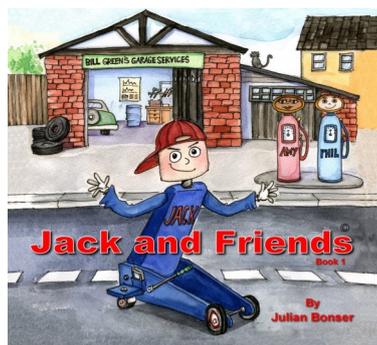


# Jack and Friends

## Book Review Feedback



**Jack and Friends** was crafted primarily to address the shortfall of reading material for young guys. **Jack** shapes-up as a strong, well defined central character, very much of the 'Thomas the Tank Engine' genre. He's animated, entertaining, heroic and believable.

To assess Jack's target audience appeal, Book 1 was piloted in a number of Primary schools, with roughly 470 pupils feeding back candidly on the character, illustrations and narrative. The collated stats point overwhelmingly to **Jack and Friends** having the potential to become a household name with young people.

The illustrations are just right Jack is funny I liked the book, who could dislike it? The book was awesome It has lots of morals  
There is nothing I don't like I'm satisfied excellent Very interesting ✓✓✓ It is a very thrilling book I really like the book  
Its words are very interesting It was colourful One of the best books I've ever read it is exciting I think the book was brilliant  
Lots of colourful pictures and several new words to learn every time you read a page you want to know more great pictures

Comments lifted verbatim from the review sheets - but with creative grammar and spelling corrected

### Who performed the book reviews?

Six primary schools were selected to take part in the reviews:

Lowther Primary School, Barnes, West London

Ryvers School, Langley, Berks

St Mary's C of E Primary School, Slough, Berks

Western House Primary School, Cippenham, Berks

Cookham Rise primary School, Cookham, Bucks

Dorington Primary School, Perry Bar, Birmingham

Students aged between 5 and 10 participated, and in total around 470 students were involved. (Accurate student counts at interactive sessions were not taken). In every case, a copy of Jack and Friends was given to the participating student as thanks for their valued opinions.

### How were the reviews conducted?

Two methods were employed:

1. Interactive classroom presentations.
2. Written review comments by the students.

Method 1 involved the author presenting 'Jack and Friends' to classes of around 30 students. Having introduced the book and central character, students were invited to take turns in reading a page. Sessions concluded with the author seeking real-time feedback from the students, who in turn were invited to ask questions - which they did with great enthusiasm. Nineteen classroom presentations were undertaken.

Method 2 involved teachers distributing copies of the book and asking the students to complete either a Book Review template, or express their thoughts and opinions in a freehand format. Many of the students included drawings of the story characters.

### What did the reviewers think?

Children take no prisoners, and their comments were refreshingly frank. Around 90% of the feedback could be ascribed as being wholly positive, and not one student dismissed the book out of hand.

When asked the key question: 'If you saw this book in a bookshop, would you be tempted to pick it up?' the answer was a resounding 'YES'.

#### General observations:

Jack appealed to the reviewers. They instantly took to a trolley-jack with human attributes, his social outlook, helpful nature and sage advice being well regarded. Jack's wacky adventures and lifestyle fired the reviewers, and the many and varied sketches of Jack included on the review sheets indicated they'd amply got their minds round this new character.

#### Illustrations:

Colourful, detailed, bright colours, pretty colours, nice. Feedback indicated that illustrations were effective in communicating the storyline. No criticisms made.

#### Narrative:

Reading abilities varied widely across age groups and schools. For 7-9 year olds, the 'Just right' category was generally favoured over 'Too hard' or 'Too easy'. Teachers endorsed the narrative level of 'difficulty', saying that the words *should* be 'challenging'. They also noted that the words and illustrations were 'well harmonised'. One student noted: 'I like the blurb'.

#### Reviewer Recommendations:

Page numbering would help - in Book 2 Amy and Phil should be involved - suggested dividing the next book into two age groups versions.