DRAMA EXPRESSIONS for children



GLOW IN THE DARK

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2025



CONTENTS

About Us 3

Mission & Vision 4

Message of the Chair 5

Projects 6

Trustees' Report 9

Independent Examiner's Report 11

Notes to the Financial Statements 12

Statement of Financial Activities 13

Balance Sheet 14

ABOUT US

Some children learn early to make themselves smaller. To keep quiet. To stay out of the way. To believe that the things they carry — poverty, family difficulties, disability, trauma or simply the feeling of being different — are reasons their story matters less. At Drama Expressions, we see something else. We see the glow. We see the child who suddenly takes centre stage after weeks of watching from the edge. The girl who writes a character who is braver than she feels, then realises she can be brave too. The young person who arrives withdrawn and leaves laughing with a new friend.

We work with children and young women whose circumstances can make them feel invisible, creating spaces where they can play, create, perform, make things, take risks and discover that their ideas are worth hearing. Drama, dance, storytelling and creative expression become more than activities — they become a way of saying, "I am here. I have something to say. I can be seen."

For more than a decade, Drama Expressions for Children has been turning those small sparks into something brighter. Rooted in our community in Hackney and reaching children facing multiple disadvantages, we combine the joy of creativity with practical, emotional and relational support — from weekly drama and dance to therapeutic arts, leadership opportunities, holiday programmes, sewing and creative projects, food and safe spaces when families are struggling. We don't ask children to leave their realities at the door; we meet them where they are and help them imagine where they could go next. Sometimes transformation looks dramatic: a child finding the confidence to perform in front of an audience. Sometimes it is almost invisible — joining in for the first time, making a friend, choosing a costume, finishing a piece of work, or finally laughing freely in a room where they feel safe. Our job is to notice that light, protect it and give it room to grow. Because even in the darkest circumstances, a glow is enough to begin with — and when children are given the right space, support and belief, that glow can become a light they carry with them.

OUR MISSION

To help children and young women who are too often overlooked discover their voice, their confidence and their sense of possibility through the power of creativity. We create safe, joyful spaces where they can express what words cannot, build meaningful relationships, develop their talents and experience the simple but profound feeling of being seen, valued and believed in.





A world where no child's circumstances determine how brightly they can shine. We envision children and young women who know their stories matter, who have the confidence to take up space, and who can look beyond the limits placed around them to imagine — and create — a different future. We want every child to have the opportunity to find their glow, even in the darkest of places.

OUR VISION

MESSAGE OF THE CHAIR

What a momentous year this has been for Drama Expressions.

For many years, we have dreamed of having a space that could truly belong to our young people – somewhere they could create, perform, talk, experiment, be supported and, above all, be themselves. When the opportunity arose to apply to the Government's Better Youth Spaces investment, we poured years of hopes, ideas and ambition into our application. We dared to describe the space we had always wanted to create.

When we heard that our application had been successful, we were genuinely astounded.

That award has been a turning point for Drama Expressions – one of those rare, glowing moments when something you have imagined for so long suddenly becomes real.

And so, this year, we opened The Breakout Room.

Our existing space has been transformed into a vibrant, multi-use creative hub, including four private mentoring pods, a fully equipped music recording studio and a large open studio for dance, drama, leadership and creative workshops. Young people now have opportunities to record and produce music, explore sound and engineering, dance, perform, develop ideas, receive individual support and discover talents they may never have known they had.

Most importantly, it is theirs.

Our young people have embraced the new space with an enthusiasm that has surpassed even our expectations. We have been able to increase our capacity, offer more sessions and create many more opportunities for young people to come through our doors – whether they want to perform on a stage, record in the studio, dance, develop confidence, receive mentoring or simply find somewhere they feel comfortable enough to try something new.

This year's theme, Glow in the Dark, feels especially fitting.

Drama Expressions has always been about finding the light that can sometimes be difficult to see. Talent does not disappear because a young person lacks confidence. Potential does not disappear because life is difficult. Creativity does not disappear because somebody has not yet been given the opportunity to express it. Sometimes it simply needs the right space, encouragement and people who believe it is there.

And once again, our young people have completely outdone themselves.

Our Talent Express performance was a tremendous success, selling out more than 800 seats. Watching our young people step onto that stage with confidence, creativity and professionalism was an extraordinary reminder of why Drama Expressions exists. Behind every performance were hours of rehearsals, nerves overcome, friendships built, risks taken and young people discovering just how much they are capable of.

We could not be prouder of them.

None of this happens alone. To our staff, volunteers, families and everyone who gives their time and energy to Drama Expressions, thank you.

And to our generous donors and supporters: you are an essential part of this story.

Thank you for believing in Drama Expressions before every dream had become a reality. Thank you for believing in our young people, investing in their potential and enabling us to keep saying "yes" to ideas that once seemed beyond our reach.

This year has shown us just how much can happen when somebody is given the space and opportunity to shine.

There is still so much more we want to do, many more young people we want to reach and many more talents waiting to be discovered.

As we celebrate this remarkable year, we do so with enormous gratitude, pride and excitement for what comes next.

Because sometimes the brightest light is the one that learns to glow in the dark.

Sarah Friedman



DRAMA EXPRESS

Drama Express is where many of our youngest participants begin their journey with us — often with a mixture of excitement, uncertainty and a very clear reluctance to stand in the middle of the room. Through drama, games, storytelling, movement and performance, children discover that there is no single "right" way to express themselves. A child who once watched from the edge can gradually become the one volunteering to play the main character; the child who would only speak to a friend may find themselves projecting their voice across the room. Across the year, 46 took part, but the most important numbers are sometimes the ones we cannot put neatly into a spreadsheet: the first hand that shoots up, the first joke made without worrying what others think, the child who stays behind because they are not quite ready for the session to end.

"When I come here I can be a different person for a bit. Sometimes I make my character braver than me, and then I feel brave too."
— Sofia, 11



CONFIDENCE CODE

Confidence Code was built around a deceptively simple idea: confidence is not something some children are born with and others are missing. It can be practised, strengthened and experienced — one small success at a time. Through creative challenges, drama, performance, teamwork and leadership activities, young people were encouraged to step outside familiar roles and discover capabilities they had not recognised in themselves. 50 young people participated during the year, with over 80% showing increased confidence or self-belief. One young person might discover they can lead a warm-up; another might finally perform without hiding behind the group; another might realise that their opinion is listened to and valued. These moments accumulate. One of our wider participant surveys found that 85% reported a significant boost in self-confidence, reflecting the kind of change that Confidence Code is designed to create.



THREADS & SEAMS, WEAVING DREAMS

There is something powerful about taking a piece of fabric that might otherwise be thrown away and turning it into something completely new. Threads and Seams, Weaving Dreams brings together creativity, practical skills and self-expression through sewing and textile work. Participants learn to handle materials, experiment with colour and texture, develop designs and — crucially — see an idea through from a first sketch to something they can hold in their hands. For young people who may not always feel that they have control over what happens around them, there is enormous satisfaction in being able to say, "I made this." The impact can be wonderfully ordinary: concentrating carefully on a stitch, proudly showing a finished piece to a friend, or taking something home and knowing it exists because they imagined it first.

"I made something for my little sister and she actually wanted to wear it. That made me feel really proud!"
- Miriam, 8

FROM OUTCAST TO STAR OF CAST

Our transformative drama program designed for multiply challenged young women in London, including those referred during the current cost-of-living crisis. Running weekly, the program consists of drama therapy sessions that incorporate various performance types, culminating in a final public showcase where participants demonstrate their skills and personal growth. The initiative aims to boost confidence, foster self-expression, and build a supportive community, with the added element of a mobile clothing bank to address participants' physical needs alongside their emotional well-being.



"The best bit wasn't even the show. It was when everyone backstage was helping each other and nobody was on their own."
- Esther, 14



CAST-OFF CLOTHING

Cast-off Clothing takes something associated with being unwanted and turns it into a starting point for imagination. Through creative reuse, fashion, costume-making and textile activities, young people explore what can happen when they look at an old or unwanted garment and ask, "What else could this become?" There is a beautiful parallel at the heart of the project: clothing that has been discarded gets another chance, and young people who can sometimes feel overlooked are given the time, attention and encouragement to show what they can do. A jumper becomes a costume; scraps become decoration; an idea becomes something wearable. And sometimes a young person who arrived saying, "I can't do this," leaves carrying something they made themselves.

"Thank you Drama Expressions, for the cuddly coat and woolly boots that kept me warm all winter!"
- Mimi, 8

SUMMITQUEST

For many of the children we support, summer does not automatically mean holidays, trips away or carefree days with family. SummitQuest Summer Camp creates that sense of possibility: days filled with adventure, creativity, friendship, challenge and the simple joy of having somewhere exciting to go. During the programme, 220 girls took part in the 2 week summer camp, experiencing empowering opportunities. The memories are often found in tiny moments — laughing so hard during a team game that nobody wants to stop, choosing who to sit beside at lunch, proudly completing something they were nervous to try, or talking about the day's adventure all the way home. Our wider holiday provision has supported hundreds of children, with 260 children receiving holidays in 2023 and 320 in 2024, demonstrating just how important these opportunities have become.

"I didn't want camp to finish. I asked my mum if I could go again the next year."
- Lily, 9



New Project

THE BREAKOUT ROOM



"Before, we just came here for our sessions. Now it feels like we have somewhere that is actually ours. I can come in, go into the studio, make something, or just sit and talk. I didn't know I could do music before. Now I'm thinking about what else I could be good at."

— Leah, 15

A space of their own.

For years, we dreamed of giving our young people somewhere that was truly theirs — not simply a room they came into for a session, but a place where they could create, experiment, talk, perform, record, dance, make mistakes and try again.

This year, that dream became real. Following a successful award through the Government's Better Youth Spaces investment, we transformed our existing space into The Breakout Room, a vibrant creative hub designed around what young people actually need. It now includes four private mentoring pods, a fully equipped music recording studio and a large open studio for dance, drama, leadership and creative workshops.

The impact has been immediate: we have been able to increase our capacity, offer more sessions and open the door to opportunities that previously simply were not possible.

But the most exciting part of The Breakout Room is what happens inside it. A young person can walk through the door wanting to record a song and leave having discovered an interest in sound engineering. Someone who has always watched others perform can try the stage themselves. Another young person can sit in a mentoring pod and have a private conversation without feeling that the whole room is listening. And sometimes the achievement is much smaller: putting on headphones for the first time, pressing "record", dancing without worrying who is watching, or staying behind for ten extra minutes because they are enjoying themselves too much to leave.

The Breakout Room is more than a new facility. It is a message to our young people: your ideas deserve space, your creativity deserves investment, and there is a place here where you belong.

REPORT OF TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The main objectives of the charity is that of:
(a)The provision of facilities for recreation and leisure time occupation for chidren and young people who are in need of such provision becauseof their age, infirmity, poverty, or social and economic circumstances and with the object of improving their condition and quality of life.
(b)The promotion of any other exclusively charitable objects and purposes such as the trustees see fit, provided that they are regarded as charitable by the law of England and Wales.

Significant activities

The financial results of the Company's activities for the period ended 31 December 2023 are fully reflected in the attached financial statements together with the notes thereon. The trustees are satisfied with the results and activities of the company for the period and do not anticipate any significant changes in the forthcoming year.

Public benefit

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the aims and objectives and in planning the charity's future activities. The aims of the charity for the public benefit are detailed in the Objectives and Activities section of the report.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

The charity received donations that amounted to £241,970.75 and spent £312,290.65 on charitable activities. Restricted funds were spent on specific projects including Confidence Code, BEAT Club, Talent Express, and Run-About.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The trustees have agreed that the charity will maintain reserves equivalent to at least 3 months of core running costs. This level of reserves is intended to provide financial stability, ensuring that the charity can continue its essential operations in the event of unexpected funding shortfalls or unforeseen expenses. The reserves policy is reviewed annually to ensure it remains appropriate for the charity's needs and circumstances.

FUTURE PLANS

The charity plans to continue its activities subject to satisfactory incoming resources.

REPORT OF TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, its memorandum and articles of association, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

It is not currently the intention of the trustees of the charity to appoint new trustees. Should this situation change in the future, the trustees will apply suitable recruitment and training procedures.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF DRAMA EXPRESSIONS FOR CHILDREN

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2024,

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner
The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under the Charities Act 2023 (the 2023 Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- examine the accounts (under the 2022 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under the 2022 Act); and

- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:
(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
- to keep accounting records in accordance with the 2022 Act; and
- accounting or to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the 2022 Act have not been met;

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



De Claron Ltd.
3a The Vale
LONDON NW11 8SB:
19 September 2024

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified to include the revaluation of land and building with the exception of investments which are included at market value. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP),"Accounting and Reporting by Charities" published in Jan 2021.

Charity status

The charity is an unincorporated association. The members of the charity are the trustees named on page 2.

Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deed of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on a cash basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resoruces.

Management and administration costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Going Concern

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis as the trustees consider the charity will continue to operate for a period of at least twelve months from the date of the approval of these accounts.

NET INCOMING RESOURCES

During the year no trustees received any remuneration, benefits in kind or reimbursement of expenses.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025

	y/e 31.12.2025			y/e 31.12.2024		
	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total Funds	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total Funds
INCOMING RESOURCES						
Grants	7,638.00	174,246.00	181,884.00	74,149.00	154,131.72	228,280.72
Fundraising Campaign	5,104.12		5,104.12	18,748.41		18,748.41
Camp Fees		37,385.41	37,385.41		29,100.00	29,100.00
Gift Aid reclaimed		-	-		-	-
	12,742.12	211,631.41	224,373.53	92,897.41	183,231.72	276,129.13
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		224,373.53			276,129.13	
Charitable Programs						
Summitquest	326.19	144,887.29	145,213.48	50,812.65	94,927.23	145,739.88
Talent Express		15,993.19	15,993.19		14,193.23	14,193.23
Temper to Tempo		898.27	898.27	13,422.86		13,422.86
Threads & Seams		3,118.70	3,118.70	5,299.98		5,299.98
Activity Materials			-		7,908.03	7,908.03
Awards Scored			-		4,343.50	4,343.50
Catering Staff			-		8,580.00	8,580.00
Cleaning Costs		12,000.00	12,000.00		4,065.00	4,065.00
Confidence Code			-		11,270.78	11,270.78
Grocery & Bills			-		27,847.91	27,847.91
Staff Training			-		149.00	149.00
Transport & Trips	462.50	38,445.09	38,907.59		19,368.92	19,368.92
Volunteer's Cost		3,330.45	3,330.45		4,115.39	4,115.39
Staff Salaries			-	500.00	3,120.07	3,620.07
Governance and Administration						
Administration & Account		674.00	674.00		819.84	819.84
Advertising & Printing		2,673.13	2,673.13		115.00	115.00
Bank Charges & Interest		78.00	78.00		106.00	106.00
Insurance	521.78		521.78		-	-
Telephone		487.83	487.83		74.64	74.64
	1,310.47	222,585.95	223,896.42	70,035.49	201,004.54	271,040.03
TOTAL OUTGOING		223,896.42			271,040.03	
NET MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR		477.11			5,089.10	
FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		16,440.35			11,351.25	
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		16,917.46			16,440.35	

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	y/e 31.12.2025			y/e 31.12.2024		
		£	£		£	£
CURRENT ASSETS						
TRADE DEBTORS					-	
CASH IN HAND & BANK		70,917.46			16,440.35	
HSBC 91396544	55,377.46			900.35		
CASH in HAND	15,540.00			6,540.00		
			70,917.46			16,440.35
CURRENT LIABILITIES						
LOAN CREDITORS		54,000.00			-	
NET ASSETS			16,917.46			16,440.35
FUND ACCOUNT			16,917.46			16,440.35