



**Media Release**  
**Immediate Release**

## **Author Adeola Sokunbi kicks off reading charity BookTrust's author tour of Northern Ireland's primary schools**

This week, leading children's reading charity, BookTrust welcomed renowned children's author, Adeola Sokunbi to Northern Ireland to kick off the charity's annual author tour.

The 2024/25 school author tour, supported by the National Lottery through the Arts Council Northern Ireland, saw Adeola visit pupils from six schools over the course of two days to run reading and drawing workshops—all designed to inspire, engage, and help create the authors and illustrators of the future. The sessions were based around her *Destiny Ink* series, and every child received their own copy to take home and keep.

BookTrust is committed to helping primary school children develop a life-long love for reading and inspiring visits from authors are key to making this happen.

A recent survey by the charity has revealed that childhood reading enjoyment declines as children progress through primary school. The findings found that while 33% of seven-year-olds say they 'love' reading, this drops to 29% at age 10 and further declines to just a quarter (25%) by age 11.

Almost 3000 primary school teachers were also surveyed by BookTrust. The survey found that teachers' concern about levels of reading enjoyment among their pupils increases as children progress through primary school. Around 48% of Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 teachers express concern over reading enjoyment levels in their class, this continues to rise to 63% of Key Stage 2 teachers.

BookTrust research shows that children who enjoy reading tend to read by choice more often, for longer, and become more skilled readers and that focusing solely on functional literacy risks depriving children of the wider benefits of reading.

Children who read regularly experience a wide range of immediate and lifelong benefits. These include improved speech and language skills, higher academic achievement, better mental well-being, enhanced social skills, and stronger relationships. Reading also fosters imagination, empathy, and creativity. It's therefore vital that strategies to promote children's reading enjoyment are prioritised and that organisations such as BookTrust alongside children's authors provide the guidance and support to do so.

Reflecting on the visit, Adeola said: "I've had an AMAZING time in Northern Ireland, and Booktrust have been super welcoming and friendly. The children are lovely and have been really excited about the workshop. It's been an absolute pleasure to spend time with them and to see their wonderful monster doodles!"

**Kathryn Anderson, Senior Partnerships Manager for BookTrust, added:** "At BookTrust, we know that it takes a whole community to make a reader. If we want children to read for pleasure, we need to ensure that they're reading books that bring pleasure - children need access to a broad range of reading materials that channel their interests, pique their curiosity, and inspire them to want to read.

"We are grateful to Adeola, and Arts Council Northern Ireland for making these visits possible – we hope that the children who met Adeola are inspired to develop a life-long love for reading."

The schools involved included: Ballysillan Primary School, Carr's Glen Primary School, St Patrick's Primary School, Rasharkin Primary School, St Columba's Primary school and Kilrea Primary School.

**-ENDS-**

### **Press contact**

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### **About BookTrust**

We get children reading from their earliest days, especially those from low-income families or vulnerable backgrounds. As the UK's largest children's reading charity, we know that children who read regularly experience better mental well-being. They form stronger bonds and relationships. They do better at school and are more creative. This is why we work with families, supporting them to start sharing stories and books together from the earliest possible age.

We work in every community in England, Wales and Northern Ireland through over 6000 local partners to reach 1.3 million children every year.