



BETH COX

Inclusion and Equality
Consultant



Inclusion Incubator Information Pack

“Thought-provoking, informative, comprehensive, and motivating. It has already started to have an impact on the way I work.”

**Judith Wilson, Senior Publisher
OUP Children's Books**

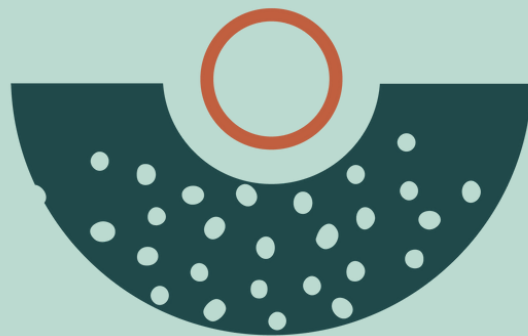
“A combination of big picture thinking about structural inequalities and how these play out in children's books, with extremely specific nuts-and-bolts tips about how to make your own projects more inclusive.”

**Rose Hall, Writer and Editor
Usborne Publishing**

“Beth created an environment based on trust, consideration and discussion; she recognises the complexities of representation and has an understanding of the constraints we work within.”

**Caroline Derby, Head of Publishing
Early Literacy and Phonics, OUP**

Overview



Inclusion Incubator Overview

Context

In recent years, children's publishers have shown a commitment to taking action on inclusion, both in the workforce and in content. They have a huge opportunity to influence children and help to build the society we want to see in the future. Not just one of tolerance and acceptance, but one that embraces and celebrates natural variation.

But the commitment isn't just ethical. In order to be seen as an organisation that publishes for everyone, it's imperative that published products are incidentally inclusive, as well as being free from stereotypes or unconscious bias that might perpetuate inequality or negative beliefs.

Publishing staff often feel a burden of responsibility when it comes to inclusion, and that hinders innovation and creativity. More and more publishers are working with specialist organisations and people with lived experience to ensure authenticity, and this is absolutely essential.

However, unless publishing staff understand the basic principles of inclusion, across all facets, it's easy, and understandable, that things will be missed and the common pitfalls reinforced.

An understanding of the basic principles of inclusion provides a solid foundation on which to embed inclusion across a publishing list, as well as to work with people with lived experience, without worrying about causing offence or how to talk about certain topics.

I can never speak for someone with lived experience, and I always advocate that as part of the inclusion process to ensure authenticity, but I play an important role in creating a bridge between those who are marginalised by the industry and the industry itself. It's the dominant groups who need to do the work here – we can't rely on those who are marginalised to do all the teaching, especially not on the basic principles.



Inclusion Incubator Overview

The Inclusion Incubator

The Inclusion Incubator provides not only the foundations needed to make books truly inclusive but the practical steps to enable action to be taken right away. Making inclusive books is not just about putting a diverse range of characters in books. It's HOW you include them and represent them that makes a book truly inclusive. Well-intentioned or inauthentically inclusive books can cause more harm than good.

Overview

The programme takes place over 12 weeks with a powerful combination of online videos, consultancy sessions and a discussion space.

Each week team members will either be given access to pre-recorded content or have a live consultancy session. Alongside the videos, implementation activities will help participants to explore the topic and to start to applying learnings their projects. Activities will also be provided to develop the right mindset around inclusion and inclusive books.

In weeks 3, 6, 9 and 12 consultancy sessions allow teams to receive direct support in applying the learnings to their projects and to discuss the topics further.

The discussion space on the learning platform allows participants to share responses to the tasks and discuss the topics, both with Beth and other team members. This peer support adds huge value.

The Inclusive Approach

- Inclusion vs Diversity
- Facets of diversity
- Intersectionality
- First steps towards authenticity
- Building empathy
- What is normal?
- Bias
- Stereotypes and prejudice



Inclusion Incubator Overview

Disability Dynamics

- Disability and difference
- Models of disability
- Accessible environments
- Including disabled characters
- Positive representation
- Ableist language
- Specific terminology
- Visual accessibility
- Accessible texts
- Accessible formats

Tactile books bonus

Constructions of Gender

- The gender spectrum
- Gender equality
- Gender representation
- Coding
- Transgender representation

Beyond Heteronormativity

- Acronyms
- Issues and barriers
- Representation
- Heteronormativity
- Cultural sensitivities
- Family set up

Ethnicity and Culture

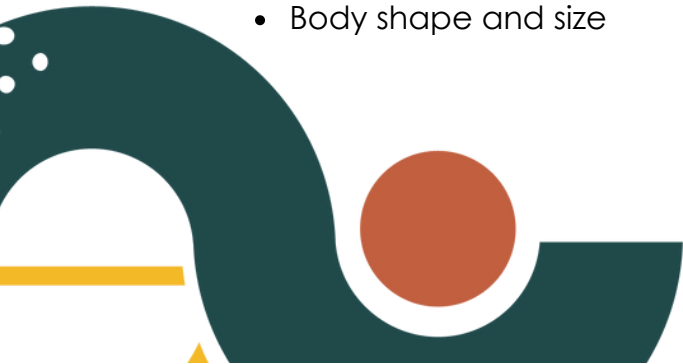
- Language and terminology
- Reflecting Realities
- Impact
- The 'Other Race' effect
- Representation and nuance
- Visual representation
- Colour symbolism
- Travelling communities
- Cultural appropriation and indigenous peoples

Ways of Being

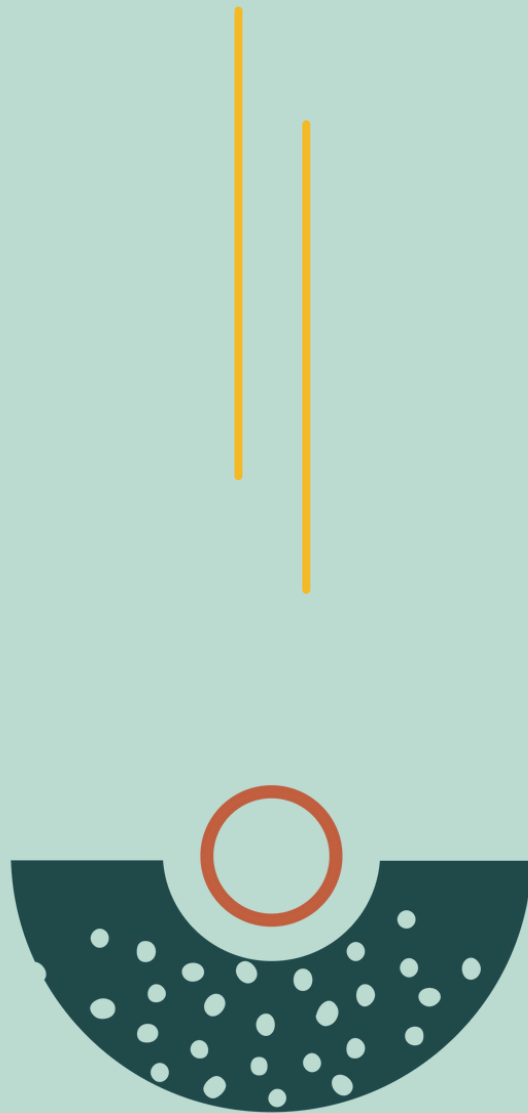
- A multitude of ways of being
- Age
- Socio-economic experience
- Growth mindset
- Body shape and size

Moving Forwards

- What next?
- Inclusion should...
- Inclusion should not...
- Your role



Case Studies



Inclusion Incubator Case Studies

Before taking part in the Inclusion Incubator, Sarah Dutton felt very strongly that inclusion was incredibly important, and wanted to make sure all products she created were truly inclusive, but was worried that she didn't always have the knowledge or the tools to implement this authentically.

Sarah said, "I was worried about using the wrong language to describe something, worried about offending people when I got something wrong."

But there were particular elements of the Incubator that stood out for Sarah, and changed the way she now works.

"I think it was really valuable considering all aspects of inclusion in one course because it's led me to try and think about inclusivity on a really broad scale when I work on projects. It means I think about gender, race, disability, sexuality, etc... all at the same time, rather than before where I might have been more aware of some under-represented people than others."

Now she has completed the programme, she's keen that other editors benefit too:

"I have gained an enormous amount from the programme, it has been really empowering. It was eye-opening to consider not just my own biases but also to think about inclusion from so many different points of view. I would definitely recommend it, particularly to other editors who have a lot to do with content and artwork briefing."

Sarah Dutton
Editor, Primary Literacy
Oxford University Press



Inclusion Incubator Case Studies

Gillian Sore, editor at Oxford University Press was finding the other available training in the field of inclusion and diversity too broad for her needs...

"I was interested in thinking about inclusion in relation to our books specifically, and felt that it was something I wanted to see more of on our list."

The Inclusion Incubator enabled her to bring that to fruition, and with the bonus of being an enjoyable experience!

"It's wonderful to work with someone who's so tuned in to inclusivity in children's books. Beth has such in-depth knowledge and experience in this field, which she communicates in clear, thought-provoking modules. I really enjoyed the mix of videos, tasks, and workshops."

And of the outcome, Gill had this to share:

"It was a great learning experience, but it also reinforced the knowledge I already had, I became more mindful about diversity and inclusion, and it's given me the tools and confidence I needed to proactively make changes to existing projects. This programme is a must for all publishing professionals interested in making inclusive books."

Gillian Sore
Development Editor
Reading at Home
Oxford University Press



Inclusion Incubator Case Studies

Kristen Harrison, author and publisher, felt for a long time that her actions in relation to diversity and inclusion did not match up to her good intentions.

She explains "I have always been a champion for minority rights in many contexts, but when it came to understanding how to apply this to inclusion in my books I had a knowledge gap that needed filling."

Kristen saw the programme as an important investment: "Through my work as a publisher I learned a lot about inclusion, diversity and empowering underrepresented voices. But I still lacked confidence in decision-making and editorial judgement."

Prior to the programme Kristen felt a sense of personal responsibility and knew she needed to approach issues of diversity and inclusion in a more objective and thoughtful way. Kristen shared that the programme "has helped me to understand that my lack of confidence stemmed from a lack of knowledge. I didn't know what I didn't know. Now I do know what I don't know, and I know how to find out, and that's been transformative. I feel empowered and able to make decisions and raise things with those I work with."

Now she has completed the programme, how is she feeling about her newfound knowledge? "Beth's course has been transformative. The programme has provided invaluable insights into representing disability, diverse ethnicities, LGBTQ+ characters and families, accessibility and much more. I feel bolstered by this knowledge, and inspired by the creative ideas that have been generated during the course."

When asked if she would recommend the programme Kristen had this to say; "Just do it. I can guarantee it will be worth your while and if it's not I'll give you the money back myself."

Kristen Harrison
Curved House Kids



Inclusion Incubator Case Studies

Rose Hall is a writer and editor at Usborne.

Before the programme, Rose was committed to doing the work on inclusion and was really interested in issues of discrimination and equality at a political level, but was aware she hadn't focused on how to put this into practice in her writing of children's books.

She explains "I hadn't realised to what extent these political issues are live and relevant in the books we are producing – in so many ways."

Through taking part in the Inclusion Incubator Rose found she gained confidence and ideas about how to approach character development, writing briefs, and commenting constructively on illustrator roughs and colours.

"I feel much more confident now. And I am even more committed than before to inclusivity in children's books. Where I perhaps had a hunch or a gut instinct about something not being right, I have the tools to articulate why that is, and to propose solutions.

"There are specific changes I am implementing in a book I'm currently working on that are a direct outcome of this course. I'm taking a new approach to character development to ensure they are more authentic."

Rose Hall
Writer and Editor
Usborne



Inclusion Incubator Case Studies

"Being a publisher, I felt that inclusion was something I needed to consider."

Karra McFarlane has gained a new level of insight into the impact of inclusion through taking part in the Inclusion Incubator Programme.

"I feel I now have the confidence to take risks and push for change. Often I would have just accepted being told things weren't possible, but considering the true impact of inclusion has pushed me to strive for change" she explains.

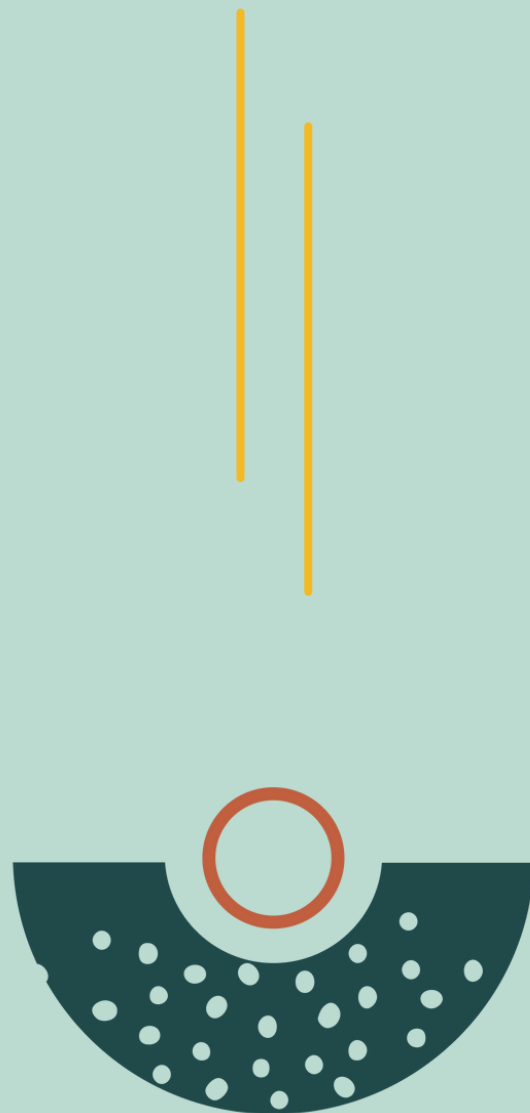
Having been concerned at first at the time commitment of the programme, Karra describes the Incubator as truly engaging and found the content immersive and compelled her to fully participate in the process.

"It's definitely worth it! I think we all feel we don't have the time to take on additional work or new challenges but this is one of those times where it's definitely worth making the time. I would say this programme is invaluable to anyone directly involved in influencing the path of the next generation."

Karra McFarlane
Primary Literacy Publisher
Oxford University Press



Testimonials



Inclusion Incubator Testimonials

"The best training I've had for years and better than other external training I have had.

It's a great model as it enables you to really apply what you are learning to your own context – and the content matter is very thought-provoking. I often find myself thinking about it when I'm not working."

Senior Development Editor, OUP

"The most useful and insightful training I've had in my publishing career."

Cathy Atkinson, Freelance Publisher

"I feel as though I've gained a really deep and broad insight into how to produce good inclusive content, and have developed a much improved awareness of what I need to think about in order to achieve this.

I thought we were doing a fairly good job of this up till now, but the programme has made me review the way we work as a department and ask how we can improve our editorial processes to improve the inclusivity of our content in a consistent, thoughtful and meaningful way.

It has motivated me to be brave and try to drive us forward as a department to create content that is truly inclusive and that will make a difference to children's lives."

Senior Publisher, OUP



Inclusion Incubator Testimonials

"Beth has offered not just her years of professional experience but a wealth of curated, well researched materials to support our learning, increase our knowledge and change the way we work. I really benefited from critically analysing my blindspots around inclusion and applying the learning from the course to my freelance work in children's publishing – the very same day! I'm still using the resources and I'm still learning!"

Lynne Humphreys, Freelance Publisher

"Beth's course is both thought and action-provoking and you'll find yourself thinking about the sessions in your work and personal life. The detail she provides about people from all backgrounds has been thoroughly researched and is sensitively delivered. It clearly comes from a place of genuine passion and compassion, and anyone who takes forward what they learn on the course will be a force for good in society and the work they transform. Time on Beth's course is time well spent!"

Helen Stacey, Commissioning Editor, OUP

"Whether you think you know a lot about inclusion or nothing about it, you will learn so much. It is packed with information and the tasks really embed the content and give you time to reflect and improve. The content is interesting and it is one of the best training programmes I have ever done."

Jen Campbell, Publisher, OUP



Inclusion Incubator Testimonials

"A combination of big picture thinking about structural inequalities and how these play out in children's books, with extremely specific nuts-and-bolts tips about how to make your own projects more inclusive. It's been a humbling process to confront the biases I may subconsciously be bringing to my work. But taking the time out from the day-to-day to think and learn is a crucial process in overcoming them."

Rose Hall, Writer and Editor, Usborne Publishing

"Beth is incredibly knowledgeable and non-judgmental. She provided a supportive space for our team to have challenging conversations and to think more deeply and more critically about both the 'how' and the 'why' of inclusion. Thoroughly recommend Beth and all of her work!"

Kirsty Stanfield, Commissioning Editor, OUP

"I was incredibly impressed with how much the course covers while never feeling overwhelming. I started the course knowing I wanted to make children's books more inclusive, and have come out of it feeling confident I can do just that."

Lisa Davis, Children's Book Editor and Publishing Consultant

"This course tested and challenged our approach to the products we produce for children. I think we'll produce more inclusive reading and learning experiences as a result of this."

Helen Freeman, Director, Oxford Children's, OUP



Inclusion Incubator Testimonials

"A well-structured, thought-provoking course. The mixture of videos, pre-session tasks, and worked examples give lots of opportunities for reflection and discussion, as well as tips for how you can practically apply the knowledge to your projects.

Engaging with the material allows you to have vital conversations with your colleagues, broadens your awareness and enables you to create truly inclusive books."

Niamh Harkett, Editor, OUP

"The live sessions were supportive and open and Beth really took the time to interrogate any examples we brought.

A truly beneficial and worthwhile experience."

Rebecca DeLozier, Commissioning Editor, OUP

"This was a really insightful and interesting course, that opened my eyes to issues I thought I already knew, and gave me the vocabulary to discuss them with more confidence. Beth always had an interesting perspective to share on personal and professional issues and ensured the group discussions felt comfortable and inclusive. The supporting materials are also a great reference bank for the future."

Helen Lawson, Senior Development Editor, OUP

"Beth provided a safe environment to explore all questions and excellent support and advice - as well as a clear way into a big topic - and in bite-size ways which were easy to incorporate into the working weeks."

Samantha Armstrong, Senior Publisher, OUP





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**Book a call to discuss how the Inclusion Incubator
could work for your team.**

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