

# SHAKESPEARE FOR ALL

## RESOURCE EVALUATION



SHAKESPEARE  
SCHOOLS FOUNDATION





# CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Shakespeare Schools Foundation	4
The Need For This Project	6
Project Overview	10
Key Findings	16
Challenges and Learnings	24
Future Avenues	26
A Thank You To Our Supporters	
Appendix	

## Evaluation Summary

- Overall, the majority of learners improved academically (93%), made gains in social development (86%) and built cultural capital (85%)
- The highest gains were demonstrated by lower attainers in mainstream primary schools
- Learners in SEND made substantial gains in their development of questioning and listening skills
- Teachers developed their professional practice

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Shakespeare For All project was undertaken by Shakespeare Schools Foundation in 2019. The project was designed to evaluate how curriculum-linked resources that promote a creative and active approach to learning can impact attainment for children at primary schools in areas of high deprivation. There was a second focus of the impact of these resources on children in SEND schools. Teachers received CPD training delivered by an expert trainer from Shakespeare Schools Foundation

focusing on the use of drama. The resources given to schools were designed to be used across a sequence of ten literacy lessons. In mainstream primary schools, the progress of six to eight children of different abilities within each class was monitored. In SEND settings, a sample group of six to ten students was monitored. Two main areas of learning were evaluated: academic attainment and social development. In addition, the study evaluated how the project built students' cultural capital.





# SHAKESPEARE SCHOOLS FOUNDATION



## “O THIS LEARNING, WHAT A THING IT IS!”

- THE TAMING OF THE SHREW (ACT I, SCENE II)

Shakespeare Schools Foundation is an award-winning cultural education charity. For over 20 years, the organisation has transformed lives through Shakespeare, giving children the confidence and skills they need to succeed. The charity's flagship project is Shakespeare Schools Festival, which gives children the opportunity to perform Shakespeare on a local professional theatre stage. Shakespeare Schools Foundation has also developed a range of award-winning curriculum-linked resources to further enrich children's learning, alongside or independently of participating in the Festival.

The work of the charity aligns with the new Ofsted inspection framework. As well as providing students with opportunities to make academic progress, schools are asked to give students opportunities to develop character qualities like confidence and resilience. The annual evaluation of the Festival demonstrates consistent gains in both academic attainment and character qualities for the vast majority of participants.

The new Ofsted framework also assesses the extent to which schools develop students' cultural capital. Shakespeare Schools Foundation's understanding of 'cultural capital' is derived from the following wording in the national curriculum:

'It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.'

By giving students opportunities to encounter Shakespeare, the charity helps students to become educated citizens. This in turn supports social mobility as students are equipped to engage with wider cultural conversations.

### The ethos of Shakespeare as a vehicle for learning

Shakespeare Schools Foundation promotes an active and experiential approach to Shakespeare. By engaging with Shakespeare through drama, children's comprehension and language skills grow. They gain a deep understanding of his themes, relating them to their own lives. The charity believes there is no one right way to perform Shakespeare's works. Shakespeare to himself retold famous stories, recycled plots and created shows for the actors he had in the room. Through discovering his works, children are inspired to take their own creative approach, developing their ideas and talents. By working collaboratively, children have opportunities to gain important social skills and support and inspire each other in their learning.



# THE NEED FOR THIS PROJECT



Shakespeare Schools Foundation believes that all children, including those from areas of high deprivation<sup>1</sup> and those with additional needs, should have the opportunity to experience the life-changing power of the arts.

The project Shakespeare For All was made possible through funding from Postcode Community Trust, Schroder Charity Trust and the 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust.

## The need in primary settings (mainstream)

The need to support learners in areas of high deprivation is acute. Children from these areas are more likely to begin school behind their peers – in 2017 44% of children from disadvantaged backgrounds had not reached a ‘good’ level of development by the time they started primary school.<sup>2</sup> Once children fall behind, they are at risk of never catching up. Research demonstrates that the academic gap only widens as they progress through school and into further education or employment.<sup>3</sup>

Access to the arts can make a significant difference for these children, raising educational attainment and inspiring them to aspire to greater things. For example, one study found that children from disadvantaged backgrounds who accessed the arts at school were:

- three times more likely to continue to higher education and get a degree
- twice as likely to volunteer
- 20% more likely to vote.<sup>4</sup>

However, in recent years, arts provision in state schools has diminished. The RSA’s ‘Arts-rich schools’ report (2020) notes that there has been a significant decline in the number of hours spent teaching the arts in England’s state schools since 2010. This is due to a range of factors including:

- cuts to school funding, which has been meant that schools arts budgets have

been squeezed

- pressure to achieve Department for Education targets for students to study the English Baccalaureate – a range of subjects that does not include the arts,
- declining numbers of specialist arts teachers entering the teaching profession.

Children from areas of high deprivation are at risk of missing out on the benefits of an arts-rich education altogether as their families cannot afford to pay for arts activities outside of school. Without access to the arts, the likelihood that those who fall behind stay behind therefore increases.

**“The school is in a poor area. Lots of our parents are working multiple jobs and don’t have the time or the resources needed to sit down and read with their children, or support with homework. Instead, children spend a lot of time on computer games. Many don’t have a lot of experience outside school or home. Very few have ever been to the theatre. Attainment is very low – 60% to 70% of students in my year 5 class are below average.”**

Helen Overton-Smith, Teacher, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Southend-on-Sea

There can be the perception that Shakespeare is something that is difficult and elitist. This study was designed to evaluate how children from areas of high deprivation could be engaged and inspired by his works, building cultural capital. The building of cultural capital has been linked to social mobility. Projects such as The Class Ceiling show how entry into top professions, such as finance, architecture and law, is made easier by the level of cultural capital of the applicants. In order to help level the playing field and break the cycle of poverty, opportunities for students from areas of high deprivation to build cultural capital are essential.

<sup>1</sup> I.e. The 30% most deprived areas of England according to the ‘Indices of Multiple Deprivation’ released by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

<sup>2</sup> Literacy and Life Expectancy - The National Literacy Trust, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Closing The Attainment Gap - The Educational Endowment Foundation, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> ImagineNation - Cultural Learning Alliance, 2017.

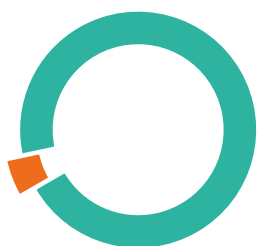


## The need in SEND settings

The valuable role the arts can play in enriching learning for learners in SEND settings is widely recognised. One report highlights how arts and cultural activities give learners:

- a creative route in to accessing broader learning objectives and curricular aims,
- a way to express themselves and develop a sense of identity whilst increasing their awareness and engagement with the world outside their daily routine,
- the opportunity to interact with new and develop their own cultural taste.<sup>5</sup>

Through its work, Shakespeare Schools Foundation has seen how learning for students in SEND settings can be transformed through the arts. For example, immersive projects delivered by the charity at Queensmill School in London and Rushmere Hall Primary School in Ipswich 2017 saw students with autism make gains in the area of social communication, developing their imagination and growing in confidence. Teachers who take part in the charity's flagship project Shakespeare Schools Festival also report how drama helps students to make gains in these areas. For example, as part of the evaluation of the Festival in 2019, 95% of teachers in SEND settings agreed that students had grown in confidence, 95% said students were better able to work as a team and 93% of students were better able to express themselves.



95% of teachers in SEND settings agreed that students had grown in confidence

However, as with mainstream schools, arts provision in SEND settings is under threat. As one study highlights, factors contributing to this include a lack of funding, changing educational structures that are devaluing the role of the arts in schools, a lack of training for practitioners.<sup>6</sup>



A young person with special educational needs attends a Company Workshop at The Rose Theatre in London

## How Shakespeare Schools Foundation addresses this need

The curriculum resources created by Shakespeare Schools Foundation include multi-sensory drama-based activities which promote an active approach to learning. The charity has seen how this approach has been an effective way to support learners, including lower-attainers and those with additional needs.

The impact of the use of these resources has been recognised as part of the evaluation of Shakespeare Schools Festival. However, an isolated evaluation of the use of these resources has never been undertaken. The study was designed to evaluate how the use of these resources could impact learning for children from all ability groups. Progress in academic learning and social development was evaluated, together with impact on cultural capital. The study also evaluated how non-specialist teachers could be effectively be trained to use Shakespeare as vehicle for learning.

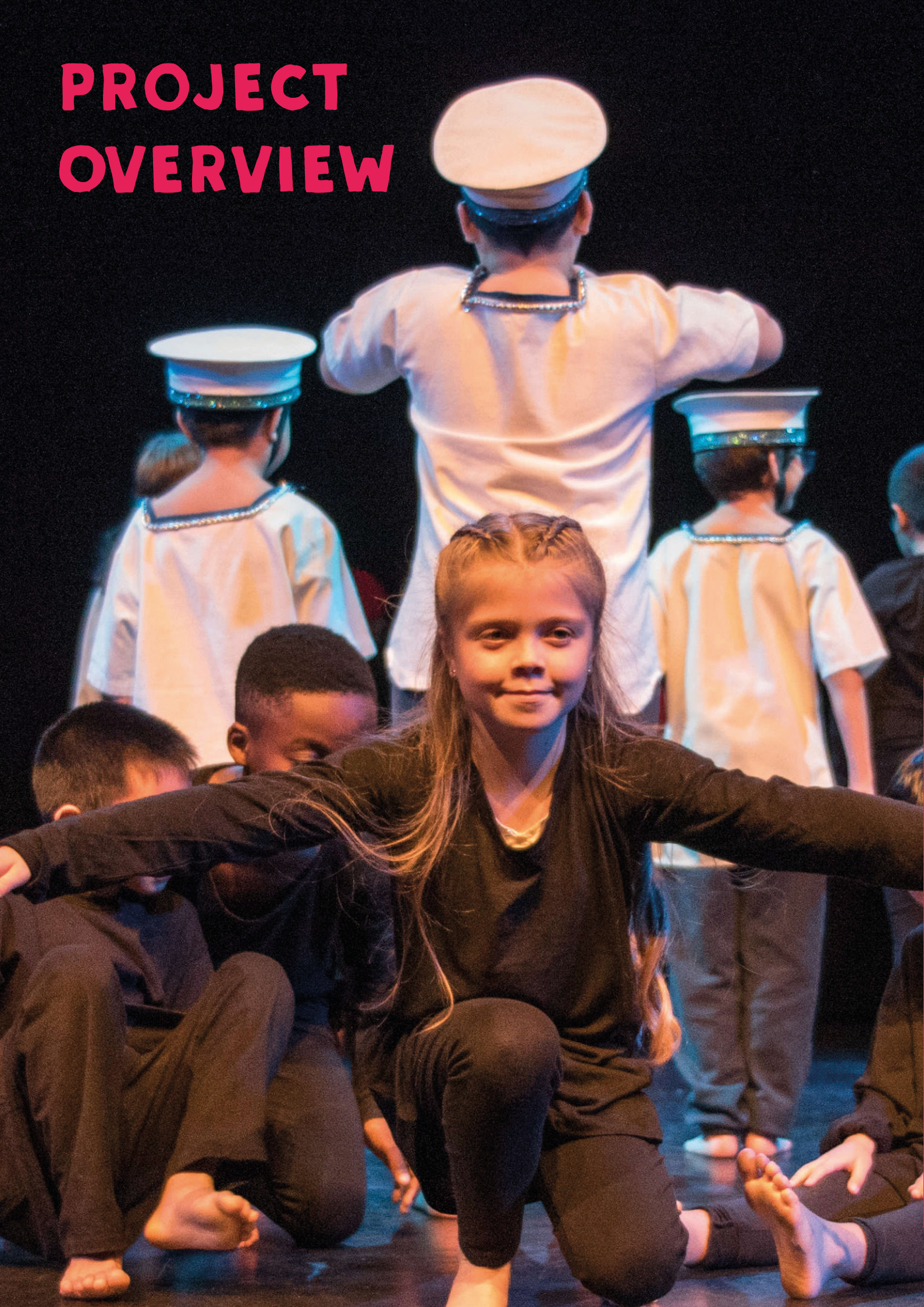


<sup>5</sup> Arts and Cultural Provision For Special Educational Needs Learners in London - A New Direction (2016)

<sup>6</sup> Arts and Cultural Provision For Special Educational Needs Learners in London - A New Direction (2016)



# PROJECT OVERVIEW



## Engaging schools

Shakespeare Schools Foundation engaged with primary schools in areas of high deprivation and with SEND schools across the UK. 16 schools completed the project.

Primary Schools	13
SEND Schools	3
Total Schools	16
Number of Children	544
Number of Teachers	23
Number of Classes	21

Table 3.1 - Schools who completed the project

Primary Schools	8
SEND Schools	2
Total Schools	10
Number of Children	392
Number of Teachers	15
Number of Classes	14

Table 3.2 - Schools who delivered data for the study

## Providing resources

Each school was given a set of Key Stage 2 curriculum resources for either Hamlet, Julius Caesar or The Tempest designed to be taught across ten literacy lessons in the autumn term of 2019. All but one of the schools (Ashfield Valley Primary School) also took part in Shakespeare Schools Festival and the resources they received linked to the play learners were performing. The lessons included multi-sensory drama-based activities designed to engage learners and

## Schools who completed the project:

Ashfield Valley Primary School, Rochdale  
 Bournemouth Park Academy, Southend-on-Sea  
 Dawn House School\*, Mansfield  
 Denbigh Primary School, Luton  
 Eresby Special School, Spilsby, Lincolnshire\*  
 Feversham Primary Academy, Bradford  
 Fitzwaryn School, Wantage, Oxfordshire\*  
 Hadrian Primary School, South Shields  
 Quay Academy, Bridglington  
 Riverside Primary School, London  
 Rosebank Primary School, Leeds  
 St. Chad's Roman Catholic Primary School, Birmingham  
 St Mary's RC Primary School, Eccles  
 St. John's Highbury Vale CE Primary School, London  
 St Joseph's RC Primary School, Manchester  
 St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool  
 The Beeches Primary School, Peterborough

## Schools who completed the study:

Ashfield Valley Primary School, Rochdale  
 Eresby Special School, Spilsby, Lincolnshire\*  
 Fitzwaryn School, Wantage, Oxfordshire\*  
 Riverside Primary School, London  
 Rosebank Primary School, Leeds  
 St. John's Highbury Vale CE Primary School  
 Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Southend-on-Sea  
 Stanley Grove Primary School (3 classes), Manchester  
 Stebon Primary School, London  
 The Beeches Primary School (2 classes), Peterborough

\*SEND settings



support reading and writing outcomes linked to the national curriculum. All the activities included in the resources were designed to be inclusive of those with additional needs.

Examples of activities included:

- **10 point summary:** Students create freeze frames of key events in the play and act them out using actions and catchphrases for key characters. An engaging and interactive introduction, this activity embeds the storyline of the play, giving students a deep understanding of character.
- **Hotseating:** Students take it in turns to play the role of interviewer and interviewee, delving deep into thought processes of different characters. This activity develops students' ability to consider different points of view, building empathy.
- **Creating a shipwreck:** Using role play and improvisation skills, students create a simple dramatic interpretation of the opening to *The Tempest*. This activity builds students' imagination, supporting comprehension.
- **A Ghostly Encounter:** Students enact the encounter between the guards at Elsinore and the ghost of Hamlet's father by coming with spooky sounds and actions, creating 'spooky conversations'. Through this activity, children develop a sense of setting and empathise with characters.

Resources for learners in SEND settings were specially adapted, including activities like:

- **Playing Musical Tempest:** When the music stops, students strike poses for the different characters, developing their understanding of characters and the relationships between them.
- **Creating an Island Full of Noises:** Using musical instruments and tactile props, children conjure up the magical world of Prospero's island. Working creatively in this way builds students' imagination, supporting comprehension of plot.

## CPD support for teachers

In September 2019, teachers received a half-day of CPD training from Shakespeare Schools Foundation to support their teaching of the scheme of work. The training was delivered by a former primary school teacher who could make clear the links between the use of the resources and criteria from the National Curriculum. Teachers therefore understood how giving students opportunities to work kinaesthetically through drama could support quality written outcomes, improve their understanding of a story and increase their vocabulary.

The facilitator was also a drama specialist with the expertise to upskill teachers who were non-drama specialists and for whom this way of working might be unfamiliar. Drawing on the principle that one of the best ways to learn is through experience, teachers had the opportunity to try out some of the content, including role-play, freeze frames and action soundscapes. By adopting a rehearsal room style and experimenting with different ideas collaboratively, teachers gained an understanding of how to replicate this way of working with students, creating a supportive environment where creativity can flourish.

As part of the session, teachers were asked to reflect on what they wanted to get out of the project personally and for their students. In this way, teachers had the opportunity to take a focused approach to the development of their own teaching practice.

Teachers were also briefed on the importance of gathering data and the logistics of how this would be collated. Time was also set aside for teachers to select the students who would form the focus for assessment. By building in this planning time, the charity ensured the project supported teachers, accounting for their already significant workloads.

## Assessment Groupings

### Primary schools

Teachers were asked to select a sample of students from three ability groups; students 'working to', 'working below' or 'working above' the national expectations. Two children were chosen from each ability category, totalling 24 students. Teachers also had the option to include two students with additional needs. The total in this group was 15 students.

### SEND settings

Teachers were asked to select a focus group of six to ten students for assessment.

## Academic Assessment

### Primary schools

Teachers conducted a baseline assessment for these students in reading and writing, scoring children against a range of assessment statements linked to the National Curriculum. An eight-point scale assessment scale was used, where one signified the lowest level of attainment and eight was the highest.

The three assessment statements for reading were:

- i) The student can read between the lines to interpret meaning and explain what characters are thinking, feeling and how they act
- ii) The student can understand and explain different characters' points of view
- iii) The student can refer to the text to support predictions and opinions.

The three assessment statements for writing were:

- i) The student can select vocabulary and grammatical structures that reflect what the writing requires
- ii) The student can write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows a good

- iii) awareness of the reader  
The student can use a range of devices to build cohesion (E.g. conjunctions, adverbials of time and place, pronouns, synonyms) within and across paragraphs.

### SEND settings

As a baseline teachers were asked to indicate students' attainment levels using an eight-point scale.

The assessment areas taken from the SEND curriculum were as follows:

- i) The student can ask questions that show that they are listening to others
- ii) The student can take part and respond in a class discussion
- iii) The student can listen to and follow instructions
- iv) The student can share what they imagine through writing, drawing or acting it out
- v) The student can share an idea or opinion with someone they know

## Social Development Assessment

The same areas were assessed in mainstream primary schools and SEND settings.

Teachers were also asked to conduct a baseline assessment for students against four core areas of social development. The core areas identified were:

- Teamwork & Collaboration\*;
- Empathy\*;
- Aspiration & Ambition\*<sup>7</sup>,
- Confidence

For the first three areas, teachers were asked to score children on an nine-point assessment scale. To help teachers score their students for each of these areas, they were provided with a statement linked to each assessment point.

<sup>7</sup> The first three of these core areas were based on criteria from the Skills Builder Framework, an assessment tool which is used widely by schools and other organisations seeking to develop skills with children and young people.



i) **Teamwork & Collaboration**, the statements linking to each assessment point were as follows:  
Student is happy to take turns with other children  
Student can work with other children to do something together  
Student can explain why teams are sometimes better than working by themselves  
Student helps with different jobs in their team and takes responsibility for finishing their job  
Student can get on well with their team and find ways to resolve a disagreement  
When they finish their task, they can help others complete their tasks on time too  
Student can help their team make decisions and make their own suggestions  
Student recognises the value of others' ideas and makes useful contributions  
Student includes all team mates in group discussions and encourages them to contribute

ii) **Empathy**, the statements linking to each assessment point were as follows:  
Student can sometimes describe how they feel  
Student can describe how their team mates are feeling  
Student can describe how their team mates are feeling  
Student can make sure that everyone has a job and can help team mates when they need them  
Student can take responsibility for their team mates completing their jobs on time  
Student can help their team come to a decision that most people are happy with and finish the task  
Student can explain their own strengths and weaknesses and how to make their best contribution  
Student can explain their team mates' strengths and interests  
Students use their understanding of their team mates' strengths to help achieve team goals

iii) **Aspiration & Ambition**, the statements linking to each assessment point were as follows:  
Student can say when they find something

difficult  
Student can tell someone what 'trying their best' means  
Student can explain why it is important to try their best if they're going to get better  
Student can try their best and feel proud when they do  
Student looks for chances to do something that they might find difficult and ask an adult to set them extra challenges  
Student can choose goals with some help from their teacher or another adult  
Student can set their own goal that gives them a chance to try something they might find difficult  
Student can order and prioritise different tasks to help them achieve their goal  
Student can identify and ensure access to appropriate resources to achieve their goals

For Confidence, teachers were asked to score where students were using an eight-point scale.

**Cultural Capital Assessment**

The same assessment was carried out in mainstream primary schools and SEND settings.  
  
Teachers were also asked to assess students' cultural capital by scoring them on an eight-point scale in response to the following question:  
How interested is the student in Shakespeare?

At the end of the project, teachers were also asked:  
Did the student enjoy discovering Shakespeare's plays?

**Teachers' Professional Development**

Following the project, teachers were also asked to evaluate their own professional development. They were asked to answer the following questions:  
i) Do you feel you have gained new tools and been empowered to use them in the classroom?

- ii) Do you feel the the project has improved your understanding of Shakespeare?
- iii) Has the project helped you to feel more confidence as a teacher?

**Data Submission**

In December, teachers conducted endline assessments and submitted their data.

*"Lots of our parents work multiple jobs and don't have time to sit down and read with their children. Many children don't have a lot of experience outside school or home. Very few have been to the theatre."*

Helen Overton-Smith, Teacher, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Southend-on-Sea.



Two young people from Riverside Primary School perform onstage. The school also participated in the Shakespeare For All project.



**544**  
the number of students who completed the project



**15**  
the number of teachers who completed our evaluation



**65**  
percent of teachers completed the project and evaluation



# KEY FINDINGS

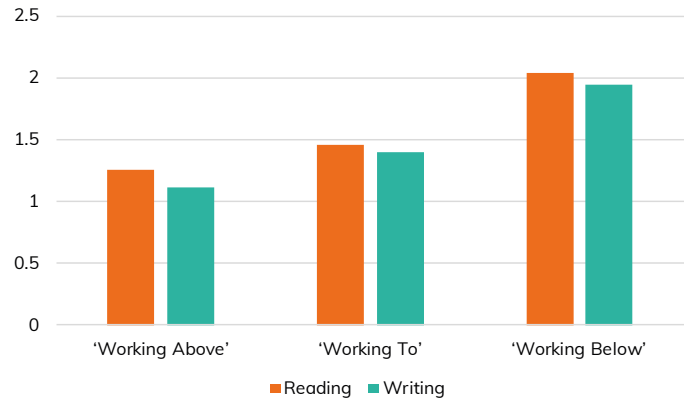


## Primary School Academic Outcomes

Subject Area	Reading	Writing
% of students making progress	89%	82%
Average points gained	1.72	1.57

Table 4.1: Academic improvements across the whole cohort

Chart 4.2: Average points gained by children across the ability groups



The most progress was made by students ‘working below’. As mentioned at the outset of this report, these students are most at risk of being left behind educationally. The fact that they made so much progress is significant. Lower-attaining children can become disengaged with learning. These results indicate the role drama-based activities can play in promoting access to learning, bringing words and stories to life in meaningful ways and inspiring students to think creatively. Having strong skills in reading and writing helps children to access all other areas of the curriculum, and development in this area has the potential to have wide-reaching impacts for all areas of learning.

Teachers had the option of including children with additional needs in their assessments. These students were a smaller sample group of 15 learners. The table below outlines the progress they made in reading and writing.

“Two lower-attaining writers made accelerated progress in the assessments immediately following the scheme of work.”  
Abigail Blaylock, Riverside Primary School, Southwark

“Reading scores are above expected at this time of year, with over half the class already achieving end of year expectations on assessments.”  
Helen Overton-Smith, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Southend-on-Sea

“Improvising a Roman street scene really captured students’ imagination. They enjoyed answering the questions, ‘What would Rome be like? What would you see?’ Real characters emerged and ideas were brought into their writing.”  
Oliver Wing, Stebon Primary School, London

Subject Area	Additional Needs
Reading	2.36
Writing	1.96

Table 4.3 Average points gained by children with additional needs

Children with additional barriers to learning can struggle to make the same level of progress as their typically developing peers. The fact that they made so much progress in reading and writing is significant. As noted above, developing strong skills in literacy helps children to access all areas curriculum and so these findings have positive implications for progress more widely.

In mainstream primary schools, teachers often provide different activities for learners with SEND as their barriers to learning can prevent them from accessing the same learning as everyone else. These findings demonstrate how drama-based activities can help teachers to uphold inclusivity within the classroom, while at the same time promoting learning outcomes.



Primary School Social Development

Subject Area	Social skills (all four areas combined)
% of students making progress	86.21%
Average points gained across the ability groups	1.28

Table 4.4: Improvements made by students across the cohort

In this study, the group who made the greatest average gains across the areas of social development was the ‘working below’ group.

Feeling confident is linked to developing the ‘growth-mindset’ needed to make progress in other areas of learning.<sup>8</sup> The fact that the ‘working below’ group made substantial gains in this area is significant. For children who are falling behind especially, having the confidence to keep trying without the fear of failure means that they will continue to

engage with learning and therefore have the potential to make progress.

The significant growth in the area of Teamwork and Collaboration skills of lower-attainers is also worth noting. Through working together, children stimulate each other’s learning. For lower-attainers especially this is important as it gives them an opportunity to have their learning scaffolded by others and to catch up. Through working creatively, these learners also realise that they have valuable ideas and skills to contribute to the group. This in turn has the effect of building their confidence and motivating them as learners.

The fact that lower-attaining children made the greatest gain in the area of Aspiration and Ambition is also significant. It indicates how, through the project, these children became more engaged in learning, pushing themselves further and striving for greater things. For children in areas of high deprivation, and lower-attainers in particular this is especially important, as it has the

power to break vicious cycles and help them realise the opportunities that are out there.

While social development is closely linked to academic attainment, its benefits stretch far beyond this. Through developing social skills, children are prepared to step out into all areas of life.

“There’s real camaraderie between them all. Students’ teamwork skills have developed – they are now much more respectful of each other.”

Oliver Wing, Stebon Primary School, London

“One child lacked confidence, lacked engagement and motivation. After about two to three weeks there was a notable improvement in his attitude, self-esteem and overall demeanour.”

Teacher, Stanley Grove Primary School, Manchester

Attainment area	SEND
Teamwork and Collaboration	0.47
Empathy	0.47
Aspiration and Ambition	0
Confidence	1.47
Average across all areas	0.6

Chart 4.6: Social development improvements for young people in mainstream primary schools by area

As with the other groups, confidence is the area where students with SEND grew the most. As noted above, feeling confident is linked to developing the ‘growth-mindset’ needed to make progress in other areas of learning. This finding therefore has wider implications for children’s wider attainment.

“Darren threw himself into it the play and learning about the characters. This gave him confidence in the classroom to speak out and to engage with the work. He found a voice in the classroom he did not have before.”

Andrew Bain, St Theresa’s Catholic Primary School, St Helens

In terms of the other areas of social development, the gains made by students with SEND needs are less significant. It is of particular note that while the area of Aspiration and Ambition was where the group as a whole made the biggest gain, those with SEND did not show any progress in this area. For students with SEND, these results may be linked to learning barriers which make social development much slower, and there may be some areas they struggle with in particular.

Primary School Cultural Capital Outcomes

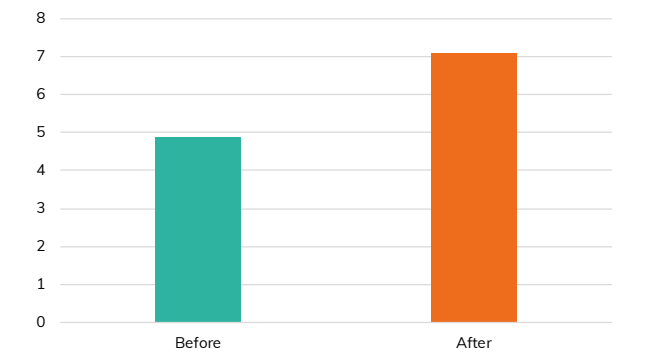


Chart 4.7: Interest in Shakespeare amongst participants across all mainstream school ability groups

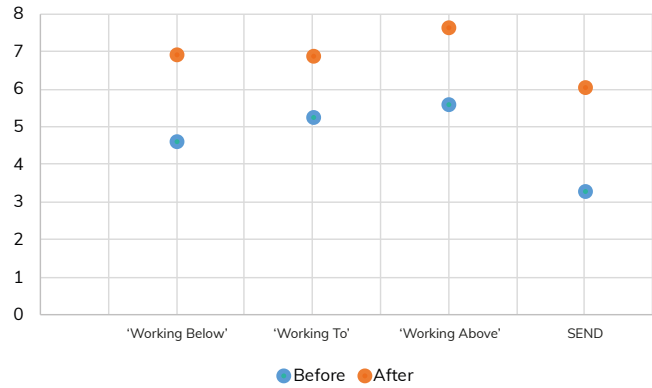


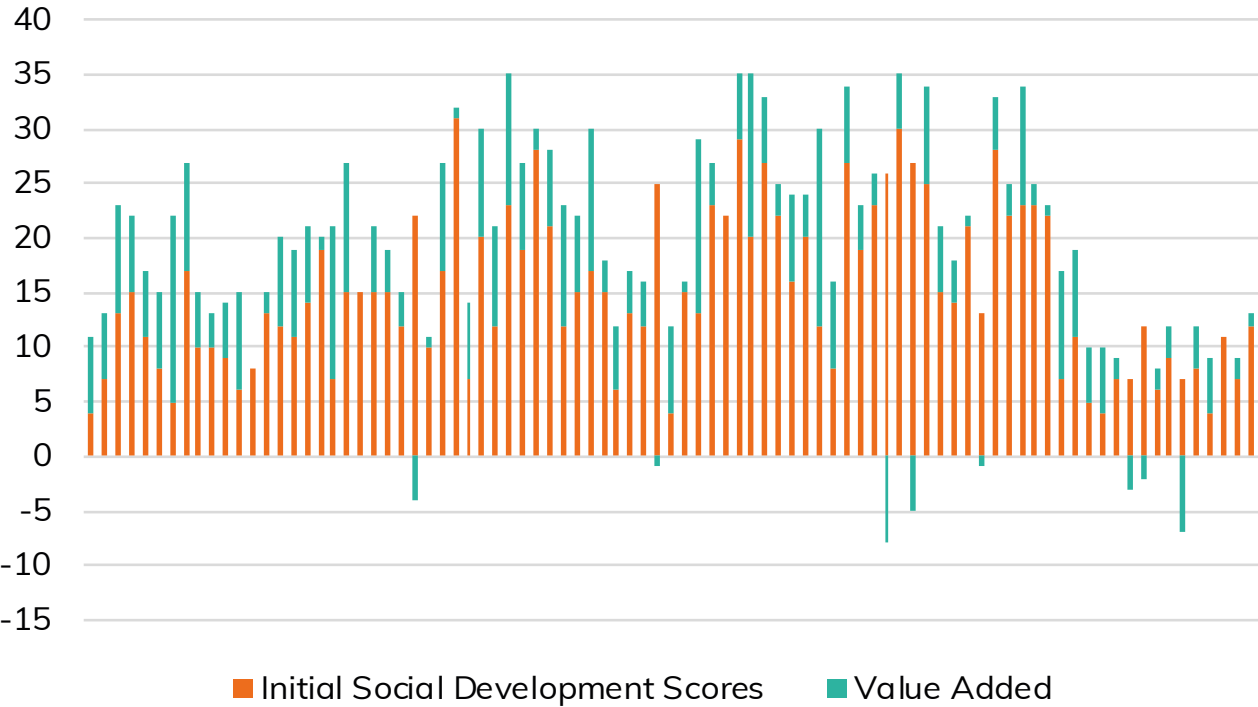
Chart 4.8: Average interest in Shakespeare amongst young people in mainstream schools by cohort

Attainment area	Interest in Shakespeare
SEND	2.73

Table 4.9: Average points gained by students with SEND

Again, those ‘working below’ and those with SEND made the greatest gains. As noted

Chart 4.5: Improvements made across all social development areas for all mainstream students:



<sup>8</sup> ‘Growth-mindset’ is a term coined by psychologist Carol Dweck to describe the underlying belief that intelligence can be developed through sustained practice and effort.



at the outset of this report, there can be the perception that Shakespeare is something that is difficult and elitist or only for higher-attainers. These results indicate that all children in areas of high deprivation all students can develop cultural capital through discovering Shakespeare. This has implications for social mobility in the long-term, enabling students to participate in conversations about culture, something which has been linked to future career success.

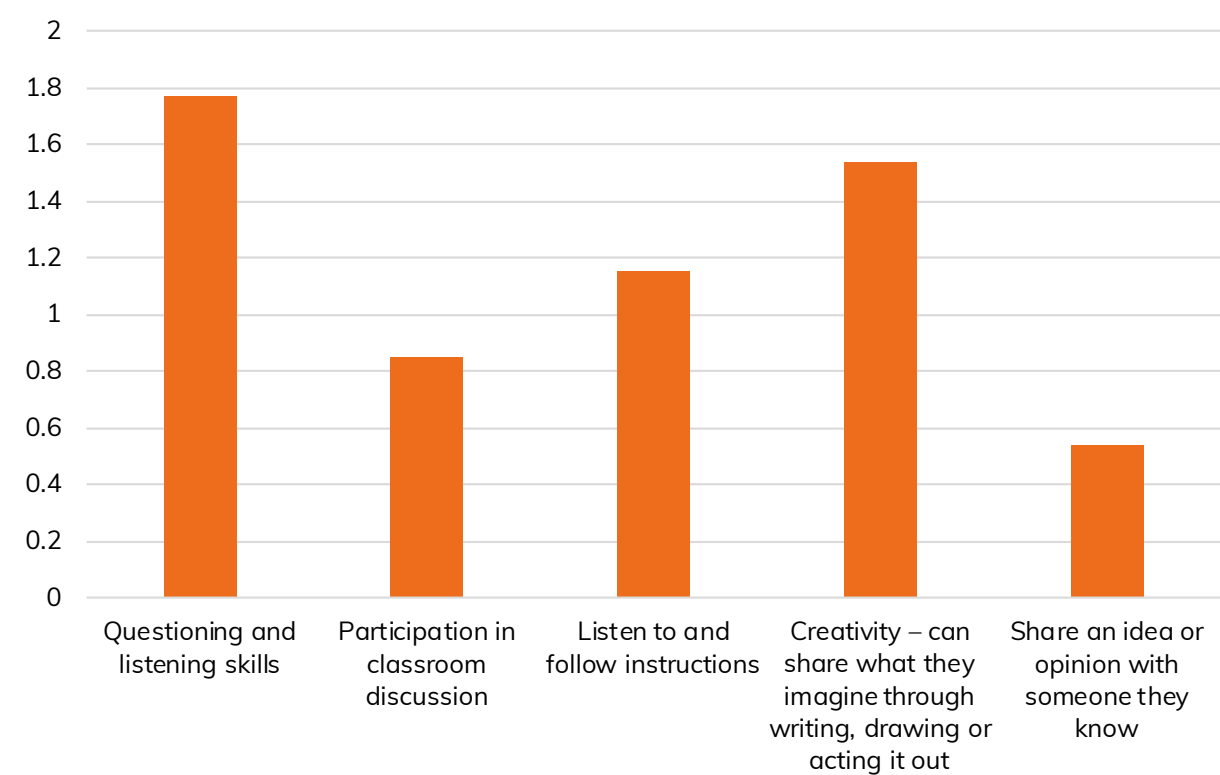
SEND Settings

Development of communication skills outcomes

Attainment area	Communications skills as a whole
Percentage of students who improved	84.62%
Average number of points gained	1.17

Table 4.10: Improvements across the cohort – across all communication skills

Table 4.11 Improvements in communication skills across the cohort – by individual area



The results show that the resources helped learners in SEND settings make gains across a broad range of skill areas. One area that stands out is students’ development of ‘Questioning and Listening Skills’. Children with SEND can struggle with communication and so the fact that so many students made gains in this area evidences the power of a drama-based approach.

“One student who stands out is Annabel. She has autism and global developmental delay, and although she is verbal student she speaks in simple sentences with a lot of prompts. She was able to talk about her characters each week, retell parts of the story and showed a real enjoyment of learning.”  
Roberta Bray, Eresby Special School, Lincolnshire

Another area where students made significant developments was ‘Creativity’. Children with SEND can struggle to verbalise their ideas, so being able to act them out provides a valuable outlet for expression.

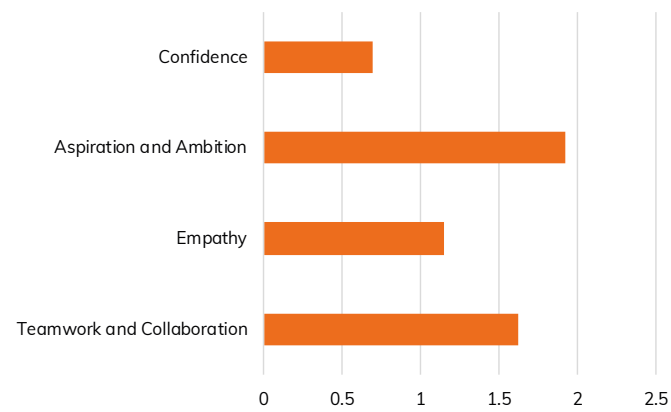
“The storm session really captured their imagination. The students enjoyed recreating the sounds and got into improvising what might happen. One student, Nathan, who has Down’s Syndrome, threw himself overboard to escape!”  
Roberta Bray, Eresby Special School, Lincolnshire

SEND settings social development

Attainment area	Social skills (all four areas)
Percentage of students who improved	84.62%
Average number of points gained	1.35

Table 4.12: SEND settings social development outcomes combined

Table 4.13: SEND settings social development outcomes across the focus areas



Children with SEND can struggle with social development. The fact that they made progress all of these areas demonstrates the power of the arts to help children gain the

skills they need to engage with the world around them.

“I was blown away at times at by how well they understood the relationships between the characters when this is an aspect of real life our students often don’t understand.”  
Roberta Bray, Eresby Special School, Lincolnshire

The fact that children in SEND settings made the most gains in the area of Aspiration and Ambition indicates how the opportunity to take on a new challenge can help all children to push themselves and grow.

SEND settings cultural capital outcomes



Chart 4.14: Percentage of students in SEND settings who gained in interest in Shakespeare (69%)

Shakespeare could be seen as something inaccessible to those in SEND settings. The fact that a significant proportion gained an interest in Shakespeare shows that it is something that can include all kinds of learner, helping them to build cultural capital and become confident, educated citizens.



Teachers' professional development

Attainment area	Percentage of teachers who improved
Confidence working with Shakespeare	86%
Understanding of Shakespeare	86%

Table 4.15: Average points gained by teachers in both settings

100% of teachers said they had gained new tools and used them in the classroom

The study therefore demonstrates how Shakespeare Schools Foundation's pedagogy can help develop classroom practice for teachers as well as learning outcomes for students.

As raised by the study by A New Direction, a lack of training for practitioners is seen as a threat to arts provision for children in SEND settings. As part of the evaluation, teachers reported that their practice was developed and that they gained new tools for use in the classroom.

**“The level of understanding and enjoyment for pupils who will not normally engage with a story has been remarkable. I am determined to use drama much more in all my teaching.”**  
Roberta Bray, Eresby Special School, Lincolnshire





# CHALLENGES & LEARNINGS



In recruiting schools, Shakespeare Schools Foundation experienced a range of challenges. The charity had planned to conduct the project in the spring term of 2019. However, schools said that they would rather do the project in the autumn term and link it to their participation in Shakespeare Schools Festival. The charity responded by moving the project to the autumn of 2019.

Out of the schools who were approached who did not take part, a number of reasons were cited. Some schools said they already had a curriculum scheme in place for the autumn term and did not want to depart from it. Teachers raised concerns that they would not be able to conduct an evaluation on top of an already heavy workload. Some SEND schools said they would find it difficult to take part in the project because of the way they structure their classes. Of the schools who did complete the project, not all delivered endline data.

In order to allow for the above, the charity approached over 50 schools in the first instance. This is something the charity will do when conducting any similar future project to ensure that sufficient numbers of schools are engaged.

Out of the schools who started the project, 392 students and 15 teachers from 10 schools (eight primary schools and two SEND schools) completed it, delivering endpoint data. However, these numbers form a representative sample size from which overall findings can be extrapolated. In future projects, the charity will ensure that a greater number of schools is engaged at the outset than is required to submit endline data in order to ensure a representative sample size is obtained.



# FUTURE AVENUES



- Many teachers commented how using the curriculum resources as well as participating in Shakespeare Schools Festival supported learners. The charity could conduct a comparison between schools who both used the curriculum resources and took part in the Festival, and schools who just used curriculum resources. This would help the charity to work out the relative impact of each approach and support schools accordingly.
- Learners in 'working to' and 'working above' groups made smaller gains overall. A future study could consider how to better tailor resources to better support these learners.
- To further evaluate the impact of resources on students with SEND across both settings, the charity could collect information about the nature of each child's SEND (e.g. autism, dyslexia, speech and language difficulties).
- In order to consolidate the evidence of the impact of these resources on learners with SEND in mainstream, a larger sample could be assessed.
- One teacher from an SEND school commented that some of the activities and concepts were too difficult for most of her students, resulting in her having to adapt the materials. The charity could therefore consider how it might develop sources to support children with a wider range of needs – for example by providing a 'menu' of activities that teachers can choose from.
- There is increasing recognition for the importance of giving children opportunities to build cultural capital. A future study could explore how this could be measured in greater depth.



Two young people from Eresby Special School in Splisby, Lincolnshire improvise a scene from *The Tempest* in which Caliban and Miranda first meet.



Students from St Mary's RC Primary School in Eccles, which took part in the Shakespeare For All project perform in the 2019 Festival.



Teachers take part in a workshop in Liverpool, developing their ability to bring Shakespeare into the classroom and preparing to direct a professional theatre performance.



**“I HAVE THOROUGHLY ENJOYED TEACHING THE LESSONS. IT HAS BEEN INSPIRING AND THE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT FOR PUPILS WHO WILL NOT NORMALLY ENGAGE WITH A STORY HAS BEEN REMARKABLE... I AM DETERMINED TO USE DRAMA MUCH MORE IN ALL MY TEACHING.”**

**“THROUGHOUT THE SCHEME, THE CHILDREN WERE HIGHLY ENGAGED AND MOTIVATED, PRODUCING SOME VERY STRONG, HIGH QUALITY WORK.”**

