



The Languages of Children's Books: Celebrating the National Year of Reading at the University of Reading

17th September 2026

10am-5pm UK time

**University of Reading
London Road Campus
4 Redlands Rd
Reading RG1 5EX**

Panel sessions and lightning talks available online



The Languages of Children's Books: Celebrating the National Year of Reading at the University of Reading

Information booklet & Programme

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Welcome

Languages are a central part of bringing diverse books to readers, and ensuring those stories speak to them. This one-day festival celebrates the work taking place across different sectors of the children's book world (academics, advocacy organisations, creators, educators, librarians, publishers, translators) to promote children's access to stories in translation, multilingual storytelling and linguistic diversity in their books. As part of the National Year of Reading in the UK, we believe it is important to showcase the many ways in which the languages of their books can inspire young people to get reading.

This mini festival is structured around panel discussions, interactive workshops, showcases, and exhibitions, and closes with a book launch and drinks reception. It is intended to bring together people from a variety of fields and backgrounds who are interested in children's books and languages (broadly interpreted).

The event is organised by the Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing (CBCP) an interdisciplinary research centre at the University of Reading. The CBCP promotes global, multilingual, and cross-sectoral research into book cultures and publishing, drawing on the University's extensive Special Collections and archival holdings. It is co-hosted with the Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism (CeLM), which brings together a multidisciplinary group of researchers broadly interested in language, literacy and multilingualism. We are pleased to partner with Outside in World (OIW), the organisation dedicated to promoting and exploring world literature and children's books in translation.

This event has been generously funded by the AHRC Impact Accelerator fund, the Centre for Book Cultures & Publishing and the Centre for Literacy & Multilingualism.

Thank you for joining us for what we are sure will be an engaging gathering!

Essential Information

The festival will take place on the University of Reading London Road Campus, in Building L22 rooms G01, G06-7, and Building L24, room G06. These rooms are on the ground floor and are wheelchair accessible. All panel sessions, as well as the pre-recorded Lightning Talks, will be streamed for remote participants, with automated closed captions. The room number for each session is detailed in the programme timetable in this booklet. To join online, please register here: [here](#).

Live scribe illustrations of the panel sessions, as well as further information about other elements of the day (exhibits, posters, workshops, etc.), will be made available online after the event.

Logistics for in-person attendees:

The London Road campus of the University of Reading sits just south of Reading town centre and is easily reachable via car or public transit.

Driving:

- **Postcode:** Set your GPS to **RG1 5AQ** for the main entrance on London Road, or **RG1 5EX** for the Redlands Road entrance.
- **Parking:** Please contact s.l.heywood@reading.ac.uk to arrange a parking permit for the day in advance

For those travelling by public transport, the London Road Campus is easily accessible from Reading Station.

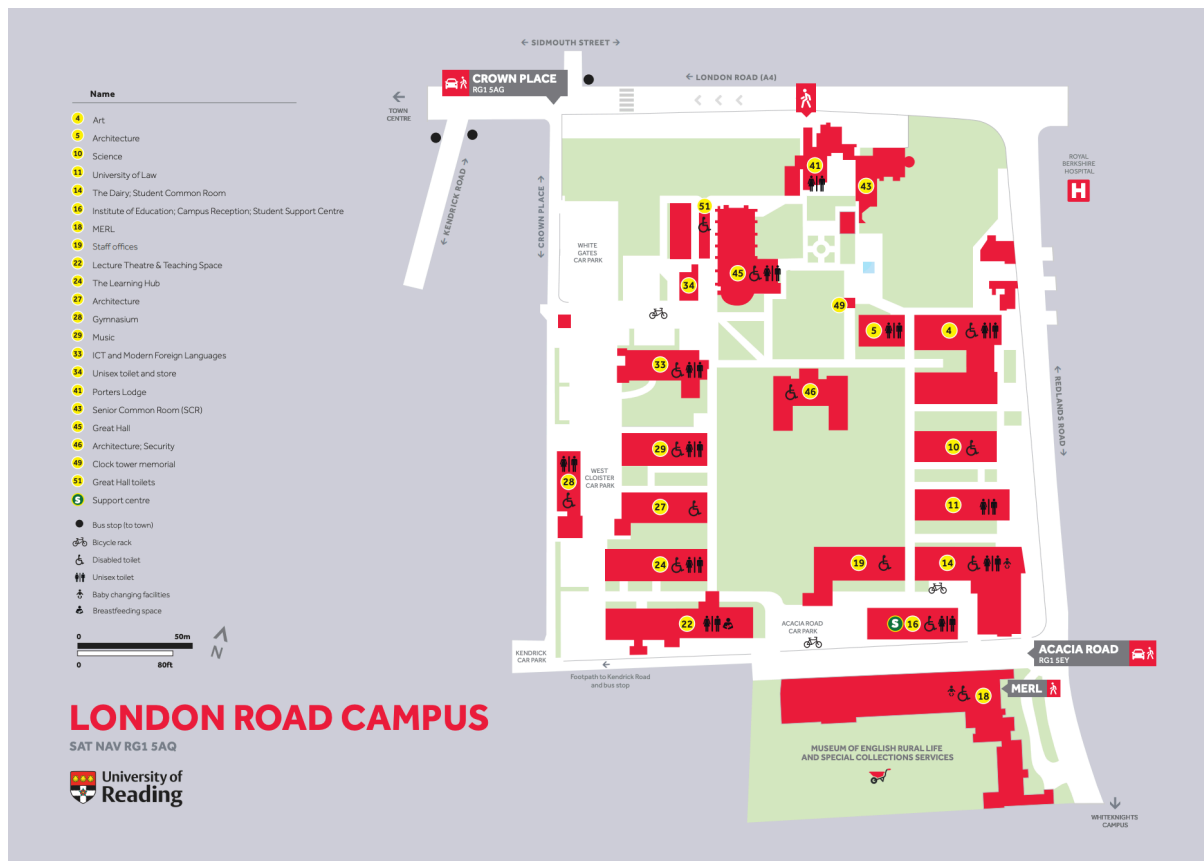
On Foot from Reading Station

- **Distance:** Approximately 0.8 to 1 mile (1.3–1.6 km).
- **Travel Time:** 15 to 20 minutes.
- **Direction:** Head south from the station through the town centre (via Station Road and London Street), then turn east onto London Road (A329).

By Bus from Reading Station

- **Boarding Point:** Catch buses from the stops on Station Road or Blagrove Street directly outside the station.
- **Direct Routes:** Reading Buses **Leopard 3**, **Ruby 10**, **Little Oranges 19a/b/c**, or **Claret 21**. No transfers are required.
- **Stop:** Get off at **UoR London Road** or **Kendrick Student Village**.
- **Travel Time:** Around 5 to 10 minutes.

Map of the London Road Campus:



Morning & afternoon refreshments will be provided, as will a lunch with vegan & vegetarian options.

If you have any dietary or accessibility requirements, please email emma.d.page@reading.ac.uk.

Programme

10:00 – 10:15	Coffee and registration (Building L22, Room G01)
10:15 – 10:30	Welcome (Building L22, Room G01): Dr Sophie Heywood, University of Reading Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing Patricia Billings, Outside in World Milet Publishing
10:30 – 11:15	Panel 1 (Building L22, Room G01): Reading for pleasure in the ‘super diverse’ 21st century: what is the research telling us? Moderator: Dr Daisy Powell, Institute of Education, University of Reading Panel: • Dr Anish Harrison, National Literacy Trust • Dr Darren Chetty, UCL • Prof Karen Sands O’Connor, University of Sheffield • Prof Sabine Little, University of Sheffield • Dr Laura Shapiro, Aston University
11:15 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 12:15	Panel 2 (Building L22, Room G01): Multilingual and translated books and the National Year of Reading: industry perspectives Moderator: Dr Megan Farr, Bath Spa University Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru/Welsh Books Council Panel: • Jake Hope, Award Executive, The Carnegies • Anam Zafar, Translator World Kid Lit • Anna Ridley, Head of Children’s Publishing, Thames & Hudson • Christofere Fila, Associate Publisher, Lantana
12:15 – 1:15	Lunch (Building L24, Room G06) All participants are invited to join the Spectacular Translation Machine (Building L24 Room G06) during the lunch break. This literary translation installation led by translator Sarah Ardizzone will centre on the eerie and beautiful French graphic novel <i>Monstres</i> by writer Stéphane Servant and illustrator Nicolas Zouliamis. Lightning talk videos will be played in the lecture hall (Building L22, Room G01) and streamed for online participants. Talks are also linked here:

- Greta Friggens: [The Outside in World collection at the University of Portsmouth Library](#)
- Gareth Osborne (University of Antwerp): [Cybercity app for fostering critical media literacy across languages](#)
- Ella Fox Plaisted: [Opening up world stories: translating for dyslexic readers](#)
- Lori Sieling: [Kids Read the World in the multilingual SEND classroom](#)
- Emma Steel: [‘Every Cherry: Big Stories, Fewer Barriers’](#)

Exhibition space (Building L22, Rooms G06-7)

12:00 onwards

- Publishers’ stands, including: Do Re Mi Books, The Emma Press, Flying Eye Books, Lantana, Little Hibba, Mantra Lingua, Milet, Otter-Barry, and Pushkin Children’s Books
- Exhibitions (full details pp. 10-14 below), including: IBBY UK honours books and Palestinian children’s books, Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru | Books Council of Wales, exhibition of Welsh and bilingual children’s books, tactile picture books showcase curated by Dr Lily Stone and touch-language children’s books from ClearVision, and examples of pioneering accessible science communication in translation from the University of Reading’s Marie Neurath collection.
- Research posters from MA & PhD students and research projects

In the Hub Library, Building L24, till 2pm

- A display of children's books in translation and in different languages from the Children's Collection and other parts of the University of Reading Special Collections, including books by the pioneering graphic designer Marie Neurath and examples of 'Les albums du Père Castor’.

1:15 – 2:00

Panel 3 (Building L22, Room G01): The languages of accessibility

Moderator: Professor Holly Joseph, University of Reading

Panel:

- Professors Emma Pagnamenta and Vesna Stojanovic, University of Reading
- Dr Vishnu Nair, University of Reading
- Chantal Bryan OBE, Director, Teach Us Too
- Alex Strick, Outside in World/ Reflecting Disability Study

2:00 – 2:45 **Project Showcase (Building L22, Room G01)- Young Creative Translators: Engaging Young People in Reading Through Creative Translation**

Chair: Dr Charlotte Ryland, Stephen Spender Trust/ University of Oxford

Speakers:

- Dr Stacie Allan, Stephen Spender Trust
- Ms Natalie Delidjani, White Woman Lane Junior School
- Ms Rosa Torr, National Centre for Writing

2:00 – 3:00 **Translation Workshops (Advance registration necessary)**

Arabic translation workshop (Museum of English Rural Life, Studio) with literary translator and editor Anam Zafar. Join award-winning translator Zafar in translating extracts from her co-translation of Lena Merhej's moving and funny graphic memoir *Yoghurt and Jam (or How My Mother Became Lebanese)*. Set in Lebanon, Merhej explores hybrid identities, the civil war and growing up in a large multilingual family through a journey into her mother's past. Participants will discover how to decode books like a professional translator, the challenges of translating humour, and more!

The Spectacular Translation Machine (Building L24, Room G06) with literary translator Sarah Ardizzone:

The Spectacular Translation Machine project was originally devised by Sarah Ardizzone and fellow translator and advocate Daniel Hahn, to run in a dedicated room at London's Southbank Centre in 2013. The project has since been iterated more than 15 times, around the U.K., and in Ireland, Spain, Canada, Belgium and the U.S.

Presented for the first time in Reading, this interactive literary translation experience will centre on the eerie and beautiful French graphic novel *Monstres* by writer Stéphane Servant and illustrator Nicolas Zouliamis.

2:45 – 3:00 **Break**

3:00 – 3:30 **Presentation and readings from the Spectacular Translation Machine (Building L22, Room G01):** Led by translator Sarah Ardizzone

3:30 – 4:00

Bilingual book launch for *When You Were a Cloud* by María José Ferrada and Azul López, translated from Spanish by Lawrence Schimel (The Emma Press) (Building L22, Room G01)

Includes discussion with translator Lawrence Schimel, [video presentations from the author and illustrator](#), presentation of bookmarks and marketing materials designed by Y10 Spanish students from local schools as part of the [Stories on the Move project](#)



4:30 – 5:00

Refreshments in the Quad (weather permitting)

Exhibitors



Here at [b small](#), we believe that children are natural learners. That's why, for over 30 years, we've been making books that celebrate their enthusiasm for discovering new things. From science to foreign languages, our award-winning non-fiction and activity books help all children discover the joy of learning. Catalogues are available [here](#).



[ClearVision](#) runs a postal lending library of children's books designed to be shared by children and adults with and without sight. We lend books all across the UK and Ireland.

ClearVision books all have braille, regular print and pictures.

This allows children with sight impairment to share books with their sighted friends and family. It also allows adult braille readers to enjoy stories with sighted children. There are over 10,000 books in the collection, catering for children from birth until they're independent readers.

We also have the UK's only loan collection of fully-textured tactile image books, in which every illustration is specially designed to be explored by touch. With ClearVision books, visually-impaired or blind children and adults can enjoy all the pleasure, comfort and excitement reading together brings.



CYNGOR LLYFRAU CYMRU
BOOKS COUNCIL of WALES

[The Books Council of Wales](#) is a Charitable
Incorporated Organisation (CIO), Registered

Charity number 1192269. Our main objectives are to support and develop the publishing industry in Wales, and to promote literacy and reading for pleasure. We were established in Aberystwyth in 1961 and became a CIO in 2021.



[Do Re Mi](#) is an independent children's publisher based in London. We make playful, distinctive board books and picture books that celebrate the best in contemporary illustration.

The Do Re Mi list includes translations of children's books from around the world, as well as eclectic, beautifully produced originals from the illustrators we love.

Founded by husband-and-wife team Sam Voulters and Anna Watanabe, Do Re Mi is inspired by cute, weird and funny stories, and the charm and creativity of Japanese children's publishing.

[The Emma Press](#) is an independent publishing house specialising in poetry, short fiction, essays and children's books. It was founded by Emma Dai'an Wright in Winnersh, Berkshire, in 2012 and is now based in Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham, UK. Their mission is to make literature and publishing as welcoming and accessible as possible. They are committed to breaking down traditional elitist and exclusionary structures, through providing opportunities for publication for writers and illustrators, through creating books which reflect as many people's experiences as possible, and through sharing publishing knowledge.



[Flying Eye Books](#) is an award-winning Children's independent publisher based in East London. Publishing for all age groups, from board books and picture books through to YA, fiction and non-fiction, every book we publish is fully illustrated and beautifully realised. Our books are brilliant and exciting, funny, sensitive and silly, with innovative aesthetics and excellence in design. Our books are made using environmentally conscious production standard and at every stage of our production processes we aim to be curious, to be imaginative and to innovate.



Alice Curry founded [Lantana](#) in 2014 when only one per cent of the children's books published in the UK featured a character of colour as a protagonist. She wanted her mixed-race niece and nephews, and others like them, to be able to grow up seeing themselves in the books they read. Alice chose to name her new small press 'Lantana' after the lantana flower which has petals of different colours on a single stem. It reflects her belief in a world where children of all races, ethnicities, genders, abilities and orientations get to read happily together on one Earth.

[Little Hibba](#) is a dedicated children's book publishing company committed to creating beautiful, personalised stories that empower young readers to see themselves as heroes of their own journeys. Our mission is to foster self-confidence, curiosity, and ambition in children by offering engaging narratives where they see their identities and experiences reflected, reminding them that their stories matter.



We specialise in children's literature that celebrates positive values, character building, and cultural awareness. Each book is thoughtfully crafted to captivate young minds while nurturing a strong sense of identity, belonging, and imagination. Our books are designed for children aged 0–8, as well as parents and educators seeking

meaningful, values-driven stories that inspire, educate, and empower the next generation of readers.



IBBY (the International Board on Books for Young people) was founded on the belief that children's books have the power both to transform children's lives and to increase international understanding. Now a worldwide organisation, [IBBY UK](#) is one of 80+ National Sections with members on every inhabited continent. We are a non-profit organisation which represents an international network of people from all over the world who are committed to bringing books and children together.

IBBY representatives **Ann Lazim**, **Pam Dix** and **Dr Sara Shahwan** will be presenting collections of books nominated for the [IBBY Honour List](#), as well as a selection of children's books [from and about Palestine](#).



[Mantra Lingua](#) exists to fulfil the needs of new and changing diasporas seen in multilingual classrooms in the USA, UK, EU, and Australia. Home language status is enhanced in bilingual versions of bestsellers, such as *The Hungry Caterpillar*, *Brown Bear*...We publish books with high-quality illustrations and production standards so that our books sit proudly in any mainstream bookshelf. We cover a wide range of genres and ages, and our family of 'Story Re-tellers' ensure that home languages are child-friendly and not mechanically translated. All our books talk, in both languages, using our bespoke PENpal, thereby preserving home languages for future generations.



As a trailblazing publishing company, [Milet](#) has indelibly expanded the scope and look of bilingual and multicultural titles for children and adults, combining artistic and linguistic excellence in books and multimedia resources that are educational and enriching on many levels. Milet is also a groundbreaking publisher of literature in translation, bringing into English works by international authors of children's books and adult literary fiction. Our books have won awards and praise, and most importantly, devoted readers, who we thank deeply. Milet is known for its thoughtful, beautiful, high quality books and for its steadfast commitment to diverse voices and visions.



[Otter-Barry Books](#) is a small independent publisher based in Herefordshire. It was founded in 2015 by Janetta Otter-Barry with a focus on culturally diverse and inclusive illustrated books, as well as an award-

winning collection of poetry titles. Otter-Barry Books are celebrating their 10th year of publishing.

[Pushkin Children's](#) brings the world's greatest stories to young readers. From classic  PUSHKIN PRESS fantasy adventures to bold young adult novels and gorgeous picture books, our list is full of tales to enchant, 's brings the world's greatest stories to young readers. From classic fantasy adventures to bold young adult novels and gorgeous picture books, our list is full of tales to enchant, inspire and open up new horizons. In 2025 we launched Pushkin Children's Classics – a list of thrilling, magical and inspiring stories from around the world. This timeless, ever-growing library features stylish covers and deluxe editions. Ranging from familiar favourites to newly discovered treasures, these are books that young readers will want to return to time and again. You can view their latest children's catalogue [here](#).

Dr Lily Stone will be presenting “Translating to Touch: An Exhibition of Tactile Picture Books”.

The exhibition brings together examples of contemporary tactile picture books for use by and with children with vision impairments. It presents examples of work created by French inclusive publishers Les Doigts qui Rêvent, and UK tactile lending libraries ClearVision and Living Paintings, as well as examples of commercially produced tactile picture books from the UK. Across these examples are books that have received global recognition as winners of the Typhlo and Tactus International Competition of Tactile Illustrated Books, or as part of the selection for the International Board on Books for Young People's Collection for Young People with Disabilities. The exhibition also presents images of Japanese cloth books designed for children with disabilities from the International Youth Library's as yet uncatalogued collections, and some picture books designed to scaffold sensory storytelling experiences.

Professor Sue Walker, Director of Collections and Archives in Typography at the University of Reading, will be presenting a display of books used in recent research projects related to accessibility, inclusion and multilingualism. These include:

- [Marie Neurath's Isotype books](#) for children, first published in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. These amazing books explain science, technology and engineering in ways that young people can relate to and understand. The books are part of the Otto and Marie Neurath Isotype Collection (part of the Lettering, Printing and Graphic Design Collections) here at Reading.
- The Multilingual Resources for Children project, where researchers worked with publishers, teachers and children to gain insight into how bilingual books were

produced and used. The books considered were in English and other languages widely used in the UK including Urdu, Bengali and Chinese.

- Fabula, an interdisciplinary project that provided software to enable children learning European minority languages to create bilingual digital books in minority languages including Welsh, Frisian, Irish and Catalan.
- ‘Little books for little hands’, which resulted in books co-designed with teachers and children in South Africa.

Festival contributors



Dr Stacie Allan has been collaborating with the Stephen Spender Trust since 2020. Drawing on her practice as a professional translator and extensive experience in working with young people, she conceptualises and manages SST’s educational projects, develops partnerships with universities and literary organisations, and trains translators in Creative Translation approaches. Stacie holds a PhD in French literature from the University of Bristol and is a specialist academic translator, working across the arts, humanities and social sciences.



Sarah Ardizzone is an award-winning translator of voices from across the French-speaking world. Her work spans literary fiction for all ages, as well as memoir, hip-hop lyrics, graphic novels and picture books. Authors include Faïza Guène, Gaël Faye, Daniel Pennac, Timothée de Fombelle and Alexandre Dumas (a fresh version of [The Story of a Nutcracker](#)). Sarah also develops multilingual ‘out of the book’ performances, recently touring Algeria with Good Chance Theatre’s production of [Discretion](#) by Faïza Guène. Co-founder of Translation Nation and Translators in Schools with the [Stephen Spender Trust](#), Sarah is an Hon. Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, a Royal Literary Fund Bridge Fellow and mentors emerging translators for the National Centre for Writing. Her translation of [Monsters](#) by Stéphane Servant is out now, together with translations of [Jacaranda](#) by Gaël Faye and Joann Sfar’s graphic novel version of St-Exupéry’s of [The Little Prince](#).



Patricia Billings is author of a collection of children's books on social-emotional and mindfulness themes, published by Milet Publishing in English and 18 bilingual editions. She cofounded Milet in 1995 and is a longtime publisher of and advocate for bilingual and translated books. As a wisdom worker, Patricia advises global literacy and literature organizations, including Outside In World (OIW), which explores, promotes and celebrates children's literature in

translation. She is cohost of the webinar series *Explorations in Translation for Children*, organized by OIW and the University of Reading Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing. Patricia is also a mindfulness and meditation guide, teaching online worldwide and in-person in Athens, Greece, where she is based.



Verity Brown taught English to both children and adults in beautiful Brittany for two years before returning to the UK last year to complete a master's in Children's Publishing at Bath Spa University. She has a passion for French picturebooks and is an avid collector. They have been a major source of inspiration throughout her master's, including *Le Zoo à London*, an interactive lift-the-flap book designed for Francophone children learning English. Next year, Verity plans to return to France to relaunch her teaching career, this time combining her experience as an English teacher with the knowledge she has gained from her Children's Publishing master's. Alongside teaching, she hopes to create innovative and engaging educational materials.

She is always keen to connect with people who share her interests in language teaching, children's publishing, picturebooks and French culture. Verity can be contacted at verity.i.brown@gmail.com.



Chantal Bryan OBE is the founder and Director of Teach Us Too, a charity that champions the right of all children, including those with complex support needs, to be taught meaningful literacy. Inspired by her experience teaching her son Jonathan to read and write outside of special school, Chantal has become a leading advocate for inclusive literacy and education reform. She also chairs the Alliance for Inclusive Literacy, a coalition of 17 organisations and charities calling for meaningful, progressive text based literacy for all pupils. Through partnerships, campaigning, and lived experience, she works to amplify voices often overlooked in education policy and practice.'



Dr Darren Chetty is a specialist in Philosophy for Children, antiracist education and children's literature based at University College London Institute of Education. He contributed to the best-selling book *The Good Immigrant* (2016). He advises on CLPE's *Reflecting Realities* and Penguin / Runnymede Trust's *Lit in Colour* and is a regular judge for children's books award. Darren co-authored with Jeffrey Boakye, *What Is Masculinity? Why Does It Matter? And Other Big Questions* (Wayland). His debut picture book, *I'm Going to Make a Friend*, illustrated by Sandhya Prabhat (Little Tiger) was published in 2025. Darren co-authored *Our Wales: A People's History with Martin Johnes* (Rily) which will be published in November 2026. Together with Prof. Karen Sands O'Connor, Chetty writes a regular column for Books for Keeps and has co-authored *Beyond the Secret Garden? Racially Minoritised People in British Children's Books* (2025, English Media Centre).



Natalie Delidjani is a Key Stage 2 teacher at White Woman Lane Junior School in Norwich. She has been teaching across the curriculum for 20 years and is passionate about children's literature and reading for pleasure. Natalie has been involved with shortlisting books for the Spark! Book Award and Cheltenham Literature Festival's 'Reading Teachers = Reading Pupils' project. Following her involvement with the Young Creative Translators Project, her school has integrated the translation of Fernando Vilela's 'Tapajos' picture book and poems by Brazilian poets into the Year 4 school curriculum.



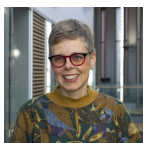
Pam Dix is the Chair of IBBY UK. A former librarian and a university lecturer, she now researches illustration in children's information books. She has written on school libraries and co-edited the proceedings of the IBBY Congress in New Zealand (*Children's Literature in a Multiliterate World*). She runs a small charity, the Akili Trust, which establishes community libraries in rural areas in Kenya.



Dr Megan Farr is Business Development Manager at Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru/Books Council Wales and Senior Lecturer in Publishing at Bath Spa University. At the Books Council, she supports Welsh publishers with domestic and international sales, partnerships, and international representation. Her PhD, *Putting Cymru on the Map: Internationalising Children's Publishing from Wales* (University of Wales Trinity Saint David), examines how Welsh children's and YA publishing can build sustainable international engagement as a bilingual, small nation, drawing comparisons with Catalonia, Ireland, Scotland, and New Zealand. Megan teaches on the MA Children's Publishing and BA Publishing programmes at Bath Spa University, bringing 25 years' industry experience in marketing, publicity, and literature promotion to her research and teaching. She is an expert in Welsh publishing, literary translation, and children's literature, passionate about promoting books, reading, and literacy to diverse audiences.



Christofere Fila is the Associate Publisher at Lantana Publishing, an independent press championing diverse and underrepresented voices in children's literature. Her responsibilities span commissioning picture books, middle grade, and YA fiction and non-fiction; rights acquisition; and strategic development.



Greta Friggens is the Faculty Librarian for the University of Portsmouth Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries. Alongside her many other responsibilities, she has overseen the acquisition, use and development of the Outside In World collection at the University of Portsmouth since 2021.



Dr Anish Harrison works for the National Literacy Trust (NLT), is a Chartered Librarian and holds qualifications in Social Work and Early Years Care and Education. Anish has worked with children and families for over 20 years within these fields and is passionate about Public Libraries and inclusive, participatory reading for pleasure practices, which nurture wellbeing, critical autonomy and joy. This pathway led her to do her Educational Doctorate, synthesising her interests in reading for pleasure, public libraries and listening to the voices of our least advantaged communities. You can find her Thesis, *Voices at Margins: An exploration of the perceptions of 'vulnerable' children, their families' and library professionals regarding reading for pleasure and public libraries* [here](#).



Dr Sophie Heywood is [Associate Professor in French](#) and a founding co-director of the Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing at the University of Reading, UK. She specializes in researching international children's literature and publishing, and has published two books *Catholicism and Children's Literature: The comtesse de Ségur (1799-1874)* (Manchester University Press, 2011) and *Children's Publishing in Cold War France: Hachette in the Age of Surveillance and Control* (Bloomsbury, 2025). She directs the Stories on the Move project, and co-convenes the webinar series [Explorations in Translation for Children](#) with Outside in World.



Jake Hope is the Awards Executive for The Carnegies, a post which supports CILIP in leading the strategic development of the Carnegie Awards. Jake is an experienced children's book and reading development consultant, named as one of the UK's top librarians of the future in the National Love Libraries Campaign. He has written extensively on children's reading development and librarianship, contributing chapters to numerous books, producing the SLA publication on diversity and inclusion and previews for The Bookseller. He is the author of the recently published book on visual literacy, *Seeing Sense*, (Facet Publishing, 2020). Jake enjoys working creatively, has strong network links across the book trade and reading sector and is passionate about children's books and promoting a love of reading and writing with young people and their families.



Molly Howard is a translator and current MA student in Translation Studies at the University of Bristol. Her research explores ways in which literary translators can assertively intervene in cultural discourse and literary production through analysing comparative approaches to translating postcolonial literature. She has previously completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Cambridge, where she read Modern and Medieval Languages, and plans to further explore her research goals through pursuing a PhD. As a translator, Molly is particularly interested in works by contemporary French diasporic writers, and is currently working on a novel by an Algerian author set during the country's civil war.



Prof. Holly Joseph is a [Professor of Language and Literacy Development at the Institute of Education](#), University of Reading. She is a steering committee member and former Director of the Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism (CeLM). Her research interests lie in reading development and difficulties, early language and literacy, family literacy, neurodiversity, multilingual language development and the impact of social inequalities on literacy. She looks at reading development in a broad range of children with different neurodevelopmental conditions, at different ages, with different languages, and in different circumstances. All of her research is rooted in social justice and the need to understand better how we can support all children to reach their potential.



Barbara King is a [Lecturer at the University of Reading Institute of Education](#), specialising in Modern Foreign Languages teacher training. She is the project co-lead for [Stories on the Move](#).



Ann Lazim is a committee member of the UK section of IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People). She was librarian at CLPE (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education) for 29 years. She is on the jury of the Indian NEEV Children's Book Award and also edits reviews of children's and YA books for Historical Novels Review.



Sabine Little is Professor of Literacy and Multilingualism at the University of Sheffield, and Vice President of the UK Literacy Association. For the past 20 years, her work has focused on understanding how children who grow up with multiple languages navigate their lives. Part of this work focuses specifically on reading across multiple languages, and how this contributes to identity development. Her work on Sheffield's multilingual children's library received the international Brenda Eastwood Award for Diversity and Inclusion, and her research on multilingual Rivers of Reading and multilingual storytelling sparked collaborations with World Book Day in 2025 and 2026 respectively. Together with the National Literacy Trust, Sabine has been exploring how multilingual children read. Her current project,

the Quilt of Welcome (www.quiltofwelcome.org) focuses on creating space for multilingualism and belonging, including through multilingual storytelling and writing.



Vishnu KK Nair, PhD is a [Lecturer in the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences](#) at the University of Reading. He joined the school in Autumn 2021. He graduated with a PhD in Cognitive Science from Macquarie University (Sydney, Australia) in 2016, and completed a Post-doctoral Fellowship in Communication Sciences and Disorders from New York University (New York, USA) in 2020. His current research has a strong focus on equity and social justice in the field of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences. He is specifically interested in studying how race and disability intersects with multilingualism and how these intersections result in pathologisation of minoritized individuals and the challenges they face in speech and language service delivery. He is passionate about conducting research utilizing critical pedagogy and research methodologies that center the experiences of minoritized multi/translingual families



Dr Gareth Osborne is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie [postdoctoral fellow in immersive arts and ethical AI](#) at the University of Antwerp. He examines creative arts practices that invite participants to perform belief in learning experiences as real, drawing immersive media and AI into contact with literature, theatre and education. Current project: “The potential of AI to augment children’s co-creation of immersive story worlds and boost their critical media literacy.” YUFE4POSTDOCS collaboration between University of Antwerp Faculty of Arts and the University of Essex School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering, UK.

Dr Emma Page is a Postdoctoral Research Assistant on the Stories on the Move project at the University of Reading. She recently completed her PhD on translation and advocacy in contemporary UK children’s publishing, funded by the AHRC, at the Universities of Reading and Cardiff: [Beyond bringing books and children together: International children's literature advocacy in the UK today](#). She also works as a professional translator of French and Spanish into English. Her research interests include the sociology of translation, histories of reading promotion and Latin American children’s books in the world.



Dr Emma Pagnamenta is an [Associate Professor](#) at the University of Reading and a Speech and Language Therapist. Through her clinical practice and research Emma has developed a strong interest in how sharing books and stories can support language development, communication, inclusion and participation of young people.

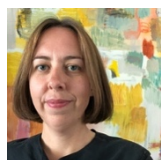
Emma is currently part of research teams exploring how we can co-produce and adapt shared book reading programmes with families to support language and communication development of young children with Down syndrome, and how we can further our understanding of family language policies in multilingual families in the context of communication disabilities.



Ella Plaisted is a freelance translator working from French and Spanish into English. Her MA research at the University of Geneva explored strategies for translating children's literature for young readers with dyslexia. She now writes and speaks on inclusive approaches to children's literature, with a particular interest in bringing world stories to dyslexic readers. She is a contributor to World Kid Lit and recently presented her research at the 2026 Children's Literature and Translation Studies conference.



Dr Daisy Powell is an [Associate Professor in the Psychology of Written Language](#) at the Institute of Education. Her research interests are in children's acquisition of early literacy skills, taking into account both cognitive factors and also the social, environmental and pedagogical factors that contribute to learning. She is also interested in literacy development in multilingual contexts and has carried out research on biliteracy development in Malaysia. She has also worked on DfE-funded projects to support the teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1.



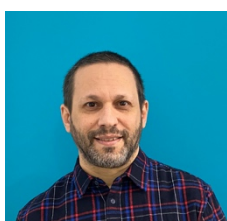
Anna Ridley is Head of Children's Publishing at Thames & Hudson. After completing a double degree in Fine Arts and Art History, she moved to London where she has worked for over a decade commissioning children's books for art publishers including Tate. She works across illustrated non-fiction, picture books, activity books and pop-ups.



Dr Charlotte Ryland is Director of the Stephen Spender Trust and founding Director of The Queen's College Translation Exchange (Oxford), organisations dedicated to promoting language-learning, multilingualism and translation. She runs the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators, the Stephen Spender Prize for poetry in translation, and a range of associated programmes that bring inclusive culture and creativity into language learning. Charlotte is particularly interested in how culture and creativity can inspire young learners at primary schools, and convinced that this is an essential ingredient for reversing the current decline in language learning in UK schools.



Prof. Karen Sands O'Connor is a Visiting Professor of Education at the University of Sheffield and an award-winning and internationally-recognized scholar of Black British children's literature. She created the UK's first exhibition on children's literature and Black Britain, 'Listen to this Story!' in 2022, and it has since been touring the country. Currently, she is developing the Every Voice, Every Story Resource Library, a research library for educators to learn about the history of representation and inclusion in British children's books. She consults for the British Library, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, and the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education on their annual Reflecting Realities reports. Along with Dr Darren Chetty, she writes a regular column for Books for Keeps and co-authored *Beyond the Secret Garden? Racially Minoritised People in British Children's Books* (2025, English Media Centre).



Lawrence Schimel is a multilingual author based in Madrid, Spain, who has published over 100 books in a wide range of genres. His picture books have won a Crystal Kite Award from the Society of Children's Book Writers & illustrators (twice), have been chosen by the International Youth Library in Munich for a White Raven and by IBBY for Outstanding Books for Young People with Disabilities (three times), and have been a finalist for the Swiss Children's Book Award, among other honors. His writings have been translated into over sixty languages, including Welsh, Scots, Korean, Filipino, Maltese, Urdu, Farsi, Kurdish, and Basque. In addition to his own writing, he is a prolific literary translator, primarily into English and into Spanish, who has published over 200 books. His translations into English have been Highly Commended for the CLIPPA, and have won a PEN Translates Award from English PEN (three times), among other honors.



Dr Laura Shapiro is a Reader in Psychology at Aston University, where she studies how children learn to read and develop language, and how everyday environments, from mealtimes to classrooms, shape that development. Her longitudinal research traces the interplay between phonological memory, vocabulary and reading comprehension from early childhood through adolescence, asking why some children struggle with reading and what kinds of support are helpful. A parallel strand of her work, conducted with teams in Kenya and Zambia, examines how home mealtimes and family routines support language development, and how schools and communities can better align with children's home environments and the way children learn. Across all of this, she is interested in translating developmental science into practical tools for parents, teachers and policymakers that make a real difference to children's reading and language outcomes, particularly for those facing socioeconomic disadvantage.



Dr Sara Shahwan is a researcher specialising in children's literature and environmental education. She has a PhD in Educational Studies from Goldsmiths, University of London, focusing on migrant children's negotiations of ecological identity through multilingual poetry. She is an Associate Lecturer teaching on the MA Children's Literature programme at Goldsmiths as well as a Forest School Lead in south London.



Emma Steel worked as a teacher in Special Educational Needs for many years, and it was whilst teaching that she developed a passion for making books accessible to those with varied Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. After leaving her career in teaching, Emma moved into publishing. She has worked to create Every Cherry, which publishes accessible books for people with disabilities and people who find reading a challenge. Emma is now [Head of Every Cherry](#), where she's striving to make engaging books that people with disabilities can read and enjoy, and is also the author of our groundbreaking Stories for Your Senses range!



Vesna Stojanovic is a [Professor of Clinical Language](#) science at the University of Reading, and is part of the university's Centre for Literacy and Multilingualism. Her research has been investigating language development for young children with Down syndrome using a longitudinal design, pre-linguistic precursors to language in Down syndrome, understanding and expression of prosody in children with Down syndrome and in those with Williams syndrome, language abilities in children with Williams syndrome and how these may compare to those who have developmental language disorder.



Dr Lily Stone has recently completed a PhD in Education at the University of Cambridge, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the University of Cambridge. Her doctoral research focused on the production of tactile picture books for children with vision impairments. Through multiple case studies, Lily explored why and how practitioners create these resources and what they illuminate about understandings of touch at play in education at large. During her doctoral studies, Lily held a fellowship at the International Youth Library in Munich, where she consulted their uncatalogued collections of cloth books. Lily teaches undergraduates in the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge across courses on play, disability, and education theory, alongside working as a teaching assistant supporting children with additional needs and disabilities in a Cambridge primary school. She is also currently working as a researcher for the Accessible Book and Story Festival 2026.



Alex Strick is an author of books for young readers - including picture books and touch and feel books (such as *Let's Play*, recent winner of the Inclusive Book Award!) She is passionate about ensuring that all children's voices are heard, and that their experiences are authentically represented.

She has a background of 30 years in the book world managing national projects (including the Bookstart programme at BookTrust), as well as working directly with young disabled people. She was also one of the three original founders of Outside In World (one of the organisations behind today's event).

She is currently co-facilitator for *Reflecting Disability*, the new Arts Council funded study into representation of disabled people in children's literature (findings of which announced 11 Sept).



Rosa Torr is Learning and Participation Manager at National Centre for Writing, where she oversees a variety of projects that encourage and celebrate the power of stories for children and young people, including the Young Creative Translators Project in partnership with the Stephen Spender Trust. She has extensive experience delivering creative projects for children and young people in community, cultural and educational settings. With an MA Writing for Performance and Dramaturgy from Goldsmiths, Rosa is a writer and Associate Artist of HighTide Theatre Company.



Prof. Sue Walker is the [Director of Collections and Archives in Typography](#) of the Design Star Doctoral Training Centre at the University of Reading. She was previously Head of the Department of Typography at the University of Reading, Head of the School of Arts and Communication Design and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. She is a Co-Director of the Reading Centre for Book Cultures and Publishing.



Anam Zafar is an award-winning translator, editor and workshop facilitator. She translates from Arabic and French into English. She appears on the 100 Inspiring Muslims: Next Generation Edition list (Emerald Network/Aziz Foundation).

Most recently, Anam translated *Elfie's Spellbook*, a French graphic novel series for children (out now with Puffin). In 2025, she won a PEN Presents x International Booker Prize for the Palestinian novella *Playing with Soldiers* by Tariq Asrawi. Her work has also won a PEN Translates Award, been shortlisted for the Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation and been longlisted for the Warwick Prize for Women in Translation.

As a member of Translators for Access, Anam advocates for the sustainability and accessibility of literary translation as a profession. She also volunteers for World Kid Lit, a non-profit that aims to bring diverse, inclusive, global literature into the hands and onto the bookshelves of young people.