



# Ask Dr K Fisher about Animals

Books Reviewed:

[Ask Dr K Fisher about Animals](#) [1]

Issue:

[166](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Margaret Mallett](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

?Are you a dung beetle that?s down in the dumps? Or a bird that?s feeling blue? My friendly advice is only a letter away.?

This is a wonderfully original book which imparts information playfully using the device of Dr K Fisher, agony uncle to the animal world. To appreciate the ideas and facts here, children need to know something already about life cycles, habitats, camouflage, food chains and predators. Their knowledge will be refined and developed as they read; for example, Dr Fisher reassures the worried dung beetle that his role as one of ?nature?s rubbish recyclers? is an important one. Information is given with wit and humour, but it is never miscellaneous and there are helpful generalisations to promote concept development. For example we have, in the section on ?Dr Fisher?s Guide to Feeding?, a double spread showing animals that all have very long body parts to cope with the particular food they catch and eat. So children learn that an animal?s structure is related to its functions.

This book will also reinforce and extend children?s understanding of how journalistic writing and illustration works. This sort of textual knowledge is sharpened by the ?Top Tips? (e.g. ?Butterflies, DON?T move inside your pupa too much ? a predator may spot the slightest twitch?), the collectors? information cards (with headings like ?Habitat?, ?Diet? and ?Special body parts?) as well as the nine letters with their fact-filled pleas for help and the thoughtful advice that is given in return. Teachers would find the book useful as a starting point for discussion about the language of advertising: there are slogans ? ?any problem solved?, and witty use of alliteration ? the weaverbird who writes to Dr Fisher is referred to as ?Bungling Builder, in the bush?. With its quality information and its potential for inspiring children?s own writing and drawing, this largish, hardback book is excellent value for money. It would enliven the science section of any primary school library or provide a splendid gift for a young naturalist.

Running Order:

76

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[2] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/166>

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