

PRESS RELEASE

Monday, 28th July

Authors and illustrators join forces to champion Irish kids' books

- Discover Irish Children's Books launch campaign in response to underrepresentation in best seller lists -

Internationally celebrated authors and illustrators Eoin Colfer, Marita Conlon-McKenna, Chris Haughton, Shane Hegarty and Laureate na nÓg Patricia Forde are among a collective of Irish writers, illustrators, teachers, librarians and booksellers who have come together to launch [Discover Irish Children's Books](#), a new initiative to champion children's books written by those living and working in Ireland.

Discover Irish Children's Books estimates there are upwards of 350 published children's writers and illustrators from or living in Ireland. Yet for 15 weeks between May and early August 2023, no Irish books charted in the weekly children's top ten sellers list. In the same period, 96 Irish writers charted in the equivalent list for adult's fiction.

To highlight the range of Irish titles available to young readers, the campaign will launch a new top ten bestsellers list dedicated to Irish children's books. The list will be informed by the top ten bestsellers in a different independent bookshop across Ireland each week throughout September and October. The list will be available each week on www.discoveririshkidsbooks.ie.

Award-winning children's writer and illustrator Chris Haughton has also designed a sticker to be made available to bookshops, libraries and schools to highlight Irish children's books for young readers and adults. The campaign will raise awareness of titles for all ages on social media using #DiscoverIrishKidsBooks and work directly with teachers to recommend novels for class groups. These resources and more can be found on the website.

Children's writer and bookseller, **Sarah Webb** says this trend shocked her: "Out of interest, I asked children attending my summer workshops who their favourite writer was. Even when prompted, they struggled to name an Irish writer.

"On the international stage, Ireland's storytellers for children are much celebrated. Eoin Colfer's 'Artemis Fowl' was a New York Times bestseller. John Boyne's 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' has been translated into 56 languages. Oliver Jeffers has sold over 14 million books worldwide. Catherine Doyle, Judi Curtin, Roddy Doyle, Derek Landy, Mary Murphy – these are well-known names in children's books globally.

"Yet at home there's a lack of knowledge and awareness that Discover Irish Children's Books is determined to tackle. We want to see new and well-established Irish writers and illustrators at book



DiscoverIrishKidsBooks.ie

festivals, hear them on the radio and published in newspapers, and find them front and centre in bookshop and library displays.

“Almost a quarter of all books sold in Ireland are children’s titles, but celebrity authors and big marketing budgets dominate that pool. There will always be a place for international writers and for the classics we all know and love, but there is a diverse wealth of new Irish books available, we need to give them an equal opportunity to find their way into children’s hands.”

Children’s author and **Laureate na nÓg, Patricia Forde** said: “Ireland now has a wonderful canon of literature for children in both English and Irish. We owe it to our young people to promote that work and to make sure that they are aware of books that are written and illustrated here. We all need to see ourselves and our culture in the books that we read, and our writers and illustrators need our support to continue making that work.”

Children’s Books Ireland CEO, Elaina Ryan said: “There’s much deserved celebration of the four Irish authors longlisted for the Booker Prize at the moment but what went by with little fanfare earlier this year, was the longlisting or shortlisting of two Irish authors and illustrators and an Irish publisher for the prestigious Yoto Carnegie Medals which recognises work created for children and young people. Ireland’s literary excellence is as obvious in our books for young readers as it is in those for adults, and they are equally worthy of our praise and support.”

Information available on: www.discoveririshkidsbooks.ie.

ENDS

**Contact: Sarah Webb, Discover Irish Children’s Books, Tel: 086-6086110,
Email: sarahsamwebb@gmail.com**

Notes to Editors:

- Sarah Webb is available for interview.
- Also available for media comment and interview are:
 - Eoin Colfer, author of *Artemis Fowl* series,
 - Marita Conlon-McKenna author of *Under the Hawthorn Tree*,
 - Chris Haughton, author and illustrator of *A Bit Lost*,
 - Shane Hegarty, author of *BOOT* series,
 - Patricia Forde, Laureate na nÓg.
- Tá Patricia Forde, Laureate na nÓg, ar fáil chun agallamh a thabhairt i nGaeilge
- Discover Irish Children’s Books’ logo can be accessed [here](#).

@IrishKidsBooks 
@IrishKidsBooks 



DiscoverIrishKidsBooks.ie

About Discover Irish Children's Books

Discover Irish Children's Books is a collective of children's authors, illustrators, booksellers, librarians and teachers who have come together to highlight the brilliant titles that are available to young readers of all ages in Ireland. We care passionately about children's books and believe that all Irish children deserve to see themselves reflected on the pages of the books they read.

Follow Discover Irish Children's Books online: @IrishKidsBooks

[Instagram: @IrishKidsBooks](#)

How you - the media - can help:

Almost a quarter (24%) of all book sales in Ireland are children's books, but is this reflected in media coverage of children's books and literature?

You can play your part by inviting Irish-based children's writers and illustrators, (or local children's librarians and children's booksellers) to talk about their work and their love of Irish children's books on your radio show, in your newspaper, in your magazine or on your online platform. Discover Irish Children's Books would love to share its passion and knowledge with you!

Together we can help all children living in Ireland to discover the incredible children's writers and illustrators based in their country and in their own communities. It could even inspire the next generation of Irish storytellers!

If you like... Harry Potter by J.K. Rowling You'll LOVE...

Discover Irish Children's Books
Top 10 Irish Children's Books from
Charlie Byrne's Bookshop, Galway

- 1 A Galway Fairytale
- 2 An Princea Beag
- 3 MARITA CONDON MURPHY Book of Hoax
- 4 THROWN! THE NEW ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF IRISH POWER & INFLUENCE
- 5 SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED LAST NIGHT
- 6 Tree Dogs: Borrowed Imagination Other Irish Words for Nature
- 7 THE SLUG AND THE SNAIL
- 8 MARITA CONDON MURPHY
- 9 THE LOST CUP
- 10 A LIMERICK FAIRYTALE

WEEK ENDING
19 AUG 2023

@IrishKidsBooks Instagram
@IrishKidsBooks Twitter

DISCOVER Irish Children's Books

DiscoverIrishKidsBooks.ie

@IrishKidsBooks 
@IrishKidsBooks 



DiscoverIrishKidsBooks.ie