Sticks and Stones

Graeme is a 'short and skinny' 16-year-old who works in a Black Country supermarket and lives with his mother and father. He's an ordinary boy leading an ordinary life, but yearning to do something different - park gardening. The unexpected arrival of his renegade elder brother, Derek, inflames his desire for freedom, but he realises that a life of unconventionality is not for him. Forbidden by his father to leave his present job, he resorts to trying to get the sack, but fails. He triumphs in the end with reason and courage winning the day. The lifestyles (and prices!) are dated, but the pace is gentle and the reader is left with feeling of affection and concern for Graeme. The Black Country dialect might bemuse those unused to it but many - particularly 2nd and 3rd year boys - will empathise with Graeme's plight and be absorbed by his gradual development and maturation.