

## Dear reader,

I wanted to write a special letter to you all, to say how proud and excited I am to have been chosen to become the next [Waterstones Children's Laureate](#).

I'm always surprised when people say to me, 'Have you ever thought of writing for adults?', as if writing for children is an inferior activity. For me, writing for children is the single greatest privilege on earth, and my quest as a writer is to play a small part in trying to get the children of today to read books, with the same excitement and wonder that I experienced reading when I was a kid.

It's a huge job, so I've created a giant to-do list – my [Waterstones Children's Laureate Charter](#). Everything on my charter is urgent, and I'm going to try to act in all areas, but there are two points that I'm going to focus on straight away.

### **Let's have access to libraries for all**

The first is libraries. It is impossible for children to become readers and experience the joy of it if their families can't afford books, or they don't have access to either a public library or a school library.

So I'm going to be campaigning that school libraries ought to be statutory, along with making the argument that public libraries and librarians are still relevant in the modern world, and ought to be funded properly, because there are plenty of people who still need them even if they are not the people who make policy.

### **Let's develop our children's creative intelligence**

My second immediate focus is the development of children's creative intelligence. I have been arguing for more creative space to be put into the curriculum for a while now, and I've been excited by the response I've had to my [Freewriting Friday campaign](#), which I launched with the National Literacy Trust last year. I've been asking the question, 'Who would like a special book where for 15 minutes every Friday, kids could write whatever they wanted, and the teachers won't mark it? No rules, no marking, just fun.'

The response from teachers, and children – drowning in SATs and losing their love of creation for fear of making a mistake – has been overwhelmingly positive. Emboldened by this, I'm going to be devising a practical plan to offer schools that helps develop children's creative intelligence through writing and drawing. I'm also going to be asking my fellow authors and illustrators to spread the word with me.

Let's take magic seriously, by getting it firmly into the curriculum.

So, all in all, I'm very excited for the next two years as the Waterstones Children's Laureate – and I will fight for books and children's interests with passion, conviction, and action.

**With best wishes,  
Cressida**