



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

The Spark! School Book Awards

On accounts for the year
ended

31st July 2025

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 period ended **31 / 07 / 2025**.

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 (other than that disclosed below *) 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

23/02/2026

Name:

Tomas Wilcox

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

FCIE

Address:

Counterculture Partnership LLP

23 St Leonard Road, Bexhill-on-Sea

East Sussex, TN40 1HH

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



The Spark! School Book Awards Trustees' Annual Report

Period: 01-08-2024 to 31-07-2025

The Trustees of The Spark! School Book Awards present their annual report and independently examined accounts for the period ending 31 July 2025 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, 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 initially signed off by all Trustees via electronic communication on 24-11-2025.

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 to 20-01-2027)

Patrick Held, 20-01-2022 to present (renewed this period to 20-01-2028)

Matthew Brown, 20-01-2022 to present (renewed this period to 20-01-2028)

As noted above, two trusteeships were renewed this period for three additional years. There have been no other trustee appointments or resignations during the period.

Acknowledgements

We would like to formally acknowledge the significant and ongoing contribution of Debbie Thomas, Rebecca Rouillard and Scott Griffin (and their respective organisations) to the work of the Spark! School Book Awards. 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

Email: hello@sparkbookawards.co.uk

Our Activity and Achievements

Non Fiction category

Our guest category this year was non fiction texts, chaired by Nikki Gamble, which was received well by schools and had a large number of submissions from publishers. Due to the nature of these books, we made several changes to our standard eligibility criteria for this category, to ensure we had enough high-quality titles. These were as follows:

- Hardback books were accepted, although the maximum retail price (of all submissions) must be £16.99.
- Publishers could submit three titles per imprint (as in previous years).

Spark! Mark

This year, we successfully launched our Spark! Mark accreditation, which recognises institutions that actively promote reading for pleasure through engagement with the Spark! Book Awards. We purposefully kept the process simple, to encourage schools to apply, and only the lower tier Bronze accreditation was possible. In total, 17 schools were awarded this by the end of the award cycle.

School sign up

We were joined by 170 different schools this year - a very similar number as in the previous year. This total includes three schools who each had two categories provided by the last of the Bookmark funding.

Below is a table showing the number of sign ups across the different award categories, which were slightly lower for primary school categories but higher for the secondary school category.

Category	No. Schools
Picture Fiction for Early Readers	79
Fiction for Ages 7+	96
Fiction for Ages 9+	92
Fiction for Ages 11+	58
Non Fiction (Guest)	65

Panels

This year our five shortlisting panels consisted of 50 volunteers from 46 different educational establishments, the majority of whom were school based. This does not include our five panel chairs, one of whom is a Trustee, three of whom are heavily involved in the awards and mentioned previously in this report, and our guest category chair Nikki Gamble, who we would like to thank, for both sharing her expertise on non fiction texts as part of the shortlisting process and for hosting our online author meets.

We would also like to extend our thanks to all of our panellists for their commitment to the awards this year, alongside their organisations for supporting them in doing so, as their contribution to the awards was greatly valued by everyone involved.

Author events

In total, we hosted 20 online author events this year, one session for each of the shortlisted books. Where relevant, illustrators were also invited to take part in these sessions. The sessions were hosted (as far as possible) at a consistent time, although slight changes were made to accommodate authors presenting from a different time zone. Similarly, the sessions for the secondary category were held after the school day, when schools were more likely to be able to access them.

Books provided

As part of our offer, schools automatically receive a set of the four shortlisted books for any category they participate in. The eight 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 1,566 books to our participating schools this year. There were several schools who opted out of the awards at a late

stage, after the orders had been placed, so the books provided to them were redistributed to other schools.

As part of our agreement with Browns Books, a significant discount on additional copies of the shortlisted books is also available to participating schools. Unfortunately, it is not possible to know how many schools took advantage of this offer or how many books they ordered.

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.

At the end of the previous financial period, there was £210.93 of unrestricted funds remaining to be used towards our Book Fund (in addition to further restricted funds for other purposes).

In total, we received £5,185.64 in donations over the financial period to be used towards our charitable aims. This consisted of:

- £4,968.00 from the Brother's Trust;
- £110.00 from our JustGiving page, after fees had been deducted;
- £80.00 from participating schools as a voluntary contribution on sign up;
- £27.64 from Bookmark, who agreed to use the small surplus at the end of this year towards the Book Fund.

This generosity allowed us to provide a set of four shortlisted books in a selected category to all of the disadvantaged children nominated by their teachers. In total, we provided 964 books to 241 children, across participating schools.

In total, £5,300.86 of the funds available were used to provide the books for disadvantaged pupils, leaving a further £95.86, which will be carried over into the next cycle and used to supplement further donations.

Competitions and voting

Engagement with our pupil competitions remained very strong this year, with a large number of entries to both competitions, from a variety of different schools.

There were 18 winners across our poetry and main competitions, each of whom received a variety of prizes, including certificates, trophies, book vouchers and more. Runners up received a smaller selection of prizes. Our poetry winners also had the opportunity to record their poems, with the videos played during our award ceremony.

108 schools placed their votes for their favourite books this year, our best engagement ever.

Our Future Plans

Guest category

Following the success of the non-fiction category this year, we will be retaining this as the guest category in the next award cycle. Nikki Gamble, our guest chair, has also kindly agreed to continue in her role.

The Spark! Mark

Next year, we are hoping to extend our Spark! Mark accreditation programme to a higher Silver tier.

Early bird offer

The Trustees felt the offer of a free category for schools provided unnecessary complication this year and will not look to repeat this again. Instead, we are looking to provide two sets of books per category if schools sign up by a certain early-bird date. This should help schools to engage with the awards more easily, whilst also reducing additional costs they may require.

Book Fund

In previous years, we have heavily relied on the donations from Brothers Trust towards the Book Fund. We now feel they are in a stronger financial position and will look to finance this key initiative internally, although may reach out again if unforeseen circumstances arise.

Our Finances

The Spark! School Book Awards

Charity no. 1199965

Receipts and payments accounts

Period: 01-08-2024 to 31-07-2025

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
Receipts			
Donations and grants		£5,158	
Participation fees	£21,775		
Investments	£10		
Sub total	£21,785	£5,158	£26,943
Payments			
Author events	£2,565		
Book fund		£5,301	
Books	£8,794	£390	
Book vouchers	£714		
Marketing and design	£2,764		
Postage and packaging	£956		
Misc. expenses	£1,515		
Sub total	£17,308	£5,691	£22,999
Assets			
Not applicable	£0	£0	£0
Liabilities			
Not applicable	£0	£0	£0
Net total	£4,477	-£533	£3,944
Cash funds last year end	£18,177	£629	£18,806
Cash funds this year end	£22,654	£96	£22,750


Notes

- The Charity holds no assets or liabilities beyond those stated above.

Reserves

The Charity holds £3,000 in reserve to protect against unforeseen financial difficulties and to assist with planning for future growth. The interest generated will remain within the reserve account unless required.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Clutterbuck', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Patrick Held

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Brown', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mark Clutterbuck, Patrick Held and Matt Brown, 24-11-2025