



Ormiston
Meridian Academy
Shaping Lives | Building Ambition | Igniting Futures

Ormiston Meridian Academy

‘Reading Widely and Often’

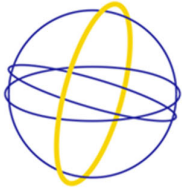
KS3 Form Time Strategy

Ambition Statement

We believe that students deserve a rich curriculum that encourages extensive reading of whole books and other kinds of texts. We believe that active encouragement of reading for pleasure is a core part of every student’s educational entitlement, whatever their background or attainment because we know that extensive reading and an exposure to a range of texts makes a huge contribution to students’ vocabulary acquisition and educational achievement.

The books which have been selected are taken from The Book Trust’s recommendations for KS3 students, ensuring progression from KS2 both in terms of reading difficulty and challenge of topic. As we read the books, we will take the opportunity to **exploit cultural references**, explore the links between the issues covered with topical news items and discuss how concepts in the books relate to our understanding of **Fundamental British Values**.

All students, regardless of ability, will access the same texts through carefully structured supportive pair reading and with the discussion of the key ideas which check and reassure understanding

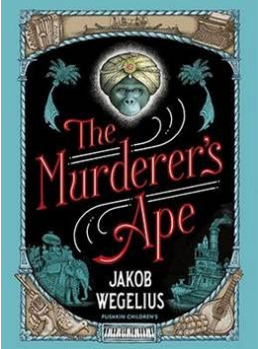


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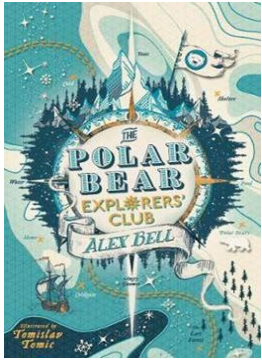
‘Reading Widely and Often’

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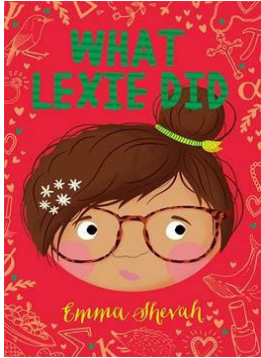
Year 7

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>‘The Murderer’s Ape’ Jakob Wegelius translated by Peter Graves</p> 	<p>Sally Jones is an engineer and loyal friend to Captain Koskela. She’s also an ape – and though she can’t talk, she’s smarter than a lot of people.</p> <p>When Koskela is falsely accused of murder, Sally finds herself on her own in Lisbon, a beautiful city that is full of people that fear her.</p> <p>Fortunately, she finds fada-singer Ana and a local café owner to help her follow the clues to unravel the mystery surrounding who framed Koskela.</p> <p>A brilliant adventure with a wonderful main character in Sally, the Murderer’s Ape is rich with lovable multi-dimensional characters that feel like family, and a European setting full of warmth and community.</p> <p>The black-and-white illustrations lend an extra hint of detail and luxury to this book, which has already won great acclaim.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Respect Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Gain a basic understanding of Lisbon/Portugal</p> <p>What do we know about this country?</p> <p>What makes this place special?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Rule of Law</p> <p>Why is it important for justice to be served?</p> <p>How important is a feeling of ‘community’?</p>

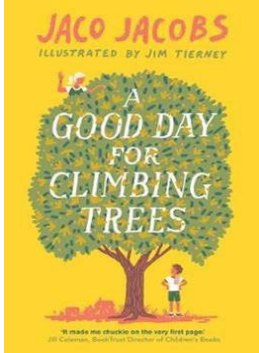
Year 7

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/ FBV
<p>'The Polar Bear Explorers' Club' Alex Bell</p> 	<p>Stella's adoptive father, Felix, is a member of The Polar Bear Explorers' Club, and Stella has always wanted to be an explorer as well.</p> <p>Technically girls aren't allowed to join The Club, but when the chance arises to join Felix, Stella is determined to prove she can be as good an explorer as anyone.</p> <p>She soon finds herself on an expedition to find the coldest part of the Icelands, but it doesn't go to plan, as she and her fellow junior adventurers get separated from the group and have to find their way across the Icelands together.</p> <p>While the Icelands is full of incredible places and creatures to discover, it's equally full of danger.</p> <p>This is a magical and charming adventure with memorable characters: Shay the wolf-whisperer, Ethan the grumpy magician, and Beanie, a genius half-elf. It is suggested that Beanie is on the autistic spectrum, although this is not explicitly stated.</p> <p>All in all, readers will be sucked into Stella's enchanting world for an unforgettable adventure.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Ambition Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Find out some facts about North Pole exploration both past and present</p> <p>Discussion Points/ FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty/Rule of Law</p> <p>Do we have gender equality now?</p> <p>Why do people explore?</p> <p>Is there any need for actual explorers now that we have satellite imaging?</p> <p>How might being autistic make you view the world differently?</p>

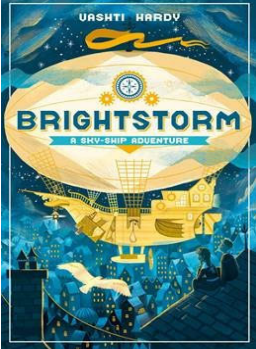
Year 7

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'What Lexie Did' Emma Shevah</p> 	<p>Lexie lives in London with her huge Greek Cypriot family, spending her time eating delicious food, admiring brilliant women in magazines, and speaking in a secret language with her best friend, her cousin Eleni.</p> <p>But things are about to get a lot more complicated for Lexie when she's caught between telling the truth and lying – and what she decides to do ends up splitting her family apart. Can she figure out how to bring them back together again?</p> <p>Emma Shevah has wonderfully tackled difficult questions about honesty in a sophisticated, complex way – but that's never at the expense of being brilliantly funny and entertaining. Young readers will find themselves flying through the pages, desperate to find out what Lexie will do.</p> <p>Lexie herself is a fascinating character – she's always likeable, but Shevah never shies away from showing her more negative traits, from jealousy to selfishness. That all pays off, though, creating someone very relatable who is caught in a dilemma that feels all too sick-in-the-stomach real.</p> <p>With a distinctive style, charming illustrations and heaps of thought-provoking moments, What Lexie Did really is a must-read.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Honesty Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn basic information about the history of Cyprus, specifically the Turkish occupation of part of the island.</p> <p>What do you know about Cyprus? Why is it important that the family is described as GREEK Cypriot?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>Can we imagine what it is like to emigrate (move from one country to another)?</p> <p>What are some of the differences moving from a rural place to a big city?</p> <p>Is it useful to be bi-lingual?</p>

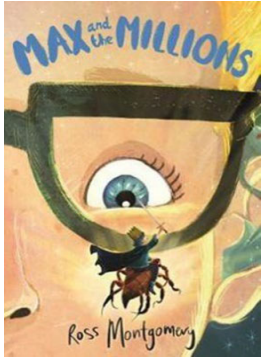
Year 7

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'A Good Day for Climbing Trees' Jaco Jacobs translated by Kobus Geldenhuys</p> 	<p>Thirteen-year-old Marnus is tired of being overshadowed. His older brother is a star athlete who gives girls kissing lessons, and his younger brother is a crafty entrepreneur who has tricked Marnus into doing the dishes all summer.</p> <p>It's while Marnus is bemoaning his predicament to himself that a girl named Leila shows up at their front door with a petition to save a tree.</p> <p>Soon Marnus finds himself at the centre of a protest as he and Leila camp out in the tree to prevent it from being cut down by developers laying a pipeline.</p> <p>Their protest inspires the town and its residents who come to visit them, and Marnus finally has the chance to be noticed.</p> <p>The book deftly handles issues around family life, as well as activism, with a light-hearted touch.</p> <p>With lots of humour and a cast of weird but wonderful characters, and Jim Tierney's modish illustrations, this is the perfect feel-good book from one of South Africa's top children's authors.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Ambition Inspiration Respect</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn basic information about Apartheid</p> <p>What do you know about the history of South Africa?</p> <p>What challenges does the country continue to face?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Democracy</p> <p>How has democracy changed South Africa?</p> <p>What do we think of democracy in our country? What are the alternatives to democracy?</p> <p>What are the issues with other forms of government?</p>

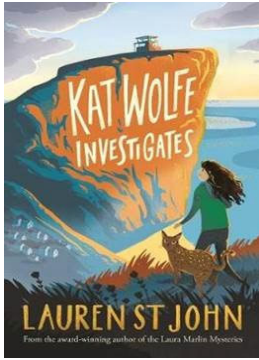
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Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'Brightstorm: A Sky- ship adventure' Vashti Hardy</p> 	<p>Twelve-year-old twins Maudie and Arthur's world comes crashing in when their explorer dad is reported dead in his mission to get to South Polaris. Not only that, their family name is tainted when he is accused of stealing another skyship's fuel before he died, which means they are unable to inherit their family home.</p> <p>The twins are sold to a horrible couple in The Slumps of Lontown, but they soon escape with the noble explorer Captain Harriet Culpepper, on a mission back to South Polaris to restore honour to the Brightstorm name.</p> <p>This is an unputdownable Victoriana adventure with characters that are vivid and most refreshing in their portrayal of gender roles.</p> <p>Maudie is a serious-minded inventor (who would very probably be best friends with Lemony Snicket's Violet in A Series of Unfortunate Events) and Arthur is a boy who doesn't quite know who he is, with empathy so deep that he learns to speak with the wonderful "thought wolves", previously seen as vicious, wild beasts. Oh, and we have a new baddie to worry about: the thoroughly evil and ruthless Eudora Vane.</p> <p>A real edge-of-your-seat romp that travels with lightning speed.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Respect Ambition</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn about exploration in the Victorian era.</p> <p>What was life like in this time? How does the historical context influence the events in the book?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBVf</p> <p>How do the gender roles in the book rebel against expectation of the era?</p> <p>Rule of Law</p> <p>What do we know about modern day slavery?</p>

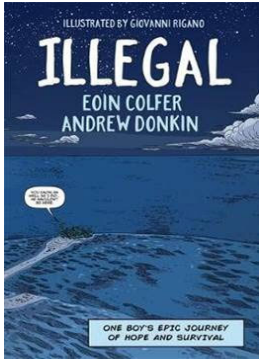
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Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'Max and the Millions' Ross Montgomery</p> 	<p>When a school caretaker mysteriously disappears, leaving behind a small pile of sand, a student is drawn into an extraordinary adventure.</p> <p>Ten-year-old Max feels like an outsider at St Goliath's. He is deaf, and while this doesn't need to be a problem, the unlikable head ensures that it is, singling him out with a special seat in assembly and showing him off like an exhibit to visitors. He's also clearly neglected to ensure Max's peers understand how to foster normal, meaningful relationships with someone who happens to be deaf.</p> <p>Then Max makes a miraculous discovery – a tiny civilisation in the pile of sand on the caretaker's floor. It's a miniature world at war: three bickering tribes, nonsensically segregated according to hair colour. Can Max find his missing friend, communicate with the tribes and bring about peace?</p> <p>Alongside the adventure, and with a light hand, Montgomery successfully touches on challenges such as coping with buzzing hearing aids, lazy assumptions about deafness, and people's inept attempts to communicate better by shouting.</p> <p>The plot is delightfully daft and complemented by many subtle social comments about inequality, the abuse of power and the futility of war.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Inspiration Respect Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn that writers choose names to have specific connotations and hidden meanings.</p> <p>Who was 'Goliath'? Why would the writer choose this as the name for the school? How does it link to the story?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Democracy/Rule of Law</p> <p>Why does war happen?</p> <p>How is life different for someone who is deaf?</p> <p>How might we communicate better with someone who is deaf?</p>

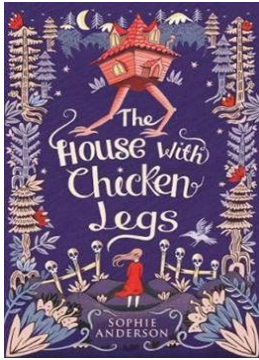
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<p>'Kat Wolfe Investigates' Lauren St John</p> 	<p>Kat Wolfe loves her new home in idyllic Bluebell Bay, especially as it comes with a resident wildcat.</p> <p>But when she starts pet-sitting for pocket money, she finds that beneath the town's perfect surface lie some dark and dangerous secrets.</p> <p>The first in a new adventure series by a very popular author.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Courage Ambition</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn about living by the sea.</p> <p>How is living by the sea different to living anywhere else?</p> <p>What sorts of jobs might you expect to have by the sea that you wouldn't have inland?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>How does having a female protagonist break gender stereotypes?</p> <p>What dangers are 'hidden' where we live?</p>

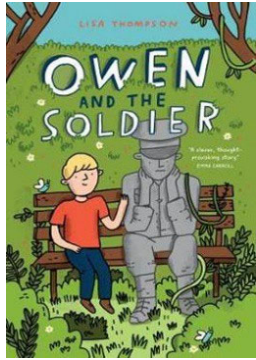
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<p>'Illegal' Eoin Colfer</p> 	<p>Illegal tells the story of Ebo, a 12-year-old boy who flees grinding poverty, zero opportunities and a drunken uncle in his small village in Africa. His brother Kwame and sister Sisi have already left in the hope of a better life in Europe and he's determined to find them en route.</p> <p>Before he even can hope to find a boat to get him to Europe, Ebo has to make the perilous journey across Sahara desert. And then the boat he manages to find passage on (for a small fortune) is a small six-person rubber dinghy, now carrying 14 passengers...</p> <p>The story is heart-stoppingly powerful and many readers will devour it one sitting. The images are of course absolutely integral and beautifully drawn by Giovanni Rigano. Ebo is a wonderful hero: so resourceful, hard-working, clever, brave and funny.</p> <p>Although Ebo's story is fictional, every element of it has been inspired by facts, based on extensive interviews and research. At the back of the book, these stories are acknowledged, including the moving story of "Helen", adapted in comic form.</p> <p>An absolute must-read, this graphic novel is thought-provoking, profound, sensitive and totally gripping.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Inspiration Ambition Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn basic information about the continent of Africa.</p> <p>How many different countries make up Africa?</p> <p>How is sub-Saharan Africa different from North Africa? What sorts of issues have these countries faced?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Democracy</p> <p>How do dictatorships link to poverty?</p> <p>Why do some countries reject the idea of democracy?</p> <p>Should the UK and other democracies open their doors to refugees?</p>

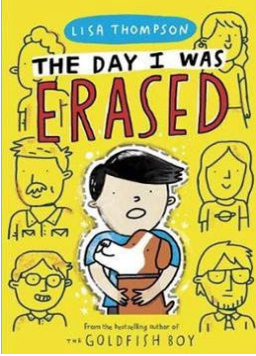
Year 8

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'The House with Chicken Legs' Sophie Anderson</p> 	<p>Every night is party night at Marinka's house. There's food, drink, music and lively conversation... But all the guests are dead.</p> <p>Marinka's grandmother is a Yaga, someone who guides the recently dead through The Gate so they can make their way back to the stars they came from.</p> <p>Marinka is expected to follow in her grandmother's footsteps but she is desperate for a normal life, where she can make friends with the living. But can she really change her destiny or is her fate predetermined and unalterable?</p> <p>Loosely based on the Slavic myth of Baba Yaga, Marinka's story is magical, delightfully macabre and utterly engrossing. Skilful storytelling reimagines ancient folklore while addressing issues such as bullying, bereavement and taking control of your future, which will resonate with many young people.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Ambition Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn what folklore is.</p> <p>What is folklore? Do you know any folklores?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Respect faiths</p> <p>Do you believe in life after death?</p> <p>How does your religion or beliefs shape your views?</p>

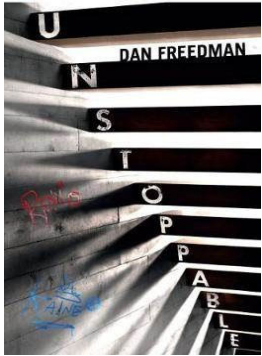
Year 8

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<p>'Owen and the Soldier' Lisa Thompson</p> 	<p>Owen lost his dad a while ago and his mum hasn't been herself since. He holds her when she's upset and does most of the household chores.</p> <p>At school, Mr Jennings picks Owen to recite a poem at an upcoming event but Owen gets anxious speaking in public. He finds solace in the park, where a crumbling statue of a soldier sits. Owen finds companionship with the soldier and shows him stunt moves and shares his worries.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the council have plans to revamp the memorial garden and remove the soldier.</p> <p>Owen is distraught and writes a complaint to the local newspaper but they don't seem interested in saving the statue. When Owen finds out the local councillor will be at the poetry recital though, he decides he might attend after all.</p> <p>A beautiful tale of a courageous young man who overcomes his fears to stand up for what he believes. Lisa Thompson writes stories that must be written. Here, she sensitively weaves complex ideas of young carers, social anxiety and remembrance into a story that somehow remains light and accessible.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Courage Honesty Ambition</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn about the origins of and the act of Remembrance.</p> <p>What places of Remembrance do you know of? Where would you go locally to attend an act of Remembrance?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Democracy</p> <p>Why is Remembrance important?</p> <p>What are the dangers of ignoring history?</p> <p>Why should we battle our fears?</p>

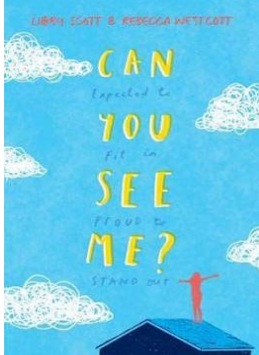
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<p>'The Day I Was Erased' Lisa Thompson</p> 	<p>Maxwell is constantly in trouble at school and at home, especially when he is wound up from hearing his parents argue. After hurting his best friend, he is banned from attending the school's Centenary Ball.</p> <p>Not wanting to miss out, Maxwell sneaks in but ends up in enormous trouble after switching off the electricity! He seeks solace with Reg, his trusted neighbour, but a strange turn of events transports Maxwell to a world where nobody, not even his parents or sister, recognise him. It's as if he never existed.</p> <p>Maxwell suspects the historical curiosities in Reg's house contain clues to help him return to his old life, but he can't fix this alone. Can he win the affection of his pal again?</p> <p>The Day I Was Erased is a fabulous book that captures the vibrancy and buzz of school life.</p> <p>Lisa Thompson's light touch in delicately exploring emotional wellbeing can help begin important conversations about memory loss, parental discord and the meaning of friendship.</p> <p>Everyone will recognise aspects of Maxwell in themselves and his story will leave readers with a warm glow and lots of hope.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Honesty Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Social etiquette in formal settings.</p> <p>What is a 'ball'? What would you expect to do/wear?</p> <p>How is it different from other school events?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Rule of Law</p> <p>Why is resilience an important part of emotional well-being? Why are friendships sometimes difficult?</p> <p>How can we have better relationships with our parents/carers?</p>

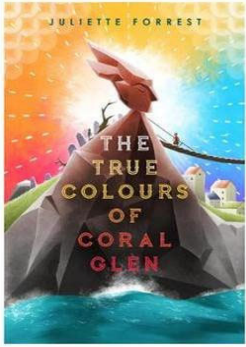
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<p>'Unstoppable' Dan Freedman</p> 	<p>Twins Kaine and Roxy are talented and driven. One plays football, the other tennis, but both feel antagonistic towards their father – and towards one another.</p> <p>Kaine is hoping for a trial at a premiership club and has to pretend he doesn't care that his dad is so uninterested, while Roxy has her heart set on winning Wimbledon one day but is rapidly falling out of love with tennis because of her dad's relentless and punishing training regimen.</p> <p>When the dreams of both twins seem to be ripped away, they are each exposed to very different kinds of danger and must struggle to get back to a life, and family, that can fulfil them.</p> <p>This highly charged story of complex family relationships, misplaced loyalty and finding strength to overcome devastating disappointment will appeal especially to sports fans but is also a cracking read for anyone who likes a well-told, engaging narrative.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Ambition Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn about the hard work that is required of professional athletes.</p> <p>What sort of training regimen do professional athletes have? How does it impact on other aspects of their life?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>Should parents push their children to succeed?</p> <p>Where is the line between encouragement and coercion? Should we do things just to make others happy even if it's at our own expense?</p>

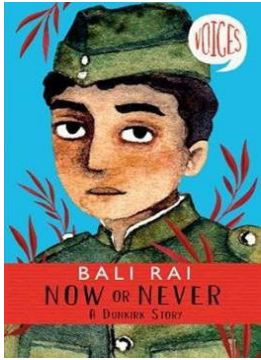
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<p>'Can You See Me?' Libby Scott and Rebecca Westcott</p> 	<p>Starting secondary school is a daunting time for any 11-year-old – and Natalia (known as Tally) is no exception.</p> <p>Acclimatising to new surroundings and learning the ways of different teachers is proving tough. Plus, there's the boy who calls her names, and her friends from primary school upon whom she's always been able to depend but who have started talking about things that just don't interest her (like boys) and cautioning her when her behaviour is embarrassing.</p> <p>In addition to the universal challenges of being 11, Tally is also autistic. She often struggles to make sense of other people's actions and language. And now, as she enters this new stage in her life, she is becoming painfully aware of the way she is perceived, feeling an almost unbearable pressure to try to conform.</p> <p>This innovative book is a collaboration between author Rebecca Westacott and a talented young blogger (herself autistic). In addition to helping shape the characters and plot, Libby supplies Tally's diary entries, thus offering the reader an authentic insight into one girl's perspective of the condition, along with valuable practical tips.</p> <p>This is a powerful and very readable story about trying to fit in, to which almost any young reader will relate. Along the way, a host of common assumptions and stereotypes about autism are smashed, as we observe Tally's potent sense of humour, her empathy and her ability to learn. Most powerful of all is witnessing Tally's ultimate realisation that autism is not something that needs to be hidden.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Inspiration Respect</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn basic information about autism.</p> <p>What issues might someone on the autistic spectrum face?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>What pressures do teenagers face?</p> <p>Is it important that we conform to what is expected of us?</p> <p>How do our choices reflect our personal identity?</p>

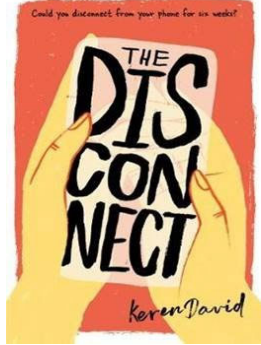
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<p>'The True Colours of Coral Glen' Juliette Forrest</p> 	<p>Gran was Coral's best friend and confidante. And Coral let her down. Badly.</p> <p>Since Gran died, Coral can't think about anything else and would give the world to see Gran just once more and say how sorry she is.</p> <p>So when a strange boy, who seems to live in the graveyard with a talking gargoyle, offers her just that opportunity, she agrees to do something in return that could cost her own life.</p> <p>The loss of a beloved grandparent is often the first experience we have of bereavement and that part of Coral's story may be familiar to many readers.</p> <p>What most of us haven't experienced is a dangerous quest to help prevent the resurrection of a heart-collecting serial killer. Or an encounter with an ancient, vengeful witch.</p> <p>Or a narrow escape from a cave-dwelling cannibal. Or a rather spiky relationship with a sarcastic, razor-toothed worm.</p> <p>A skilful blend of the deeply human, imaginatively supernatural and darkly comic ensure that Coral's story will have a very broad appeal.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Honesty Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Consider the value of life - how can we place a value on it? Does this vary depending on where you live?</p> <p>What are the connotations of 'gargoyles'?</p> <p>What is a serial killer? What are cannibals?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Rule of Law</p> <p>What lessons do we learn about our own behaviours and regrets?</p> <p>How does grief affect people? How can we take comfort following a death?</p>

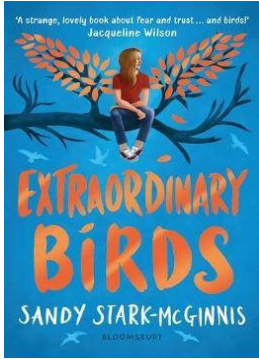
Year 8

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<p>'Now or Never: A Dunkirk Story' Bali Rai</p> 	<p>Narrated by Private Fazal Khan, a young Muslim soldier in Company 32 of the Royal Indian Army Service Corps, this is a moving and insightful account of a key event in the Second World War.</p> <p>Fifteen-year-old Fazal runs away from his family in northern India and lies about his age to join up and serve the British Empire, just as his grandfather did during World War I.</p> <p>His role is to look after the mules used to carry supplies to the front line, which he performs with diligence and pride.</p> <p>Fazal's romantic views of duty, loyalty and honour are challenged when he arrives in France during the freezing winter of 1939 and experiences the harsh realities of war.</p> <p>Despite the sacrifices made by members of Company 32, not everyone treats them as equals, which becomes shockingly apparent as they await evacuation at Dunkirk.</p> <p>Voices is a thought-provoking series of stories based on true events, aiming to highlight the valuable and often overlooked contribution made by immigrants to Britain throughout history.</p> <p>Written by a range of highly regarded children's authors, these tales bring different historical periods to life.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Respect Inspiration</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn about the impact of countries from around the world fighting on the side of the allies in WW2.</p> <p>How many different nationalities fought on the side of Britain during World War 2?</p> <p>What do you know about the British Empire?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Democracy</p> <p>How can immigration be a positive thing for countries today?</p> <p>Respect faiths</p> <p>Why were the members of Company 32 not treated as equals?</p> <p>Do we still see divisions in society based on race or religion?</p>

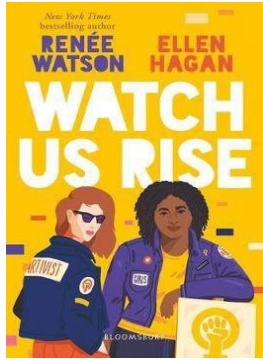
Year 8

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'The Disconnect' Keren David</p> 	<p>Would you give up your phone for a thousand pounds? Esther would have said no – but then a rich woman visits their school and sets the whole year group a challenge. Give up their phone for six weeks, and they will win a thousand pounds.</p> <p>For Esther, who uses her phone to keep in touch with her dad and sister in New York, it's a real wrench, but she decides to make the effort. Only it seems that some people aren't playing fair...</p> <p>This short, snappy and entertaining book has an irresistible premise which many teenagers will find relatable.</p> <p>It takes a healthily balanced view of the pros and cons of mobile phone and social media usage.</p> <p>Among other things, it includes a heart-warming theme about the importance of family. Esther gains, and loses, unexpected things from giving up her phone.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Honesty Respect</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Think about the impact that technology has on our lives.</p> <p>What was life like before the advent of mobile phones?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>Should restrictions be placed on the use of mobile phones? 'I would talk to my family members more if they lived further away.' Discuss.</p> <p>'Mobile technology is causing us to become anti-social.' How far do you agree?</p>

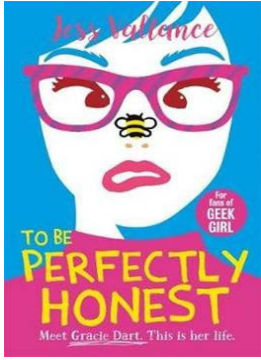
Year 8

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'Extraordinary Birds' Sandy Stark- McGinnis</p> 	<p>Eleven-year-old December has an encyclopaedic knowledge of birds. And that's because she is one. Or at least she will be, once her wings have sprouted from the scars across her back.</p> <p>December needs her wings so she can fly away and be with her real mum but in the meantime she must keep her true nature a secret. And if that means getting kicked out of all her foster homes because no-one else understands that she must keep practising by jumping out of trees, then that's a price she's willing to pay.</p> <p>When December is placed with Eleanor, a new foster mum, she begins to have doubts about the story she tells herself about the past but letting go of it would mean accepting some very painful truths.</p> <p>In this stunning, painfully poignant story, December takes refuge in a fantasy world because real life has always been such a disappointment. The inclusion of a non-binary character, a non-traditional depiction of home and family and incidental mental health issues add to the credibility of a story that is, in the end, uplifting and hopeful.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Courage Inspiration Honesty</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn about different types of families.</p> <p>Why do some children live with foster carers?</p> <p>What does non-binary mean?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Respect faiths Individual Liberty</p> <p>Why might someone prefer to live in a fantasy world?</p> <p>What are the problems with living this way?</p> <p>Is our mental health as important as our physical well-being?</p>

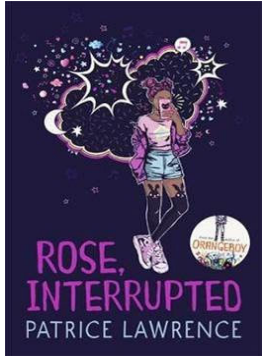
Year 9

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'Watch Us Rise' Renée Watson and Ellen Hagan</p> 	<p>Jasmine has just found out her dad is dying. Perhaps that's one reason she seems so much more sensitive to the thinly veiled sexual comments from the creepy guy on the subway. And to the way the drama teacher wants to pigeonhole her as the "angry black girl".</p> <p>But it seems Jasmine isn't the only girl her age who has issues with the racism/sexism/sizeism that seems to permeate all aspects of her life. And so the "Write Like a Girl" blog is born.</p> <p>At first it's a great success but almost every popular movement experiences a backlash. Are Jasmine and her friends prepared for trial by social media?</p> <p>This teen novel, set in New York City, is presented as a dual narrative interspersed with blog posts and poetry. It is not only a timely look at how easy it can be to become desensitised to casual discrimination but also a realistic representation of budding relationships and the many demands of school and home life faced by today's young adults.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Respect Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn about the history of racism in the USA.</p> <p>What do you know about New York?</p> <p>What do you know about racism in the USA's past and present?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>Rule of Law</p> <p>In what ways might people feel discriminated against? How can we fight discrimination?</p> <p>What are the pros and cons of social media?</p>

Year 9

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'To Be Perfectly Honest' Jess Vallance</p> 	<p>Fed up with family and friends keeping secrets, Gracie decides she's had enough of lies and takes a pledge of total honesty for 50 days, whatever the circumstances.</p> <p>At first, she sees only positive outcomes; her uncle seems genuinely relieved that he no longer has to seek out bizarre bee-related gifts for her, and admitting at a job interview that she's only in it for the money doesn't stop her being hired.</p> <p>But will her new girlfriend be impressed when she is totally honest about their fledgling relationship? And can she repair the damage done by some painfully truthful remarks about a fellow student?</p> <p>A realistic depiction of the tightrope most of us walk between absolute honesty and telling a few white lies to save face or spare other people's feelings.</p> <p>The scrapes Gracie gets herself into are both familiar and very funny, making this an ideal book for teens and young adults looking for a light-hearted, yet worthwhile, read.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Honesty Courage Ambition</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Consider what 'truth' is and how it applies to community.</p> <p>What are white lies?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>Is honesty always the best policy?</p> <p>What is 'the truth' and how might it differ from person to person?</p>

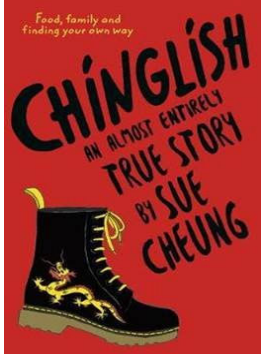
Year 9

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'Rose, Interrupted' Patrice Lawrence</p> 	<p>When Rose leaves the stifling rigidity of life among God's Pilgrims, governed by strict rules about everything, to live with the Worldly Wise, she formulates a ten-point plan to help her integrate into the outside world of freedom and social media.</p> <p>Despite living in a squalid flat above a smelly kebab shop, and her mum working long hours in several jobs just to keep them off the streets, Rose thinks her plan is going pretty well. Until her boyfriend wants to take a topless photo of her.</p> <p>He says everyone is doing it and, with no frame of reference, Rose becomes increasingly aware that there are a whole heap of unwritten rules for life as a 17-year-old that she has no idea about.</p> <p>A thoughtful and compelling look at the rules, whether formal or unspoken, that govern all our lives, and a timely assessment of both the positive and negative aspects of a world increasingly focused on social media. The book also explores themes of self-expression, loyalty, and family dynamics.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Honesty Courage Ambition</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn about religions/communities which operate outside of society.</p> <p>What is a pilgrim? How does the concept relate to several world religions?</p> <p>What are the laws relating to 'sexting'?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Rule of Law</p> <p>Respect Faiths</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>Are rules a necessary part of life?</p> <p>Are there rules that we should be able to ignore?</p> <p>What would a society with no rules be like?</p>

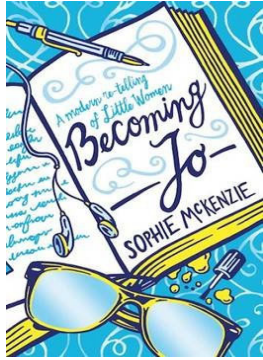
Year 9

Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'Toffee' Sarah Crossan</p> 	<p>Allison has run away from home and an abusive father, with nothing and no one. In desperation, she lives in the shed outside what she thinks is an abandoned house. Then, she meets its owner, Marla, who has dementia.</p> <p>Marla thinks Allison is her old friend Toffee, and so Allison decides to become Toffee. She is a girl trying to forget and Marla is a woman trying to remember, and an unusual real friendship develops against the odds.</p> <p>This verse novel – by the writer whom we can really thank for introducing UK teens to the genre – goes straight to the heart and explores complex themes of identity and personhood. It's the question teenagers most want to explore: who am I and what's my place in the world?</p> <p>Allison/Toffee is so shaken by what life has thrown at her that she really doesn't know, but through the course of the novel, she explores and finds out. Readers will learn much about themselves by accompanying her on her journey.</p> <p>The lushness of Sarah Crossan's language almost drips off the page. This is a beautiful, profound book and teenagers are likely to devour it, possibly first-time round in one sitting. Toffee is one of those books with the power to bring teenagers out of love with reading back into the fold.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Courage Inspiration</p> <p>Cultural references</p> <p>Learn basic information about dementia.</p> <p>What is dementia? How does it affect people and their families and friends?</p> <p>Discussion Points/ FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>How does dementia affect identity?</p> <p>What makes a friendship?</p> <p>Is dishonesty the best policy in some cases?</p>

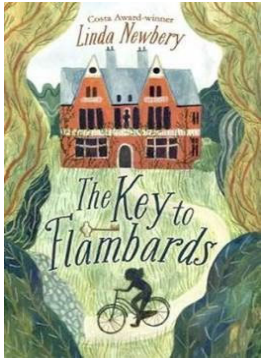
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Book Title/Author	Summary/Review	Achiever Values/ Cultural Refs./ Discussion Points/FBV
<p>'Chinglish' Sue Cheung</p> 	<p>When Jo's family move to the flat above their new Chinese takeaway in 1984, she's incredibly disappointed to learn that it's so tiny that she has to share a room with her deeply annoying younger sister Bonny.</p> <p>It's no better when she starts a new school, where she's called names and excluded by the other kids for being Chinese. Luckily, she finds a friend in gothy Tina who teaches Jo how to backcomb her hair and shares her love of art.</p> <p>Jo's terrified about asking Tina home and revealing that she lives above a Chinese takeaway, but is also wary of anyone meeting her parents, and most of all her dad, with his unpredictable behaviour.</p> <p>Slowly, in reading Jo's diary, we start to understand the unsaid undercurrents of tension within her family, as well as the racism and homophobia that exists in the world around her.</p> <p>The diary format is an ideal way for Cheung to allow us intimate access to Jo's life and allows the inclusion of her doodle illustrations, which add verve and character.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Respect Courage Honesty</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn about the Chinese system of government past and present.</p> <p>What do you know about China?</p> <p>What is the system of government in China?</p> <p>Why have many Chinese people emigrated to the UK?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Rule of Law Individual Liberty Democracy</p> <p>Why are some people homophobic?</p> <p>How can we challenge homophobia?</p> <p>What are the dangers of ignoring homophobia/racism?</p>

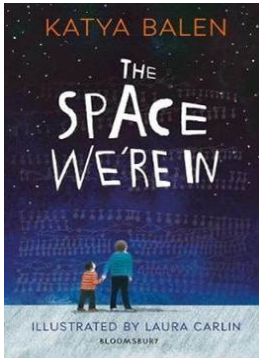
Year 9

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<p>'Becoming Jo' Sophie McKenzie</p> 	<p>Jo has always wanted to be a writer. She'll happily spend hours squirrelled away working on her masterpieces, but with three sisters to contend with, a new friend who's just moved in to her street and a father who's in Syria working as a humanist minister, there is a lot going on.</p> <p>Becoming Jo is a marvellous modern retelling of Little Women from Girl, Missing author Sophie McKenzie, which proves how relevant Louisa May Alcott's novel still is today, 150 years after its publication.</p> <p>McKenzie has expertly captured the personalities of each of the sisters, and fans of the original will enjoy her clever little callbacks – from how Amy destroys Jo's manuscript this time around to the transformation from Laurie to Lateef.</p> <p>It's a joy to see how she puts a twist on the tale and makes it work in an up-to-date setting (and in the UK, too).</p> <p>But there's also plenty to enjoy for those new to the Marches, with McKenzie's tale covering themes of identity, making plans for the future, family relationships, romance, bullying and health. Becoming Jo might pack a lot in, but it does it with style.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Ambition Respect</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn about Little Woman - Louisa May Alcott</p> <p>Published in 1868, USA.</p> <p>What would life have been like for young women growing up in this time? How has the writer changed it to modern day issues?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>How can we deal with bullying?</p> <p>What are the benefits and pitfalls to making plans for the future?</p> <p>'Romance is dead'. Do you agree?</p> <p>Our health is the most important thing and we must do all we can to protect it. Do you agree?</p>

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<p>'The Key to Flambards' Linda Newbery</p> 	<p>It's been a year of dramatic changes for Grace. She must now start to move on, accepting her parents' divorce and adjusting to her life with a prosthetic limb, following a car accident which resulted in a lower leg amputation.</p> <p>This summer, she's reluctantly left her home and best friend to spend the holidays at Flambards, a quiet countryside arts centre, where her mum is trying to breathe some life into a struggling business.</p> <p>Flambards is a stately home with some serious history – and Grace's family are direct descendants of the Russell family who used to own it.</p> <p>As she gradually gets to know the locals, she uncovers some mysterious secrets buried in the house's past. It's a summer that will slowly change Grace's feelings about her past, her future and her very place in the world.</p> <p>Grace is very likeable but convincingly flawed, grappling with conflicting emotions about friendship, identity, rural living and life in general. We see her assessing (and reassessing) her attitude towards disability – and Newbery ingeniously explores the theme from different angles,</p> <p>Grace's situation mirrored by other characters past and present, including an ancestor with facial disfigurement.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Courage Ambition</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn basic information about Stately homes.</p> <p>What is a stately home?</p> <p>Why did many families have to sell them?</p> <p>Discussion Points/FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>What are the pros and cons to running your own business?</p> <p>Do disabilities become part of your identity?</p> <p>What do we mean by a 'rural life'? Would you want to live a rural life?</p>

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<p>'The Space We're In' Katya Balen</p> 	<p>When Frank's younger brother is diagnosed with autism at the age of three, their mum explains that it means he may not always understand the way the world works.</p> <p>Frank, with great perceptiveness, observes that he doesn't understand the world, either. Who really does? Now aged ten, Frank is learning that people can sometimes be cruel. When kids make unpleasant jokes about Max, Frank fails to defend him. Like many older siblings, he is also frustrated at how much of his parents' time and attention his brother now demands.</p> <p>All in all, he's currently wrestling some pretty serious feelings of guilt and resentment. Little does he know, life is about to throw something far, far worse at the family.</p> <p>This is a heart-rending read. It's the world according to Frank, so where autism is concerned, the portrayal is very much from a sibling's perspective and at a particular moment in time.</p> <p>However, the author's genuine and expansive knowledge of the spectrum is clear and the messages are ultimately reassuring, illustrating how much a severely autistic child (like any child) can develop and achieve, love and be loved.</p> <p>The addition of references to coding and powerful observations about life, the universe and everything, make this a memorable and satisfying read.</p> <p>Above all, the reader will fall in love with Frank as he sits precariously on the edge of childhood innocence, before being dragged far too soon towards grown-up tragedy.</p>	<p>Achiever Values</p> <p>Respect</p> <p>Courage</p> <p>Cultural References</p> <p>Learn more developed information about autism.</p> <p>How does autism change the way we understand the world around us?</p> <p>How does having a sibling with needs affect your relationship with the the family?</p> <p>Discussion Points/ FBV</p> <p>Individual Liberty</p> <p>'Growing up is a loss of innocence'. Do you agree?</p> <p>'Parents should divide their time between their children equally, even if one child has greater needs.' Do you agree?</p> <p>'We should always defend those that can't defend themselves.' How far do you agree?</p>