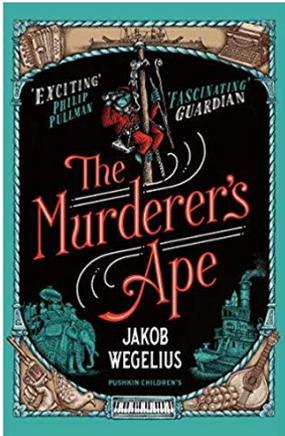
Every year the *English and Media Centre* publish a great holiday reading suggestion list. We are sharing some of the edited highlights of that, along with a few more added for good measure—all organised in age groups. The KS5/adult readers are also good treat options for us parents!

You can also get recommendations and guidance about suitable books for specific ages here: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/bookfinder/>

KS3&4

The Murderer's Ape

By Jakob Wegelius

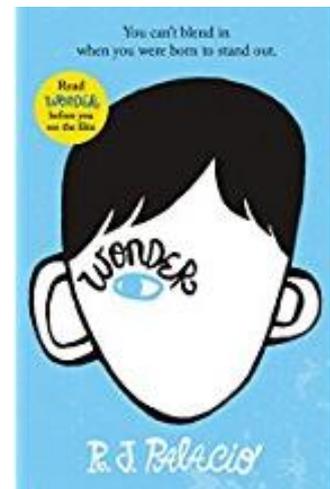


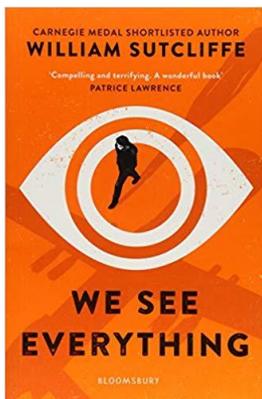
Sally Jones is on the run and trying to clear the name of her dear friend the Chief. She's a great protagonist: kind-hearted, adventurous, resourceful, loyal and brave. Oh, and she's an ape. Particularly good for year 7 needing to build some reading stamina as it is long but never lags. There is a prequel: *The Legend of Sally Jones*.

Wonder

by R.J. Palacio

It is a book about celebrating differences and how it is okay to be different. A children's book, but a must read for all!





We See Everything

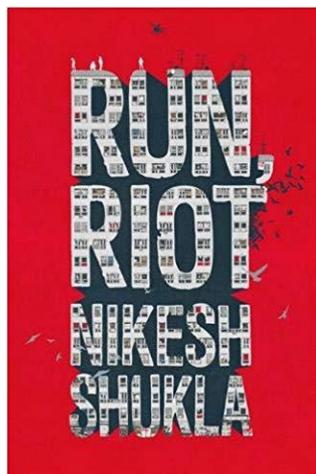
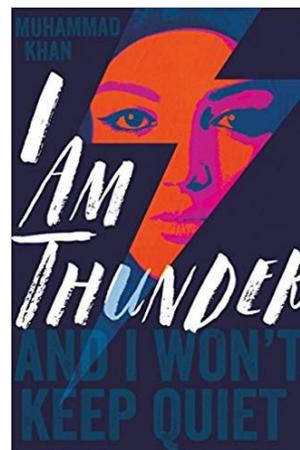
By William Sutcliffe

Dystopian thriller in which London is a bombed out shell of a city in which survivors are trapped and under constant surveillance. Gripping read, switching between two narratives, and working towards a stunning conclusion.

I Am Thunder

By Mohammed Khan

Debut novel by an East London teacher inspired by real-life events that saw three British schoolgirls travel to Syria to join so-called Islamic State.



Run Riot

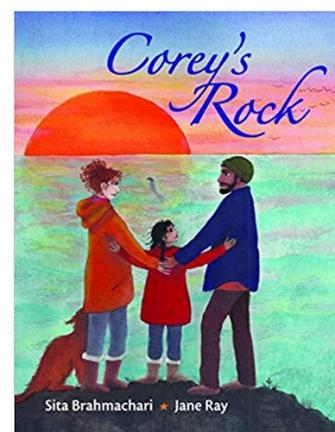
By Nikesh Shukla

The coming of age novel meets gentrification. Caught up in a tragedy, the lead protagonists go on the run, in a story that offers an interesting take on young lives, identity and place.

Corey's Rock

By Sita Brahmachari

A very short book for younger readers, but the story of a family coping with the loss of a young child is so powerful and moving that it deserves to be read by everyone.



The Sun is Also a Star

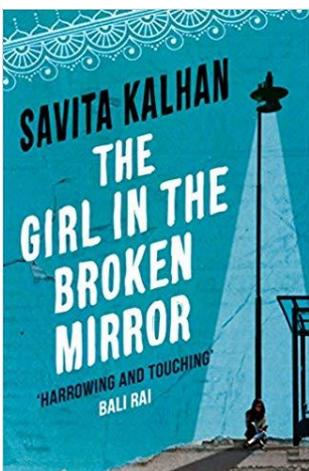
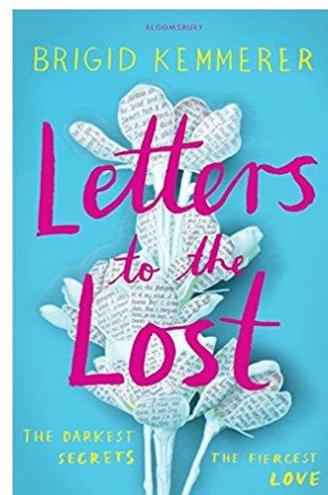
By Nicola Yoon

A great novel to get readers stuck in the romance genre to be more adventurous. Under the guise of a simple 'opposites attract' story and the hackneyed 'fated to be together' premise, this novel manages to explore racism, immigration and parental expectation. Her previous novel, *Everything Everything*, is also very readable for KS4 (or older KS3) romance fans.

Letters to the Lost

By Brigid Kemmerer

When Juliet's mother dies, leaving letters at the graveside helps her to deal with her grief and loss. Troubled teen Declan, doing community service in the graveyard, begins to write back. This is a delicately handled modern epistolary novel with unexpected twists and a satisfying ending.



The Girl in the Broken Mirror

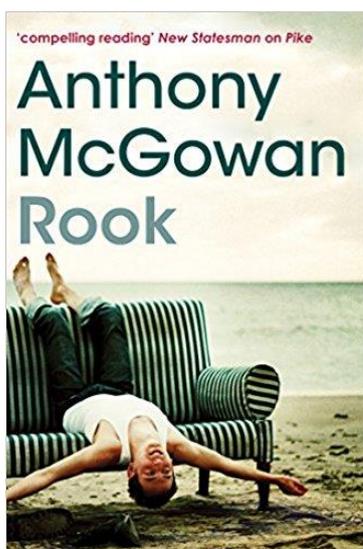
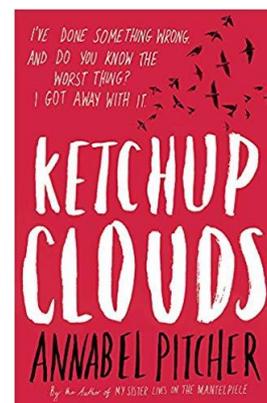
By Savita Kalhan

Hard-hitting coming-of-age novel confronting a clash of cultures.

Ketchup Clouds

By Annabel Pitcher

15-year old Zoe's letters to a man on death row in Texas are away for her to share her own guilty secrets. The story is by turns gripping, funny, sweet and dark. Pitcher's other young adult (YA) novels, *My Sister Lives on the Mantlepiece* and *Silence is Goldfish*, are also very good.



Rook

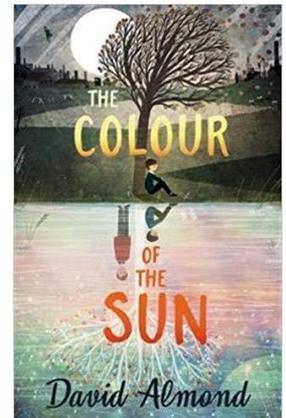
By Anthony McGowan

Published by the always excellent **Barrington Stoke** who produce **'super-readable books' for dyslexic or struggling readers**, this book has a reading age of 8 but a YA interest age. A gripping tale of two brothers and a rescued rook, this is no less compelling for being simply written. Others in the same series are also excellent: *Brock* and *Pike*, with *Lark* coming in January 2019. McGowan's other young adult titles (not dyslexia friendly) also make for gripping reading: *The Knife that Killed Me* (dealing with gangs and knife crime) and *Henry Tumour* (about a boy's relationship with his brain tumour).

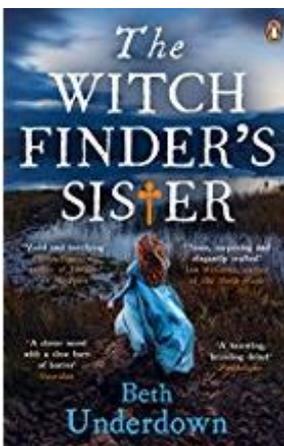
The Colour of the Sun

By David Almond

An absolute gem from Almond that blends the real and the imaginary as a young boy deals with the moral complexities that come with possessing knowledge unknown to others.



KS5 and Adults



The Witchfinder's Sister

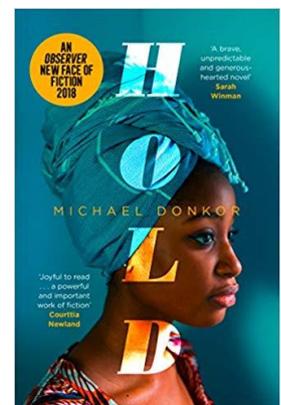
By Beth Underdown

A novel about the sister of the most famous persecutor of witches in 17th century England, Matthew Hopkins, who returns to him looking for help...but he has changed since they were children. This is a book where the world of reality meets imagination. A book with many depths.

Hold

By Michael Donkor

A debut novel by a still practising English teacher is always a cause for celebration. This gripping coming-of-age novel moves between London and Ghana, with plenty of secrets and revelations coming to light along the way.



Convenience Store Woman

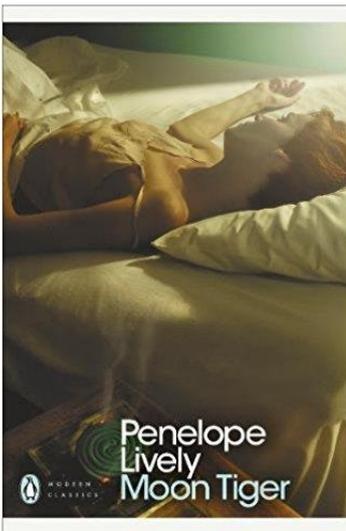
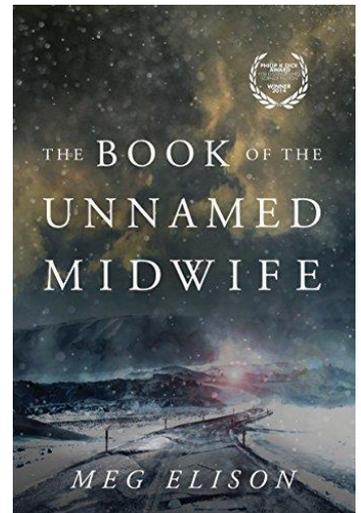
By Sayaka Murata

Having never fitted in, Keiko finds her place working in a Japanese convenience store. The simple, unadorned style and flat narrative voice are what make this short novel both absorbing and more than a little disturbing.

The Book of the Unnamed Midwife

By Meg Elison

This starts with a fairly standard dystopian plot device – the sudden extinction of most of the human race and virtually all female life on the planet. The unnamed narrator wakes up having survived the deadly flu epidemic and sets out to make sense of what has happened. Elison is excellent on the language and behaviour of men and women and how the outward signifiers of traditional femininity have to be hidden in this new world. There's more to come in the follow-up: *The Book of Etta*.



Moon Tiger

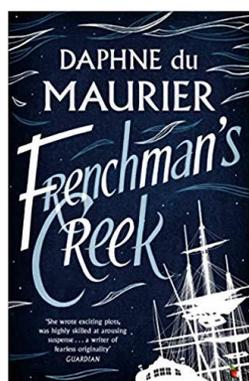
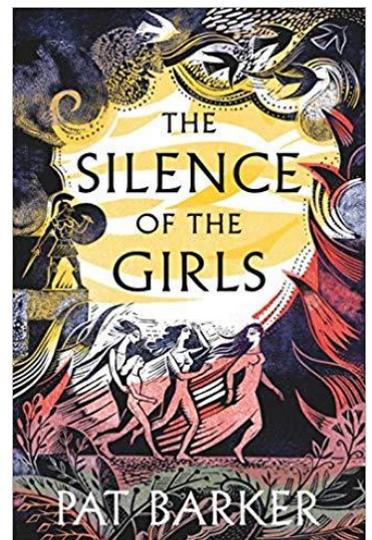
By Penelope Lively

A dying woman, Claudia Hampton, looks over her life and in particular her time as a journalist in Egypt during the Second World War. Not only is her complex, tragic, personal history gradually revealed to the reader, but her reflections as a popular historian make us consider the nature of history and historical records. Wonderful evocation of Egypt, and the extraordinary, unflinching portrayal of the relationship between Claudia, her brother and sister-in-law!

The Silence of the Girls

By Pat Barker

The story of the Trojan Wars, re-told from the point of view of captured Queen Briseis, given as a 'prize' to Achilles. The voice of Briseis is entirely believable and the novel wears its historical research lightly. This is a thoroughly compelling read.



Frenchman's Creek

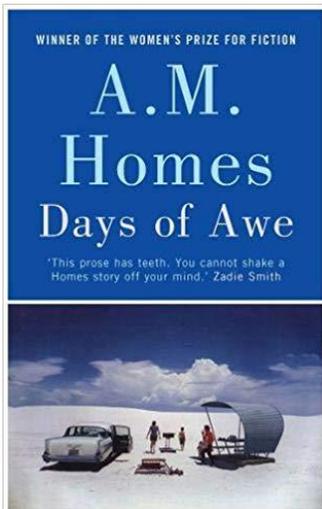
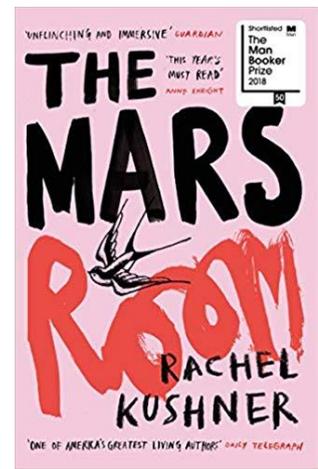
By Daphne du Maurier

DuMaurier's pirate adventure was a thrill from start to finish. Dona is in her twenties - a vivacious London society girl saddled with two kids and an idiot toff of a husband. She flees to Cornwall where she becomes a cross-dressing pirate and falls in love with the educated and cultured gentleman pirate, Jean-Benoit Aubéry.

The Mars Room

By Rachel Kushner

Beautifully crafted, linguistically rich and morally compelling novel centred around a woman serving two life sentences for murder in a US prison.



Days of Awe

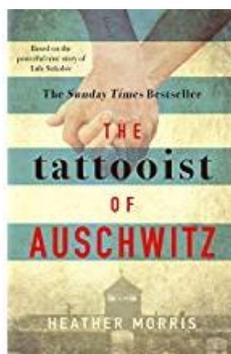
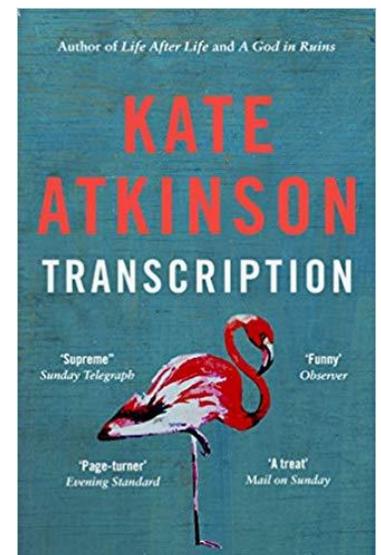
By AM Holmes

Brilliant short stories on the back of the highly recommend *This Book Will save Your Life* and *May We Be Forgiven*.

Transcription

By Kate Atkinson

Atkinson's characteristically playful narrative style is particularly suited to this wartime tale of espionage and counter-espionage. If you haven't read any Kate Atkinson before, also go for 'When will there be good news?' –there are a whole series of Jackson Brodie thrillers to enjoy!



The Tattooist of Auschwitz

by Heather Morris

An incredible love story delivered against the backdrop of the atrocities of Auschwitz. A total surprise for me when I read it.

Love is Blind

By William Boyd

Both witty and moving, this love story set in the 19th century takes in Edinburgh, Paris, St Petersburg – and a whole life (a sub-genre Boyd is particularly good at).

