

Confidance Evaluation Report, October 2021



ConfiCo performing in front of Rana Begum's artwork in Folkestone, 2021

About Confidance

Confidance is an inclusive dance not-for-profit organisation based in East Kent that works with people with learning disabilities. Confidance works in schools, in communities, and with a professional dance company called ConfiCo.

In 2020-2021, Confidance ran a project called *Connect* at two different schools: Whitfield Aspen School in Dover, and Wyvern School in Ashford.

About this evaluation report

This evaluation report was written by an external evaluator, Mary Paterson. 'Evaluation' means finding out about how something works. Being an 'external evaluator' means Mary does not normally work for Confidance or either of the schools involved in *Connect*.

Confidance asked Mary to evaluate *Connect* by visiting the schools and talking to some of the people involved. Although *Connect* is only one of Confidance's projects, it is similar to other projects that Confidance runs. Some of this evaluation is only about *Connect*, and some is about all of the work that Confidance does.

This evaluation report was funded by Royal Opera House Bridge Trust.

Evaluation aims

Before starting work, Mary and Confidance agreed on some aims for this evaluation. These aims were:

1. To understand how Confidance works
2. To understand the best way to evaluate Confidance's work
3. To tell other people about Confidance
4. To make some practical tools (e.g. surveys) that Confidance can use to evaluate their work in the future, without having to ask an external evaluator to do it.



ConfidCo performing at Wyvern School, 2021

Evaluation methods

Mary evaluated *Connect* and Confidance by visiting Whitfield Aspen School and Wyvern School to see what happened when Confidance was there. She spoke to some of the school students who took part in *Connect*, and to some of the teachers at each school. Mary also spoke to two members of ConfiCo who used to be students at Wyvern School.

Mary looked at videos and photos that Confidance made for *Connect*.

Finally, Mary spoke to someone from Creative Folkestone, the organisation that runs arts projects in Folkestone. Some of Creative Folkestone's artworks were the inspiration for *Connect*.

Evaluation findings

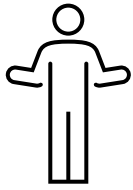


Confidance and Whitfield Aspen School, 2021

This evaluation found that *Connect* was a successful project that had a positive impact on everyone who took part.

Confidance brought a creative idea to each school and worked closely with them to plan a project that was right for their students.

As an example of how Confidance works, *Connect* shows us that Confidance works in a **person-centred** way. Confidance's work is **engaging**, **accessible** and **inclusive**. (These terms are explained on the next page.)



Person-centred

Being 'person-centred' means thinking that people are more important than systems. A person-centred approach to a project means caring for every person who is involved, thinking about what they need, and how to help them.



Engaging

If something is 'engaging' it is interesting and enjoyable to do.



Accessible

If something is 'accessible' it can be accessed – either physically, emotionally, or intellectually – by everyone.



Inclusive

If something is 'inclusive' it is open to everyone and adapts to their needs.



Connect at Whitfield Aspen School, 2021

Connect took place during the Covid-19 pandemic and plans had to be changed a lot in line with public health restrictions.

But, by working closely with each school, *Connect* was able to go ahead. In fact, it was particularly important at a time when there not many other things for students to do.

What is Confidance's impact?

Confidance has an impact on people who take part (e.g. students), schools (e.g. teachers) and other arts organisations.

People who take part

- Increasing self-esteem
- Increasing confidence
- Developing relationships and social skills
- Qualifications (e.g. Arts Awards)
- Reaching Individual Learning Targets
- Developing a hobby/ interest
- Work experience/ paid work

Schools

- A sense of community
- Increasing staff wellbeing
- Professional standards (e.g. Arts Mark)
- Teacher's professional development
- Connections with arts organisations

Arts Organisations

- Developing new audiences

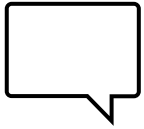
Why does Confidance work?



Installation at Whitfield Aspen School, created by a class as part of Connect

Confidance works because it creates good relationships with people. This means that it can adapt to what people need and have a positive impact on everyone, including students, teachers and the whole school community.

Confidance also works because it brings creative ideas into a school environment. It broadens people's horizons and inspires them to do something new.



Quotes from people who took part in Connect

‘When it [the dancing] starts, I feel like I can just go with the flow. No matter however many times you fall. The most important thing is to have fun.’

‘I can be compassionate with the dancing.’

‘If somebody else is nervous [about joining in with Confidance] then I can tell them – oh, I was nervous once. But I’m not anymore.’



Quotes from teachers at Whitfield Aspen School and Wyvern School

‘When we’ve had sessions, we’ve developed it together. They’ve put their expertise forward, we’ve put the knowledge of the children, and together it has worked really well.’

‘What I enjoyed was watching [Confidance] understand what engagement looks like for our children.’

‘It’s not inclusion for inclusion’s sake; it is really meaningful.’