

September 2025

Welcome to the 2026 Bookfest Book Award, with another exciting collection of new stories and picture books for your children to enjoy and a very interesting and informative conference line-up for teachers to be inspired by. Our Book Award project is at the heart of a wider programme of professional development, children's events and information aimed at supporting schools in developing reading for pleasure for all children. Recently endorsed by research from University of Worcester, the Shropshire Bookfest initiative is making a huge impact on children's reading in schools across the county.

Bookings are now open for Book Award 2026. This is our flagship event, a reading development project where children read and vote for their favourite books from shortlists of fiction titles published in the last 12 months. This project is split into two age groups:

Big Book Award for children in Years 5 & 6

and **Picture Book Award** for children in Reception and Years 1 & 2.

Book Award is hugely popular, with many schools returning and new schools joining every year. Booking, on a first come, first served basis, closes on **12th October 2025**, although capacity is often reached before this date.

The Book Award offer to schools:

50% of the cost of running the Book Award project is funded by grants from charitable trusts and foundations.

By being involved in the Book Award project, pupils will have the opportunity to take part in a nationally recognised reading for pleasure initiative.

Two teachers from each participating class can attend our CPD conference on 20th November 2025 at University Centre Shrewsbury.

Big Book Award (Years 5 & 6):

- A book for every pupil. Schools will be able to refresh their libraries with quality, contemporary children's books.
- A comprehensive 'Teacher Pack' on how-to run the project in the classroom, including activities based on the shortlist books.
- Online and in-school support from Shropshire Bookfest throughout the project.
- Expert-led strategies for getting children to TALK about books.

The Book Award project is designed to bring children together to respond to texts through poetry, film, writing and art and to develop a love of reading - **whatever their reading ability.**

BIG BOOK AWARD Snapshot of the Costs:

There are two investment levels for schools to choose from.

Based on a class (eg of 30 pupils) to do **Big Book Award**:

Option A:

School registration fee: £180
£12 per pupil: £360
Total cost: £540

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

Option B:

School registration fee: £180
£5 per pupil: £150
Total cost: £330

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

50% of the cost of Book Award project is funded by grants from charitable trusts and foundations.

- An art competition, with winning entries being publicly exhibited.
- A creative writing competition.
- A poetry competition.
- A film trailer competition.
- A platform for pupils to share their views on the shortlisted books with pupils across the county via the Bookfest website.
- Live screening of the Awards Ceremony at Theatre Severn on 21st April 2026 direct into your school.
- Tickets to the Awards Ceremony at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury on 21st April 2026 (Option A only).

Picture Book Award (Reception, Years 1 & 2)

- Comprehensive support materials (Teacher Pack) including classroom activities based on the shortlisted books - online and printed versions.
- Multiple copies of each of the 4 shortlisted titles for your class/school library.
- An Art Competition (every school will have a winner) and a Class Response competition.

What To Do Now?

1. Please read the "**Important Points to Note**" attached which sets out further details of the project and FAQs.
2. Please confirm whether your school will be taking part in Big Book Award and/or Picture Book Award by completing the **Booking Form** and returning it by email to your Bookfest Co-ordinator. **There is a capacity limit for this project, so bookings will be confirmed on a first come, first served basis.**
3. The closing date for booking your school onto Big Book Award and/or Picture Book Award is **12th October 2025**.

If you have any questions at all, the Bookfest Co-ordinator supporting your school will be delighted to answer them. Or you can contact the Bookfest team at info@shropshirebookfest.co.uk

In the meantime, we look forward to hearing from you and hopefully to working with your school and pupils on this exciting project.

PICTURE BOOK AWARD Snapshot of the Costs:

Based on a class (eg of 30 pupils)
to do *Picture Book Award*:

School registration fee: £150
£5 per pupil: £150
Total cost: £300

PROJECT TIMELINE:

- **12th October 2025:** Booking deadline.
- **20th November 2025:** Teachers' Conference/CPD Training Day.
- **January - March 2026 - Big Book Award** runs in the classroom. Pupils read the shortlist, create their competition entries and vote for their favourite book.
- **Tuesday 21st April 2026 10am - 12noon - Big Book Award Ceremony**, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury.
- **May - July 2026: Picture Book Award** runs in classrooms.
- **July 2026 - Picture Book Award 2026** winner is announced to all schools.