

The UKLA Book Awards Winners 2018

- *Independent publishers dominate in 10th anniversary year*
- *Sarah Crossan scores a second win with her novel co-authored with Brian Conaghan*
- *Information text shares the first ever joint award for 7-11 year olds*
- *Debut artist on debut list triumphs in the 3-6 category*

The unique UKLA Book Awards are the only awards to be judged entirely by teachers. In their 10th Anniversary year, their choice of winning books which, according to the criteria, can “*enhance all aspects of literacy learning*”

clearly demonstrates that teachers’ judgements are soundly based on pupil response. They are able to share the books with their classes and discover what genuinely works with young readers in each of the three age categories. The 9 teachers nominated from the 45 involved in the shortlisting, who came from around Cardiff and from Gloucestershire, formed the final judging panel and had the challenging task of reading all the shortlisted books in all three age categories, which meant nursery teachers reading fiction for teenagers and secondary teachers reading picturebooks!

For the first time there are joint winners in the 7-11 category. The judges found it impossible to choose between the powerful refugee story

Welcome to Nowhere

by Elizabeth Laird and the remarkable information text

Lesser Spotted Animals

by Martin Brown.

Colin & Lee: Carrot and Pea

, one of the first four books to be published on the brand new Two Hoots list has won the 3-6 category for debut author Morag Hood and proved unexpectedly effective in all school sectors.

Carnegie medal winning Sarah Crossan's writing partnership with Costa Award winning Brian Conaghan in the verse novel

We Come Apart

also received universal acclaim to scoop the 12-16 category.

The 2018 awards were presented at a special ceremony on July 6th at the UKLA International Conference, The Mercure Cardiff Holland House Hotel which began with a celebration of the first 10 years of the award with past winners including Frances Hardinge, Jason Wallace, Gill Lewis, Philp Reeve, Sarah McIntyre and Ross Collins being presented with Emeritus Awards. Other past winners sent messages of support including this from A.F Harrold:

'Congratulations on the first ten years of brilliance in highlighting and promoting the finest children's literature and here's to another ten years... Me and Emily Gravett's book 'The Imaginary' winning the 7-11 prize a few years ago was a delight. It was a book we were both proud of and pleased with and to have our belief in the story confirmed by not only the judging panel, but also the shadowing trainee teachers, was a lovely feeling. Thank you so much, for that and for all your hard work waving books around, and I hope we cross paths with another book of ours further down the path ...'

Student teachers from 19 universities around the UK took part in Shadowing the awards and read and use the shortlisted books on teaching practice in schools before having their own online vote to select their own winners. The 2018 Carnegie Medal winner

Where the World Ends

by Geraldine McCaughrean took the 12-16 category and Rob Biddulph's

Odd Dog Out

was the 3-6 winner. The National Education Union sponsors 5 student shadowers to attend the conference and they announced and presented certificates for the student votes to the authors at the ceremony.

For UKLA, giving classroom practitioners the opportunity to read a number of new quality children's books is as important as finding an overall winner. Research carried out by members of UKLA (Cremin et al 2008) clearly demonstrated the links between teachers' knowledge of children's books and the likelihood of pupils becoming successful readers. Despite this evidence, teachers are seldom given time to read new books or funding to purchase them when they do. As Awards Chair Lynda Graham said: "Over the last 10 years it has been a joy to involve more than 500 teachers from across the UK as teacher judges in the UKLA Book awards. In common with past teacher judges, teachers this year loved the opportunity to read and discuss quality, newly published books for children and young people, and delighted in opportunities to discuss their reading with group leader tutors from Cardiff Met, Bath Spa, UWE, librarians from Penarth library,

and to share these books in their classrooms”.

This makes them particularly useful as co-sponsor Deborah MacLaren, Director of LoveReading4kids said: “LoveReading4Schools and its sister site LoveReading4Kids are delighted to again support the UKLA Book Awards in 2018. Under new ownership the brand has been re-launched and the sites are being re-designed to bring them bang up-to-date and will continue to develop further to further support our mission to promote a love of books and reading by offering the tools, advice and information needed to help our members and browsers to find their next favourite book.

The fact that the teacher judges reflect on their students’ responses to the books gives these Awards huge credibility and trust so that schools know the books will be in turn loved by their own pupils. The awards are equally valuable for parents looking to support the school environment and further engender a love of reading at home.”

Tracey Parvin, President of UKLA said ‘We know that literature broadens the reader’s experience of the world and sense of the possible and thus should have a central place in classrooms and educational contexts. Children need access to a rich range of high quality literature and our awards over the past ten years have highlighted some of the very best literature available to children and young people in the UK. We are proud to be celebrating all these truly outstanding winners at our International Conference ‘

The winning book in the 12 to 16+ category is

We Come Apart

written by Sarah Crossan and Brian Conaghan. Published by Bloomsbury

Jess and Nicu meet when they are both doing community service. Nicu is expecting to return to Romania and an unwanted arranged marriage; Jess lives in an abusive household. Their love brings them together, everything is pulling them apart. Written in the voices of the main characters in very accessible verse, this poignant story is unforgettable. Judges were impressed by the ‘free verse which allowed the characters to come alive’ and enabled the ‘dialogue to read convincingly’

Joint winner in the 7-11 category is

Welcome to Nowhere

written by Elizabeth Laird and illustrated by Lucy Eldridge. Published by Macmillan

All twelve-year-old Omar wants is for his happy life in Bosra to continue. When the bombs start to fall, the family has no choice but to try to reach the safety of Jordan. Elizabeth Laird writes about important events with a passion and immediacy which will communicate to all readers. This is not

always a comfortable book, nor should it be. This world is not always a comfortable place. Judges were impressed by the way it showed children how very ordinary lives can be affected by extraordinary circumstances 'a tale that needs to be told'

Joint winner in the 7-11 category

is Lesser Spotted Animals

written and illustrated by Martin Brown Published by David Fickling Books

There are some animals that don't appear in most animal books. Martin Brown has brought together some of the strangest and interesting of these 'lesser spotted animals' here. Written in a witty engaging way which children will love, this book offers a great deal of information and celebrates the range of the natural world. Judges celebrated the 'deep learning by stealth' which this 'superb model of an informational text' encouraged

The winning book for the 3 to 6 category

Colin and Lee Carrot and Pea

written and illustrated by Morag Hood. Published by Two Hoots

Just because you happen to be a pea, is that any reason why you can't be friends with a carrot? Lee doesn't think so. This clever book explores the idea that diversity enriches our lives in a very simple way which children will understand. Illustration and text work together perfectly to offer a story which can be enjoyed in different ways. Judges commented 'Very simple, very funny yet with pathos, very cleverly written to develop empathy and show the key values of friendship'