

Reading Recommendations Newsletter



Summer 2025



Welcome to our reading recommendations newsletter!

Each term, we will share with you reviews and information about books our pupils are currently enjoying.

We encourage our pupils and their families to look through these to see if any may be of interest to them. In addition, we have reading lists by year group and genre on our website.

Happy reading!
The BVS Book Group

Our 2025 Festival and Our Love of Bookshops!

We've thoroughly enjoyed this year's Festival of Culture and the authors who have visited us! The pop up bookshops also allowed us to purchase both new books (at the greatly discounted rate of £1.50!) and pre-read favourites donated by pupils and staff. It was great to browse through the stalls, with many of us leaving for the summer laden down with reading material that guarantees many hours of entertainment!

BVS loves a bookshop and we're really delighted that two of our Sixth Formers (in fact, one being a founder member of the BVS Book Groups!) have recently gained internships with Waterstones following a competitive selection process. This is a dream opportunity for them!

From all in our Book Group, we wish all pupils and their families a happy summer holiday and we hope that you are all able to take interesting and inspiring travels ... with books!

Festival Author Spotlight:

Jess Webb (co-author with Michael Sheen)

Jess Webb's collaboration with actor Michael Sheen on 'A Home for Spark the Dragon' has attracted much attention. This heartwarming picture book about the importance of home, by much-loved actor and activist Michael Sheen and co-author Jess, who visited our Festival of Culture, is proving popular with children (indeed many of our pupils bought copies for younger siblings!). The story tells of Spark the dragon waking up to find a storm has destroyed his cosy nest. He must find a new place to live, but Spark soon discovers that a house needs more than just walls to feel like home, and he starts to wonder if he will ever find the right place for him. This beautiful story is brought to life by Sarah Massini's stunning illustrations.

Jess's visit to Bishop Vaughan gave our pupils a behind-the-scenes look at her writing process and her passion for storytelling. We encourage all pupils to become readers, and Jess urged all readers to turn their hand to writing, providing them with expert advice and lots of encouragement, drawing on her own experiences in getting published to provide great insights into what it is to be an author!



Festival Author Spotlight:

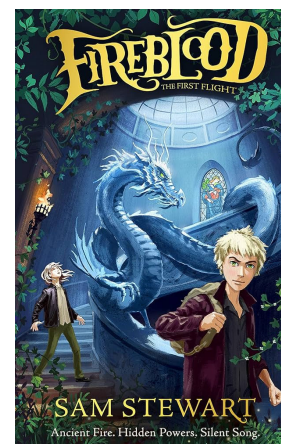
Sam Stewart (author of 'Fireblood')

If you love gripping fantasy and fierce protagonists, 'Fireblood' by Sam Stewart should be at the top of your reading list!

The book follows a young girl with a deadly secret in a world where fire is power and betrayal lurks at every turn. Sam's writing is immersive, vivid and action-packed. Her stories are thrilling, emotional and filled with twists that will keep you hooked.

Sam led sessions in last year's Festival and followed up this year by launching a writing competition which she will judge. This is intended to inspire students to unlock their creativity!

We are grateful to Sam for her commitment to her link with our school.



Festival Author Spotlight:

Siôn Tomos Owen

Poet, illustrator and broadcaster Siôn Tomos Owen brings a unique blend of humour and heart to his work.



Known for celebrating Welsh culture and the everyday magic of life, Siôn's storytelling elicits laughter, creativity and inspiration.

We recommend his stories, as they capture the voice of modern Wales with style. If you enjoy poetry that's accessible, fun and meaningful—or you're interested in telling your own stories—Siôn Tomos Owen's work is a brilliant place to start.

Reading Recommendations from Pupils:

Looking for a book to get lost in this summer? Try **The Inheritance Games** by Jennifer Lynn Barnes—a fast-paced mystery full of riddles, rivalries and hidden fortunes. Or dive into **Amari and the Night Brothers** by B.B. Alston, where a magical world meets a real-world heroine on a mission. Both are perfect for long afternoons and are packed with twists, humour and heart.

Quick reads with big impact are always a good idea and the summer break is the perfect time for short, powerful reads. Try **Clap When You Land** by Elizabeth Acevedo—a verse novel about grief, family and finding your voice. Or **Boy Everywhere** by A.M. Dassu, which tells the timely story of a refugee's journey with compassion and clarity. If you prefer graphic novels, we've previously recommended **Heartstopper** by Alice Oseman, which offers a heartfelt and relatable story of friendship and love.

All of these books are ideal for dipping into during a busy holiday or screen break. Remember, reading just 20 minutes a day can make a huge difference—and might just be the best part of your summer. Visit your local library, check out a bookshop or swap titles with friends—you might discover your new favourite!

Wise Words:

**"Today a reader,
tomorrow a leader"**

Margaret Fuller