



# **Weapon of Choice: Beachcroft In-School Residency Project Report**

**September 2024 to July 2025**

Prepared by Alesha Pryce, Project Manager

The project, delivered between September 2024 and July 2025 at Ormiston Beachcroft AP Academy, used drama, creativity, and discussion to support young people's personal and academic development. Through weekly sessions integrated with English lessons, participants were encouraged to build confidence, resilience, and leadership skills. Activities such as check-ins, drama games, and creative writing offered safe spaces for reflection, self-expression, and teamwork. Despite challenges with attendance, behaviour, and timetable disruptions, the project consistently provided positive opportunities for engagement, trust-building, and growth. Learners developed stronger focus, voice, and peer leadership, highlighting the transformative role of creativity in alternative education.

Young people at Beachcroft often face complex challenges, including disrupted education, behavioural difficulties, low confidence, and disengagement from learning. Many struggle to remain focused, cope with mainstream classroom settings, or find safe spaces to express themselves. Traditional teaching approaches alone are not always sufficient to meet these needs, as learners require more creative, flexible, and inclusive interventions. This project addresses these gaps by using drama, creativity, and dialogue to re-engage learners, build resilience, and support emotional wellbeing. It provides consistent opportunities for leadership, teamwork, and academic support, helping learners develop confidence, self-expression, and a renewed sense of belonging.

The project supports participants' needs by combining creative expression with academic development in a safe, structured environment. Through drama, games, and reflective discussions, sessions encourage focus, teamwork, and resilience while fostering trust between learners and facilitators. Integrating with English lessons makes academic content more accessible, while activities such as check-ins and peer-led games promote leadership and confidence. The flexible, learner-centred approach ensures that even those with complex behavioural challenges can engage at their own pace. By prioritising creativity, consistency, and positive relationships, the project re-engages young people, helping them develop skills essential for both education and personal growth.





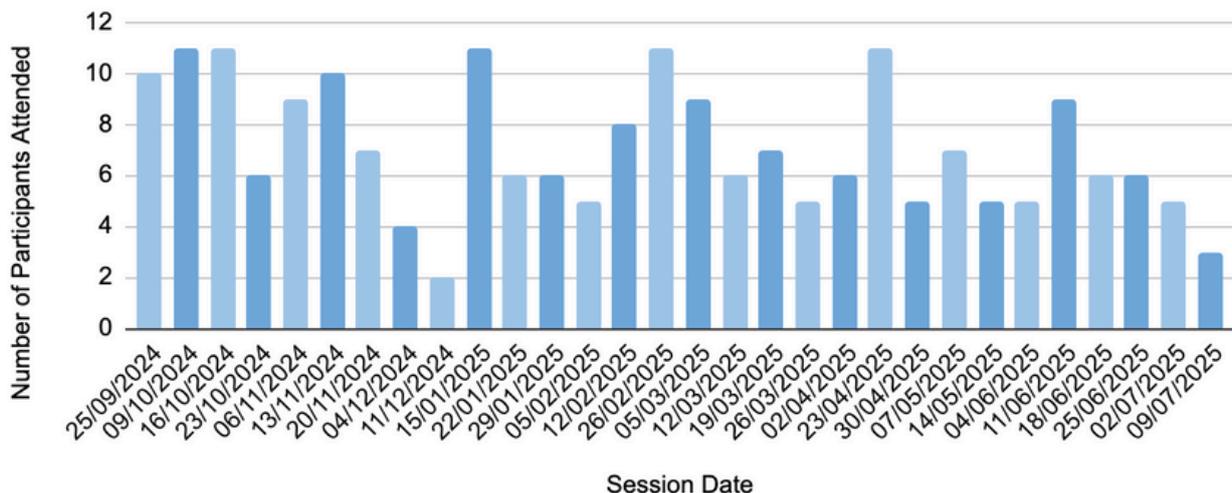
# Throughout the Year

## Sessions:

- We delivered **30 regular sessions**, once a week, during term time (25/09/24 to 16/07/25), on Wednesday between 1:30pm and 3:00pm at Beachcroft Academy.
- We provided sessions for a total of **36 participants**, with **55.56 %** of these participants attending 5 or more sessions.
- In all we delivered **318 participant hours** of workshops.

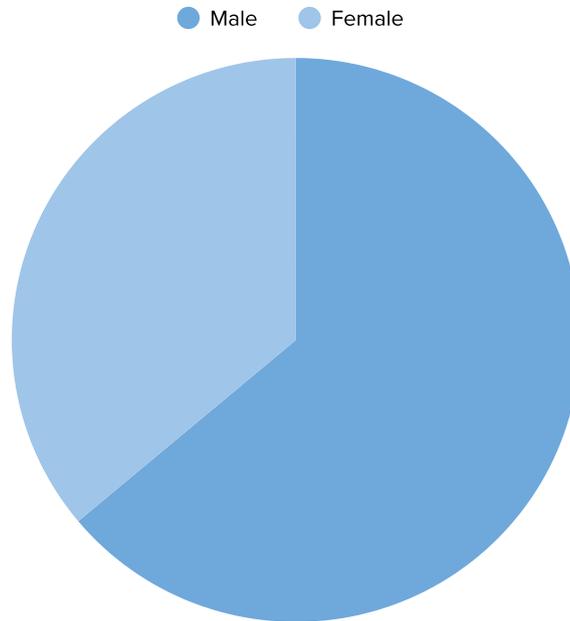
## Attendance:

- Attendance across the year was mixed, reflecting the wider challenges of working within a Pupil Referral Unit. While some learners attended consistently and showed strong retention (e.g., I\*, K\*, and R\*), others dipped in and out depending on behaviour, exclusions, or external factors. Importantly, many who initially resisted (e.g., R\*, K\*) grew in confidence and stayed longer in sessions over time.
- Participants primarily joined through referrals from English teachers and staff at Beachcroft.
- Others heard about the sessions through peers and joined out of curiosity. Several learners reported attending school specifically because they knew sessions were running, highlighting the project’s role as a motivator for engagement.
- Attendance fluctuated due to several factors:
  - School Trips & Exams: Frequent last-minute cancellations for trips and mock exams disrupted consistency.
  - Behavioural Dynamics: Some learners only engaged if their friends were present, while others left when activities felt too challenging.
  - Timetable Changes: Shifts in scheduling occasionally reduced attendance and required facilitators to adapt quickly.
  - External Challenges: Suspensions, exclusions, and personal circumstances also affected retention.
- Despite these challenges, the project succeeded in drawing learners back repeatedly, with many showing increasing resilience, focus, and willingness to remain in sessions.

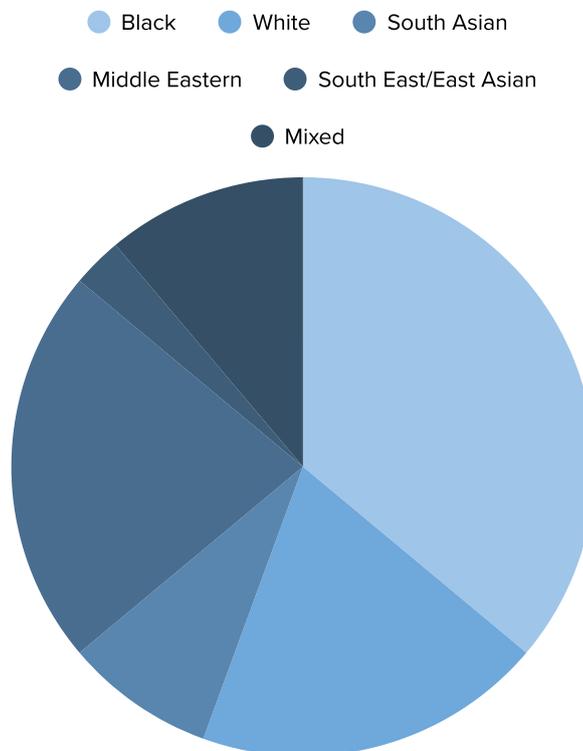


## Participant Demographic Breakdown

- The majority of the participants are male (69%) with the remaining 31% being female. The higher proportion of male participants reflects school referrals, particularly in alternative provision settings, though the project is open and welcoming to all.



- The ethnic breakdown of the group is 36% Black, 20% White, 8% South Asian, 22% Middle Eastern, 3% South East/East Asian with the remaining 11% being mixed ethnicities.



- All of the participants are under as Ormiston Beachcroft Academy, where they attend, only serves students aged 5–16.

## Project Overview

The first term focused on re-establishing trust, building relationships, and engaging learners through creative activities and integrated English support.

Early sessions set the tone with check-ins, drama games, and discussions that encouraged participation and self-expression. New learners such as R\* and M\* displayed resilience and leadership, while returning participants like I\* and K\* grew in confidence and motivation.



Despite challenges with walkouts and fluctuating attendance, many learners began to stay longer, engage more fully, and take creative risks. The term laid a strong foundation for collaboration, with learners increasingly viewing the sessions as a safe and positive space.



The second term deepened learners' engagement through more focused creative work, discussions, and performance preparation. Sessions often blended games with reflective conversations, encouraging confidence, teamwork, and leadership. Learners like P\* and A\* demonstrated maturity and individuality, while new voices such as D\* and L\* brought fresh energy.

Integration with English lessons continued, particularly through poetry analysis, helping learners connect creatively with academic content.

Attendance was sometimes disrupted by trips, timetable changes, and challenging behaviour, yet many participants showed greater resilience and willingness to remain in sessions. This term highlighted the importance of consistency and peer-led activities in sustaining focus.

The third term built on earlier progress, with learners showing increased maturity, ownership, and willingness to engage in deeper discussions. Sessions often evolved into reflective conversations on life, school, and identity, providing valuable spaces for honesty and vulnerability.

Younger learners in KS3 became more involved, bringing high energy and enthusiasm, while older learners displayed leadership by staying engaged even when peers disengaged.

Attendance continued to fluctuate due to exams, trips, and behavioural challenges, but overall retention improved, with several learners attending specifically for the sessions. The term concluded with stronger peer relationships and a foundation for next year's growth.



## External Partnerships, Funders & Supporters

### Taster Sessions & Referrals:

Participants were referred to the project primarily through their schools, with teachers and pastoral staff playing a key role in identifying young people who would benefit from the programme. Many first engaged through introductory taster sessions in previous years, which provided a practical insight into the project's creative approach and encouraged them to join more regularly. Schools and partner organisations supported this process by promoting sessions, recommending students, and creating space within the timetable for participation. These tasters proved essential in breaking down barriers, sparking interest, and building trust with new participants.

### Partnerships:

This year, partnerships played an important role in supporting the delivery of the project. Schools such as Ormiston Beachcroft AP Academy provided venues and referred participants, ensuring that young people most in need could access the sessions. Collaborations with teachers and pastoral staff were key, as they supported consistency and created a safe and welcoming environment for participants.

While there were no external trips arranged by the project, schools facilitated enrichment opportunities independently, complementing the creative work taking place in sessions.

One teacher shared: *"The project gives our students a voice and a chance to explore creativity in ways the curriculum doesn't always allow."*

A participant also reflected: *"It felt good to work with WoC ( Bruno and Ehireme) they really understand us."*

These partnerships strengthened the impact of the project, combining artistic excellence with pastoral support and ensuring sessions remained both engaging and relevant.

### Funders:

WoC Beachcroft Residencies was generously funded by the **Young Westminster Foundation's Brighter Futures Fund** and **Aesop** this year. The work would not be possible without this funding.



Young  
Westminster  
Foundation

Aēsop®

### Performances:

There were no formal performances this year, following a decision by the Project Director in consultation with the school. Due to inconsistency in attendance, it was not possible for students to devise a full production. However, sharing and performance elements were embedded throughout the sessions, with opportunities for students to present work-in-progress and showcase their creativity, particularly towards the end of the project. These smaller, informal sharings allowed participants to build confidence and gain a sense of achievement without the pressure of a final performance.

### Trips and Special Events:

No external trips or special events were arranged by the project this year. All off-site activities and events were coordinated independently by the schools, with students participating outside of project delivery time. On occasion, project sessions were cancelled or rescheduled to accommodate school-led trips and events. While the project itself did not host additional outings, its flexibility allowed students to benefit from both the school's wider enrichment programme and the focused creative work provided within the project.

## Evaluation

We examined the impact of the project on this year's participants using a mixture of self reported reflections from the participants, both written and verbal, session reports from the Project Director, as well as observations from the sessions, using the Pan project objectives to measure the success of the project which are:

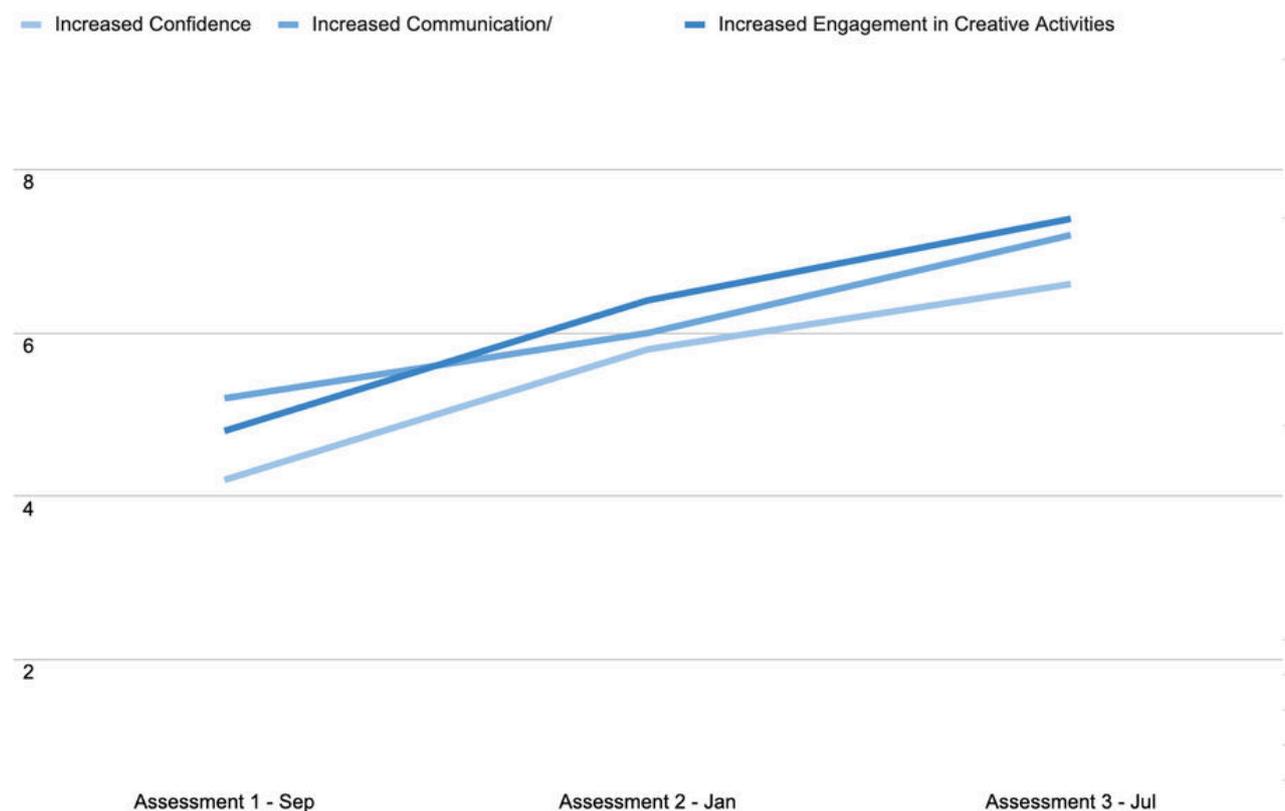
- Improved confidence
- Improved communication/expression skills
- Increased engagement in creative activities

A baseline assessment is taken of each individual participant when they first attend the project, with further assessments taking place each month. At the end of each term, participants are asked for their feedback and to share their experiences of the project. Case studies for a few participants are also written at the end of the project.

The variety of evaluation methods allows the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The weekly staff monitoring allows the team to see small changes in an individual participant's progress, as well as identifying any additional needs a participant might have. Participants have a wide range of life-experiences, so monitoring exercises focus on observing the change in participant progress against outcomes, rather than observing the overall level. The individual case studies allow a focus on the journey of each participant. Direct feedback from the participants allows us to fully cater to their needs and for our project goals to be led by them.

There are some limitations to our evaluation methods, including written and spoken language barriers, experiences of trauma resulting in a loss of agency in participants expressing their feelings and participants responding to questions with what they 'think you want to hear'. The goal is that the variety of methods mitigates these limitations as much as is possible.

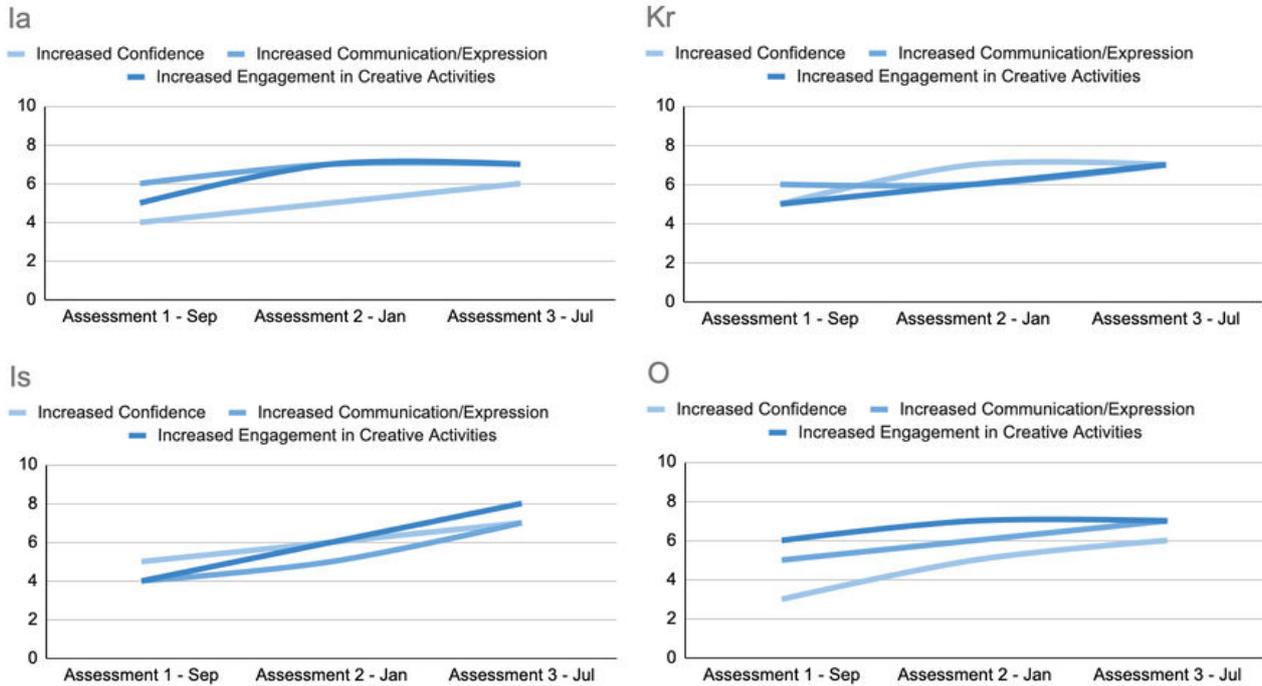
Below is a graph showing the average progress of all of the participants across the year. There was noticeable improvement across the year for all three categories that we measure.





## Individual Participant Evaluations

Below is a sample of individual participant growth in our key areas across the year.



All participants increased in all three areas across the year.

## Key Words

From the evaluations run across the year, the following key words and themes have emerged as the most prevalent, and give a snapshot towards the impact of the projects on the participants.

encouraging  
 supportive risk-taking  
 collaboration  
 creativity exploration  
 communication  
 artistic belonging  
 safe-space  
 inclusion  
 representation  
 achievement

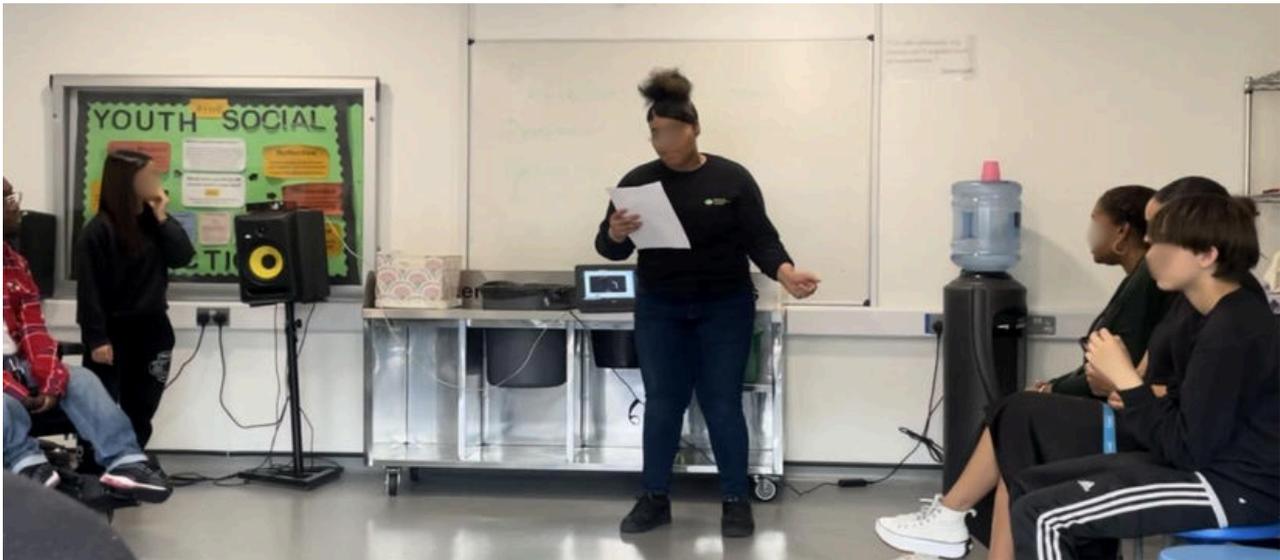
## Key Outcomes

Participants expressed that the sessions gave them a safe and enjoyable space to be creative, build confidence, and connect with others.

Many reported attending school specifically because of the workshops, highlighting their motivational impact.

Progress was observed in learners' English skills, particularly through poetry analysis and written expression, while others developed musical and performance abilities, taking creative risks with songs and improvisation.

Several participants grew in leadership, running games and supporting peers, while new friendships formed across year groups. Importantly, learners demonstrated greater resilience, focus, and self-expression, with some beginning to apply creativity outside sessions in positive ways.



It's important that we also nurture the participant's wants from our sessions as well as focusing on the key objectives. However, with feedback from the participants, it is clear that there has been good growth within Pan's key objectives, as shown below.

### Improved Confidence: Participant feedback

- Participants consistently highlighted that the sessions gave them the confidence to take creative risks and express themselves more openly. For example, I\* shared that she decided to come into school specifically because the WoC team was running a session, showing the project's power as a motivator.
- Learners like A\* surprised staff by excelling in focus-based games, boosting his self-esteem, while Ke\*i began participating more vocally after initially holding back.
- P\* also displayed individuality by voicing her honest views when others stayed silent.
- These moments of feedback and observation demonstrate clear growth in self-belief, resilience, and confidence across the group.
- "Can I run the check-in?" – frequent requests from participants, showing ownership of the sessions.
- "*I actually feel uncomfortable around police.*" – P\* (expressing individuality when peers stayed silent).
- Kr\* stayed focused through an entire poetry session, working hard to articulate her ideas despite usually struggling to concentrate.

### **Improved Communication/Expression: Participant feedback**

- Participants showed growing confidence in expressing themselves verbally and creatively. I\* regularly led check-ins and facilitated games, encouraging her peers to participate.
- Kr\* demonstrated determination to stay focused and articulate her ideas during poetry analysis, despite her usual struggles with concentration.
- A\* expressed himself successfully in 'Yes/No/Bro', surprising staff with his ability to communicate without relying on filler words.
- These examples highlight how the project created a safe space for young people to explore new ways of expressing themselves, both in structured activities and open discussions.
- *"I wasn't going to come to school today but then I remembered the WoC team was going to be here, so I decided to come."* – I\*
- *"What was the lowest point in your life?"* – A\*, leading to an honest and vulnerable session.

### **Increased Engagement in Creative Activities: Participant feedback**

- Learners became increasingly willing to take part in drama, games, music, and reflective discussions.
- Ka\*, initially shy, gradually began improvising and offering creative ideas.
- D\* participated fully in games, even promising to share food she cooked at home, linking creativity to her personal life.
- I\* demonstrated artistic growth by attempting to write a song on positive encouragement.
- Participants consistently engaged with activities more deeply, often asking to replay favourite games or suggesting new ones themselves, showing stronger ownership of the sessions.
- I\* showed leadership by running the '7UP' game, re-explaining instructions when peers laughed and lost focus.
- *"Can we play this again?"* – repeated requests from learners when enjoying activities like 'Bomb & Shield' or 'Word Tennis'.
- Ka\*, initially shy, gained confidence to join improvisations after watching her peers.
- D\* connected with facilitator Brie through food, promising: *"I'll cook it for you next week."* – showing how creativity linked with personal life.

### **Additional Outcomes/Observations:**

#### **When asked what they would like from the project in the future, learners expressed a desire for:**

- More performance opportunities, including music, drama, and dance.
- Creative writing and songwriting projects that allow them to share personal experiences.
- Collaborations with external artists to broaden their exposure and inspiration.
- Trips and showcases to share their work outside school.

#### **When asked what they'd like in the future, participants said:**

- *"We want to do more music and write songs."*
- *"Can we do a proper performance?"* – in response to Christmas showcase planning.
- *"Bring in more artists for us to work with."*
- *"We want to go on trips and show people what we can do."*

**The participants used the following words to describe Beachcroft In School Residency project; "Fun, safe, creative, calm, different from lessons, somewhere I can be myself."**

## Artist Facilitators



### **Bruno Correia** – Project Director

Bruno Correia is an actor, musician, and facilitator, and the Project Director for Weapon of Choice's work in alternative provision.

A former participant turned facilitator, he now leads the Beachcroft Residencies and has over five years' experience delivering projects in pupil referral units such as Beachcroft AP Academy and Camden Centre for Learning.

Bruno also helped pioneer WoC's first school residencies, working across schools including Haverstock, Hampstead, and Acland Burghley.

Passionate about empowering excluded young people, he combines artistic excellence with youth work values, training young leaders and ensuring all voices are heard.

### **Ehireme Omoaka** – Artist Facilitator

Ehireme Omoaka is the Project Director of the Weapon of Choice Theatre Project, the after school theatre group, and the producer of Pan Talks: Poetry Night.

A former participant of WoC, he went on to become a facilitator and now directs one of the WoC projects, bringing his lived experience and passion full circle.

Alongside WoC, Ehireme works with Poetic Unity, is a freelance facilitator, and the published author of 'Points of Contact', a poetry collection exploring themes of family, fatherhood, nature, the Black experience, and youth identity. A performance poet and storyteller at heart, he uses his craft in creative writing and spoken word to empower young people, helping to fill the gaps he once faced himself.



### **Brie-Morgan Appleton** – Peer Facilitator

Brie-Morgan Appleton is a facilitator, actress, youth worker, and teaching assistant.

She first connected with Pan after seeing Weapon of Choice perform at her school, joining through a taster session.

From there, she became a peer facilitator, and has since grown into a facilitator for both WoC and Fortune projects. Drawing on her own journey from participant to leader, Brie brings relatability, creativity, and commitment to supporting young people through her work.





## Case Studies- Cont..

### Case Study: Written by Bruno Correia

O\* has been participating in our sessions, where he has been developing his ability to explain activities and lead games. Over the past few weeks, we have observed significant improvements in his communication skills and confidence.

In previous sessions, O\* demonstrated a tendency to rush through his explanations when introducing activities. This sometimes led to confusion among participants. Additionally, he exhibited signs of shyness, often lowering his head while speaking and not projecting his voice effectively.

During an earlier session, we provided O\* with constructive feedback, advising him to slow down while explaining activities to ensure clarity. We emphasised the importance of clear articulation, measured pacing, and making eye contact with participants to foster engagement and understanding.

In the most recent session, O\* demonstrated noticeable improvements in his approach to explaining games. He actively applied the feedback he had received by taking his time to ensure that all participants understood the instructions. One key moment highlighted his progress: when a participant struggled to grasp an aspect of the game, O\* took a brief pause to gather his thoughts and then provided a clearer explanation. This demonstrated his ability to adapt and refine his communication in real time.

Additionally, O\*'s voice projection has improved significantly. He now speaks with greater volume and confidence, ensuring that his instructions are heard clearly by everyone in the group. His body language has also evolved; he maintains eye contact while communicating, a strong indicator of his growing self-assurance.

One of the most promising aspects of O\*'s growth is his ability to reflect on his own progress. He has acknowledged that his confidence has improved, which demonstrates his awareness and willingness to develop further. His increasing ability to lead and communicate effectively within the group highlights his growing comfort in the space.

O\*'s journey showcases the power of constructive feedback and self-reflection in personal development. His ability to take in feedback and actively apply it has resulted in significant improvements in his communication skills, confidence, and leadership abilities. With continued support and practice, O\* has the potential to further enhance these skills, making him a more effective and engaging facilitator in group activities.





## Conclusion

This year the project provided consistent, creative interventions that supported learners at Beachcroft in building confidence, focus, and leadership. Despite timetable changes, cancellations, and behavioural challenges, sessions offered safe, engaging spaces where learners could express themselves and connect with others.

Academic support through creative English integration and performance-based activities enriched learning, while discussions allowed learners to explore personal and social issues openly. The project's adaptability ensured that each session responded to the learners' needs, resulting in tangible growth in resilience, communication, and self-expression.

Learners demonstrated measurable growth in communication, confidence, and creative engagement. Participants who once resisted activities stayed longer and contributed more consistently, while peer leaders emerged to run games and support others.

Academic progress was seen in creative writing and poetry analysis, while musical and performance skills developed through improvisation and song-writing practices. Friendships were formed, and learners frequently described the sessions as safe, fun, and motivating. Several learners reported attending school specifically because of the project, showing its impact on retention and wellbeing as well as personal development.

Next year, the project will focus on deepening curriculum integration, expanding performance opportunities, and supporting creative writing and music. Learners' feedback shows a desire for more showcases, collaborations with external artists, and projects that link creativity with personal expression. We plan to build stronger links with English and other subjects while offering structured opportunities for learners to share their work publicly. Additional emphasis will be placed on peer leadership, encouraging learners to co-facilitate and take ownership of sessions, building their independence and confidence further, eventually encouraging them to attend the After school sessions.

### Improvements/goals for the next year of the project:

- **Stronger Staff Collaboration:** Ensure consistent staffing support during sessions, particularly in Period 6, to manage high-need learners effectively.
- **Learner Selection Strategy:** Curate session groups more intentionally to balance engagement with inclusivity. Introduce phased entry for learners with complex behaviour.
- **Sustained Curriculum Integration:** Deepen links with English and other subjects, building on successes in poetry and creative writing.
- **Performance Opportunities:** Provide structured but low-pressure opportunities for learners to showcase creativity (music, drama, spoken word).
- **Consistency & Communication:** Strengthen communication with staff to reduce last-minute cancellations and timetable disruptions.
- **Expand Peer Leadership:** Continue encouraging learners to run check-ins, lead games, and co-facilitate, building their sense of ownership.

We look forward to another year of our Beachcroft In School Residency Project and the joy and development it can bring to young people.