



OUR IMPACT

2024



“We are fighting for a fair future for disabled kids. We want to dismantle barriers to inclusion.”

Flamingo Chicks' Agents of Change

WELCOME

Now in our 11th year, Flamingo Chicks is more magical than ever, bringing joy, wellbeing, and change to disabled children and their families.

What a year it's been! From breaking down barriers in iconic spaces to magical performances, 2024 has been bursting with colour, movement, and inclusion - all thanks to your incredible support.

- ★ We took over 10 Downing Street, Heathrow Airport, the Science Museum, and the Eden Project, advocating for inclusion in the UK's most iconic spaces.
- ★ **12,455** children joined our inclusive dance sessions, bringing our total to 47,778 Flamingo Chicks!
- ★ Nearly **10,000** children took part in our 2024 on-demand virtual class, featuring Paralympian and Olympic cameos.
- ★ **88%** of Flamingo Chicks felt pride as performers, and 81% reported improved physical wellbeing.
- ★ We launched **Sparkle Squads**, adding extra costumes, giant props, and new sensory experiences to classes.
- ★ **78%** of health, education and socialcare professionals felt they had learnt new techniques from us, with **95%** going on to implement them in their own practice.

Volunteers are the heartbeat of Flamingo Chicks. We champion first-time, disabled, older, and socially isolated volunteers, unlocking incredible talent that strengthens our charity. An example of this is our network of care homes which crafts props and costumes for us, helping us use more eco-friendly and repurposed materials. 78% of volunteers said working with us reshaped their view of what disabled children can achieve - proof that volunteering drives real social change!

Our Agents of Change youth council continues to break barriers. This year, 40 young changemakers interviewed 12 VIP guests from TV to climate change, conducted accessibility audits, and hosted celebrity guests - ensuring disabled voices are heard in key conversations. They are the future of inclusion, and we can't wait to see what they do next!

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

Katherine Sparkes MBE, Founder & CEO and Claire Bridges, Chair of Trustees



Claire Bridges



Katherine Sparkes MBE

FLAMINGO CHICKS BY NUMBERS



OUR REACH

In 11 years, we've gone from 15 children to

47,778!

In 2024: 198 workshops and regular classes up by 28%. We saw 12,455 (up by 7%) children in our sessions through:

- ★ 676 regular classes
- ★ 198 workshops
- ★ 85 regular adult classes
- ★ 19 stage shows

Overall, regular classes up by **44%**

CHAMPIONING INCLUSION

- ★ 39% boys
- ★ 20% non-disabled children
- ★ 24 dance teachers, specialising in inclusive techniques

£225,780 income



x37

Agents of Change youth advocates

13 Awards

8 Global Chicks outreach projects

HARNESSING THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY

9906

children took part in this year's virtual class

EXCEPTIONAL VOLUNTEERING

Over 4572 hours of volunteer time donated, the equivalent of £90,891 based on UK average wage!



1266 Intergenerational volunteers

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY

2024 kicks off at Number 10 **Downing Street** with an 'advocacy hijack'. Here our Agents of Change showcased our techniques and trained up Civil Servants on inclusive communication.



FEBRUARY

Diving into a world of circuits, gears and tech wonders, we celebrated our new theme with **Robot Parades!**



MARCH

A return visit to Number 10 for **International Women's Day** with Hatching Chicks!

Hatching Chicks Spring Show dancing to 'Pure Imagination' from Wonka.

West Blatchington Flamingo Chicks dazzle at **Brighton Dome!**



APRIL

Agents Of Change celebrate being finalists at **The Learning Disability and Autism Leaders' List** awards held at the O2.



4 new **'Performance Deconstructed'** stage shows - a riot of colour in our sensory wonderland!



The Tutu Takeover! We launch our advocacy campaign 'It Takes Two To Tutu' highlighting the need for inclusion. 15 celebrities designed magical tutus to support and raise awareness, and each one was hand-crafted by our volunteers!

MAY

Our annual **everyone active** campaign raises £33,500 and gets 1066 people active.



The **tutus go on tour** to John Lewis, Crafter's Companion and on stage at UK theatres!



We launch the **'24 hour dance relay'** to mark our 10th birthday. 24 differently themed events, dancing through an entire night and day! Hundreds joined us from babies to care homes!



JUNE

We release a new virtual class and almost **10,000 children** take part! Paralympics / Olympic themed, it featured real athlete cameos and some visited our classes too!



JULY

Gardening and crafts - summer makeovers for our children's hospice settings plus making props and backdrops with our corporate and care home partners.



SEPTEMBER

Sparkle Squads take the magic up a notch in our sessions, with targeted visits featuring new props, costumes and wows!



On tour at the Science Museum - Flamingo Chicks takeover the iconic **Winton Gallery** at the Science Museum, London.

Team Development Day, full of learning, planning and dreaming!



OCTOBER

Last parent/carer event of the year, a **Dads' Dinner** which sold out in minutes!



NOVEMBER

PROPS joins the Flamingo Dance family as our newest adult, regular class.

DECEMBER

Heathrow Airport takeover! Showcasing inclusive dance and upskilling staff in travel Makaton.



JAN-DEC 12 VIPs

Agents of Change take on 12 VIP's from a range of sectors from Youth Parliament to TV production, adventurers and mental health.





OUR MISSION: WHY WE'RE HERE

“Opportunities to get moving are sparse. Flamingo Chicks’ unique blend of colourful props and kit and adapted movement gets everyone feeling good and ensures our wide range of abilities can all take part in a really supportive, joyful environment.”

Stephanie Hodgson,
Manager at Silva Care

Flamingo Chicks combats inactivity and isolation among the 1.8m disabled children (8% of the child population) and their families. We support disabled children to realise their full potential.



Tackling inactivity

7 out of 10 disabled people want to be more active [Activity Alliance]
23% of children with learning disabilities are obese [NICE]



Combatting isolation

180 disability hate crimes are reported every day in the UK [Disability Matters]
4 in 10 parents of disabled children say their child rarely or never has the opportunity to play with non-disabled children [Mumsnet]
72% of disabled children feel lonely versus 36% of non disabled children [Activity Alliance]
15% of disabled children feel lonely every day [FC own research 2024]



Supporting parental health

83% of parents and **100% of dads** of disabled children felt socially isolated before joining Flamingo Chicks [FC research]
Only 4% had sufficient support to care for their disabled child safely [Disabled Children's Partnership]
87% of parents of children aged 0-5 have felt judged by members of the public when they go out with their disabled child [Scope]
76% of parents experience mental ill health some or a lot of the time [Gympanzees]

“Flamingo Chicks helps my stiff muscles loosen and helps me to relax. I get to dance even though I am in a wheelchair.”

Delliah, Flamingo Chick



OUR MISSION: WHAT WE DO

At Flamingo Chicks, we're breaking down barriers to inclusion and fighting for a fairer future for disabled children and their families. We do this through five core pillars: inclusive dance classes, parent/carer support, intergenerational volunteering, global outreach and youth-led advocacy.

"Flamingo Chicks proves that dance is not only a progressive physical activity but a truly therapeutic route to development and all round wellbeing for some of our most complex young people. The impact can be felt beyond the sessions with improvement in confidence and resilience. Flamingo Chicks offers invaluable support with tangible outcomes. Gold dust."

Kris Tavender, Community Engagement Lead, Bristol Bears

PILLAR ONE

Inclusive dance classes & workshops

Through our three dance interventions: Flamingo Chicks (for children), Flamingo Dance (for adults) and Hatching Chicks (aimed at disabled mums and mums of disabled babies), we provide inclusive physical activity that caters for ALL. Our classes are unique: founded in core dance principles with communication aids such as Makaton signing, as well as adapted movements and multisensory elements, our classes support both the physical and emotional health of participants.

PILLAR TWO

Parent/carer peer support network

Offering a lifeline for parents and carers, we provide opportunities to connect and tools to help equip families.

- Bitesize online workshops on key topics
- Wellbeing activities: guided relaxation sessions, available on-demand
- Free access to NHS-recommended 'Companion App'
- Social events
- Makaton training



87% of parents feel less socially isolated after joining the Flamingo Chicks community

76% were more able to cope with the demands of caring for a disabled child

PILLAR THREE

Exceptional intergenerational volunteering

We exemplify the highest standards in volunteering, as evidenced by our Queen's Award for Voluntary Service – the MBE for charities! Volunteers are the heartbeat of Flamingo Chicks. We pioneer opportunities that welcome and encourage first time, disabled and socially isolated older volunteers. We know there is such huge talent and potential in these groups which make our charity stronger. We offer training and opportunities including Makaton and public speaking.

1266 intergenerational volunteers during 2024

25% are disabled volunteers

78% said Flamingo Chicks has made them re-evaluate what disabled children are capable of

56% had improved confidence and 81% felt more connected to the community

30% of volunteers learnt Makaton with Flamingo Chicks

37% have volunteered for us for over 5 years!

100% would recommend volunteering at Flamingo Chicks

[Flamingo Chicks' 2024 Volunteer Survey]

"I like volunteering at Flamingo Chicks because I like to help out and join in with the dancing. It's good to get out of my house and make new friends. Some of them have Down's Syndrome like me. I feel like I'm part of a team. It makes me happy."

Jack, Volunteer



"I feel a sense of purpose and belonging volunteering at Flamingo Chicks. The sessions are so joyful that I smile throughout and leave with a spring in my step. I enjoy making a contribution to the wider community and feel valued."

Terry, Volunteer



PILLAR FOUR Global outreach

Global Chicks is an outreach project sharing tips, best practice and upskilling organisations that work with disabled children across the world.

There are between 93 and 150 million disabled children worldwide (Their World, 2021). Many of these children live on the margins of society, excluded from school and living in poverty. They are also often overlooked by policies, plans and targeted support programmes.

From Ghana to Vietnam and Singapore to refugee camps in Greece, our outreach teams have delivered Flamingo Chicks' workshops to hundreds of children worldwide and supported local organisations to develop their own activities and grow!

“How did you come up with such a wonderful dance? I have never seen anything like it! Such colour, pomp and great moves! Thank you very much - you have left us highly inspired. You are great instructors! We will continue practising your wonderful dance.”

Lucy - Safe Centre for Children With Special Needs, Nakuru, Kenya, following an outreach session led by Flamingo Chicks' Volunteers.



Cape Coast school for deaf and blind children, Ghana

PILLAR FIVE Advocacy

Leading our movement to champion inclusion and disabled children's rights are the very people Flamingo Chicks exists to serve - disabled young people. We call them our Agents of Change. They work towards dismantling barriers to inclusion so that schools, health facilities, public transport bodies and others encourage disabled children to participate alongside their peers. Our Agents of Change meet regularly for workshops underpinned by the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. They already have an impressive speaking record, including the UN HQ in New York and the House of Commons, and have advised power-houses like the Science Museum in London.

“When I'm older I want to work in law to help advocate for disabled people's rights.”

Alisha

“We believe that inclusion and understanding of people with disabilities is essential to a fair and flourishing society.”

Sameer

“We are trying to get the young generation to build this earth as disabled friendly.”

Asha

Good Morning Britain TV Studios



The United Nations, New York

37

Agents of Change
youth advocates



12

VIP guests
during 2024



“Being an Agent of Change has made me so much more confident! I've met amazing people and gone to places I never dreamed of - like Downing Street! It's really exciting that important people listen to us, and I'm proud to help other young people and make real change.”

Kian, Agent Of Change





THEORY OF CHANGE

The barriers we're breaking down

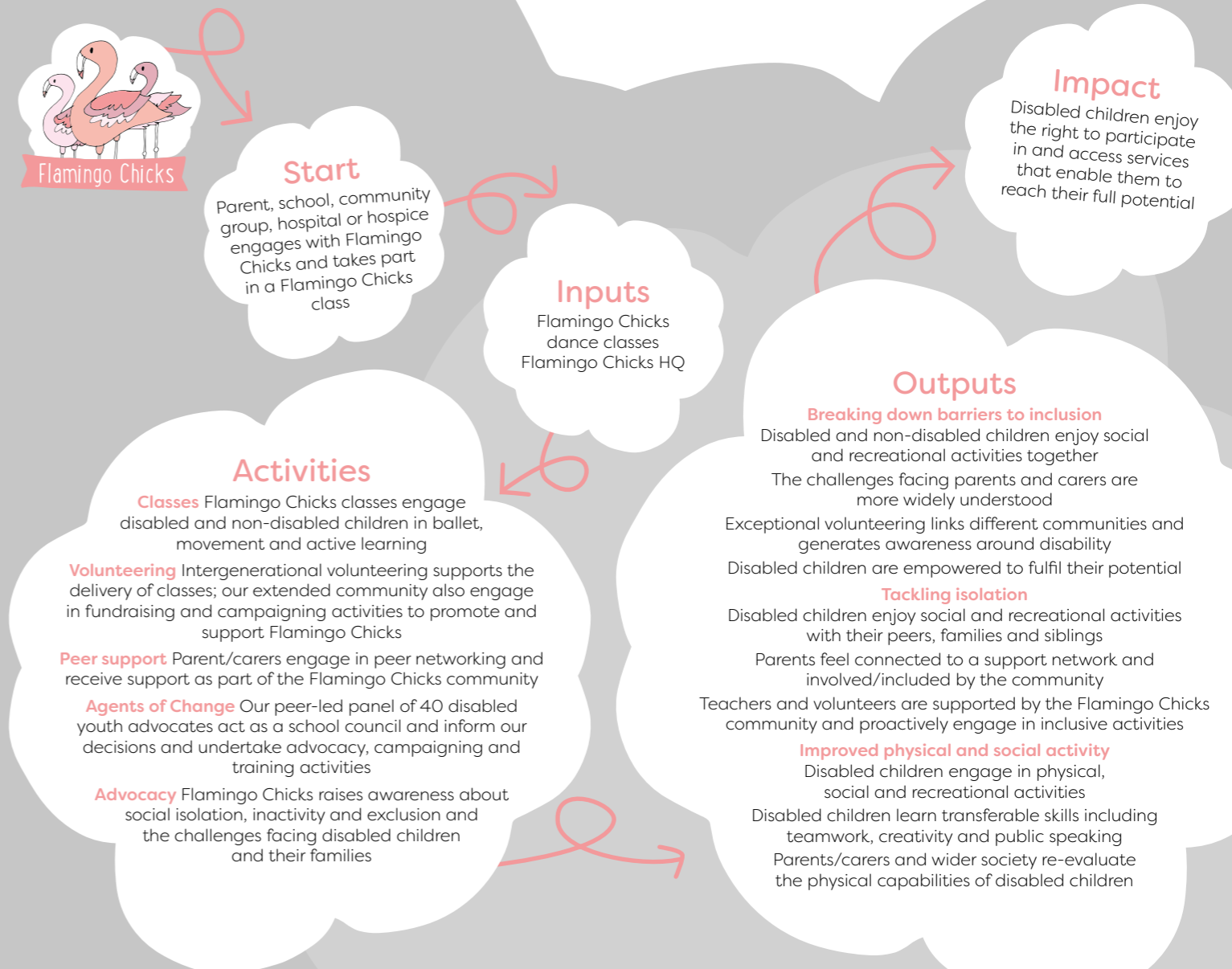
Disabled children do not have the same access to physical and social activities and are segmented from enjoying these activities with their peers.

As a result of this exclusion there is a lack of awareness around disabled children, their capacities and their right to decide and advocate for their own futures.

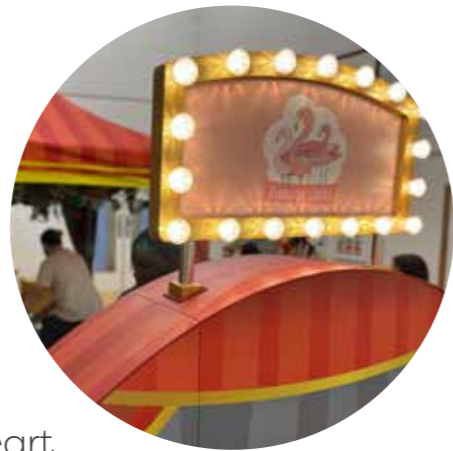
How we're doing this

Providing fully inclusive dance classes and activities gives disabled children the chance to participate in activities that can combat stereotypes around what disabled children and their bodies can do. The activities can also help address inactivity and obesity among disabled children.

Dance and creative experiences not only enable people to live more physically active lives, tackling obesity and enhancing health, they also promote empathy, friendship, and support children and young people to process the world around them.



PERFORMANCE DECONSTRUCTED



Magic and sparkle have always been at the heart of what we do. Our mobile stage with interconnecting sensory canopy takes this up a level. We took Flamingo Chicks on the road with new magical theme touring workshops offering a unique fusion of performance and activities, reaching 287 children.

Performance Deconstructed, allows us to harness the transformative power of theatre and dance to create unique performances and opportunities for disabled young people, their families and the wider community.

Our bespoke pop-up stage is a beautiful, stimulating sensory space which has been designed by our Agents Of Change and made into a reality thanks to the talents of Bakehouse Factory.

Magical moving props, fabrics, smells, sounds and costumes nurture confidence, imagination and curiosity. It keeps the very best of a theatre experience for both audience and performer but strips away the elements that make a traditional venue overwhelming and inaccessible.

Our aim is to ignite a culture shift where accessible and immersive performances are a valued and intrinsic part of the artistic landscape, sparking a ripple effect of significant and sustainable impact.

“Completely magical, beautiful and amazing! For ALL students. Staff also had a fantastic experience. The staging was enchanting and the storyline was highly sensory and appropriate. You encouraged students to be up and exercising through dance in a fully immersive environment.”

Tamara Stewart, Teacher Mapledown School



“I was blown over by how beautiful it was and how expertly you used movement, sensory stimulation and physicalised learning to explore topics that (on the face of it) might seem beyond our learners.”

Patxi del Amo, Lead Practitioner of the Performing Arts, TreeHouse School



MEASURING SUCCESS

At Flamingo Chicks, we're making sure ALL voices are heard, so when evaluating our projects we pioneer inclusive techniques to measure our impact. We also share these widely with others to enable them to capture all voices effectively and accurately.

2024 evaluation highlights

Improved emotional wellbeing

75% of schools also saw an increase in independence (a 25% increase on last year) For our Performance Deconstructed Stage Shows, **88%** of schools saw an increase in emotional wellbeing (23% increase on last year).

Improved physical wellbeing

In our regular classes, **81%** of participants showed improved physical wellbeing and were able to complete a series of set exercises after 6 classes. For our stage shows, **94%** of schools saw an improvement in physical wellbeing (5% increase on last year). **84%** of children reported they had moved their bodies more than usual.

Improved self-confidence

88% of participants reported they felt like a performer by the end of a term of regular classes. Schools also reported a **78%** increase in the performance level of participants following regular classes. After our Stage shows, **97%** said they enjoyed performing and **94%** would like to do more.

Professionals views

We surveyed the health, education and social care professionals we work with to hear how they feel our classes and workshops impacted young people:

81% felt that participants were much happier after a Flamingo Chicks class. **93%** saw an improvement in independence and confidence.

Speech & language

85% saw improvement.

Physical wellbeing

96% saw improvement.

Active learning

85% reported that Flamingo Chicks themes reinforce learning in the curriculum.

Inspiring

92% said Flamingo Chicks has been helpful to show parents/carers what young people can do outside of school.

78% of professionals felt they had learnt new techniques from us, with **95%** going on to implement them in their own practice.

Finally, Flamingo Chicks had an NPS (Net Promoter Score) of 88. Our survey found **88%** of professionals would recommend Flamingo Chicks sessions to a friend or colleague.

"Within just one session we were really inspired by the Flamingo Chicks' approach. It made us re-evaluate what our children were capable of in a new context. It helped invigorate our team, freshened our thinking and empowered us to be more creative with the opportunities for our students. Pupils were able to experience the joy of dance and expressing themselves in different ways, something that most of them would not have been exposed to because of the inability to access mainstream groups. This also helped make pupils and parents aware that there are opportunities to access extra-mural activities for children with additional needs."

Charleen Bruce, Assistant Headteacher - John Chilton School, Ealing

78% of professionals felt they had learnt new techniques from us, with 95% going on to implement them in their own practice.

Sensory Scales
Tactile and creative ways to score activities

Confetti Ceremony
To assess happiness

Layers of Sand
To show collective attainment

Draw what you learned
Free drawing time to record term highlights

Traffic Light Paddles
With emotion faces to help convey feelings

Flamingo Scale
To measure feelings

Inflatable Microphones
To encourage soundbites

Miles up the Mountain
Interactive Zoom techniques as a confidence gauge

Impact Pool
Playtime with tactile items to test knowledge retained and explore topics in depth

Flamingo Chicks' techniques

- Sensory and tactile evaluation techniques
- Makaton and widgeo symbol flashcards to self-report mood
- Three-level warm up scale to measure physical movement
- Performer 'Spotlights' and 'curtain calls'
- Teachers' reporting and feedback
- School feedback and questionnaires
- Peer evaluators
- NPS score
- Celebration sessions
- Observations, oral testimonies and stories of change

WHERE WE WORK

We run regular classes across the UK in settings such as schools for disabled children, children's hospices, hospitals and community groups. We also deliver outreach workshops across the UK and the world!

OUR FLOCK

- Regular Classes
- Taster Workshops



“Flamingo Chicks is a really important part of our week. Run as an after school club, it provides great opportunities for children to access a physical based session, outside of their core provision. Furthermore, the PE/Dance sessions in school, are beginning to mirror the excellent practice we see in Flamingo Chicks sessions. Each session is a real lesson in how to deliver Dance, to even the most complex learners.”
Tom Peters, Oasis Academy Longcross

“Flamingo Chicks helps hugely with mental health, happiness and student engagement with movement activities. The sensory aspect of the lessons means that students can engage with challenging topics and the resources used are always pitched very well. After the sessions students feel much more relaxed and are generally better engaged in anything they do for the rest of the day.”
Tamara Stewart, Mapledown School



“Flamingo Chicks is expert at creating magical sessions full of wonder, sensitively adjusted for all abilities and using Makaton. This means our students, who have a wide range of profound and multiple physical and learning disabilities can take part - they access the sessions from Acheeva beds, wheelchairs or using their walkers! We love our sessions, and look forward to them all week!”
Lucy Galloway, Curriculum Lead - Claremont Special School, Bristol



HOW WE WORK

We are committed to being a representative organisation that champions inclusion and fights for a fairer future throughout.

Our team

Our teaching team: our teachers are specialists in inclusive dance practice and bring a plethora of skills to Flamingo Chicks. They have extensive experience working across the arts, including theatre and music and working in a variety of settings, such as private dance schools, care homes and professional dance organisations.

Our board: we are passionate about ensuring our board is diverse and represents the community we serve. Board members are trained in disability awareness, undergo DBS checks, complete NSPCC Child Protection training and follow the Charity Governance code. 88% are disabled or have long term health conditions.

Our Patrons: Flamingo Chicks is proud to work with our Patrons Peaches Golding OBE CStJ, Mark Smith, Tamara Rojo CBE, Rosaleen Moriarty-Simmonds OBE, Joe Sims and Claudia Fragapane. As champions, their support enables us to reach new communities and audiences, motivates our team and provides powerful, memorable opportunities for our community.

Our practices

Accessibility: we are committed to ensuring our way of working is inclusive: our board meetings are live-captioned and recorded so they can be replayed, we have a buddy system to support new additions to the team and we introduce ourselves with an audio description amongst other techniques.

Collaboration: we work with many partners to ensure we are providing the best service possible. Some of our partners include: The Paraorchestra, Flying Seagull, English National Ballet and Northern Ballet (who provide incredible behind-the-scenes opportunities and experiences) plus annual roundtables bringing together health, education and social care professionals.

Environmental sustainability: we're committed to looking after the environment we live and work in. Flamingo Chicks recognises that aspects of our activities have an impact on the environment. We are committed to managing these aspects and impacts. We have a clear action plan with measures including: minimising our carbon footprint, avoiding unnecessary travel, recyclable kit, props and backdrops, involving our young people to raise awareness of environmental issues and incorporating environmental aspects and themes within our programmes.



Flamingo Chicks Development Day 2024

CELEBRATING SHAHED

Shahed radiates confidence and kindness in every Flamingo Chicks class. Always eager to go first, suggest dance moves, and assist with props, she uplifts those around her.

Her biggest impact? Encouraging others. She cheers on her peers, making everyone feel valued and included. For those who may be shy or uncertain, Shahed is a reassuring presence - dancing alongside them until they feel ready.

She embodies the true spirit of Flamingo Chicks: friendship, encouragement, and joy.

I love "helping my friends" and making up "new dance moves". Flamingo Chicks makes me "feel really happy."



CELEBRATING HESTER

Watching Hester dance is pure joy! After a procedure temporarily limited her movement, she rebuilt her strength step by step - now, she's dancing stronger than ever, even mastering new skills.

Her grand battement in our flamingo warm-up is a highlight, lifting her leg with incredible height to well-earned applause. Hester's communication has also flourished; she confidently waves, says "bye," and bows in our goodbye routine. And when we spin together, she now leads with a delighted "Weeeee!" Her journey is a testament to resilience, progress, and the power of dance.



CELEBRATING GABRIELLA

For Gabriella, Flamingo Chicks isn't just a class - it's the highlight of her week! Dance lifts her mood, helps her sit taller in her chair, and brings out her best self.

She thrives in our warm-ups, stretching and balancing with beautiful retiré positions. Her passion extends beyond class too - over Easter, she attended Swan Lake and proudly shared a photo outside the theatre. Gabriella is not just a dancer; she's becoming a true lover of the arts, full of enthusiasm and confidence.



CELEBRATING SOPHIA

Sophia's growth this year has been extraordinary. She now independently performs a beautiful bow in our curtain call and loves demonstrating it for the class.

Her Makaton vocabulary has expanded, and she even surprised us by signing key words before being shown! Her independence has soared - once reliant on a learning assistant, she now follows class on her own. Using her walking frame, she moves with speed, balance, and confidence, spinning and following floor patterns effortlessly. Sophia is proof of how dance builds strength, independence, and self-expression.





WHAT'S NEXT

2025 is set to be one of our most magical years yet! From enchanting performances to pioneering advocacy, we have an exciting year ahead - filled with adventure, inclusion, and creativity.

A Once-in-a-Lifetime Global Tour!

In April, we're off to Disneyland Paris! A group of disabled children and their siblings will experience the magic of performing on the iconic Videopolis stage.



Nature & Conservation - Our New Theme

As decided by our Agents of Change Youth Council, all our classes will embrace the wonders of nature as our active learning theme! With support from partners like the Wildlife and Countryside Link, Natural History Consortium, the National Trust, Beach Guardian, and more, we're aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals to bring learning to life.

Magical worlds with extra sparkle!

We've invested in stunning new props, costumes, and backdrops - many created by our crafty volunteers using repurposed and eco-friendly materials. Picture giant flower meadows, twinkling night skies, and magnificent mini-beasts!

Other Exciting Highlights

- **Eden Project Virtual Class:** Kicking off the year with a mesmerising new virtual class filmed beneath the famous biomes!
- **Expanding our Makaton Programme:** Promoting inclusive communication while generating vital funding.
- **24-Hour Dance Relay:** Following last year's success, this annual event is back - join us for a full day and night of movement, uniting the community.



With volunteering at the heart of Flamingo Chicks, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved. And with our Agents of Change leading a new campaign on inclusive communication, we're set to make an even bigger impact.



A MULTI-AWARD WINNING CHARITY

- Short-listed and highly commended in the Charity Awards, Charity Times Awards and the Third Sector Charity Awards 2023
- MBE for our Founder, Katie Sparkes - New Year Honours 2022
 - Innovation In Dance Award - One Dance UK 2021
- Best Family Arts Activity - Fantastic For Families Awards 2021
- Youth Leadership Programme of the Year - Prestige Awards 2021
- Inclusive Physical & Virtual Activities - 2021 GHP Social Care Awards
- The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2020 - 'the MBE for charities'
 - Dance People Entertainment - Community Services Award 2020
- Best Disabled Children Inclusion Initiative - GHP Social Care Awards 2018
 - Bristol Life Magazine - Education Award 2017
- The Independent Newspaper - 'Happy List' of 50 inspirational people whose kindness, courage and selflessness make our country a better place to live - our CEO 2017
 - TSB Pride of Sport - Community Award 2016
- A Point of Light Award from the Prime Minister - recognising our work in championing inclusion 2015



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