

Judges' profiles

Farrah Serroukh is the Research and Development Director at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education ([CLPE](#)). Throughout her career, Farrah has always been committed to amplifying marginalised voices and keenly advocated for inclusive practices both within and outside of the education sector. She is responsible for leading on the research and development strand of CLPE's work which informs the design, development, and delivery of the charity's professional development programme. She is the author of the CLPE's annual [Reflecting Realities Survey](#) and leads on the ground-breaking and award winning work in this area.

Imogen Russell Williams is a children's literature critic writing for the Guardian, the Metro and the Times Literary Supplement, among others. She is a former cohost of Down the Rabbit Hole, a monthly radio show devoted to children's books. She is also the author of children's non-fiction including The Big Book of the UK, The Big Book of Slimy Things, and Great Britons: 50 Amazing People Who Have Called Britain Home. For adults, she is the author of the poetry collection The Women Left Behind.

Struan Murray won the 2021 Branford Boase Award with his novel Orphans of the Tide, which also won the 2017 Bath Children's Novel Award. He is a scientist as well as an author, and lectures in Biochemistry at the University of Oxford. He took up writing as a form of stress relief after too many of his experiments went disastrously wrong. Born in Edinburgh, the youngest of a rowdy family of redheads, he now lives in Oxford with his partner. He hopes to one day own many cats.

Sonia Thompson is the Headteacher/Director at St Matthew's C.E. Primary Research School in Nechells, Birmingham. Sonia was part of the original United Kingdom Literacy association (UKLA), Building Communities of Readers research. She is passionate about evidence-based reading for pleasure (RfP) practices and her school won the first Egmont/UKLA Reading for Pleasure Award. Sonia has run and now mentors OU Teachers' Reading Groups and was an advisor for the RfP website. She has spoken at various conferences about reading, including Peters Love Literacy and ResearchED.

Sonia is a co-opted member of the UKLA National Council, as a Teachers' Reading Research Group Representative.

Julia Eccleshare is a regular contributor to Radio 4's Front Row and Open Book programmes. She is the children's director of the Hay Festival and head of Public Lending Right policy and advocacy.