

mad about books?

Rachel Newcombe reviews some great books for children and parents.

Babies

Amazing Baby - Rhyme Time! and Early Days!

(Templar, £8.99 each)

These two are both giant tab board books that come complete with sound.

They're both packed with plenty to look at, touch and count, plus lots of bright colours to stimulate young minds. The sound is added via a button in the top right hand corner of

each book. In *Rhyme Time* it's a boing noise, like a frog jumping, and in *Early Days* it's the sound of a child giggling, both of which tie in with the stories. Both books are well-produced and provide plenty of action, variety and interest.



Age 2+

Sparkle's in the Dark

Illustrated by Bill Bolton (Templar, £9.99)

Sparkle, a baby glow-worm, can't get to sleep. Each night the BusyBugz hatch another plan to help her doze off, but nothing seems to work. Will

she ever get to sleep? It's a fun tale written in rhyme, but it's also a highly impressive pop-up book, which is full of vibrant colour, stunning illustrations and wonderful 3D images.



Fairy Hill: The Summer Ball

By Fran Evans (Piccadilly, £9.99)

It's the day of the Summer Ball at Fairy Hill, a special day in the fairy kingdom, and Rose Fairy has been working hard at making all the costumes. She finishes everyone else's costumes, but is far too tired to finish her own. Luckily, the other fairies hatch a plan to ensure she does get to go to the ball. This is a really delightful story with the most exquisite illustrations. The attention to detail is amazing - every tiny aspect of the fairy kingdom, from the flowers and leaves to the tiny beads being sewn on their clothes, is covered in minute detail. There are some great characters in the story and their world is depicted to be a fun, happy and tranquil place. A very memorable book that is sure to enhance the way your child, and even you, think of fairies.



Age 4+

Millie's Big Surprise

By Gerard Rose (Andersen Press, £4.99)

Millie leaves her dressing up box open, so the animals decide to plan a big surprise for her. They dress up in wonderful fancy dress costumes, but Millie has a surprise for them too. With entertaining illustrations and a varied cast of animals, this is a fun and playful book for young readers.

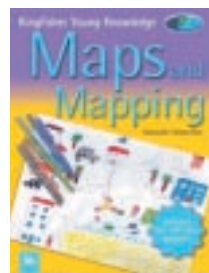
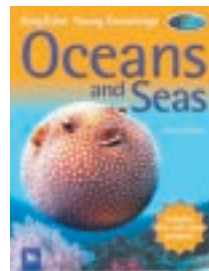


Age 5-8

Kingfisher Young Knowledge

Oceans and Seas, by Nicola Davies and *Maps and Mapping*, by Deborah Chancellor (Kingfisher, £5.99 each)

These highly illustrated hardbacks form part of the Kingfisher Young Knowledge series. Each title is packed with fascinating detail, offering clear explanations of sometimes tricky concepts, and excellent photographs and illustrations. Children are encouraged to thoroughly explore the topic and there are fun activity ideas included. *Oceans and Seas* opens up the world beneath the sea, presenting an intriguing look at the underwater world. *Maps and Mapping* explores all aspects of the topic, from understanding why we need maps, to using symbols and making maps. They're highly informative and a great source of facts and trivia for young minds.

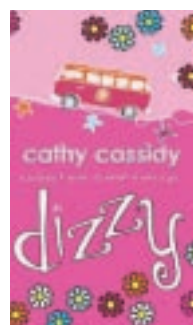


Age 8-12

Dizzy

By Cathy Cassidy (Puffin, £4.99)

Dizzy's mum left when she was four years old, but each year she sends a present for her birthday. Dizzy waits anxiously for the one piece of yearly post she receives from her mum and she treasures the gifts and letters. This year, however, it's different. Rather than sending a present, her mum, who likes to be known as Storm, turns up in person and whisks her away in the middle of the night. Together they set off to join the summer music festival circuit, which is a completely different world for Dizzy. Packed with colourful hippies, earth-loving people, solstice followers and natural healers, at first it's an exotic



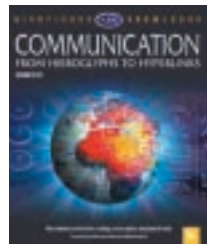
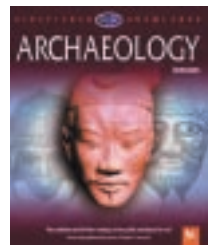
and new experience. But it isn't what Dizzy had expected, and neither is her mum. The book offers a fascinating insight into the world of non-conformist living and those opting for a different type of lifestyle. Cathy writes with enthusiasm, using fantastic descriptive imagery that captures the imagination. It's a touching tale that highlights the fact that sometimes things, and people, aren't always as we imagine. As an added touch, the book comes with a free bracelet.

Age 8+

Kingfisher Knowledge

Archaeology, by Trevor Barnes and *Communication: From Hieroglyphs to Hyperlinks*, by Richard Platt (Kingfisher, £7.99 each)

The Kingfisher series for older readers provides an in-depth look at topics, whilst offering a highly illustrated and wonderfully factual learning experience. The information in each book is written with clarity, there are colourful photos and illustrations covering every area of the topic, and useful websites to visit for further study. *Archaeology*, which has an introduction from Time Team's Tony Robinson, starts with the basics of what archaeology is and what archaeologists do. It moves on to extensive coverage of famous sites around the world, including the tomb of Tutankhamun, Pompeii, the warship Mary Rose and giant stones of Western Europe. *Communication* has an equally vast coverage, offering insight into everything from animal communication and alphabets, to the printed word, the Internet and censorship.



Elise and Nanou: Au Supermarché

By Blandine Robb-Carraro, illustrations by Julie Thilgen (£5.99, including CD).

Elise and Nanou are sisters and in this story, the first of a planned series, they're off to the supermarket. The book is designed to help children learn French and is accompanied by a CD with the French story on it, so children can hear how words are pronounced. There are helpful child-like illustrations in the book, which show their actions, and add to the learning experience. The book can be purchased at *Chapter One* in Wokingham, or online from the following website: www.frenchafterschool.com

