

James Reckitt Hull Children's Book Awards (JRHCBA)

James Reckitt Hull Children's Book Awards Team

Submission for the Harper Collins Award 2024
Community Reading Champion



Context

The JRHCBA was established 17 years ago as a reading for pleasure initiative for local schools. Since then, it has become a 'must-do' initiative, developing each year following evaluation and emergence of new research.

Research inspiration and rationale

The initial research inspiration for the JRCHBA was:

- Twist *et al.*, 2003; 2006: numerous studies evidence that primary-aged children find less pleasure in reading than many of their peers in other countries, and the situation continues to decline.
- Clark and Rumbold, 2006: a growing number of children do not read for pleasure.
- Clark and Osborne, 2008: children enjoy reading less as they get older.
- OECD, 2002: reading enjoyment was been reported as more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status.

Due to recent research (below), the approach for this year's JRCHBA has developed significantly.

OU/ UKLA Teachers as Readers (TaRs) findings (1-5)

- Farshore Storytime Trial 2023
- Understanding the Children's Book Consumer Nielsen's Book Data (2022)
- Cole *et al.*, 2022 Children and Young People's Reading Engagement in 2022

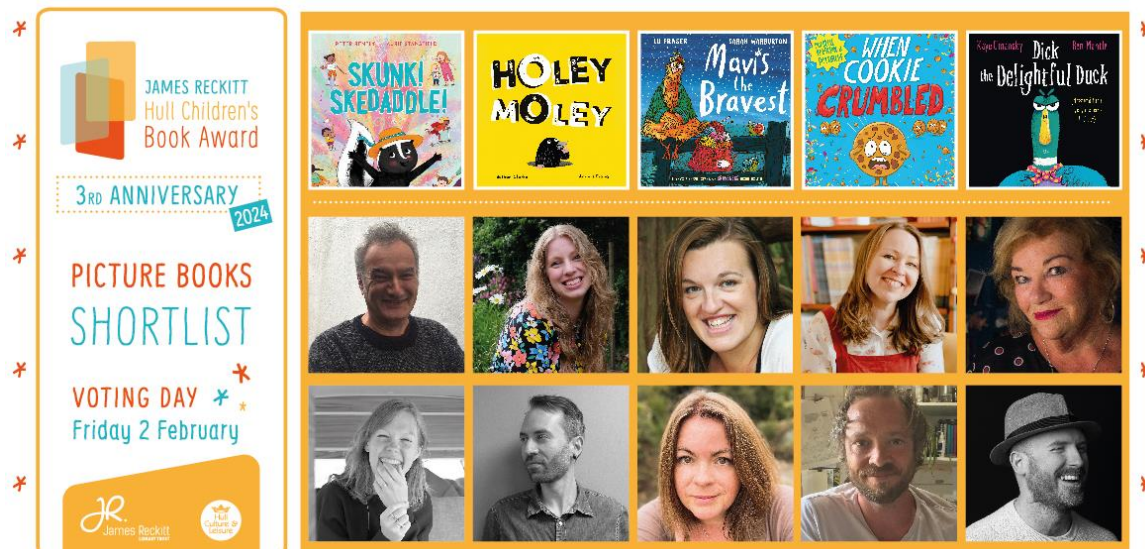
Aims

JRHCBA was established to foster a love of reading by introducing young people to new writers and titles they might not normally read. Since then, it has developed significantly.

In a city where reading attainment is low compared to the national average, and where COVID has widened this gap significantly, our aims are now to:

- encourage reading outside of school and increase the number of young people using public libraries;
- encourage young people to share their opinions about books and engage in purposeful 'book talk' (The Reading Framework);
- provide an exclusive opportunity for young people to experience a large-scale literature event and meet authors;
- develop teachers' knowledge to enable them to foster development of reading within their settings, make recommendations and talk to children effectively about books. (Medwell *et al.*, 1998) and our own local consultation also evidenced a lack of knowledge of age-appropriate, high-quality texts suitable for reading for pleasure, and a wide range of authors;
- provide classrooms with a range of high-quality, age-appropriate, engaging books (60% of classroom had no access to a budget for new books (Farshore, 2023).

Outline



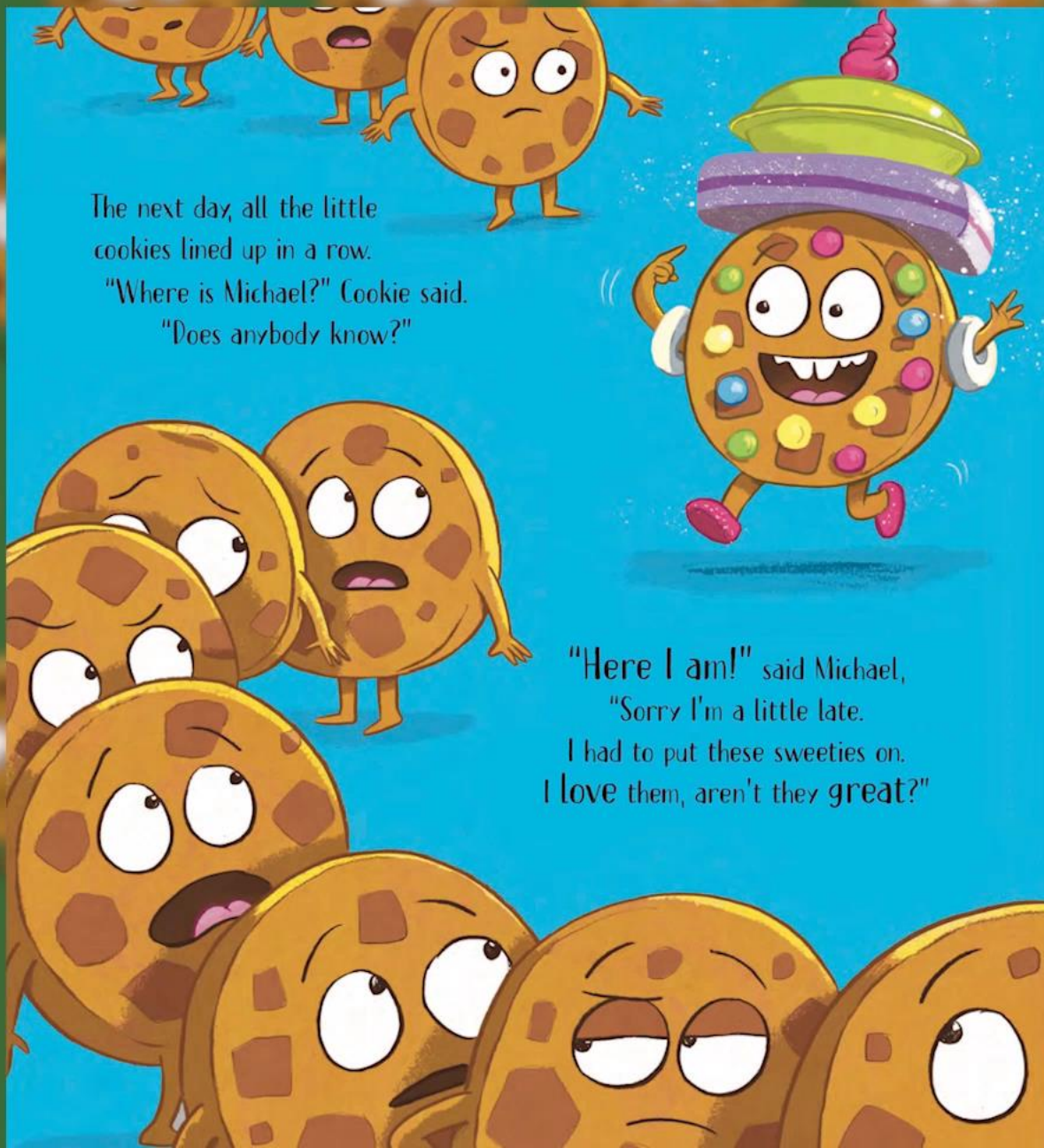
Picture Book Award

Taking place in *National Storytelling Week*, copies of each title are delivered to schools. Adults in EYFS and KS1 read one book to their class each day because 'when children are read aloud to, they are 'enveloped' in a risk-free learning environment that removes the pressure of achievement and the fear of failure, allowing the freedom to wonder, question, and enjoy.' (Cremin, T. 2024) By Friday, all children have listened to the shortlisted titles and vote for their favourite. Understanding the impact of multi-sensory storytelling, and embracing the digital world, this year we worked in partnership with a local storyteller and Youtube channel host, *Storytime with Hannah & Patrick*, who created read-aloud versions of each book complete with sound-effects and music – two films can be found on the next pages.

Sections of these were then placed on our social media outlets, and those of the schools, to involve parents in discussions about the Awards at home.

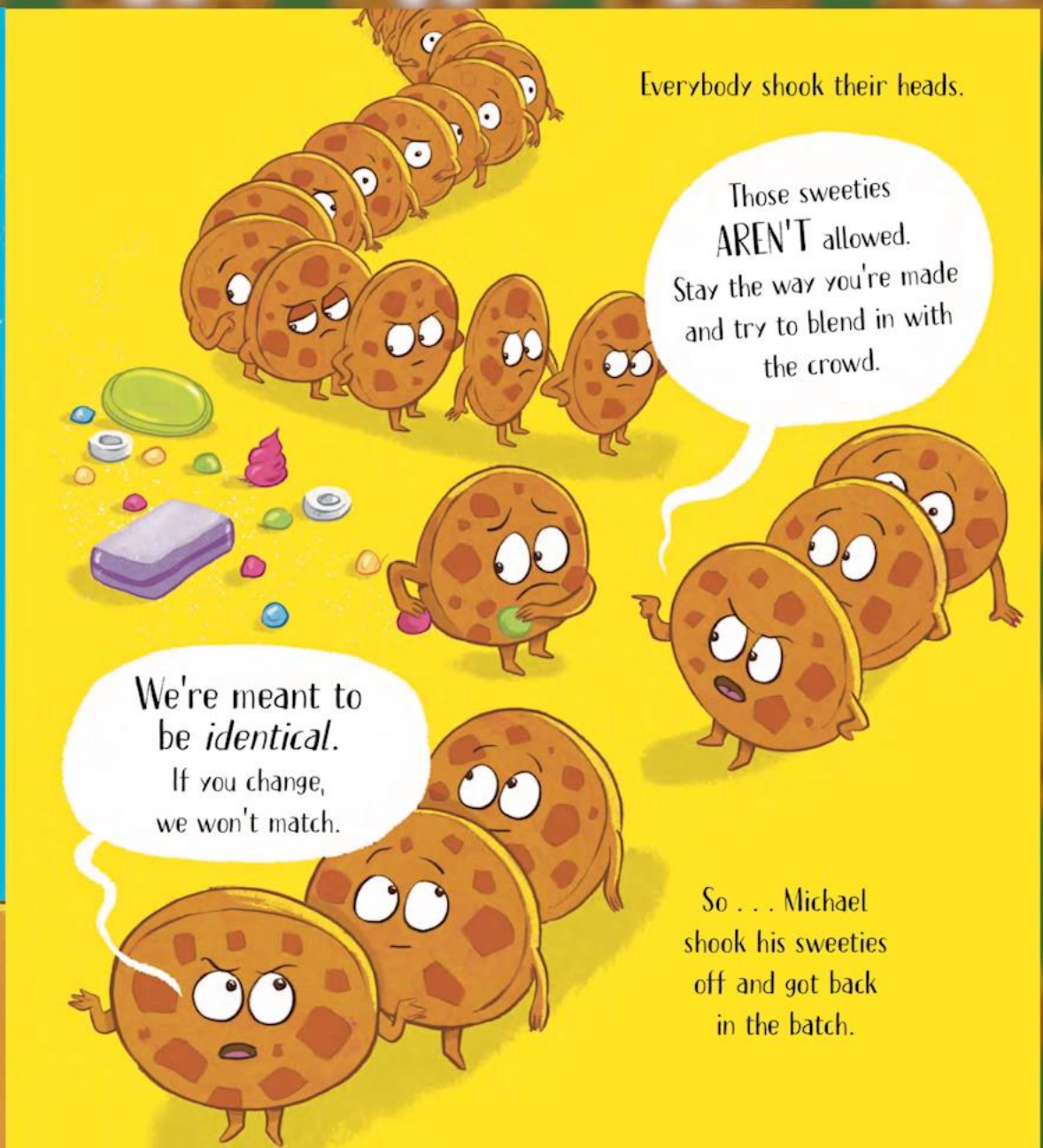
The winning title was announced via the JRLT, Hull Libraries and Hull SLS Twitter pages. Children then have the opportunity to meet the author and illustrator at The Big Malarkey Festival, our children's literature festival, in a 'Meet the...' session.





The next day, all the little cookies lined up in a row.
"Where is Michael?" Cookie said.
"Does anybody know?"

"Here I am!" said Michael,
"Sorry I'm a little late.
I had to put these sweeties on.
I love them, aren't they great?"



Everybody shook their heads.

Those sweeties
AREN'T allowed.
Stay the way you're made
and try to blend in with
the crowd.

We're meant to
be *identical*.
If you change,
we won't match.

So . . . Michael
shook his sweeties
off and got back
in the batch.

Outline



KS2 & KS3 Award

Copies of each of the five shortlisted titles are distributed to schools in January. Pupils have until the middle of June to read them. Over those five months, schools are offered regular 'Book Award Book Clubs' which provide pupils with an informal discussion forum, allowing them to develop social skills and friendships shared around something in common. Alongside this, all shortlisted authors visit schools to meet participants and hold an inspiring key stage assembly. For those schools unable to host in-person, we offer virtual sessions. In a bid to encourage reading relationships across Trusts, some schools host others in their MAT. Additionally, we run author visits in public libraries close to lots of schools to enable pupils to meet Book Award participants from other schools in different Trusts.

In June, two separate Book Award voting days are hosted in The Big Top at Malarkey Park (the festival site). The pupils get to:

- meet the shortlisted authors again and hear their last-minute attempt to win votes;
- complete challenges associated with the books;
- chat to other participants from different schools;
- buy other books by the shortlisted authors and have them signed;
- meet an illustrator and participate in a draw-along;
- hear an inspiring talk by the previous year's winner;
- participate in a live vote and watch the winning author be crowned Book Award Champion.

If they'd like to, participants also complete an Arts Award Diary alongside their reading, which contains short, easy and fun activities related to the shortlist. This is returned to us on Voting Day, marked and sent for verification. If successful, Arts Award Discovery Certificates are presented in assemblies.



VALENTINE CROW AND MR. DEATH

Jenni Spangler

What's this book about?

Valentine Crow's story begins with an ending... He and his best friend, Philomena, are leaving their children's home to become apprentices - but a mistake leaves Valentine assigned to Death himself! Soon, he's faced with an impossible situation, when his best friend's name appears on the list of souls to take. Can he fight Death to save Philomena's soul, or does fate have other ideas?

Hold on to that thought... Things are about to get grim...



Jenni Spangler writes children's books with a twist. She loves to take real and familiar places and events and add a layer of mystery and hocus-pocus.

Her debut novel *The Vanishing Trick* was selected as Waterstones Children's Book of the Month and is widely acclaimed.

Create an advert

Create a job advert for Mr Death, outlining what an apprentice would do whilst working with him.



THE HOUSETRAP

Emma Read

What's this book about?

Amity has run off into Badwell Woods. Her brother Claude goes after her, only to discover his little sister's scarf dangling near a house in the trees. Has she gone inside? He enters, not expecting a three storey building with NO stairs. And a party laid out when there's nobody else around. Only when the front door locks behind him does he realise it's a house trap.

And they've been caught...



Emma was once a very sensible biologist. Now she uses her transferable talents such as attention to detail, patience and fine motor skills, to extract Lego from under the sofa. And of course to write children's books.

Her other dream jobs include being an Egyptologist, or the first human on Mars.

There's always hope.

Design an escape room

YOU'VE DISCOVERED ANOTHER ROOM IN THE HOUSETRAP! DRAW THE ROOM BELOW AND EXPLAIN HOW TO ESCAPE.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND DIFFERENT TYPES OF ART?

LOOK OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF ART AT HOME, IN YOUR LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD, ONLINE, AT SCHOOL, OR ON THE TELEVISION. WHEN YOU HAVE FOUND AN EXAMPLE, WRITE DOWN WHERE YOU

MUSIC

PAINTING

ANIMATION

ARCHITECTURE

PHOTOGRAPHY

TELL US WHERE YOU SPOTTED THEM!



Hull SLS @Hull_SLS · Mar 21

We've had the BEST time- and more importantly, so have the children, so a HUGE thanks to you @simonjamesgreen 🙌👏👏



Simon James Green @simonjamesgreen · Mar 21

3 days, 12 primary schools... and a whole lot of love for Finn Jones!

I'm knackered, but it was so much fun! Thanks for making it happen @Hull_SLS 🍷





BIG TOP SUNDAY

- 11:00am - DUTY FREE THE PLACE
- 12:00pm - ADVENTURES ENTERTAINMENT
- 1:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO
- 2:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO
- 3:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO
- 4:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO
- 5:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO
- 6:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO
- 7:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO
- 8:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO
- 9:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO
- 10:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO
- 11:00pm - ROCKY A RAO GOO GOO





Jeffrey Boakye @jeffreykboakye · Jun 21, 2023

I love it! Copies of KOFI being gifted to the kids 🌟 #RapBattleSummer



Hull SLS @Hull_SLS · Jun 21, 2023

We are thrilled to announce that the chosen book to be gifted to all KS3 pupils participating in the @jrlthull Hull Children's Book Awards is the fabulous Kofi and the Rap Battle Summer by @jeffreykboakye @FaberChildrens @BethLouC



Jenny McLachlan @JennyMcLachlan1 · Jun 21, 2023

450 children laughing at Stink's antics 😄🐱🐶🦋🦄

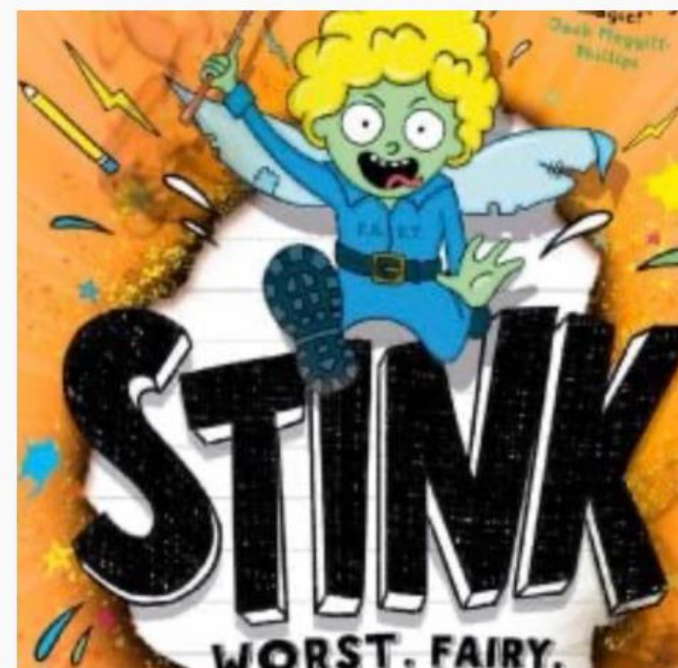
I'm absolutely thrilled that Stink has been chosen as a gift for the @jrlthull Hull Children's Book Award ❤️

@FarshoreBooks



Hull SLS @Hull_SLS · Jun 20, 2023

We are absolutely thrilled to announce that the book we've chosen to gift the 450 children at the @jrlthull KS2 Hull Children's Book Award is Stink by the amazing @JennyMcLachlan1 @hull_libraries





JAMES RECKITT
Hull Children's
Book Award

3RD ANNIVERSARY
2024

PICTURE BOOKS
SHORTLIST

VOTING DAY *
Friday 2 February



Priory Primary @priory_primary · Feb 2

What a fabulous week FS and KS1 have had for #NationalStorytellingWeek! Our votes are in... now to wait and see who the winner will be 📖🌟 @Hull_SLS @jrlthull



Priory Primary @priory_primary · Jan 31

It's Day 3 of the James Reckitt Children's Book Awards and Willow Class are very excited to read today's story. Will it take their vote on Friday? @Hull_SLS @jrlthull @thrivetrust_UK #NationalStorytellingWeek



Eastfield Primary School
@EastfieldPSHull

FWK enjoyed the first of their James Reckitt Picture Book Award books during story time 'Skunk Skedaddle!' We can't wait to read the other shortlisted books before voting for our favourites next week! 📖
[@PeterBently](#) [@Hull_SLS](#) [@jrlthull](#) #epsread



Cavendish Primary School @CavendishHull · Jan 29

2WB are really excited to be taking part in the James Reckitt children's picture book awards. Today we read our first book Holey Moley. We loved it and can't wait to read the next shortlisted title tomorrow!
[#jamesreckittbookawards](#) [@Hull_SLS](#)

 **Bricknell Primary** @BPSHull · Jan 29

This week is the start of the James Reckitt Hull Children's Picture Book Awards. Reception and Year 1 are excited to read all of the stories and vote for their favourite on Friday. @Hull_SLS #BPSReading



 **Buckingham Primary Academy** @BuckinghamSch · Feb 3

FS2 had the incredibly tricky decision of choosing their favourite picture book yesterday. All of the children took part in a democratic vote! We are very excited to find out the winning author! 📖⭐💙
#buckinghameyfs #buckinghamreading #buckinghamdpd @Hull_SLS





Endsleigh Holy Child
@EndsleighHoly

What a fabulous day!!!! In the words of Holly-“Best day ever!” Huge thanks to Amy and team for organising such a super event. @Hull_SLS Well done to @iDanielPeak for winning! Loved the drawing session @CalvinInnes



5:43 PM · Jun 20, 2023 · 1,035 Views



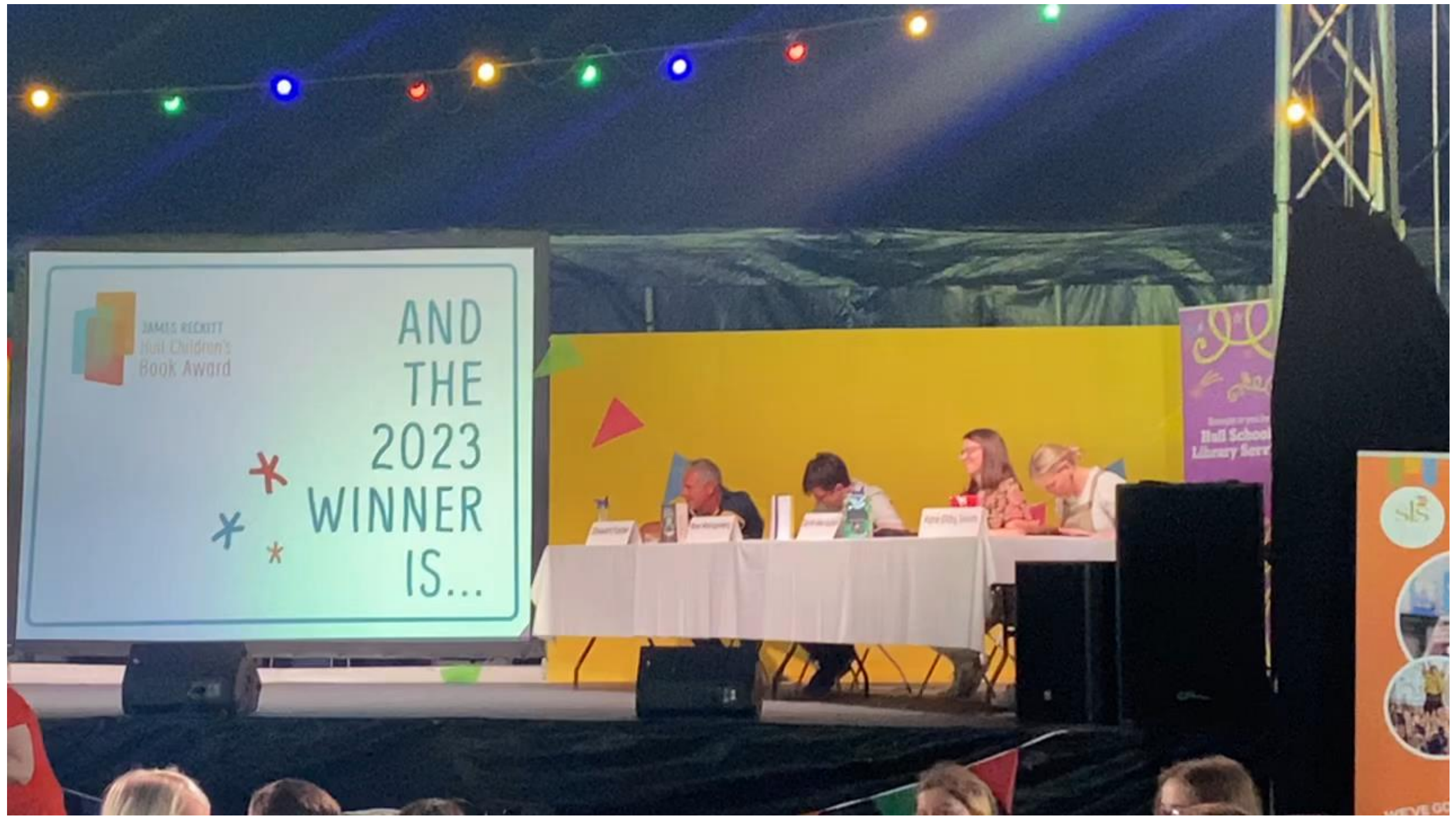
EPA Years 5 & 6 @EPA_Y5_Y6 · Jun 20

What a day! It was a pleasure for our children to meet such wonderful authors and get the opportunity to take a photo with the winner, Daniel Peak! #LittleHorror 🐼 @DeltaEstcourt



Griffin Primary School @griffinprimary · Jun 22, 2023

Year 6 had an incredible day with @Hull_SLS voting for their favourite book in this year's James Reckitt Book Awards. They were also thrilled with the winner! #gpsreading



I am new to being a Librarian and this was my first experience with JRHCB which I found exceptional. It was exciting, engaging and entertained the students. They were all thrilled at the experience. They loved meeting the authors, 'hooking a book', learning about animation and front covers. It was superb.

The children's awe at meeting real-life authors...PRICELESS!

I've even had students who took part in the KS2 book awards in primary school enquire if they can take part in the KS3 Book Awards. They said it was like a 'Glastonbury for kids'.

It helped children to develop independent skills for life. I set up and facilitated a weekly book club which the children organised and ran for themselves.

My Y6s loved the experience and developed their love of reading which I'm sure will continue into KS3 and beyond.

The impact on reading for pleasure has been huge: we've noticed that more reluctant readers have been seen to engage with texts (texts that they would not normally choose to read). Children are not only reading more in school, but also at home. When children have a couple of spare minutes in the classroom, they are voluntarily getting out their books to read. Children are also taking them home to read and enjoy without any prompting. Several children have told us how much they've enjoyed reading the books: they are always very keen to tell you about the book they have just read, and which book so far is their favourite. Children look forward to changing their book and seeing which one is available for them to read next.

Our children were fully immersed. We met authors prior to the event and had photos; super-fans were born! The child who created artwork for the authors had responses and gifts from two of them. She was delighted!

I think the James Reckitt is alot different ~~different~~ more different from the reading we do at school because at school its a class read and the James Reckitt you can read in your own time.

This year by joining the James Reckitt programme I came out of my reading comfort zone. I read so many books I couldn't have read if I didn't join the programme. I also had the pleasure of meeting one of the authors (Simon Jones (Mr)) who helped me understand how they get ideas and also the long process of sending drafts between the editors. It was an amazing opportunity and I will definitely be competing next year!

Reading has improved my vocabulary and spelling. I also like reading a lot more this year. The James Reckitt reading is lovely to do and all of the books are amazing.

I chose to be a James Reckitt because I absolutely loves reading books, but when I started to read James Reckitt I started to adore reading it. I just can't stop reading it.

Reflections on the impact that research had on your practice

This year, JRHCBA involved teaching staff from the outset: they are part of the longlisting process, building considerable knowledge of children's literature and assisting in becoming teachers who read. All nominations are delivered to teachers across the city. This new reading community reviews and scores the nominations, collectively reducing them to a longlist of ten, and then a shortlist of five. Due to the impact this has upon teachers' knowledge, this practice will continue.

Significantly, this process was imitated for children too. In a bid 'to get close to what the children want to read' (Cremin, T. 2024), in particular schools across the city, 'Mini Reckitt Review Teams' were established. This provided children with shared stories and provided opportunities for social and friendship development. To foster the development of 'Book Talk', staff from Hull SLS supported regular meetings of these teams to model good practice. Moreover, it provided us with an insight into what children **want** to read. This will be developed in more schools in the next Awards.

The winners of each category in this year's awards will be given a three-month residency in the city, which will enable pupils to benefit from in-person and virtual visits and workshops from September 2024 onwards.

Recognising the importance of the transition from Year 2 to Year 3, as pupils progress from phonics, a new category will be established, splitting the KS2 award into LKS2 & UKS2.

Plans are underway for our 20th anniversary, too, when we will host a 'Champions of Champions Award.' Pupils will vote for their favourite winning titles of the past ten years. Participants of previous year's Awards will be invited to local libraries to form Book Clubs to read and review the titles.

Since Mullis et al 2023 and Lindorff et al. 2023 reported that fewer pupils enjoy reading than in 2016 and 2011, coupled with the vast amount of research demonstrating the impact of reading for pleasure, this year we have introduced a more robust evaluation. For this year's Award all participants have completed a pre-evaluation. This will be repeated at the end of Voting Day to gain comparable data (per school) regarding reading attitudes and motives, reading confidence, reading frequency and library use.