



The Costa Book Awards is one of the UK's most prestigious and popular literary prizes and recognises some of the most enjoyable books of the year, written by authors based in the UK and Ireland.

Launched in 1971 as the Whitbread Literary Awards, they became the Whitbread Book Awards in 1985, with Costa taking over in 2006. The awards have rewarded a wide range of excellent books and authors across all genres.

Uniquely, the prize has five categories - First Novel, Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book - with one of the five winning books selected as the overall Costa Book of the Year. It is the only prize which places children's books alongside adult books in this way. The Children's Book category has won the overall Book of the Year twice. First by Philip Pullman for *The Amber Spyglass* in 2001 and by Frances Hardinge for *The Lie Tree* in 2015

Books are entered by publishers, and entry for the Awards closes at the end of June each year.

The submission criteria for Children's Books are:

"This should be a book of a primarily literary rather than pictorial nature written for children between the ages of 9 (confident readers) and 15. A collection of poetry or a biography is acceptable, provided it is written for children in this age group. Non-fiction (eg educational, academic and reference books) is not eligible."

Each Award is judged by a panel of three judges. The final nine-member judging panel selects the overall Costa Book of the Year. It consists of a Chairman, a judge from each category panel and three other people "who love reading"!

COSTA CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD WINNER 2019



Asha and the Spirit Bird by Jasbinder Bilan (Chicken House. ISBN: 978-1911490197; £6.99)

About the book: In an unforgettable adventure set in contemporary India, Asha is guided by a majestic bird which she believes to be the spirit of her grandmother. Together with her best friend, Jeevan, she embarks on a journey across the Himalayas to find her missing father and save her home...

About the author: Jasminder was born in India close to the Himalayas on the family farm. When she was one and a half her family moved from India to Nottingham. But India was kept alive by continuing to talk about the farm and all the funny things that happened there during big family feasts. As a young girl, Jasbinder always loved writing. In fact she can't remember a time when she didn't invent stories, but she never imagined that one day she'd write a story that would win a major prize and be published.

Judges

Charlotte Eyre- Children's Editor The Bookseller

Bali Rai- author Sevenoaks Bookshop

Danny van Emden West End Books

Shortlisted titles 2019

Crossfire by Malorie Blackman (Penguin. ISBN: 978-0241388440, £7.99) An extraordinary return to the world of the groundbreaking Noughts and Crosses series

In the Shadow of Heroes by Nicholas Bowling (Chicken House. ISBN: 978-1911077688, £6.99) Brilliant historical adventure set in the time of the Roman Invasion of Britain with 14-year-old Cadmus set on a quest which will lead to Emperor Nero and the far corners of the Empire

Furious Thing by Jenny Downham (David Fickling Books ISBN: 978-1788450980, £12.99) A powerful novel which explores how a girl's sense of self can be whittled down and what happens when she fights back against injustice