

Lower KS3 Recommended Reading

March 2020

The following offers some suggestions for reading for girls in years 7 and 8. They are all good examples of the best books currently available, both old and new (excluding standard classic titles which the girls should be reading additionally). All are available from the School Library.

Happy Reading! From the Library and the English department

Susin Nielsen

No Fixed Address

Felix Knutsson appears normal. He lives with his mother and pet gerbil, and is brilliant at memorising facts and trivia. But Felix and his mom Astrid have a secret: they are living in a van. Astrid promises it's only temporary and begs Felix not to breathe a word about it. So Felix does his very best to hide the fact that he only showers weekly at the community centre, and doesn't have enough to eat. When his friends ask to visit, Felix always has an excuse. But Felix has a plan to turn his and Astrid's lives around: he's going to go on his favourite game show Who, What, Where, When and win the cash prize. All he needs is a little luck and a lot of brain power...

Michelle Harrison

A Pinch of Magic

The Widdershins sisters – Fliss, Betty and Charlie – live with their granny on the miserable island of Crowstone. It's damp, misty and surrounded by marsh - not somewhere you'd choose to live. But the sisters are trapped by an ancient curse and can never leave. If they do, they will die. Their granny has tried to protect the girls by hiding the truth but when she is forced to reveal it, the girls each inherit a magical object. Betty sees an opportunity and can't resist the temptation to try and change their fate. But as she leads the sisters into danger it's by no means certain that can they work together. Can they do so and break the curse?

Gillian Cross

Where I Belong

There are guns and bandits in this story...and supermodels...and drought and starvation. Are you wondering how they can all come together? Well, that's how life can be. Things don't happen neatly, in separate little places. We're all caught by the great spider's web of media that spans the world and that's where this story is set. The world. It's the story of Abdi and Khadija and Freya and what happened to them because of Somalia ...

Jane England

Whisper My Name

Following the death of her mother, Meriel Garland has lived with her grandfather who makes Meriel feels trapped by a strict regime of study and tests. So imagine Meriel's delight when she discovers a world outside her narrow existence - one that promises admiration for her acting skills, social success and mysterious seances. When a young medium, Sophie, passes on a message "from beyond the grave" Meriel's life takes an unexpected turn as she looks into her past and uncovers a sinister secret - soon it's hard for Meriel to know who to trust – dead or alive.

Dan Gemeinhart

The Honest Truth (sensitive readers may find some of the content upsetting)

Mark's like any other thirteen-year-old. He loves his dog, taking photos and hiking... but he also has cancer. As his condition deteriorates, Mark decides he's had enough of hospital. With his small dog Beau, he runs away from home and sets out to climb a mountain. He's prepared really well. No-one and nothing – certainly not the cancer that is going to end his life – will stop him from making this trip. A sad but ultimately heart-warming and life-affirming novel.

Val Rutt

Out of the Blue

One beautiful spring evening Kitty Danby meets Sammy Ray Bailey, an American pilot. They fall in love and, for a few weeks, the future holds a promise of happiness that Kitty hardly dares hope for. But it is 1944 and a tragic accident changes everything, leading to a web of secrets and misunderstandings which will only be unravelled years later.

John Marsden

So Much to Tell You (for more mature readers)

A teenager uses her journal to describe how she feels about being scarred and the trauma it has brought to her. "I don't know what I'm doing here. Well, I do really. I have been sent here to learn to talk again. Sent here because my mother can't stand my silent presence at home. Sent here because of my face." She watches; she dreams. She sees more than they realise. She has worries and fears, hopes and dreams. She is troubled; she is angry. Above all, she is lonely. She tells her story - with humour and insight, with sensitivity and strength, with painful honesty. You will never forget her. Based on a true story.

Jason Reynolds

Ghost

This is set in America so readers will come across a few unfamiliar aspects of life but the main character soon becomes very engaging. Running. That's all Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. But Ghost has been running for the wrong reasons - until he meets Coach, an ex-Olympic Medallist who sees something in Ghost: crazy natural talent. If Ghost can stay on track, literally and figuratively, he could be the best sprinter in the city. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed, or will his past, which isn't the best, finally catch up with him?

Gail Giles

Dead Girls Don't Write Letters

Fourteen-year-old Sunny Reynolds is stunned when her older sister Jazz shows up as Jazz died, out of town, in a fire months earlier. Everyone is surprised (to say the least) but they are overjoyed to have Jazz home. Everyone apart from Sunny, who is convinced that this girl must be an imposter. She may look like Jazz and know everything Jazz, but Sunny is sure her real sister is dead - so who is this girl? And why is she posing as Sunny's sister?

Jonathan Stroud

Lockwood & Co: The Screaming Staircase

For more than fifty years, the country has been affected by a horrifying epidemic of ghosts and a number of Psychic Investigations Agencies run by young people (adults aren't sensitive enough) have sprung up to destroy the dangerous apparitions. One of them, the smallest most ramshackle agency, is run by Anthony Lockwood and his associates Lucy and George. When one of their cases goes horribly wrong Lockwood & Co. must spend a terrifying night in one of the most haunted houses in England, and try to escape alive...

Rachael Lucas

The State of Grace (contains occasional strong language and content)

Fifteen-year-old Grace is funny and plain-spoken. Just because she has Asperger's doesn't mean she's great at maths (she's not) or can draw the Eiffel Tower from memory (she can't). Like any teenager, Grace just wants to fit in, so when it turns out that the cutest boy in school likes her, she finds herself falling in with the cool crowd. But with her dad away and her mum distracted there's no one at home to see Grace's younger sister spiralling out of control, and suddenly everything threatens to fall apart - unless Grace can fix things on her own.

Morris Gleitzman

Grace

"In the beginning there was me and Mum and Dad and the twins. And we were bountiful. But it came to pass that I started doing sins. And lo, that's when all our problems began..." Morris Gleitzman uses humour and parody to tell this harrowing story of a young girl fighting for the right to free speech within the strict religious community in which she is brought up. An empowering story about the importance of thinking for yourself.