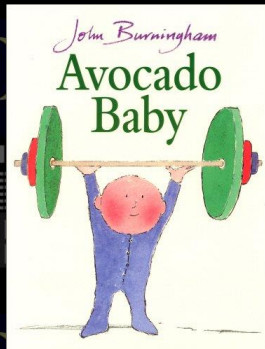


# Superheroes

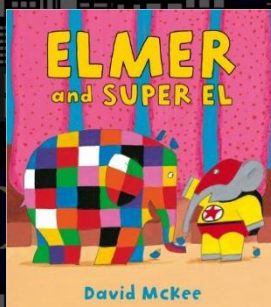
This is a popular theme with teachers and children in KS1. There are quite a number of picture books, such as Bob Graham's *Max* which challenge the macho superhero image although the shadow of Clark Kent and his transformation into Superman sometimes stands behind them. Most of the superheroes in children's books are, like their adult counterparts, cape-clad boys. But Origami Girl, Super Daisy, Rita the Rescuer and Wonder Doll are fighting back!



***Avocado Baby* by John Burningham**

**Red Fox 9780099200611**

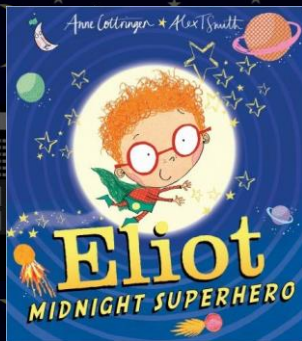
Baby power is something that exerts itself in all families - but in this picture book John Burningham has used exaggeration to make his point with humorous effect. Eating an avocado suddenly turns a weedy infant into a menacing force - so Avocado Baby can push the family car, chase a burglar and put bullies to flight in the park.



***Elmer and Super El* by David McKee**

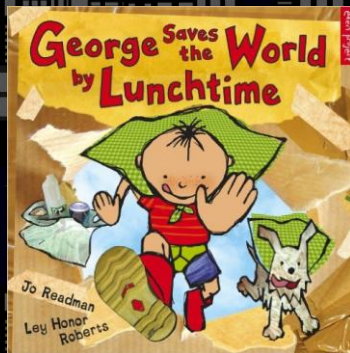
**Andersen Press 9781849394574**

Super El has torn his superhero outfit on a thorn bush. Enter Elmer to the rescue as he guides his young elephant friend to Auntie Zelda so she can repair it. On the way, he makes sure the other animals are distracted by his jokes and won't notice Super El's embarrassment. No attempt is made to encourage him to do his own sewing though!



***Eliot, Midnight Superhero* by Anne Cottringer & Alex T. Smith**  
Scholastic 9781407139166

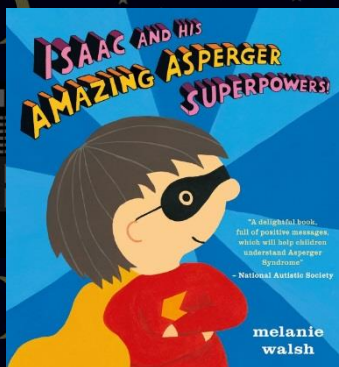
By day, Eliot is a quiet boy but when midnight strikes he becomes a superhero and is able to save the world from destruction! His amazing abilities as a champion swimmer, excellent sleuth, skilled jet pilot and highly experienced mountaineer enable him to save many situations. Eliot's exploits are played out against a background of collage pictures which could inspire children to design their own superhero adventures.



***George Saves the World by Lunchtime* by Jo Readman and Ley Honor Roberts**

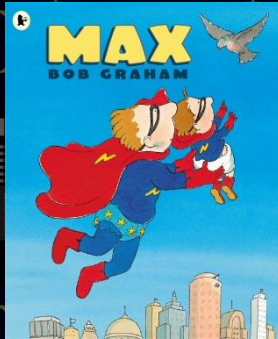
Eden Project 9781903919507

George's Grandpa shows him how he can be a real superhero and save the world by putting into practice the four Rs – reduce, re-use, repair, recycle. The collage pictures incorporating photos show them having fun sorting out clothes for the charity shop, smashing bottles at the recycling centre and visiting a farmers' market.



***Isaac and his Amazing Asperger Superpowers!* by Melanie Walsh**  
Walker 9781406344455

Isaac has Asperger's syndrome which sometimes means other children don't understand his behaviour. He interprets his autism positively, seeing his skills as 'special superpowers' that make him 'slightly different'. He can remember loads of interesting facts, he has lots of energy (although he doesn't like to play football as 'superheroes don't like sticky mud') and he is fearless at telling people just what he is thinking. Isaac is happy to tell people about himself so that they can understand him.



**Max by Bob Graham**

**Walker 9780744598278**

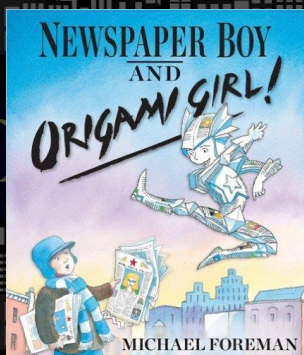
Max is having problems following in the footsteps (or should it be the flightpath?) of his superhero family, in this superbly drawn story which draws on many of the conventions of comic strip. Eventually, he finds he can fulfil his role in life as 'a small hero doing quiet deeds'.



**Nat Fantastic and the Brave Knights of Old by Giles Andreae and Katharine McEwen**

**Orchard 9781408305188**

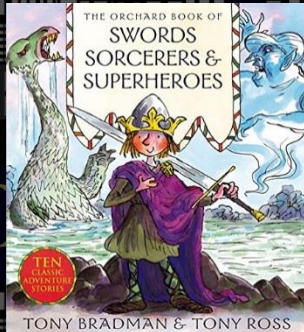
Every time Nat sneezes FLASH! BANG! WHIZZ! KABOOM! Nat Fantastic's in the room! He travels to medieval times and becomes a brave knight, performing deeds of derring do. He defeats the Black Knight, drives the baddies out of a castle and ends up taking part in a feast featuring his favourite food – sausages!



**Newspaper Boy and Origami Girl! by Michael Foreman**

**Andersen Press 9781849395199**

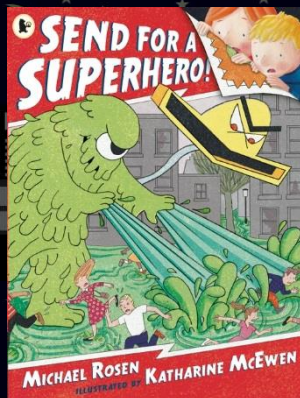
A homeless boy who sells newspapers on the streets is robbed by a gang of bullies but in this empowering picture book he does not stay a victim for long. Out of his bag unfolds superheroine Origami Girl and between them they bring to justice the Fagin-like crook behind the thieving operations. Michael Foreman has previously produced picture books with themes about conflict between countries. Here the underdogs overcome the powerful in a more localised urban setting.



***The Orchard Book of Swords, Sorcerers & Superheroes* by Tony Bradman, illustrated by Tony Ross**

**Orchard 9781408309216**

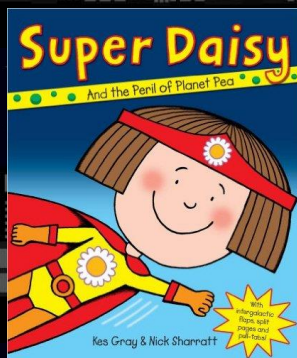
Superheroes from myths and legends are here presented in a lively and humorous way. They include Arthur drawing the sword from the stone, Robin Hood in an encounter with the Sheriff of Nottingham and Theseus braving the Minotaur. These retellings may inspire children to find out more about these heroes from days of yore.



***Send for a Superhero!* by Michael Rosen & Katharine McEwen**

**Walker 9781406355505**

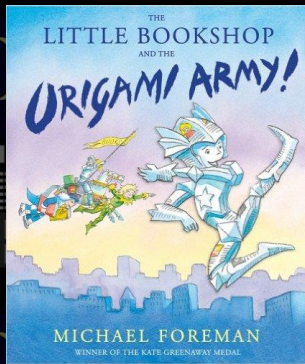
A comic strip about unlikely heroes is framed within a narrative about a dad reading a bedtime story to his children. Filth and Vacuum, aka the Terrible Two, want to pour muck and slime over everything and suck out money and jewels from the pockets of the populace. Who will come to the rescue?



***Super Daisy and the Peril of the Planet Pea* by Kes Gray and Nick Sharratt**

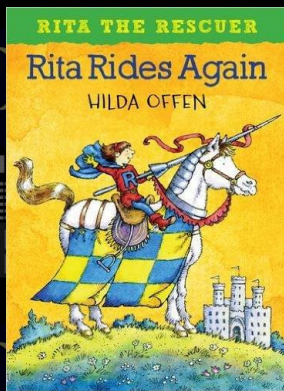
**Red Fox 9781862309647**

Anyone who has read *Eat Your Peas*, the first picture book about Daisy, will know that the one food she can't abide is peas. So imagine her horror when she envisages Earth on a collision course with Planet Pea which will mean peas with everything, depicted in a pull tab double page spread. How will the world be saved from this calamity? Of course – with a flip of a flap, our heroine turns into Super Daisy who with a 'Biff!' and a 'Pow!' rescues the situation in time for a pea free tea. Or has she?!



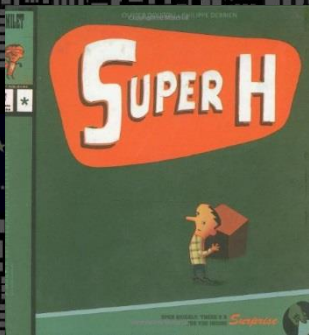
***The Little Bookshop and the Origami Army!* by Michael Foreman**  
Andersen Press 9781783441204

Newspaper Boy and Origami Girl swing into action again in this sequel to their earlier adventure. When an independent bookshop is threatened with demolition by a developer who wants to build a superstore, the dynamic duo summon characters from the pages of children's books in the shop and the public library to form an Origami Army. The characters prove that they are not only made of paper but of Ideas and Imagination and defeat the developers because of the affection and esteem in which they are held by the builders. Many favourite characters can be seen in the pictures, from Alice and Peter Pan to Elmer and the Little Princess, created by fellow Andersen Press illustrators David McKee and Tony Ross.



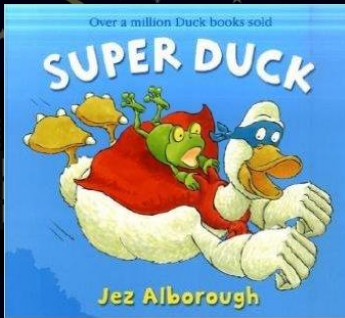
***Rita Rides Again* by Hilda Offen**  
Troika Books 9781909991224

When she dons her special outfit complete with cloak, Rita Potter becomes Rita the Rescuer. Apparently unrecognisable to her family and friends, she saves everyone from danger and disaster. In this episode of her continuing adventures, her Grandad takes her to the castle where he is a tour guide. Unbeknownst to him, she scares a ghost, tames a monster and takes on a challenge as a knight on the jousting field. And that's not all!



***Super H* by Olivier Douzou and Philippe Derrien**  
Milet Publishing 9781840593334

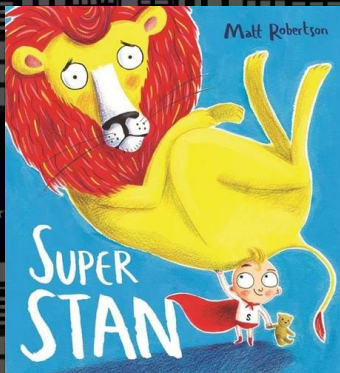
Henry takes delivery of a parcel containing a superhero outfit emblazoned with a huge 'H'. He feels he must take on the cool qualities that this clothing confers upon him. But his mother has other ideas and, ignoring his protests, drags him off to the shops where he makes a disappointing discovery.



***Super Duck* by Jez Alborough**

HarperCollins 9780007273270

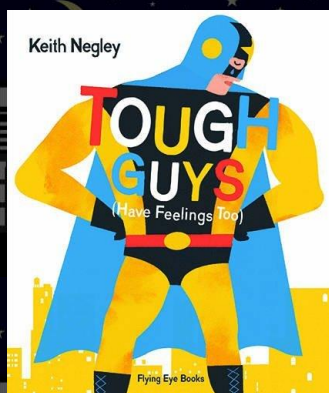
Duck insists that with his superhero skills and strength, he can make the kite Goat has made take flight. When the wind whooshes it away, Frog gets swept away with it. Will Super Duck be able to rescue him? The tale is told in a humorous rhyming text, as are others in this series which began with *Duck in a Truck*, and the comic strip style of the illustrations is very much suited to this story.



***Super Stan* by Matt Robertson**

Orchard 9781408337288

Whatever Jack does, his little brother Stan manages to outdo him, winning applause and acclaim. He can even fly! 'The whole world thought Stan was super' and mimicked his superhero style. Even on Jack's birthday, Stan gets all the attention by playing with the wild animals in the zoo. However, when all's said and done, Stan is the baby brother and there are times when only a big brother can come to the rescue, save the day, and be a real superhero!



***Tough Guys (Have Feelings Too)* by Keith Negley**

Flying Eye 9781909263666

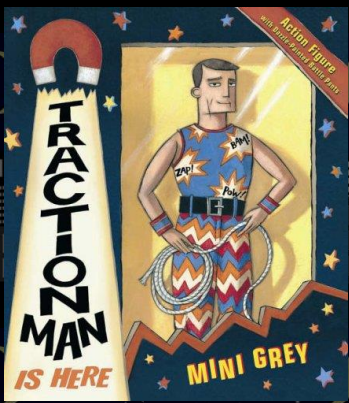
The strong show their sensitive side. The brief text applies across a whole range of heroes who demonstrate that it's ok for grown men to cry, whether it's from sadness, sorrow, fear or frustration. The book is arrestingly designed with illustrations in bold blocks of blue, red and yellow.



***Toys in Space* by Mini Grey**

**Jonathan Cape 9781849415613**

Seven toys are left out in the garden one summer night and WonderDoll tells them a story to help the hours of darkness pass. In her tale, they are taken up into a spaceship where they meet an alien who has been scooping up toys from gardens in search of his own lost toy. WonderDoll and her companions help him return the toys to their true owners but will the Hootopize get his Cuddles back? The answer lies in a dénouement in which it is necessary to read the pictures as well as the text and the boundaries between stories blur.



***Traction Man is Here* by Mini Grey**

**Red Fox 9780099451099**

A boy receives an action figure as a Christmas present and the first half of this inventive picture book shows Traction Man's exciting adventures in house and garden, sink and bath. Then comes the visit to Granny who has knitted a green romper suit with matching bonnet for our hero. Will Traction Man be able to overcome the embarrassment of this inappropriate costume and put it to good use with the aid of his trusty pet, Scrubbing Brush? There are two sequels: *Traction Man Meets Turbodog* and *Traction Man and the Beach Odyssey*

**See also:**

**Penny Holland: *We Don't Play with Guns Here. War, Weapon and Superhero Play in the Early Years*  
Open University Press 9780335210893**

**Vivian Gussin Paley: *Boys & Girls. Superheroes in the Doll Corner*  
University of Chicago Press 9780226130101**

**Steven Popper: *Rethinking Superhero and Weapon Play*  
Open University Press 9780335247066**