Recommended Reads

YEAR 1 • AGES 5–6

A menu of possibilities

Keep reading aloud every day, even as children begin to decode books independently. Familiar stories, rhyme and repeated language build confidence; picture books also develop vocabulary, comprehension and imagination. 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 Smeds and the Smoos — Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler
A funny rhyming adventure about two families learning to accept one another.

The Proudest Blue — Ibtihaj Muhammad, S. K. Ali & Hatem Aly
A thoughtful picture book about family, identity and standing proud.

The Hodgeheg — Dick King-Smith
A short, funny animal adventure about solving a dangerous problem.

The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch — Ronda & David Armitage
A seaside classic with a clever plan and some very persistent seagulls.

Ruby's Worry — Tom Percival
A sensitive way to explore worries and why sharing them can help.

The Bear and the Piano — David Litchfield
A beautiful story about talent, ambition, friendship and home.

The Koala Who Could — Rachel Bright & Jim Field
A reassuring story about change, bravery and trying something new.

The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark — Jill Tomlinson
A gentle chapter story about facing fears and seeing darkness differently.

Amazing Grace — Mary Hoffman & Caroline Binch
An inspiring story about imagination and refusing to let stereotypes limit you.

Beegu — Alexis Deacon
A moving story about an alien child searching for welcome and belonging.

Traction Man Is Here — Mini Grey
Everyday objects become the setting for a brilliantly imaginative hero adventure.

Anna Hibiscus' Song — Atinuke & Lauren Tobia
A joyful celebration of family and happiness set in contemporary Africa.

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

Mr Wuffles! — David Wiesner
A nearly wordless, highly detailed space adventure starring a cat and tiny aliens.

Tuesday — David Wiesner
Surreal pictures of flying frogs invite observation, inference and storytelling.

The Adventures of Egg Box Dragon — Richard Adams & Alex T. Smith
A playful illustrated tale about an unusual handmade dragon.

Narwhal: Unicorn of the Sea — Ben Clanton
A cheerful first graphic novel about friendship, imagination and waffles.

Poetry & verse

Chocolate Cake — Michael Rosen & Kevin Waldron
A deliciously funny poem-story made for reading and performing aloud.

A First Book of the Sea — Nicola Davies & Emily Sutton
Gentle poems and information celebrate life in and around the sea.

Out and About — Shirley Hughes
Seasonal poems about the small wonders children notice outdoors.

Perfectly Peculiar Pets — Elli Woollard & Anja Boretzki
Funny, energetic poems featuring a wonderfully strange collection of animals.

Fascinating non-fiction

Look Inside Your Body — Louie Stowell & Kate Leake
Flaps and clear explanations introduce the workings of the human body.

Fantastically Great Women Who Changed the World — Kate Pankhurst
Lively illustrated introductions to women whose ideas and actions made history.

Usborne Beginners: Weather — Catriona Clarke
Short sections and photographs explain everyday weather clearly.

A Seed Is Sleepy — Dianna Hutts Aston & Sylvia Long
Beautiful illustrations reveal the variety and life cycle of seeds.

Shorter and super-readable

Rabbit & Bear: Rabbit's Bad Habits — Julian Gough & Jim Field
A funny illustrated chapter book with friendship and woodland facts.

Claude in the City — Alex T. Smith
A stylish, humorous first chapter book about a small dog's big day out.

Little Gems: Too Small Tola — Atinuke & Onyinye Iwu
Warm, accessible stories about a determined girl and her lively family.

Mango & Bambang: The Not-a-Pig — Polly Faber & Clara Vulliamy
Short, beautifully illustrated stories about an unlikely friendship.

More ideas online

The Reader Teacher – Year 1 • 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.