

## YEAR 8 SUGGESTED READING LIST 2024/25

### **The Lighthouse** by Alex Bell

On Bird Rock, gannet's circle and thick mist surrounds the lighthouse at its centre, hiding the secrets of a tragic past within. From the second they set foot on the island to join their dad and his new family, Jess and Rosie feel that something's wrong. Nightmares haunt their dreams and there seems to be someone, or something, else with them in the lighthouse - their home for the summer. Counting down the days until they can leave, Jess and Rosie decide to investigate. But when Rosie disappears, the countdown takes on a new meaning. Especially when no one but Jess remembers Rosie at all.

### **Noughts and crosses** by Malorie Blackman

Set in a segregated society where light-skinned noughts are suppressed by the ruling black Crosses. When Sephy, the Cross daughter of a government official, falls in love with her nought housekeeper's son, Callum, the power of love and optimism of youth are put to the ultimate test. Racism is at the heart of this searing alternative history. However, themes of terrorism, class, politics and relationships are also addressed.

### **Jurassic Park** by Michael Crichton

On a remote jungle island, genetic engineers have created a dinosaur game park. Now one of mankind's most thrilling fantasies has come true. Creatures that have been extinct for millions of years roam Jurassic Park, and all the world can visit them - for a price. But when a catastrophe destroys the park's defence system, what was once a scientific dream becomes a living nightmare. . . And scientists and tourists alike are left fighting for their lives.

### **Bang bang you're dead** by Narinder Dhami

When a mysterious gunman takes a class hostage, the rest of Mia's school is evacuated. But Mia is determined to stay behind. She knows it's a life or death situation but there's something she fears more than dying. Mia thinks she might know who the gunman is, and, if she's right, she may be the only one who can save her schoolmates.

### **The Boy who Steals Houses** by C.G. Drews

Sam is only fifteen but he and his autistic older brother, Avery, have been abandoned by every relative he's ever known. Now Sam's trying to build a new life for them. He survives by breaking into empty houses when their owners are away, until one day he's caught out when a family returns home. To his amazement this large, chaotic family takes him under their wing - each teenager assuming Sam is a friend of another sibling. Sam finds himself inextricably caught up in their life, and falling for the beautiful Moxie. But Sam has a secret, and his past is about to catch up with him.

### **Seven Million Sunflowers** by Malcolm Duffy

Escaping war is only half the battle as the Kovalenko family swap Ukrainian dangers for life with a British family. 15-year-old Kateryno and her family live in Kharkiv. Their lives are shattered when on February 24th 2022 the Russian army invades. Their apartment block is struck by a missile. After weeks living in their basement, Kateryno, her mother, and brother, decide to leave, joining seven million Ukrainian refugees. They come to England and meet their host family, the Hawkins. But their new beginning brings a whole new set of problems.

### **Half Bad** by Sally Green

Nathan Byrn is the illegitimate son of the world's most dangerous witch. Kept in a cage by the Council of Fairborn witches, who believe he is destined to follow the same destructive path as his father, Nathan must find a way to unlock his full powers before his seventeenth birthday, or face madness and death. His one hope lies with the sinister Blood witch Mercury. But Mercury's help always comes at a price - one Nathan may not be able to pay.

**Flowers for Algernon** by Daniel Keyes

Charlie Gordon is about to embark upon an unprecedented journey. Born with an unusually low IQ, he has been chosen as the perfect subject for an experimental surgery that researchers hope will increase his intelligence – a procedure that has already been highly successful when tested on a lab mouse named Algernon. As the treatment takes effect, Charlie's intelligence expands until it surpasses that of the doctors who engineered his metamorphosis. The experiment appears to be a scientific breakthrough of paramount importance, until Algernon suddenly deteriorates. Will the same happen to Charlie?

**Akata witch** by Nnedi Okorafor

Sunny Nwazue lives in Nigeria, but she was born in New York City. Her features are West African, but she's albino. She's a terrific athlete, but can't go out into the sun to play soccer. There seems to be no place where she fits in. And then she discovers something amazing--she is a free agent with latent magical power. And she has a lot of catching up to do. Soon she's part of a quartet of magic students, studying the visible and invisible, learning to change reality. But as she's finding her footing, Sunny and her friends are asked by the magical authorities to help track down a career criminal who knows magic, too. Will their training be enough to help them combat a threat whose powers greatly outnumber theirs?

**Eragon** by Christopher Paolini

When poor farm boy Eragon finds a polished stone in the forest, he thinks it's a lucky discovery. Perhaps, he will be able to buy his family food for the winter. But, when a baby dragon hatches out of the stone, he realises he's stumbled upon a legacy nearly as old as the Empire itself. His simple life is shattered, and he's thrust into a perilous new world of destiny, magic and power. To navigate this dark terrain, and survive his cruel king's evil ways, he must take up the mantle of the legendary Dragon Riders. Will he succeed? The fate of the Empire rests in his hands.

**Unwind** by Neal Shusterman

Unwinding: the process by which a child is both terminated and yet kept alive. Unwinding is now a common, and accepted, practice in society.

Connor's parents want to be rid of him because he's a troublemaker. Risa has no parents and is being unwound to cut orphanage costs. Lev's unwinding has been planned since his birth as part of his family's strict religion. Brought together by chance, and kept together by desperation, these unlikely companions make a harrowing cross-country journey, knowing their lives hang in the balance.

**Happyhead** by Josh Silver

When Seb is offered a place on a radical retreat designed to solve the national crisis of teenage unhappiness, he is determined to change how people see him and make his parents proud. But as he finds himself drawn to the enigmatic Finn, Seb starts to question the true nature of the challenges they must undergo. The deeper into the programme the boys get, the more disturbing the assessments become, until it's clear there may be no escape.

**The blue book of Nebo** by Manon Steffan Ros

In 2018 when Dylan was six 'The End' came. The electricity went off, and the 'normal' 21st century world he knew disappeared. Now he's 14 and he and his mum have survived in their isolated hilltop house above the village of Nebo in north-west Wales, learning new skills, and returning to old ways of living. The relationship between mother and son changes subtly as Dylan takes on adult responsibilities. But they both have secrets, which emerge as they jot down their thoughts and memories in a notebook - the Blue Book of Nebo.

**Orbiting Jupiter** by Gary D. Schmidt

A heartbreaking story, narrated by twelve-year-old Jack, whose family is caring for fourteen-year-old Joseph. Joseph is misunderstood. He was incarcerated for trying to kill a teacher. Or so the rumours say. But Jack and his family see something others in town don't want to. What's more, Joseph has a daughter he's never seen. The two boys go on a journey through the bitter Maine winter to help Joseph find his baby - no matter the cost.

**Tsunami Girl** by Julian Sedgwick

Tsunami Girl is a powerful coming-of-age story of 15-year-old Yuki Hara Jones who gets caught up in the March 2011 Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. It's about a young person trying to work out who they are, and where they fit - and trying to do this whilst surviving the trauma of a triple disaster of colossal scale, told through both prose and manga.

**Cane Warriors** by Alex Wheatle

Moa is fourteen. The only life he has ever known is toiling on the Frontier sugar cane plantation for endless hot days, fearing the vicious whips of the overseers. Then one night he learns of an uprising, led by the charismatic Tacky. Moa is to be a cane warrior, and fight for the freedom of all the enslaved people in the nearby plantations. But before they can escape, Moa and his friend Keverton must face their first great task: to kill their overseer, Misser Donaldson. Time is ticking, and the day of the uprising approaches.