

IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE ABOUT BOOK AWARD 2026

1. What is Book Award?

Book Award is a nationally recognised reading initiative that delivers comprehensive support for teachers and children in developing reading for pleasure. The basic idea – to find the fiction titles published in the last 12 months that Shropshire pupils aged 5-7 and 9-11 years love the most – provides a real purpose for reading and forms the basis for developing communities of reading within classes, schools and across networks of schools at local, trust and county level. Children read and vote for their favourite book from a shortlist of 6 books (Big Book Award - Years 5 & 6) or 4 books (Picture Book Award - Reception & Years 1 & 2). The shortlist is chosen on the basis of recommendations from Shropshire children.

Material benefits include access to leading authors, practitioners and academics in children's literature; sources of advice and inspiration for developing reading for pleasure; attendance (virtually or in-person) at the Big Book Awards Ceremony in Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury (UKS2); and the permanent addition to class libraries of multiple copies of the latest titles from leading publishers.

Book Award is launched to participating schools via a whole-day Teachers' Conference/CPD Training Day delivered by recognised expert practitioners. As well as providing practical information about the Book Award project, the aim of the Conference is to equip teachers in raising engagement with reading for all children, building purposeful 'book talk' within classes and schools and providing an inspiring enrichment to any school's existing reading programme.

2. Does Book Award link to the DfE Reading Framework?

Book Award can be used effectively to implement recommendations within the DfE Reading Framework guidance. Participating in Book Award fosters a sociable reading environment within a class. As the teachers, TAs and pupils are all encouraged to read the books on the Book Award shortlists, it is an ideal opportunity for encouraging ongoing, informal book talk between peers and between adults and pupils. All adults and children within the class have stories in common, giving opportunities for meaningful conversations about them. Multiple copies of each of the shortlisted books also allows pupils the opportunity to read independently or together.

3. Can we take part in Picture Book Award and Big Book Award?

Schools can choose to take part in either Big Book Award (Years 5 & 6) or Picture Book Award (Reception & Years 1 & 2) **or both**. Further, schools can then choose what level of involvement to invest in for Big Book Award. The costs for the two levels of involvement for Big Book Award and for Picture Book Award are clearly outlined under Point 8.

4. How many books will be given to our school – and do we get to keep them?

Big Book Award:

Schools will be **given** multiple copies of each of the six shortlisted titles, which will be kept by the school at the end of the project. There will be a book for **every pupil**.

Picture Book Award:

Again, schools will be **given** multiple copies of each of the four shortlisted titles, which will be kept by the school at the end of the project – enough for one book for every child in the class.

5. How many books will the children have to read?

We will ask children to vote for their favourite book from the shortlists. In order to be able to compare and choose between them and cast their vote, pupils will obviously need to read as many of the books as they can - at least 3 in order to make a considered choice. However, we don't expect all children to read all the shortlist books – although we hope that many confident readers will do so. You may want to set reading goals with individual children.

6. Will teachers be given any suggestions for classroom activities to help support the children's reading?

For both Picture Book Award and Big Book Award we will provide Teacher Packs. These are 'how-to' guides with resources and are full of carefully researched ideas and plans to help teachers deliver the project in the classroom.

7. The Conference/Whole Day CPD – Thursday 20th November 2025 at The Trinity Centre, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury

As part of this project, schools will be able to send up to two teachers from every class taking part in Book Award 2026. A place at a conference such as this usually costs upwards of £200 but is provided **free** to Book Award participating schools.

This year, workshop leaders will include: **Mat Tobin**, who teaches English, related Specialist Pathways and Children's Literature in both the Primary BA and PGCE ITT courses at Oxford Brookes University and also leads an MA/PGCert Course in Children's Literature and Reading for Pleasure; and **Heather Wright**, founder of Reading Rocks, which draws together and supports educators with a passion for reading for pleasure.

8. Book Award Competitions:

We will be running competitions for the children to explore their thoughts about the books. (While there is no requirement to enter these competitions, they offer children a range of opportunities to respond imaginatively and creatively to the books they are reading.)

Big Book Award (Years 5 & 6)

- An art competition: children produce a picture illustrating a scene or a character from one of the shortlisted books.
- A creative writing competition: children write a letter to a character from one of the six shortlisted books.

- A film trailer competition: children can work as a group or individually to produce a short 'preview-style' film introducing any one of the books.
- A poetry competition: children create a short poem based on their response to any of the books, which may be written or in the form of a song, a rap, or a piece of performance poetry.

Winners of the Big Book Award competitions will be announced, and prizes awarded, at the Awards Ceremony in Theatre Severn on 21st April 2026 and the winning art entries will be on public display afterwards.

Picture Book Award (Reception & Years 1 & 2)

We will run an art competition for pupils to enter individually and there will also be a class-response competition, which will take the form of a whole-class poem, dramatic piece or song. Prizes will be awarded at an assembly in your own school at the close of the project.

9. Do all schools attend the Awards Ceremony for Big Book Award (Years 5 & 6)?

The Awards Ceremony is for *The Big Book Award* only. It will take place in Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury on Tuesday 21st April 2026 from 10am to midday, to reveal the winning author and hear and see the shortlisted authors on stage talking about their books. Theatre Severn can accommodate a maximum number of 590 pupils and teachers and there will be considerably more than 590 pupils taking part in the project! So bookings for this will be confirmed on a first come, first served basis.

The event **will** also be live-screened to all participating schools, however, giving **everyone** the chance to watch and be involved - and of course discover which book and author has won Book Award 2026!

10. How much does Book Award cost?

Schools pay half of the cost of running the Book Award project. The other half is funded by grants from charitable trusts and foundations who recognise the educational impact of Shropshire Bookfest.

- Registration fee per school to take part in the Book Award 2026 Project:
 Picture Book Award (Reception & Years 1 & 2): £150
 Big Book Award (Years 5 & 6): £180
 Plus charge per pupil: £5 or £12 (see table on next page)

Big Book Award (Years 5 & 6) sample cost breakdown:

Option a) For one class of 30 pupils to be involved in **Big Book Award** the costs will be:

One-off school registration fee:	£180
£12 per pupil:	<u>£360</u>
Total cost:	<u>£540</u>

(This **includes attendance** at the Awards Ceremony at Theatre Severn for which there is limited capacity)

Option b) For one class of 30 pupils to be involved in **Big Book Award** (Years 5 & 6) the costs will be:

One-off school registration fee:	£180
£5 per pupil:	£150
Total cost:	<u>£330</u>

(This **does not include attendance** at the Awards Ceremony, **but the event will be live-screened into ALL participating schools**)

Picture Book Award (Reception & Years 1 & 2) sample cost breakdown:

For one class of 30 to take part in **Picture Book Award** the costs will be:

One-off school registration fee:	£150
£5 per pupil:	<u>£150</u>
Total cost:	<u>£300</u>

An invoice will be sent out as soon as you have confirmed your school's participation in the project. The invoice must be paid by **12th November 2025**.

	Big Book Award £180 Reg Fee		Picture Book Award £150 Reg Fee
	£12/pupil	£5/pupil	£5/pupil
The opportunity to take part in the only Shropshire-based, child-centred reading development initiative suitable for KS2 (Years 5 & 6) and/or KS1 (Reception, Years 1, 2) regardless of their reading ability	✓	✓	✓
Up to two teachers per class to attend Conference/CPD at The Trinity Centre, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury on 20.11.25	✓	✓	✓
Multiple copies (a book for every pupil) of the shortlisted titles which remain in your school fiction library at the end of the project	✓	✓	✓
A comprehensive curriculum pack and online resources, drawn up in consultation with primary school teachers in Shropshire, including a series of suggested fun and engaging activities which can be used throughout the project whilst the shortlist is being read	✓	✓	✓
Support from a Shropshire Bookfest Book Award volunteer throughout the entire project	✓	✓	✓
Unique opportunity for UKS2 buddy system to mentor KS1 pupils	X	X	✓
Opportunity, via live screen feed, for pupils see the Big Book Awards Ceremony unfold and to hear the shortlisted authors speaking live	✓	✓	X
Attendance at the Big Book Awards Ceremony at Theatre Severn on 21st April 2026	✓	X	X

11. Transport to the Big Book Awards Ceremony - Theatre Severn Shrewsbury, Tuesday 21st April 2026; 10am - midday

The cost and arrangement of transport to the Awards Ceremony are the responsibility of the school. You may wish to link up with another school to share transport costs. If transport is required, we recommend you book your transport ASAP, to arrive at Theatre Severn by approx. 9.30am and collect from 12.15pm onwards, to allow for possible meet and greet opportunities with authors after the event in the public areas of the theatre.

12. Timeline for Book Award 2026:

- **12th October 2025:** Deadline to book your school onto the Book Award 2024 project.
- **Thursday 20th November 2025:** Conference/CPD for teachers at The Trinity Centre, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury. 9am – 3.45pm
- **January to March 2026:** Children in Years 5 & 6 read the **Big Book Award** shortlisted books, comment, prepare their competition entries and vote for their favourite on **25th March 2026**.
- **Tuesday 21st April 2026, 10am – 12 noon:** **Big Book Awards Ceremony** at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury for participating schools and the shortlisted authors. The winning book will be announced and prizes awarded for the competitions.
- **Week beginning Monday 18th May 2026:** Multiple copies of the four shortlisted books for the **Picture Book Award** will be taken into schools by their Bookfest School Coordinator together with all the supporting materials. (**Note:** *Phonics Screening runs week beginning 8th June 2026.*)
- **From Monday 18th May to Friday 26th June 2026:** Children from Reception & Years 1 & 2 read the 4 shortlisted picture books, supported by a 'buddy reader' from Year 6.
- **Friday 26th June 2026:** Voting, art competition and class response entries deadline for the **Picture Book Award**.
- **Monday 6th July 2026:** The winning picture book will be announced. Prizes will be awarded to pupils for Art Competition entries by Bookfest volunteers.