



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Big news for little readers: “Ten Little Ducklings” Named Book of the Year for Under-fives by BookTrust**

BookTrust, the UK’s largest children’s reading charity, has named *Ten Little Ducklings* by Lucy Rowland and illustrated by Aki, as the BookTrust Storytime Prize 2025 winner—celebrating it as the best book to share with children under five.

The rhyming picture book, published by Bloomsbury Children’s Books, captured the hearts of librarians, families, and early years professionals across the country, who voted it their favourite in this year’s competition.

The award announcement took place at a special ceremony hosted by BookTrust this evening and is part of the BookTrust Storytime 2024–25 programme—an initiative designed to inspire a lifelong love of reading by encouraging families to visit their local library and enjoy stories together.

This year’s programme reached over 2,500 libraries in England and Northern Ireland, engaging around 50,000 children under five. BookTrust Storytime supports libraries with free books, storytelling resources and activity ideas—making it easier for librarians to create welcoming, memorable experiences for families.

Research from BookTrust highlights that children who enjoy reading are more likely to form strong reading habits, and in turn benefit from: Improved speech and language development, stronger emotional wellbeing and social skills, better family bonds and higher academic achievement later in life.

*Ten Little Ducklings* reimagines the familiar rhyme by taking children on a playful hide-and-seek adventure. Perfect for toddlers and preschoolers, the book’s rhythmic text, bold illustrations, and interactive format make it both accessible and engaging for young readers.

**Lucy Rowland, the book’s author, said:** *“I’m absolutely over the moon that Ten Little Ducklings has won the BookTrust Storytime Prize. I’ve admired BookTrust and their incredible work for a long time, so this recognition feels truly special. It’s a real honour—thank you so much!”*

**Illustrator Aki added:** *“I’m thrilled that our ducklings are out in the world on their own adventure! Thank you so much—and long live the ducklings! Quack quack!”*

**Diana Gerald MBE, Chief Executive of BookTrust, said:** *“BookTrust Storytime is rooted in the belief that every child deserves joyful and inspiring reading experiences from the very beginning. We’re incredibly grateful to our library and local authority partners who bring these experiences to life in communities across the UK. Reading with children isn’t just a ‘nice-to-have’—it’s one of the most powerful ways to support a child’s development and future success. Congratulations to Lucy and all the shortlisted authors whose books will continue to bring families together through stories.”*

#### **The 2025 BookTrust Storytime Prize Shortlist Also Included:**

- *Whisper, Shout, Let it Out!* by Madhvi Ramani, illustrated by Anuska Allepuz (Two Hoots): An empowering call for children to find and use their voices.
- *Into the Wild* by Thomas Docherty (Oxford University Press): A vibrant and adventurous picture book full of wonder.
- *Look Out! Hungry Snake* by Paul Delaney (Kumusha Books): A fun and engaging hide-and-seek flap book.
- *Roarr!* by Sam Taplin, illustrated by Ailie Busby (Usborne): A sound-slider book filled with animal fun and early learning opportunities

**-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.

**Some of our key activities include:**

- BookStart programmes for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers which provides families with books and resources to help foster a love of shared reading from the earliest age.
- Running the Storytime prize for libraries to choose the best children's book of the year.
- Publishing the Great Books Guide for primary schools and publishing over 350 reviews of children's books every year.
- Running the selection process for the Children's Laureate and supporting their campaigns (currently Frank Cottrell Boyce). Former Laureates include Jacqueline Wilson, Malorie Blackman, Anthony Browne and Quentin Blake.