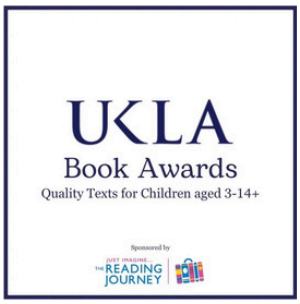
UKLA BOOK AWARDS MANCHESTER 2027

SUBMISSIONS CRITERIA



The UKLA Book Awards seek to celebrate children's books in order to:

- encourage teachers to increase their professional and personal knowledge of recently published high quality children's books that can reflect all identities and promote diversity
- promote the place of books for young people in all educational settings from nursery to key stage 4.

The books selected for the award will be titles that teachers can share with pupils as part of regular classroom experience, e.g. to:

- read for pleasure in the teacher's read aloud programme to the whole class
- inspire extended response from learners (through discussion, creative interaction or understanding the wider curriculum)
- be the focus of study (set books, shared and guided reading)
- enhance all aspects of literacy learning and literary study

Selection committees and teacher judges are asked to look, first and foremost, for well' written, engaging reads' and, where appropriate, outstanding illustration and design.

Eligibility:

Submissions will open each year for books published in the previous 12 months.
All categories of English-language printed books for children and young people are eligible, Submissions are invited in 4 categories:

- **Fiction and Poetry 3-6+**
- **Fiction and Poetry 7-10+**
- **Fiction and Poetry 11-14+**
- **Information Books 3-14+**

Books previously published in other countries and translations from other languages are eligible, but reprints and new editions are excluded. The book may be co-authored, but multiple-author anthologies are not eligible.

Submissions are invited in May of each year, with a closing date at the end of June.

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Criteria:

The award is given every year for books in which the language is powerful. Language can be used in many ways when telling a story, giving information or even when adding meaning to picture books. Sometimes it is the effect of the use of language which remains with us well after we have read the story or book. This award seeks specifically to honour those writers whose use of language engages the young reader in just such a way.

Language can be funny, expressive, descriptive, serious, explanatory, stark, telegraphic, observational but most of all it should be powerful. It must have an effect on the child reader and be memorable in some way because of the way it is used.

The current award seeks to recognise the use of language in a fiction, non-fiction or picture book from those books nominated by a wide and inclusive range of publishers of children's books. The specific qualities will be unique to each book; however, judges should pay regard to the following statements in making the award:

- **Fiction**

A key criterion for the fiction award is that the book should have something interesting to say and that it should communicate its themes in interesting ways. Books will be well-crafted not only at plot level but also with regard to narration, style, dialogue, lexical choices and recognise a broad range of perspectives, experiences and voices. The language may be poetic, humorous, descriptive, challenging or appropriately straight forward and it does not need to draw attention to itself in order to be deemed powerful. Specifically the award will be given for a book that the judges deem to use language in ways that enhance the storytelling.

- **Picture Books**

Picture books convey their meanings through the language of pictures, textual language and the interaction between the two. The award for picture book should take account of the relationship between image and word and the readerly gaps that are presented by this interplay. Due regard should be given to the reading experience for the child and while the language should be appropriate for the intended age group, it should not be condescending. The language might be playful or solemn, it may have memorable qualities, it might be patterned, the register might be formal or informal but the award will be given to a picture book that judges feel that young readers will want to revisit over and over again.

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- **Poetry**

Exciting and innovative collections of poems by individual poets are eligible for the book award. (Multi-author anthologies are ineligible.) The language used by the poet should be powerful, effective and appropriate to the poem. It should appeal to children and young people in ways that challenge their thinking, encourage their aesthetic engagement and appreciation, and inspire their own creativity. If rhyme and metre are used, they should be used in accomplished and imaginative ways.

- **Information Books**

The award is presented to creative non-fiction from a diverse range of voices and perspectives and which emanates from the writer's passion about a subject rather than an obvious curriculum objective. It may capture the reader's interest by using elements that are familiar in fiction: drama, tension, storytelling, character, description.
It will have a clear authorial voice which will engage the reader and help them negotiate the context without being patronising. Issues and themes should, where appropriate, be represented inter- culturally and with equality.
In judging the non-fiction award, account should be taken of the aesthetic reading experience, where the visual illustrations and diagrams should, where possible, represent a range of cross- cultural examples, and whether the submitted title is one that a child would read for pleasure as well as for information.