



# **The Spark! School Book Awards Trustees' Annual Report**

Period: 06-04-2022 to 05-04-2023

The Trustees of The Spark! School Book Awards present their annual report and independently examined accounts for the year ending 05 April 2023 and confirm they comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

There were no serious incidents during the period that should have been reported to the Charity Commission.

The Trustees have made consideration of major risks and are in the process of producing a risk register to record these, along with any required actions to mitigate their impact. These will be reviewed by Trustees and any lessons learned from risk events will be used to improve risk management practices.

This report was signed off by all trustees via email on 24-01-2024.

## Our Structure

The Spark! School Book Awards is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), governed by a charity constitution document dated 20 January 2022. The only voting members are its charity trustees.

### Trustee recruitment

Any new trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

### Current trustees

Mark Clutterbuck, 20-01-2022 to present (for up to five years)

Patrick Held, 20-01-2022 to present (for up to three years)

Matthew Brown, 20-01-2022 to present (for up to three years)

There have been no trustee appointments or resignations during the period.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to formally acknowledge the significant and ongoing contribution of Debbie Thomas to the work of the Spark! School Book Awards this year, an integral part of our team. We would also like to extend our thanks to a range of different volunteers, mentioned elsewhere in this report, who were involved with our awards this year.

## Our Aims

The aims of the Spark! School Book Awards is the advancement of education for the public benefit by the promotion of reading in schools through a set of Book Awards in British schools which:

- Introduce children and teachers to an increasing range of new books and authors
- Build links between authors and pupils by providing opportunities for virtual author visits and other contacts as appropriate
- Develop children's critical approaches to reading by providing a forum for children to vote on their favourite books
- Administer competitions for children to motivate and encourage their interest in reading
- Provide books for disadvantaged children, as identified by the school where they learn

The aims of the Spark! School Book Awards are achieved through the running of an annual competition for children in schools, where they vote for their favourite book from a shortlist selected by teams of volunteers from the education sector across the country. Books are supplied to schools through a discount provided by a local bookshop, and shortlisted authors provide a video for use in schools as well as taking part in online Q&A sessions with children, to help to build relationships between them. Competitions are organised for children on the theme of reading and a magazine is produced and provided based around the shortlisted books. Copies of books are also provided free of charge for disadvantaged pupils as nominated by teachers, purchased via donations from our Book Fund. At the end of the process, the books and authors are celebrated in a ceremony where the winning titles are announced alongside the competition winners.

## Our Details

The Spark! School Book Awards

Registered Charity No. 1199965

Address: 25 Denmark Rd, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 2SD

Website: [www.sparkbookawards.co.uk](http://www.sparkbookawards.co.uk)

Email: [hello@sparkbookawards.co.uk](mailto:hello@sparkbookawards.co.uk) (formerly [sparkbookawards@gmail.com](mailto:sparkbookawards@gmail.com))

## Our Activity and Achievements

### Charitable status

Having run similar projects over the last two years through Coombe Hill Junior School and Achieving for Children, we achieved charitable status as of 04-08-2022.

### New partnerships

Over the year we formed two new partnerships, which helps us to extend the reach of the Spark! School Book Awards to a greater number of schools and children. The first of these was an agreement with the Open University Reading for Pleasure team, who kindly helped to promote our awards as a vehicle for developing reading for pleasure, with their network of schools and teachers.

The second of these partnerships was with Bookmark Reading charity, who offered their Gold and Platinum package schools free access to two award categories of their choosing, in addition to an additional set of books in the selected categories. In total, 50 places were reserved, the majority of which were taken up by schools. Some of these also opted into additional, paid categories.

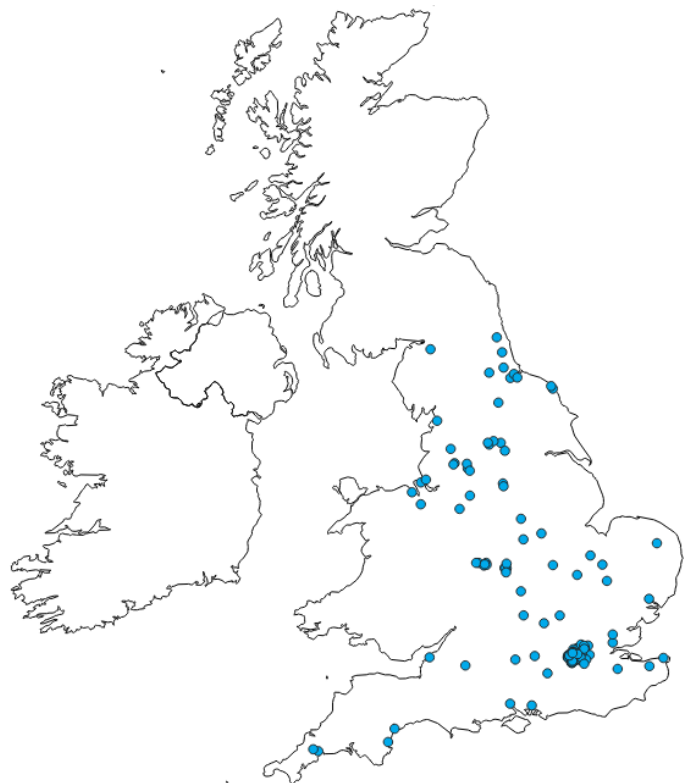
### School sign up

For the 2022-23 edition of the awards we were joined by 155 schools, which is a sizable increase on the 88 schools from the previous year.

This also represents a more diverse range of schools from across the country, with just 39% (60) of participating schools from Kingston and Richmond, where the awards were founded. This has been represented in the map shown to the right.

Our two new partnerships have undoubtedly supported the growth seen this year, with 42 Bookmark schools joining us and a further 28 finding us through links with the OU RfP team.

Across these schools the fiction for 7+ and 9+ were the two most popular categories, with 117 and 112 schools choosing to access them respectively. 88 schools opted into the picture fiction for early readers category, whilst 72 did so in our guest poetry category.



### Panels

This year our four shortlisting panels consisted of 25 volunteers from 20 different educational establishments, the majority of whom were school based. This includes 11 returning panellists from the previous year, including Rebecca Rouillard, Kingston Educational Trust, and Scott Griffin, Barnes Primary School, who chaired our picture fiction for early readers and fiction for ages 7+ categories respectively. We were also joined by Charlotte Hacking from the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) as our chair for our poetry (guest) category, who were remunerated a small amount for the author events Charlotte hosted.

We would like to extend our thanks to all of our panellists for their commitment to the awards this year, in particular to those who chaired the various panels and their schools for supporting them in doing so, as their contribution to the awards was greatly valued by everyone involved.

### Author events

In total, we hosted 28 online author events with 15 different authors this year. This meant schools could access events with each of our shortlisted authors, except one, who was unfortunately unwell and we were informed by the publisher that they were unable to participate in any events. Two live sessions were initially offered for all authors, although two sessions (for two different authors) were subsequently

cancelled as there were no bookings for these sessions. The recordings from these events were also shared with all participating schools, so they could be revisited or watched by those who were unable to make the actual events.

### **Books provided**

As part of our offer, schools automatically receive a set of the four shortlisted books for any category they participate in. Bookmark schools also received an additional set in each of the two categories they chose to access, as agreed and funded by Bookmark. In total, this meant we provided 1,888 books to our 155 participating schools this year.

We also offer schools and their communities the chance to order additional copies of the books at a 30% discount on recommended retail price for a short window, via the Regency Bookshop in Surbiton. We received additional orders from 38 schools, who ordered a combined 3,423 additional this year. The 2021-22 Spark! School of the Year also chose to put their £100 prize for books towards additional copies of this year's shortlisted titles, ordering a further 18 books.

Overall, this meant we helped to distribute 5,329 books to 155 school communities this year, not including those outlined below through our charitable Book Fund.

### **Spark! Book Fund**

The aim of our Spark! Book Fund is to ensure that everyone is included in our awards, particularly those with lesser access to the shortlisted books. All of the funds donated are used to purchase additional copies of these books and give them to disadvantaged pupils nominated by teachers in participating schools.

In total, we received £4,791.28 in donations over the financial year to be used towards our charitable aims. This consisted of £3,075 from the Brother's Trust, a £1,000 direct donation from an individual known to the organisation and £716.28 from our JustGiving page, after fees had been deducted.

This generosity allowed us to provide a set of shortlisted books in a selected category to all of the disadvantaged children nominated by their teachers. In total, we provided 620 books to 155 children, in 35 participating schools. Twelve further books were also provided to The Good Samaritan Primary School in Kibera, Kenya.

As there were funds remaining after these books had been provided, we went out to schools once again to try and get further nominations from the schools who hadn't already made them. This resulted in a further 60 children put forward from twelve additional schools and three who had already made some nominations. These 240 books will be distributed early in the 2023-24 financial year.

In total, £3,392.20 of the donations received had been used to provide books for disadvantaged pupils, which will rise to £4,715.20 with the additional order in the next financial year. This leaves £76.08 that will be earmarked for the same purpose in the following award cycle. It is too early to determine the impact these books have had on children, although it will be explored towards the end of the award cycle, in June. One school did, however, provide the following feedback in an email shortly after receiving the books:

***"We are delighted to be taking part in the awards this year and think that the donation of books to nominated pupils is such a wonderful addition to the process for those who need support the most."***

### **Competitions**

Five winners were selected across the four age categories, with each receiving a variety of prizes including a £15 book voucher. Either further runners up were awarded a £10 book voucher.

Our main competitions will run from March to June 2023, with the winners announced as part of our online award ceremony.

## Our Future Plans

Once we have completed the 2022-23 awards, we hope to collect valuable feedback from participating schools on the impact of the awards on their children, what worked well and what we could improve further. This will take place in June, shortly after our award ceremony has taken place.

Beyond this, we also hope to refresh our annual guest category, in addition to extending into a completely new secondary age range.

### **Guest category**

Each year we hope to engage children and teachers with a broader range of types of children's literature, via our annual guest category. As previously mentioned, this year's category was poetry by a single or pair of authors, with our guest panel chair Charlotte Hacking from CLPE, which 72 schools signed up for.

Our plan for 2023-24 is for this category to be focused on graphic novels and Richard Ruddick has been approached as the potential panel chair.

### **Secondary (Fiction for ages 11+) category**

Now that we are established for the primary age range, we are also looking to move into the lower secondary phase, so we can engage a wider range of children, although we are hoping that some primary schools engage with the category for some of their more mature readers.

We feel that now is the right time to do this, partly due to the greater focus on reading in secondary schools following the increased focus and reports on secondary reading, from Ofsted and the Department for Education, but also because there will now be two cohorts of pupils who have previously experienced and enjoyed the awards in a number of secondary schools.

We acknowledge, however, that the secondary model will need to look different to the primary model and this is something we consider, prior to taking it forward. The financing will also be a key factor as, due to their size, we will inevitably have fewer secondary schools taking part and need to ensure we can remain financially viable.

## Our Finances

### The Spark! School Book Awards

Charity no. 1199965

#### Receipts and payments accounts

Period: 06-04-2022 to 05-04-2023

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
<strong>Receipts</strong>			
Donations and grants		£13,091	
Participation fees	£12,460		
Misc. income	£1,572		
<strong>Sub total</strong>	<strong>£14,032</strong>	<strong>£13,091</strong>	<strong>£27,123</strong>
<strong>Payments</strong>			
Author events	£333	£167	
Book fund		£3,392	
Books	£6,928	£3,762	
Book deliveries	£236	£118	
Marketing & design	£526	£263	
Postage & packaging	£558	£279	
Misc. expenses	£140	£70	
<strong>Sub total</strong>	<strong>£8,721</strong>	<strong>£8,051</strong>	<strong>£16,772</strong>
<strong>Assets</strong>			
Not applicable	£0	£0	£0
<strong>Liabilities</strong>			
Not applicable	£0	£0	£0
<strong>Net total</strong>	<strong>£5,312</strong>	<strong>£5,040</strong>	<strong>£10,351</strong>
Cash funds last year end	£1,600	£0	£1,600
<strong>Cash funds this year end</strong>	<strong>£6,911</strong>	<strong>£5,040</strong>	<strong>£11,951</strong>

#### Notes

- The Charity was registered part way through the period, on 04-08-2022.
- The Charity holds no assets or liabilities beyond those stated above.
- Payments have been manually adjusted in a proportional manner split between unrestricted and eligible restricted funds, where the purpose was not specified beyond delivering the awards.

## Reserves

As the award cycle runs across the financial year end, the majority of funds carried over are projected to be used, either for the current cycle or as additional marketing at the start of the new cycle. The Charity is not yet in a position to hold reserves but we hope to revisit this position in the future, as we continue to grow, and will review our reserves policy as appropriate.

## Signed

Three handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'M Clutterbuck', the second is 'Patrick Held', and the third is 'Matt Brown'.

Mark Clutterbuck, Patrick Held and Matt Brown, 24-01-2024

## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Spark! Schools Book Awards

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 5th April 2023.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

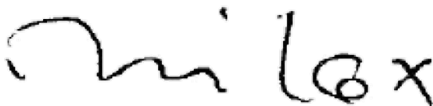
### Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tomas Wilcox'.

Tomas Wilcox FCIE

Date: 24th January 2024



**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

The Spark! School Book Awards

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

05 April 2023

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1199965

**Set out on pages**

Above

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **05/04/23**.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

24/01/24

**Name:**

Tomas Wilcox

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

FCIE

**Address:**

Counterculture Partnership LLP

Unit 115 Ducie House, Ducie Street

Manchester, M1 2JW

**Section B**

**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).



Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

N/A