

Colour Blind Awareness launches #1ineveryclassroom campaign

Ask any teacher how many colour blind pupils they've taught and the answer will usually be 'one or two'. Statistics suggest though that actually, it is more likely to have been one in every class they've ever taught.

- Colour vision deficiency (CVD) affects 1 in 12 boys, 1 in 200 girls
- Boys are 20 times more likely to have CVD than girls
- CVD affects 320 million worldwide (more than population of USA, 314m), 33m in Europe, c3m in UK
- 1 in every classroom = 400,000 CVD kids in UK schools, or enough to fill completely fill 400 average secondary schools (or 13,500 classrooms of 30 pupils)
- There are 15,000 CVD teachers, all experiencing some problems themselves in school, so one could teach each classroom and there would still be 1500 CVD teachers left over

Like dyslexia, before it was well known and well understood, colour blindness is a hidden disability and can lead to children becoming disillusioned with learning or feeling that they are stupid or less able than others – just because they see colours differently. It can even affect how well they do in their GCSE and A Level exams and the choices of careers open to them when they leave school. Parents and teachers don't realise that textbooks, worksheets and educational software just aren't designed with colour blind pupils in mind.

There are approximately 400,000 colour blind children in UK schools but there's no Government advice for parents or teachers. Teachers aren't trained in how to identify and support their colour blind pupils, even though statistically speaking there will be one in every classroom.

Colour Blind Awareness founder, Kathryn Albany-Ward explains:

“Colour blindness is a hidden disability and is currently not recognised as a Special Educational Need (SEN). Teachers, however good they are, can't be expected to know about everything so having dedicated SEN support would mean that every child with a colour vision deficiency could access help.

“This Campaign is needed because children with CVD are unlikely to be diagnosed (colour vision test not part of NHS eye test for children and our studies show opticians often ignore the test because there is no cure) with estimates that 80% CVD kids arrive at secondary school undiagnosed and 20% will actually leave school still without a diagnosis – potentially seriously affecting future career prospects.”

Founded in 2009 by Kathryn after she was shocked to discover that her own then 7 year old son was colour blind, the organisation (which is a not-for profit Community Interest Company) is gradually gaining recognition and support across the UK and is exporting its experience and advice overseas.

One of the most vocal supporters is Northumberland-based mum of two Marie Difolco who, in support of her son Marcus commissioned an animation – kindly created by Gareth Wood, a parent of another child from school - which shows the different ways colours appear to Marcus and hopes this will give people more understanding about the condition.

The animation -

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxZ599esLjhsuqHI3RhDeEliWmAq9WdFx> - features a cloud (who looks like he could do with a hug, or at least some understanding) with Marcus singing his own version of the rainbow song.

Marie explains “When we found out Marcus was colour blind we really needed the help and information that Kathryn and Colour Blind Awareness offered. They’ve supported us, helped with training at Marcus’s school and just generally been there.

“A parent at Marcus’s school is a graphic designer and he kindly put together this amazing awareness raising and myth-busting animation for us.”

Kathryn adds: “We’re hoping the film will help people to realise that colour blind people don’t just confuse red and green, or see only in black and white.”

“I set up Colour Blind Awareness and the website after I realised that there was very little information, support or resources out there for parents and teachers wishing to understand more about colour vision deficiency – and for anyone wanting simple, practical ways to support children and others with this condition.

“I hope this campaign will encourage more schools to invite us to provide colour vision training for teachers and I hope it will make parents stop and think about whether their children, especially boys, have had a colour vision test.”

The campaign will be run across traditional and social media platforms with interested people asked to use the #1ineveryclassroom hashtag @colourblindorg and @mariesthename

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