

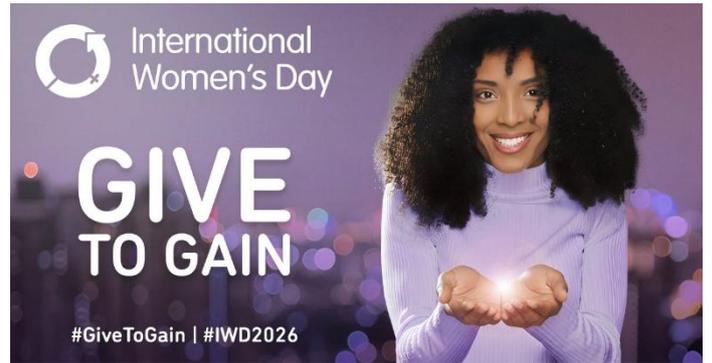


Spring term 1 2026

Leading voices

Welcome to the third issue of Inspire, our new school magazine. We are proud to bring you journalism and content on a wide range of topics that have inspired us this term.

Our theme for this issue is **Leading voices**. With **International Women's Day** just around the corner on 8th March, we've included the first of a two-part series on **pioneering women** across a range of fields, from music to sports and science. We also caught up with **Empty Banner's** frontwoman Mia S, who told us about smashing stereotypes and making waves in Hull's music scene and beyond. Plus, you'll find news on Taylor Swift and the Harry Styles/Louis Tomlinson rivalry in **music**; facts on our feathery friends in



nature; recommended **film** and **books** for the half term break and **poetry**.

If you would like to be involved in the production of the next issue, have an idea you'd like to pitch or content you'd like to submit, please get in touch. In the meantime, have a great break!

Ms Watkins, Super Curricular Lead

Contributors

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Front page photo and all Empty Banner photos taken by
Annabel Snowden, Year 11

Empty Banner take Hull by storm

Inspire caught up with frontwoman Mia Ann to find out more...



Welcome, Mia Ann! Tell us about yourself and the band.

My name is Mia Ann and I'm in Year 11 at Beverley High School. We started the band around last April/May and it has genuinely been one of the best things that has happened to all of us. It's so refreshing to be able to spend most of your time with your favourite people, doing the things you love most, which for us is music. In the

band we have **Roisin M.** from Beverley High School on drums, **Maisie F.** on guitar from Longcroft, **Cora B.** on bass from Wilberforce College and Me on vocals and rhythm Guitar!

So cool that you've all joined forces. Why Empty Banner?

The name Empty Banner came from a very random place, but we think it works. As it can symbolise the fact that we have

so much we want and need to say or do, but we can't, simply because we are girls. "Girl bands" are often put down in the music industry for being seen as weak, too loud, too girly, attention seeking...and this is exactly why we do what we do, to squash these stereotypes that were put into place by males in the music industry... and we aren't JUST a girl band.



Hell yeah! How's the gigging going?

On 6th February we played at the Polar Bear in Hull, it was one of our best gigs yet. The feedback we got from people there was amazing; the venue was pushed to its capacity!

These are some of the amazing photos that our photographer **Annabel S.** in Year 11 took.

“Girl bands” are often put down...this is exactly why we do what we do, to squash these stereotypes’

We have played many different gigs now, such as Humber Street Sesh and Let's Rock festival at Brid Spa. Also, we opened for an event at Lazaat, and a festival at the Albemarle Music Centre. And we played the Adelphi – one of my personal faves. This was a very special concert for us as it's where bands like Radiohead, Oasis, Green Day, Two Door Cinema Club, Fat Boy Slim and others have played!

‘It's so refreshing to spend time with your favourite people, doing the thing you love most’

Woah, you guys sound unstoppable. What's next?

We have recently been signed to Warren records, which was a VERY big step for us. Our first gig with the label is on the 2nd of April at the Adelphi! It's a 14+ venue but we would absolutely love to see some of you there. The gig information will be announced in March, so keep an eye on our Instagram/ around school for that!

Congratulations on the record deal! What else does 2026 hold?

This year our gig line up is huge. I can't say all of them yet, but we are very excited for the Adelphi again on the 2nd of April. We are also playing Humber Street Sesh again, but the date for that is yet to be confirmed!

So great that you're playing these iconic gig venues!

Obviously, none of this would have been possible without the organisation who gets us gigs/ supported us from the very start, and that is **ERock**. More specifically Ben and Callum: thank you. We wouldn't be doing this without you guys!

What advice would you give someone who wants to play more?

If you are interested in starting or joining a band, please do consider ERock to help you. It's at the Hexagon in Beverley every other Thursday, and it's run by the East Riding Music Service. The music industry also needs more women, so if you're thinking about it... just do it!



Great advice! Any final words for our readers?

Thank you for reading this, and please keep an eye out for our gigs! It'd be amazing to see some of you at them.

Have a nice half term,

Mia Ann + The band x

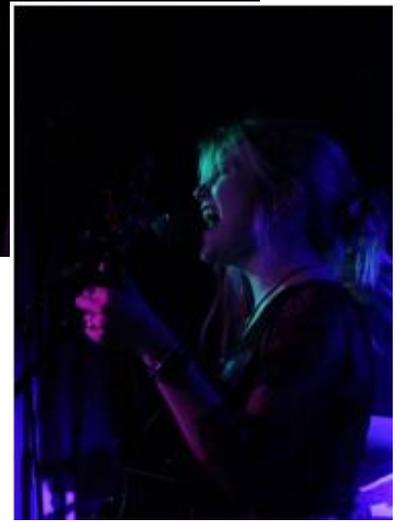
'The music industry also needs more women, so if you're thinking about it...just do it!'



[empty.banner.band](https://www.instagram.com/empty.banner.band)



[empty.banner](https://www.tiktok.com/@empty.banner)



Empty Banner (photo credits: Annabel S)



Empty Banner (photo credits: Annabel S)



lazaat
restaurant bar hotel

HUMBER STREET **Sesh**



Empty Banner (photo credits: Annabel S)





Beyoncé Knowles-Carter

Queen B is music royalty

Iris R., Year 7

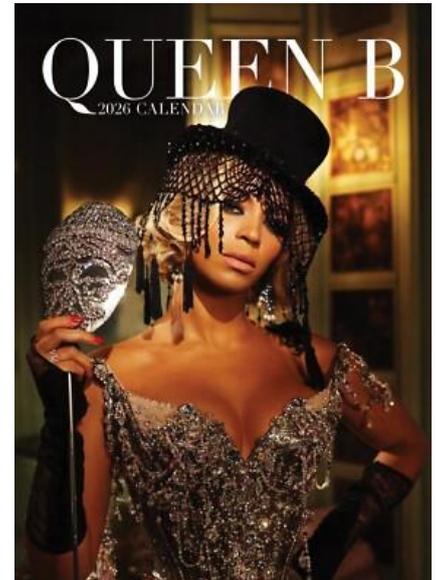
Beyoncé inspires me for many different reasons, whether it be her resilience, independence or even self-love. With 32 Grammy wins she has set new standards in music, making her such a great and well-loved artist.

Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter (or Beyonce for short) was born in Houston, Texas on 4th September 1981. She is most known for her singing career, but is also an actress, voice actress and an advocate for Black women's culture. When she originally became popular and rose to fame she was in an R&B group called Destiny's Child. When the group

split up, she decided to carry on as a solo artist. Her debut album *Dangerously in Love* was a huge success and not long after she became a musical top selling artist with sold out tours worldwide.

Although Beyoncé has had many highs, of course as any person does she has also had her fair share of lows as well. She had to overcome many obstacles, such as being dropped by a record label, dealing with intense, often racist criticism and struggling with depression as well.

Looking back at this time of her life she said, 'We're all going through our problems, but we all have the same



insecurities and the same abilities, and we all need each other'.

Despite her struggles, Beyoncé married hip-hop artist Jay-Z and now has three beautiful children, Blue Ivy, Rumi and Sir.

Now in 2026, Beyoncé's and Jay-Z's net worth is estimated to be around one billion US dollars each.

This shows me and many others that no matter what you've been through, it will and can always get better, even if it doesn't always feel like it.



Jocelyn Bell Burnell

Pioneering astrophysicist who also helped widen access to careers in physics

Ruth P., Year 11

Jocelyn Bell Burnell was born on the 15th of July 1943, in Northern Ireland. She is an astrophysicist (and also a Quaker) who discovered pulsars in 1967. Pulsars are a type of neutron star that rotates so radio telescopes can detect a series of regular pulses coming from them. She attended school at a time when girls weren't expected to study technical subjects and was only able to study science after people challenged the school's policies.

Then, she went to study at Cambridge which, in those days, didn't have many women studying there. There, she spent three months

checking for the signal from the pulsar while also helping with the construction of a radio telescope. Although she was one of the people to discover pulsars, her supervisor got a Nobel Prize and not her.

However, in 2018, she won the Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics and decided to donate the 2.3 million pounds she won to help under-represented groups become physicists. She went on to work at many universities around the UK, and she was the President of the Royal Astronomical Society from 2002 to 2004. She led the Institute of Physics from 2008 to 2010 and she was the



Chancellor of the University of Dundee from 2018 to 2023.

Although she did not get the Nobel Prize, she got many other awards and honours including a species of sea slug, *Cadlina bellburnellae*, named in her honour. Also, she featured on a £50 Irish banknote which was issued on June 15th, 2022.



Amy Johnson

Hull's iconic aviator

Keira B., Year 7



Amy Johnson inspires me because she was the first ever woman to fly solo from England to Australia. The challenges she had to face were hard but she pushed through them. Some of these challenges were: only flying with a map, a compass and a ruler; flying 11,000 miles; surviving plane crashes; overcoming engine failure and even monsoon sandstorms – often in an open cockpit.

Even though she got a lot of hate for trying to fly a plane, she ignored it and carried on doing what she loved.

Amy Johnson grew up in Kingston Upon Hull, East Yorkshire. Born on 1st July 1903,

she studied Economics, Latin and French at the University of Sheffield before moving to London to work as a secretary, where she learned to fly at the London Aeroplane Club.

She became a record setting pilot – in 1932 she set a record for the fastest flight from London to Cape Town, South Africa. She was also the first woman to qualify as a ground engineer. She flew her de Hallivand Gipsy Moth named Jason to Australia in 19 days, a 11,000 mile journey. Did you know her first plane Jason was named after the trademark of her father's fish business in Hull?

She battled dangerous weather and

mechanical failures; she even famously repaired her plane in desert conditions. She flew without a radio GPS or reliable weather reports. She relied on a basic map, a compass and her own instincts.

Finally, Amy Johnson joined the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) transporting RAF aircraft between airfields. On 5th January 1941, she went off course in poor weather and she had to bail out into the Thames Estuary...never to be found.

She was a massive celebrity celebrated for her bravery. A statue in her honour was placed in Hull and she is remembered as one of the most important women of the 20th century.

Simone Biles

Raising the bar for international gymnastics

Emily G., Year 7

In my opinion there is no one more inspirational than Simone Biles. She is the most decorated gymnast EVER (male or female), with over 40 Olympic and World Championship medals. She is known for her powerful routines, new skills (some named after her) and advocating for mental health. She has overcome mental health problems and childhood adoption still to become a global icon in women's artistic gymnastics.

Simone Biles first fell in love with gymnastics at age 6 on a field trip! She continued with gymnastics and even learned how to do a backflip off her post box.

Biles overcame many



obstacles such as the 'twisties' (a mental block gymnasts can get), anxiety, depression and even being diagnosed with ADHD. Despite her struggles, I believe her greatest achievement was being the first woman to ever perform a Yurchenko double pike, often referred to as the 'Biles II' after her!

Some of Simone's achievements are: jumping 12 feet into the air, being ranked Number 1 in the whole world, and holding 30 Gold medals (23 in the World Championships, 7 in the Olympics).

Biles is tiny standing at 4 feet and 8 inches (1.4m): smaller than me!

Her story is important to me because she was the first Black all-round champion and she has NEVER given up.

Biles was born in 1997, making her 28.

That is why I think Simone Biles is the most inspirational woman. What do you think?



Discover: waterfowl

Do you know your mandarin ducks from your horned screamers?

Ruth P., Year 11



Waterfowl can be very interesting so here's some facts you might not know about them.

The mandarin duck is often considered the world's most beautiful duck, with male ones having especially vibrant plumage. They are native to East Asia, however they are seen rarely in Europe because they were introduced there in the mid 18th century and became wild around the 1930s.

The hooded merganser is a species of duck which eats fish. They do this with a toothed beak which is unusual since most ducks have broad, flat bills for eating aquatic plants.

There is a type of waterfowl known as the horned screamer which weighs around 3.5 kilograms and is roughly the size of a turkey. They are known for the horn at the top of their head. This horn, however, is used for display rather than fighting. For fighting, it uses sharpened spurs of bone located on its wings. Inside their bones and skin are many tiny air sacs, helping to reduce their weight and the sacs sometimes make a crackling noise as the horned screamer takes off. They are also known for their loud 'screaming' sounds which sound a bit like a goose.

On the 17th of January each year since 2024, it is world waterfowl day. Its aim is to increase public awareness of waterfowl and their habitat. It celebrates Mike Lubbock who

dedicated his career to bird conservation and has helped many endangered waterfowl species. Lubbock was born on the 17th of January, 1944 and died on the 7th of September, 2024.

Did you know that although penguins are very good at swimming, they are not waterfowl? This is because waterfowl are defined as belonging to the order Anseriformes (waterfowl) rather than just living in or near the water.

Other birds that go in the water but aren't considered waterfowl include flamingos and ibises which are considered as wading birds instead whilst penguins are seabirds.



Taylor Swift reaches new heights

The showgirl must go on!

Lottie B., Year 7

Taylor Swift is a singer and songwriter from West Reading, Pennsylvania. With 12 phenomenal albums with 137 awards, she has just been announced the youngest female artist ever to be included in the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

On 22nd January, Taylor Swift's social media team put online an 'Opalite' CD, one of the singles on her 12-track album *The Life of a Showgirl*, which is making Swifties think there is going to be a 'Opalite' music video.

When *The Life of a Showgirl* came out it earned the biggest first week in music history by moving 4 million units in the U.S and 5.5 million units globally. It stayed at No. 1 on the album charts for 12 weeks. It had over 1.5 billion global streams in the first week of being out. Since it has come out, it is clear that the most popular song is 'The Fate of Ophelia' because



of its remarkable lyrics and amazing tune.

On May 30th 2025, she bought back her first six albums with the money she got with the Era tour. They were sold without her permission back in 2019 and since that happened, she has been re-recording those albums (*Fearless*, *Speak Now*, *Red* and *1989*). She paid \$360 million to get them back and was successful.

Did you know Taylor Swift's cat Olivia Benson is allegedly worth \$97 million?



Reviews: Harry Styles vs Louis Tomlinson

Former bandmates drop their single and album on the **SAME DAY**

Daisy C., Year 8

Recently, Harry Styles released 'Aperture' and it is introducing a new genre to Harry Styles. This new song is very like house music, and disco vibes. I believe it is one of the best songs the artist has released in his career. It has very catchy lyrics with the chorus including, 'We belong together', which he included in many of his advertisements before he had announced his new album, *Kiss All The Time, Disco Occasionally*. This new album is going to bring a lot of hype to Harry. Also, 'Aperture' was released on the same day as the new album of Louis Tomlinson, another former band member of One Direction!



Louis Tomlinson had announced, *How Did I Get Here?* in mid-September, and released the full album on January 23rd, same as Harry Styles. His new album had three singles released prior to the main drop, 'Lemonade', coming first and soon followed by 'Palaces' and 'Imposter'.

Louis' album has his usual genre, but all his songs are very unique and are very good. One of the songs is based on the death of his ex-band mate, Liam Payne. Personally, it made me cry, along with the fact I was one of the few people who got to who got to listen to the pre-release.



Review: *Uptown Girls*

Molly and Ray learn how to act their ages in this heartwarming comedy

Georgia S., Year 10

Uptown Girls, a 2003 comedy film, follows the story of Molly Gunn living like a princess in her New York apartment. Molly's life almost resembles a fairy tale; she lives a naive, upbeat life, funded by a trust fund from her departed rock-star father. Her prosperity comes to a close when she finds out that her accountant has stolen her inheritance, leaving her homeless. In consequence, Molly finds herself babysitting for Ray, whose personality greatly differs from Molly's.

Despite the film having similar traits to a romcom, the film focuses more on the bond between Molly and Ray. I love that these characters have been developed to contrast each other so perfectly: while Molly is more child-like and whimsical, Ray is

sophisticated and mature. Regardless of their differences, the girls learn valuable life lessons from each other - Molly teaches Ray how to have fun, whereas Ray teaches Molly responsibility.

I found the ending of the film amazing. The final scenes highlight the influence that the girls have had on each other. Molly finally decides to organise her chaotic life: she auctions off her father's guitars and buys her own apartment, showing us her increasing wisdom. Meanwhile, Ray is last seen dancing freestyle to 'Molly Smiles' (a song written by Molly's father when she was a child). We can see how Molly's recklessness has altered



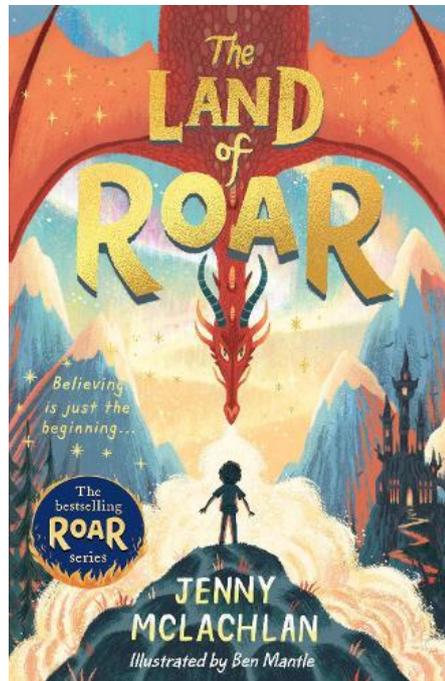
Ray's coordinated way of life. At the start of the film, when Ray finds out that her ballet class has been given time to freestyle dance, she leaves early as freestyle is for "little kids".

Overall, *Uptown Girls* is definitely worth watching because of its amazing character development and heartfelt storyline.

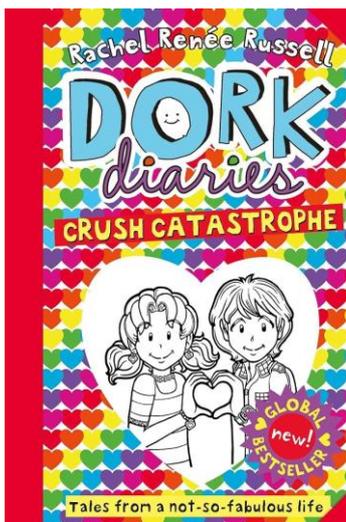
From fantasy adventures to high school dramas, our book reviewers have you covered!



Lucy G., Year 8



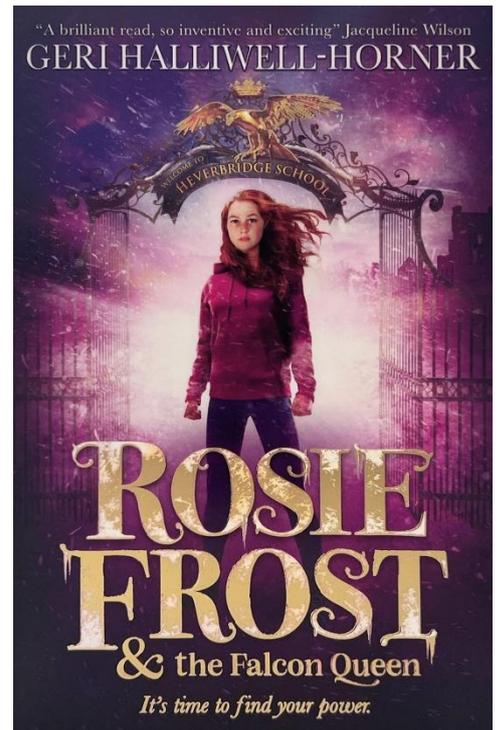
The Land of Roar series by Jenny McLachlan (there's four books altogether). Twins, Rose and Arthur Trout, used to play a game they called "roar". But ever since they turned eleven, Rose has gotten into make-up and got addicted to her phone. Their Grandad then gets mysteriously taken when he goes into the entrance to their made-up game; Arthur then realizes that their game is real...



Scarlett S.,
Year 7

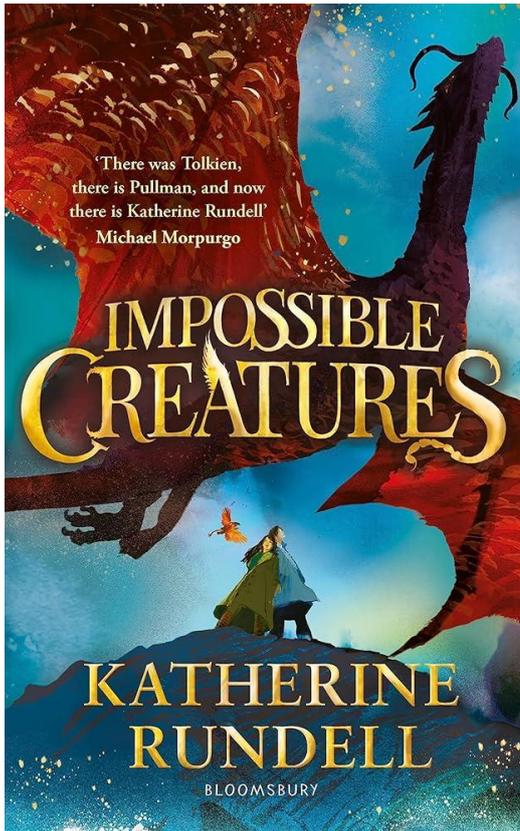
I would definitely recommend the *Dork Diaries* series by Rachel Renée Russell, because it relates to teenage girls in high school involving crushes, bullies and besties who have been through everything together. It also makes you want to read more and with the way it's set out, it is so easy to get dragged in! It will leave you wanting to read more every time.

It is a very large series of books but my favourite is 'Crush Catastrophe'. I love it. I think it is such a good series for teenagers as it is so relatable. It is also such an easy book to read with all the pictures and the layouts of the text.



The *Rosie Frost* series (there are two books of the series so far, but the author is planning to write more). The author is one of the *Spice Girls* singers, Geri Halliwell-Horner and it's a very good book series. It's about murder, mystery and lots more! It's a very gripping book with tension and excitement, plot twists and friendship drama. It's even based on History, even though it might not be really true.

Books – KS3 recommendations



One of my favourite books is 'Impossible Creatures' by Katherine Rundell. I absolutely love this book because of the mix of fantasy, magic, adventures, and mystery that it involves. This book took me on an emotional roller-coaster the whole way through.

My favourite character is Mal, a girl from the archipelago. She owns a magical coat that allows her to fly and explore the world that she uses many times during the series.

This book is all about Mal, Christopher and a baby griffin (called Gelifen) who form an unlikely team to save the glimourie (magic) from fading. If the glimourie fades, then many of the magical creatures may die.

I absolutely adore this book and hope that many others enjoy reading it too. It truly is a great book.



Charlotte G.,
Year 8

Other recommendations from Charlotte:

The Land of Stories series by Chris Colfer, about a different world where all the stories come alive, but aren't always as expected.

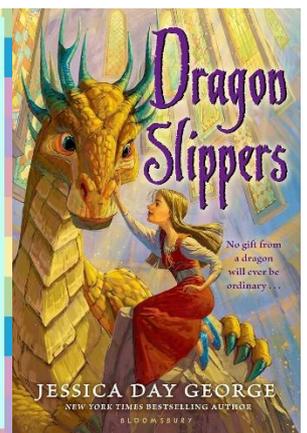
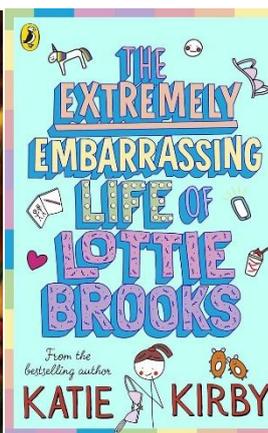
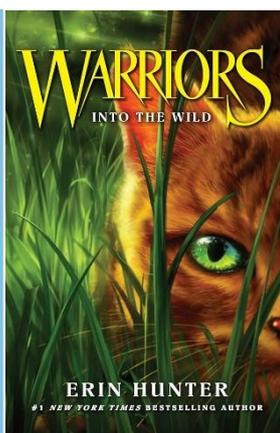
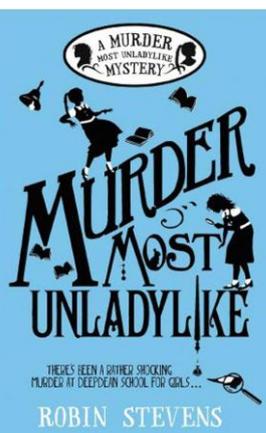
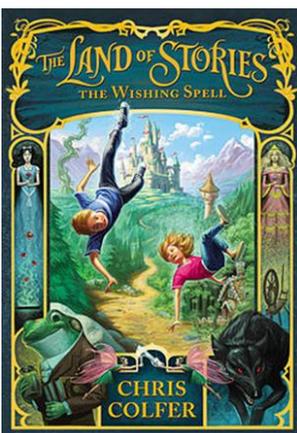
Murder Most Unladylike series by Robin Stevens, about two girls from a boarding school who keep on stumbling across murder.

Other recommendations from Lucy:

The **Warrior Cats** series by Erin Hunter, about cats who live and survive in the wild. There is also a dog version called **Survivors** by the same author.

The **Lottie Brooks** series by Katie Kirby, a comedy series which will make you laugh. It is like a diary and tragic things happen in her life. It's a bit like a comic but drawn with stick men.

The **Dragon Slippers** series is three books altogether: 'Dragon Slippers', 'Dragon Flight', and 'Dragon Spear'.



Oak

over the rooftops,
over the sky,
over the thing that hangs so high,

300 years to grow,
300 years to live,
300 years to die,
900 years alive,

above the bushes,
the benches,
the bikes,
above the trunks,
the trees,
the paths,

300 years to grow,
300 years to live,
300 years to die,
900 years alive,

keep on watching,
watching,
watching,
keep on waiting,
waiting,
waiting,
for things to grow,
for things to live,
for things to die,
keep on watching and waiting
the old oak does,
from start to finish,
from acorn to oak,
they keep on growing,
keep on living,
keep on dying,
keep
on
surviving.

Alice Jorna, Year 7

