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Dear Parents and Carers,

I am proud and delighted to share some extraordinary news with our school community. At the School Library Association's 'Recognising Excellence' awards ceremony, Balksbury Federation of Infant and Junior Schools was crowned the national winner of the **Peter Usborne Primary School Library of the Year Award**.

To be shortlisted alongside outstanding schools from across the country is a significant honour in itself, reflecting our federation's consistent, long-term commitment to reading. To win this prestigious national title is a monumental achievement. It recognises a whole-school team that works tirelessly to ensure our library positively impacts every single pupil, helping all children discover the lifelong joy of books and reading.

The award, sponsored by Usborne in honour of founder Peter Usborne's lifetime dedication to children's literacy, celebrates spaces where reading truly thrives. Speaking on the vital role of school libraries and the impact of this award, Sam Taplin, Publishing Director for Usborne, captured what makes this recognition so meaningful:

*"It's hard to imagine a better reason to get out of bed in the morning than to spark the imagination of children, and to nurture a space where they can see themselves reflected and be reminded that they're all part of something. Since I attended the School Library Association awards ceremony last year, there's a new test I often apply when I'm looking at the proofs of an Usborne book: I look at them and think, if this book were lucky enough to end up in a school library, if it were lucky enough to be in one of those special spaces, would it deserve to be there?"*

That vision is at the very heart of what our English, Reading, and Library Team does every single day. Their passion goes far beyond shelves and books; they have built a vibrant, inclusive reading culture where every child at Balksbury can see themselves in a story, explore new worlds, and feel inspired as a reader.

Well done to Mrs Davies and Miss Bolton! Every member of our team should feel immensely proud of this remarkable accomplishment. Please join me in congratulating

them on this well-deserved national success and thanking them for their unwavering dedication to our children.

Warm regards,

Caroline Whitlock

Executive Headteacher

Balksbury Federation