**ClearVision Children’s Braille Library**

ClearVision is a national charity based in South West London. It grew out of a small collection of braille and print books created in the mid-1980s for young braille readers at Linden Lodge school for the Blind, in which grounds we’re still based. ClearVision became a registered charity, independent of the school, in 1992 and now lends books by post to around a thousand families, schools, Sensory Support Services and public libraries all over the UK.

ClearVision books are designed for sharing; the braille text is added to ordinary children’s books so that each book can be read and enjoyed by print readers and braille readers together. This means that children and young people learning braille can be supported by sighted family and teachers, and share books with sighted peers, reducing isolation in the classroom. This support is vital to helping children learn and practice their braille, attain literacy and achieve in their education. The books are also perfect for braille-reading parents, grandparents etc. who can share them with sighted children.

ClearVision provides a wide selection of children’s books to suit different tastes, interests and reading levels. It’s designed to fit in under the reading level of the RNIB library, which provides braille-only books. Many readers move on to these once they no longer need the support of a sighted adult. The collection includes novelty board books with sound buttons, scents, flaps and textures) for babies, toddlers and children of all ages at an early stage of development. We have interleaved books for pre-schoolers and children learning to read, early chapter books for newly-fluent readers, and some books for pupils at Key Stage 3 who have a lower reading age. ClearVision is one of the few sources of reading materials in Moon, another touch-reading language, somewhat simpler than braille, and is proactive in promoting its use for children unable to learn braille.

For schools and Council Sensory Support Services, ClearVision has a loans collection of over eight hundred books with tactile illustrations. The pictures are made up of different materials, with realistic textures to help children relate pictures to real objects. This collection is unique in the UK and one of few such collections worldwide. Most of these books are hand-made by volunteers. Work has now started on expanding this collection to include more appropriate books for children and young people with sight impairment and more complex disabilities. Many of the children and young people we support today, including those at Linden Lodge School who visit in us person, have a variety of disabilities in addition to sight loss, including dual sensory impairment (Deaf/blind), physical disabilities, communication difficulties, severe learning disabilities and/or are Autistic. Many have complex health needs, which means their lives may be shorter and/or very different to those of children without disabilities. Many will never be “readers” in the conventional sense but can enjoy exploring tactile pictures as the story is read aloud to them. We are very proud to bring the excitement, pleasure and joy of books to all our borrowers.

The ClearVision Trustees are keen that the library should continue to develop to meet the changing needs of children with sight impairment – including those with additional needs. ClearVision encourages and supports families and professionals by sharing information, publishing booklets, and promoting and celebrating touch reading wherever appropriate. ClearVision works closely with RNIB, Calibre Audio Library, Guide Dogs and other service providers and users through its positions on various boards, campaign groups and committees.

Office staff consist of one full-time Director, one part-time Library Administrator and one part-time Project Officer. Books are transcribed into braille by three self-employed home workers and a prison braille unit. All books are proofread by a blind, self-employed proofreader working from home. Tactile books are mainly designed and produced by volunteers working from home.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the strategic development of the charity, for ensuring compliance with charitable and accounting regulations and for overseeing the management of the ClearVision library. The Trustees bring professional experience and personal interest to this task; some are former library borrowers, others have used our books in their professional work as Specialist Teachers for children with sight impairment. ClearVision's patron is former Children's Laureate Anne Fine, OBE.

Membership of the ClearVision library is currently free for families and a heavily-subsidised £50 p.a. for schools, services and libraries. ClearVision receives no state funding and relies on donations from trusts and individuals. Our supporters are varied and numerous, ranging from private individuals to local sports groups to famous authors. The majority of our funding is in the form of grants, including several multi-year grants from large organisations such as the R.S. MacDonald Foundation and BBC Children In Need. We recommend reading our Annual Report on the Charity Commission website (or contact us for a copy) for a full recent list. ClearVision's location in the grounds of Linden Lodge School helps to keep overheads to a minimum; our budget for 2022/3 is £115,000 p.a.

At present, we are completing a three-year project to put our entire library catalogue online, to improve our borrower experience and communication. We have recently partnered with Pilotlight to scrutinise our internal processes and work though our Theory of Change, ensuring we meet the needs of our library borrowers now and in future years. We see ourselves as a small but wide-reaching charity, providing a simple, effective solution to a real need.

For more information please see our website and social media:

[www.clearvisionproject.org](http://www.clearvisionproject.org/)

[www.facebook.com/clearvisionproject](http://www.facebook.com/clearvisionproject)

Twitter: ClearVisionOrg

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