



The roads
to the brains
we live in

Poetry by Year 6 pupils

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Thrive LDN

Thrive LDN is a citywide movement to ensure all Londoners have an equal opportunity to good mental health and wellbeing. We are supported by the Mayor of London and London Health Board partners.

Thrive LDN
towards happier, healthier lives



Workshop facilitator

Louise Hale aka Curly Wordy, is a spoken word poet, integrative holistic play therapist, educator and author from east London. She has been writing since she was 14, spent over a decade as a regional and national journalist, ten years as teacher and most recently began working as a play therapist to help children find their voice in feelings.

Louise is a regular on the London poetry scene and has performed as a headline act at an array of different events. Louise's poetry is emotional and empowering, offering a strong storytelling nature that pays homage to lived experiences, family, self-image, London life, social mobility, education, thriving through adversity, overcoming traumatic experiences and all the quirky bits in between that build our bones.



Louise's work celebrates the unsung heroes in all of us.

The Jenny Hammond Primary School (JHPS)

JHPS is a small, two-form entry, multicultural community school situated in Leytonstone, in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The 14 children who participated in the workshops were in Year 6. It is a UNICEF gold Rights Respecting School and has Artsmark status.



A foreword from the Headteacher

I have been the Headteacher of The Jenny Hammond Primary School, in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, for nearly 2 decades and in that time I have seen children truly flourish and invent themselves through the exploratory wonders of the Arts, allowing children to explore, express, empower, create and know themselves better.

The Arts has always had a central role in the school curriculum and is recognised as an essential part of a child's education, academically, socially and personally throughout their time at our school. We ensure through high quality professional development the staff are confident at delivering a skilled, progressive curriculum and that as educators we ensure children leave the school with life skills that help them be kind and thriving citizens in life. By promoting the Arts, we openly acknowledge that it's ok for children to invent and express themselves in innovative ways, allowing children to lead on their own learning, ensuring they own their pupil voice and that their voice is heard.

Creative writing is something I have always been passionate about as a teacher and Head Teacher and within the school curriculum, time for creative, expressive writing should never be compromised.

It has been a pleasure to host this creative writing project at the school and see our children thrive and enjoy every moment. With Louise's guidance, it has allowed our Year 6 children to find a beautiful outlet for their feelings ahead of leaving our school and venturing into Secondary school life. It is of no surprise that writing, word play and rhyme helps children make sense of the worldly things around them and this has been a fantastic opportunity

for our children to build on that creativity and understanding.

Their poems were honest, varied, brave and personal. Louise led the children through fun, expressive hands-on activities, which in turn created great talk for writing.

If we can arm children with the appropriate skills to self-care and release stress when times get hard, we are giving them the best chance to prosper and I couldn't have been prouder of what our children achieved.

This project 'Engaged, Inspired and Empowered' our children and what more could we ask for.



Deborah Gibbon

Headteacher
The Jenny Hammond Primary
School

Foreword from the project facilitator

I have always passionately believed in the power of poetry and its ability to heal. As a child it was a huge releaser for me and I believe it is the single most creative form of expression which evokes emotions so freely.

Therapeutic practices are designed to improve mental health and wellbeing. Writing - especially writing poetry - is a therapeutic activity, in its rawest form.

I invited 14 children from The Jenny Hammond Primary School to step into the workshop space with me, participate in creative arts activities, share their views and be open minded enough to journal the process. It was brave and it made for moving material. They poured feelings, thoughts and memories into their work and created pieces that were personal and poignant to them.

I drew on my expertise as a poet, integrative holistic play therapist and teacher and facilitated 6 creative writing sessions over six weeks to help these children discover just how powerful poetic expression can be when telling the stories that live in us.

I didn't rush the children, I didn't control what they submitted, I facilitated and held space for 14 young people to walk the roads of the brains they live in in order to find their voice in feelings, own their words, their mental health and their wellbeing. I was touched by the themes that jumped out- joy, love, togetherness, friendship, loss, fear, aspirations, joy, humour and gratitude, are just a handful that spring to mind.

The poems and artwork that follow are created by children for children. This booklet is a true testament that we can inspire young minds to be more mindful and that self-expression should never be boxed.

Louise Hale (Curly Wordy)



The roads to the brains we live in

By Louise Hale

The roads to the brains we live in,
are paved with so much potential,
a body-verse
corridors of doors
housing visions of the people we could
become.

But in order to create ourselves,
invent ourselves
empower ourselves
we need to read ourselves
and stop telling ourselves that feelings
don't matter.

The world around us fires the wires that
shapes the contours of our inner worlds,
feelings are meant to be felt
feel as things happen
not stored away only to manifest in a dif-
ferent way,
they need to meet the light of day.

Long before we can talk, we feel
cos, we think in feelings first
as babies, our body tracks emotions
and maps our preverbal verse,
limb upon limb connected to the limbic
cos
emotions, are the food of the body.

So I ask you,
what really defines intelligence?
A boy who never cries, punching above his
weight in maths, but evaporates under the
pressure.
A girl who knows the Harry Potter books
inside out, but can't read her own, ask for
help, nor express terror.
What is the real measure?
Cos when all is said and done
and young people go off into the unknown
seeking sunsets with the skillset we gifted
them
will they hold their own?
Emotional intelligence paves the way with
relevance,

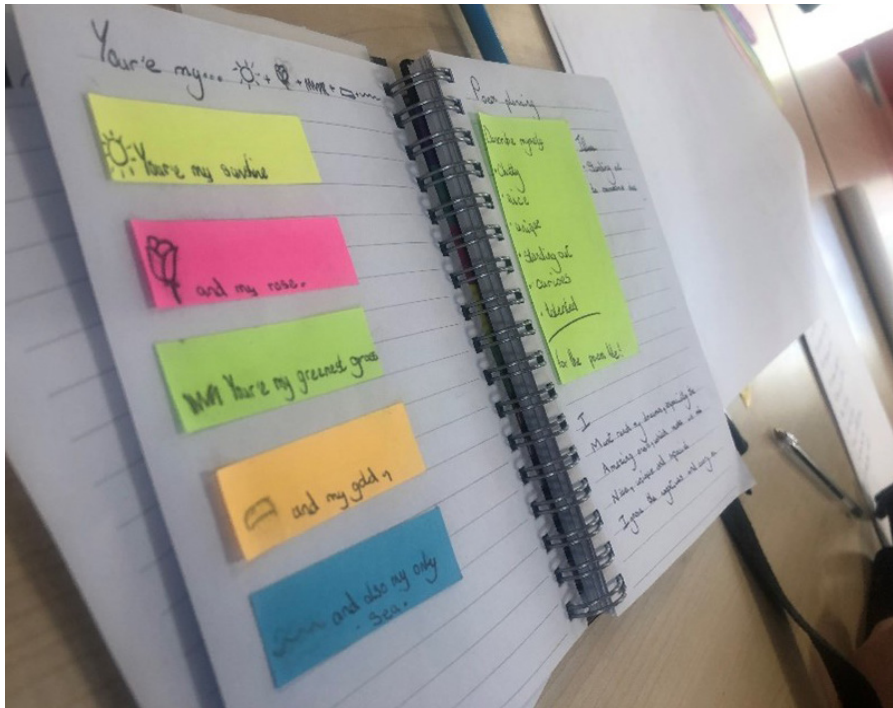
unlocks wellbeing, creativity, self-care,
relationships, kindness, awareness and
empathy,
surely that should hold the highest
currency?

Mind and body were only ever meant to be
friends,
but if we block what we feel
those butterflies in our tummy,
road blocks in our throat,
car alarm chest,
can cause quite a lot of unrest,
brain embodies body
body is binded to the brain
stems
have to be solid from the inside to hold up
a flourishing flower.

We all need Maslow before we can truly
bloom
so we can question the mysteries
feed the thought of
WHO AM I NOT TO BE?
A seed of good soils in all of us,
so read the book in you, caress its inner
pages and review it well,
cos dreams know no book ends,
but feelings need to feel the sunlight too.

Create your own proud
stand up
get active
get creative
get outdoors
drink down air
steady your roots
dust off your petals
reroute if you have to
whatever works for you
just do
but NEVER
EVER
give up on the project that is you.





Queendom

I'm weird.

I like it.

I would scream stuff I always understood,
but no one else did.

I thought, gone on.

So I tried to recalibrate, and got played.

I was blocked like Minecraft.

I changed to make things different, but that was me.

So when I laughed, people looked, like a piece of
dirt.

When I cried, people looked, and it really
hurt.

I was an illusion like Loki.

And I was Loki upset.

So I embraced it.

And I was brave and weird like a hammerhead.

I had played my trump card, and called Yu-gi-ch.

Popping like popcorn.

The brave, strong, proud crow inside had called.

Long live the weirdness Queen.

Every weird is a good way.

Amélie



Amélie



Creativity Haiku

Your brain's a flower.
If you don't give it much rain,
It will never grow.

Amélie 



You 

ARE

PLENTY!



Amalie

I love my random brain ↓

Oh yes my brain is random,
Filled with Harry Potter gandom,
My brain is it's own lardom of random,
And it's lit,
I love it,
Mit, Bit, Sit,
All these words swarm in my mind,
The world is not kind,
It leaves me alone with my random brain,
Left to hunt and grind,
Damn this line, or like we follow is difficult,
For my random brain,
Some of my thoughts are insane,
But I still love my random brain.

-Connie Messingham

body is a car,
brain is a navigator,



It's you what to do, what to say and how to move.

-Connie Messingham

BE - you-tiful

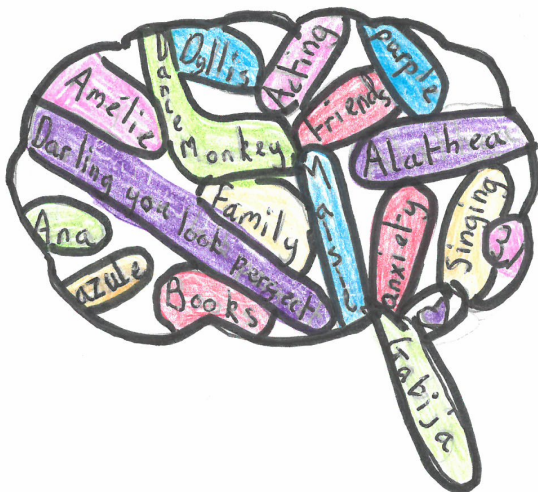


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- Connie Messingham

Connie



Life is something
Something you could breathe
Something you could leave
It is something you could give
It is something what you could play
or say

It could get in your day
But it could get in your head
Make you feel dead
It help you fall
or walk

-Deon MwekwaTse



Life is . . .

Deon



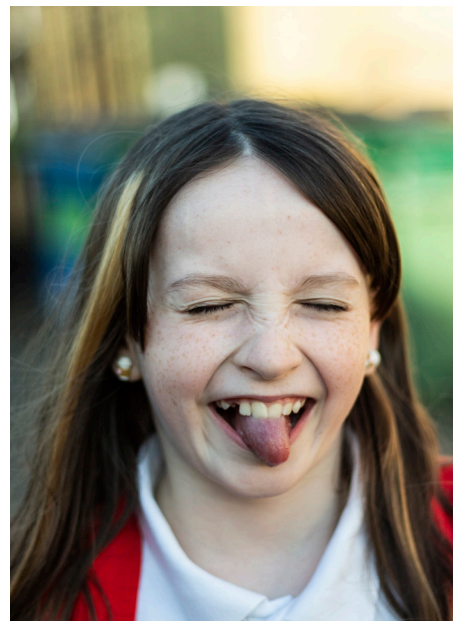
Head ^WPorches

Head torches is what were like
searching through the darkness
to find a light
but when we find that one thing
we become AMAZING
like Ariana Grande she's a star
or Tom Holland, he's gone far
or ~~maybe~~ Ed Sheeran
he started on the streets
but look at him now he's got a beat
SEE
you can be whoever you want to
BE!!

Flora



Flora

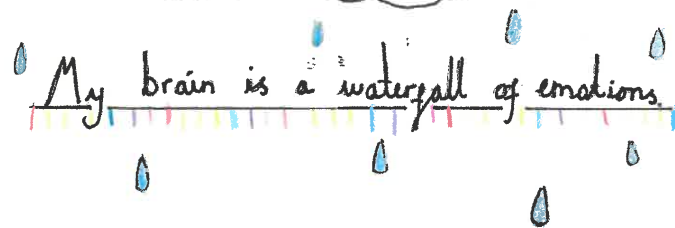


Family

My family are always there for me
they help me be me

Of course they can be annoying but that's just them
the most frustrating is my brother, Clem
he cries and screams night after night
sometimes I wish I could take flight
do you ever want a vacation?
I want one in another nation!

Floras

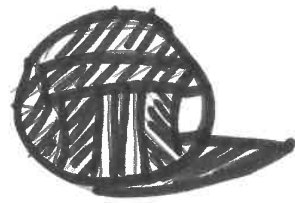


A new day, and which one you ask?

Tuesday of course

And i'll have a blast!

I want to finish school
Really fast!



What's so great about Tuesday

What do you mean?

It's the best day!

So let me tell you just one thing

Tuesday is the 24 hours I sing

But not for fun

But with glee

Open your eyes so you can see

Tuesday night

5:30 pm

playing volleyball

with the men!

I have been playing,

Since I was ten!

I love volleyball

and to be honest


I think I have told you all.





Gene



My brain is my heaven
 I could daydream for hours
 And I would float to the skies
 And I would get lost in a forest
 Of thoughts
 This is my brain and I love it! 

-Gene Ramone Crayer

Family Differences

For some, family means food or drink.

For others, being alone makes them feel just as much like family.

For some, family brings us together at the end of a long day.

For others, family drives us to insanity.

For some, being with family is being at home.

For others, being with family feels awkward and alien.

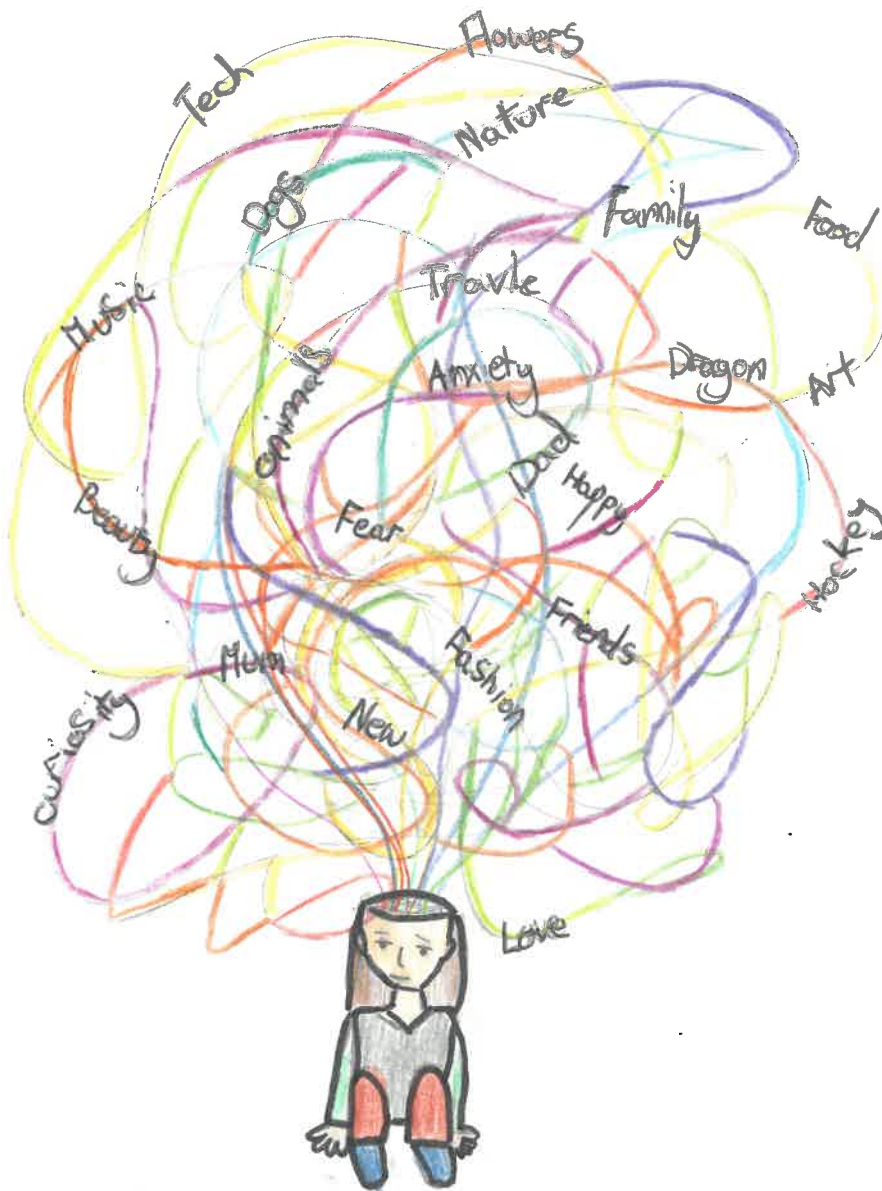
For me, family is sitting down and watching a film or going on a dog walk.

Family, can mean anything to anyone!

-Hannah Rogers-



My Brain



Hannah



Love and Loss

Through out my life,

I've gone through lovin' to loosin',

Or having a grip to something Special,
And being told to let go,

Things can leave as quickly as they come,

And this isn't about the grease on my hands,
But rather me losing my furry avacardo,

It's gone, deal with it,

But I can't,

You see no one comes back,

Or stays put,

So now I'm just left behind.

-harriet



They Don't understand!
He's never coming back!
Why can't they
Just Leave me Alone!

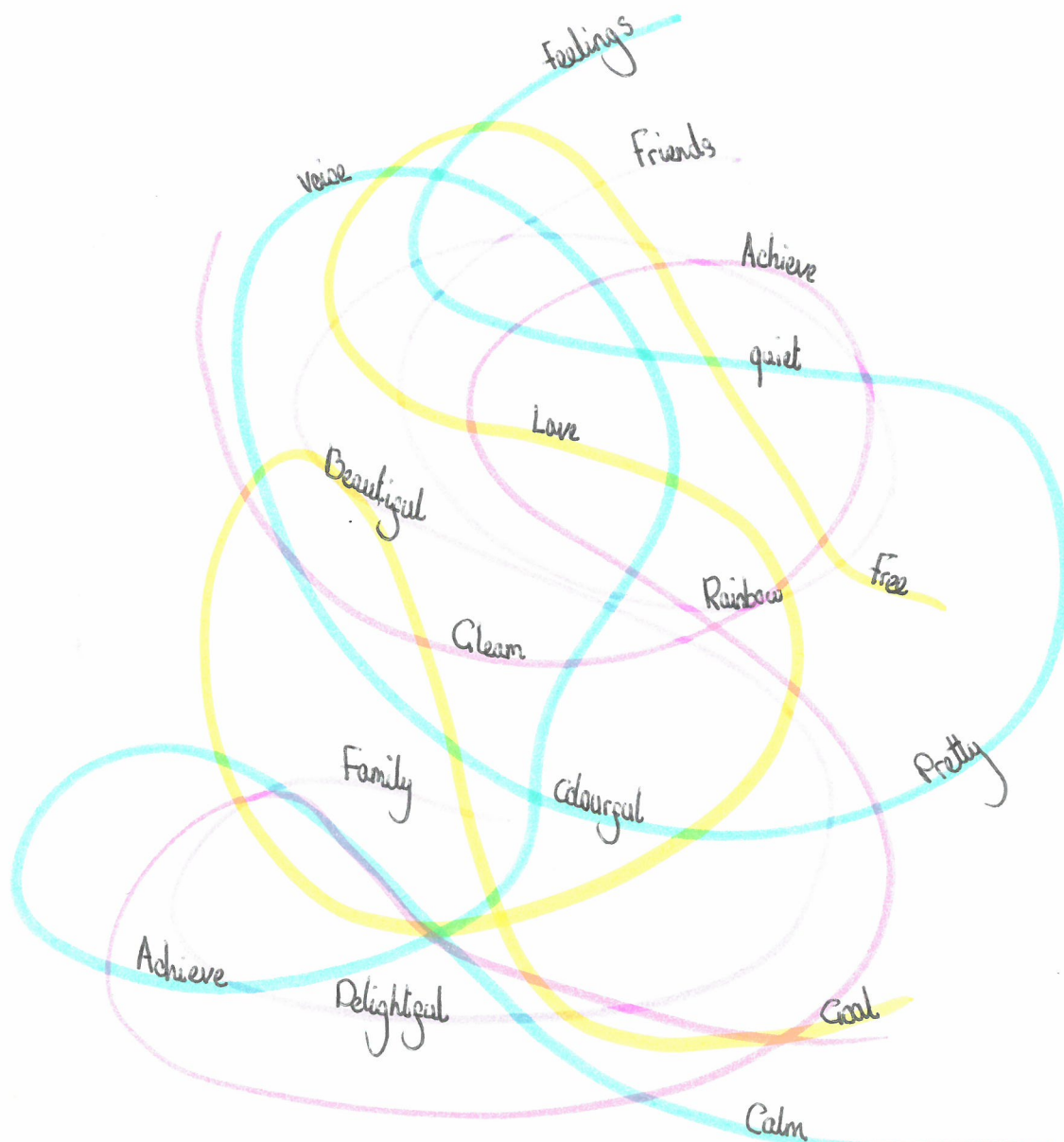


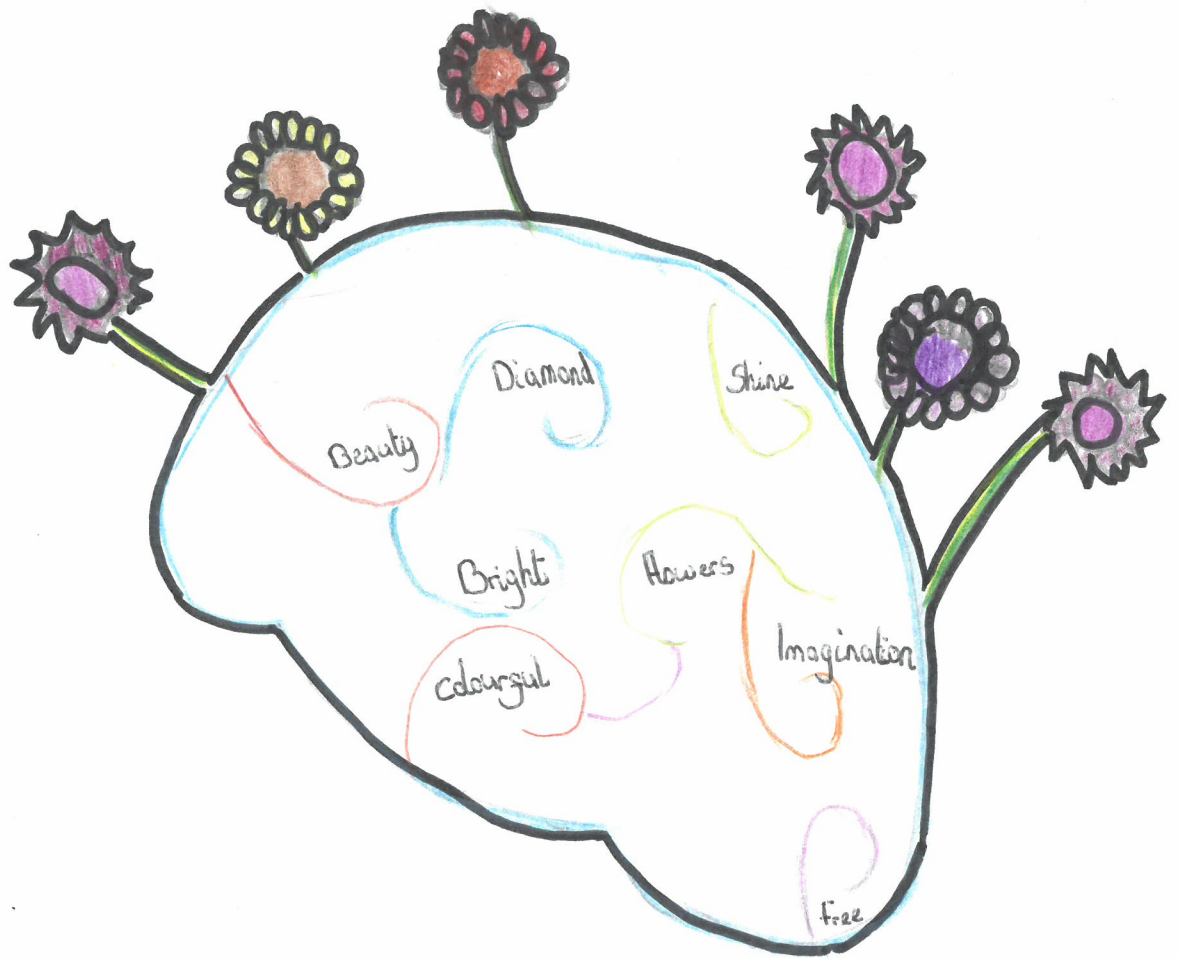
Harriet



Dreams

My dreams gleam like the stars in the sky
Blinding the planes that fly by
My dreams are roots from the tree
Languing to set free
I achieve and believe
This is me!





Imani



5 Minutes After I Needed It...

5 minutes after I needed it

You were there

That special person who always cares

That one person whose close to me

That one person who actually gets me

That lives in a place I call home

Where I feel free

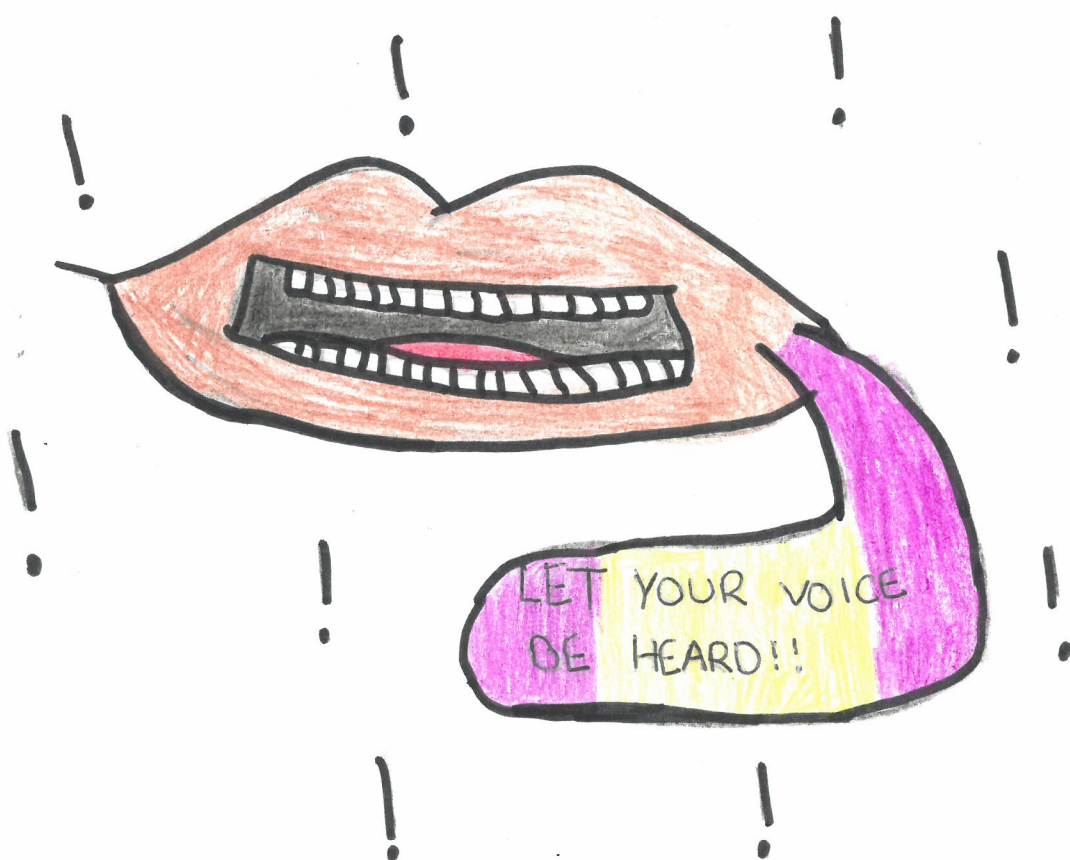
Not scared of being me

Not were in surrounded by enemies

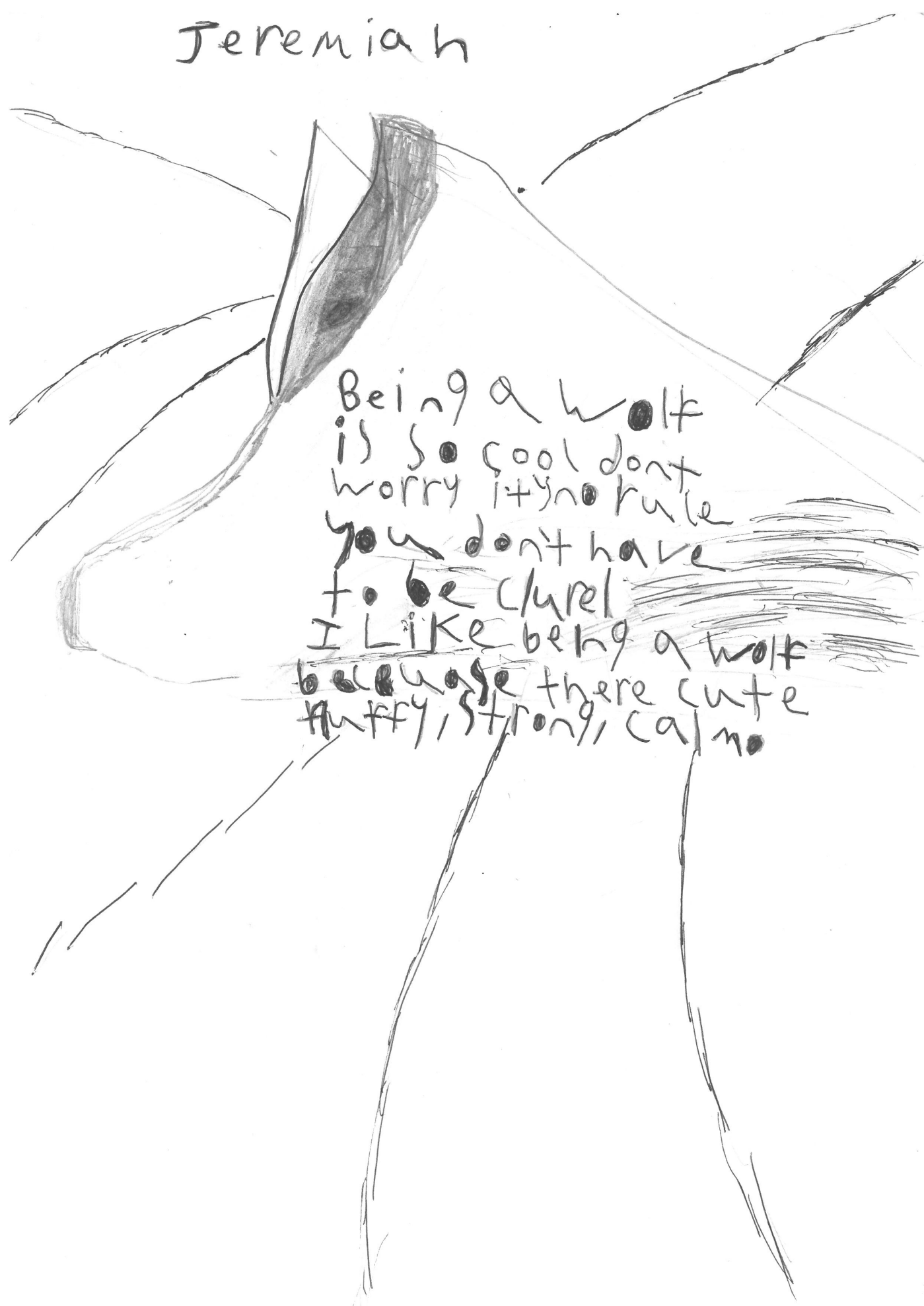
That someone who I need

5 minutes after I needed it!

-Iman. Rock-



Jeremiah



Being a wolf
is so cool dont
worry it's no rule
you dont have
to be cruel
I Like being a wolf
because there cute
fluffy, strong, calm

Friendship

Friendship
Jeremiah

Jeremiah



To hear

To hear, it means
a lot,

To listen well, it means
a lot,

To take in sound, it
gives me hope,

But the thing is, I
can't do these things.

- Maisie Ventriglia





Maisie



My Deafness and Me

When I was younger,
I kicked and hit,
I slapped and bit,
I was the strange child,
The weird child,
The different child.

My mum knew something was wrong,
My mum knew I needed help,
She protested and begged,
Threatened and shouted,
Everything she did was for me.

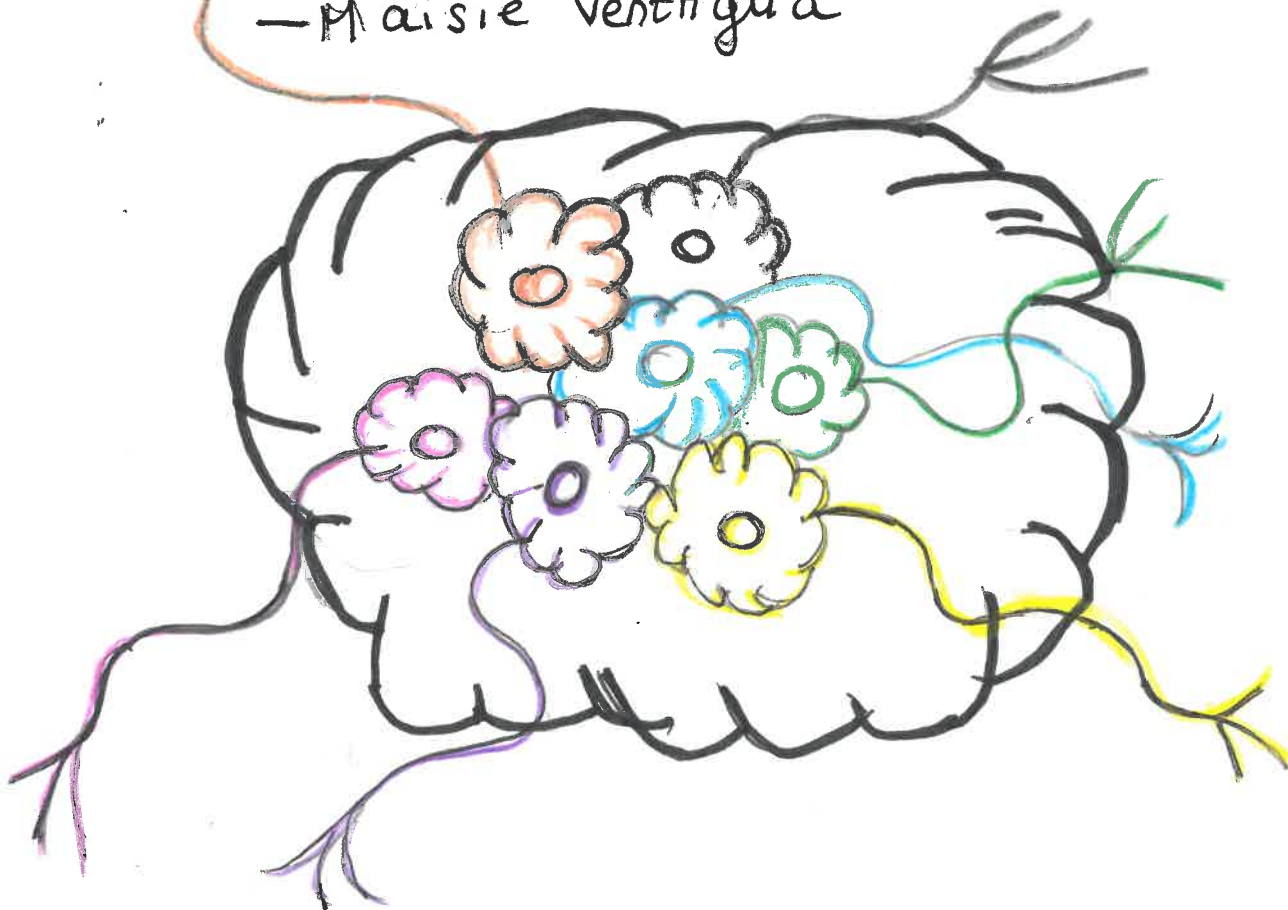
My mum knew I was deaf,
That I was hard of hearing,
She was there for me always,
Always.

Everyone denied I was deaf,
Everyone said no,
But my mum,
My strong, tough mum,
She fought through everyone's denial,
And proved I was deaf.

In school it got better,
I no longer felt left out,
I made amazing friends,
Who looked after me, out and about.

Now I'm a wise, old owl,
Very wise for my age,
Living the life of being deaf,
Who I am now:
My personality,
My strength,
My,
Me,
Myself,
Is all because of what I've been through.

—Maisie Ventriglia



From the hood,
you know what I mean,
gangsters grew up with me,
bossman there,
from the east,
he taught me,
and only me,
slang I heard,
things I see,

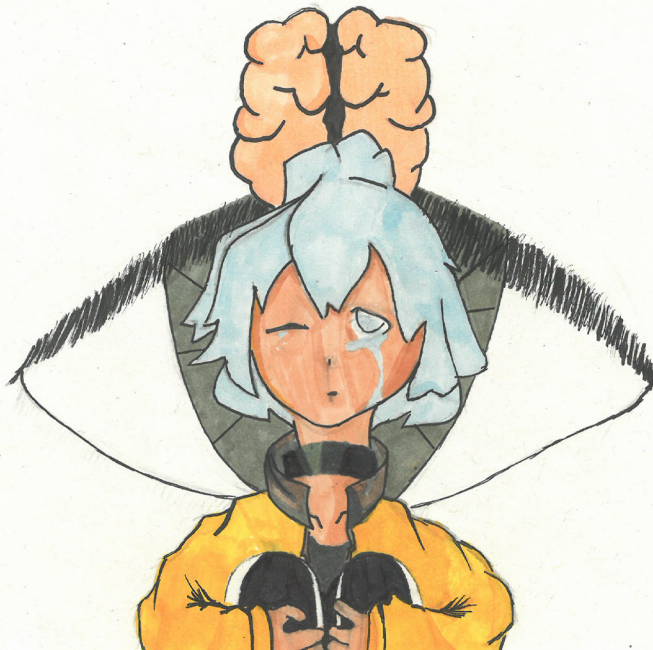
LONDON. EXCLU

by Marcus Powell



scvclg

Let . me . remove . the
splinter . in . you're
eye . How . Can . you . remove . the . splinter . when . you . have . a . plank . in . your .



eye
eye
eye
eye
eye
eye
eye
eye

The Roads to
the Brains we live in



Marcus



Water Heaver

I slaughter when I hit the water
When I swim I don't jalter,
I speed through the pool,
Accuracy is the rule,

I start the chase,

I'll win this race,

My training, four times a week,

My style is sleek,

I launch into my dive,

To win I'll thrive!





My brain roars...

Noah



Failure

Failure tastes weird,
And a bit sad,
But when you stoop low,
Don't get mad, ☾

It happens to everyone,
You're not the only one,
In a million years, ☀
To taste failure tears

You could be the plane,
Flying, then crash,
Lost the flying game,
Taken a big bash. 🤪

You think you've lost your head,
Want to drop dead,
Well, your in luck,
You don't have to pay a buck,
Because the best thing to do,
Is to go and start anew,
Then you know you're mistake,
And then success leaves your wake. 🤪

'The brain is a box, only you, and you in it.' - Rayhan Ibrahim



Rayyan



PROUD

Black and Proud, that's my memmow might
be Silly but it's how I say hello,
My hair stands out expanding
in the heat, Spreading love
and warmth in every Step
an leap.

My heritage is my home
and my home is my life my
life is my home and it's
the only one I have. And I
will Share it with the world.

You May think it's all I think
about, but it's my life and I'm
going to plan it out.

We came from the Windrush we
were Slaves. People think it's different
but I say it's the same. We get stoped
and searched because we look guilty
and filthy because of what we wear,
but a white man could stop on the
streets and be lit to stare. How is that
fore.

You might think we've got Justice and we just



want attention.
If you think that then
you haven't been watching
television.

I can't breath unless you let
me free I can't breath unless
you let me be me I can't breath
unless you see me and not on the
outside but mean the inside I will
not stop until we are free you can
Shut me down mentally and physically
but I will get back up and make sure
I'm Seen. I will not shut up until I
get what I need.

I need to be
free





Saniyah



Food 4 Thought

By Louise Hale

Isn't it mental
That the way we feel as a child
Is so fundamental to the paths we take in adult life
Minds don't have to be set
Instead we can teach children to
Grow their brains
Know their brains
Find their voice in feelings
Arm them with skills that give them ample avenues for healing
Teach them that to feel is ok
And how to find their brave
When they need to say
I am not ok
We don't want to leave them upside down
But upside up
Assist them in helping them to fill up their cup
Releasing stress
Getting stuff off their chest
We were born empty
None of us are born angry or rude
We are the canvas waiting for its paint
The book waiting for its words
So at the very least
We can help them
Make it a masterpiece



A huge thank you to the Year 6 pupils and teachers at The Jenny Hammond Primary School for sharing your thoughts, efforts, words and art with us.

Louise Hale aka CurlyWordy

www.curlywordy.com



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