



**The
Children's
Booker
Prize
2027**

supported by

AKO Foundation

Booker Prize Foundation
Somerset House
Strand
London WC2R 1LA

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Dear publishers,

Thank you for being part of the inaugural Children's Booker Prize. We're hugely excited to have reached this stage, and are looking forward to what comes next.

We've had quite a few enquiries about what we're looking for among the submissions – in particular, whether we're expecting 'literary' books or books that children will enjoy.

I asked the Chair of the judges, Frank Cottrell-Boyce, whether he'd like to give publishers clues to what the panel would like to see. He simply said they were looking for GOOD books. He made no distinction between books that were well-written and books children would enjoy, since he supposed those things to be one and the same.

It's true that this new prize is underpinned by a social mission: to create future generations of lifelong readers. That does not mean the books the prize rewards should be any less excellent: we feel confident that we can enthuse children if we are armed with the very best.

By 'good' or 'best', we mean books that readers will love, books that can be read over and over again or enjoyed just once. Books that contain great characters, emotion, wit, action, adventure, imagination, magic. Books that take readers to other places – in the world, in their minds or in their hearts.

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Although this prize is different from the adult Booker Prizes in some ways, it's worth saying that we ask judges for the adult prizes to keep their minds as open as possible, and not to set criteria too firmly in advance. (We are slightly allergic to the word 'literary'!)

The Children's Booker Prize judges are looking forward to seeing graphic novels as well as chapter books, other forms of illustration if it plays an important part in the storytelling, and translation if the book was originally written in another language.

A reminder of the judging process: the three adult judges will choose a shortlist of eight books, which reflect a range of experiences and cater to a range of tastes. All of these should be books the judges would be happy to see win. The adult judges will then be joined by three child judges – selected through a nationwide competition. Together, during an in-person discussion, the six judges will choose a winner. If the panel is split the Chair will abstain, ensuring an odd number of votes and putting the children in a majority.

In the course of setting up this prize we have consulted with small and large publishers, but since this is the first year it may be imperfect. We welcome your feedback ahead of year two. Please get in touch at CBPsubmissions@bookerprizefoundation.org

In the meantime, we can't wait to see what you send us.
And again: thank you!

With all best wishes,



Gaby Wood
Chief Executive
Booker Prize Foundation

A note on the call-in system

As you will see when you read the rules, each imprint may submit two books for consideration by the Children's Booker Prize judges. This is to ensure that three adult judges can each consider all of the submissions.

Each imprint may also submit up to five call-in letters. The call-in system has worked well for the adult Booker Prizes: judges understand that there is a cap on submissions and don't think of the call-ins as a 'slush pile'. They take these very seriously.

What they look at, initially, is a letter from the book's commissioning editor and – if the letter makes the book sound appealing enough – the first chapter of the book. If they like the first chapter, one of the judges will read the rest and decide on that basis whether to recommend that the panel as a whole call it in for consideration alongside the rest of the submissions.

What DOES make a difference is the persuasiveness of the call-in letters. So here are a few pointers – apologies if they sound strict! These are based on our experience with call-in letters for the grown-up prizes:

- The letter must be written by the book's commissioning editor, who should state in the signature who they are and which imprint they work for
- Please write the letter on headed paper, and state clearly at the top of the letter the title of the book and its author
- The judges want to know why you published this book. They don't want jacket copy or blurbs. They want to know why, in a market they can see from the rest of the submissions is crowded, you felt you had to publish this
- The judges are impassioned champions of great literature. By the time you write the letters you'll know their names and have seen their faces. They may not agree with you about individual books, but in principle, they're with you. Your letter should be a personal plea to people you know are likely to be on a good book's side.