

Recommended Reads

RECEPTION • AGES 4–5

A menu of possibilities

At this age, sharing books matters more than finishing a list. Re-read favourites, talk about pictures, join in with repeated phrases and let children see adults enjoying books. Children can listen to stories far beyond the level they can yet read for themselves. These suggestions are not a reading test or a list to finish, and there is no need to buy the books.

Stories to get lost in

The Gruffalo — Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler

Rhythm, rhyme and a clever little mouse make this a wonderful book to join in with.

Handa's Surprise — Eileen Browne

A warm, beautifully illustrated story of friendship, fruit and a surprising journey.

Owl Babies — Martin Waddell & Patrick Benson

A reassuring story about separation, waiting and a parent's return.

The Tiger Who Came to Tea — Judith Kerr

A playful classic in which an unexpected visitor eats everything in sight.

Julian Is a Mermaid — Jessica Love

A vibrant picture book about imagination, self-expression and loving acceptance.

Look Up! — Nathan Bryon & Dapo Adeola

An energetic story about space, family and remembering to look beyond a screen.

We're Going on a Bear Hunt — Michael Rosen & Helen Oxenbury

A much-loved journey with repeated language, movement and memorable sounds.

The Colour Monster — Anna Llenas

A gentle way to talk about feelings and the colours we may connect with them.

So Much — Trish Cooke & Helen Oxenbury

A joyful celebration of family, affection and a new baby.

Mr Gumpy's Outing — John Burningham

A cumulative story with animals, a boat and plenty of opportunities to predict.

The Lion Inside — Rachel Bright & Jim Field

A rhyming story about courage, confidence and discovering that size is not everything.

The Leaf Thief — Alice Hemming & Nicola Slater

A funny seasonal mystery that introduces change in the natural world.

Family tip: Visit the library, read a first page together and let your child decide what they would like to try.



More ways into reading

Pictures, facts, poetry, audio and shorter texts all help children build knowledge, language and a positive reading identity.

Graphic novels & visual storytelling

You Choose — Pippa Goodhart & Nick Sharratt

Busy pictures invite children to choose, explain and tell their own stories.

The Storm Whale — Benji Davies

A tender visual story about loneliness, care and family connection.

The Snowman — Raymond Briggs

A wordless winter adventure that children can narrate in their own way.

The Suitcase — Chris Naylor-Ballesteros

A simple, thoughtful story about welcome, difference and kindness.

Poetry & verse

A Great Big Cuddle — Michael Rosen & Chris Riddell

Playful poems written especially for sharing aloud with young children.

Rumble in the Jungle — Giles Andreae & David Wojtowycz

Rhyming animal poems with bold pictures and an enjoyable beat.

Zim Zam Zoom! — James Carter & Nicola Colton

Short, lively poems full of rhythm, sound and opportunities to perform.

Oi Frog! — Kes Gray & Jim Field

A very funny rhyming picture book that encourages children to hear patterns in words.

Fascinating non-fiction

A First Book of Animals — Nicola Davies & Petr Horáček

Poetic facts and striking artwork introduce animals from around the world.

All About Families — Felicity Brooks & Mar Ferrero

A welcoming introduction to the many ways families can look and live.

The Big Book of Bugs — Yuval Zommer

Detailed pictures and accessible facts reward curious young explorers.

First Big Book of Why — Sally Symes & Stephanie Drimmer

Child-friendly answers to the questions young children love to ask.

Shorter and super-readable

Dear Zoo — Rod Campbell

Lift-the-flap surprises and repeated language make this ideal for joining in.

Shark in the Park! — Nick Sharratt

Bold pictures, rhyme and repetition create a lively shared read.

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? — Bill Martin Jr & Eric Carle

Predictable language, animals and colours support confident participation.

Where's Spot? — Eric Hill

A simple hide-and-seek story with flaps, prediction and a satisfying ending.

More ideas online

[The Reader Teacher – Reception](#) • a longer, regularly updated list

[BookTrust – Great Books Guide](#) • recommendations grouped by age

HELP YOUR CHILD CHOOSE

- Browse together
- Try audio or read aloud
- Talk about the book
- Stop if it is not working

External websites are offered for further ideas. Great Leighs Primary School is not responsible for their commercial links or changing content.