

**Scottish Ballet**  
**Safe to Be Me ® Research**  
**Evaluation Report**

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## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a research evaluation of the Scottish Ballet's Safe to Be Me ® programme which explores key social issues around identity, diversity, racism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia with children. The Equality Act (2010) describes nine protected characteristics. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (see Lawrence & Taylor, 2019). The Safe to Be Me ® programme is delivered in line with key Scottish Government targets to address these areas, engaging young people to explore issues such as identity, respect, acceptance, allyship, family diversity, and LGBTQ+ communities.

The evaluation of the programme was conducted in three phases. Phase one involved collection of data prior to children starting the programme. Phase two involved data collection during workshops. Phase three occurred several weeks to months following programme completion. During phase three, children and teachers were asked to reflect on their experiences and learning from the programme. Separate focus group interviews with dance facilitators and programme managers provided further context and insights.

In total, 5 schools and 6 classes were involved across the project. Within this sample, participants included 60 children, 2 teachers, and 7 programme facilitators and leaders. Attrition of school participants meant that different schools participated across phases one, two and three, such that a direct mapping or comparison of impact is not possible. Instead, the data provides rich and detailed snapshots of participant experiences across the programme.

Overall, the findings indicate that the Safe to Be Me ® programme influenced children's understandings of key terms and enabled confidence in using these terms to describe structural inequality or 'protected characteristics', as listed under the Equality Act (2010). Prior to the programme activities and workshops, children used common rhetoric and phrases to discuss identity and diversity (e.g., "difference doesn't matter"). Following workshop completion, children made more direct references to racism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia. The findings also indicate that the programme influenced children's language recognition, with students directly reflecting on, recalling, and labelling instances of discrimination. Participants' willingness to talk about or accept diversity varied across ability, gender, race, and sexuality. On occasion, children had mixed feelings towards dance – with some students indicating enjoyment and self-confidence with dance during and after the programme, and others sharing feelings of discomfort, hesitance, and/or awkwardness.



## Project Aims, Rationale and Research Questions

The aim of this research was to evaluate the Scottish Ballet's Safe to Be Me ® programme. The programme uses dance and embodied approaches to support children and young people to understand and embrace diverse identities and support ongoing cultures of inclusion. Delivered in line with key Scottish Government targets, the programme focuses on challenging racism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia in primary and secondary schools across Scotland.

Research indicates that children develop prejudiced understandings of human difference based on social norms that are internalised from an early age (Connolly et al., 2002). Whilst educational sites appear to be key to disrupting prejudiced understandings (Morgan & Taylor, 2019), research suggests that educators – particularly those working within early years and primary school settings – feel unprepared to engage with children in social justice education (Baily & Katradis, 2016). Programmes such as Safe to Be Me ® therefore play a central role in fostering inclusive education. However, little is known about children's and educators' experiences of such programmes, and as such determining the impacts of the Safe to Be Me ® programme is important.

The aim of this study was to understand how the Safe to Be Me ® programme uses dance and facilitated discussions to support children and teachers in Scottish primary schools to meet four anti-bias goals. These are for children to: a) "Demonstrate self-awareness and confidence in their own identities" (identity) (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019, p. 7), b) "Express comfort and joy with human diversity, [using] accurate language for human differences" (diversity) (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019, p. 7), c) "Recognise unfairness (injustice), have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts" (justice) (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019, p. 8), and d) "Demonstrate a sense of empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions" (activism) (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019, p. 8). Accordingly, the research questions underpinning this project were three-fold:

- a) How do children understand and experience the anti-bias goals (identity, diversity, justice, and activism) through the Safe to Be Me ® programme?
- b) How do teachers understand and experience the anti-bias goals (identity, diversity, justice, and activism) through the Safe to Be Me ® programme?
- c) What impact, if any, do children and teachers feel the Safe to Be Me ® programme has had on the school community?

## Methods

This project used a multi-medium case study design, incorporating arts-informed and embodied approaches to engage with children, educators and dance facilitators working across primary schools in central Scotland. Researchers visited 5 schools and 6 classes (see Table 1 School Participation across Phases), which provided opportunities for gaining insights into children's and educators' real-time lived experiences of the programme (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Given the embodied nature of the programme and the sensitive content covered, a participatory, relational, and pedagogically aligned approach was undertaken. The researchers brought varied methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives to this evaluation<sup>1</sup>. For this study, researchers met with dancers and programme leaders prior to the commencement of in-school visits, to discuss how the research could take place. As the programme ran over two days, with each class experiencing one half-day skill-up session and one full-day workshop session, consideration of time constraints was also key to the planning and implementation of data generation activities.

Following collaboration with Scottish Ballet dance facilitators and programme developers, data making tools used with children in the project included: Pupil Views Templates (PVTs), photography, observations, artefact and documentation collection (e.g., drawings, written comments), and dialogue (e.g., focus groups). This ensured pragmatic and relevant strategies were used, without the research impeding on Safe to Be Me ® programme operations. Interviews were also conducted with teachers, dancers, and managers following completion of the programme. Ethical approval for this project was gained from the University of Strathclyde. Data was gathered from February to July 2023, with researchers attending schools based on the pre-existing schedule for visits that had been arranged by the Scottish Ballet.

### Phase One

Phase one occurred directly prior to the start of the skill-up session. During the skill-up key concepts and terms were introduced by dance facilitators to children. In phase one, **Pupil**

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<sup>1</sup> The team capitalises on experience from different disciplinary backgrounds and publications, including e.g., Cologon et al. (2019), Hussain and Molyneaux (2022), Taylor (2023) and Wall (2018).

**Views Templates** (PVTs) were used to elicit children's initial understandings of concepts related to the four anti-bias goals: identity, diversity, justice, and activism (see Appendix 1 Pupil Views Templates) (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019). This enabled researchers to gain insights into children's pre-existing understandings before the start of the programme.

PVTs have been effectively used in research on metacognition to elicit children's thinking about their learning (Wall & Higgins, 2006; Wall, et al., 2007). PVTs use cartoon-based images to represent familiar learning scenarios to students, inviting learners to input their thoughts into speech bubbles imposed on an image. For this study, children were asked to create their own image, and to use speech and thought bubbles provided on a blank template to show what characters in their drawing were thinking and saying. Children were given the following prompts to use – each of which corresponded with one the four anti-bias goals: I feel confident in myself (identity), I feel comfortable with difference (diversity), I recognise unfairness (justice), and I feel confident standing up for myself or others when something unfair or hurtful happens (activism).

## Phase Two

Phase two was undertaken during the Safe to Be Me ® programme implementation – that is, during the skill-up and workshop sessions in schools. In this phase, data-making methods included the use of **photography, video, observation, storytelling**, and the collection of **documentation and artefacts**. These methods are outlined below.

**Documentation and Artefacts:** Data in the form of artefacts and documentation (e.g., characters created with Safe to Be Me ® facilitators) were collected during this phase. Naturalistic documentation such as this captures 'in the moment' thinking about a concept and provides snapshots of student thinking. Documentation and artefacts therefore provide evidence relating to contextually relevant experiences for children (Cresswell, 2014).

**Storytelling:** Data reflecting learners engaging in storytelling (through dance, writing, drawing) were captured through written (observations) or visual evidence (photographs, writing, drawing, and video). Clark (2005) argues that data-making tools such as storytelling support children's meaning-making and interpretation. Veale (2005) suggests that stories facilitate imaginative exploration of sensitive issues and experiences, which support children to analyse and ascribe meaning to concepts (such as those explored in the programme). Einarsdottir et al. (2009) also suggest that stories provide a useful lens for viewing and understanding children's representations of the world.

**Observation:** Observations were collated by the researchers. Marshall and Rossman (2014) state that observations involve systematic recording of a range of formal and informal experiences. Observations support the researcher's immersion, enabling familiarisation with settings, people, and routines. Clark and Moss (2011) emphasise the need to observe where the intention is to 'truly listen' to children – recognising children's multi-modal expressions and behaviours as forms of communication (Mevawalla et al., 2022).

**Photography and Video:** Photographs and videos were collected in this research. Photography and video provide effective platforms for visual communication (Punch, 2002). Videos offer dynamic (rather than static) insights and enable exploration of the embodied, moving, and rhythmic nature of arts-based approaches such as dance. Photographs also support inclusivity for younger and children with diverse traits and characteristics, facilitating opportunities for multiple means of communication (Crivello et al., 2009).

### Phase Three

Upon completion of the programme, researchers revisited the participating schools to complete a follow-up **Pupil Views Template (PVT)** and **focus group** to elicit reflections from children on their understandings and experiences from the programme. **Interviews** were also conducted with teachers to elicit their understandings and experiences.

**Interviews and Focus Groups:** Conversations with children and adults (teachers, dance facilitators, and programme leaders) were conducted in the final phase of this research. In-depth dialogue provides meaning-making opportunities for participants, which enable them to co-construct, re-construct, and de-construct their experiences. The use of dialogue also facilitates opportunities for shared reflection and provides 'time and space' for participants to express their understandings of concepts (Seidman, 2006).

## Participants

This section provides an overview of who participated in the research. Overall, 5 schools and 6 classes were involved across the three phases, including 60 children, 2 teachers, and 7 Safe to Be Me® dance facilitators and programme leaders. Two classes participated in phase one, four classes participated in phase two, and two classes participated in phase 3. A breakdown of participation across phases is provided below (see Table 1).

Table 1 School Participation across Phases

	Phase One (Skill-Up)	Phase Two (Workshop)	Phase Three (Follow Up)
School A	X		
School B		X	X
School C, Class 1		X	
School C, Class 2		X	
School D			X
School E	X	X	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>

Information and context about each participating school is provided in the appendix (see Appendix 4 School Profiles).

Influences from the broader socio-political Scottish context may have impacted on the recruitment and attrition of sample schools. This includes media attention on the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill (2022) (see also Dance Facilitator and Manager Perspectives). Some schools dropped out of the programme before and after the initial skill-up session. This impacted on the logistics of data collection and meant that no class or school participated across all three phases of the research. It is, therefore, not possible to make direct comparisons in terms of changes in understandings for individual cohorts.

Nonetheless, participants' reflections on the programme provide robust and meaningful insights into their own lived experiences of Safe to Be Me ®. The number of child and teacher participants in each class is provided in the table below.

Table 2 Number of Child and Teacher Participants

	Child Participants	Teacher Participants
School A	13	
School B	9	1
School C, Class 1	6	
School C, Class 2	5	
School D	21	1
School E	6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>2</b>

All child participants were 10 or 11 years old and were in Primary 6 at the time of data making.

Five dance facilitators and two programme managers also participated in the project. Dance facilitators were permanent or freelance, had varying levels of experience with the programme, and had accessed some form of training through the Scottish Ballet, prior to being involved in the Safe to Be Me ® programme.

## Findings

In this section, the findings emerging from each phase of data collection are discussed. Findings are first outlined individually before an overall view is provided. All data presented in this report has been de-identified to preserve participant anonymity and confidentiality.

## Phase One Findings

Prior to the start of the programme, children were asked to complete a Pupil Views Template (PVT). Children could choose from one of four templates, each of which had a prompt that related to one of the four anti-bias goals. These prompts and their corresponding goals are outlined below.

Table 3 Anti-bias Goals and Corresponding PVT Prompts

Focus	Anti-bias Goal	PVT Prompt
Identity	“Demonstrate self-awareness and confidence in their own identities” (Derman-Sparks & Olsen, 2019, n.p.).	I feel confident in myself.
Diversity	“Express comfort and joy with human diversity, [using] accurate language for human differences” (Derman-Sparks & Olsen, 2019, n.p.).	I feel comfortable with difference.
Justice	“Recognise unfairness (injustice), have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts” (Derman-Sparks & Olsen, 2019, n.p.).	I recognise unfairness.
Activism	“Demonstrate a sense of empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions” (Derman-Sparks & Olsen, 2019, n.p.).	I feel confident standing up for myself or others when something unfair or hurtful happens.

Not all children completed PVTs based on the prompts provided – with some using it as a space for free drawing (e.g., of a soccer game). The latter were not included in this report. In total, 19 children participated in phase one.

## Identity

In relation to the first anti-bias goal, identity, and the prompt “I feel confident in myself”, the PVTs showed that children who chose this template focused on their confidence and capabilities in relation to specific tasks, rather than on their identities. Children shared examples of singing, climbing trees, or horse-riding, represented attitudes and feelings – e.g., happy, safe, and good (see Figure 1 Feeling Safe, Confident, Great and Good). Physical qualities were also mentioned, e.g., “it makes me feel strong”, as were beauty standards, e.g., “I’m butiful [beautiful]”.

It may be that the prompt used (“I feel confident in myself”) could have been reframed to better prime children to think about their own identities (e.g., I feel comfortable being who I am).

Figure 1 Feeling Safe, Confident, Great and Good

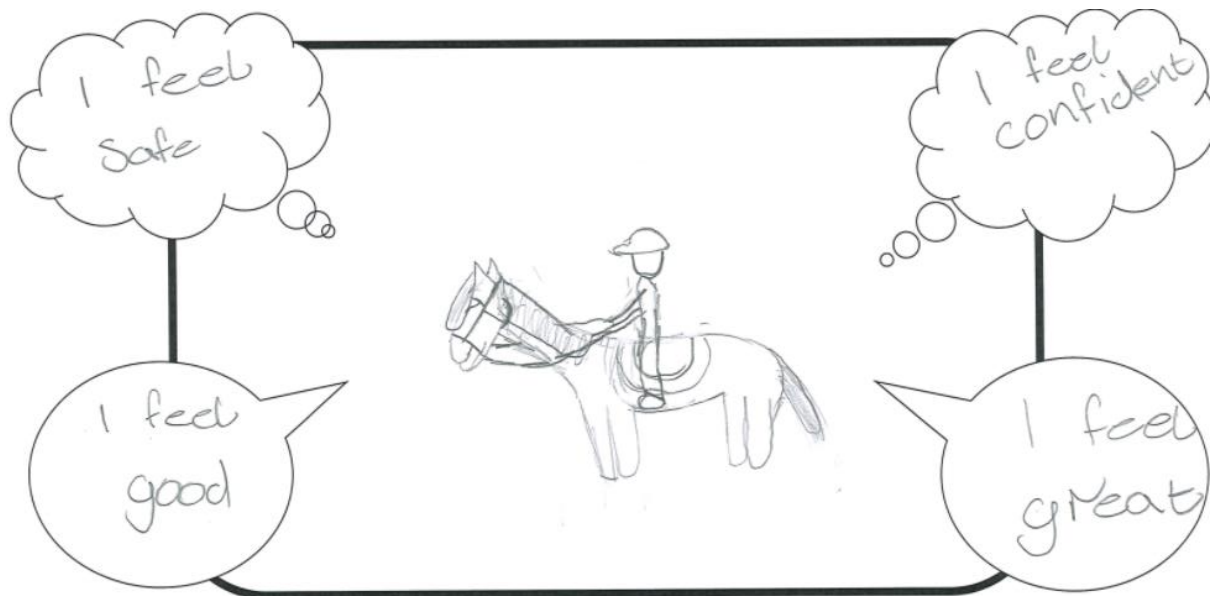
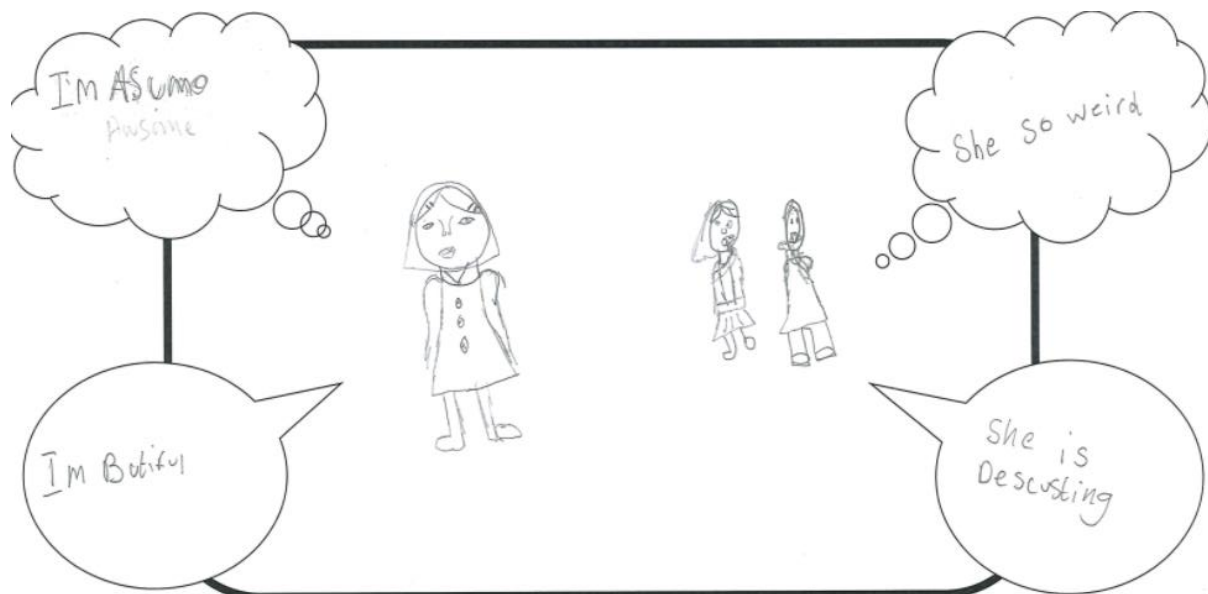


Figure 2 Feeling Confident Despite What Others Say



Notably, in this dataset, the only identity markers clearly visible in drawings appeared to be in relation to children’s representations of the gender of their characters – primarily expressed through hair and clothes. Ambiguous representations in relation to culture (e.g., dress, or the wearing of a hijab) were difficult to distinguish from the dataset.



Discussion of images with children in-the-moment, and afterwards, could have provided greater insights into children's drawings and representations (Cologon et al., 2019). Additional time for children to share interpretations and add to details could also lead to richer understandings in the future.

## Diversity

Themes emerging from the PVT based on the prompt "I feel comfortable with difference" appeared to be contradictory – with children using questions to ask if difference is 'weird' or 'good'. Some children represented comfort with difference as existing on a continuum (e.g., feeling 'a bit' comfortable with difference). For example:

Figure 3 'A Bit' Comfortable with Difference



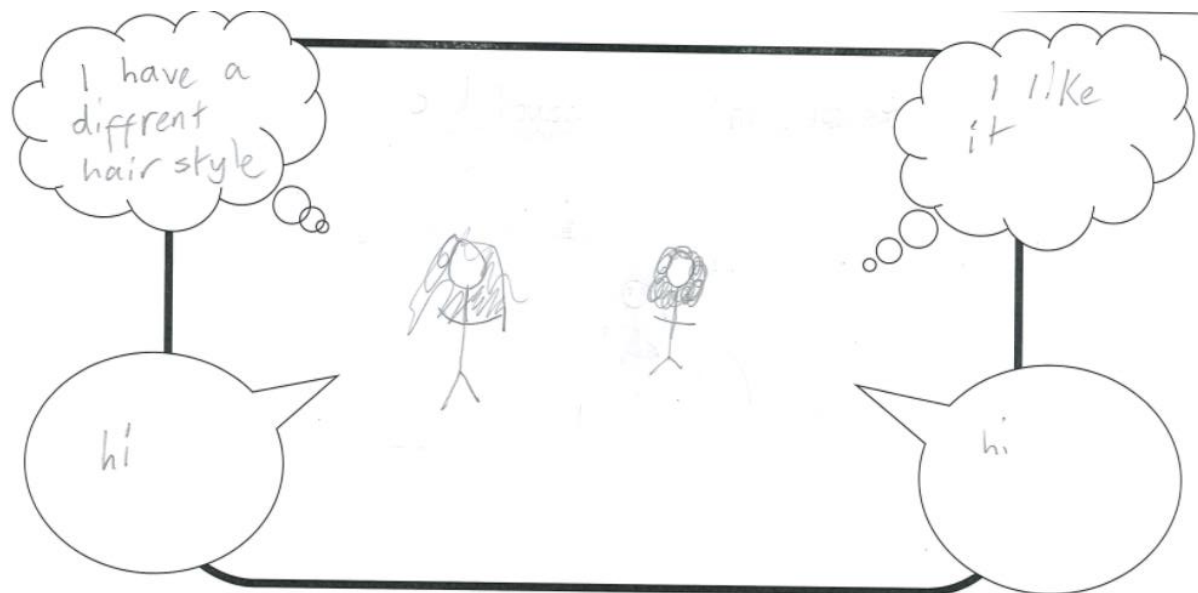
This could highlight the social discourses around difference which children may have internalised. Children also shared common rhetoric and colour-evasive views of diversity, such as "difference doesn't matter", and "be yourself". For example:

Figure 4 Common Rhetoric Surrounding Difference



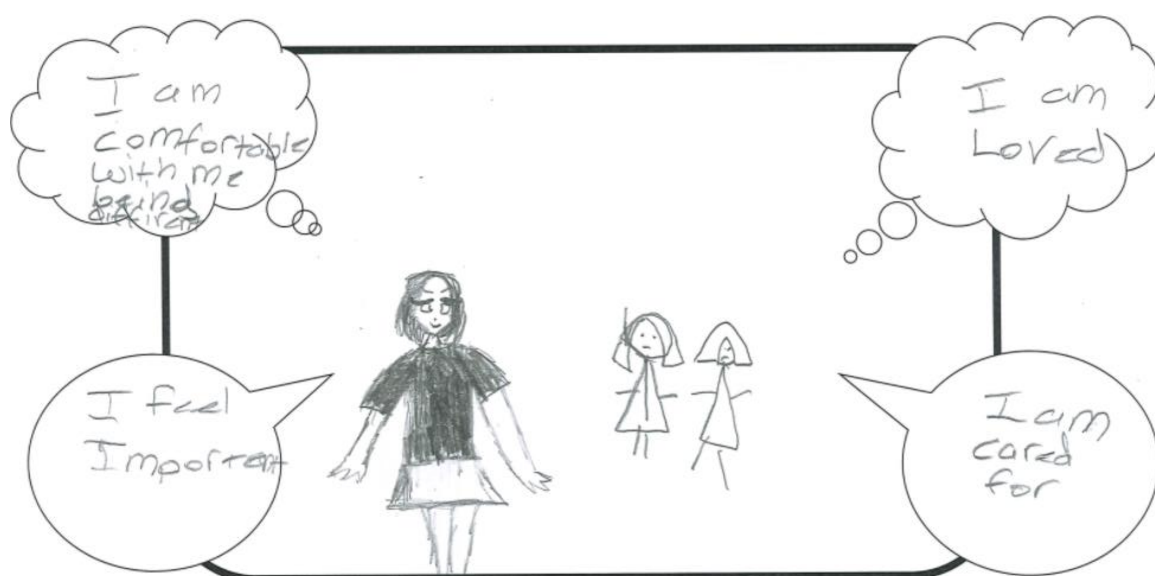
At times, representations of difference related to appearance, fashion, and style – particularly hairstyles - rather than human diversity related to race, culture, religion, sexuality, or disability. For example:

Figure 5 Different Hairstyle and Fashion



One child highlighted the importance of being loved, cared for, and comfortable with one's own differences. However, in the image, the main character is presented in a way that aligns with social norms of gender, such as in the use of large eyes, softened facial expressions (in comparison to background figures), and stereotypical clothing. For example:

Figure 6 Being Loved and Cared For



### Justice

Only one child chose this prompt and represented injustice as being “not a nice feeling”. It is therefore not possible to identify common themes emerging from this prompt.

### Activism

All children who used this template made references to bullying, and to speaking out against bullying – for example, by saying ‘stop’ or ‘go away’. Children also identified the importance of helping as an active stance – with characters speaking out or acting out (see Figure 8 Speaking Out for Others).

Children’s images represented bullying and ‘being mean’ in the form of characters teasing, hurting, laughing at others, being coercive (e.g., “I’m going to do whatever she says”), and taking things (see Figure 7 Bullying - Being Mean and Laughing). Children also represented instances of resistance to bullying – e.g., refusing to leave a space, and protagonists asking for stolen items to be returned (for example, see Figure 9 We do not need to leave if we do not want to!).

Bullying was represented in outdoor scenes, or on a blank canvas. No representations of bullying within classroom settings were depicted. There was also no direct reference made to experiences of discrimination or exclusion based on social oppressions such as racism, ableism, homophobia, or transphobia.

Figure 7 Bullying - Being Mean and Laughing

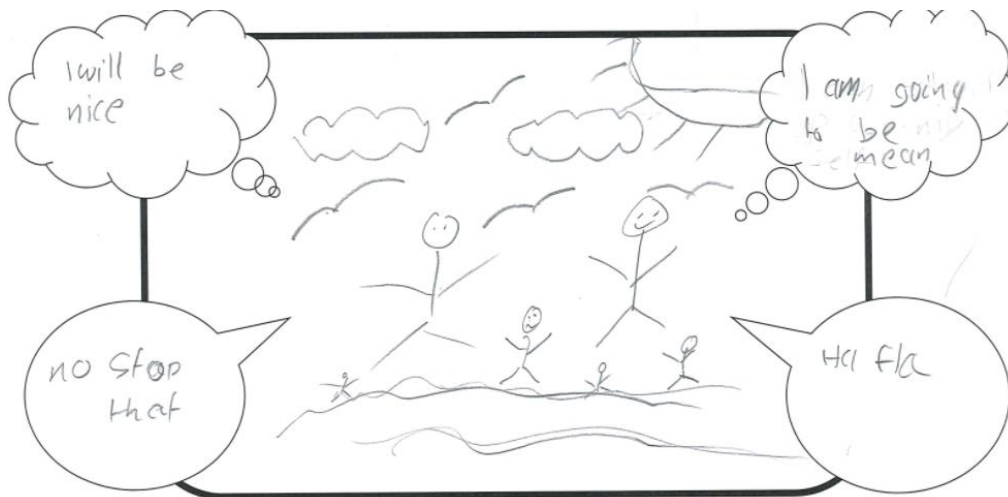


Figure 8 Speaking Out for Others

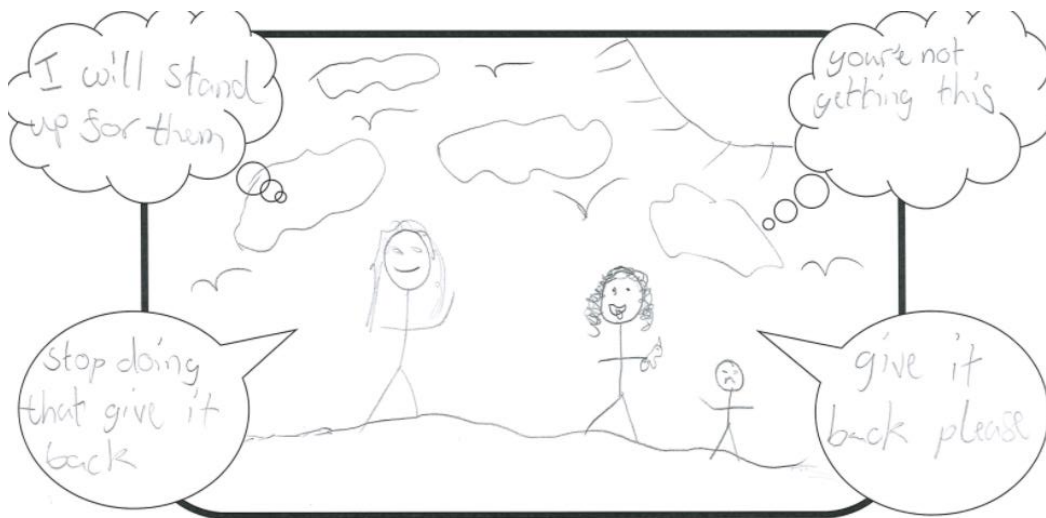
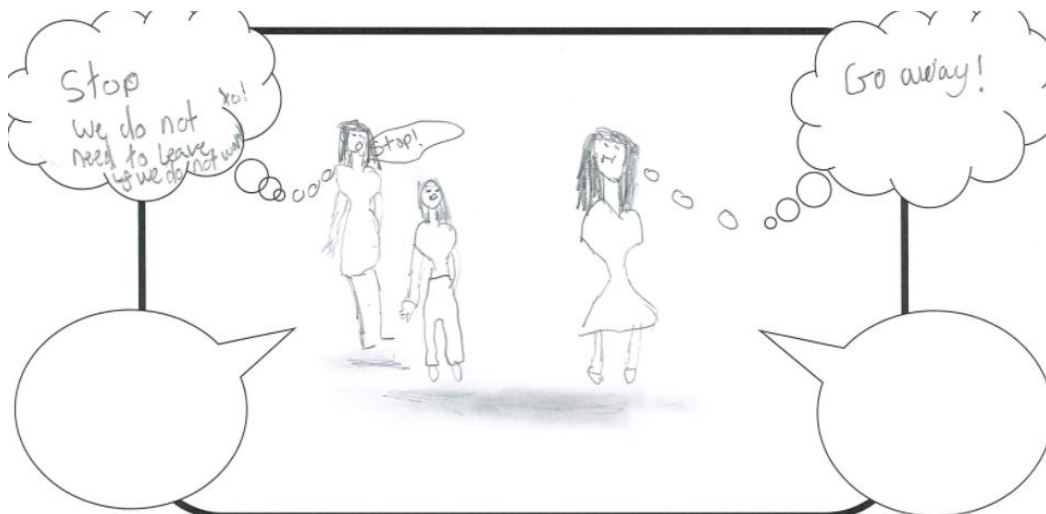


Figure 9 We do not need to leave if we do not want to!



## Phase Two Findings: Skill-Up

Phase two took place during the skill-up and workshop sessions of the Safe to Be Me ® programme with a total of 19 child participants. Phase two findings focus on the expressions, experiences, and behaviours of children in the research. Findings from the skill-up session are discussed first, followed by results from the workshops.

### Prejudice, Dehumanisation, (Ab)Normality, and Othering

Throughout the skill-up session, children expressed subtle and overt forms of prejudice, dehumanisation, and the othering of certain identities and experiences discussed in the Safe to Be Me ® programme. The data showed an underlying discourse of “normality” evident in children’s views and perspectives during the skill-up sessions. This view of “normality”, in turn, also revealed children’s perspectives as to who might be considered “abnormal”.

Notably, both dance facilitators and children interrupted and challenged notions of “normality”. This is exemplified by the following observation which occurred during the ‘character creation’ task, in which a fictional character is attributed characteristics and experiences (e.g., name, age, gender, nationality, heritage, disability labels, sexuality, hobbies, interests, etc.).

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*Child O makes a comment about non-binary not being “normal”. The Dance Facilitator directly challenges this view, using a question to reiterate Child O’s remark: “is it normal?” and then adds, “all [are] equally normal, they all exist out there.”*

*Child C adds to this comment from the Dance Facilitator, sitting forward in the group circle, Child C nods: “they’re all normal, but just different.”*

*- Observations and Field Notes, School A*

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Internalised ideas surrounding “normality” were also evident in more subtle ways, for example, during discussions of labels pertaining to romantic love, with children laughing at the words ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’, and others giggling at experiences of disability such as ‘brain damage’ (School A). In one instance, there was evidence of anxious behaviours and discomfort at terms such as gay and bisexual, which did not appear to be prevalent when discussing heterosexual relationships.

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*Child S knows the word 'gay' but appears to be quite anxious (hands are wringing as they say it). Child Y screwing up their face at 'bisexual'.*

*- Observations and Field Notes, School E*

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The findings also highlighted children's resistance to identities and experiences. This was evident, for example, when discussing pronouns in School A. In this example, Child E refused the adult-imposed choice of using they/them pronouns for the co-created character:

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*The group is asked to choose pronouns for the character. Discussion about non-binary and pronouns emerges.*

*Child P suggests she/her pronouns, but Child F suggests they/them pronouns, and this is quickly chosen by the Facilitator.*

*Child E shakes their head to resist this choice, face scrunched, they note they do not want to use they/them pronouns for the character.*

*- Observations and Field Notes, School A*

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These examples highlight how certain identities and experiences may be positioned as "other" or "abnormal" by children. These findings may also demonstrate children's sub-conscious or internalised awareness of the taboo or stigma surrounding certain experiences and labels. This is significant as attitudes about "normality" perpetuate social exclusion and inequality, by positioning the individual as the "problem" that needs to be "fixed", rather than recognising the *social* nature of oppressions (Cologon & Mevawalla, 2023; Lawrence & Taylor, 2023). Ideas of "normal" are therefore antithetical to genuine inclusion.

Children's worldviews about "normality" are also evident in language use and familiarity with terms. Children indicated that certain terms were familiar, with others being new or unfamiliar. As might be expected in any group of 15-20 children, some terms were familiar to some children and new to others, and vice versa. The list of new and unfamiliar terms is outlined in the table below.

Table 4 Familiar and Unfamiliar Terms at Skill Up (All Cohorts)

Familiar Terms	New and/or Unfamiliar Terms
She/her	Cisgender
Gay	Homophobia
Transgender	Transphobia
Gender Fluid	Gender Fluid
They/them	Pansexual
Racism	Ableism
	Ally
	Straight

As children were asked to respond verbally or by a brief show of hands, it was not possible to determine the exact numbers of children in each school who were familiar or unfamiliar with these terms. Familiar and unfamiliar terms were documented in the Character Creation task.

Figure 10 Character Creation Task - Unfamiliar Words Underlined



The dehumanising of certain identities and experiences was also evident in the Character Creation Task. Whilst discussing the fictional character, there were instances of children positioning the character as being “other than” human. For example, children made links to the Character being like an Alien and an Avatar:

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*Child A wants the character to have blue skin and orange hair. Child A suggests that the character should be an Alien. They are not called upon by the dance facilitators. Child A’s hand stays up throughout, and when they are still not called upon by the Facilitators, they say loudly to the group, “Can we decide it’s not from earth, and it has orange hair and blue skin?”*

*Another Child, Child B, builds on this, and suggests that the character created has a skin condition where they have white spots. Child C interjects that the character should wear a football kit. Another child suggests they should have glasses. Child D suggests they should have a buzz cut. Child A’s hand is still up.*

*- Observations and Field Notes, School A*

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These examples of dehumanising may have emerged due to the character not being a “real” person. These instances of dehumanising may also imply that children do not relate to the character as a human being, or that the Character Creation task emphasises multiple labels rather than an individual’s personhood.

Although it could be suggested that the use of game-based approaches ensures age-appropriate engagement with complex and sensitive concepts, this data reflects that learning *about* labels could result in exoticism and difference being objectified (Mevawalla & Cologon, 2023). That is, the gamification of labels and experiences could be presenting diverse lived experiences and identities as “exotic others”. However, the data also showed that dance facilitators were highly skilled at creating trusting, respectful, and honest spaces with children. Concepts were also ‘humanised’ for children, through dancers making ‘real life’ connections to their own experiences. This is key to supporting inclusion, as in this way children were learning *with* people with diverse lived experiences, rather than just *about* abstract or imagined labels, experiences, and identity markers (Mevawalla & Cologon, 2023).



Children also voiced pity and tragedy model views. For example, after watching the Selkie Dance<sup>2</sup>, when discussing transgender experiences:

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*Child M raises their hand and is called on by the Dance Facilitator. Child M says, "I feel bad for her cos if she wants to be a man then that's quite disappointing for her".*

*The Facilitator reminds children about the earlier discussion about different gender identities, emphasising how 'all are normal and okay'.*

*Child M nods but then looks to the ground, their head drops down, and their back hunches into their body, lowering closer to the ground.*

*- Observations and Field Notes, School A*

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Children also appeared to use 'colour-evasive' ways of discussing diversity (e.g., I treat everyone the same no matter what they look like) (Boutte et al., 2011). Whilst these views highlight an *intention* to include, colour-evasiveness focuses on ignoring, rather than acknowledging and valuing, difference. It focuses on 'sameness' and 'fitting in' rather than true belonging, in which one has the space and freedom to be oneself. For example:

---

*Child S offers to the class "I think we should all be kind to everyone as we are all exactly the same."*

*Observations and Field Notes, School E*

---

Subtle forms of othering were also evident in each class. For example, with children unwilling to partner with each other (particularly 'across' genders), children excluding each other during dance-based activities, and children overtly and covertly teasing each other (e.g., for being short).

---

<sup>2</sup> The Selkie dance represented a transgender character's journey to self-discovery.

## Valuing Diversity and Challenging Deficit Understandings

Examples of children valuing diversity and challenging deficit understandings were also evident in the dataset. These primarily emerged in response to provocations from the dance facilitators, who guided conversations. At times, this enabled children to share their own knowledge, and to challenge deficit views held by their peers. For example:

---

*It's 10.34 AM. Discussion moves to disability.*

*Child I says "she has no legs" and is corrected in their pronoun use by the Dance Facilitator, "they have no legs".*

*Child S asks "is it both legs?" and Child I responds, "no just one, they only have one leg."*

*Child J asks "what is that one Stephen Hawking has?" Child W responds with "MND Motor Neurone Disease."*

*Child C says loudly "this is like customising your Avatar in a game!"*

*Child A's hand goes up and they suggest that the character has "brain damage". There is some laughter and giggling with this idea.*

*It is suggested that the Character plays basketball.*

*"Umm..." Child R interrupts, "can you even play basketball with one leg?"*

*"Yes" responds the Dance Facilitator.*

*Child C jumps in to add: "Yeah, I saw a guy I was watching and it was called... watching basketball and he was playing someone with two arms and he had one arm and he still destroyed him!"*

*- Observation and Field Notes, School A*

---

## Language and Terminology

At the end of the skill-up session, children indicated that they had learned new words and terms. For example, in response to the Dance Facilitator asking what they had learnt that day:

---

*Child R said, “ally”.*

*The Dance Facilitator asked the children to explain what that term meant.*

*Child D responds with “someone who has your back when someone is being really mean, stuff like that”.*

*Child G also adds that they learnt a new word “Stephen Hawking what’s it called motor neurone?”*

*Child R adds that they learnt: “straight, when a boy likes a girl.”*

*- Observations and Field Notes, School A*

---

Children also indicated forgetting some of the words they had learnt, with one child explaining “I can’t remember what they [words learnt that day] were” (Child G, School A).

## Dance

Another theme which emerged when children were asked what they had learnt and done during the skill-up related to dance and game playing. With children sharing, for example:

---

*Child D notes, “we played a game [called] High Ten.”*

*Child I builds on this, noting that they played the “game of poses.”*

*Child M adds that they “learnt some ballet moves.”*

*- Observations and Field Notes, School A*

---

## Phase Two Findings: Workshop

Four classes were involved in the data collection for the workshops. As not all children in all classes participated, the total number of participants for this phase of the research was 26 children.

The key themes emerging from the workshops primarily highlighted children's valuing of diversity (e.g., "everyone is different"). This is noteworthy given that skill-up data indicated that some children echoed colour-evasive views that sanitise discussions of difference (i.e., "everyone is the same").

Children also demonstrated that they were able to recognise injustice and unfairness, and to empathise with those being excluded or discriminated against. However, there also appeared to be some subtle instances of tragedy and pity views related to disability experiences.

The learning of new terms and phrases was also emphasised. Using a short survey, children shared learning about gender (e.g., gender identity) and intimate or romantic relationships (e.g., family members or LGBT status). Whilst children communicated themes related to identity, such as "being yourself is okay", no direct references to race or disability were made.

In the survey, children were also asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert rating scale if they felt they had greater confidence in themselves (identity), felt more comfortable with difference (diversity), were more confident recognising unfairness (justice), and if they felt more confident standing up for themselves or others when something was unfair (activism). Children answered primarily in the affirmative for all prompts, followed by a response indicating they were 'unsure'.

Children also focused on dance and ballet, and indicated enjoyment of the Safe to Be Me ® programme. This is also reflected in the data from photographs and the 'Feelings Fan' (TES, 2023) which captured data at two points throughout the workshop – once during a mid-day break (lunch) and once at the end of the session (end of school day).

Data suggests that children's feelings shifted to being more 'tired', 'calm' and 'happy' at the end of the workshop day. However, there are tensions and limitations related to this data set which are also discussed.

## Identity and Diversity as Valued

Similarly to the theme 'valuing diversity and challenging deficit understandings', children demonstrated openness to diversity through their questions, comments, and interpretations of dance (e.g., asking questions about labels to find out more). For example, following a performance by the dancers, children were asked what they noticed, and said:

---

*Child B: "concentration".*

*Child C: "how did they learn the dance?"*

*Child N: "that the world should accept who they are and their true identity."*

*Child M: "looked like she was being bullied, the music beats got stronger when they were laughing at the dancer and that they got married."*

*Child N: "dancing showed emotion."*

*Child M: "suitcases said different things."*

*Child Y: "suitcases mean their personalities."*

*Child A: "what is Sikh?"*

*Dancers explain it's a religion.*

*Child O: "what is ADHD?"*

*Observations and Field Notes, School B*

---

This theme was also demonstrated throughout the workshops where children were able to share their own experiences and customs. For example:

---

*Children who celebrated Ramadan were excited to explain to the class, talking about fasting for 8 hours, and the party at the end.*

*A student asked what Hogmanay was and students took turns telling him about the 'party', 'fireworks', 'bagpipes', and 'new year's'.*

*A student asked what Pride is, dancers explained the celebration and said that a rainbow flag can also represent allyship.*

*Dance facilitators noted that many holidays and celebrations have things in common, such as feasts or fireworks.*

*- Observations and Field Notes, School C, Class 2*

---

Beyond sharing their own experiences, students also made connections to experiences and knowledge, including from their own communities, and more broadly. For example, following a discussion of families:

---

*Students nodded agreement that they knew about families with two dads and two mums.*

*Dancers asked about adoption and fostering, students who knew more about these topics answered questions.*

*It appeared they were happy to share their knowledge with the class.*

*Students mentioned that adoptive parents don't have the same blood as the child.*

*Observation and Field Notes, School C, Class 1*

---

This was also evident in other examples, where children agreed that they knew about families with two fathers, two mothers, or single parents. Extended families were also included in these discussions, with aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings and others mentioned by children in Schools B, C and E. This theme also emerged throughout the dances, with key messages from children's performances in School E including:

---

*Show your true colours and be kind for who you are!*

*Everybody's welcome and it's safe to dance!*

*- Observations and Field Notes, School E*

---

This was also echoed in School B, with the key tagline:

---

*Show yourself and your personality, it's ok to be you.*

*- Observations and Field Notes, School B*

---

Similarly, in School C, the key messages reflected the same sentiments:

---

*I love myself and I love being me.*

*Respect everyone, I love being me.*

*Everyone is different, it's safe to be you.*

*- Observation and Field Notes, School C*

---

Whilst the similarity of key messages might be expected given the content covered in all settings, the repetition of key words and ideas may raise questions about the extent to which these taglines are child-led or adult-driven.

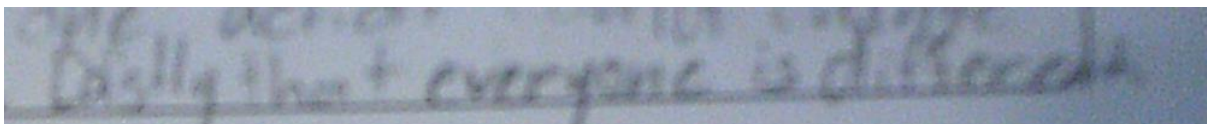
This theme was also evident in the dance movements that children and dance facilitators co-constructed. For example, standing with hands above heads to indicate triumph and pride:

Figure 11 Show your true colours and be kind for who you are!



At the end of the session, children were asked to complete a one-page survey of the day sharing their thoughts. On this, children were asked about what they had learnt. Key themes around identity and diversity as valuable were also evident in this dataset, with children sharing ideas such as “everyone is different” and “being yourself is okay and safe”. Some excerpts which exemplify this theme are shared below:

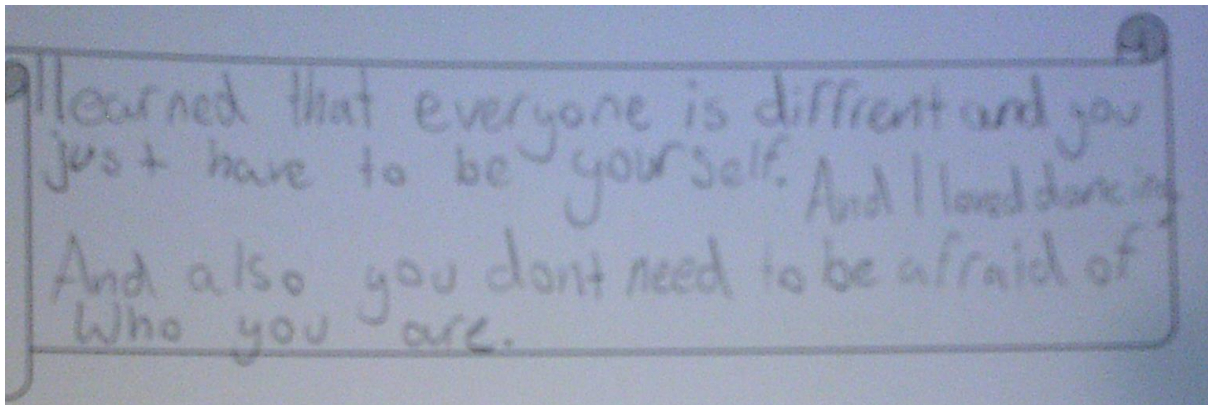
Figure 12 Everyone is different



Description: Lastly, that everyone is different.

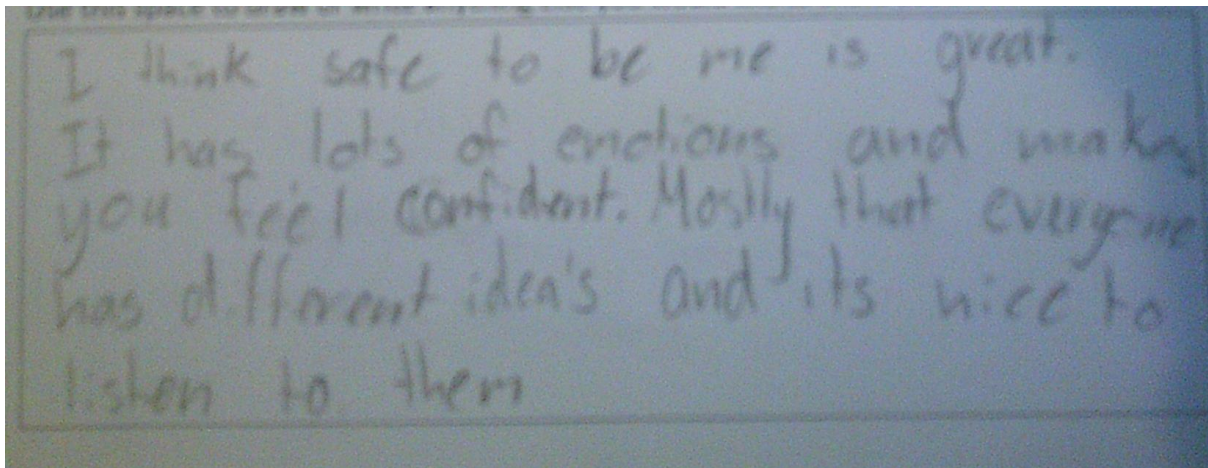


Figure 13 I learned that everyone is different



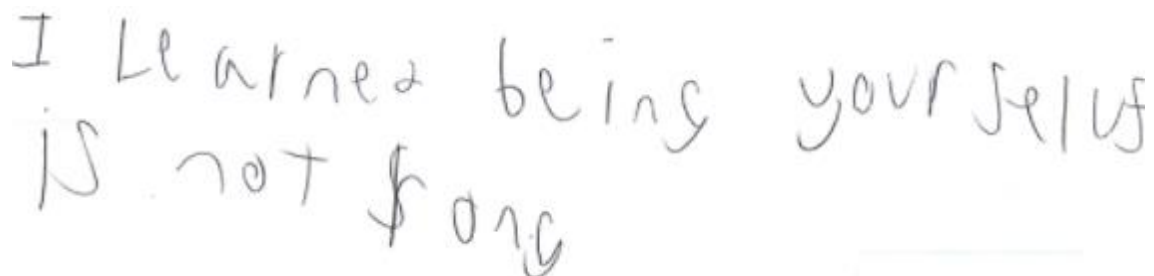
Description: I learned that everyone is different and you just have to be yourself. And I loved dancing. Also you don't need to be afraid of who you are.

Figure 14 Everyone has different ideas and it's nice to listen to them



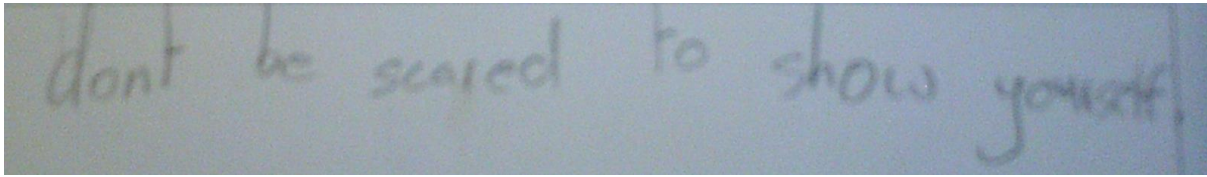
Description: I think safe to be me is great. It has lots of emotions and makes you feel confident. Mostly that everyone has different ideas and it's nice to listen to them.

Figure 15 Being yourself is not wrong



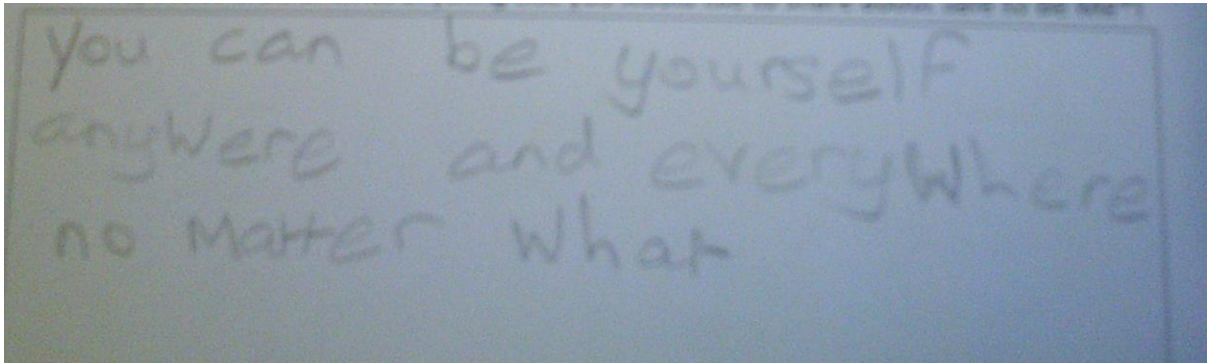
Description: I learned being yourself is not wrong.

Figure 16 Don't be scared to show yourself



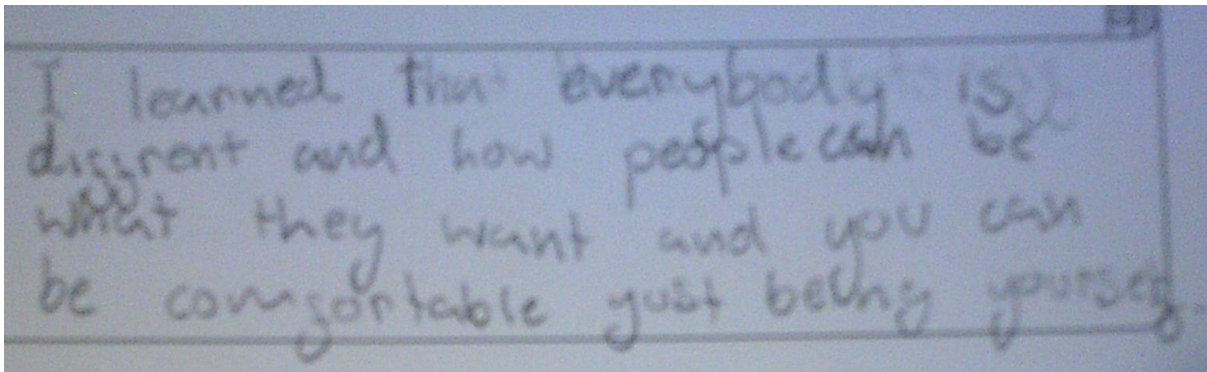
Description: Don't be scared to show yourself.

Figure 17 You can be yourself anywhere



Description: You can be yourself anywhere and everywhere no matter what.

Figure 18 People can be what they want



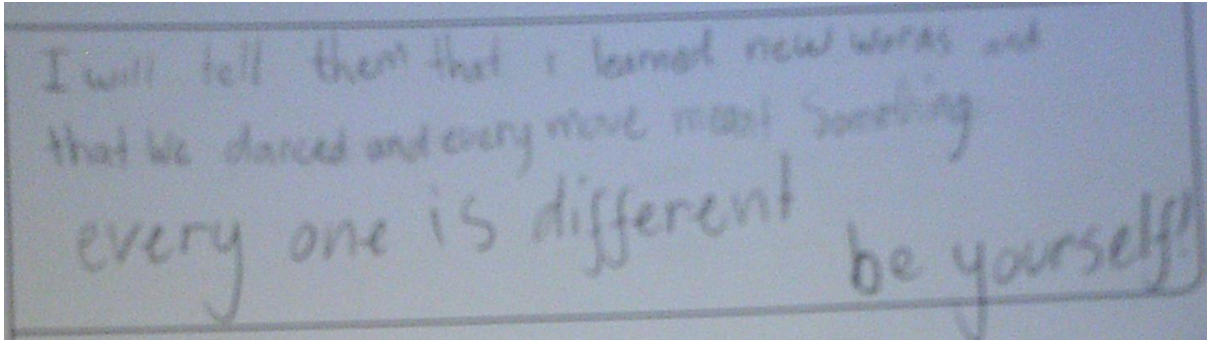
Description: I learned that everybody is different and how people can be what they want and you can be comfortable just being yourself.

This focus on difference and diversity, rather than sameness (as noted in the phase one findings), is noteworthy. This is because, as Boutte et al. (2011) explain, focusing on sameness can support a desire for conformity, and lead to the further marginalisation of those of us positioned as “other” or “abnormal”. Colour-evasiveness can promote the idea that discussion of difference is taboo – i.e., too sad or bad to talk to children about (Mevawalla & Cologon, 2023). Rather than inclusion, this contributes to the silencing and denial of diverse lived experiences.

## Learning Language and Terminology

Language learning also emerged as a key theme. When asked what they had learnt throughout the day, and what they would tell their family and friends, children shared the following insights about learning new words:

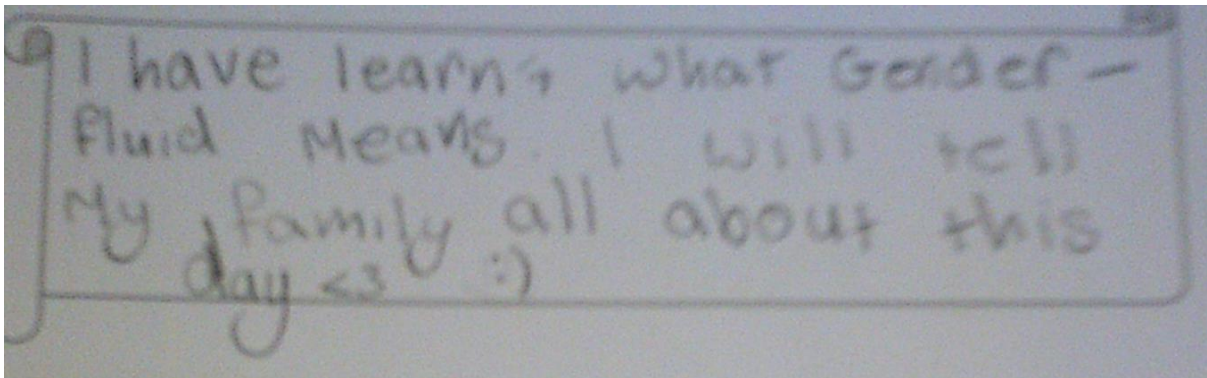
Figure 19 I learnt new words



Description: I will tell them that I learnt new words and that we danced and every move meant something everyone is different be yourself!

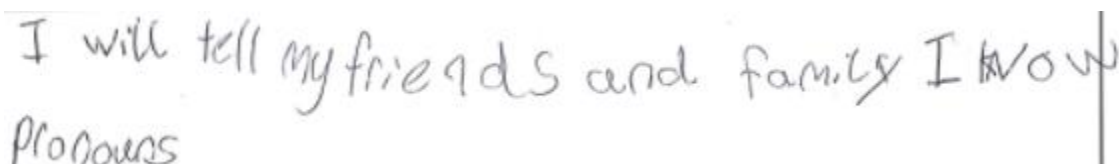
When analysing the specific terminology that children shared in this one-page survey, the focus appeared to be on gender diversity and romantic relationships. For example:

Figure 20 Learning words - gender-fluid



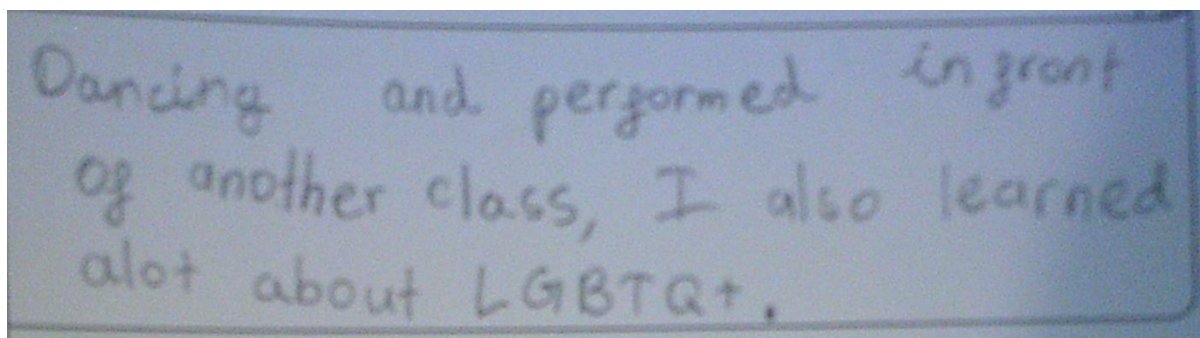
Description: I have learnt what gender-fluid means. I will tell my family all about this day <3 [sideways love heart] :) [smiling face].

Figure 21 I know pronouns



Description: I will tell my friends and family I know pronouns

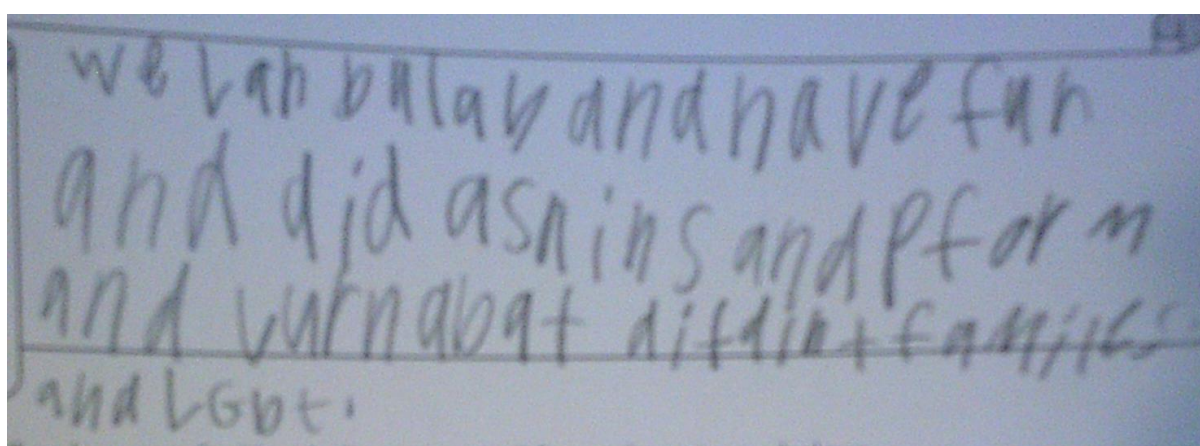
Figure 22 Learning about LGBTQ+



Dancing and performed in front of another class, I also learned alot about LGBTQ+.

Description: Dancing and performed in front of another class, I also learned a lot about LGBTQ+

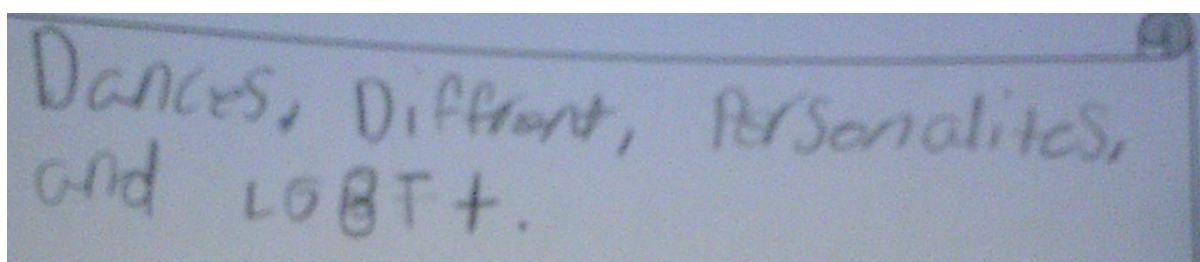
Figure 23 Different Families and LGBT



we learnt ballet and have fun and did dancing and perform and learn about different families and LGBT.

Description: we learnt ballet and have fun and did dancing and perform and learn about different families and LGBT.

Figure 24 Personalities and LGBT



Dances, Different, Personalities, and LOBT+.

Description: Dancers, different, personalities, and LGBT.

There was no specific reference to disability or race made in this survey data, but when children were asked verbally about what they had learnt, these concepts were mentioned.

## Recognising Unfairness, Empathy, and Tragedy Views

Directly related to the third anti-bias goal (justice), children also demonstrated being able to recognise unfairness. For example, in dance scenarios children identified bullying behaviours. Children also labelled emotions (e.g., hurtful) and demonstrated that they were able to recognise where situations were unfair. In doing so, children showed empathy towards people who may have been excluded, hurt, or discriminated against. For example:

---

*Children said the character would feel scared and sad and need support, help, and comfort if experiencing discrimination.*

*Students said that [Character Created] would be sad, emotional, anxious, stressed, lonely, and embarrassed if people called her things she didn't like/want.*

*Observations and Field Notes, School B*

---

At times, children were not familiar with the word empathy, but understood it when it was described as being in someone else's shoes. Empathy was also evident in the children's co-construction of dances with the dance facilitators. For example:

---

*Children in the consent group (whirlwind group) of the dance co-creation, suggested that the character would need help and respect. They were eager to show the dancers different moves to depict these.*

*Dancers listened and encouraged students to display movements, allowing students to feel they were leading the activity.*

*Observation and Field Notes, School B*

---

This was also evident when children chose to incorporate movements such as helping each other up off the floor and using open arms to indicate an embrace. For example:

Figure 25 Helping Up



*Description: Children help the Dance Facilitator in the middle up by pulling them up by the arms together.*

Whilst children demonstrated empathy, there may be scope to more explicitly tease out differences between empathy and medical model (charity, pity, tragedy, and sympathy) views of disability. This is noteworthy since inequitable power relations exist where children and adults focus on “helping” disabled people, in ways that are infantilising, patronising, or paternalistic (Janz & Stack, 2017). As a result, disabled people are continuously objectified and positioned as “lesser” and “other” (Cologon, 2016).

During the workshop, for example, dancers used an example of a wheelchair user not being able to access buildings without ramps and described this as terrible (Observations and Field Notes, School C, Class 2). Here, for example, there may be scope to use language such as ‘unjust’ or ‘unfair’ rather than ‘terrible’, to avoid the possibility of invoking charity, pity, or tragedy views of disability.

During the programme, discussions of disability as being invisible and visible occurred. For example:

---

*Similar to the two other classes, the student preference seemed to be to describe the characters' hair, eye colour, and earrings first.*

*Dance facilitators probed for other aspects of appearance, one student said she had a 'bionic arm', and the Dance Facilitator clarified, 'a prosthetic arm'.*

*Students noted the character was 'deaf', and dance facilitators expanded that that could mean many things. The character maybe has partial deafness, had an accident causing deafness, and just like wearing glasses some disabilities are visible and not visible.*

*Students all nodded in agreement that they knew you can see some and not other disabilities. Dancers say all bodies and minds are different and can change throughout our lives.*

*Observations and Field Notes, School C, Class 2*

---

There may be scope to further problematise this framing, as there is a large grey area between visible and invisible disabilities. As disabled, trans artist Taylor (Flottacat, 2023) explains, when and where disability is visible may also be dependent on factors such as time, context, diagnosis, access to medication, and/or quality healthcare services.

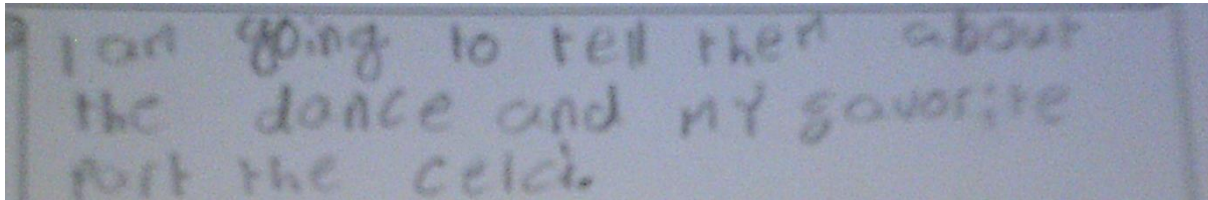
A focus on what is visible or invisible may also inadvertently create a hierarchy of who is considered "more" or "less" disabled. This, in turn, repositions the focus on what is *observed* by society, rather than what is experienced by the disabled individual (Flottacat, 2023). The use of invisible and visible has also been linked to the experiences of masking and passing as "normal" (Lingsom, 2008), and to disabled individuals not being believed when sharing their experiences, or identifying as disabled (Stone, 2005).

Whilst dance facilitators were largely cognisant of sensitivities with respect to language use in relation to gender, race, and disability, further resources, and training to delve deeper into the nuances of language and labels could also be useful. For example, discussion of D/deaf experiences could also be expanded since belonging to the Deaf community is also a cultural and identity marker (see British Deaf Association, n.d.).

## Dance

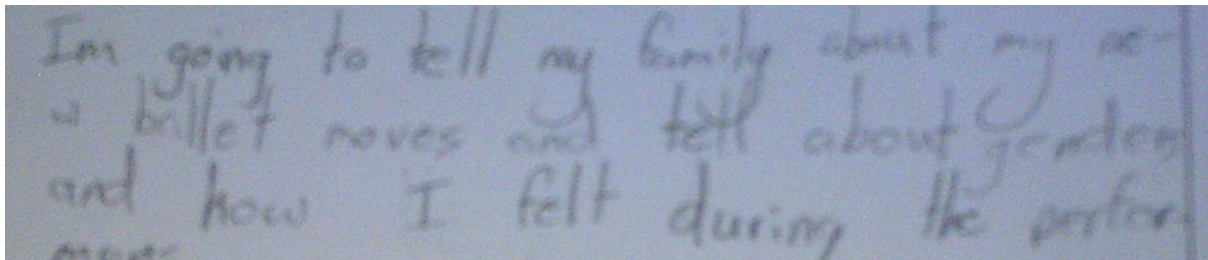
Some children also indicated enjoying dance – whether this was watching the dancers perform or engaging in dance themselves. For example:

Figure 26 My favourite - Selkie



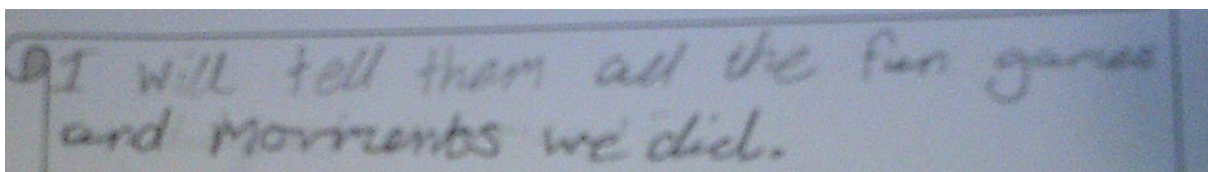
Description: I am going to tell them about the dance and my favourite part the Selkie.

Figure 27 Ballet moves



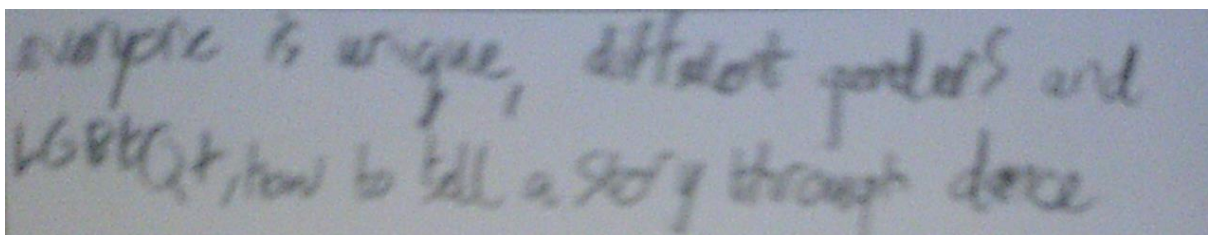
Description: I am going to tell my family about my ballet moves and tell about gender, and how I felt during the performance.

Figure 28 Fun games and movements



Description: I will tell them all the fun games and movements we did.

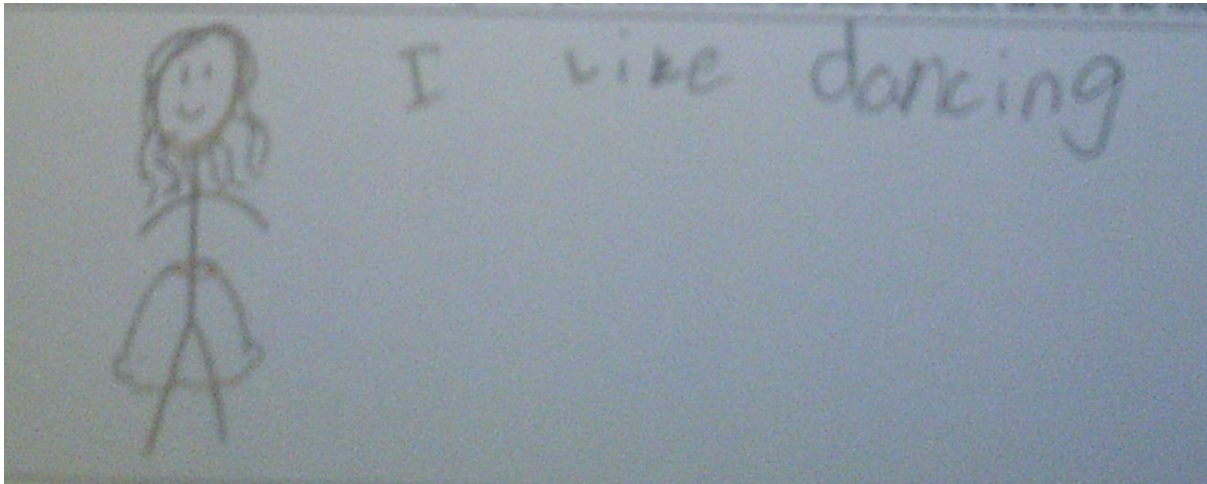
Figure 29 Stories through dance



Description: everyone is unique, different genders and LGBTQ+, how to tell a story through dance

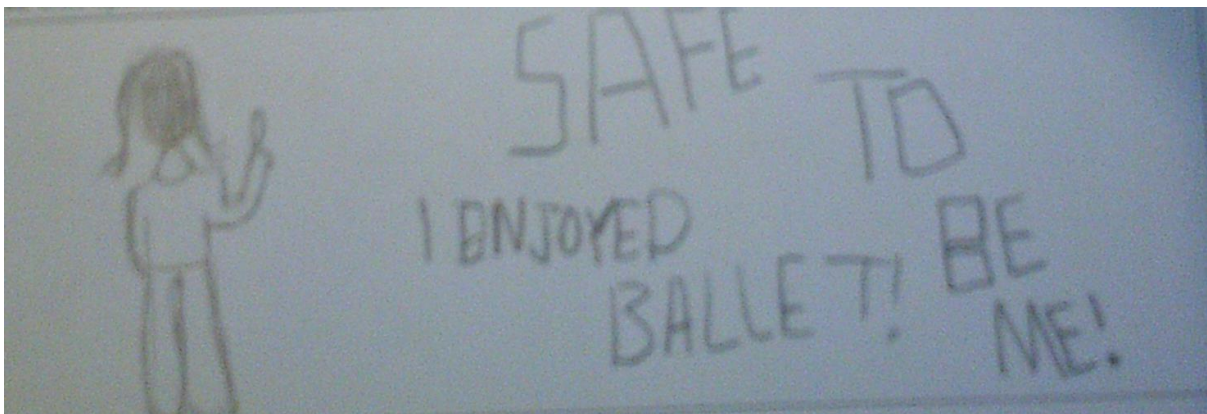


Figure 30 I like dancing



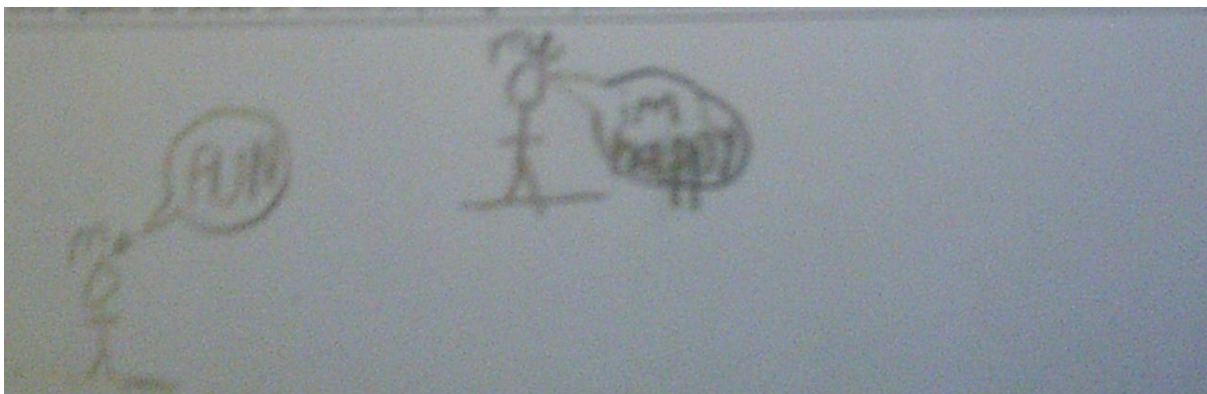
Description: figure with long hair, what appears to be a ballet skirt next to text 'I like dancing'.

Figure 31 Enjoying ballet



Description: figure with long hair wearing trousers and shirt, holding hand up, smiling face. Text says: Safe to be me! I enjoyed Ballet!

Figure 32 Fun and happy



Description: Two figures with speech bubbles, one says FUN, the other says I'm happy.

## Confidence and Comfort with own Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Activism

As part of the one-page survey completed at the end of the workshops (see Appendix 3 Short Evaluation), children were asked to indicate if:

- a) They felt more confident in themselves (identity),
- b) They felt more comfortable with difference (diversity),
- c) They felt more confident recognising unfairness (justice), and
- d) They felt more comfortable standing up for themselves or others when something was unfair or hurtful (activism).

Children were given a 5-point Likert scale upon which to respond, with available options as follows:

- a) Not at all
- b) Not really
- c) Unsure
- d) Yes, a little
- e) Yes, definitely!

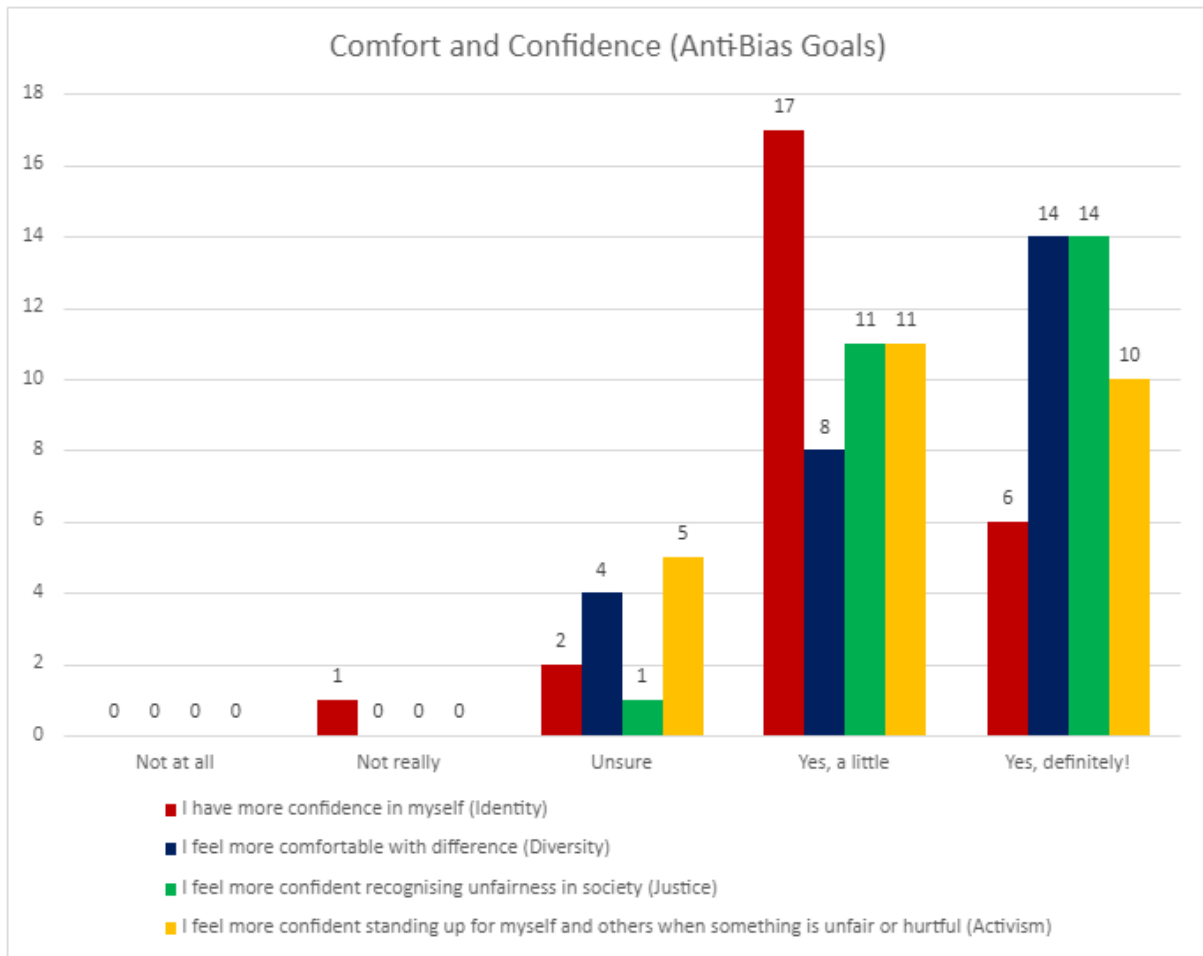
Emojis with facial expressions (e.g., smile and frown) were also used as an additional layer of communication to supplement the written words on the Likert scale.

A simple descriptive analysis of numerical data is presented here. Greater insight and depth could have been captured if children's interpretations of prompts could have been recorded. However, as the research was conducted parallel to programme implementation, a short survey provided a fast and practical means to gather data.

Overall, responses indicated that most children marked 'yes, a little' or 'yes, definitely' to all four prompts (88%). This suggests that the programme had positive impacts in terms of children feeling more confident in themselves, feeling more comfortable with difference, feeling more confident recognising unfairness, and feeling more comfortable standing up for themselves or others.

The figure below provides an overview of all responses and is organised using the Likert-scale to show how confident or comfortable children were at the end of the workshop - with themselves, with others, with recognising unfairness, and with challenging unfairness.

Figure 33 Comfort and Confidence (Anti-Bias Goals)



As the figure shows, the lowest and highest responses were gained in relation to a single prompt (I have more confidence in myself). No child indicated that they were ‘not at all’ comfortable or confident with any of the four prompts but 12% indicated that they were ‘unsure’ if, following the programme, they were more comfortable and confident with their own identity, diversity, recognising unfairness, and standing up against it.

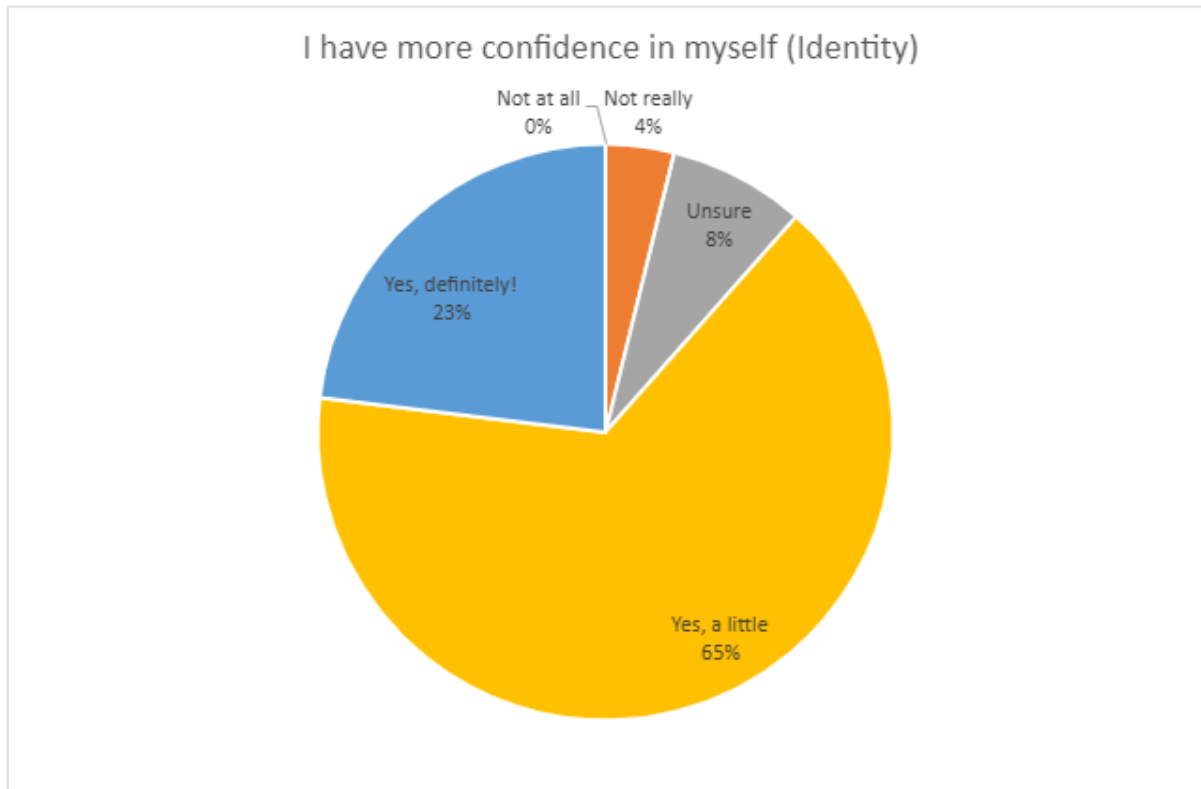
Children were most unsure about whether or not they felt more comfortable standing up for themselves or others when something was unfair or hurtful (activism). Conversely, children were most positive (indicating ‘yes, definitely!’) when responding to the prompts ‘I feel more comfortable with difference’ (diversity), and ‘I feel more confident recognising unfairness in society’ (justice).

The four prompts are individually examined in the subsequent section.

### I have more confidence in myself (identity)

The figure below provides an overview of responses in relation to the prompt 'I feel more confident in myself' (identity).

Figure 34 I have more confidence in myself (identity)



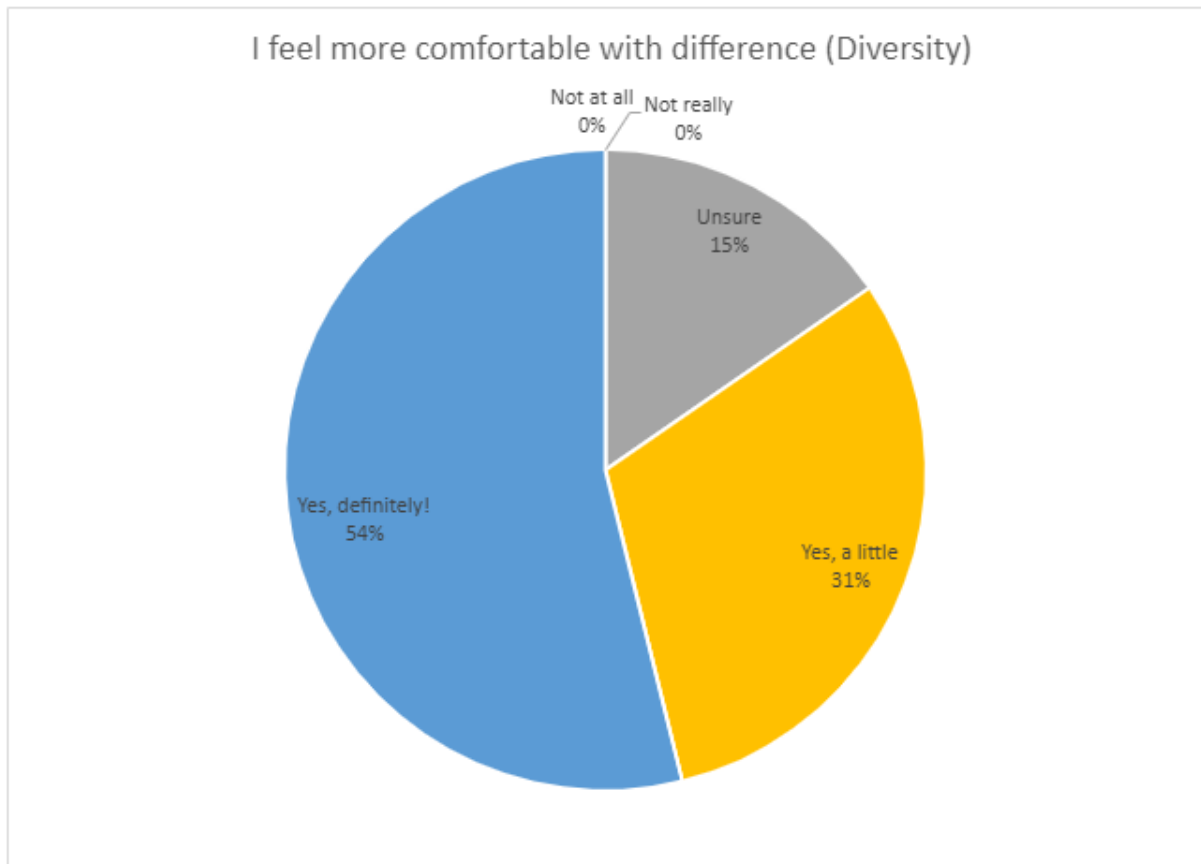
When asked if they felt they had more confidence in themselves, 88% of all responses were affirmative, with 23% responding 'yes, definitely', and 65% responding 'yes, a little'. Of the remaining 12% of responses, 8% were unsure, and 4% (that is, the equivalent of one person) indicated that they were 'not really' more confident in themselves. As noted earlier, children may have interpreted this first prompt as being focused on self-confidence, rather than identity, and this may have impacted findings.

### I feel more comfortable with difference (diversity)

When asked if they felt more comfortable with diversity, 85% of responses were affirmative. This is similar to the responses in the previous prompt (I feel confidence in myself). However, whereas only 23% of respondents noted that they were 'definitely' more confident in themselves, 54% of respondents were 'definitely' more comfortable with diversity.

The figure below provides an overview of responses in relation to the prompt 'I feel more comfortable with difference' (diversity).

Figure 35 I feel more comfortable with difference (diversity)



As the figure shows, 15% of respondents indicated that they were 'unsure' if they felt more comfortable with difference. Given that this question was asked of children immediately following the end of the workshop, it may be that some children were still processing the learning from the day.

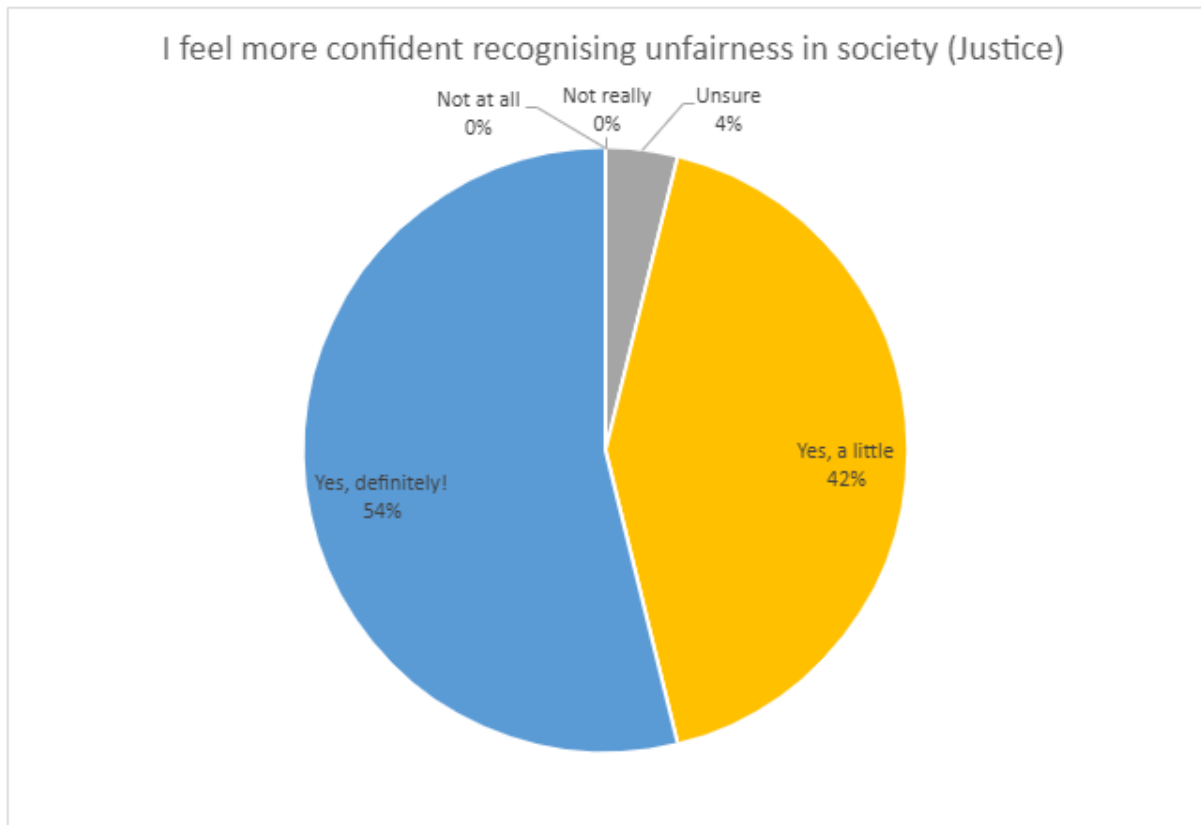
Moreover, as Zembylas (2015) suggests, there may be a sense of discomfort and uncertainty when existing worldviews are challenged. Given the earlier data from phase one gave examples of children's prejudiced views, it may be that children's feelings of uncertainty are a key starting point for disrupting ingrained societal views.

**I feel more confident recognising unfairness (justice)**

In response to being asked if they felt more confident recognising unfairness, 96% of respondents indicated in the affirmative, and only 4% of respondents – that is, the equivalent of one person – responded with 'unsure' to this question. This finding suggests that most

children did feel more confident recognising unfairness after completing the programme. The figure below provides an overview of responses in relation to the prompt 'I feel more confident recognising unfairness in society' (justice).

Figure 36 I feel more confident recognising unfairness in society



Here, as with the previous prompt (being comfortable with diversity), 54% indicated they were 'definitely' more confident recognising unfairness, and 42% indicated that they were 'a little' more confident in recognising unfairness.

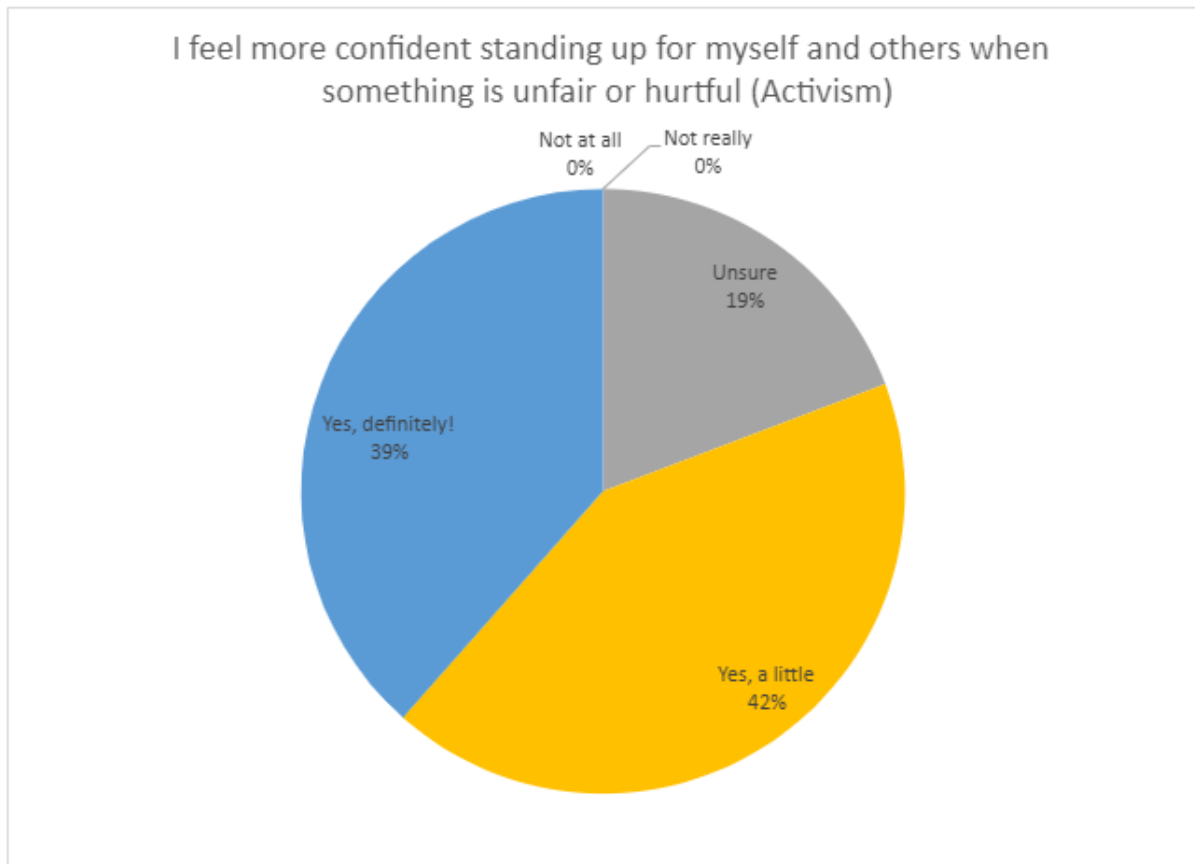
This finding echoes the earlier theme on recognising unfairness and empathy, where children used their knowledge to point out unfair and hurtful practices through dance and dialogue. The higher percentage of responses indicating children felt more confident recognising unfairness in society aligns with previous research which suggests that children have a strong sense of fairness and justice (Demetriou & Hopper, 2007; Mevawalla, 2020).

#### I feel more confident standing up for myself or others (activism)

In the final prompt, children were asked to indicate if they felt more confident standing up for themselves or others when something unfair or hurtful happens. Overall, 81% of children

answered yes (with 39% indicating 'yes, definitely' and 42% choosing 'yes, a little'). While 19% of respondents marked the 'unsure' box when responding to this question.

Figure 37 I feel more confident standing up for myself and others



This data suggests that – in comparison to the other three prompts on identity, diversity, and justice - child participants were the most unsure about how to act or respond when a situation is unfair or hurtful. Thus, whilst children might be highly capable of recognising unfairness (as noted in the prompt above, where 96% indicated that they were more confident in recognising unfairness), they may feel less certain about how to act or respond when a situation is unfair or hurtful.

Critical scholars have written about the dangers of being able to recognise unfairness without being motivated or knowledgeable about how to act against it (Giroux, 2022; Rutherford, 2016). Research suggests that the role of the adult is significant in supporting children to develop strategies with respect to activism for themselves and others (Souto-Manning et al., 2019). However, one study found that even when children were aware of situations involving a distressed classmate and knew how to help them, they still believed it was the responsibility of adults to address the situation (Demetriou & Hopper, 2007). Thus, a key role of adults may be to support children to learn about, and uphold each other's rights (Fairhall & Woods, 2021).

Dunhill (2018) found that teaching children that they are not only “rights holders but also upholders of rights” (p. 24) encouraged them to “practice, protect and promote the rights of others” (p. 16). Further resources for facilitating the engagement and motivation of relevant adults (e.g., teachers) may be key to the sustainability of programme outcomes.

In the context of this programme, there may be scope for children to make explicit connections between the focus on ‘being an ally’ and how this could be an avenue for acting against injustice or unfairness. Alternatively, some further discussion with children on how behaviours could move from discrimination to allyship may also prove useful.

It is worth noting a key limitation in relation to this prompt. There is scope to reframe and avoid the use of ableist language such as ‘standing up’. Better recognition of the power of words and language and their subtle impact on attitudes could improve tools used for data collection with children in the future.

### **Feelings Snapshot – During and After Programme**

Children were asked to add a sticker to a ‘Feelings Fan’ (see below) showing their feelings at two different points during the workshop. Children were asked during their first break in the day and then later at the end of the day. Figure 38 Feelings - During and After Workshop) provides an overall picture of children’s feelings ‘during’ and ‘after’ the workshop.

This shows that key changes occurred in relation to a decrease in excitement prior to the performance and increased feelings of happiness and calm. There was also a decrease in ‘neutral’ feelings such as feeling ‘okay’. A small percentage were more worried after workshop completion, compared to during the day.

On reflection, the use of language such as fidget could have been replaced with restless to more accurately reflect feelings. The language of fidget may also imply inattention or reflect deficit views of stimming (self-stimulating) behaviours and could therefore be avoided in the future.

A notable limitation of this tool is that it was reliant only on a snapshot of a moment-specific decision made by children, with in-depth insights not possible due to time constraints and feasibility. This is worth acknowledging, as in the observations and field notes children indicated that they were feeling multiple feelings at the same time (some of which were not available on the feelings fan for children to choose). For example:



---

*Child C was unsure what feeling to put her sticker on because she was happy about the performance but very sad and disappointed that her mum couldn't come to see the performance.*

*She expected her mum to be there, her teacher explained her mum was working and that the performance was recorded and would be put up on the class Teams.*

*Another student put his sticker on excited but said he actually felt proud.*

*Observations and Field Notes, School C, Class 1*

---

Figure 38 Feelings - During and After Workshop



## Phase Three Findings

Phase three findings were gathered following the completion of the programme. In this section, children's, dance facilitators', and teachers' views are presented.

### Children's Perspectives (PVTs)

In this phase, two groups of children completed Pupil Views Templates (PVTs), and two focus group discussions with children across two schools were conducted. In total, 29 child participants were involved in phase three.

Children were given the same four prompts in the PVTs as in phase one (I feel confident with myself, I feel comfortable with difference, I recognise unfairness, and I feel confident standing up for myself and others when something is unfair) (see Appendix 1 Pupil Views Templates). Some drawings were difficult to distinguish and code and were therefore excluded from analysis. A key limitation of this data is that it was analysed by adults rather than by the children themselves. In the future, eliciting children's perspectives on their images could provide more rigorous insight (Clark, 2005).

The findings from the PVTs are presented below in the first instance, before those from the focus group discussions are unpacked. The findings are organised according to the four anti-bias prompts – identity, diversity, justice, and activism.

#### Identity

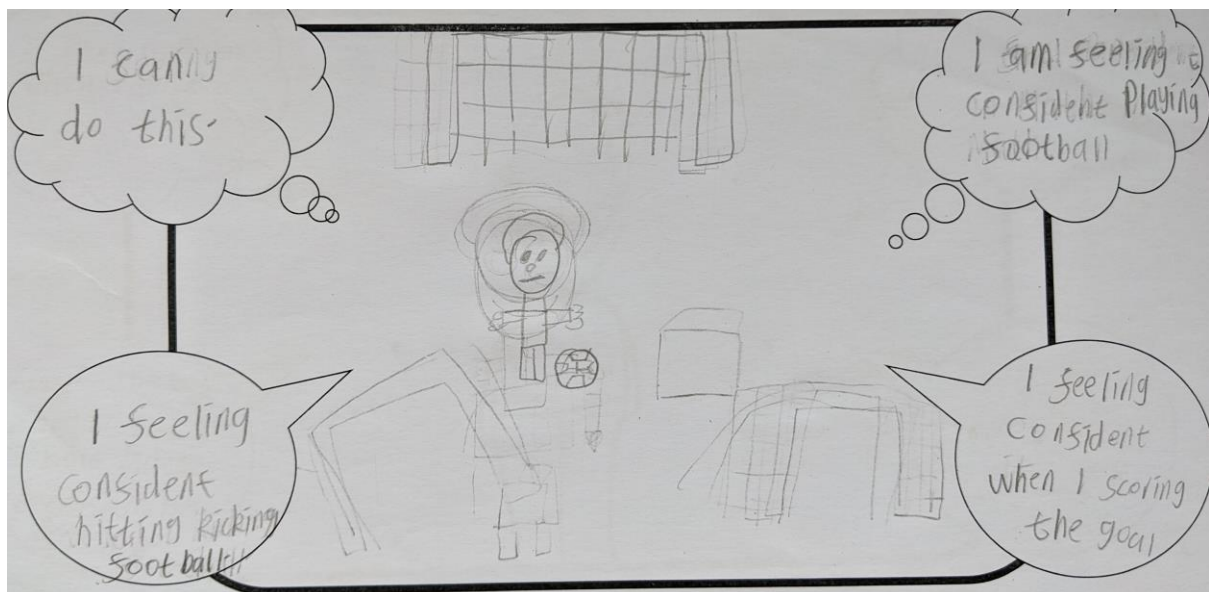
Thirty-one percent of all participants chose to respond to the first prompt. Children who chose this template focused on feelings of self-confidence, efficacy, and capabilities in relation to specific tasks – e.g., football, dancing, giving presentations, or diving. Children also represented 'can do' attitudes, e.g., "I can do this" (see Figure 40 Football confidence, below).

Unlike in the phase one data, children also represented examples of empathy when using this template, labelling emotions, and demonstrating compassion amongst characters in Pupil Views Templates (PVTs). For example, in Figure 39 Diving confidence, below, a scene depicts a person standing on a high diving board, with other characters shouting encouragement, "you can do that... yay you done it", and empathy "I hope she do this that's over coming her fear!"

Figure 39 Diving confidence



Figure 40 Football confidence



Children also represented themselves in their PVTs, drawing scenarios where they were the central character. This can be seen in children's repeated use of language such as "I" and "me", as well as in their use of their own names when drawing characters (e.g., children used their own name on football jerseys they drew). This is also evident in the following examples (see Figure 41 Telling my story, Figure 42 Presenting with confidence, and Figure 43 Making friends), with examples of children telling their stories, giving presentations, and showing confidence in making friends.

Figure 41 Telling my story



Figure 42 Presenting with confidence

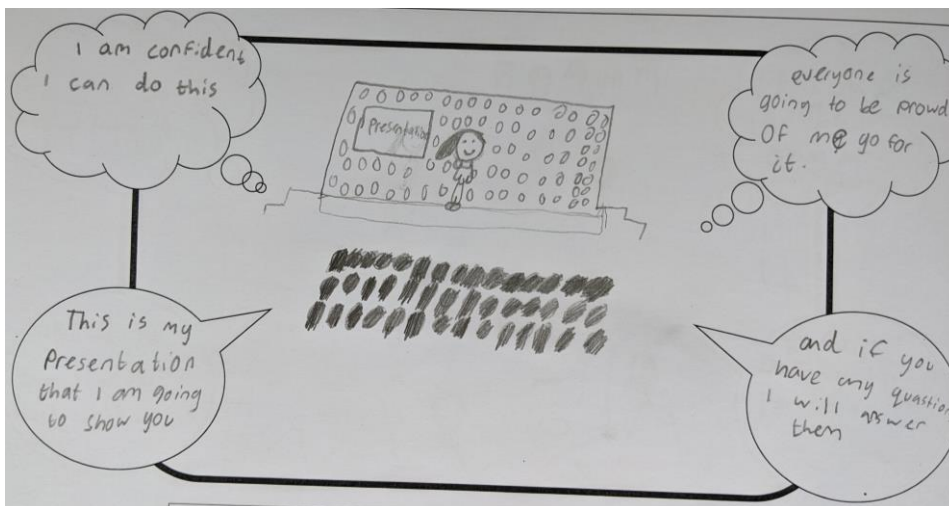


Figure 43 Making friends



Even where children were not representing themselves it may be that they were representing scenarios that were familiar in relation to their own experiences, current fears, and strengths. Souto-Manning and Epley (2023) suggest that schools and programmes should recognise and build on the “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al., 1992) that children bring to educational sites. These writers suggest that relational knowledge of children, their families, and communities is fundamental to creating learning that children can connect with, and contribute to, as knowledgeable co-learners. Moreover, building on children’s existing understandings could support them in developing social consciousness (Mevawalla, 2020).

In the context of the programme, there may perhaps be scope for connecting to, or creating spaces for, children’s own stories, dreams, hopes, their funds of knowledge from home and community life, and other familiar examples. Phase one data showed that dance facilitators were skilled at using the skill-up sessions to determine children’s existing understandings and inviting their contributions to discussions. Incorporating more child-led or personalised learning may involve priming children’s involvement through pre-programme engagement. However, this may not be feasible in the context of the programme without further resources and funding, since facilitators may be employed on a short-term basis and may not have allocated time for relationship-building or pre-programme work.

Engaging with the social and cultural worlds of children and families is significant, particularly when attempting to raise social consciousness. This is because research has found that parents and families have a significant role to play in developing children’s social views and understandings (Connolly et al., 2002). This is especially the case where there might be a dissonance between what is learnt in the programme and the values and views shared in the family. Successful family and community engagement is therefore vital to the success of programmes such as Safe to Be Me ®.

### Diversity

Only three children (12%) chose to respond to the prompt “I feel comfortable with difference” (diversity). The first may have referred to family diversity, but was difficult to distinguish and therefore excluded from coding. In the second, a representation of difference primarily in relation to gender was depicted (see Figure 44 Gender differences, below). In the third example, a depiction of being comfortable with changes in the world was drawn – with references made to technology (e.g., rockets and cars) (see Figure 45 Changes in the world, below). This highlights how children took programme concepts and applied them to their own interests and perspectives.

Figure 44 Gender differences

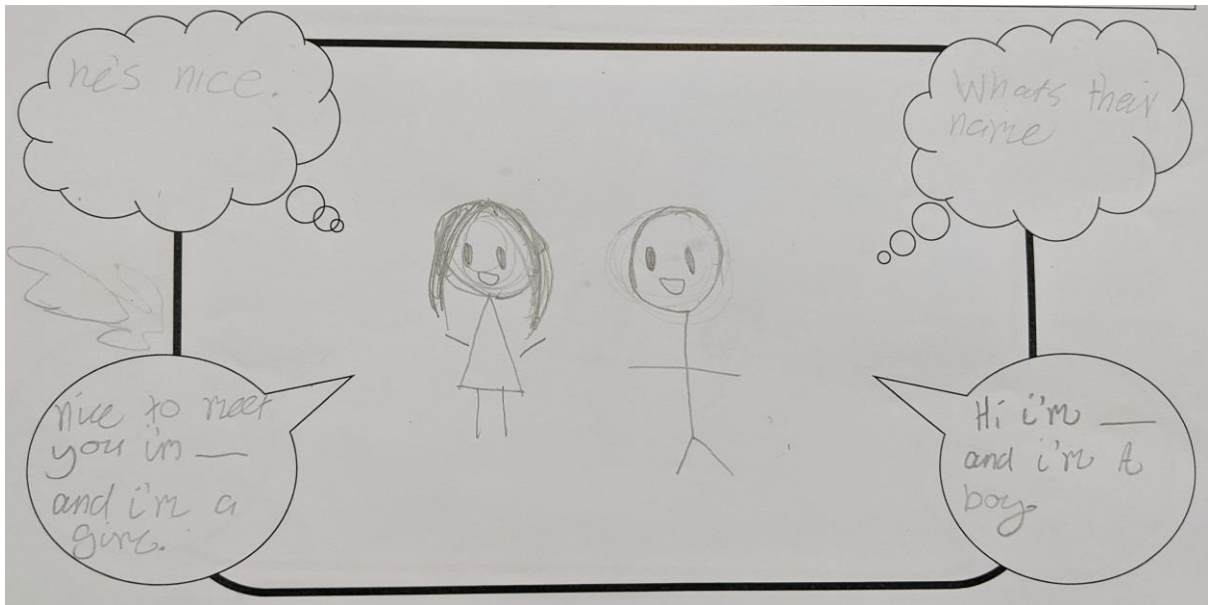


Figure 45 Changes in the world

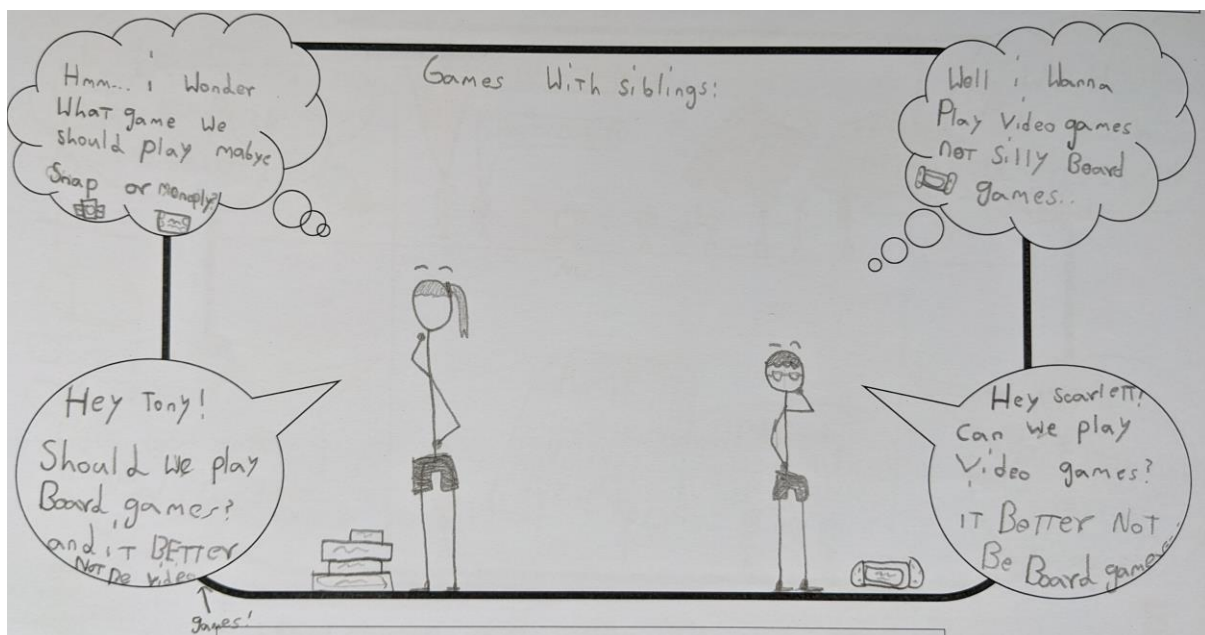


## Justice

In direct contrast to the first phase, where only one child chose to respond to the prompt “I recognise unfairness in society” (justice), in the third phase 28% of all child participants chose this prompt. Using this prompt, children recorded various examples of exclusion and unfair treatment based on age, disability, and looks.

As with the themes emerging from the identity prompt above (see Identity, p. 50), the children’s examples of unfairness primarily reflected micro-politics, that is everyday examples of inequitable power relations, that could be considered particularly relevant to children’s own lives. For example, children gave examples of unfairness in games played with siblings (see Figure 46 Games with siblings), and being excluded in the playground for being too young (see Figure 48 Excluded for being “too young”) or too short (see Figure 47 Excluded for being “too short”).

Figure 46 Games with siblings



The above representation of micro-politics is complex, as the scenario implies that whatever choice is made (board games or video games) would be unfair to at least one person. Thus, a need for compromise and negotiation is also implied here, as the drawing demonstrates perspective-taking skills and theory of mind (that is, being able to understand what another person might be thinking or feeling). These skills are central to the development of empathy, and social development more broadly (Goldberg, 2021).

Figure 47 Excluded for being "too short"

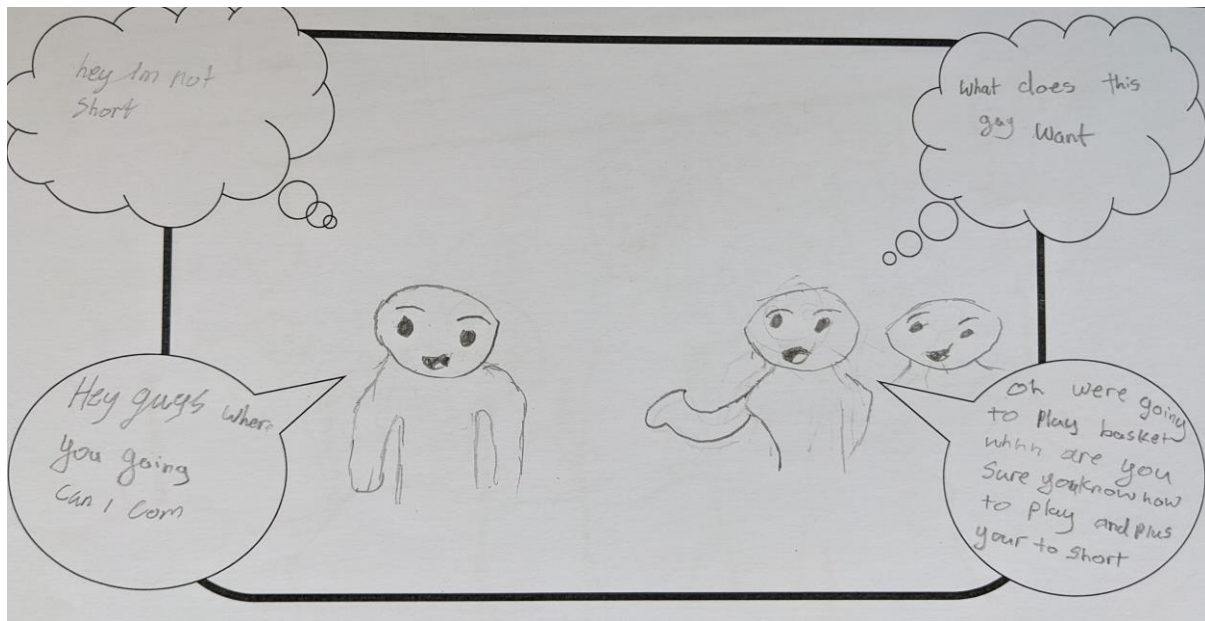
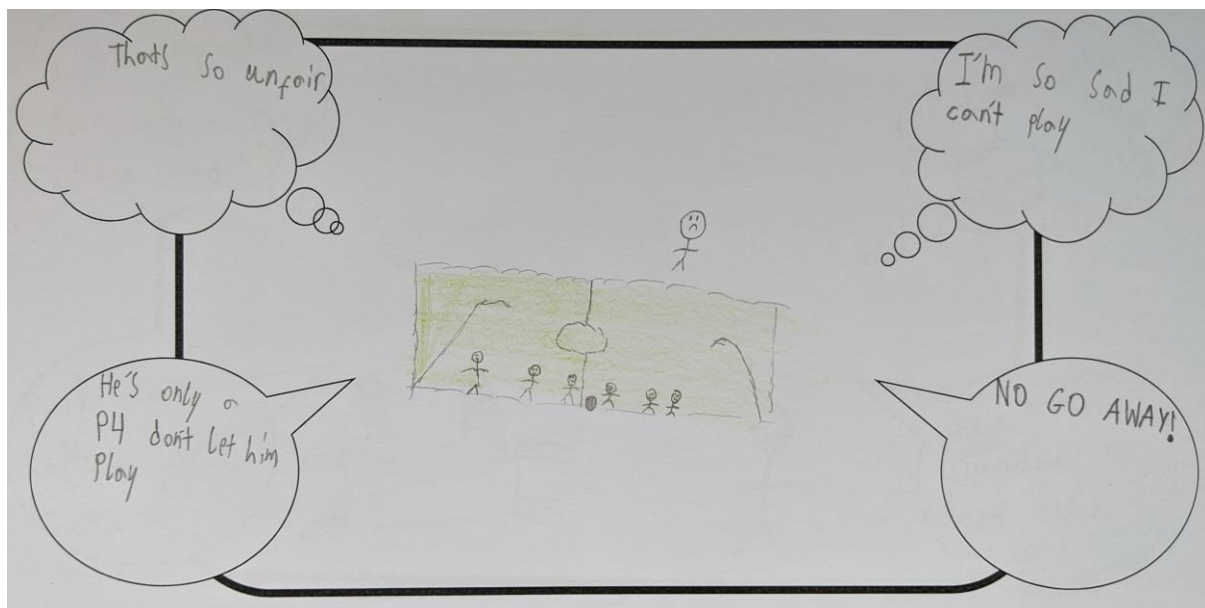


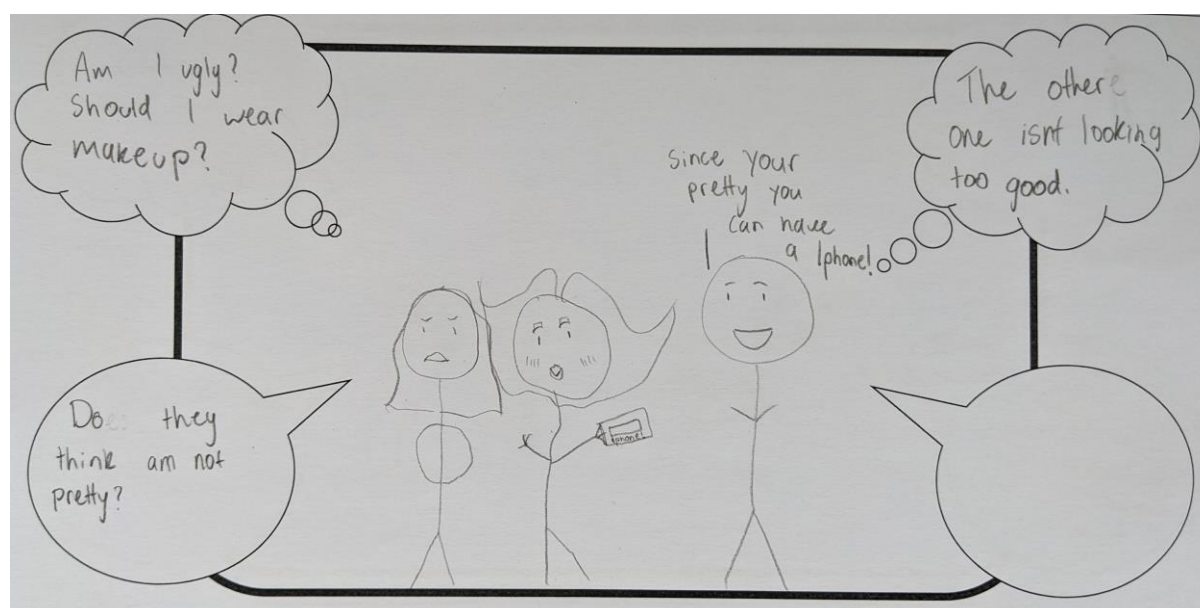
Figure 48 Excluded for being "too young"



One child also portrayed unfairness in relation to beauty standards and lookism. In this scenario, the child depicted the social capital that comes with being considered beautiful. In this example, female "beauty" is judged by the male gaze, with a stereotypically "beautiful" female (with voluminous hair, large lips, thick eyebrows) receiving a free iPhone from a male character. A female character with a sad expression stands to the left, and is shown thinking "Am I ugly? Should I wear makeup?" and saying "Do... they think am not pretty?" On the right, the male character is shown thinking "The other one isn't too good looking" (see Figure 49 Lookism and Beauty Standards as Social Capital, below).



Figure 49 Lookism and Beauty Standards as Social Capital



Lookism refers to prejudice on the basis of a person's appearance, where that appearance is socially constructed as unfavourable or unattractive (Spiegel, 2022). Lookism is intertwined with social and cultural assumptions and expectations around gender, race, and disability, and is also connected to colourism, which is discrimination on the basis of having darker skin (Sobande & hill, 2022).

Researchers have examined the impacts of lookism and colourism, including on children, with DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Cho (2011) finding that teacher candidates in the USA had "preconceived notions about the adolescents they were shown in photos and that those notions were stratified clearly along gender and racial lines" (p. 53). The study found that teacher candidates considered Asian adolescents to be most likely to achieve academic success, and Black or Hispanic females most likely to become parents before graduating.

Lookism may be worth reflecting on in the context of the Safe to Be Me ® programme, particularly given that children are asked to create an imagined character. It may also be relevant as phase one data showed that discourses of normality were prevalent for children.

In this dataset, other examples of unfairness, in relation to social oppressions covered in the Safe to Be Me ® programme, were also shared by children, with representations demonstrating recognition of ableism and homophobia (see Figure 50 Recognising unfairness - ableism, and Figure 51 Recognising unfairness - homophobia, below).

Figure 50 Recognising unfairness - ableism

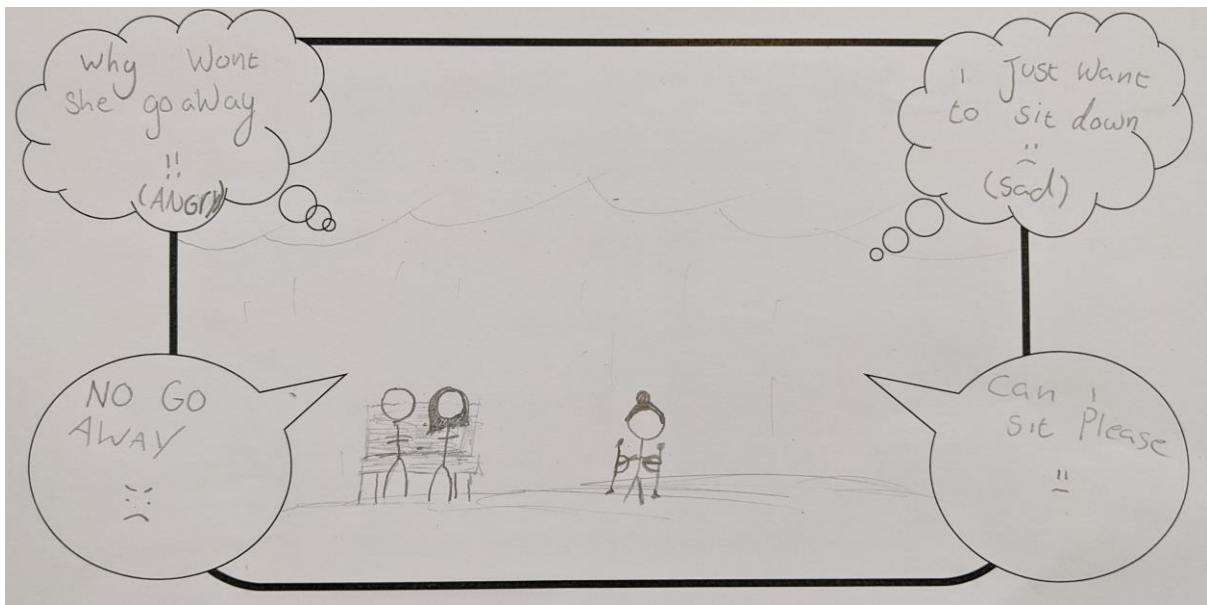
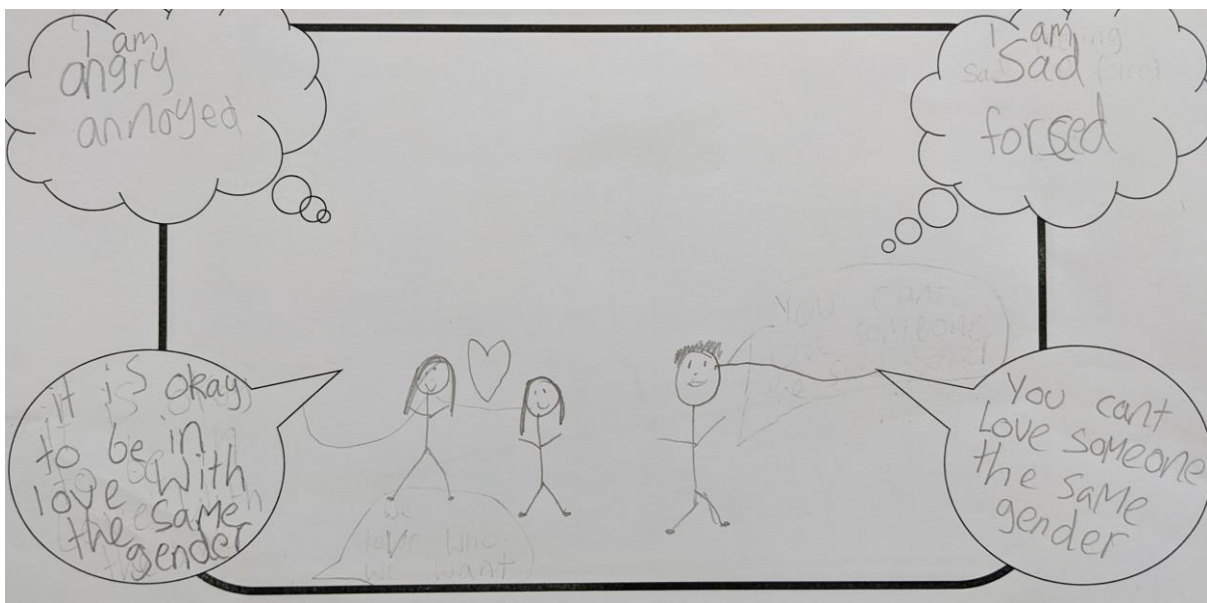


Figure 51 Recognising unfairness - homophobia



Notably, in the above example demonstrating homophobia as unfair, the child also affirmed individual rights to identity, expression, and choice, by saying “It is okay to be in love with the same gender”. This scenario therefore provides an example of a child not only recognising injustice but also understanding ally behaviours and activism – that is, in this case, speaking out against homophobia.

## Activism

In this phase, 31% of children chose to respond to the prompt “I feel confident standing up for myself or others when something is hurtful or unfair”. Several themes emerged in this dataset. Children used this prompt to describe instances of what appeared to be bullying, fights, or arguments. They portrayed characters who were confident in intervening, challenging, or resisting, for themselves or others, using words or actions. For example:

Figure 52 Stop doing that to me!

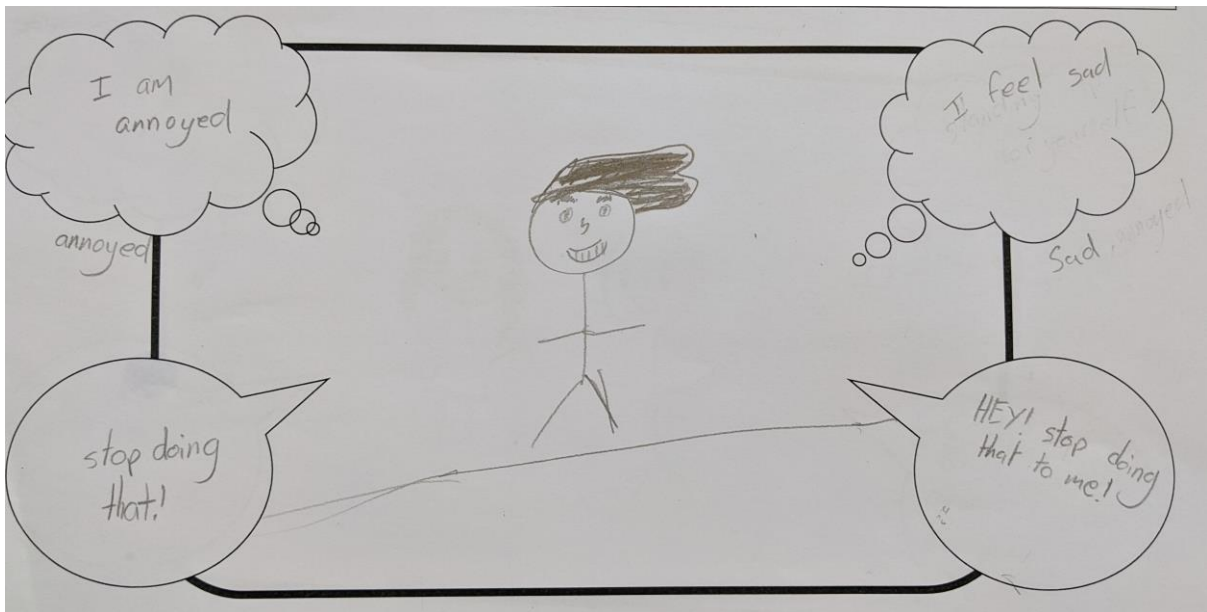
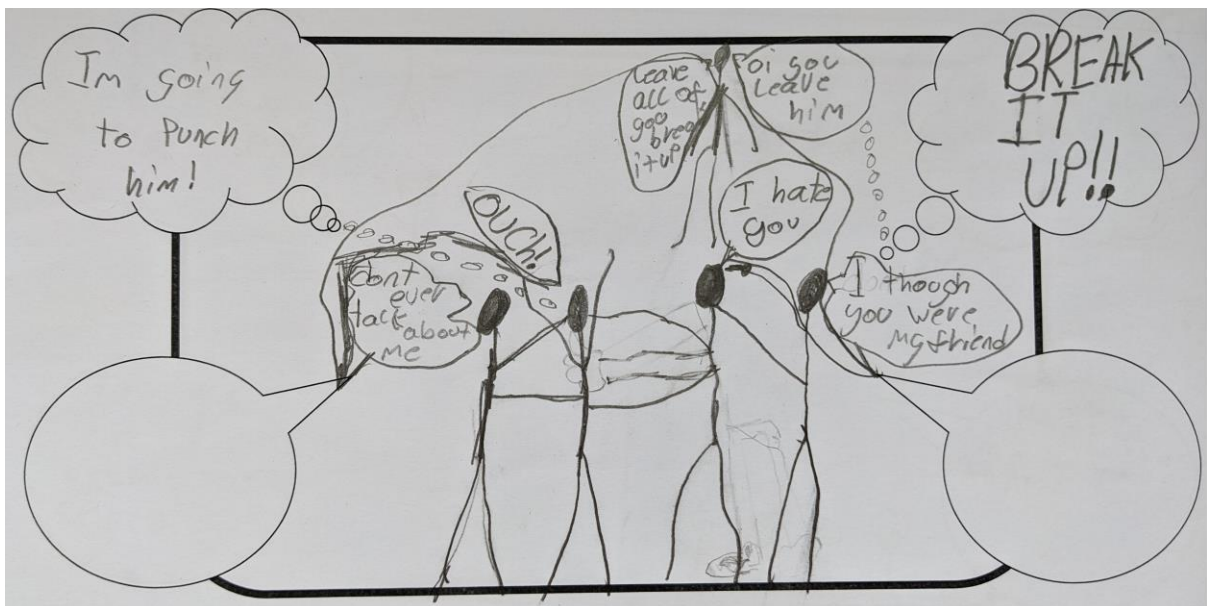
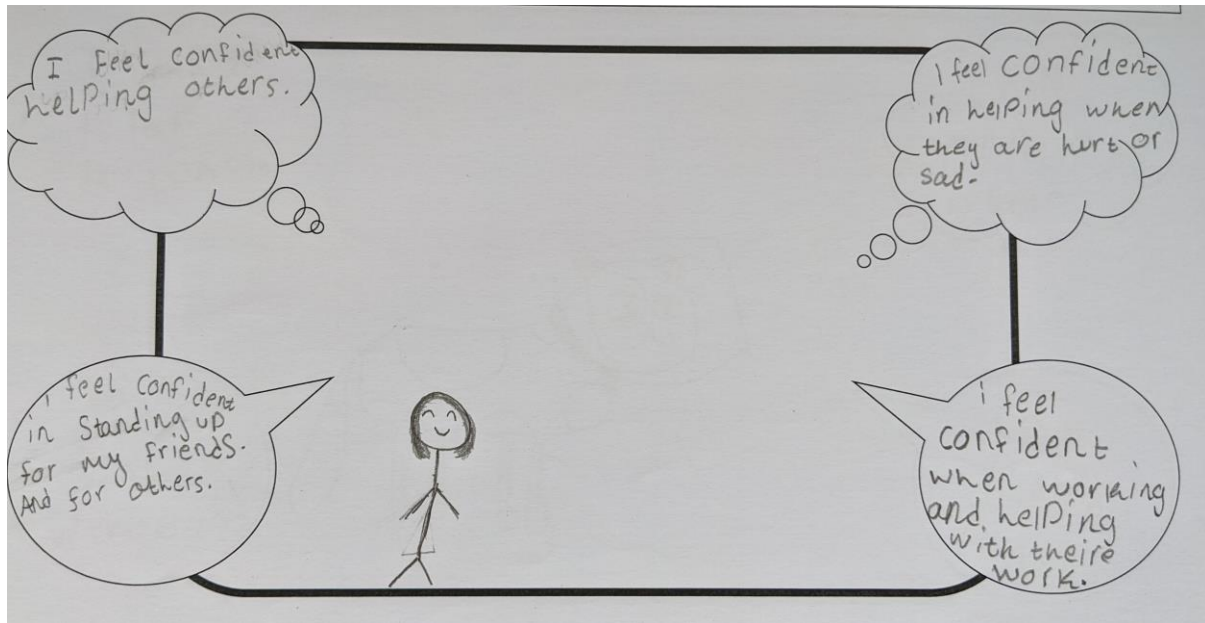


Figure 53 BREAK IT UP!!



Children also emphasised the importance of empathy, a motivation to act and to uphold the rights of others, through representations of helping, which could also be interpreted as allyship. For example:

Figure 54 Helping



As with the findings from the above prompt on recognising unfairness, in this dataset children also provided direct representations of Safe to Be Me © programme content through scenarios of characters experiencing, and challenging, racism and gender policing. There is also the possibility that ableism or lookism are represented.

For example, in Figure 55 Challenging racism, below, potential reference to ableism and/or lookism is made through a speech bubble stating "No he can't play he has a mark on his face." In this case, a 'mark' may be referring to several possibilities, including, but not limited to, moles, scars, allergic reactions, facial disfigurement, lacerations, tumours, etc.

Racism is depicted through speech bubbles which say, "you can't play with us your [sic] brown". As with earlier examples, in this scenario the child may have been sharing their own experience of discrimination. This is highlighted through the language use of "me" and "others" in the PVT.

Here, the child is seen standing up for themselves, through them responding to racism with "then I'll get some new friends". Standing up for others is depicted through the facial expressions drawn (a smile) and the words in speech bubbles, which include "you can play with us" and "catch".

Figure 55 Challenging racism

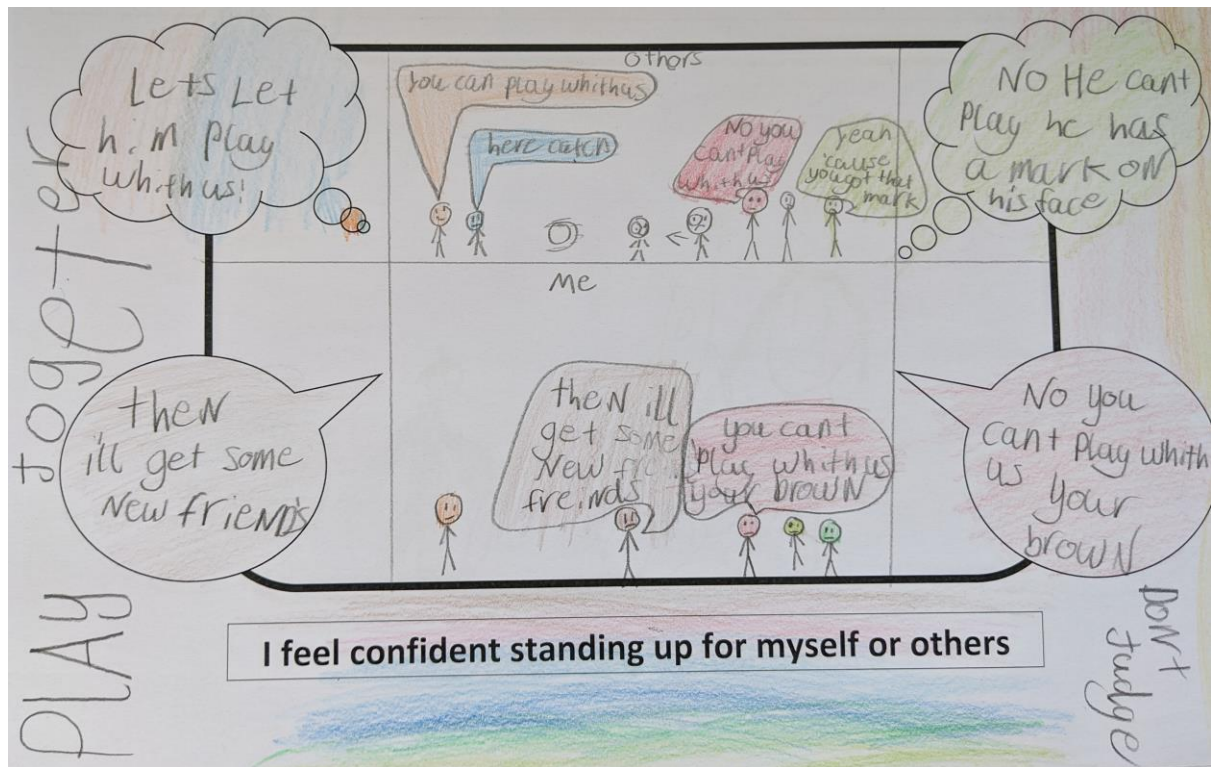
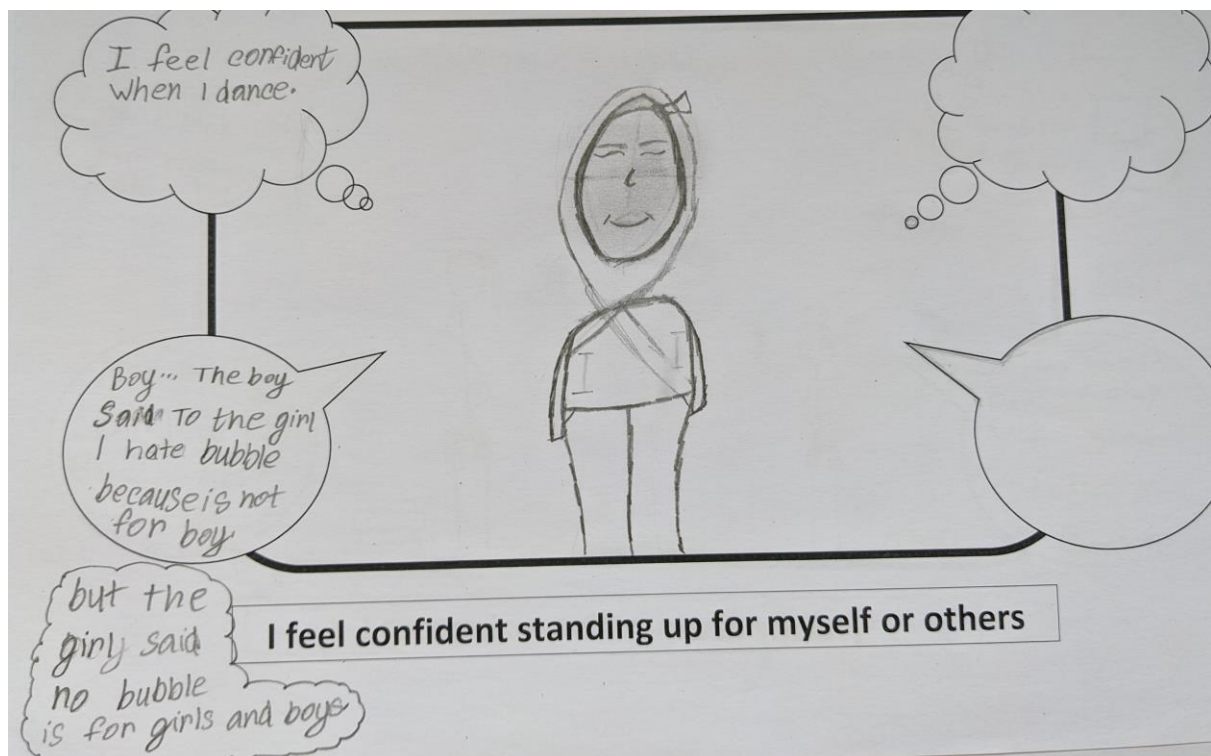


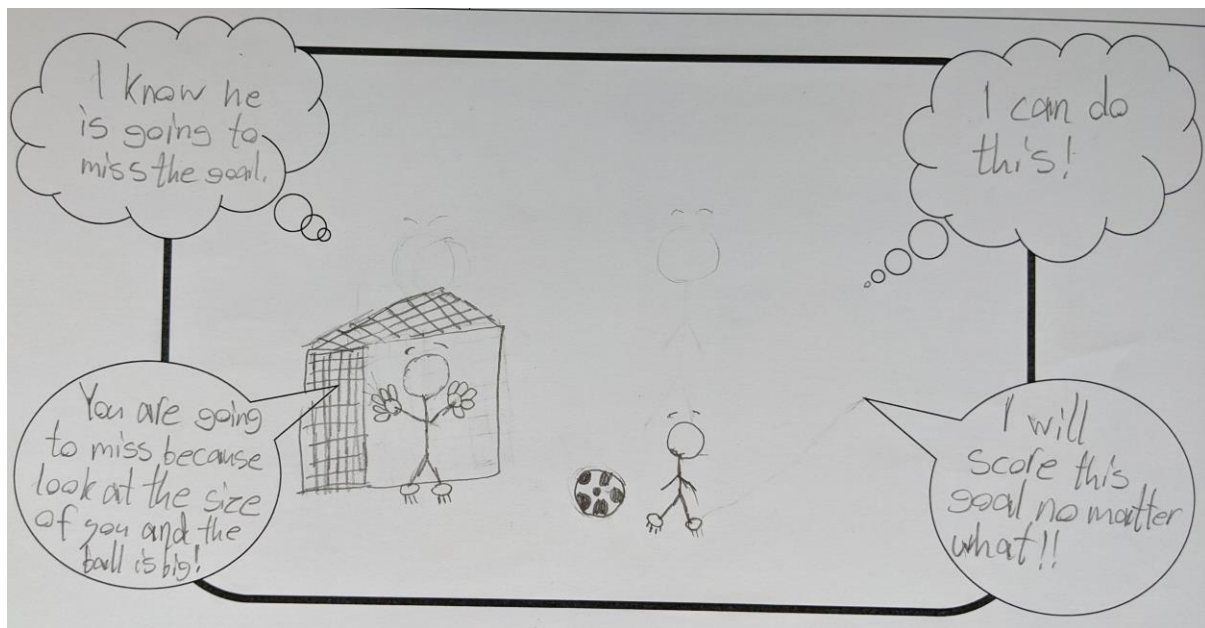
Figure 56 Challenging gender policing



Similarly, in the example above, the character challenges gender policing by saying that bubbles are “for girls and boys”.

Notably, using this prompt, children also demonstrated examples of activism as resistance in the form of 'proving people wrong'. For example, in the scenario below, a child who is short is depicted playing soccer, and attempting to score a goal. The use of a speech bubble noting "I will score this goal no matter what!!" in response to the goalie saying, "You are going to miss because look at the size of you and the ball is big!" highlights a motivation to succeed.

Figure 57 Proving people wrong



As in phase one, children in this phase represented their knowledge and understandings of identity, diversity, justice, and activism using scenarios which were reflective of their own micro-politics and lifeworlds. For example, most scenarios represented characters who were children, in outdoor and home play scenarios that are reflective of, or relevant to, the everyday lives of children. In this way, children used PVTs to share their expertise and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). As with the phase one data, representations primarily depicted scenes outside of the classroom.

Notably, the post-programme data shows an increase in children's writing on the templates. There is also greater complexity in the relationships and emotions depicted in the speech and thought bubbles. An increase in the use of justice and activism templates, along with the explicit examples of unfairness and social oppression is evident in phase three data. Children also affirmed diverse identities, choices, and experiences in phase three data, and provided clear examples of ally behaviours. This may indicate that after the programme children had more language to draw on, as well as increased confidence in representing their ideas in scenarios after the programme.

## Children's Perspectives (Focus Groups)

In addition to Pupil Views Templates (PVTs) data, in phase three children were also invited to partake in a focus group. Children were asked for their overall thoughts and feelings about the programme, including what they liked most and least. They mentioned most liking games and dancing, using their imagination and co-creating characters, acting out scenes, and watching dancers perform. Conversely, children also indicated that what they liked least was also dancing, staying still during character creation, and some games.

Children were also asked about what they learnt from the programme, and responded with respect to learning about identities, discrimination, difference, and new words. When asked if they had used their learning from the programme, children primarily responded 'no', or 'not really', followed by responses such as 'I don't remember'. Children also responded that they used some new learning in relation to dances from the programme. These findings are discussed below.

## Remembrances

When asked what they remembered from the programme, children explained the games they played, remembered their performance at the end, and the character creation. When reminiscing about the games, children shared:

---

*Student: We played games.*

*Student: Yeah, we rolled a massive dice.*

*Researcher: Oh, yeah. Oh, what did the dice do?*

*Student: There were just like, oh, it was like hot potato but with a dice.*

*- Focus Group, School B*

*Student: We played games.*

*Researcher: Do you remember what kind of games you played?*

*[...]*

*Student: So like, when we first came, we were like, they were dancing, and we would like copy after them in lines, we were copying them.*

*Focus Group, School D*

---

Children also shared remembrances from the character creation task. Notably, when prompted by the researcher, children were able to list several details about the character they had created and appeared to use the correct assigned pronouns for them. For example:

---

*Student: We created Becky<sup>3</sup>.*

*Researcher: Can you tell me more about Becky?*

*Student: He had blond hair.*

*Student: He's gay.*

*Researcher: Yeah. Okay.*

*Student: Like a thousand allergies.*

*Researcher: Oh really?*

*Student: Yeah.*

*Researcher: Anybody remember anything else about Becky?*

*Student: He had ADHD. Dyslexia. What else?*

*Student: He was a boy.*

---

<sup>3</sup> Pseudonyms are used throughout this report for all characters created in schools with children, to avoid schools or children being identifiable.



*Researcher: Okay.*

*Student: He liked sports.*

*Researcher: Anybody remember anything else about Becky?*

*Student: One of his favourite foods was mac and cheese.*

*Researcher: Nice.*

*Student: He lives with his dog.*

*Student: And his sister. Yeah.*

*Student: It was a stepsister.*

*Researcher: He lives with his stepsister and his dad, does he, or his stepsister and his mum?*

*Student: Stepsister and his boyfriend and his dog.*

*Student: He likes wearing sports clothes.*

*Student: It was actually his husband, I think.*

*Student: Yeah, that's what I said.*

*Focus Group, School B*

---

Dancing, including making up a dance, and performing were also mentioned by children as key aspects of the day they remembered. Diversity was also highlighted, particularly in terms of family diversity, and the remembering and sharing of religious and cultural celebrations.

#### Overall thoughts and feelings about the programme

Reflecting on the programme, children shared that the sessions were fun, but there were also feelings of embarrassment, 'weirdness' and 'silliness' recorded. For example:

---

*Student: I liked at the end when we danced, it was fun but a bit embarrassing.*

*- Focus Group, School B*

---

Hesitance was also noted in terms of dancing and partnering up with others 'across' genders:

---

*Student: At first it felt kind of silly, because I was like, dancing with my friend and she's a girl. But after that, it was kind of fun...*

*Student: At first it was a bit weird, and then, when we did that more, I um, started getting used to it.*

*- Focus Group, School D*

---

Relatedly, children also mentioned the notion of 'touch' at various points, including:

---

*Student: We did like dance moves, but, we all touched each other.*

*Student: We made like the other, because we get through people, and then did with a move that was still touching each other.*

*Focus Group, School B*

---

Whilst consent is explored in the programme, there may be further scope to reflect on children's hesitance, ideas around touch, and feelings of 'silliness', 'weirdness', and embarrassment.

#### Most and least liked elements of the programme

A snapshot of what children indicated they did and did not like about the programme is provided in the table below.

Table 5 Most and Least Liked Programme Elements

Most Liked	Least Liked
Dancing and games	Dancing
Imagination and co-creating character	Staying still (e.g., during character creation)
Acting scenes (e.g., celebrations)	Dice game
Watching dancers perform	

As might be reasonably expected, children had diverse views about what aspects of the programme they did and did not like. In response to this question, another key theme which also emerged was children indicating that participating in the programme was better than doing schoolwork. These themes are explored below.

#### *Dancing and Games*

When asked about what they most liked, dancing and games were the most frequently referenced terms by children. Children shared the following about what they liked about the games and dancing in the programme, and why:

---

*Student: I like learning the dance like how to do it. I like the games as well.*

*Researcher: Thank you. So why did you like learning how to dance?*

*Student: And it's just like that we don't usually do dance.*

[...]

*Student: I love that game. Well, we did all the positions that was good.*

*Researcher: And why did you like that?*

*Student: Because it was quite fun.*

*- Focus Group, School B*

*Student: I enjoyed the games. And when we were practicing with the show [for] the P5s. The dancing, I forgot what it was called. It was fun, because we had that much fun.*

*- Focus Group, School D*

---

At the same time, when sharing what they liked least about the programme children also mentioned dancing. At times, this was, in part, connected to pairing up with others, which echoes the earlier hesitance children noted (see; Overall thoughts and feelings about the programme). Reflecting on what they liked least, in relation to dancing, children shared:

---

*Student: I didn't really like, what I like to dance, but like, I didn't really want to do it.*

*Researcher: Do you know why you didn't want to do it?*

*Student: Maybe to like partner up with other people [...]*

*Student: I didn't like to do the dance because I don't really like dancing.*

*- Focus Group, School B*

*Researcher: Does anybody remember what they didn't like about the day?  
And why? Yeah, go ahead.*

*Student: Like dancing, because I don't like dancing.*

*- Focus Group, School D*

---

#### *Character Creation*

As with the above there were contradictory views about the Character Creation element of the programme. Children indicated that they liked using their imagination and having decision-making powers when creating the character. Children shared:

---

*Student: Creating the character because you got to like create their own personality. Like what they do.*

*- Focus Group, School B*

*Student: Ah, I like when we did imagination...*

*Researcher: Yeah, what did you like about that? Was that Billie?*

*Student: Yeah. I liked it because we got to choose, where she's from, and her family, and the name and draw around.*

*[...]*

*Student: I like the, ah, when we were making imaginary friend, making Billie.*

*Researcher: And what about making Billie did you enjoy?*

*Student: Like to see, like where she's from, like choosing. We got to choose twice, we've got to choose where she's from and where she lives now.*

*Researcher: And why did you like that?*

*Student: Because I got to choose.*

*- Focus Group, School D*

---

On the other hand, when asked what they least liked, children indicated that they did not like 'staying still' during the character creation segment, and one person indicated that they found aspects of the character creation confusing:

---

*Student: Um, I didn't really like making character I found just staying still for that long quite you know, bad.*

[...]

*Student: I didn't really like making the character because we had to sit for so long.*

[...]

*Student: Didn't really like making the character really confusing. Because it had so many allergies.*

*- Focus Group, School B*

---

#### *Acting and Watching*

Children from School D also emphasised the chance to 'act out' different cultures and families as an element of the programme they enjoyed:

---

*Student: I like when we got to play the act, different cultures.*

*Researcher: And what did you like about that?*

*Student: We did Ramadan, did Chinese New Year, lots of other stuff.*

[...]

*Student: I enjoyed when we were like, in different groups, and we were like, acting, some families like, like Mum and Mum, Dad and Dad, or something. And I enjoyed that. Because we also performed that to the peoples and that was just fun.*

*Researcher: Nice. Yeah. What did you like about the family best?*

*Student: Because I like that, because I don't know, fun acting out.*

*Focus Group, School D*

---

Children also indicated that they liked watching the dancers perform –referencing the Selkie dance, and the “dance with the suitcases”.

#### *Better than Schoolwork*

Children from School B also answered this question by noting that engaging with the programme was better than doing schoolwork:

---

*Student: I thought it was better than doing work.*

*[...]*

*Student: it's better than maths.*

*[...]*

*Student: And you get to miss out on all the other boring stuff you have to do in class.*

*[...]*

*Student: Yeah, it's better than work.*

*Focus Group, School B*

---

#### **New learnings from the programme**

This section highlights children’s learning of new words and ideas from the programme.

#### *Learning new words*

When asked what they learnt, children spoke about new words and provided accurate explanations for most terms, in a clear, confident, and factual manner. There were some instances of children ‘mixing up’ words and understandings. However, when prompted by the researcher, children were able to rectify these. For example:

---

*Researcher: [...] We've already mentioned a few words. Did we learn any new words? Or what do the words that we've already touched on such as discrimination and racism? Did we learn what they meant? Or what they mean? Does anybody want to explain or tell me about that?*

*Student: Discrimination is like judging someone because where they're from, how old they are, or what they speak.*

*Researcher: Perfect, thank you. Anybody else want to explain it or a different word that you learned on the day?*

*Student: Racism means offending over, what they look like, what's your skin colour or religion?*

*Student: And like people won't, don't support the LGBT, LGBTQ are homosexual.*

*Researcher: So I think that those are two different ideas. So homosexual is that you might like the person that a boy likes a boy, and a girl likes a girl. So if you have two mums or two dads, but then if you don't support them that is inequality.*

*Student: Oh not homosexual, homophobic.*

*Focus Group, School D*

---

*Affirming identity and challenging colour-evasiveness*

Children continued to challenge colour-evasive views, instead emphasising how everyone is different, and the importance of being yourself. In doing so, children also affirmed identity, expression, and choice. For example, when asked what they learnt on the days the dancers came to school, children explained:

---

*Student: Um, that everyone is, like, different in their own way.*



*Student: Yeah, everyone's like different.*

*Student: It's okay to love someone that's the same gender.*

*Student: Everyone's different*

*Student: To be yourself.*

*Focus Group, School B*

*Researcher: What did you do when they came?*

*Student: Learning about all different types of things you can be.*

*Focus Group, School D*

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*Recognising unfairness: Homophobia and racism*

Children shared understandings which demonstrated recognition of unfairness, injustice, and discrimination. They also reiterated their understandings of homophobia and racism. In the focus groups, there was no mention of transphobia or ableism, however, these were referenced in earlier phase three data (in the Pupil Views Templates). When discussing new terms learnt about over the course of the programme, children responded:

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*Student: It was like homophobic, and it was more like, you don't like gay people?*

*Focus Group, School B*

*Student: We learned about discrimination and stuff.*

*[...]*

*Student: I like them learning about race and racism, and stuff. Like words that, you should know about it now.*

*Researcher: Why did you like that?*

*Student: Um, because then, actually, then I would know about it, learn more.*

*Focus Group, School D*

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#### *Activism and allyship*

When prompted, children explained the concept of allyship, but when discussing strategies for how to be an ally, children's responses were generic and concise. For example:

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*Researcher: Does anyone remember what allyship means?*

*Student: Isn't it like when you support gays and all LGBQ but you're straight and all?*

*Student: Like when you're on someone's side? Just like helping them.*

*Researcher: Exactly. Yeah. And do we remember examples of what it meant to be an ally or how we can act that way?*

*Student: Be nice to LGBQ, support it.*

*Student: Just be nice to everyone.*

*Student: Be nice not rude.*

*Focus Group, School B*

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This mirrors earlier findings from phase two, where 19% of children indicated that they were 'unsure' if they felt confident standing up for themselves or others. In contrast, in the final phase of using Pupil Views Templates (PVTs) children were able to demonstrate examples of allyship and activism, e.g., 'speaking out' or 'acting out' (see section on Activism above). This may indicate that there is further scope to connect children's understandings of being an ally

to acts that both affirm diversity and resist injustice. The brevity and simplicity of children's responses (e.g., "be nice") suggests that there is scope to develop children's understandings of concrete strategies for how to be an ally. This is significant given that children of this age and in this grade may be developing more autonomy in their leadership and decision-making, particularly as they begin the transition into secondary school.

*Not being accepted by society*

In one noteworthy example, a child reflected a prejudiced view at the very end of the focus group, indicating that what they had learnt from the programme was that people would not be accepted for who they are. For example, nearing the conclusion of the focus group, the following conversation unfolded:

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*Researcher: Anything else about the ideas and the words?*

*Student: Thank you for coming.*

*Researcher: Yeah, you liked it?*

*Student: Yeah, it's better than work.*

*Student: We learned that sometimes society won't ever accept you for what you do.*

*Researcher: You think they won't ever accept you?*

*Student: Yeah.*

*Researcher: And how did you learn that do you think on the day?*

*Student: Different and like different things.*

*Focus Group, School B*

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This echoing of pre-programme views has also been reflected in earlier research. For example, Nguyen (2022), in a study using picture books to discuss race with young children,

found that some children developed racial consciousness or awareness over time, whilst others expressed confusion, and sometimes continued to perpetuate prejudice.

However, this snapshot from our research is distinct and significant in some important ways. Firstly, it indicates that the child recognised that barriers exist in *society*, not in the *individual*. This is important as it demonstrates recognition of the social nature of barriers, as opposed to the notion of individual deficit (Cologon & Mevawalla, 2023; Souto-Manning & Epley, 2023).

Moreover, unlike earlier broad-brush and colour-evasive rhetoric (e.g., “everyone is the same”), this excerpt reflects greater complexity of thought, and therefore could be demonstrative of a process of cognitive dissonance, which is necessary to growth.

Crucially, our data, like that of others, signifies the importance of children having opportunities to revisit and consolidate their knowledge with skilled and attuned adults (Nguyen, 2022). This is unsurprising given that developing social consciousness is a complex and ongoing journey, for adults and children alike.

#### Sustainability of the programme

In thinking about the sustainability of the programme, when children were asked why dancers came to the school, they responded that dancers came to explain discrimination and unfairness, and to explain that being unique is okay. However, when asked if they had used anything from the programme since the completion of the workshop, the most frequent response was “not really”, with some children noting they “didn’t know” and others indicating they had used dance moves from the programme:

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*Researcher: Thank you. Okay, so have any of you used any of these things that they told you about in your day-to-day life?*

*Student: Yeah, dance moves.*

*Researcher: Yeah. We’ll go around the table one more time.*

*Student: No, no.*

*Student: Not really.*

*Student: Not really.*

*Student: No.*

*Student: I don't know.*

*Student: Yeah, dance moves.*

*Focus Group, School B*

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However, children's perspectives contrasted with teachers' perspectives, which are discussed in the next section. Teachers, for example, indicated how programme learning was consolidated.

## **Teacher Perspectives**

Two teacher interviews were conducted in phase three. Insights from teachers revealed useful background information, in terms of children's prior knowledge and understanding, socio-cultural contexts, and if/how learning from the programme had been developed after completion.

*Direct and indirect connections to the programme*

The teacher at School D indicated that they had built upon learning and themes from the programme through the curriculum. This may partly explain the sustained understandings of key concepts demonstrated by children in School D. For example, the teacher said:

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*We did refer back to it a little bit through our health and wellbeing lessons because the children just had a curiosity after it because it was obviously new vocabulary said and using [words] that they hadn't thought of before.*

*Teacher Interview, School D*

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In contrast, the teacher at School B explained that they had not explicitly followed up with children, however, their teaching partner may have been responsible for undertaking this task:

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*I haven't done the ... health and sexual education part of the curriculum. I didn't teach any of that. And that would be for any further questions, we'd have possibly come up maybe around some of the things to do with sexuality or gender issues.*

*And so that would be my team teacher. And she taught that after the workshop, so I would probably have to ask her if there's anything specific to link up that maybe came up.*

*Teacher Interview, School B*

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*Funds of knowledge, family, and community context*

Teacher insights also shed light on children's existing funds of knowledge, and the family and community context. At times, this was informative for teachers as it showed children's prior knowledge and enabled teachers to reflect on children's experience in the family and community context:

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*They were really, a lot of them are quite aware of a lot of things. Maybe not always every definition of what things meant, but they were kind of aware of some of the words they were using anyway in discussions about I guess it was gender and different things to do with this and discrimination.*

*Teacher Interview, School B*

*Because some of the language that they were introducing, I thought, well, they might not know, but some of the kids did know and it just sort of, as I say, it raised my awareness of what the children are hearing outside or experiencing and it just made me think again, so it's going on and is something that we need to touch on in schools as well. So I was really happy with how it was delivered. Yeah, it was great.*

*Teacher Interviews, School D*

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The teacher from School D also shed light on the social and cultural context of the setting, indicating that family beliefs and views, at times, differed from those shared in the programme:

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*It was quite interesting, because of some of the religions in the class they speak out and say, we don't believe in that. So we went down the road of respecting others and you know, you don't believe in that. That's fine. But we still treat each other with respect. So it kind of opened up that avenue after to explore you.*

*Teacher Interview, School D*

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#### *Normalising terms*

Teachers also indicated that language learning and use was influenced by the programme. School B's teacher noted that there was no derogatory use of language, and School D's teacher indicated that the 'shock factor' of certain terms had been removed, and therefore, normalised. For example:

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*[...] what I did say is that I haven't heard anybody using any of the terms that were discussed in a derogatory manner, since.*

*So I don't feel while having increasing the vocabulary around those things. I don't feel that knowledge is then being used, that hasn't been used or abused.*

*I feel like it's been treated quite respectfully. But in terms of just specifically saying, have I seen a big change? Or have I seen any changes relating to that particular thing? Or particular, because I don't, I haven't done any sort of particular dance stuff since. So... can't really compare.*

*Teacher, School B*

*I feel like the use of vocabulary a lot more when you mentioned things in class and through your health and wellbeing lessons there's not that 'shock*

*factor' with some of them or they're aware of what they mean, yeah I've heard them.*

*We do like a lot of school values in here are a big, big push in our school. So we're always on about respect and responsibility. And so yeah, I think that does come through on it. Yeah.*

#### *Teacher Interview, School D*

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##### *Parent and family views of the programme*

One of the teachers indicated that the programme had been well-received by families. For example:

*And then on the day, during the school day, so we didn't have a huge number of parents, but the ones who did turn up all seem to be positive. And I heard really good things to see. And quite a lot of them had said they really enjoyed, the bit, the end where all the children stepped forward and said, it's Safe to Be Me that part of it is that, that was really moving. And that like worked really nicely as a class activity and felt really personal.*

#### *Teacher Interviews, School B*

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This contrasts with some of the data collected from dance facilitators, who highlighted some of the tensions and challenges they had faced in relation to implementing the programme during this time – this is discussed in the subsequent section (see Socio-political influences).

## **Dance Facilitator and Manager Perspectives**

In phase three, dance facilitators and managers were involved in focus group discussions to provide further insight into the programme. Here, the barriers and facilitators experienced by staff and managers running the programme are shared.

### **Barriers**



Barriers shared by dancers and managers included challenging the experiences or views of schools and adults, and the influences of the broader socio-political context.

#### *Socio-political influences*

Emphasising some of the challenges experienced within the schools and with adults, dancers explained that challenges emerged as a result of socio-political factors and differences in the views and beliefs of adults, as well as in relation to communication between parties. This included adults in the context of the programme, e.g., differences in pedagogical approaches to engaging children, as well as beyond the programme (e.g., parents and families with different values and beliefs). For example, participants highlighted:

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*I think everything we do, obviously I think everything we do is great, but I think it's definitely that hard thing. We go in once, twice, we do skill up and the workshop and then just hope that the parents agree and the school can continue it.*

*Dance Facilitator 2*

*For me personally, the thing that I found difficult is not how we deliver it or how the children interact with us. It's more like you're saying the external environment in which they come from because that can affect everything. Like it can affect how we feel, like even kind of after a skill up has been and [name] got feedback, some people aren't going to do the workshop now. The school were a bit kind of funny and funny is not the word for it, but the school were kind of maybe not entirely aware of what we're going to talk about when we then go into that school. Like the first one that we did that had response like that, I felt a little bit defensive of it and kind of almost not attacked by the school, but just kind of like, I don't feel like they want me to be here today. So that's the most difficult. But I think because we believe in it so much that when it is questioned, which is like, people are different, but that's I find quite hard when teachers and parents are a bit opposed to what it is that we're doing.*

*Dance Facilitator 5*

*But I think what's interesting is that the young people there's been a shift in the knowledge that the young people have and they tend to have much more. We started this programme in 2018 and there's generally, I've noticed a lot more knowledge in the room, but it seems like maybe from teachers and from parents there's more kind of tentativeness around the subjects, whereas we haven't really we've developed what we're talking about and we've kind of shifted it and evolved a little bit.*

*Programme Manager 1*

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Differences in pedagogical approaches and teacher engagement were also highlighted as a possible barrier. For example:

*I think another aspect that's difficult in the project can actually be teachers in the room... there was a really clear example of it yesterday where the teacher was very involved but was then also saying, no, don't do that.*

*Oh no, maybe you should do a foot like that, maybe you should do a jump like this. And then actually suggesting the choreography for the kids and that was stressful and that's sort of like when they obviously wanted the kids to do well, but actually they're not allowing the kids to have their own space and their own opinion.*

*Yeah, and don't get me wrong, it doesn't always happen and you get the opposite as well, which is sometimes a problem where the teacher is so unengaged that not engaged, that they're just kind of sitting out and watching.*

*Dance Facilitator 1*

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Managers and dancers also discussed the impact of broader socio-political influences, noting how this resulted in barriers to school participation in the programme. For example:

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*I think that's massive to the external factors right now, really in the world and in the news, because it's never in the five years that has never happened until this point.*

*Dance Facilitator 1*

*So there's definitely been a cultural shift with the narrative going on at the moment. I think maybe kind of stimulated from the Gender Recognition Bill, which has had a huge impact there out in the world. Everybody's a bit more tentative around the conversations, around gender and transgender subjects.*

*What came up is that sometimes young people are misinterpreting what we're talking about sometimes. So we're looking to challenge ourselves in that the teachers aren't feeling safe and knowledgeable to have continue these conversations, post us bringing them up, and then the parents are feeling like they're not exactly in the loop of these conversations.*

*So I think that's the three kind of big red flags that we're looking maybe as we move forward, is to kind of challenge ourselves on how we tackle them and to understand that maybe we're going through a kind of cultural what's the word? Regression in certain areas.*

*And the big one is certainly gender. Not so much sexual orientation, not so much racism and not so much ableism, but certainly the gender subject is a big pinch point red flag area.*

*Programme Manager 1*

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## **Facilitators**

Participants were also asked to reflect on what enablers or facilitators made the programme successful. Responses indicated that processes undertaken by Scottish Ballet, including working in groups, reflecting together, and having access to training and support, were beneficial to the programme. Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of having

shared values and the important role of their own motivation for being involved in the programme, as being facilitators for programme success.

### Reflexivity and group work

Group working and the ongoing reflexivity of the staff involved in the programme were highlighted in focus groups as key strengths for dancers. Participants explained how knowledge of and reflections on programme structure and delivery were shared throughout the Safe to Be Me ® teams. Participants provided examples of how tips and feedback were shared. The immediacy of feedback also benefitted dancers, enabling them to implement actions in a timely, supportive, and constructive manner. For example:

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*I guess, like, it's not necessarily training but there is an element of like... sort of passing down our knowledge just on like, basically the structure of the day but also tips and tricks of how we facilitate conversations to the rest of the team.*

*Dance Facilitator 3*

*Because as soon as we did something, you'd automatically give some sort of feedback. There's things to think about, which then I would go away overnight and think and try and do it differently. And it was instant, it wasn't left. And I think every single at the end of every single workshop we did that, we had a conversation.*

*I mean, the Monday when we changed how we were going to do the discrimination chat and then on Tuesday I did it differently and it worked better on the Tuesday and it was just going away and having that sort of instant sort of things are growing and things became more natural over that time.*

*Dance Facilitator 4*

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## Shared values and the motivation of justice

Emphasising shared values and motivations for being involved in the programme, the data suggests that participants' own identities and experiences influenced their desire to be involved in the programme. Connecting this to personal stories, participants' views of the importance of the programme also showed a strong sense of justice, and recognition of the need to support future generations to be more inclusive and aware. For example:

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*Yeah, I think we want to think in Safe to Be Me terms, we're all allies and trying to be trying to be supportive of everyone, so it's nice that we get to do a project that, like, allows us to do that as well... when I was in primary school, I didn't, I found it very difficult to learn I found classrooms hard ... in sitting down, writing really difficult. So I feel like this Safe to Be Me, is teaching in a way that's creative... And I know that I would have absolutely loved that growing up. So I think it's good that we teach them and introduce like, different terminology and words and like about being inclusive and all that also, I think there's a side of like, we all learn differently. So it's nice that they all get to kind of be in a room where they're told that they're great. And they're doing well, cos they are.*

*Dance Facilitator 2*

*I feel like by the time I came to Safe to Be Me, like, I was super familiar already with a lot of the terminology and it's always changing but like I already followed like, lots of content creators who would talk about these issues. So it was all felt very familiar. And I think what's really like the training also has been really, really helpful in sort of, like, backing up that knowledge. What's really interesting is how to then, as you guys have picked up on like, translate that in like 10-year-old terms, but I think I felt really lucky that I've always, like, none of the terminology was ever very new, but it was just about how to pitch it in that way. So I think that gave me a really good like baseline for like [inaudible] and also was one of the reasons why I was like, I'm really interested in doing a project like this because it just feels like it marries all of my interests and passions in one thing.*

*Dance Facilitator 3*

*It's part of the training that you, you have to bring sort of your life experience into this project, because they [the children] don't know yet. And all this is been such a difficult path for so many people before them.*

*Dance Facilitator 4*

*We all believe in these things and our life. So like, I know that everyone is equal, and nobody should be discriminate against and we should use their pronouns and things like that. And, and I think that's why I wanted to do it. Because I know that it's so important that I've not had anything like that in school or high school and the... like knowing that it needs to be done.*

*Dance Facilitator 5*

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**Training and Support**

Access to training and support through the Scottish Ballet was also identified as a strength, providing greater confidence and tools for communicating with children and adults. These factors appear to be key facilitators for staff on the programme. For example:

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*So we even had, so, there's Scottish Ballet have [a] counsellor or psychotherapist. I'm not sure what her title is. But she came in and did some training with us so that as a team, we could also learn how to debrief each day or each week sufficiently and in a way that would it also would take care of us.*

*[...]*

*Training to help us be aware of each other and the limits if anyone was triggered, and how we would, um, notice that... And then from that, she also confirmed that Scottish Ballet offer us two free counselling sessions if we want to take them.*

*Dance Facilitator 1*

*But being in Safe to Be Me, they gave me the like sentences and the knowledge. And they're like, because I feel this way. Like, I know that I feel it but I didn't know, then, how to articulate myself properly, which has been really helpful, like elsewhere in life, because we all work other places.*

*And if something like that comes off, then I know exactly what to say... And sometimes I'm like, can I just come right out, what this means? Like, what is gay or something, for example, but no, no. Like, well, that's just a man loving a man. Okay, great. Let's move on, which is really helpful. That we became, like, self-confident.*

#### *Dance Facilitator 5*

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This section has outlined the views of dancers and programme managers. The subsequent section provides an overview of key highlights before recommendations and conclusions are discussed.

## Highlights

In this section, key highlights and overarching themes emerging from across the three phases of the dataset are discussed. The key themes unpacked in this section relate to identity, diversity, justice, activism, and dancing.

### Identity

Children showed confidence in their own identities before, during, and after engaging with the programme in different ways. Children used the Pupil Views Templates (PVTs) to share their strengths, feelings, self-efficacy, and self-confident attitudes before and after the programme. In the PVTs, children drew themselves, or other child protagonists, engaging in football, horse-riding, storytelling, presenting, and diving. Children shared 'can do' attitudes throughout the PVTs, with phrases such as "I am amazing", and "I can do this" (see Identity, p. 15).

Children's self-awareness and confidence in their identities was also demonstrated during the programme, where key taglines emerging included phrases such as "I love myself, and I love being me" (Observations and Field Notes, School C). These sentiments were echoed in the dance movements co-created by children (e.g., embracing self), and the end-of-session surveys, with children sharing messages such as "you can be whatever you feel safe as" (Student Survey, School B).

In phase two, when children were asked if they felt more confident in themselves after the programme, most children participating in this phase (88%) provided a response that was affirmative. These findings suggest that the Safe to Be Me ® programme had positive impacts on children's self-confidence.

Children's awareness and confidence in their own identity was also highlighted by teachers during interviews. Teachers indicated that relationships, sexuality, health, and wellbeing were key curriculum content, including a focus on children developing confidence and awareness of their identity.

### Diversity

The Safe to Be Me ® programme supported children to develop comfort with, express, and celebrate diversity. Before the programme and during the skill-up, children sometimes used glossing rhetoric and colour-evasive discourses such as "difference doesn't matter" when discussing diversity (Morgan & Taylor, 2019). These ideas can focus on difference as



sameness, whereby everyone becomes 'different' which, in turn, can perpetuate the marginalisation, silencing, and denial of diverse lived experiences, or differences that matter as inequalities.

Before the programme, where children represented difference in the Pupil Views Templates (PVTs), visuals did not reflect significant differences between characters, except in relation to gender, and differences in fashion and hairstyles. During the skill-up, data revealed subtle and explicit discourses of "normality" evident in children's understandings and behaviours. This underpinned examples of prejudice, dehumanisation, and othering of those considered "abnormal". Some data also highlighted deficit understandings of diversity, in relation to disability and trans experiences.

Dance facilitators were skilled at challenging these views, and brought their own experiences into workshops, using a range of sophisticated and subtle ways to develop more inclusive understandings. This was also emphasised by teachers in their interviews. Teachers noted the ways in which dance facilitators created safe, open, sensitive, trusting, and respectful spaces for children to discuss programme content.

During the workshops, and after the programme, children valued diversity, and challenged deficit understandings. Children connected to their own experiences and knowledge of diversity from their communities. In focus groups, teachers acknowledged children's prior knowledge and expertise, and recognised the impact of the programme in terms of children's language use (e.g., noting that there was no longer a 'shock value' to terms).

Data from surveys collected at the end of the workshop indicated that 85% of children felt 'a little' or 'definitely' more comfortable with difference. After the programme, this was echoed by children sharing that the programme had taught them about diverse identities and social inequalities, the importance of creating inclusive environments, and being comfortable with uniqueness and diversity (e.g., "loving someone of the same gender is okay").

Children were also supported to learn and use accurate language for communicating with others about difference. Whilst children remembered terms and phrases after the programme, there is scope to continue consolidating this knowledge.

The role of other significant adults (e.g., teachers, families, peers, community members) is key in terms of revisiting and reinforcing children's understandings, and normalising the use of terms in everyday life (e.g., use of diverse texts and resources in schools).

## Justice

Children demonstrated that they were able to recognise unfairness and use language to describe unfairness. After the programme, children were more confident in their use of language to describe unfairness and discrimination, and children's scenarios in PVTs showed increasing empathy, demonstrating that children understood that unfairness hurts.

Before the programme, only one child responded to the PVT prompt "I recognise unfairness in society", noting that "unfairness is not nice". During the programme, children recognised unfairness and demonstrated empathy towards people who may have been excluded, hurt, or discriminated against. Children shared interpretations of bullying in dance performances. This was then reflected in children's own choice of dance moves during their co-construction of dance performances.

Within the programme, some subtle references to tragedy views of disability were evident during the workshop. By the end of the programme, children's representations of unfairness in the PVTs were much more complex and sophisticated, and there was a notable increase in the number of children who chose to respond to this prompt. There was also an increase in writing (number of words used) on the PVTs after the programme, with more specific language used to describe discrimination. This suggests that children understood more language to explain unfairness and were more confident in representing these scenarios.

Children continued to represent examples of micro-politics, showing examples of power imbalances children and young people might experience in the everyday (e.g., with siblings). They also represented more nuanced examples of exclusion and discrimination, based on age, height, disability, and beauty standards. Reflecting content covered in the programme, children also directly shared examples of racism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia after the programme.

Children also increasingly represented examples of empathy, showing greater complexity in how relationships and emotions were portrayed in their PVTs after the programme. This was echoed by one teacher, who noted that children demonstrated sensitivity and compassion during the workshop.

After the programme, children continued to evidence their recognition of unfairness, making direct reference to homophobia and racism, but seemed less familiar with or able to use the terms transphobia or ableism. Further work is required in relation to developing children's understandings of these terms.

## Activism

Before the programme no direct reference was made in PVTs to themes such as racism, ableism, homophobia, or transphobia. However, after the programme children directly represented discrimination (e.g., challenging of racism, and gender policing). Children also showed a sense of empowerment through resistant attitudes in their PVTs. For example, children depicted scenarios which involved 'proving people wrong' and agency, e.g., leaving peer spaces that perpetuate discrimination and exclusion.

Allyship was a key theme related to activism and children's knowledge of how to act against prejudice. During the programme, connections were made to allyship, through both discussion and dance, with children choosing actions which represented allyship (e.g., helping each other up). After the programme, in the PVTs, children referenced allyship by depicting examples of helping others (e.g., by intervening in a fight, or acting out against someone who is being mean). However, at the end of the workshops, data from surveys indicated that 19% of children were still unsure whether they felt confident standing up for themselves or others if something unfair or hurtful happened.

In the focus groups, children provided very concise and non-specific responses as to how to be a good ally (e.g., "just be nice"). Whilst empathy was mentioned in teacher interviews, specific themes around allyship or strategies were less likely to be raised. Taken together, this data indicates that there is further scope to support children to develop a stronger sense of empowerment, and knowledge of skills to use in acting against injustice.

## Dancing

During and after the programme, children indicated having fun and communicated enjoyment of dance, choreography, and performance. The feelings fan similarly indicated that children were more 'happy' and 'calm' at the end of the workshop day. Teacher interviews also highlighted children's engagement and enthusiasm with dance across the programme. Some children also highlighted hesitance and feelings of discomfort, which may have been due to the length or timing of the programme over the course of a full day. This tension in the data reflects the need to consider different strategies, including different abilities and capacities to dance, learn, and engage at length; educational activities typically need to balance group activities and collective learning goals alongside individual experiences and needs. Similarly, educational contexts need to balance attentiveness to social inequalities alongside care towards the individuals that inhabit, challenge, and are challenged by these.

## Recommendations and Conclusions

In this section, key recommendations and conclusions emerging from this research are discussed, alongside limitations of the research. Overall, the research demonstrated that the programme had positive impacts on children's self-confidence, comfort with diversity, accurate and non-stigmatising language use, and motivation for justice against unfairness.

In survey data, 96% of children indicated that they were more comfortable and confident recognising unfairness. This was also evident after the programme, where children were confident in discussing and representing identity, and social injustices and inequalities. A key strength of the programme is the ways in which it provides challenges to, and respite from, the structuring of differences as insurmountable 'divisions' – thus creating spaces for affirming identity in positive and joyful ways.

Related to this, one recommendation regards the use of familiar language and categories. Whilst children shared their funds of knowledge about their own lives, family, religion, and heritage, during the workshop sessions there could have been further efforts to directly support children to think about their own differences – including using categories such as 'girl' and 'boy' - which might lead to more nuanced understandings and usage of their own gender embodiment and diversity as a category and lived experience.

After the programme, there was some evidence of children 'mixing up' understandings of key terms (e.g., homosexual and homophobia). This may indicate that there is scope to revisit content, and for consolidation of programme knowledge in schools with adults and peers, following completion of the programme.

Similarly, when considering terminology, further resources could be allocated to support careful consideration of language use and tensions in the framing of disabled identities and experiences (e.g., as invisible or visible disabilities, inter-category complexities, and politicised language and self-definition, e.g., D/deaf), which may support reflection and learnings in the context of the programme. This is significant as it directly connects to challenging tragedy and charity views of disability, and disrupting discourses of normality.

Children seemed to have difficulty identifying practical strategies for allyship and activism. This indicates that the role of relevant adults, such as teachers, may be central to supporting children in consolidating knowledge and developing strategies for allyship. Similarly, the role of key adults in continuing to normalise and revisit terms and concepts is also significant. As both teachers and dancers identified differences in values and beliefs as potential barriers to

the achievement of programme goals, strategies for communication and engagement with key adults such as families and teachers is worthy of further consideration. Buy-in from families, teachers, communities, local authorities, governments, and funders is also key to sustaining programmatic impacts. This, in turn, would support the meeting of the statutory obligations under the Equalities Act (2010).

Recognition of the pressures experienced by schools, may involve consideration of how to best work with, and support teachers, before, during, and after the programme to sustain positive outcomes for children. For example, additional resources to support the Safe to Be Me ® team to provide instruction to schools may be helpful. Specifically, information about what teachers could do to fully engage within the space, alongside the class and facilitators, could be included. Clear instructions could also be provided to the school about the physical space itself, and who may or may not be in spaces throughout the programme, in order to support dancers. Running professional development or in-service sessions aimed at teachers (across early years, primary, secondary, further and higher education) seems a key starting point for developing motivation and investment in the sustainability of programme goals.

As might be expected, the findings from this research also highlight the ongoing nature of developing social consciousness, and the need for continuous investment in, and development of, similar programmes. This is also significant considering the changing nature of social and political influences over time, and the need to act responsively to challenge social inequities as they emerge. Dancers and managers also identified barriers from socio-political influences, such as those surrounding the proposed amendments to the Gender Recognition Act (Scottish Parliament, 2024), impacting on pressures on schools and dancers. In recognising and responding to broader socio-political influences in the Scottish – and indeed the rest of the UK and more global context – additional resources to expand topics (e.g., experiences of refugees) may also be beneficial. Public debates actively impact upon classroom and programme spaces.

Following the Equality Act (2010) and critique thereof (Lawrence & Taylor, 2019), inequalities must be imagined as intersectional rather than discrete. The Character Creation may provide rich ground for attending directly to this. A limitation of the study may be that findings may be reduced to discrete, separate categories (e.g., race, sexuality, gender, disability). Similarly, as this research used the key themes ‘identity, diversity, justice, and activism’ to develop tools and questions, a limitation of this study may be in relation to its focus on anti-bias, which overlaps, but is distinct from, inclusive education (Cologon & Mevawalla, 2023).

Across the study, findings revealed the skilfulness of dance facilitators in engaging children throughout the programme, creating “safe and brave” spaces (Arao & Clemens, 2013), and challenging prejudiced views. Dancers actively and thoughtfully navigated differentials in the room, at times also adopting the ‘least adult’ in the room approach to actively encourage children in their own power. Continued resources to support dance facilitators, through resources, ongoing reflection, group work, and access to services may further mobilise their work. Similarly, additional resources would be beneficial to expand the team, which may then allow for more extended or catered attention to be provided to students.

During focus groups, dancers expressed their individual motivations for facilitating the programme, and highlighted personal connections to the programme content. Dancers vocalised a desire to not only create a space in which to learn about terminology and diversity, but for students to hear words that may relate to them in a neutral context. This is significant, and the opportunities for children to learn about, and alongside, dancers is a key strength of the programme that should be supported.

In conclusion, the Safe to Be Me ® programme provides a significant opportunity for children to affirm and develop comfort with their own and each other’s diversity. It has demonstrated the capacity to develop confidence with using key terms and accurate language to talk about difference and social inequalities. The programme also supports children to recognise unfairness, empathise with each other, and be motivated to act as allies. The programme meets these outcomes in inclusive, holistic, and creative ways. Moreover, dance facilitators in the programme are highly adept at navigating content with children, in ways that foster respectful dialogue, and opportunities to connect and share their ‘funds of knowledge’. It is therefore a rich programme worthy of further resourcing and support, with implications for other spheres and practices (e.g., Higher Education, and cross-sector Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives).

## Learning Points and Responses

Following completion of the study, a report of findings was provided to Scottish Ballet for review. Subsequently, a dialogue between researchers and Scottish Ballet reiterated some key learning points and responses. A summary of these is provided below.

As part of the Safe to Be Me ® programme, Scottish Ballet are now planning to work with teachers prior to the implementation of the programme in schools. This will involve implementation of a Professional Learning course to ensure that there is transparency of content, and to enable teachers to partake more fully before, during, and after the programme to reinforce key messages and new learning.

Approaches towards including families, community, and professionals in education and higher education contexts were also discussed (e.g., possibilities for working with pre-service teachers to develop knowledge and skills before entering practice). This echoes the recommendation for ensuring greater sustainability and buy-in from key adults in children's lives.

Reflection on the ways in which movements in dance can more clearly communicate key ideas and connect with meanings were also discussed. Implications and possibilities for future research could focus on further developing data collection methods that align with the activity-structure of the programme.

During the dialogue, ongoing challenges were also considered, including: the need to strike a balance between being structured or open-ended, being child-led and adult-driven, and being clear in teaching new content, whilst recognising the nuances and complexities of topics. It is anticipated that these conversations will be ongoing and feed into the upcoming revision of the programme.

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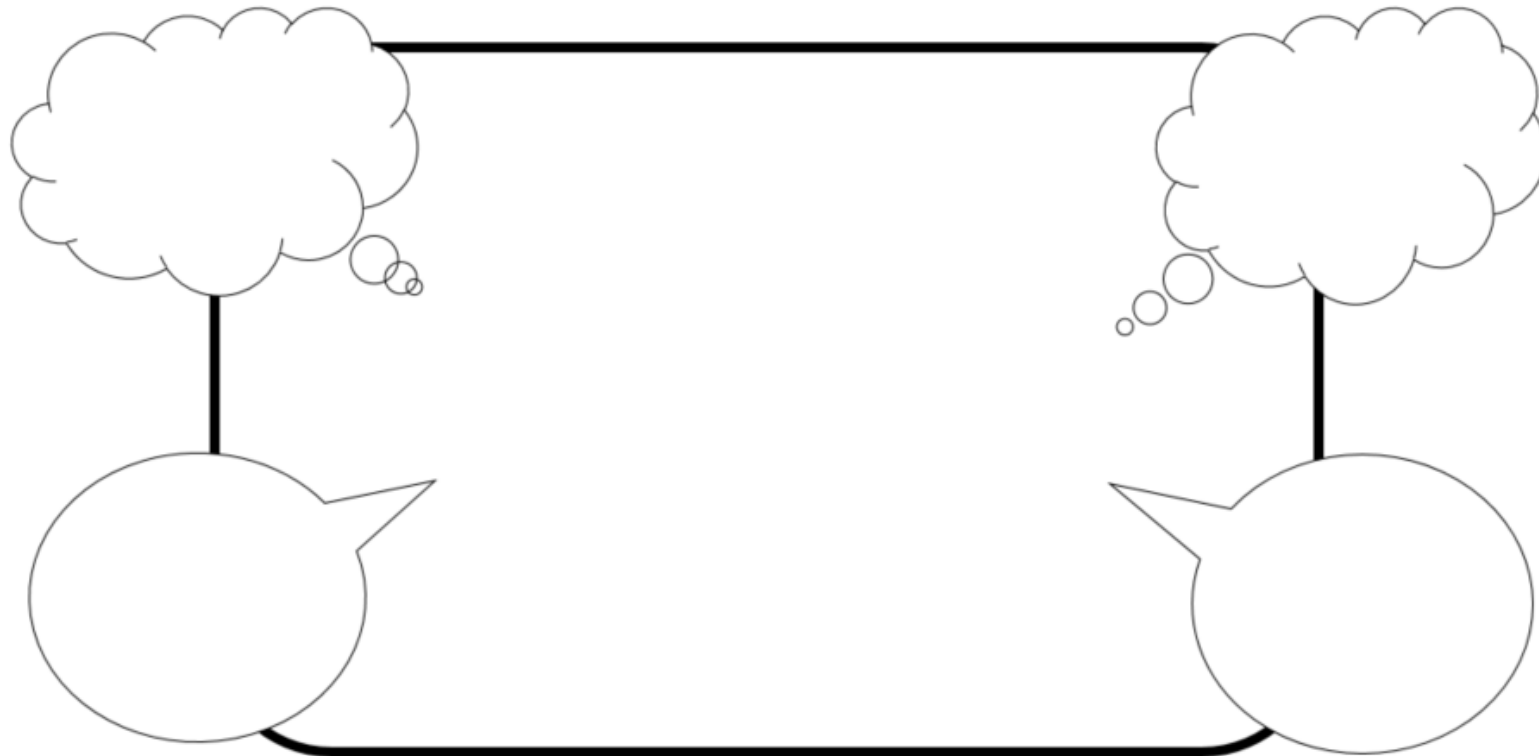


## Appendix 1 Pupil Views Templates

The four Pupil Views Templates (PVTs) used for this study are included below. The four templates correspond to the four anti-bias goals: identity, diversity, justice, and activism.

## I feel confident in myself

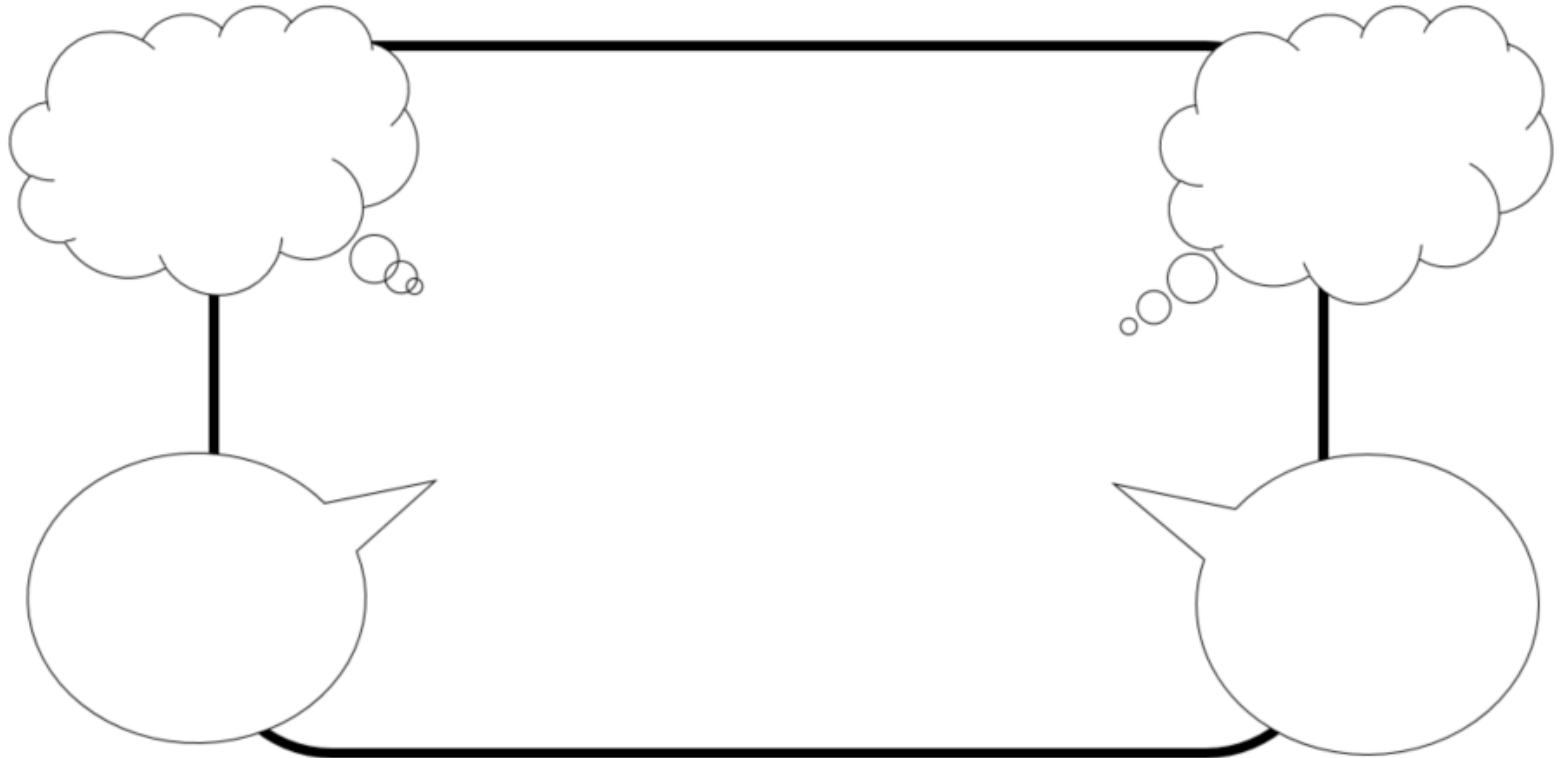
<b>My Name is:</b>	<b>What to do:</b> Add your own drawing to create an image titled 'I feel confident in myself' - use the thought and speech bubbles to show what the characters are saying and what they are thinking.
<b>My age is:</b>	



**I feel confident in myself**

**I feel comfortable with difference**

<b>My Name is:</b>	<b>What to do:</b> Add your own drawing to create an image titled 'I feel comfortable with difference' - use the thought and speech bubbles to show what the characters are saying and what they are thinking.
<b>My age is:</b>	

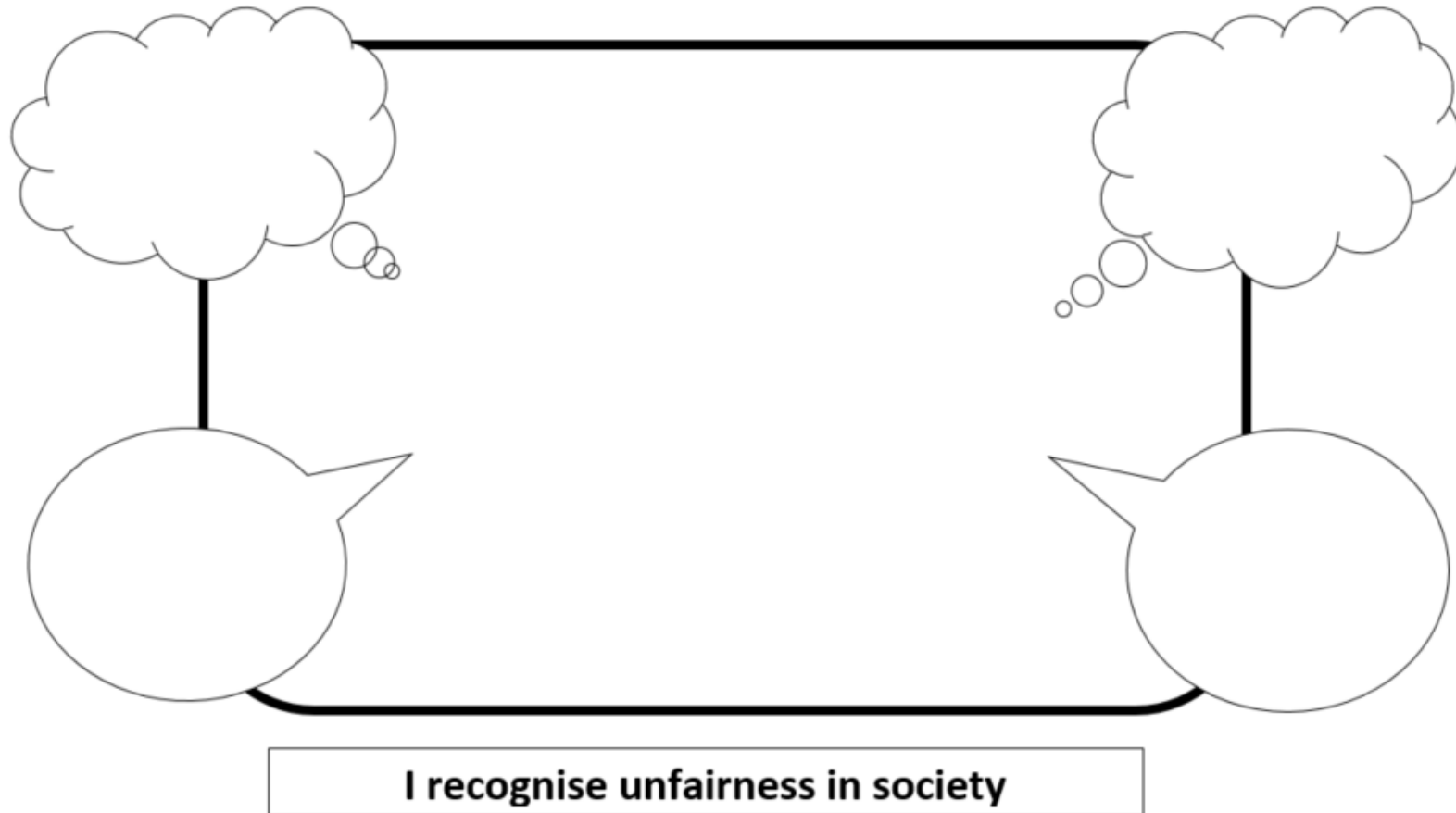


**I feel comfortable with difference**



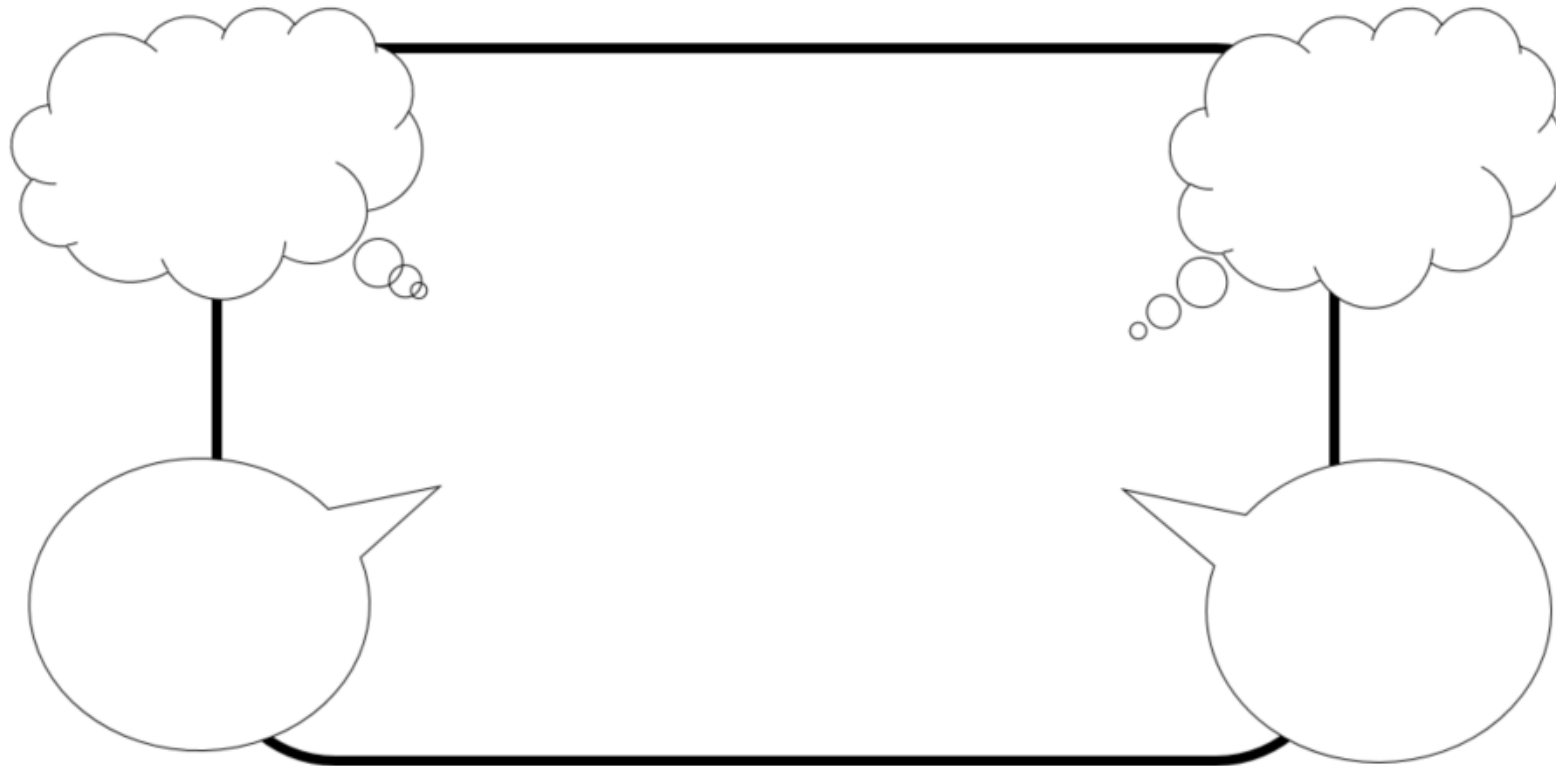
**I feel confident recognising unfairness in society**

<b>My Name is:</b>	<b>What to do:</b> Add your own drawing to create an image titled 'I recognise unfairness in society' - use the thought and speech bubbles to show what the characters are saying and what they are thinking.
<b>My age is:</b>	



**I feel confident standing up for myself or others when something is unfair**

<b>My Name is:</b>	<b>What to do:</b> Add your own drawing to create an image titled 'I feel confident standing up for myself or others when something unfair or hurtful happens' - use the thought and speech bubbles to show what the characters are saying and what they are thinking.
<b>My age is:</b>	



**I feel confident standing up for myself or others**

## Appendix 3 Short Evaluation

### Scottish Ballet Safe to Be Me <sup>®</sup>

My Name is:
My Age:

Think about what you have learned today. What will you tell your friends and family about?

Tell us how you feel by circling one emoji for each sentence below:

I feel more confident in myself

				
Not at all	Not really	Unsure	Yes, a little	Yes, definitely!

I feel more comfortable with difference

				
Not at all	Not really	Unsure	Yes, a little	Yes, definitely!

I feel more confident recognising unfairness in society

				
Not at all	Not really	Unsure	Yes, a little	Yes, definitely!

I feel more confident standing up for myself and others when something is unfair or hurtful

				
Not at all	Not really	Unsure	Yes, a little	Yes, definitely!

Use this space to draw or write anything else you would like to share about Safe to Be Me<sup>®</sup>!

## Appendix 4 School Profiles

School A, located in the South Lanarkshire council area, is a non-denominational school, with 236 pupils and 22.3 full-time teachers. According to the SIMD School A is located within the 30% most deprived areas in Scotland, and 40% of the Educational and Skills domain (SIMD, 2020). Of School A's pupils, 0-5% of pupils are minority ethnic, 30-35% of pupils are in the category of most deprived, and 60% of pupils are meeting the required standards of Listening and Talking, Numeracy, Reading and Writing (Scottish Government, 2023).

School B, located in the Edinburgh City council area, is a non-denominational school, with 156 pupils and 10.3 full-time teachers (Scottish Government, 2023). According to SIMD School B is located within the 50% most deprived areas in Scotland, and 60% of the Educational and Skills domain (SIMD, 2020). School B has no available information on the proportion of ethnic minority pupils, 0-5% of pupils are in the category of most deprived, and 77.5% of pupils are meeting the required standards of Listening and Talking, Numeracy, Reading and Writing (Scottish Government, 2023).

School C, located in the Edinburgh City council area, is a non-denominational school, with 457 pupils and 25.4 full-time teachers (Scottish Government, 2023). According to SIMD School C is located within the 30% most deprived areas in Scotland, and 30% of the Educational and Skills domain (SIMD, 2020). School C is listed as having no ethnic minority pupils, 0-5% of pupils are in the category of most deprived, and 67.5% of pupils are meeting the required standards of Listening and Talking, Numeracy, Reading and Writing (Scottish Government, 2023).

School D, located in the Glasgow City council area, is a non-denominational school, with 318 pupils and 22.5 full-time teachers (Scottish Government, 2023). According to SIMD School D is located within the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland, and 20% of the Educational and Skills domain (SIMD, 2020). Of School D's pupils 5-10% are of an ethnic minority, 85-90% of pupils are in the category of most deprived, and 75% of pupils are meeting required standards of Listening and Talking, Numeracy, Reading and Writing (Scottish Government, 2023).

School E, located in the West Dunbartonshire council area, is a non-denominational school, with 92 pupils and 8.4 full-time teachers (Scottish Government, 2023). According to SIMD School E is located within the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland, and 30% of the Educational and Skills domain (SIMD, 2020). No data is available as to the proportion of ethnic

minority proportion or specific deprivation of pupils, and 60% of pupils at School E are meeting required standards of Listening and Talking, Numeracy, Reading and Writing (Scottish Government, 2023).

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