

**WHAT
IT'S LIKE
TO BE
ME**

NHS

Derbyshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Includes
winning
entries

**2024
CHILDREN
AND
YOUNG
PEOPLE'S
WRITING
COMPETITION**



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Foreword

Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust launched a children and young people's writing competition on the theme of 'What it's like to me' earlier this summer to provide an opportunity for children and young people in Derbyshire to share their experiences with others. The competition's intention was to celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion by giving entrants the opportunity to write about themselves and to share their experiences with others.

Successful local author Freya Wolfe (pictured) was on the judging panel. Freya was joined on the judging panel by Marie Hickman, Trust Library and Knowledge Manager and Staff Governor; and Emma Hickman, Primary School Teacher.



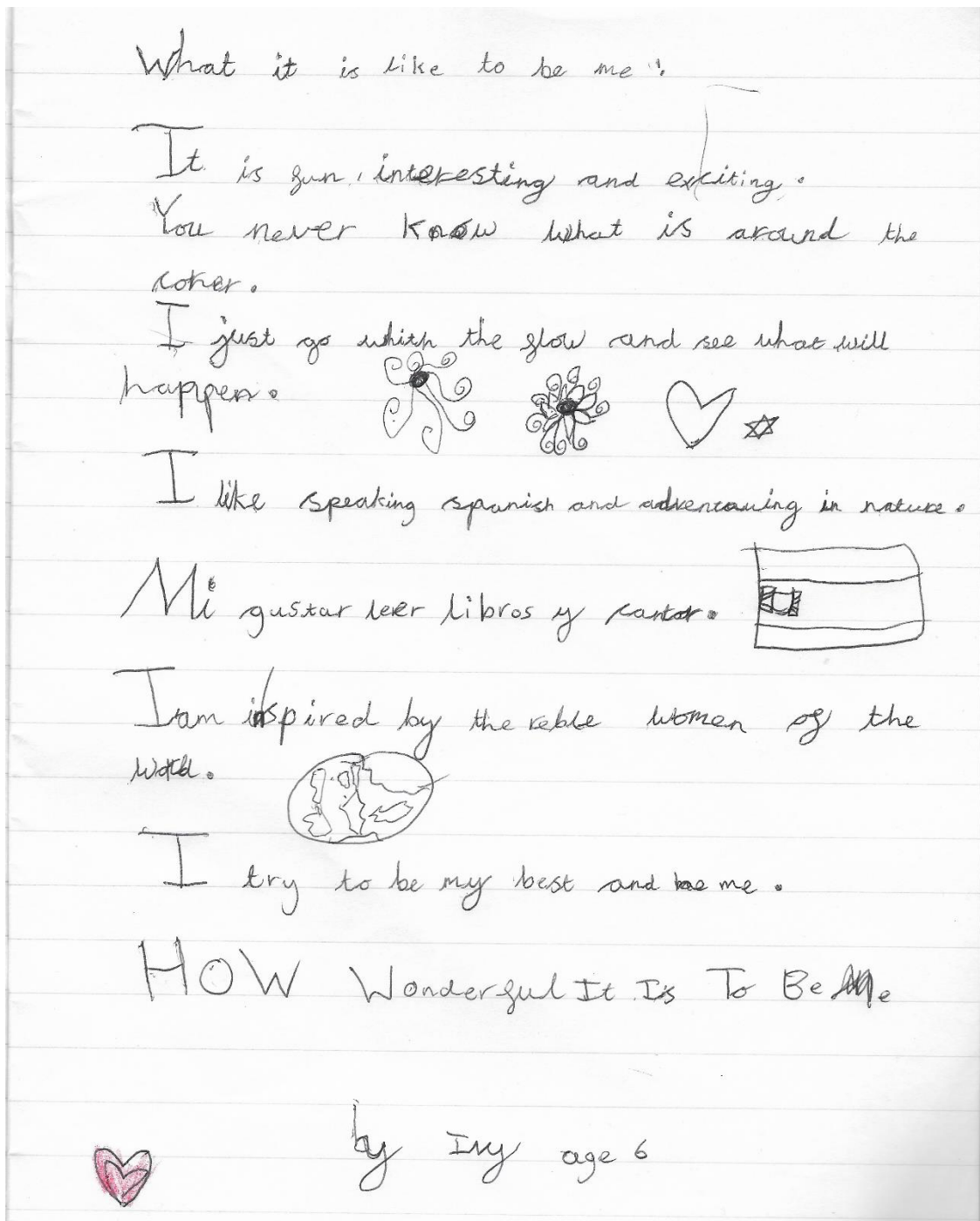
Freya said: "It was a real gift for me to be able to read work by these talented young people. In all of the age categories, they wrote meaningfully about their lives and what makes them so wonderful and unique. I was truly fascinated by the insights that these young people gave in terms of what it means to be neuro-diverse, or to be dealing with mental health issues; it's such a courageous and inspiring thing to talk about and they all did it in such a meaningful way. As someone who loves creative writing and words, I was also impressed by the quality of their writing, not just communicating heartfelt messages but also doing so in an imaginative form, using poetry and prose to reflect their experiences. Overall, what stood out to me was the joy that most of these young people felt for themselves and their individualism; the message that it's wonderful to be yourself is so important for all of us, children and adults alike."

This booklet contains the winners and highly commended in each age category. We have reproduced their original entries.

Thank you to everyone who entered the competition, your writing is amazing.

Age Group 5 to 7

Winner: Ivy Irungu Slack, age 6



Judges' comments:

"We liked the presentation of this entry with the doodles and Spanish line. It was cute and we like the way it was structured with each line beginning with 'I' except for the last line which is really lovely – 'HOW Wonderful It Is To Be Me' which emphasises how great it is to be her. The use of capital letters was clever and advanced for her age. We got a real sense of who Ivy is reading her poem, which is so positive."

Highly Commended: Phoebe Watkins, age 7

Saturday

I wake up it's Saturday
it's cheerleading fun and play today.
I eat my porridge "yum yum"
It's time to have some fun.

Handstands, walkovers, cartwheels too
So many things what I can do.
I'll do stunts, I'll do flips
Me and my team will do all the tricks!

After cheer it's art time
it's a drawing, painting, sticky surprise.
Now it's time to play with my friends
Skipping, dancing the fun never ends.

Now I sit in my cosy couch
I read my book out loud.
I can feel the pages deep into my skin
As I get lost in the stories I am in.

So, this is me not you
I'm Unique that is true!

by Phoebe Watkins
Age 7

Judges' comments:

"We loved to visualise all the fun things that Phoebe gets up to on a Saturday. She describes them really well. The rhyming in this poem is lovely and we particularly liked the line 'I can feel the pages deep into my skin'. It is a personal poem and meets the brief of describing "what it is like to be me" really well. She definitely takes us with her."

Age Group 8 to 10

Winner: Francesca Bowers, age 9

Little old me

I talk my own talk,

I walk my own walk,

You could never be,

As crazy, weird, fantastic,

as little old me,

If you are my friend,

Then you'll need to know,

If you want me to change,

Then you'll need to go,

You could search all the land,

To the tallest tree,

I'm strange, fun, wonderful,

I'm little old me,

In my heart koalas climb

and love rules the land,

Everyone chips in and gives

a helping hand,

You could search the highest mountains,

To the bottom of the sea,

You could never be as unique,

As little old me.

Judges' comments:

"We really smiled when we read Francesca's poem. It is such a positive poem about what it is like to be Francesca. It is such a personal account, with a positive outlook. The rhyming is lovely and the imagery is amazing. We particularly liked the lines 'In my heart koalas climb and love rules the land' and 'You could search the highest mountains, To the bottom of the sea'. There is a sense of defiance in the poet and confidence in being herself with the choice of words she uses to describe herself, for example, wonderful, fun, weird and unique."

Highly Commended: Rebekah Ager, age 9

'WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE ME'

Autistic Spectrum Disorder - ASD

Usually you can't see it

Things frustrate me more than they should

I get overwhelmed easily - mostly by noise

Sensory overload - if there are too many colours or

Too many people or too many flavours

I can think better with ear defenders on

Crying is how I show my feelings

Sensory time helps me a lot

Perhaps being in a room with relaxing lights

Especially with nice things to feel or touch

Concentrating is difficult for me, I get distracted

Time on my own is very important to me

Readng takes my mind off things

Understanding me - some can, some can't

My friends are important to me

Judges' comments:

"We really liked the use of acrostic that Rebekah has used, and it flows really well. We loved "too many colours, too many people or too many flavours". Her personal description of herself really fits the remit of the competition very well. Her poem helps people to understand more about ASD. The poem shows a real understanding of what helps and what support she has at that age, knowing that some people will understand and some will not."

By Rebekah, age 9

Age Group 11 to 13

Winner: Stanley Yapp, Age 12

'What it's like to be me'

Football Freedom

By Stanley Yapp

aged 12

Amongst a field of emerald, under a pallid sky,
The seconds and minutes pass rapidly by,
The wind speaking softly,
The globe beneath my studs,
And over my mind a wave of contentment floods...

An orb of joy encased by enveloping seams,
A sport I love embraced by aspiration and dreams,
A vessel of hope,
A vessel of unity,
Bringing together a stronger community...

Elated and calm, never a fear in sight,
Free from society and all of it's blight,
On this field of dreams, oh how I feel free,
No phone, no pressure, just able to be me!

Judges' comments:

"We really liked that Stanley's poem describes his love of football and how it makes him feel. We got a real sense that Stanley really enjoys playing football and that it enables him to be himself without any pressure. It is definitely his happy place where he feels most like himself. In terms of a piece of creative writing is it wonderful. Stanley has created a picture using rich vocabulary."

Dyslexic

The word dyslexic feels nice in my mouth.
It makes me good at drums.
I get to speak to an iPad.
I love that I get help.
I can see shapes and patterns upside down.
It means I'm good at some things that other people find hard.
My brain works differently.

I am Delilah.
I am determined.
I am different.
I am dramatic.
I am a drummer.
I am dyslexic.
I am delighted to be me!



Delilah Burns

Judges' Comments:

"We like how Delilah describes being dyslexic does not get in her way of doing things. She clearly recognises the positive aspects of being dyslexic. It is all about what she can do and the support she is getting in a positive way. She recognises that she can do things that others may find hard. The use of the different words beginning with D is clever and makes it a joy to read, especially ending with 'delighted'."

Age Group 14 to 18

Winner: Zofie Selucka, age 15

A stained canvas

What is being myself? Why is it so hard to love someone who I've spent every minute of my life with? Is it because of every embarrassing, desperate moment that has happened stains like blood on a white carpet? The liquid thick, dark and choking despite being the very thing that keeps my mind reeling and hands shaking. It could be that, I've come to conclude.

The fear of the inside being out, that some generous - and yet naive - caring hands might be painted in the same cruel picture that emerges, from some deep part inside of me that I hold against my chest. I hold it so tight that it still seeps between my fingers, slips out and onto the waiting hands and paints a far smaller peice than the red paint could.

Maybe the carpet can be replaced. Maybe we can find a bigger canvas. Maybe one day all the paint will be gone and no stains reside and make their home on the softness. Maybe there will be a day where I can take the caring hands and not paint or stain them the same shade of red that escapes from my own fist.

Or maybe the caring hand will be gone by then.

Gone, promised cleaner, less staining hands.

Judges' comments:

"We really found Zofie's piece of creative writing incredible. It is a really personal piece describing what is on her mind. We saw despair and hope in this piece by Zofie which leads to a more positive ending. We spent a lot of time thinking about what this piece means. We really liked the title and thought of a blank canvas that is then stained which can't be removed. It is full of emotion with very dark imagery, although we also saw optimism in this piece."

Locked Away

One knows what happens here,
For if they did, they would run in fear,
Would they sneer in disgust?
Would they turn a cold shoulder and leave me to rust?
Would they leave me alone with not a friend in the world?
You would,
And I would too, I can't run,
Can't enjoy the fun.

The head and the heart, they coincide,
One, however, will always be a landslide,
I break free from my little room,
Told to hush, sent to my doom,
No one knows what happens here,
For if they did, they would run in fear.

Confused and distressed and without thought,
I hide in my room with nothing to bloom,
But sadness, anger and all out depression,
No way to leave, to join the procession,
No one knows what happens here, for if they did, they would run in fear.

Priya Munnien (14)

Judges' comments:

"We liked the clear metaphors that Priya uses. They work well to describe how she feels. She has taken time with the rhyming scheme, and this is really effective. It is a personal poem and definitely left the judges understanding what is felt like to be her."



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