

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BOOKTRUST CELEBRATES DOUBLE WIN AT THE PRESTIGIOUS MRS AWARDS 2023.

BookTrust, the UK's largest children's reading charity, is thrilled to announce its remarkable success at the MRS Awards 2023, securing two wins – the MRS/AURA award for 'Activation of Insight' and the MRS/ICG Independent Consultants award, a joint win with agency Untapped Innovation.

The MRS (Market Research Society) Awards are a celebration of the impact and effectiveness of research, insight, and business excellence. BookTrust's success highlights the organisation's commitment to creating real-world impact through innovative research and insight-driven strategies.

These awards reflect BookTrust's use of research to drive changes in the programmes it offers, going beyond book gifting and moving to a model which has changes in reading behaviour at its heart. Its new early years programmes, Bookstart Toddler and Bookstart Pre-schooler provide wrap-around reading experiences for low-income families which are showing real evidence of impact. The programmes were designed using large-scale family surveys involving thousands of participantsⁱ, observations and in-depth interviews with delivery partners and target families. As a result, 74% of families said the programme had prompted them to read and share stories more and 66% were encouraged to visit their local libraryⁱⁱ. 82% of families told us they learnt something new about how to share stories with their children.

Academic research is clear about the wide-ranging benefits of regular reading, from improved mental and emotional wellbeing to attainment across the curriculum. A child growing up in poverty who is read to at age five has a significantly higher chance of economic success in their 30s than their peers who were not read toⁱⁱⁱ.

BookTrust's new programmes are part of a long-term strategic shift to providing targeted support to children from low-income and vulnerable backgrounds as these children have the most to gain from developing a reading habit.

On the success of this ongoing work the judges remarked:

"BookTrust has threaded its insight the whole way through the organisation and beyond, to its 6,000 partners across the UK where it will drive further engagement. Impressive!"

Reflecting on the collaboration with Untapped Innovation, the judges said:

"This project shows the very best of what can be achieved when bringing together a bespoke team of independents – a fantastic creative range of research methods to drive a programme of innovation and long-lasting impact for the client."

Ruthann Hughes, Director of Research and Impact at BookTrust said:

"We are overjoyed and honoured to have won two prestigious MRS awards. These awards acknowledge the significant impact of our research and insight not only on our work with thousands of local partners and millions of children across the country, but also on BookTrust as an organisation.

This win inspires us to continue our mission of inspiring a new generation of children to enjoy books and reading, making a positive difference in their lives.”

Claire Goodall, Director of Design and Development said:

“Our research and evidence shows that just giving a child a book won’t turn them into a reader, you have to provide a range of support for them and their families from the earliest possible age. The transformational journey we’ve been on at BookTrust, embedding and activating deep-rooted human insight into the heart of all our work, is helping families to discover the magic and power of shared reading. Using books and stories as a catalyst, we are designing and delivering new service offers which have genuine, lasting impact.

A huge thank you to the team. I am beyond proud of their dedication, passion and hard work that has been instrumental in achieving this success.”

ENDS

Please contact our press office for further information: press@booktrust.org.uk

Notes to editors

About BookTrust

We are the UK’s largest children’s reading charity. We get millions of children reading, especially those from low-income families or vulnerable backgrounds. We do this because research shows that children who read regularly are happier and healthier. They form stronger bonds and relationships. They do better at school, are more creative and enjoy more success in life. This is why we work with families, supporting them to start sharing stories and books together from the earliest possible age.

Our support is based on robust evidence, designed to deliver reading behaviour change. It is developed in partnership with families and expert practitioners to create inspiring and enjoyable shared reading experiences for children and families.

Some of our key activities include:

- Bookstart programmes for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers, which provide families with a wide range of carefully curated and designed books, resources and support to help families start sharing stories from the earliest moments and to continue reading throughout childhood. Bookstart baby reaches over 90% new born babies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Bookstart Toddler and Pre-schooler reach nearly 400,00 children from low-income families.
- BookTrust Storytime, an interactive library experience developed to learn how BookTrust can best support families, especially those with lower incomes, engage with their local public library and develop an ongoing reading habit. The pilot activities were designed in collaboration with librarians, local authorities and families across the UK to test new ways of inspiring families with children aged 0-5 to engage in shared story experiences through their local library and to celebrate the best books to make sharing stories a regular part of family life. Just under 2400 libraries participated in Storytime in 2023.
- Our writer-in-residence programme which gives a platform to some of the best children’s writers and illustrators in the country to champion the power of books. Past writers in residence include Michael Rosen, Nick Sharratt, Onjali Q. Raúf and Dapo Adeola.
- Supporting the work of the Children’s Laureate (currently Joseph Coelho). Former Laureates include Jacqueline Wilson, Malorie Blackman, Anthony Browne and Quentin Blake.

About MRS

The Market Research Society (MRS) is the UK professional body for research, insight and analytics. Recognising 5,000 individual members and over 500 accredited Company Partners in over 50 countries who are committed to delivering outstanding insight. As the regulator, MRS promotes the highest professional standards throughout the sector via the MRS Code of Conduct.

MRS supports the sector with specialist training and qualifications, professional membership, company accreditation, cutting-edge conferences, glittering awards and advice on best practice. www.mrs.org.uk

References:

- i. BookTrust Family Survey 2022, online survey with 2,148 low-income parents / carers of children aged 0-7, across England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- ii. BookTrust Early Years offers evaluation (2022-23), over 600 parents / carers of children aged 0-5 in receipt of our Bookstart Toddler and Pre-schooler packs
- iii. Blanden, J. (2006) 'Bucking the trend': what enables those who are disadvantaged in childhood to succeed in later life? Corporate Document Services