

On Saturday 22nd February, Francesca, Mrs Saunders and I were all really excited to be going to the Red House National Children's Book Awards at The Royal Festival Hall in London.

First of all we had a long journey on the Oxford Tube and the London Underground. Alessia and I had to buy our own tickets and work out which lines to travel on and in which direction. We were very impatient to get there!

As we arrived, we caught a glimpse of the London Eye and Big Ben just along the River Thames, so we stopped to absorb the landscape.

We had a nice snack and a drink while we waited for the event to start. The South Bank Centre is huge, and it was buzzing with activity for the "Imagine" children's festival.

As soon as we set foot inside the function room we were treated like VIPs! The room was beautifully set out, with huge bunches of red and white balloons, and there was a free Elmer goody-bag for every child.

Everyone sat on different tables with an author, an illustrator or someone from a publishing house. We were very lucky to be sitting right next to Jennifer Gray, who wrote "Atticus Claw Breaks the Law". She talked to us about writing stories and was really nice about wanting to hear our own ideas. We were delighted when she won her category!

All the authors were presented with a portfolio of writing and drawings made by children from all over the UK. We had to give one to Axel Scheffler. He is the illustrator of Julia Donaldson's stories, and drew The Gruffalo and Superworm.

We were given a mouth-watering lunch, including really cool stripy jellies and desserts with exploding crystals inside. We couldn't believe it was all really for us!

Next we were escorted next door to the Queen Elizabeth Hall for the award ceremony – everyone was really excited and longing to find out who the big winner of the main prize would be! We were so delighted to see Issy Taylor and Sorcha in the audience!

The children's comedian James Campbell hosted the award. We had all been given party blowers but he wouldn't let us blow them until the very end.

Each author and illustrator read or drew pictures for us, played a game or showed us a video about their work. One of the authors in the teenage category said she liked to think up different ways to kill off teenagers in her stories!

In the end the big prize was won by Rick Yancey for *The 5th Wave*, a science fiction story for teenagers. At last we were able to blow the blowers!

As you probably know, our school belongs to the Oxford Children's Book Group and they gave us the tickets for the event and a copy of each book to keep in our school library. We are really pleased to welcome their representatives this morning and would like them to know how much enjoyment Years 1 and 6 in particular got from reading each story and voting for our favourites.