



Alisha's story*

*Names of the young person and the Creative Mentor have been changed to protect the young person's identity.



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Polly*, Creative Mentor

background to Alisha's referral

Alisha was nine years old at the time of referral. She was matched with a Creative Mentor as she approached the upper years of primary school, facing the scary transition between primary and secondary.

Alisha is a selective mute who talks to her close group of peers but is quite reluctant to talk to other adults in school. Alisha had been receiving lots of support within school to help her access her education, which included 1:1 support for English and Maths alongside Covid Catch Up sessions. Prior to her creative mentoring referral, Alisha's attitude to learning and motivation had dipped; she had been showing a lack of engagement and enthusiasm for learning, particularly in 1:1 sessions.

who was Alisha matched with?

It was identified that Alisha loved to draw and often used drawing as a vehicle for expression and communication, especially when she wasn't confident with a particular person. Because of this interest, Alisha was matched with Polly, a Creative Mentor with a visual arts background.

at a glance

- Alisha was nine years old at the time of referral and was facing a **scary transition** from primary school to secondary school
- As a selective mute, Alisha would talk to her close group of peers but was **reluctant to talk** to other adults in school
- Due to Alisha's love of drawing, often using this as a **vehicle for expression and communication**, she was matched with a Creative Mentor specialising in visual arts
- She started the sessions ensuring neatness and cleanliness, but soon Alisha was exploring paint with her hands and **enjoying getting messy!**

Our vision is to inspire children and young people to harness the power of arts, creativity and culture for positive change.



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what happened next?

Polly and Alisha have spent 22 hours together, distributed as weekly 2-hour sessions across a half-term. Together, they have explored many different types of tactile and sculptural work to give Alisha other media to express herself through.

To begin with, they started making and painting models, making objects out of clay, and creating a Halloween installation. By their second session, Alisha had already grown comfortable enough with Polly that she was able to direct Polly and guide the session. She would do this by using gestures, facial expressions, and using the creative medium to communicate. Polly, through our person-centred ethos, would remain adaptable and flexible to Alisha's needs - something which Alisha responded incredibly well to.

what positive changes did Alisha show throughout the creative mentoring process?

Alisha started the creative mentoring process very much conforming, ensuring neatness and cleanliness. As the sessions progressed, she began to explore painting with her hands. She used her fingers to paint and seemed to really enjoy the sensation of having fun, playing, and getting messy!

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what impact has creative mentoring had on Alisha?

Alisha started to come to the sessions with a very clear idea of what she wanted to do and what she didn't want to do. She became more confident at communicating, asserting her choices, and now communicates exceptionally well non-verbally.

At the start of their time together, using the 8 Measures of Progress tool, Alisha has made the most progress in the following areas: Participation and Engagement, Relationship Building, Confidence, Communication, Motivation and Self-belief. She has made some progress in all of these areas (at least a 1 point difference on a scale of 1-5). For example, Participation and Engagement has increased from 3/5 to 4/5; Relationship Building from 2/5 to 3/5; Confidence 2/5 to 3/5; Communication 2/5 to 3/5; Motivation 3/5 to 4/5; and Self-Belief 2/5 to 3/5.



what's next?

Alisha's school have requested for the creative mentoring intervention to continue. Alisha, Polly, and the school hope to see Alisha continue to grow in confidence and make progress across all areas.