



# Children engaging with drama

An evaluation of the National Theatre's drama work  
in primary schools 2002-2004

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## Foreword

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'... education should help one make sense of the world.  
At the same time, it should help students make sense of  
themselves as 'players' in the world.'  
**(Kincheloe and Steinberg 1998)**

The research study that formed the basis for this report was unique. Most research on drama in schools has been on drama lessons or sessions led by teachers (Somers 1994); ours was on drama led by artists (actors, directors, storytellers, musicians, movement specialists), trained by the National Theatre. Most school-based drama research has been done by the teachers; ours was carried out by experienced researchers. In the UK, research on drama in school has been mainly about secondary school students, especially in relation to criteria for assessment in external examinations (e.g. Taylor 1996). Our study was concerned with primary school children. Most research studies have been cross-sectional (Catterall 2002); ours was longitudinal - over three years, where children participated in three two-term programmes. Much research on drama focuses on one class, on, essentially a case-study. We were able to follow classes in ten schools taking part in the National Theatre drama programmes and ten matched schools.

As we describe in the main body of the report, the theoretical basis for our study has been the new sociology of childhood (developed since the 1980s). We think of children as contributors to the division of labour in society; their activities in school should be understood as work. We think of childhood as subordinated to adulthood; and therefore children can be understood as a minority social group; at school, as elsewhere, they find that adult agendas predominate over theirs. That is one reason why drama programmes based on more democratic child-adult relations are so important for children. For within sociological perspectives, children are to be understood as social agents, as active learners, who take part in the structuring of their lives, as far as adults permit them.

We think our study gained too from its unusual focus on a range of issues. Over the three years of the study, we kept a running focus on three areas of possible gains for the children. First, we considered whether National Theatre children made literacy gains and whether their test scores on SATs improved. Second, we pursued the complex question whether personal and social gains could be attributed to the drama work. And third, we focused down on specifically drama-related gains: did the children learn what drama is as an art form; and did they learn how to engage with drama and to make drama? Of great interest here is relations between these three strands. For instance, we found that high maths test scores seemed to relate to participation in the drama programmes; was this because the children also gained in self-confidence - the Can Do factor?

In the arts world, evaluation is often described as an important weapon to justify arts expenditure; but funds are rarely made available for adequate evaluation. The National Theatre was highly committed to the research element in their programme of education work, and

funded us for three years. This enabled us to explore, refine and use a wide range of methods. These included observation of drama sessions, informal discussions with children, artists and teachers, more formal interviews, questionnaires, literacy exercises, drama exercises and class attainment on tests (SATs). We were able, then, to compare the sets of data: to 'triangulate', in order to see whether one type of finding was borne out in another type. Having varying types of data lends strength to findings; for instance, not only did children themselves say they had gained self-confidence - in both interviews and questionnaires, but we could observe that they had; and their teachers said so, too.

This central finding, that children made personal and social gains through participation in the National Theatre programmes, is important; not least in the context of today's English primary education system. Perhaps the most worrying - and counter-productive - feature of that system is that it prioritises teacher-led instruction over children's active learning. Once children start on Key Stage 1 work, child-led exploration declines drastically (Watts 2001) and as the years go on through Key Stage 2 and beyond, children lose their sense of control over their learning, and increasingly lack confidence in their abilities (Triggs and Pollard 1998; Deakin Crick, Broadfoot and Claxton 2002; Deakin Crick 2003). It is not then surprising that a proportion of young people, especially those who find that they 'fail' according to school criteria, revolt against the system and indeed vote with their feet. As our data on children's views on school show, children enjoy most those parts of the school day where they are actively engaged - sports, free time, playtime.

The case for drama in schools, if it needs to be made, can rest on the point that it introduces children to the complexities of an art form, and to ways of making it happen. But if, more instrumentally, we also want children to enjoy their agency in educational processes, then drama allows them to do so.

# Acknowledgements

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This research has benefited from hugely co-operative and positive engagement by the many people involved. We are especially grateful to Jenny Harris, Head of the National Theatre Education Department, who had sufficient faith in the research to fund it over three years. We have had very good contacts with staff who implemented programmes, including Rose Harrison and Lynn Whitehead. Two of the National Theatre staff - Rachel Dickinson and Julia Samuels - not only produced and managed the programmes but worked with us as researchers and have given valuable insights and technical advice to those in the research team for whom drama is not their principal area of expertise. Our thanks also go to all the National Theatre artists and directors, in particular to Kate Beales for designing and carrying out a series of special drama workshops in 2003.

At school level, we have been welcomed by the head teachers into the schools and by the teachers who gave us their time and reflected carefully and creatively about the topics we raised with them. We are grateful both to our 'National Theatre' schools and to the 'matched' schools.

We want to say an extra special thank-you to the children, who also gave us their time and reflected carefully and creatively on the topics we raised with them, and who did it with such enthusiasm.

Colleagues at The Institute of Education have offered valuable suggestions about conceptual issues. Our thanks go to Sandra Stone and Christine Delaney who entered the children questionnaire data in 2002 and 2003 and to Lyn Rajan who analysed the children questionnaire data in 2003.

We should also like to thank Andrew Chapman for his design input on this report.

## 1 | Summary

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This is the final report of our three-year study of the National Theatre Education Department's drama work in primary schools in deprived areas of Greenwich and Lewisham. Their work was part of a larger urban regeneration project: Art of Regeneration (AOR) based at the Albany in Deptford, South-East London.

Our study followed two cohorts of primary school children, during their participation in the National Theatre's drama programmes. We reported on the older children, whom we followed for two years, in our two interim reports (January 2003 and October 2003).

This report focuses on the younger children whom we followed for three years (2002-2004). Children in nine classes participated first as Year 3s and again as Year 4s; eight of the classes participated as Year 5s.

This was a match control study where we collected qualitative and quantitative data with and about these children, their teachers and National Theatre artists. In the first two years of the study we compared data about National Theatre children and teachers with data collected in matched schools. In the third year we collected data only from National Theatre children, teachers and artists. We summarize here the main findings detailed in this report.

- Recent education policy promotes drama in education as a tool for learning. Both National Theatre and matched schools were committed to promoting the arts, including drama.
- Those children who participated in the National Theatre drama programmes reported an increased enjoyment of school. Drama promotes and supports children's agency and engagement in educational processes.
- These drama programmes each stretched over two terms; and children were engaged as experiential learners. These factors encouraged children's knowledge to become embedded and creativity to flourish.
- The main gains made by the children were twofold. First, they learned drama literacy: drama, performing and responding to drama as an art form. Second, the programmes promoted essential tools for learning: self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Children also engaged with theatre - a key cultural experience, beyond the world of school.
- Children recognised, through experience, the value of working with other people towards goals.
- Children's gains in self-confidence may explain the National Theatre children's statistically higher score in optional SATs mathematics compared to the matched children.
- National Theatre children learned to speak more clearly and listen more attentively than their matches. We found no differences between the two groups on Literacy SATs (reading and writing).



- The National Theatre drama programmes offered children the opportunity to use their bodies, minds, voices, instruments, puppets and space.

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- The programmes, artists and research gave children the chance to reflect on and discuss what they had learned about drama and about themselves.

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- Teachers think children learn through active engagement but that this is not generally promoted through the National Literacy Strategy. Since drama work implements this engagement, they valued it highly.

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- All the National Theatre teachers said they had gained confidence about doing drama with children and were using their learned competencies.

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- Artists used a variety of roles: performer, instructor, rule-maker, supporters of cultural heritage, reflexive practitioner and partner with teachers in order to promote continuously interesting sessions and democratic partnership with children.

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- Children concentrated for longer and participated more fully when artists used a range of environments for learning (whole class or group work/discussion, team games, paired work).

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- Music, movement and puppetry/design sessions worked best when specialists led them. However, continuity, where one artist led all the sessions, was valued by teachers, artists and children.

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- The programmes were strongest when there was good artist-teacher partnership. Liaison between (the very busy) teachers and artists varied in quality and quantity despite goodwill on both sides.

In the final section of the report we list good practice points.

## 2 | Introduction

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### The urban regeneration context

Cultural projects have played an increasingly important role in urban regeneration since the mid-1980s. Millions of pounds of public and private money was committed and spent on redeveloping some of Britain's high-profile cultural industries. The 1990s saw a shift in emphasis in regeneration strategies away from capital investment in large-scale reconstruction of the post-industrial urban landscape, towards seeing local people and communities as the principal asset through which renewal could be achieved (Landry, Greene, Matarasso, Bianchini 1996; Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1996).

Indicative of this change in emphasis was a major review on the future of education commissioned in 1998 by David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment and Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The report that followed, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (NACCCE, 1999), stated that if we wanted to meet the economic, technological, social and personal needs of the twenty-first century then schools had to provide 'a broad, flexible and motivating education' that recognised the value of creativity, adaptability and better powers of communication.

Arts organisations responded to this rallying call. In June 2000, National Theatre Education in partnership with the London Boroughs of Greenwich and Lewisham, Goldsmiths College, Lewisham College and The Albany, Deptford made a successful Single Regeneration Bid (SRB) to fund and manage a community-based venture called Art of Regeneration (AOR). AOR was based at the Albany in Deptford, in South East London. Its strategic objectives were to:

- raise levels of achievement in the local schools
  - improve levels of motivation, skills and competencies for young people
  - enhance the skills and expertise of the adults who work with them
- and
- transform what was a neglected facility, the Albany in Deptford, into an inspirational focus for learning, creativity and social activity for the whole community.

AOR set out to achieve its objectives through a series of interlinked arts activities targeted at children and young people, families and communities, including local artists and creative entrepreneurs. AOR divided its arts activities into strands: in-school (primary and secondary); out of school; work-based training; professional support for small creative businesses; live performance at the Albany; and a Digital Arts and Media skills training and support initiative.

In October 2001, the National Theatre Education Department commissioned the Social Science Research Unit at the Institute of Education to carry out a rigorous evaluation of the in-school (primary) strand.

In brief, the National Theatre in-school drama programmes for primary school children had a

similar structure in all three years: artist and teacher training days preceded the programme. The artists and teachers were trained separately with a crossover day where they could meet one another. These were followed by artist-led in-school sessions with the children. The in-school sessions usually took place in the morning in the school hall and lasted approximately two-and-a-half hours, with a playtime break half-way. Teachers were asked to be present and were expected to maintain order; most also participated in the activities. Children spent most sessions active, on their feet, working as a whole class and/or in groups. Mid-way through the programme, the children went to the National Theatre to see a performance related to the programme. At the end of the programmes the children put on and participated in a show at the Albany, Deptford. We give a detailed breakdown of the three programmes on pages 21 and 22.

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### **The educational context**

What do regeneration programmes and education strategies have in common? Both are interested in the development of social capital (cultural and intellectual). Both are under pressure to ensure effective positive outcomes. It is only within the last five years however, that both have converged to make children the locus of social capital development, and creativity the agent or catalyst. Before that, the focus of political attention and concern was getting back to basics and raising educational standards to a level comparable with other similarly developed countries around the world. The implementation in the early 1990s of the National Curriculum and its associated measures: testing and competition between schools, was designed to do just that. As a consequence, and in order to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, primary schools reduced arts activities (Galton and McBeath 2002; Downing, Johnson and Kaur 2003) and playtimes (Blatchford 1998).

The national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy have had a major impact on primary schools, particularly the National Literacy Strategy. However, there has been growing expressed disquiet among teachers and educationalists about the rise of the 'performativity' discourse with its attention to targets and improvement criteria. Furthermore, argued Ken Robinson, the cognitive focus of the National Curriculum was unlikely to equip children for the world of work (NACCCE, 1999). Teachers are also concerned that the regime has seriously downgraded children's own knowledge, views and interests. They argue that the child as 'agent in learning' has been replaced by the child as 'object of teacher instruction'. Of particular concern is that children are losing self-esteem (Triggs and Pollard 1998); and self-esteem is probably important for achievement (Davies and Brember 1999). Studies on effective lifelong learning have found that as children move up through the key stages of the curriculum they lose control of factors that enable learning (Deakin Crick, Broadfoot and Claxton 2002; Deakin Crick 2003). The authors identify these factors as: confidence that you can progress; the ability to make connections; curiosity; creativity; the ability to relate to a teacher; and the ability to talk about learning.

In response to these concerns, government departments, ministers and central education departments have sought to encourage schools to foster the arts and in particular creativity (Joubert 2001; DfES 2003), and have provided arts funding, especially to disadvantaged areas, through the Education Action Zones and Creative Partnership schemes.

'I make no apology for putting test and examination results at the centre of our education policy...But we also know that creativity in the curriculum, in teaching methods, in use of school time and school staff, and in after school activities can help young people fulfil their potential...creativity has always been a source of wonder and enjoyment. Today it is a source of economic wealth too.'

(David Miliband, Three Rs? Now it's the three Cs, The Daily Telegraph, November, 2002)

Judging by the 20 schools in our study (10 National Theatre and 10 match), schools are enthusiastic about introducing arts activities; and not just those schools in EAZ, Creative Partnerships or regeneration areas. Schools are incorporating the arts either formally, through Artsmark, Creative Partnerships (Arts Council England) and Beacon school status (two of the schools in our study are linked to the Creative Partnership scheme), or by bringing in arts-based activities during and after school. Data from 'our' 20 head teachers suggest a commitment to provide children with a rich and rounded set of experiences and a large range of arts activities. Children take part in assemblies; many can join music, dance, visual arts and drama clubs. Thus, for example, in 2002-3, all the National Theatre and match children had been on at least one arts-focused trip and took part in at least one session with an incoming arts person/organisation. Many children also reported that they attended school and out-of-school drama clubs. In addition, some of the teachers we spoke to had some training for teaching drama (beyond the minimal training given in PGCE). Six of our 20 schools employed teachers to teach drama and/or had artists in residence or visiting weekly. Many study children were participating in some drama work with their class teacher.

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## Theoretical perspectives

### Children and childhood

This study is underpinned by sociological understandings of children and childhood (e.g. Alanen 1988; Qvortrup et al 1994; Mayall 2002). We think of children as social agents, whose activities at school should be, but often are not, described as work. Children constitute a minority social group, where adult agendas prevail over theirs, at school as elsewhere. We argue that it is not appropriate to think of education as socialisation by adults; rather that good learning takes place when children are active participants, with adults as partners, in programmes within the curriculum. In the context of current education policies, teachers find they have to adopt top-down methods, and they emphasise that they would prefer - because it is more effective - that children were positioned as active participants, with more control over their learning.

These ideas are important to our understanding of the potential and actuality of drama programmes in school. For during these, children's active participation is essential to success; and the adult who leads the session must engage in respectful interaction with the children. Therefore, we have taken care to observe and describe the drama sessions; to study the varying ways in which the artists work with the children; and to record children's own accounts of their experiences. From our perspective, children are not the objects of the exercise; they are centre-stage - in both senses - as active participants in the programmes and in the research.

### Ideologies of education and ways of learning

Putting a drama programme into school provides a case-study of differing views about how education can and does take place, a debate that has a long history. Michael Young (1977), writing at the time when right-wing ideas were setting in train the education 'reforms' of the 1980s and 1990s, quotes Maxine Greene (1971) who described a then dominant view among education philosophers that the curriculum was 'a structure of socially prescribed knowledge, external to the knower, there to be mastered'. And she contrasted this with her own preference for a curriculum 'as a possibility for the learner as an existing person mainly concerned with making sense of his own world.' (See also Greene's later work [2002] on drama work as conscious participation.) Young provides shorthand terms for these two views: the curriculum as fact; and the curriculum as practice. The long-running debate about how to school our children is taken up again in the context of the 1990s education 'reforms' by Meighan and Siraj-Blatchford (1997: Section Three) who provided a useful discussion of these two dichotomous views, and argued that the complexity of practice defies simplistic divisions. Our study of the National Theatre drama programmes in primary schools required us to consider how far children, as social agents, were enabled to practice, to participate actively in learning in a school setting where adults control the agenda, even in drama sessions.

Understandings of learning are at the centre of this project. A drama programme in schools delivered by artists brings its own ways of learning. Discussions about the value of drama as both a tool for learning and an art form has been an important thread running through the history of drama in schools (for example, Slade 1963; Way 1967; Wagner 1979; Bolton 1979; Somers 1996). The HMI report: 'The teaching and learning of drama' (1990) supported this dual nature of drama as a teaching method and an arts subject. Whilst the National Curriculum omits drama in the primary curriculum as an individual subject area, it is mentioned as a teaching tool in the Orders for Maths, History, Geography, Science and English.

Clipson-Boyles comments: 'drama is a powerful pedagogy' (1998, preface). Drama provides meaningful contexts for bringing language alive, for enabling interactive learning to take place and providing children with another medium for the expression and presentation of learning (Clipson-Boyles 1998: 4).

Whilst drama in schools can take many forms, it is its interactive character that is central to the learning process. This is in keeping with a social constructivist view of learning where children are seen not as empty vessels to be filled but as active participants or co-constructors of meaning with others, as described, for example, by Vygotsky and others (Vygotsky, 1978; Rinaldi, 1998).

However, this social constructivist paradigm sits uncomfortably alongside the practice of assessment and testing in schools. The emphasis on quantifiable outcomes is influenced by a scientific management paradigm (Deakin Crick, 2003:2). These tensions between process and measurement are important in this evaluation of an arts education programme. What learning are we interested in and how do we set out to measure this learning?

In our study, we are considering a range of indicators of learning, including summative measures such as the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) scores, but also formative and learner-led

approaches to assessment. The breadth of learning we are interested in is congruent with the qualities and characteristics of effective lifelong learning identified by Deakin Crick, Broadfoot and Claxton (2002; Deakin Crick 2003). They identify seven dimensions of learning energy: growth orientation or belief in learning as a lifelong process, critical curiosity, meaning making, resilience and robustness, creativity, relationships/interdependence and strategic awareness or awareness of themselves as learners.

### Creativity

Creativity is one of the dimensions of learning we have been interested in investigating:

'Effective learners are able to look at things in different ways and to imagine new possibilities. They like playing with new ideas and taking different perspectives, even when they don't quite know where their trains of thought are leading'.

(Deakin Crick: 2003: 8)

This understanding of creative thinking is in keeping with Craft's notion of 'little c creativity', which she equates with 'personal effectiveness' and 'resourcefulness lifewide' (for example, Craft 2000). An important aspect of her concept of creativity is that it is not necessarily linked with a product-outcome.

Creativity as a life-skill is a democratic notion of creativity, as described in the NACCCE report (1999). Democratic creativity in this context means the creativity of the ordinary person in ordinary daily life, and recognizes that all people are creative (Kress 1995). The NACCCE report hints at creativity being both a learnable and latent entity. Teachers can both encourage children to believe in their creative potential, and give them confidence so that they may develop creative abilities and skills. Teachers can also identify and foster children's latent creativity, which may often go unrecognized (NACCCE 1999). Learnable versus latent creativity is not a new issue. Howard Gardner has written about this for many years (Gardner 1993). Like Kress, David Buckingham argues that we are all creative and that creativity as a social panacea is currently being sprinkled around like 'fairy dust' (Buckingham 2003).

So we have been interested to see which ways of learning have been promoted through the National Theatre programmes and how these have influenced the roles of teachers, artists and children in learning processes. An important element of this evaluation is children's own perspectives on their learning over time and on the differing learning styles promoted by the artists.

### Current theories supporting drama in education

Removed as a discrete curriculum subject under the Education Act of 1988, drama in schools has been making a comeback, owing in part to campaigning by the Arts Council, teachers and researchers. The case was argued by the Arts Council of England in their report 'Drama in Schools (1992). 'Drama', they argued, 'is an artform, a practical activity and an intellectual discipline...which involves imagination and feelings and helps us make sense of the world'. Ofsted also recognized the role of drama when they provided guidance on what inspectors should look for in monitoring the quality of drama in schools. Under the auspices of the National Literacy

Teaching Framework (1998), drama was included within the English Curriculum at Key Stages 1-4, mentioned explicitly under Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. The Arts Council's later version of 'Drama in Schools' pin-pointed the importance of drama in schools: as a way of learning about things through drama and learning about things in drama (M. Ashwell, Drama in Schools in UK, Athens Conference 2000). In 2003, the DfES provided specific detailed guidance for implementing Speaking, listening, learning: teaching objectives in the National Literacy Strategy, under four headings: speaking, listening, group discussion and interaction and drama (DfES 2003).

Researchers and educationalists have also made the case for the benefits of drama as a powerful tool to help children construct meaning and a 'brain-friendly' medium for teaching and learning (Baldwin and Fleming 2003). The theory underpinning this account is that drama is a multi-sensory medium that allows children to explore language in all its variety. Drama allows children to look and think about texts, stories and other aural and written communications through their bodies, senses and intellect.

'The mind, body and emotions are given opportunities to connect and function together rather than separately, enabling children to make all-round and interconnecting sense of their experiences and learning'

(Baldwin and Fleming, 2003:4).



**Performing at the Albany**  
**Primary Shakespeare 2002**  
Photo: Helen Turner

## 3 | *Research aims, designs and methods*

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### **Research aims**

- To evaluate the effects of a creative drama programme in disadvantaged inner city primary schools on children's educational, personal, social and aesthetic development
- To study collaboration between artists and teachers and impacts on teachers of the programmes
- To explore processes in the implementation of National Theatre programmes in primary schools

### **Research design**

The research study aimed to evaluate the effects of a creative drama programme in disadvantaged inner city primary schools on children's educational, personal, social and aesthetic development. We did this by comparing, in a controlled way, differences between children and teachers who participated in the National Theatre programmes and those who did not. The study employed a match control study design, where qualitative and quantitative outcomes collected from the children in intervention schools ('the National Theatre children' - that is, those participating in the programmes) were compared with baseline measures, and with outcomes from children in 'matched' control schools.

The National Theatre Education Department asked 15 schools to participate. These schools were chosen because they were within the catchment area of Art of Regeneration - a National Theatre Education-led programme in North Lewisham and West Greenwich, based at the Albany in Deptford. All except two agreed. Three of the schools were receiving extra input, especially arts input, via the Education Action Zones scheme and we were asked not to include those in our study. Our study therefore included ten 'intervention schools', in this report referred to as 'National Theatre schools'.

The criteria used for selecting the matched schools were as follows: the percentage of children receiving free school meals, having English as a second language (EAL) and achieving Level 4 or above on Key Stage 2 SATS for reading and writing. These criteria would point, as a rough guide, to socio-economic status; opportunities for doing well in the English-language school system; and academic achievement. Identifying matching schools was difficult, and in the matching process, in two cases we had to be a bit lenient; but in these cases there was always a close match for one of the criteria, and a match within 10% for the other two. Schools that best fitted the National Theatre schools were approached; in two cases the first (best) match refused, so we approached the next best match. Matched schools were offered £500 for their participation during both the first and second years of the study.

The benefits of including a well-matched comparison-group can be valuable in generating theories about 'what works'. Well-matched comparison-group studies can also tell you whether an



intervention, such as National Theatre drama programmes, makes a difference. Well-matched studies also play a valuable role in generating hypotheses that merit confirmation in randomized controlled trials (U.S. Department of Education).

We followed two cohorts of children in National Theatre and matched schools over three research years. The older cohort began in school Years 4 or 5 and participated in two years of National Theatre programmes (2001-2 and 2002-3). The younger cohort participated in all three years of National Theatre programmes, beginning in school Year 3 and ending in the Spring term of school Year 5. We did not follow the older cohort of children into the third year of the study, since half would have gone on to secondary school and because funding was not available. We report on findings for this older cohort in our two interim reports (January 2003 and October 2003).

The younger cohort, who took part in all three National Theatre programmes, are our main cohort and are the principal topic of this report. We collected qualitative and quantitative outcome data about and from them and their matches when they were in Year 3 (2001-2), again when they were in Year 4 (2002-3) and again when they were in year 5 (2003-4). In the final year of the study (2003-4), we had to omit the matched children owing to funding restrictions. Nine classes, one from each of nine National Theatre schools, took part in 2001-2 and 2002-3, and 8 schools in 2003-4 (the ninth school wanted a different year group to participate in the programme and so we had to exclude them from the research in 2003-4).

In addition to outcome comparisons, we carried out a process evaluation of the National Theatre's implementation of their drama programme. Process evaluations offer 'a structured way of thinking about what happened during a project' that enable you to describe and discuss what happened as a result of the activities (Woolf 1999). No process evaluation was carried out in match schools.

This study can also be seen as a case-study, in keeping with Robson's definition, which acknowledges the complexity of real world research:

'We are taking case-study to be a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence.' (Robson, 1993: 146).

Thus, the National Theatre's drama programme acts as a case-study and model for other drama programmes.

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## Research methods

This was a complex research study. We needed both quantitative and qualitative methods to capture, describe, illuminate and measure the impact and process of implementing such a large and lengthy drama programme across the schools and two theatres over a period of three years. We adopted a multi-method approach where we used differing theories and methods (observations, documents, interviews, questionnaires) to understand what was happening in the research setting and how the people involved managed their roles. We give equal value to the varying methods used and these allow us to 'triangulate' and cross-check one result against another, and increase the reliability and validity of our findings.

Those carrying out the fieldwork included Helen Turner (all three years), Berry Mayall (first year), Suzanne Hood (first year), Alison Clark (second year) Rachel Dickinson (first two years) and Julia Samuels (third year).

As we note above, this report deals with our main cohort, the children studied over three years. With, from and about them we collected the following kinds of data (see Appendix 1).

**Semi-structured questionnaires:** Children in the National Theatre and matched classes completed a baseline questionnaire before the National Theatre programmes began (2001) and outcome questionnaires in 2002 (N=396) and 2003 (N=309). Only children who completed the baseline and outcome questionnaires were included in the statistical analysis in 2003. National Theatre children also completed an outcome questionnaire in 2004 (N=192). The children's questionnaires in each of the three years included a variety of validated and specifically designed measures to cover areas such as confidence, self-esteem, self concept, literacy level, ability to work as part of a team, happiness at school, cultural awareness, feelings of exclusion/inclusion, and community involvement (copies of the questionnaires are available on request).

In the first two years, we entered the children's questionnaire data using Access and analysed them using SPSS. We compared National Theatre children's answers with matched children's answers (global scores and by sex) and tested for significance (that any differences were unlikely to be by chance) using Chi Squares. In the third year, we had no comparison group. However, we compared National Theatre children questionnaire data across the three years of the study.

**Observations:** Over the three years, researchers observed 85 two-and-a-half-hour long in-school drama sessions (*Primary Shakespeare*: 36 observations, *Word Alive*: 25, *Primary Classics*: 24). We ensured even coverage of type of session, of schools and of artists. During the in-school drama sessions and the video recorded exercise (summer 2003), researchers coded what they saw taking place (actions and words), using a running order time-line, and wrote other comments and observations on a schedule specifically devised for the task and purposefully refined over three years (see Appendix 2).

The process of analysis was as follows: immediately after each observation the researcher listed the principal activities seen in each session. As a group, they then met to discuss and agree what were the processes through which children were learning during the programme, what were the main activities, what worked well and what were the differences within and between the sessions.

**Researchers** also observed 12 children's performances at the Albany Theatre (four *Tempest* and eight *Dr. Faustus*) and 16 National Theatre performances (four one-hour *The Mini Tempests*, four one-hour *Word Alive Storytelling Festivals* and eight one-hour *Wonderful Life and Miserable Death of the Renowned Magician Dr. Faustus*). We made field-notes and after the shows we discussed their experiences with children using a four-question topic list.

**Interviews with children:** It was an important feature of the study that the children themselves were consulted about their experiences of and the perceived value of the National Theatre's drama programmes. Children were interviewed in pairs, small groups and as a class at several

points during the three years to find out what they thought about the programmes and to gauge their aesthetic development, and levels of literacy and oracy skills. Interviews were: ten-minute class interviews at the end of each observed session (2002); halfway through reviews with three intervention classes in 2002 and four in 2003. These reviews took 20-25 minutes per small group (usually 5 or 6 groups per class). The researcher used a pre-determined set of questions and responses were recorded on flipcharts. In 2004 we asked all eight classes (in groups) to review their experiences over three years.

Interview data were analysed under three main headings - identified in the data. We listed the number of comments they made on issues relating to drama, literacy, and the personal and social.

**Questionnaires and interviews with teachers:** The nine *Primary Shakespeare* teachers and nine teachers from matched schools completed baseline and outcome questionnaires in 2002; we also interviewed all nine *Primary Shakespeare* teachers at the end of the programme. Nine *Word Alive* teachers and their nine matches completed baseline and outcome questionnaires in 2003. All eight *Primary Classics* teachers were interviewed in 2004 after the programme ended.

The data were analysed according to the questions asked and also more broadly for themes running across the answers. We explored: professional experiences of drama and of working on drama with children; confidence about teaching drama; current and past involvement in extra curricular activities at school and use of innovative teaching methods; additional projects or responsibilities; and job satisfaction. Data were compared across the three years of the study.

**Questionnaires and interviews with other key informants:** As part of the process evaluation, we conducted interviews with head teachers and National Theatre artists and gave school administrators questionnaires to complete about their school's other arts-related activities. The themes we explored included: their enjoyment of the programmes, the benefits and drawbacks of participating, effects they had on their work and on the school, and any processes that promoted or hindered generalisation of the programmes through the rest of the school.

**Documents:** At the start of the *Primary Classics* programme, we gave each child a folder. In the folder was a National Theatre publicity poster about the *Faustus* show at the National Theatre, a timetable of the whole of the *Primary Classics* programme they were taking part in (in-school sessions and visits to the National and the Albany theatres) and three literacy exercises to complete. There were extra pockets for the children to include other pieces of work if they wished. At the end of the programme we went back into schools and, with the children's permission, looked at the contents of every folder. We used a grid to record the contents and made copies of examples of children's work, some of which are included in this report.

**Secondary data:** Key Stage 2 optional SAT scores for reading, writing and mathematics for National Theatre and matched children in 2002 and 2003 were compared. In 2002 (*Primary Shakespeare* children and their matches), we were able to compare only six of the nine pairs, since some schools did not provide the data. In 2003, we obtained data for eight of the nine pairs of classes. We also compared individual scores (rather than class scores), since this provides

greater power to show differences between the intervention and matched groups. The figures for 2003 were adjusted for baseline differences. Statistical adjustments were also made to allow for the point that children from one school were more likely to be similar to each other than to other children. (Logistic regression of 2003 individual scores, adjusting for baseline scores, and clustering for school attended.)

SATs data were not collected for 2004, since funds were not available for this work.

**Video recorded data:** We decided to test out children's learning in the central agendas of the National Theatre programmes: learning what drama and storytelling are, and learning to do or to make drama and construct and tell stories. We designed, organised and analysed video recorded drama exercises with randomly selected pairs of National Theatre and matched schools - four pairs from our main cohort (the subjects of this report) and three pairs from the older cohort.

Two researchers sitting together watched the pairs of videos, individually coded the activities and agreed a final assessment. Researchers were 'blind' to the identities of the classes; no researcher analysed videos from schools they had worked in and where they would recognise the children/teachers. Schools had been instructed beforehand to remove or turn inside out any identifying school logos or badges.

We coded and assessed the differing elements of the workshops, made a rating of a story-telling exercise and then made an overall rating of the children's performance, using scores of 1 to 5 on the continua below. The list on the right points to factors that enable children to learn (Deakin Crick 2003), and that demonstrate children's drama skills and personal and social abilities:

Obedient	<>	assertive
Not creative	<>	creative
Cautious	<>	confident
Cognitive	<>	multiple intelligences
Dependent	<>	independent
No interaction with artist	<>	much interaction
Unconfident interaction with peers	<>	confident interaction

### Appreciative Inquiry

We have also taken advantage of a promising approach to considering a complex set of processes: Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Our broad understandings of learning within the context of an evaluation of an arts education programme fits well within the approach. It sets out to 'appreciate the best of what is; envision what might be; engage in dialogue to generate new knowledge; innovate' (Brighouse and Woods, 1999: 146; Carnell and Meecham 2002). The approach has its origins in organisational management (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987). It allows us to place the children at the centre of the research (Carnell and Meecham, 2002:5); for the emphasis is on the impact of the arts education programme on the development of children as learners. Description of best practice includes consideration of what have been the opportunities - and the barriers - for children to develop as learners.

## 4 | *The National Theatre drama programmes: 2002-2004*

When they were in Year 3, children and teachers took part in *Primary Shakespeare* (2002) exploring William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. This programme started with a two-day teacher INSET (in-service training) held at the Albany in Deptford. This was followed a few weeks later by 12 in-school drama sessions spread over two terms (Spring and Summer 2002), led by artists and specialist artists.

Session 1 Storytelling *The Tempest*

Session 2 Mini-scenes

Session 3 Text specialist

Session 4 Movement as a means of exploring the text

Session 5 Devising from the children's own ideas

Halfway through the *Primary Shakespeare* programme, the National Theatre children and their teachers went on a trip to see *The Mini Tempest* at the National Theatre. The in-school sessions continued with:

Session 6 Devising using puppetry

Session 7 Making puppets

Session 8 Manipulating puppets

Session 9 Incorporating puppetry with performance

Session 10 Music as an element of performance

Session 11 Rehearsal

Session 12 Rehearsal

In July 2002, the children took part in *The Tempest Festival* at the Albany where they put on their own shows in front of two other schools and parents.

When these same children were in Year 4, the children and their new class teachers took part in a storytelling programme called *Word Alive* (2003). This programme also started with a two-day INSET for the teachers. In this programme, children had nine artist-led in-school sessions:

Session 1 Basic drama and theatre games

Session 2 Listening to stories

Session 3 Deconstructing stories

Session 4 Re-building and re-telling stories

Halfway through the *Word Alive* programme, the children and their teachers went to the National Theatre, to attend a *Word Alive* Storytelling Festival, where they listened to two professional storytellers.

## 22 Children engaging with drama

Session 5	Make your own stories
Session 6	A body that moves
Session 7	A body of sound
Session 8	A body of words
Session 9	A story, a story, let it come, let it come!

There was no storytelling festival at the Albany at the end of this programme.

When the children were in Year 5, they took part in a third and final National Theatre programme called *Primary Classics* (2004) based on Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. Again, the programme began with a two-day teacher INSET followed by 12 artist-led in-school sessions:

Session 1	Introductory drama games
Session 2	Curriculum links with history (The Tudors)
Session 3	Curriculum links with Citizenship (Choices)
Session 4	Storytelling <i>Faustus</i>
Session 5	Mini-scenes from <i>Faustus</i>
Session 6	Exploring themes from <i>Faustus</i> using music
Session 7	Exploring themes from <i>Faustus</i> using movement

A little over half-way through the programme, the children and their teachers went to see a production of *The Wonderful Life and Miserable Death of the Renowned Magician Dr. Faustus* at the National Theatre.

Session 8	Theatre design
Session 9	Puppetry – making and manipulating
Session 10	Create, rehearse and produce children's <i>Faustus</i>
Session 11	Create, rehearse and produce children's <i>Faustus</i>
Session 12	Create, rehearse and produce children's <i>Faustus</i>

At the end of the *Primary Classics* programme, the children went to the Albany to put on their own show in front of one other school and parents.

## 5 | *Findings: The children*

In Sections 5,6 and 7 we describe and briefly discuss the findings about children, teachers and artists. We are using qualitative and quantitative data to tell the story of children and teachers' engagement with drama. The main quantitative findings are grouped in Appendices 3 and 4 and referred to here as appropriate. In Section 8 of the report, we provide a more general discussion and offer some suggestions for best practice.

In the following section, we have used the Arts Council of England's framework to discuss our findings relating to children making, performing and responding to drama (Arts Council England, 2003).

Improvisation  
*Primary Classics 2004*  
Photo: Helen Turner



### **Drama making, performing and responding**

Drama is a key component of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in the National Curriculum. For, in addition to the speaking, listening, reading and writing work detailed later, the drama activities discussed in this section are a component of literacy, as defined by the NLS.

However, we note that 'literacy', as defined in the NLS, is largely a matter of technical skills and knowledge; it includes skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation and knowledge of differences between non-fiction and fiction writing. We use the term 'drama literacy' to include children's appreciation of drama as an art form, and also of their understanding of ways and techniques of working that make drama. In

the account that follows, we argue that the children learned experientially both of these; over three years, they learned to appreciate what a play is, and how to make drama. Through this we see emotional learning through aesthetic learning

Writing about necessary qualities for a literary critic, D. H. Lawrence put an honest emotional response top of his list. And yet: 'The man who is emotionally educated is as rare as a phoenix' (Lawrence 1928/50). We think the children were enabled to develop their emotional sensitivity, responses and vocabulary, through the aesthetic experiences of engaging with drama. And so, if emotional learning develops through aesthetic learning, literacy skills then develop in turn through emotional learning.

From our observations and discussions with children, it is clear that the children's experiential knowledge was that the *Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics* programmes in particular were about making and doing drama. Whether they commented on enjoying the sessions, on finding some of it difficult, or on what they were learning, most of their comments related to drama: 55% in 2002 and 66.5% in 2004 of children's comments were about doing drama. For them the best bits in 2002 and 2004 had been: acting, the characters, games, movement, making puppets, the story, the play's text – they especially liked hurling Shakespearean insults at each other. What follows is a description and discussion of the drama work the children took part in over three years.

#### Drama making: Drama games and exercises

Drama games and exercises are an accepted part of any type of drama training. The first session in years two and three (*Word Alive* 2003, *Primary Classics* 2004) comprised drama games. It was a good way for artists to get to know the children: names, likes and dislikes, strengths and weakness, friendship groups and enemies. It enabled the artists to give a clear message to the children that the programme was going to be active, fun and exciting; also to establish some ground rules and boundaries about how artists like to work; and about acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour.

The games were also a great way of waking children's minds and bodies, developing physical co-ordination and memory, encouraging vocal confidence and the ability to think on their feet. Games also helped create focus and a sense of common purpose.

Playing games helped the children learn about and understand the nature of risk-taking and failure in a fun and safe environment. Games helped children to work together in differing ways and with different

The 'what are you doing?' game because it's fun and humorous; someone might be running the marathon and it's obvious they are running but then they say swimming

(*Word Alive*, Interview, 2003)

[I liked the] Riverbank [game] because if you are out people laugh and it's OK and then it's over'

(*Word Alive*, Interview, 2003)



[I enjoyed] the games, all of them, they are fun and exciting, you don't know what's going to happen next and silly things happen

(*Word Alive*, Interview, 2003)

people. Learning to take turns in a fun way was a preparation for understanding the teamwork required to make a piece of theatre happen.

Children said they enjoyed these games because they were fun and offered a chance for the whole class to have fun together.

Drama games were a shared experience, so in later sessions artists could use them as a short-hand for waking up, re-finding focus, breaking things up and sparking imagination. By the third year, children began to recognize the worth of games as an opportunity to re-energise and re-focus when needed.

The games also helped artists and children establish friendship and a bond with each other. For example, some artists and children had favourite games, such as *Zombie* or *Tiger Tiger*, which they played every session. One artist cleverly and creatively combined all the children's favourite games into one game he called 'The Grand Faust' in which all the players, rules, instructions and constituent components of the game revolved around the story of *Dr. Faustus*. They played this game for nearly half the session. Some artists had signature games which children in year three remembered from year one.

Drama games also provided an early opportunity to introduce some drama exercises and techniques, such as mirroring, trust exercises and freeze frame/still pictures/tableaux. Such exercises and techniques are essential building blocks for drama work and children indeed used this acquired vocabulary throughout the programmes.

Drama games – whether in a discrete session or peppered throughout the programme – develop the children's drama literacy through action, experience and experimentation to the point where structure and performance become instinctive.

### Storytelling and mini-scenes

In *Primary Shakespeare* (sessions one and two) and *Primary Classics* (sessions four and five), the aim of the storytelling session was for children to experience the story of *The Tempest* and *Dr. Faustus* through a sequence of designed participatory drama activities. The mini-scenes workshop then aimed to consolidate and develop this knowledge of the story, its language and characters. This was achieved by breaking up the story into parts assigned to groups of children, who were taken through a step-by-step process from tableaux-making to acting out their scene using excerpts from the text. To create a telling of the whole play, they then played these mini-scenes in sequence through the story. In the

*Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics* programmes we observed children physically inhabiting a character: for instance as heavenly good angels – with high pleading voices, hands in prayer position, eyes raised up to heaven, and as bad angels – with low hissing voices, spiky tortured bodies, glazed staring eyes.

In *Primary Shakespeare* children learned and practised the rhythm of Shakespeare's language using iambic Pentameter exercises. However, when it came to performing their scenes in class or later at the Albany, none were able to deliver or pace their lines in this way. There may also have been a missed opportunity at this point in the programme to talk to children about how actors learn or develop voice characterisation through listening and practising accents and through mimicry. *Word Alive* artist Jan Blake made great use of accents, sounds and use of voices from around the world in her storytelling. But in performance, very few children gave their characters a voice different from their own speaking voice. When some did, the rest of the class responded with enthusiasm: a boy impressed his class with his very sinister voice in his portrayal of Prospero.

The strengths of the mini-scenes workshops are that by the end, the children had already acquired: knowledge of the play and its storyline; the names, roles and emotional journeys of the main characters and the relationships between them; and the dynamics of the story. Through playing out the story in this way, the children understood the meaning of the text. It was by engagement with emotion, character and action, that the archaic, poetic language was demystified, inhabited and brought to life.

The children enjoyed the work of inhabiting and living through a story. They talked enthusiastically afterwards about how much they enjoyed these sessions, which combined acting things out (which they see as the main purpose of this work) with game-like structures through which learning about sometimes very complicated text and concepts took place unconsciously.

These sessions prepared the children to see the productions at the National Theatre. Their experiences enabled them to navigate the play unfolding in front of them. Their sense of ownership and recognition of text and character allowed them to participate and become a critical audience.

These sessions were also an introduction to performance.

### Music and movement

The music and movement sessions were led in year one (2002 *Primary Shakespeare*) by specialist artists and by artists in years two (*Word Alive* 2003) and three (*Primary Classics* 2004). The overall aims of these sessions were to expose the children to the multidimensional nature of theatre (Esslin 1991) and specifically to prepare them for the National Theatre production they were going to see. The music sessions also aimed to do away with the idea that only children who play musical instruments are musical or can make music; instead children learned they could make music from anything. We saw children amazed that they could make musical instruments out of junk and household objects. They were awestruck by the sound of their own voices as they made a tempestuous storm. They were transported into the drama by the music that accompanied the

scene where they released Ariel from the tree, which for the adults watching was an aesthetic moment. At a basic level, in 2002, the children said they enjoyed making noise, because, as many commented, they didn't usually get the chance to make much noise.

Movement is another key tool in theatre-making, to which the children were introduced. Specific aims of the movement sessions were: to give children a kinaesthetic understanding of bodies in space; to explore how movement can be used to tell a story; to share a vocabulary of movement and dance; and to show how to use your body and space safely. The movement sessions, like the music sessions and the drama games, gave the children the chance to move about and offered opportunities for self-expression.

Children responded positively to the movement and music sessions. In year one, 20% and 24% of all the comments children made about the whole *Primary Shakespeare* programme were about music learning and enjoying music. When we asked them what they thought they had been learning about, movement was one of the six spheres of activities they identified. Movement sessions, they said, helped them learn how to move about and express themselves, how to move and change direction without touching; and it was also a way of getting into shape.

In the second and third years, we asked children to be more specific about what they had liked and disliked about the programmes. It is clear from their responses in the table below that they liked the music and movement sessions.

Preferences	2003	2004
Like music	83%	82%
Like movement	81%	83%

Significantly more *Word Alive* (2003) girls than boys, enjoyed the music and sound session where they could sing and use their voices to accompany the storytelling ( $p=0.004$ ). We also saw girls writing their own songs, in their own style in their own time, which they later performed as part of the *Primary Classics* Festival at the Albany.

The music and movement sessions worked best when led by specialists brought in for that session specifically or when the artist happened to be trained in and/or comfortable with that discipline. Some artists chose not to lead these sessions at all, replacing them with material they felt equipped to teach, and others adapted them or did lead them but found them difficult (see discussion below). Some children got excellent encounters with music and movement during the programmes. Others got little music and movement, but their artists made up for this absence in other ways, providing alternative quality experiences.

### Theatre design and puppetry

In the *Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics* programmes (2002 and 2004), children took part in puppet-making and theatre design workshops. In 2002, specialist puppeteers led three two-hour workshops. They showed children how to make and manipulate a range of different types of puppet. As with the rest of the programme, the intention was that children would be introduced to the differing elements of performance that were to be used in the National Theatre's *The Mini*

*Tempest*. Thus they were equipped with a choice of techniques to draw upon in creating their own shows at the Albany. In the event, very few chose to incorporate their puppets in their show, preferring to perform themselves - with their puppets on parade, featured just as an example of their work. In year three (2004), children had two two-hour workshops on theatre design and puppetry led by the artists themselves rather than puppetry specialists.

The business of making puppets and designing theatre sets provided children with a creative opportunity that engaged and stretched their creative and artistic imagination, manual dexterity, performance skills, vocabulary and vocal skills. Children listened to and used a new puppet-making vocabulary, describing various materials used, the various types of puppets (glove, rod, shadow), the techniques required to make and manipulate them and the way the materials could be used to convey concepts such as status (Prospero in gold cloth and Caliban in rags). The children acquired some new technical knowledge and skills. In year one (2002), they were shown how to work with and use a range of materials: acetate, card, muslin, wadding; how to use scissors; how to apply glue and oil; and how to manipulate or display the puppet using backcloths, projectors and lights. In year three (2004), children made simple rod puppets from household objects. Here there was more emphasis and instruction on how to manipulate and bring their puppets to life. In the final performances, as in year one, most children preferred to show their puppets rather than make them part of the action in performance.

These workshops also encouraged children to work together. They shared materials and collaborated with each other when working in a group. They displayed tolerance and patience with each other, especially around scarce resources: scissors, glue-pots and scraps of gold cloth. They concentrated and persevered with the task at hand. Children gained a sense of achievement making their puppets.

The puppet workshops in the first year gave children the opportunity to come up with creative ideas for the development and representation of scenes from *The Tempest*. The children were keen to make suggestions for characters and scenery. Scene one: sailors, a dog, giant sea serpent, underwater cave, giant squid, octopus, shark, fish, treasure, orange coral, seaweed, gold, sweets, money, a magic island, an ice-cream volcano, a convertible car and falling in love with another monster. Scene three: Ariel and other tree spirits, Sycorax, a pine tree, a forest, bears, wolves, snakes, crocodiles and monkeys. Perhaps not enough advantage was made of this creative ability in year three. Whilst making rod puppets was an enjoyable and successful workshop in itself, the artists made



Prospero – designed, made and operated by children  
*Primary Shakespeare 2002*  
Photo: Helen Turner



Children operating Trinculo puppet  
*Primary Shakespeare 2002*  
Photo: Helen Turner

very little connection about possibilities for using the puppets in *Faustus*. Yet after the National Theatre performances, the children spoke intelligently and passionately about the use of puppets - 'if she was the face that launched a thousand ships how come she [the puppet Helen of Troy] didn't have a face?' (*Primary Classics* observation, 2004). And there was much debate about whether or not Kasper should have been a puppet. However, very little of this sophisticated discussion translated into the development of their own puppets' characters or the parades and little sketches they performed at the workshops or at the Albany. There was some use of puppets in one or two of the end of programme shows at the Albany.

The theatre design workshop in year three was an opportunity for artists to extend children's drama literacy. Children were introduced, through a series of activities, to the concept, processes and vocabulary of theatre design and staging. The timing of this workshop was apposite: they had been to see the National Theatre's *Faustus* the week before and this gave artists the opportunity to explain and consolidate what they had seen and understood from the production. However, although the artists used discussion and reflection as a means of analysing the staging at the National, the activities in the workshop could also have been part of this analysis, rather than discrete and seemingly separate tasks. A chance was missed to use the children's concrete experience in understanding more abstract concepts.

It may be that artists missed these opportunities to the extent that they were working outside their 'comfort zone' or area of expertise. When this happened, some artists may have felt dependent on the workshops-as-trained. Some artists admitted to feeling anxious about theatre design and puppetry and adhered very closely to the workshop notes they had been given. Because of this situation, artists might be less able to stand back and really think about what the aims and objectives of the workshops were and where the children were 'at' with their understanding of the concepts explored. As a result, some workshops lacked internal logic and coherence for the children. Important meaning-making connections were missed and the workshops were more 'how to' rather than 'what it's all about'.

This does not mean that children and teachers did not enjoy or appreciate these workshops. Significantly more of the *Primary Shakespeare* children, especially boys, than of control children said they liked painting and making things ( $p=0.042$ ). In year one (2002), in the discussions after the puppet-making workshops, children said they had enjoyed making puppets and were particularly interested in the different materials they had used: 'The feel of the materials; it felt like stroking sheep' (*Primary Shakespeare* 2002). They loved the idea that you could make puppets out of junk or ordinary household objects. Children also commented on how technically difficult making puppets could be - some children found scissors a challenge - but they said they had learned something new and were looking forward to 'making a little play with the shadow puppets' (*Primary Shakespeare* interview, 2003). At the year one halfway-through review, the puppet, movement and music sessions received the highest number of positive enjoyment comments. The puppeteer sessions yielded the fewest number of negative comments. The puppet-making and director-led sessions (1,2,and 6) had the highest number of learning-new-things comments. This enthusiasm for making puppets was still evident in year three: puppet making was the most popular workshop - 96% of children said they liked making puppets.

### Devising a piece of theatre

The last two sessions of the *Primary Shakespeare* and last three of the *Primary Classics* programmes were allotted to devising and rehearsing a contribution for the post-programme show at the Albany. Unlike the other sessions, where artists had been given models and ideas for working during their training, in these last sessions children and artists were given the opportunity to set the agenda.

Children participated in discussions about what the content of the performance would be, based on what they had enjoyed. Their ideas were 'grassroots' - songs written in playgrounds, spells written in class, as well as some that came directly from the workshops – for instance, in *Primary Classics*: the temptation of Faustus, the seven deadly sins and the Helen of Troy poem they knew had worked really well the first time round.

Given the raw material from the children, artists then structured and refined the children's ideas, taking the role of 'director'. The children enjoyed these sessions because they embodied so much of what they really liked doing: acting and acting only the bits they had chosen to do. They also valued the chance to rehearse and refine their work, preparing for a public performance of which they would be proud.

In terms of drama literacy, these sessions preparing for performance at the Albany were where the diverse learning that had taken place was pulled together. These sessions had a distinctive energy. Drawing on the body of knowledge acquired in previous sessions, the children could approach the devising as informed participants. They had a range of skills, vocabulary and the confidence to create a performance. By 2004, these drama-literate children were, in the main, able to see and comment on what worked, what did not work, what was worth keeping, and how to improve something. They were also confident with appropriate rehearsal vocabulary: a run, cue, entrance, exit, line, scene, freeze. Through the energy and urgency inherent in the end of a rehearsal process, the children worked together supportively, creating the atmosphere of safety and trust that is necessary in a rehearsal room. However, perhaps more could have been done at times to explain to children why it is important for the director to have a final say in the creation of a coherent performance.

### Performing

Performing, whether within a session or in a public context, gives children the chance to put into practice what they have learned and rehearsed. Through performance, children's learning is, in a moment, deepened, expanded and clarified.

#### *In-school*

Performing or showing the drama or storytelling work children had been doing in pairs or groups was both integral to the sessions and a good way of structuring or ending a session. Performance was therefore used as both product and process. There is a difference, however, between a final product and the work-in-progress performances we observed taking place in the sessions, which were more relaxed and allowed children the opportunity to make mistakes and correct them without fear of 'messing-up' on the day. What children feared, even the ones who were confident and at ease when performing, was letting themselves or other people down. Performing and performances are both individual and group moments.

Performing in front of their peers gave children the opportunity to use and display a range of learned skills and 'natural' (and sometimes unrecognised) talent. During the *Word Alive* programme, a number of children emerged as natural storytellers who could engage their whole class or in some cases a whole school assembly. Mostly, children seemed enthusiastic about showing each other what they had devised and put together. Some children declined the limelight; this was usually because they felt unprepared: had not enough time to devise and rehearse; did not really understand what they were supposed to be doing; or their group had failed to work together.

When we asked children later (via a questionnaire) about what they had learned, *Primary Shakespeare* children scored more highly than their matches on having learned to act out a story (75% v. 65%,  $p=0.04$ ), and on theatre-going as one of their out-of-school activities (51% v. 43%,  $p=0.03$ ). On the other hand, more of the matched children said they had learned to listen to what people say this year (70% v. 59%,  $p=0.03$ ). *Word Alive* children were significantly more likely than match children to enjoy speaking in front of the class ( $p=0.04$ ) and more (particularly *Word Alive* girls) thought they had learned how to tell a story ( $p=0.002$ ). More *Word Alive* children than matches said they enjoyed drama and storytelling, and taking part in assemblies ( $p=0.005$  and  $p=0.000$  respectively). On balance, then, these findings suggest considerable perceived gains by the National Theatre children.

#### *On stage at the Albany*

The *Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics* programmes both included an end-of-programme sharing at the Albany in Deptford. For the majority of children in 2002 (when they were only seven or eight years old), this was the first time they had performed on a real stage. Classes were invited to perform or share with one or two other classes some of the work they had been doing in their school: mini-scenes, some games, sonnets, or pieces of theatre they had devised during the last three sessions with their artists. The classes were each given technical support (lights, stage management) and technical rehearsal time with their artist and the team before their performance. The artists took this opportunity to impart some last minute instructions: 'One person has to start the bow. Be clear, be loud, there's the audience' (Artist, *Primary Classics*, 2004).



Children creating the storm with parachute  
*Primary Shakespeare*  
2002

Photo: Helen Turner

In this work in the theatre, children were given an in-the-moment learning experience of technical aspects of theatre. This included: seeing lighting and sound being cued and rehearsed; seeing a stage manager at work; learning how to exit and enter the stage; and exposure to further theatre vocabulary, such as stage-left and stage-right. Their drama

literacy was also enhanced by their initiation into theatre tradition and culture. For example, the stage manager treated them as professionals: 'Ladies and Gentlemen, the house is now open.' (*Primary Classics*, 2004)

We spoke to children both before and after their performances in 2002 (three classes) and 2004 (all eight classes) about their feelings and thoughts about the experience of performing. In 2002, most children reported feeling nervous beforehand and relieved afterwards: 'When I was at home my legs were shaking, but when I got here I was excited'; 'Scared and nervous, but I enjoyed myself'; 'I had lines and I thought I would forget them' (*Primary Shakespeare* 2002). Although still nervous, children in 2004 were noticeably more upbeat: 'I feel nervous because I think I'm going to mess up. At the same time I feel very excited because we are performing. I feel confident 'cause I've got my friends with me. I really feel privileged'; 'I feel nice and feel like we will do well' (*Primary Classics*, Pre-show interview, 2004).

### Responding

#### *Children's responses to the National Theatre's production of The Mini Tempest, 2002*

For most children, then in Year 3, going to the National Theatre - or indeed to any theatre - was a first. They were very excited – as much by the journey and packed lunch as by the theatre experience. It was clear that many did not realize that the National Theatre complex housed three theatres, and they were not given the opportunity to see any of these spaces. They knew they were somewhere special, talking about the cloakroom, the light installation and the nice table and chairs. They were excited but unfazed by seeing the actor who had played 'The Demon Headmaster' in such surroundings. Given these initial reactions, many children were disappointed to find themselves in the makeshift theatre space (Cathedral Windows) in which the National Theatre's *The Mini Tempest* was staged.

Although they were inexperienced theatre-goers, the children assumed the role of an audience instinctively: quiet and attentive, joining in when asked to make the sound of a storm, and applauding on cue.

In their post-show discussion, comments about the space were one of the two main topics: the space and the puppets. Children found the space too hot and uncomfortable and some thought the stage was 'rubbish': 'I thought there would be a bigger stage'; 'I was really shocked that there was not a stage and a bigger room'; 'I thought it would be on a real stage...' (*Primary Shakespeare*, Post-show interview, 2002).

The second main topic was the use of puppets. Their comments about the use of puppets 'instead' of actors showed how new to theatre and the notions of adaptation and expediency children were: 'I think you make the play better by putting actors in the play'; 'I liked the music, but I think the performance wasn't that good because there wasn't enough actors...' (*Primary Shakespeare*, Post-show interview, 2002). Puppets were still an issue for children in 2004.

Children's post-show comments also indicated that many had been awestruck and amazed by the production: 'I felt amazed when the lady in the green dress came in. I opened my eyes very wide like this' (*Primary Shakespeare*, 2002). Some had found it funny and had laughed at the





Laura Rees as Ariel in  
*The Mini Tempest*  
Photo: Jim Four

characters' antics and jokes. Some had been shocked by the rudeness (a talking bum) and surprised by the close proximity and immediacy of live drama.

*Children's responses to the National Theatre's storytelling festival, 2003*  
*Word Alive Dilemma Tales* (2003) was programmed in the Cottesloe Theatre, presenting a double bill of stories from a range of cultures told by four very differing and dynamic professionals. The dilemma stories were compelling stories focusing on fundamental complexities of social relations and the ethics of choice. With a single performer on a bare stage, this was a very different theatre experience for the children (compared to *The Mini Tempest* the previous year). The children accepted the solo performance, understanding that this was the appropriate dramatic form for such work.

Children continued to show how interested they were in 'architectural framework and ambiance surrounding the performance' (Esslin 1991 103), making straightforward observations about the building and the seats. Some could take this further and reflect on relationships of auditorium to stage; and on relationships between the stage, auditoria, and performer and how technical resources (such as lighting) support these for a given effect.

Children were able to distinguish between and describe the skills and techniques used in storytelling in performance. They showed understanding of the technical challenges that each performer faces when telling a story. They could comment upon the material or content of a story and how this is brought to life when performed – the links between the material and performance technique.



*The Wonderful Life and Miserable Death of the Renowned Magician Dr Faustus*  
Photo: Jim Four

*Children's responses to the National Theatre's production: The Wonderful Life and Miserable Death of the Renowned Magician Dr Faustus, 2004*  
This performance was also in the Cottesloe Theatre. Post-show comments show that the children understood the diverse elements involved in theatre-making. They described how the story was conveyed to them multi-dimensionally and had an excellent grasp of the appropriate technical vocabulary. They commented on the whole range of tools being used to tell the story including: puppets, actors, props, set, expression, special effects, lighting, wigs, costume, music, instruments, fake blood, teamwork.

This understanding of theatre-making, combined with their prior knowledge of the story, enabled children to engage in detailed, animated reflection on the interpretation and presentation of the performance. For example, most classes made a comment on the part of

Mephistopheles being played by a woman: 'I thought Mephistopheles could only be a man but now I know it can be both' (*Primary Classics*, Post-show interview, 2004). Other points were made about the way the play had been adapted. They noticed that, and questioned why, the seven deadly sins were 'missing' and the clown story had changed from the version they had met in school. The issue of puppets still remained controversial, but now the children could debate the choice to have a major character played by a puppet, weighing up the relevant merits: 'it had a funny face... it was interesting... it had good movements'; drawbacks 'you could see the puppeteer... an actor would have used facial expressions'; and practicalities 'there was an actor there anyway so he could have just played the part' (*Primary Classics*, Post-show interview, 2004).

Though children said that they had enjoyed the performance, they could also express refinement of their enjoyment, analysing and challenging choices made in the production. Referring closely to the text, they, as sophisticated critics, were able to reflect on whether such production choices were justifiable. [Of the Helen of Troy puppet]: 'She never had no head, so how can they say she's beautiful – there wasn't any 'face'. How can he 'kiss' no lips?' (cf. Marlowe, scene 12, lines 81-3). Casting Faustus as a young man - outside the 'mad professor' stereotype - provoked much discussion: 'I imagined him to be old and mad, with a beard'; 'more like a scientist making things'; 'he didn't look like a doctor'; 'I thought Faustus would have looked older'. Some children were able to extend the debate even further:

Child 1: The real play is more serious – this should have been more serious

Child 2: It was good the clown was there 'cause the play was quite serious and so for children it stops you being bored. It makes you laugh

(*Primary Classics* observation, 2004)

Having watched the performance, children identified the range of skills they had seen deployed in the production: facial expression; loud voices; don't be shy; making the set; remembering your lines/good memory; be expressive; and put emotion into the script.

Ignoring skills and being able to keep your cool, like when things go wrong, like when the book fell off the shelf

(*Primary Classics*, Post-show interview, 2004)

Through relating to their own experience as theatre-makers, they could also recognize less visible expertise implicit in creating a high quality show: working with team-mates; communication skills; co-operating; concentration; enthusiasm; dedication; responsibility; not losing control; literacy skills.

Skills to imagine you are the person. Skills to imagine what's going on: in the story he [Faustus] was in front of a crowd [at the emperor's court], but on the stage there is no crowd

(*Primary Classics*, Post-show interview, 2004)

Children showed themselves as confident, experienced theatre-goers, who could comment articulately on what the point of going to the theatre might be. It was educational: 'good because

you see different versions of a play'; 'it helps you understand the story – more than being told it'; 'it was set in the olden days – that was easier to understand when you see it – it's hard to imagine'; 'you get to see other people's ideas of what it is – gives you ideas too'; 'if you want to be a director, you get ideas from it.' It was a good social occasion: 'to have fun'; 'it's relaxing, quiet and calm'; 'keeps you happy, in a laughing mood'; 'to be involved'; 'to be amazed by the show' (*Primary Classics*, Post-show interview, 2004)

#### *Children's responses to their own and each other's performances at the Albany, 2002 and 2004*

Some artists had expressed concern that putting on a show at the Albany would introduce and/or encourage competitiveness between children, teachers and artists. The artists' concerns were only partially realized: there was some bad feeling between two local schools in 2002, which one class reminded us of before the performances in 2004. They said that the other school had not clapped and had told them that their performance was rubbish. Wisely, these two classes were not invited on the same day in 2004 and no bad feelings were reported.

We spoke to children both before and after their performances in 2002 (three classes) and 2004 (all eight classes) about their feelings and thoughts about their own performance and that of their co-performers.

In 2002 the children were, on the whole, supportive and complimentary of the other classes' performance; overall they made more compliments than criticisms: 'It was a great performance', 'I liked the way they put everything together because they were co-operating [with each other]' (*Primary Shakespeare*, 2002). With some encouragement from their artists, children in 2004 asked some enquiring questions of their co-performers. The questions centred on what classes had chosen to perform and perform with: 'What made you want to do a version of the play rather than [drama] activities?' 'Why did you decide to do it with puppets and singing?' 'What made you decide to put your own song in?' (*Primary Classics*, Post-show interview, 2004).

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### **Personal and social gains**

Perhaps, the most important contribution the National Theatre's drama programmes have made was to enable children's personal and social skills to shine and to enhance them.

#### **Confidence and self-esteem**

In 2002 and 2003, our questionnaire asked National Theatre and matched children a range of questions designed to tell us what they thought they were like – what they were good at, what they liked doing, friendships, how they liked to work. We wanted to see whether, at the end of each year, the National Theatre children scored more favourably than their matches. The results showed that there was very little difference between them on most of our measures. Almost all children thought quite highly of themselves: a high percentage said they were good at singing, drawing, dancing and sport. Most children thought they were clever. Some children said they were shy and some said they were cheeky. A minority said they were often in trouble at home or at school. Three out of four children said they felt happy most of the time. Almost all children said they had lots of friends and most had a best friend (*Primary Shakespeare* and *Word Alive* Children's Questionnaires)

In 2002, slightly more matched children thought they were good at looking after people (77% v. 67%,  $p=0.04$ ) than National Theatre children. We devised a composite self-confidence code (incorporating 13 variables) and this too showed that, whilst scores were high on average, the matched children scored more highly, with a mean of 8.3 versus 7.2 for the National Theatre children. This difference was most clear among the boys in each group; of the National Theatre boys only 25% scored above the mean, compared to 44% of the matched boys ( $p=0.006$ ); whereas 38% of the National Theatre girls and 50% of the matched girls scored above the mean (not significant).

In 2003, to supplement children's own self-assessment through the questionnaire, we designed and carried out a different type of assessment of children's confidence, based on researcher observation. One artist carried out a 90-minute drama workshop with four classes and then with their matched classes, following an agreed series of exercises. The sessions were videoed. Later, researchers in pairs watched the videos 'blind'; each individually assessed the children's activities and then compared notes and agreed scores.

We hypothesised that the National Theatre children would score more highly on the storytelling and on the overall assessment. This was borne out in three of the four pairs, with the National Theatre children scoring more highly on both. In the fourth pair, even scores in the storytelling exercise balanced the overall score in favour of the match class. (We also carried out the same exercise with three pairs of the older cohort; in all cases the National Theatre children scored more highly on the story-telling and overall assessment.)

These findings suggest that the added value the National Theatre programmes bring to children may be identified not so much in children's own personal perceptions and assessment of their attributes, skills and talents, as in the differences others (researchers) identify. Further, the video exercise tested central skills and learning arising from the National Theatre programmes. However, as we note below, National Theatre children did also think they gained socially and personally through their participation in the programmes.

#### Learning to work with others

Children experienced a range of opportunities, particularly during drama games, exercises and mini-scenes, for collaborative working in teams, groups and pairs. They learned about the value of group work and about themselves through this work. In many instances children worked together effectively. However, in other instances problems in listening to and engaging with each other prevented the tasks being completed successfully. In each of the evaluation years (2002, 2003 and 2004) and in each of the National Theatre's programmes (*Primary Shakespeare*, *Word Alive* and *Primary Classics*) some children found group work difficult: they had difficulties getting into and working together in groups; they refused to work with each other, and withdrew from the group they had been allocated to; they devised elaborate ways of circumventing artists' and teachers' attempts to separate them from their friends and peer group. Artists and teachers however, remain convinced that group work, especially working with someone new, is beneficial to children's personal and social development.

The children were aware of these group work difficulties. When in 2002 we asked children how

they preferred to work (on their own, with a friend, in a small group, as a whole class), the most preferred option for all children (National Theatre and matched) was 'with a friend' (49%). But significantly higher proportions of *Primary Shakespeare* girls than of matched girls opted for 'on their own' (36% v. 22%,  $p=0.03$ ) and for 'in a small group' (26% v. 14%,  $p=0.03$ ). However, by 2003 though some children told us how difficult and frustrating it was learning how to work with others, taking or missing turns, being patient and accepting others' mistakes or shortcomings, yet they also recognized the value of this type of learning. They saw the *Word Alive* sessions as a time 'to have fun with the whole class'.

In the third year, the *Primary Classics* programme (2004) addressed the issue of group work head-on. Artists and teachers received a one-hour training session on the nature of groups and group work exercises. This was the first time (to our knowledge) that artists had been given explicit instructions and training about how to get children to work better in groups. Artists were given some particular group-work exercises to do with the children in session one. The aims of the session were:

- To enable children to understand the way they work in a group
- To enhance their ability to work together and therefore the standard of their drama work

An idea underpinning the work and referred to in the artists' training pack was that however big a group might be, it should contain a balance of four different types of personality (promoters with ideas, controllers who lead, supporters who makes the group get on and analysts who see all the details) in order to work successfully. (See also Seeley Flint and Riordan-Karlsson's [2001] classification of roles during group discussions).

The reaction from the children we observed was interesting. They discussed the pros and cons of group work: group work is good 'if someone else knows more than you'; group work is bad 'if you think you've got a really good idea but no-one else likes it' (*Primary Classics*, Observation, 2004). They enjoyed and participated fully in the group-work exercises, for example, getting into height and warmth-of-hand order without speaking. However, they did not all accept or agree on the group types, preferring their own labels, such as 'The Smart One', 'The Cool One' (*Primary Classics*, Observation, 2004).

One way in which to describe personal and social gains made by children is via the concept/term 'emotional literacy'. This refers to our ability to understand and use information about our own and others' emotional states, with skill and competence (Weare 2003). We saw children being thoughtful and kind towards each other. Some demonstrated that kindness has its own rewards. For example, in our videoed exercise we saw a boy refuse to be paired up with a girl he didn't like. Another boy took his place and the scene this pair put together turned out to be a triumph, attracting roars of approval and clapping from the class. Children also showed they could use what they knew about someone's likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. For example, during one of the *Primary Classics* exercises two children had to tempt (by calling, whispering, pleading) a third child - Faustus - along a tightrope either towards 'good' or towards 'bad' at opposite ends of the tightrope. The temptations they used showed they were using their emotional intelligence – a girl knew what would tempt that particular Faustus boy: as between

football or happy/ friendly – it had to be football because he was football-mad (*Primary Classics*, observation, 2004).

### Enjoying school

When Charles Clarke launched the Primary Strategy document Excellence and Enjoyment: A Strategy for Primary Schools (DfES 2003), he said enjoyment [of school] was every child's birthright. We were ahead of Charles Clarke's thinking on enjoyment! We were already asking if drama was making a difference to their level of enjoyment at school. In 2002 and 2003 we asked children if they enjoyed school a lot, a bit or not at all. We compared what children receiving the drama programmes said with the responses of their matches. In 2002 more of the National Theatre children said they enjoyed school; only 10% (v. 19%,  $p=0.01$ ) did not enjoy school at all. However, whilst girls' scores did not differ significantly, boys' did: twice as many matched boys disliked school, compared to National Theatre boys (29% v. 15%,  $p=0.05$ ). Since so many National Theatre children expressed their enjoyment of doing drama, it is possible that this affected their feelings about school in general.

There was no statistical difference between *Word Alive* children and their matches in 2003 regarding enjoyment of school, and no matched comparisons were made in 2004, but we note that the percentage of our children who said they disliked school decreased from 10% in 2002 to 7% in 2004 (6% boys).

Another contribution the drama and storytelling sessions made to children's enjoyment of school was making learning exciting. As children informed us, drama, unlike some other subjects, is not boring.

What is it about drama that makes it different and more exciting than other subjects? Questionnaire findings point to an answer. When in 2003, we asked *Word Alive* children and their matches to say which school subjects and activities they liked or disliked, top of the liked list was free time (a time when they had finished their work and could choose what to do). Free time (98%) was followed by making and painting things (96%) and then by playtime (95%). More *Word Alive* children than matched children said they enjoyed playtime ( $p=0.01$ ). Drama and storytelling (81%) came fifth after PE (95%). What all these have in common is that they are less teacher-directed, they are social rather than individual and they involve and value children's own agency and creativity. By contrast, fewer than half the children (48%) said they liked the literacy hour - which, relatively, is more teacher-directed, individualistic, and positions children as passive.

I used to be bored  
but then I did *The  
Tempest* and I was  
excited

(*Primary Classics*, Halfway through  
interview, 2004)

[Artists teach] in an interesting way – they are making it more child friendly

(*Primary Classics*, Halfway through interview, 2004)

Actors tell you the other side of education, like how to act, how to do dance, how to do drama, how to sing

(*Primary Classics*, Halfway through interview, 2004)

Children also liked the way drama was taught. From our observations, it was clear that the drama and storytelling sessions promoted the idea of children as engaged participants who could actively contribute by sharing their stories, developing skills as a critical audience and leading some of the drama games. When we asked *Primary Classics* children about teaching methods and styles, almost a third (30%) of the responses to this question were about the ways in which the National Theatre artists had engaged with them. The children valued the way artists explained things in interesting and creative ways. They liked the artists' flexible, inclusive and non-sanctioning approach. They liked being spoken to politely.

Teachers don't let you mess around; they get all stroppy. Artists say 'OK, please do this'

(*Primary Classics*, Halfway through interview, 2004)

Children's comments also showed that they understood that teachers have a role to play and, according to some children, less popular subjects to teach

Teachers are different; they teach us maths and literacy. But artists think about stuff like stories and acting and play games that teachers never do, well some do

(*Primary Classics*, Halfway through interview, 2004)

Teachers are a bit bossy 'cause they have to look after the whole day

(*Primary Classics*, Halfway through interview, 2004)

#### Children as citizens: Meeting and talking with people

Our data indicate that the National Theatre's drama programmes engaged with most of the topics and spheres of activity included in the new Citizenship curriculum, particularly meeting and talking with people, considering moral and social issues and helping children to feel positive about themselves through their achievements.

Over the course of three years, the children met, talked and worked with eight different professionals: the two artist/directors and a storyteller who led the *Primary Shakespeare*, *Word Alive* and *Primary Classics* workshops in-school sessions and productions at the Albany; the movement specialist who showed them how to use their bodies in space; the music specialist who taught them how to make musical soundscapes from everyday household objects; the text specialist who helped them understand and use Shakespeare's language; the puppeteer who showed them how to make and manipulate puppets in a piece of

theatre; and AOR's Primary Co-ordinator. Meeting, talking and working with people from outside school gave children the opportunity to develop new and different skills and intelligences than those promoted by the curriculum. It allowed children the opportunity to display and use skills and experiences learned at home and in their communities in school. It also provided children with a window on a wider world of people from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds and professions and gave them an idea of the kind of arts-related work opportunities that exist out there.

Children taking part in the drama programmes also met, talked and worked with people in their own class with whom they had previously not mixed. One of the aims of the drama work was to break down barriers and cliques between children. Drama games and exercises were one way of doing this. Drama games fostered both equality of opportunity, in that everyone was included and also equality of difference – previously unknown talents were recognized.

Finally, the children taking part in the programmes got the chance to meet, to talk to and to become someone from the past or belonging to a different culture from theirs. Through text, in-role characterizations and physicality, they were able to explore how people living in different times and places understood about and dealt with powerful issues such as status, power and family disputes and resolutions. For example, children did freeze frames of Prospero as towering and regal and Caliban as his floor-scraping and hunched slave. They had a physical experience of what it felt like to be powerful and cruel or powerless and downtrodden which helped them to understand the relationship between Prospero and Caliban, which in turn helped them write with true feeling and empathy.

#### Children as citizens: considering social and moral dilemmas

Children have been engaged in doing drama work that addresses social and moral dilemmas in each of the three years. As we have just noted – Prospero's treatment of Caliban or the master/slave relationship was and remains a social and moral issue. In the *Word Alive* programme, the children worked with storytellers on listening to and re-telling traditional dilemma stories. They were encouraged to think and speak about difficult choices and uncertainty in their own lives past and present. The point about dilemma stories is that often there is no right answer or happy ending. Children were confronted with uncertainty and difficult choices. As one child asked, 'Who would you save – The Buddha or your mum?' (*Word Alive* 2003) This may seem an extreme example, but it points to the possibility that this kind of work can help children face the real world where life can be uncertain.

The *Primary Classics* programme in 2004 was the first of the National Theatre's programmes to be explicit about its links to Citizenship as a curriculum requirement. One of the 12 workshop sessions was specifically dedicated to exploring decisions and choices during which lively discussions were had about selling your soul (*Primary Classics*, Observation, 2003):

Child 1: You could get anything you wanted

Child 2: A Lamborghini?

Child 3: He [the devil] can't be trusted

Child 2: Can't I have my Lamborghini in hell?

Child 3: Don't do it, you'll lose more than you think!



The children nearly didn't get to work on this play because some adults (artists and teachers) feared that children would be frightened by the language and imagery of the play - devils tearing Faustus limb from limb. They were worried that parents would withdraw their children; that good wasn't as exciting as evil. In the event, children relished the drama of signing a devil's contract with their own blood. We note, for all those worried adults out there, that children are quite clear - Faustus made the wrong choice and that bad, though tempting, is not better than good!

We wonder whether opportunities were missed for children to explore in more depth some of the moral and social issues raised by the programmes. There were moments during the programmes when children seemed ready to take the work further. For example, in one of the *Primary Shakespeare* mini-scenes sessions (2002), the issue of sibling rivalry came up. The children had been exploring the relationship between Prospero and his brother Antonio. The ensuing discussions and revelations of children's own jealousies and rivalries were shocking and deeply moving. A child who, to the teacher's knowledge, had never spoken in front of the class before, told an attentive audience all about his own home circumstances. Morning playtime interrupted any further discussion and neither the artist or the teacher brought the subject up after the break.

We are not sure whether responsibility to take this deeper exploration further rests with the artists or the teachers. Artists should and do provide a safe environment for discussion, but should also allow enough time and know how to help children reach some sort of closure of the discussion.

#### **Children as citizens: helping children to feel positive about themselves through achievements and by showing what they can do**

After participating in National Theatre programmes over three years, the children were clear that they had gained personally and socially. Overall, 35% of comments about the work they did as Year 3s (in the first year of the programmes) were about performing at the Albany Theatre. Asked what they thought they had learned about themselves over three years, almost half (49.5%) of children's comments were about their own personal and social development and awareness. Of these, 96% were positive statements about themselves - that they had learned something positive about themselves. Many of the children's comments strongly suggest that they think doing drama work and getting the opportunity to show other people what they have been doing makes them feel positive about themselves in a way that much other work done in schools does not: 'I liked being Ariel. It made me feel special', 'I didn't know I had so much inside me'; 'I've learned to be more confident about myself - how to get in touch with my feminine side, from Robert' ('his artist'); 'When you feel talentless you realize you're not coz you went through three years of drama' (*Primary Classics*, Halfway through interviews with all eight classes, 2004).

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#### **Literacy: Children as listeners and speakers, readers and writers**

We noted earlier that drama is a key component of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in the National Curriculum and that the drama activities discussed earlier are a component of literacy. So why write a separate 'literacy' section? We are responding to the National Theatre's request to study impacts of their drama programmes on children's literacy as defined in the NLS, and on

SATs in particular. We understand and appreciate why the National Theatre wished us to do so, but, as we said in our 2003 Interim Report, a number of reasons give cause to doubt whether the National Theatre's programmes would affect SATs. First, the literacy SATs do not specifically test speaking and listening. Second, any effects may take longer than the duration of the programmes. Third, the emphasis on the arts in all our 20 schools may obscure the effects of the National Theatre's input. To supplement the SATs, we devised our own literacy exercises and compared the results between National Theatre and matched children.



A freedom spell,  
*Primary Shakespeare*  
2002

### Listeners and speakers

Teachers routinely spend more time on teaching the NLS objectives for reading and writing than on developing and teaching listening and speaking, yet these have been defined as key skills by the National Curriculum and are the 'cornerstone of communication' (Baldwin and Fleming 2003:17). When children are listening it's nearly always to the teacher; one study found that 70% of children's time in school is spent listening to their teacher (NACCCE 1999:93). In a drama session, artists expect that children will do most of the talking and will listen to one another, as well as listening to the artist.

Drama can be seen as a powerful tool for developing literacy skills as defined in the National Curriculum: it gives teachers and children the opportunity to explore and develop their listening and speaking skills further by exposing them to, and giving them the opportunity to try for themselves, different models, patterns and modes of speech and expression. It can help children understand how language is constructed and used. It can expand children's vocabulary and encourage them to become playful wordsmiths.

Throughout the three years, children participating in the National Theatre's programmes were presented with a range of differing purposes and contexts for listening and speaking. The aims of the *Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics* programmes were to give children a practical introduction to the structure, language and imagery of play texts and a basis for developing use of the spoken word and communication skills. The *Word Alive* programme in 2003 was more explicit: to encourage children to tell stories; to look at how stories are told; to use stories and storytelling as a means of developing oracy, speaking and listening skills; to introduce a range of stories from different cultures. The *Primary Shakespeare* programme began with the children listening to the story of *The Tempest*; a mini-scenes session – where they got the chance to try the language out for themselves – quickly followed. The *Word Alive* programme started with traditional stories told by artists and storytellers. Listening to these stories was the springboard for children to develop their own storytelling, writing skills and creative thinking. *Primary Classics* contextualized the story of *Dr. Faustus* in amongst other classical stories and myths before children heard the full story of Faust for the first time.

We found that children listened more attentively and remembered more about the stories and/or characters when artists gave the children the opportunity to be active listeners and speakers: where children were actively engaged in the process of telling the story through questions and answers (what kind of food would you put on the feast table?); where there was repetition of words and character names (such as Mephistopheles); re-capping, re-telling and consolidating the story so far; and discussion of the meanings of possible unfamiliar words, such as harpy, soul, thou.

In the *Word Alive* sessions we observed that children listened and concentrated – over long periods – and responded appropriately to the storyteller telling stories; they listened to different types of story (dilemma, traditional and other types of stories); we saw them learning story construction by taking part in practical exercises such as 'one word at a time' stories, 'unfortunately fortunately' stories, 'X marks the spot' stories and 'big fat lie' stories. We also saw them learning to tell a story effectively to an audience and listening as an audience to each other. By the end of the *Word Alive* programme, significantly more *Word Alive* children than matched children said they liked listening to stories in class ( $p=0.006$ ) and story time ( $p=0.000$ ). More *Word Alive* children than matched children said story time was their favourite subject ( $p=0.007$ ).

Children felt most comfortable and confident speaking in front of each other when artists created and fostered an atmosphere of mutual respect for other children's efforts and made the children feel part of a joint enterprise. Children were also expected to respect the artists by paying attention to their instructions on how to play a drama game or what the next drama exercise involved. An essential part of respecting and valuing other children was learning to listen to each other. Children were encouraged and given opportunities to listen to others' creative ideas, interpretations, directions, renditions and performances. Listening to others encourages appreciation of their creativity. Listening encouraged children to make connections with other subjects and have their own knowledge valued. Respecting and listening to each other encouraged them to speak without fear of ridicule.

It is not always easy to create an environment where children feel safe enough to make mistakes in front of their peers. Artists and storytellers who fostered a playful atmosphere helped children experiment and take risks with words; 'Shakespeare played with words – he invented the word bubble' (Artist, *Primary Shakespeare*, 2002). Some artists had a tool-kit of word games and exercises: tongue twisters, riddles, repeating rhythmic phrases. These games and exercises helped children play with words and language un-self-consciously.

Action gave children something to speak about. Getting the children on their feet in character put words into their mouths. Children were introduced to important speeches and passages or lines of text through games, call and response repetitions, discussion, songs and acting out mini-scenes. *Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics* artists introduced children to new words and phrases, text and theatre language. The text specialist in the *Primary Shakespeare* programme introduced children to the beauty and inventiveness of Shakespeare's language. Her enthusiasm and admiration for Shakespeare's plays and use of language was infectious. The powerful themes contained in *The Tempest* – jealousy, rivalry, revenge and reconciliation, encouraged children to talk about their own feelings and emotions. In the *Primary Classics* programme, artists aimed to contextualize Marlowe's writing in Tudor history and other myths and stories. Though this may have helped set the scene for the themes and vocabulary contained in *Dr. Faustus*, the children found the 'history lesson' too much like school.

In order to consider possible effects of the *Primary Shakespeare* programme on children's literacy, we set the children and their teachers a whole-class task (nine National Theatre classes and nine matched classes): we asked them to contribute words describing a bee (summer 2002). The aim was to study children's vocabulary and their creative response to the task. For example, here is one class's contribution:

Bees hum, bees sting, bees like making honey.  
 Bees are yellow, bees are black, bees come out when it's sunny.  
 Bees are stripey, bees are clever, bees are very funny!  
 It swizzles and swirls, it does lots of twirls,  
 Bizz buzz, bizz buzz, but beware of the sting...  
 (The Bee Exercise, *Primary Shakespeare*, 2002)

We found no differences between the two groups as to the total number of words contributed. However, a count of the total number of single word contributions and of contributions of six or more words showed more single word contributions from the National Theatre classes (43 v. 7) and fewer six or more word contributions (11 v. 38), as compared to the matched classes. This finding works against the hypothesis that the *Primary Shakespeare* programme may have a positive impact on children's oracy and/or creative use of words.

In a second oracy exercise that summer, we asked pairs of children (in four National Theatre classes and four matched classes) to discuss with a researcher a print of Rousseau's painting *Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised)*. We examined their responses to our four questions and found that the average number of all responses per class pair was slightly higher for the National Theatre classes than for the matched classes (64.9 v 57.3). Then we grouped the answers into three

categories: descriptive, aesthetic and imaginative. Analysis of the average number of responses in each category showed a similar pattern: 24.4 v 21.7 on descriptive responses; 11.4 v. 11.3 on aesthetic responses; 15.8 v. 12.4 on imaginative responses. These findings point to a difference in favour of the National Theatre children, but the difference is very slight.

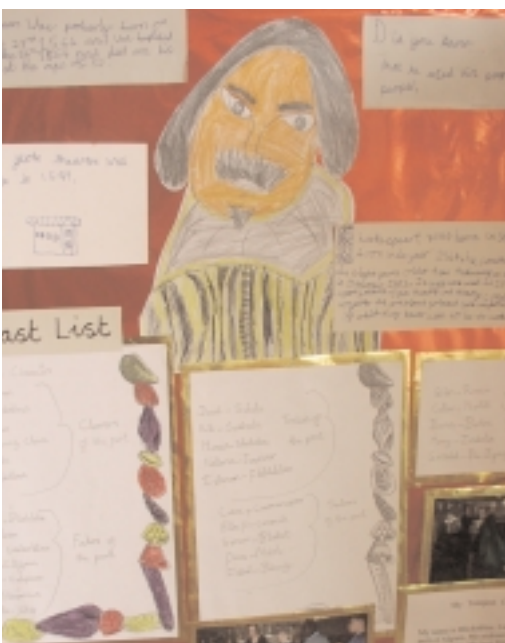
One explanation for these findings is as follows. Children were not trained or rehearsed for these exercises (by contrast with training and rehearsal for SATs), so their responses, perhaps, provides an accurate measure of where they 'are at'. Possibly we were tapping into children's latent imaginative response and existing complex vocabulary and these did not differ between the two groups. As we noted earlier, we consider the main gains children made were in drama literacy and self-confidence. Here we did see differences between the two groups in the video recorded exercise (see page 36).

Halfway through the *Primary Classics* programme, in discussions with children and later in the post-programme questionnaire, we asked children what they thought they were learning. A quarter (25%) of their comments about learning were speaking-and-listening related: '[I have learned] how to pronounce Mephistopheles'; '[I have learned] a lot about the language' (*Primary Classics*, Halfway through interviews, 2004). In the questionnaire, we also asked children whether they thought they had learned to listen to others, to speak clearly and to enjoy speaking in front of others: 86% said they had learned to listen; 81% said they had learned how to speak clearly; but some children (almost a fifth and more boys than girls) continue to find it difficult to raise and project their voices. A fifth (20%) of children also said they did not like speaking in front of the class. We did not ask children why this was, but our observations of sessions suggest that children with English as an additional language, whilst benefiting overall and in the long term, might find speaking particularly daunting.

#### Readers and writers

The National Curriculum states that Key Stage 2 children should be taught how to: read with fluency, accuracy and understanding; understand texts; read for information; and develop an understanding and appreciation of literary texts, non-fiction and non-literary texts. Key Stage 2 children should also be taught: composition; planning and drafting; punctuation; spelling; handwriting and presentation; formal and non-standard English usage; and language structure.

The National Theatre's literacy aims and objectives varied between programmes. The *Word Alive* programme (2003) was more overtly aimed



Examples of children's written work, *Primary Classics 2004*

Photo: Helen Turner

at the National Curriculum). In 2003, the *Word Alive* programme's literacy aims were more closely tied into National Curriculum agendas: to locate evidence in text; to explore the main issues of a story by writing a story about a dilemma and the issues it raises for the character; to write an alternative ending for a known story and discuss how this would change the readers view of the characters and events of the original story (*Word Alive* 2003). It gave children more opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills than the *Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics* programmes. *Word Alive* artists provided a supportive environment for the children to read out loud, particularly when working in small groups. Story-maps and drawing pictures provided a useful aid to story-writing for some children: 'We had a big sheet of paper and we were in fours and we drew a picture and when we got back to the class we turned the paper around and you had to tell a story' (*Word Alive*, Halfway through interviews, 2003). The technique helped children to move from listening to a story to writing it down. It was significant that more *Word Alive* children than matched school children said they had learned how to put a story together during the current year ( $p=0.007$ ), although there was no significant difference between *Word Alive* children and their matches when asked to put four muddled-up sentences comprising the story *Smudge the Naughty Dog* into the correct order (Children's questionnaire *Word Alive* 2003 ).

Children (in halfway through discussions 2003) agreed with their teachers and with the National Theatre that the purpose of the *Word Alive* programme was improving literacy; 50% (107) of comments were that it was to help them learn about literacy. These comments can be subdivided into components of literacy: learn how to listen; remember or make a story up; be creative; tell stories and speak generally; recognize story genres, particularly classic and dilemma stories; start and end a story; de-construct and re-construct stories; and write stories. Children pointed out the added value their participation in the *Word Alive* programme brought to their literacy work in class: 'We are better at writing stories now because he has been teaching us how to write stories' (*Word Alive*, Halfway through interviews, 2003).

It was clear that children appreciated the way literacy was being taught in *Word Alive*: 43% (110) of their comments about what they had enjoyed referred to literacy-related activities. They had particularly liked listening to new stories, making up and telling their own stories, and having fun doing it! By contrast, children's questionnaire responses on what they enjoyed at school show that the literacy hour came second to bottom. For some children, the enjoyment of literacy generated by *Word Alive*, spread into the classroom. One child spoke enthusiastically about the work he had done in class with his teacher; they had written

I've learned how to  
do stories out of  
nowhere. You can  
even make your own  
words up – it only  
needs a beginning, a  
middle and an end

(*Word Alive*, Halfway through  
interviews, 2003)

Telling stories 'cause they was hard to tell and I kept going 'erm' and 'um' and you had to keep thinking and thinking

(*Word Alive*, Halfway through interviews, 2003)

letters to finish the story, a letter to his sister and some newspaper stories about dilemmas about wells and eyeballs. The work in class also encouraged children to work together: '...two people did the pictures then we swapped – they did the headlines, then interview, then title' (*Word Alive*, Halfway through interviews, 2003).

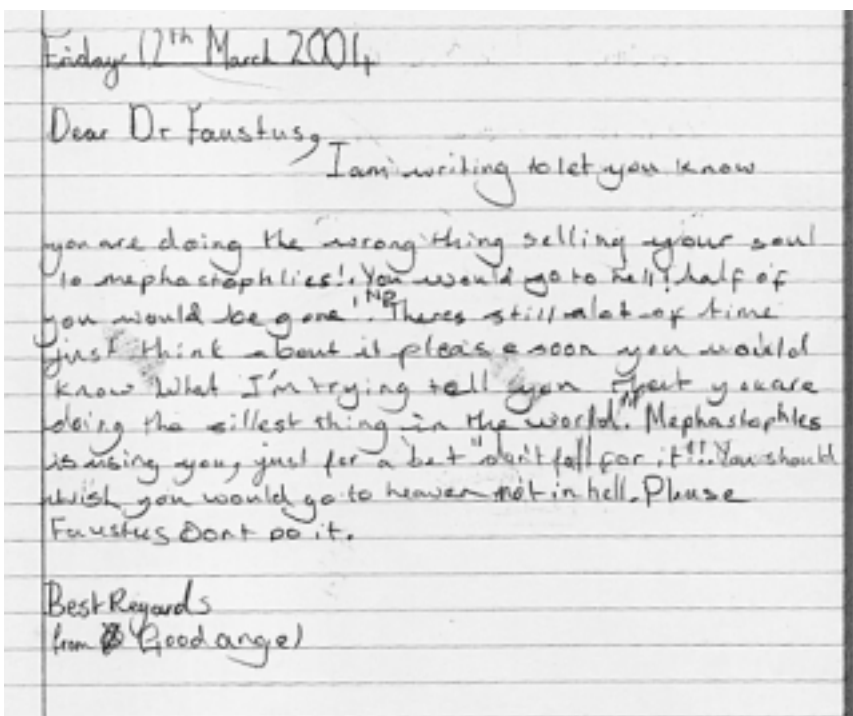
However, the children recognized that learning about literacy within *Word Alive* was not always easy. Half (53%) of their comments about difficulties they had encountered so far in the *Word Alive* programme referred to literacy issues. Most of these literacy difficulties centred on their inexperience with speaking or telling stories, thinking creatively or writing stories down: 'Telling your own stories; it was difficult because we don't tell out loud a lot – in class we only do reading'. Some children were also thrilled, disgusted, frightened or frustrated with some of the contents of the stories they had been told.

Some children were able to comment on the value of some of the literacy-based exercises. In one literacy exercise a photocopied story was cut into many pieces, which were then mixed up and handed back to the class. The children were asked to work together to re-construct the story into its original form. Some children found this exercise difficult – some couldn't read well enough to join in, some found working in this way very difficult, others had no sense of the story and many said it went on too long.

In 2002 the *Primary Shakespeare* programme's literacy aims were: to develop oracy and writing in line with learning outcomes in the National Curriculum (*Primary Shakespeare* 2002). In 2004, there were no specific reading and writing aims. The only curricular-related work mentioned was with history and citizenship. We observed few opportunities for reading and writing during the *Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics* sessions, apart from reading lines of text or writing down words they associated with Shakespeare, lists of desirable objects (found in a treasure chest), magic spells and ingredients; and a more extensive list of descriptive words during the design workshops in 2004. The programme designers thought the drama work children did with artists would provide the impetus and material for writing after and in-between sessions. Reading and writing around the sessions was, therefore, dependent on the teachers finding the time and space to do this work.

We saw many instances of good practice. Thus artists suggested activities the teachers and children could do for the next session, such as writing spells or a newspaper article. Teachers could also dip into the teacher's pack - given at their INSET day at the start of the programmes

- for inspiration. We observed, and artists and children told us, that some teachers did use the packs and/or did work around the programmes, whilst other teachers did very little additional work. Some - but not all - classrooms were covered in pieces of children's work (pictures, puppets, spells, pictures of Shakespeare, maps). One class turned an adjoining room into a Tempest island whilst another put their work on public display for the whole school to see. Teachers were also asked to provide some pieces of the children's work for the end-of-programme show at the Albany, which resulted in a public display seen by the community.

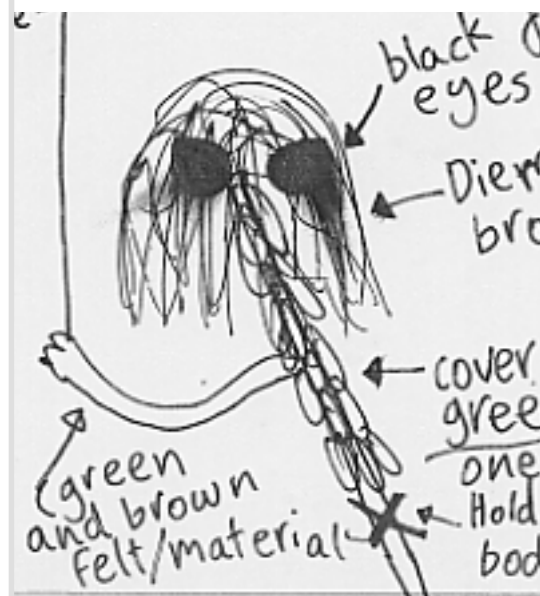


Example of child's written work set by the teacher, *Primary Classics 2004*

At the end of both *Primary Shakespeare (2002)* and *Primary Classics (2004)*, we set the children some tasks to see if the programmes had made a difference to children's written literacy. In 2002 (in a questionnaire to *Primary Shakespeare* and matched children), we gave children the first two lines of a poem about summer: Summer is ice cream wrappers and hot dusty streets, sunshine and shade in the park. We asked them to write two more lines, adding that poems don't have to rhyme, although some children did make their poem rhyme. Here is an example of one child's poem:

Ice cream wrappers and hot dusty streets,  
Sunshine and shade in the park,  
Swimming and playing and running about,  
Summer's here so everybody shout  
(*Primary Shakespeare*, Summer is... exercise, 2002)

Example of puppet design work in children's folders, *Primary Classics, 2004*





We found that statistically significantly more of the National Theatre children than of the matched children achieved this task (78% v. 67%,  $p=0.02$ ).

In 2004, in their *Faustus*-related folders, we set children another writing task, partly to see if the in-role drama work they had done in the sessions had helped them write in the first person and partly to see if teachers had allocated time to work after and in-between the sessions. We found that some teachers had either not made time for the children to do this work or had substituted something else; but where the children were encouraged to do this task, almost all accomplished it, writing in the first person, in character as Faustus. Much of the substituted and additional work was written pieces and mainly teacher-initiated. For example, one teacher asked the children to write a report of the trip to see the *Faustus* at the National Theatre using paragraphs and conjunctions. Another teacher got the whole class to compose '*The Ballad of Faustus*'. Each child then had to write it down and decorate the page with images from *Faustus*.

In conclusion, we asked the children who had taken part in all three years of National Theatre programmes (*Primary Shakespeare*, *Word Alive* and *Primary Classics*) what they thought they had been learning over the whole three years: 22% of learning comments were literacy related.

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### **SATs: literacy and mathematics**

In addition to our own literacy exercises and children's own views and comments about literacy-related benefits from the programmes, we also compared the SATs scores of children in National Theatre and matched schools at the end of both *Primary Shakespeare* (2002) and *Word Alive* (2003) years. The results are given in more detail in our two interim reports (January and October 2003).

#### **Optional SATs 2002**

The comparison between National Theatre classes and classes in matched schools showed no significant differences between the groups. When we took into account differences found between 2001 Key Stage 1 (baseline) scores in intervention and matched classes, we found that differences between classes on writing were much larger than for reading and maths, but they were not significant ( $p=0.07$ , 95% confidence intervals [CI] -2 to 41). (It should be noted that it is difficult to prove significant differences with small pools of data.)

We then considered whether 2002 reading and writing scores combined, or reading, writing and maths scores combined showed differences between the two types of classes. Following adjustment for differences at baseline in Key Stage 1, statistical tests showed there were no significant differences between the National Theatre and matched classes either on reading and writing combined or on reading, writing and maths combined (respectively  $p=.24$ , 95% CI -6 to 25; and  $p=.13$ , CI 95% -3 to 24).

#### **Optional SATs 2003**

For the National Theatre children and their matches, we compared numbers of children scoring level 3 or above on their optional SATs in reading, writing and maths (see table below). After adjusting for baseline differences, similar proportions in the two groups of schools scored 3 or above in reading or writing. Significantly more National Theatre children than matched children scored level 3 or above in mathematics.

## Optional SATs scores, 2003

N= 282	Baseline - *		2003 optional SATS -		Statistical significance test
	% scoring 3 or above		% scoring 3 or above		
	<i>Word Alive</i>	Match	<i>Word Alive</i>	Match	P [z] (95% CI)
Reading	27	22	79	72	P=0.46 (-.45, .96)
Writing	7	5	50	50	P=0.90 (-.96, .84)
Mathematics	23	26	75	59	P=0.01 (.18, 1.2)

\*Baseline scores based on school scores for 2001 Key Stage 1 SATS in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

No matched classes were studied in 2004 and so there were no SATs comparisons between National Theatre and matched classes.

The finding on mathematics in 2003 could be a chance finding. But the Durham study found this too (Merrell and Tymms 2002). So we discuss here other suggestions. It is commonly said by teachers that, compared to the literacy hour, the numeracy hour allows for much more interactive input by the children. The literacy hour is characterised by the huge number of items to be covered. Teachers replying to our questionnaire (in 2002) said they had to rush along, instructing the children; children as active learners were downplayed.

In this connection, an evaluation of England's National Literacy (NLS) and Numeracy (NNS) strategies (Earl et al 2003) makes some interesting points on differences in teacher perception of the usefulness of the NLS and NNS. Teachers consistently favoured the NNS over the NLS; they said the NNS had improved children's learning more than the NLS had (Earl et al 2003, Table 5-2a); they felt more comfortable and capable in teaching the NNS than the NLS (Table 5-6). These findings suggest that teachers find the numeracy session chimed in with their ideas about how children learn (i.e. as active participants).

There is also some small-scale research evidence that in the numeracy hour, teachers allow children to contribute, to discuss possibilities, to move around the classroom, to work in groups (Gemma Moss, personal communication). Gillian Hatch (1999) suggests - based on classroom observation - that children's willingness to engage with mathematics - and thence their achievement - relates to their self-confidence. She noted that high ability Year 6s 'were willing and able to tackle any problem I chose to set them'. They were confident they could make progress; and behaved as active learners. By contrast a group of high ability year 7s had become 'dependent learners', who thought they had to be instructed how to respond to maths problems. She ascribes this difference to teacher behaviour - the younger children's teacher had fostered children's creative abilities; the older children's teacher had suppressed them.

These points about the teaching of literacy and numeracy suggest that children's self-confidence as active learners may lead to higher achievement. Our video recorded data show that the National Theatre children had high self-confidence (as compared to the match children). It may be that in the literacy hour their self-confidence is not given a chance to flourish; they do not

feel in control of the topics. In the numeracy hour, however, perhaps they have more scope to engage as self-confident active learners and so achieve more highly.

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## Creativity and reflexivity

### Creativity

Creativity is 'imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value'

(NACCCE 1999:29)

The sessions provided many opportunities for children to think creatively and use their imagination. This included a creative use of their minds, their bodies, costumes, instruments, objects, props, puppets and the space. The artists established an environment where originality was encouraged and the children's contributions were valued. When the sessions worked best, children had opportunities to work creatively as a whole class, in small groups and individually.

For instance, in one *Primary Shakespeare* text session, an artist set a whole class activity based on the storm scene set in a spaceship. Half of the class was asked to think of a character on board a space ship and to act out that role. Meanwhile, the rest of the class formed a circle around the actors and decided how to use their voices to create together the sound of the storm. Once combined, the noises of the storm built to a crescendo with the members of the space crew frantically engaged in their individual tasks. This example demonstrates that where artists exercised their own imagination exciting opportunities could be created for the classes to think creatively and contribute their own ideas.

Creating tableaux enabled children to work in small groups to convey a scene. This technique was used in all three programmes. At its most successful, where the children were able to overcome the difficulties of working together, developing tableaux led to some creative solutions.

For instance, during one *Word Alive* session, the children worked in groups to produce five focused freeze-frames. In one session this worked particularly well: one group involved every participant and chose a different narrator for each freeze-frame. The teacher built on this imaginative work by taking digital photographs of the tableaux and displaying them in the classroom to promote further discussion.

The *Word Alive* programme presented children with perhaps the most opportunities for creative development of their own individual ideas. For example, in a storytelling session, children worked in groups to complete a story begun by the artist. Where these groups worked well each child in the group could contribute their ideas and had a part to play in the retelling of the story, often incorporating humour. Children's creativity was also demonstrated through the invention of their own stories, such as the 'X marks the Spot' exercise where children drew a picture of something that happened to them and where they were in the picture/action/story. The final *Word Alive* session provided the space for as many children as possible to share their own stories. In some instances children adapted and retold stories they had heard. At other times children developed their own story lines. One boy began his story by introducing the main character of his story:

Daniel, who was relaxing at home, watching television. He was fostered. He could see from his window that an army was destroying his village. He planned to save the world from this army. He was very scared. The army started walking towards him. Then he became fearless. ...the army started walking more slowly. The army's weakness was his bravery. So it was sucked into the earth. The village returned to normal. Daniel ruled the world and never died (Word Alive observation, 2003).

Another example of an imaginative activity is the exercise 'big fat lie' used in the *Word Alive* programme. Here, children told stories that began describing an aspect of their real life but which developed into a fictitious tale (a big fat lie), unleashing the imagination through the 'untruth' of the story. Permission to tell a lie in school proved very popular. One boy sat in the 'big fat lie' chair and confidently told his own story to his class, lasting for four minutes.

#### *Creativity using body and music*

The sessions gave the children opportunities to work creatively using a variety of different 'languages'. Children could also express themselves through movement and music sessions. In the *Primary Shakespeare* post-programme questionnaire, 81% of children indicated they had liked making music and sound and 77% that they had liked the movement element. There were the opportunities for children to demonstrate an imaginative use of their bodies. This included children of varying abilities. One activity, for example, during the movement session involved the children working in threes to compose a sequence of movements based on Ariel and Sycorax, using different body shapes and levels. Three boys, one with a statement of special needs, worked imaginatively together to produce their own interpretation of the sequence, which they confidently performed to the whole class.

Children were encouraged to use their voices creatively as well as to experiment with a range of instruments, including recycled objects. The storm scene in *The Tempest*, for example included a soundscape created using voices and instruments:

Artist: let's make rain with our hands.

[Children respond by patting their legs.]

Artist: What other body part could you use?

Child: Rainsticks?

Artist: What about on your cheeks?

[Children try it out. The room is quiet apart from the sound of popping cheeks.]

Artist: It sounds like the storm has gone and these are the drips.

(*Primary Shakespeare* observation, 2002)

### *Creativity using the visual arts*

Combining the visual arts with the performing arts proved popular with the children. In the *Primary Shakespeare* programme, 86% indicated that they liked the painting and making element. During the four sessions involving puppetry children had opportunities to develop their creative skills through thinking creatively about ideas for representing scenes of *The Tempest*, using a range of materials to make their puppets and introducing individual design elements and experimenting with staging and manipulating techniques.

The *Primary Classics* programme included similar opportunities for the children to exercise their creativity through puppetry. Children, for example, demonstrated their ingenuity in bringing household objects to life. One child turned his green soap dish into a 75-year old man, who walked very slowly. Another child turned his plunger into a 25-year old 'whizzy' person called Sticky McDotty, by spinning the plunger around the table-top. A small Tupperware box was transformed into 'Baby Football', which was given a very believable squeaky babyish voice.



A display of children's puppets, *Primary Classics 2004*  
Photo: Helen Turner

### *Reflexivity*

A number of key elements enabled children to develop as reflexive learners with an opportunity to reflect upon the way that they are learning at the same time as understanding what they are learning.

### *Programmes*

Each of the three programmes included a minimum of 9 sessions (12 sessions for *Word Alive* and *Primary Classics*) in addition to performances at the Albany and the National Theatre. This time-span, in contrast to an isolated visit by a theatre company, enabled the children to revisit, reflect and accumulate knowledge, because there have been opportunities to revisit skills and knowledge acquired in previous years.

### *Artists*

At their most successful, artists encouraged children to reflect on what they were learning, during individual sessions and to reinforce work from different stages of the programme. One good technique was to ask children to reflect on the purpose of a particular activity:

Artists: What is the point of a game like that?

Child: Was it like a memory thing?

Child: It's to test your quick reactions

Child: Eye to hand co-ordination

Child: It's a concentration game

Artists encouraged another type of reflexive practice through asking

children to comment on each other's work. For example, after some group work in *Primary Shakespeare* on the birth of the island, the children asked each other questions and made comments about what they had seen:

Child: It was good; the island with life slowly creeping up  
(*Primary Shakespeare* observation, 2002)

Child: It would look better if it were more spaced out  
(*Primary Shakespeare* observation, 2002)

The following excerpt illustrates links between acquired reflexive skill and ability to critique a story.

Artist: What do you think made this a good story?

Children: The way you said it. They were moral. They were adventurous

Artist: What makes interesting words?

Children: It teaches you a lesson; Crick crack keeps us involved ...making us wait for the good part.

(*Word Alive* observation, 2003)

Encouraging reflexivity requires artists' time and skill. It seems from our observations that the most experienced artists were the ones who confidently left spaces for reflection and reinforcement. This appeared to happen less often with the least experienced artists who perhaps were anxious to move on through the material.

Some teachers encouraged children's reflexivity by continuing the themes introduced by artists between sessions. One method was through the use of the children's folders introduced in *Primary Classics*. This worked best when teachers allowed the children to have frequent access to these folders.

#### *Special educational needs*

The opportunity to stop and reflect, to repeat and reinforce knowledge offered by these programmes may have had particular importance for children identified as having special educational needs. In several instances teachers and other professionals commented on the responses of such children. A teacher told us about a girl who had spoken at a review meeting with a number of adults present. When asked what she had been doing at school that term, she replied: 'I've been doing Shakespeare and I like Ariel because she is a spirit of the air'. The teacher commented on everyone's surprise. (*Primary Shakespeare* 2002).

#### **Research - Children's reflections over three years (Reviews 2004)**

The research has added another important opportunity for reflexivity. Children have talked with members of the research team at several points in each programme, including specific discussions after some individual sessions, group discussions mid-way through each programme, and discussions after artist performances and children's performances. An important written element has been the end-of-programme questionnaire. Each of these activities offered a rare opportunity in the school year for children to stop and reflect on their own learning.

In the final year, 2004, we asked the children, in small groups, to review and reflect on the drama work they had been doing with the National Theatre over the past three years. It was clear from their responses (quantity and quality) that they enjoyed this reflexive opportunity. It was also clear that the programmes had made an impact on them, particularly the artists and the plays and stories, and that they were able to remember so many things in the minutest of details.

We began by asking them to think about each of the years in turn. Children had many memories of working on *The Tempest* in 2002 and spoke at length about special moments. Most of their comments about the *Primary Shakespeare* programme as a whole were drama-related. Almost two thirds (64%) of their comments were about doing drama, particularly playing drama games, making puppets and performing in a play at the Albany

I remember I was Stephano and I was drunk

I liked the shell he blew through when he wanted us to be quiet

One of my best moments was when we stuck silvery bits onto the sea.  
It was lovely

I liked acting *The Tempest*. I just like acting out a lot and I liked watching the others  
[performing at the Albany]

Some children spoke appreciatively about the artist/directors they had worked with, particularly the humour and the signature drama games the artists had played with them: 'I liked it when K did his tricks; [he said] 'I can hold my breath for an hour under water' and then put a cup of water on his head' (Child talking about her *Primary Shakespeare* artist).

They gave fewer overall comments about the *Word Alive* storytelling programme in 2003. Some children were a bit hazy about the contents and order of the sessions. They were clear, however, what the purpose of *Word Alive* was: to help them with literacy. Some 43% of their comments about *Word Alive 4* were literacy-related (listening and speaking) although drama activities, especially games, songs and movement still featured in their conversations. What these discussions revealed was how much they had enjoyed listening to really good stories and having the opportunity to tell their own stories.

There was one [story] with a family down a well and they grabbed him and the eyes fell out. It's a puzzle: who should get the eyeball?

We had to go around and do a word of a story in a circle, then we did one word at a time stories

When we asked them what they thought they had learned from the programmes across the whole three years, 51.5% of their comments were about learning how to make and perform drama. Almost a fifth of comments (19%) related to learning about their own personal and social development, especially learning to work as a team or in groups and 22% were literacy-related (Halfway through review, 2004).

We learned to be more confident about acting and learning to look at the audience

When you are doing the play it feels good. I like my scene 'cause I was a devil. I was a good devil

The storytelling was good 'cause we learned to tell stories with more omph!

[That] I don't mind telling stories, but I don't like writing it down

Finally, during these discussions about their three years' experience of National Theatre programmes, we gave children a few moments to think about what, if anything, they had learned about themselves - as distinct from things like literacy and drama skills. Some children needed quite a lot of clarification and examples from their friends before they could answer this question, leading us to think that children are not often asked what they know about themselves past and present. Almost half (49.5 per cent) of their responses to this question were about their own personal and social development and awareness and of these, 96% were positive statements about themselves.

Other learned-about-myself comments (40%) related to their ability to act, tell stories, speak clearly in front of others and perform in front of an audience

[I've learned] that I can do different stuff; like acting out. I used not to be good at acting and telling stories  
(Halfway through review, 2004)

[I've learned that] I know I can do it – some people say you can't do it

That I can't work with people unless [I like them]. It's hard to work with others. If you like them it's easier

[I've learned} don't be bossy – let other people have a go



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### Summary points:

- Recent education policy promotes drama in education as a tool for learning. Both National Theatre and matched schools were committed to promoting the arts, including drama.
- Those children who participated in the National Theatre drama programmes reported an increased enjoyment of school. Drama promotes and supports children's agency and engagement in educational processes.
- These drama programmes each stretched over two terms; and children were engaged as experiential learners. These factors encouraged children's knowledge to become embedded and creativity to flourish.
- The main gains made by the children were twofold. First, they learned drama literacy: drama, performing and responding to drama as an art form. Second, the programmes promoted essential tools for learning: self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Children also engaged with theatre - a key cultural experience, beyond the world of school.
- Children recognised, through experience, the value of working with other people towards goals.
- Children's gains in self-confidence may explain the National Theatre children's statistically higher score in optional SATs mathematics compared to the matched children.
- National Theatre children learned to speak more clearly and listen more attentively than their matches. We found no differences between the two groups on Literacy SATs (reading and writing).
- The National Theatre drama programmes offered children the opportunity to use their bodies, minds, voices, instruments, puppets and space.
- The programmes, artists and research gave children the chance to reflect on and discuss what they had learned about drama and about themselves.

## 6 | Findings: The teachers

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We collected data from teachers across all three years of the study - they were the class teachers of the National Theatre classes and matched classes (older cohort: 13, younger cohort (the focus of this report): 26, match teachers: 31, no matches for *Primary Classics*). In all 70 teachers took part in the study. Our aims were to describe what part teachers played in the National Theatre drama programmes, as a way of considering their professional development and the use they could make of their experiences to improve children's learning and enjoyment. We also wanted to know their views on drama's possible contribution to children's social and educational growth, in the context of current education policies. In terms of method, we observed the teachers during training, evaluation and drama sessions, held informal discussions with them about their involvement in the programmes, and carried out questionnaires and interviews. For some topics we compared intervention teachers with match teachers via pre- and post-programme questionnaires.



Teachers and artists attending an INSET, *Primary Classics* 2004  
Photo: Helen Turner

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### Teacher training and involvement

One of the aims of the National Theatre programmes, and of Art Of Regeneration (AOR) more generally, was to set in place measures that would increase arts activities in schools. So there was proposed merit in helping teachers increase such work with children. In each of the three years, before each programme began, intervention teachers took part in

training days (INSETs) organised at the Albany by the Primary Co-ordinator. These were designed to introduce teachers to the aims, content and methods of the programme, and to discuss issues arising with them. The teachers were asked to participate in drama games and activities (similar to those the children would participate in), and thus to learn their value from experience. Each teacher was given a pack with information about the programme.

Each programme was developed as a sustained learning process rather than an arts-based activity 'parachuted in' to school. Teachers were asked to be present at each session. But they responded to the programme in differing ways: taking responsibility for children's behaviour; supporting learning; and/or actively participating in the sessions and in the programme as a whole.

A minimal requirement was that teachers would be present at sessions and responsible for behavioural issues. Most teachers maintained control of the classes. Some played a more active role in controlling behaviour, enforcing accepted rules and dealing with occasional disruptive incidents. Some teachers were present but sat aside marking books. One teacher in the *Primary Shakespeare* programme absented himself during parts of sessions and sometimes, for whole sessions.

Some teachers extended the work carried out in the sessions following suggestions from the artists or on their own initiative. For example, in *Word Alive*, the researcher observed that following the story-maps session an artist praised the children and told them he hoped they would keep their story maps and write them up. The teacher agreed with this suggestion and the class spent the final 15 minutes in class making good copies of their story maps.

Some teachers also used the teachers' pack provided by the National Theatre to prepare children for a particular activity. For instance, a teacher spotted that the next session would involve a complex whole class activity: assembling a complete story from jumbled sections of text. She prepared her class by trying the same exercise twice with her class earlier in the week, using a shorter, simpler story (*Word Alive*, Observation, 2003).

Some teachers, sometimes, participated in the activities and also contributed to class discussions or drama games. This allowed the children a rare opportunity to see their teacher in a different role. Conversely, the teachers were able to view the children in new ways too.

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### **Teachers' views on literacy and on drama**

The teachers gave their views on education policies, especially as regards the National Literacy Strategy in our questionnaire (2001) before the first programme. They indicated that they found government policies for the literacy hour constructed children as relatively passive; and, by contrast, that they themselves wished to increase children's active participation in learning. Thus they thought the literacy strategy had advantages: it provided structure, progression and good materials. But it had serious disadvantages: it did not harness or build on children's own interests; there was always time-pressure, too little emphasis on speaking and listening, and not enough time for extended work. These views, consistent across all the 32 teachers (of both older and younger cohort children), provide an important context for the National Theatre programmes.

Thus, for example, teachers suggested that more practical work, including drama, would improve children's experience and learning.

After the *Primary Shakespeare* programme (2002), all the nine teachers involved said they had learned about the merits of drama work with children; and all indicated that they planned to do more themselves in the following year. This is indicated by their answers on what skills children can learn through drama. We coded these under three topics: personal/social, literacy, and drama. Before the programme, 22% of teachers' comments referred to drama-related skills; afterwards 34% did so. The teachers also indicated that their confidence in doing drama sessions with children had developed during the programme. They recorded their levels of confidence (on a scale of 1 to 5) before and after the programme; four low scorers before scored more highly afterwards; 2 high scorers stayed the same; 3 high scorers went down one (*Primary Shakespeare*, Teacher questionnaire, 2002).

Similar points emerged in 2003. After the *Word Alive* programme, five of seven teachers gave higher ratings of their confidence about storytelling than before the programme (and two gave the same high rating). After the *Primary Shakespeare* programme with the older cohort, three of the six gave higher ratings on their confidence about doing drama, two high scorers stayed the same and one gave a lower rating. That they were putting these skills into practice is suggested by the children they taught: more of the *Primary Shakespeare* children than of the matches said they were doing drama with their teacher; and more of the *Word Alive* children than of the matches said they liked story time at school (*Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics*, Teacher questionnaires, 2002 and 2004).

Again, in 2004, the eight *Primary Classics* teachers claimed to have gained in knowledge, skills and confidence about drama work with children and all but one of them gave clear evidence that they were putting drama techniques into practice.

I can mix in the games, things we've learned, in just about every aspect of the curriculum. It's cross-curricular. We've done role-play in science, which is fantastic. Stuff from the workshops has come up - especially group work and group dynamics, team-work. In IT, the children came up with - you need a mixture of leaders, ideas people - they came up with it. (Teacher, *Primary Classics*, interview, 2004)

Perhaps the main, clear, message coming through from the teachers at their post-programme evaluation in 2004 was that the children had hugely benefited, in personal and social terms, and as makers of drama.

They had seen children helping each other in novel ways: 'G -it really brought him out - acting, movement. He's not that good at reading, but he is at acting. No-one had done that for him before. And his friends read it out for him and then he did it. Last year he would barely put his hand up or anything. He's much more confident now' (Teacher, *Primary Classics*, interview, 2004).

Children really came out of their shells. Those who are not strong at reading and writing can do this - they really enjoy expressing themselves in this way.

(Teacher, *Primary Classics*, interview, 2004)

And they saw children making drama: 'Even games they play - their voices, projection, it's getting better and better. And in assembly I didn't have to stop them once because they were projecting their voices so well... They get so much out of it.' (Teacher, *Primary Classics*, interview, 2004)

It's wonderful... Just being able to see them in the mini-scenes, just amazing. All of a sudden it's like they've got something that's going on the stage, and they're confident, they like it, they're very pleased, they feel it's fun. The whole project has been fun for them. And that's the important thing. It hasn't been like, we're looking at text - sometimes literacy hour is very much unpick text and they don't do anything. This has been fantastic.

(Teacher, *Primary Classics*, interview, 2004)

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### Professional exchange or partnership

An important aim of the National Theatre programmes was 'to encourage the development of partnership between artists and teachers by providing a structured context for professional exchange in an educational setting'. These partnerships were encouraged through: training for artists; INSET training for teachers; artists and teachers training together; teachers observing artists working with their classes; National Theatre staff and artists suggesting work for teachers to do with children between sessions.

In the first year, artists and teachers were trained separately with a cross-over session in the afternoon of day two of the INSET. During the programmes, we found that liaison arrangements and practices varied, with some artists in well-organised, frequent and constructive contact with teachers; others less so. Liaison tended to focus on practical scheduling issues, rather than on creative partnerships. Teacher-led work with the children between sessions varied, with some doing much more than others, and some artists offering suggestions more than others did. There was no consistency of expectation or of outcome across the classes.

After these experiences and judging from initial research data from the first year, National Theatre and AOR staff agreed that more measures should be put in place to improve teacher-artist liaison. So in the second year (2003) and the third year (2004), the teachers had both their own training day and also a joint day with the artists who would work with their classes. Within this training, clear specific information was provided – guidelines were screened on an overhead and given out on paper to all parties. However, we observed that exchanges of information at this joint day were rudimentary, partly because this was a rushed session, and also perhaps because it was an unsatisfactory way of getting to know each other and the class characteristics.

At the artists' post-programme evaluation session (2003), artists commented that they saw they could offer teachers a space to see and think about the children in the class in a different way – and see that some children had strengths that shine during drama sessions, though not in classroom situations.

In 2003, in relation to the *Primary Shakespeare* programme, we tried out another scheme. Artists were asked to keep records of their suggestions for between-sessions work, and teachers similarly were asked to record details of such work carried out. We provided record-sheets. This scheme aimed to track not only artist-teacher liaison, but also how far the programmes were being extended into the classroom and so how far the children were engaged with the programme over its lifetime. However, in practice the record-sheets were rarely used. Though some artists did suggest work, and some teachers and children did carry it out, this was not done systematically or regularly.

In the 2004 programme, contacts between teacher and artist worked well – as both sides reported. This may be because one artist carried through the programme with each class and so had a good grasp of it all and also got to know the teacher. It could have resulted from artists being more experienced in working with schools. And greater use of new technology may have helped – communication by text message and email was often mentioned.

At the *Primary Classics* teachers' post-programme evaluation session (April 2004), teachers indicated that they recognised the importance of liaison; they suggested a 10-minute session with the artist weekly would help both sides to assess the programme so far and to move it on effectively.

For the 2004 programme, too, we devised two schemes directly to help the children take control of *Primary Classics* and benefit fully from it. The first comprised information: details of the sessions and of planned expeditions to the National Theatre and to the Albany. Secondly, the National Theatre provided a file for each participating child, again giving details about the programme, and suggesting a minimum of three *Faustus*-related activities, at stated points in the programme, which children and teachers could work on together. In practice, in all the eight classes, the children carried out the three suggested activities, and in some classes children did more. Four of the eight teachers particularly noted that the children very much liked the folders, two that children would have liked to do more activities, and two that they did do more. At their post-programme evaluation (April 2004), teachers suggested that if they had teacher packs and children's folders earlier, they could plan the term's work better, in advance.

For [the teacher] when I was working with the class, he could see things that the children don't normally do – the style of questioning, debate, answering – it's different from the way that he teaches

(Artist, *Primary Classics*, 2003)

For future reference, I would base the curriculum timetable around the project, having it as a running theme for one and a half terms  
(Teacher, *Primary Classics*, 2004)

Post-programme evaluations showed that teachers were enthusiastic about the benefits to themselves of seeing artists at work.

Finding and learning about different approaches to teaching literacy and Shakespeare  
(Teacher, *Primary Shakespeare*, 2002)

Being able to see a professional artist at work: experiencing different methods of working, taking part in 'fun' activities, letting inhibitions go. Having lots of fun.  
(Teacher, *Word Alive*, 2003)

Provided a new approach from a professional storyteller. Teachers have so limited opportunities to work with other people  
(Teacher, *Word Alive*, 2003)

This enthusiasm echoes Oddie and Allen's observations about the value of artists in schools, as outsiders: 'Introducing artists into the teaching frame can enable the teacher to stand back and observe their class at work. The experience can be illuminating for a teacher who may see individual children in a new light' (Oddie and Allen, 1998:43).

This implicit or indirect form of professional exchange is an important element of professional development that the programmes potentially can encourage. Throughout the National Theatre programmes, teachers have attended INSET led by artists, observed the workshop sessions and met to reflect on the impact of the programmes at a post-programme evaluation meeting. The research element has added another layer to this reflection, by asking teachers to complete pre- and post-programme questionnaires and to talk to the researchers in interviews. These opportunities for reflexive practice are hard-won in the hectic schedules of school life but are an important element of the programmes.

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### Summary points:

- Teachers think children learn through active engagement but this is not generally promoted through the National Literacy Strategy. Since drama work implements this engagement, they valued it highly.
- All the National Theatre teachers said they had gained confidence about doing drama with children and were using their learned competencies.
- The programmes were strongest when there was good artist-teacher partnership. Liaison between (the very busy) teachers and artists varied in quality and quantity despite goodwill on both sides.

## 7 | Findings: The artists

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It is important to examine the role of the artists in order to contribute to a wider understanding about the 'added value' of their work in schools. The artists employed by the National Theatre are freelance, paid by the session. As we noted earlier, artists and children have to work in democratic partnership if the drama work is to succeed. Oddie and Allen (1998) draw attention, in their review, to two broad ways in which artists work in schools: artists as makers and presenters (or performers) and artists as teachers/facilitators (see Sharp and Dust, 1997). We have observed artists working in both ways in the National Theatre programmes. However, the artists' roles were more complex than this division may suggest. Each artist wore a number of interchangeable hats and used a variety of roles beginning with performer and instructor/facilitator but also encourager, rule-maker, supporter of cultural heritage, employee, reflexive practitioner and partner with teachers.



**Jan Blake; Artist**  
Photo: Wilkinson

This section draws together observation material from the *Primary Shakespeare*, *Word Alive* and *Primary Classics* programmes and from training days, together with artists' comments from post-programme evaluation meetings. We observed at least three of every type of session in the first and second years and two of every type of *Primary Classics* sessions across all participating classes (85 sessions in total).



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## Artist's roles:

### Performer

The artist's role as performer was central to the *Word Alive* programme. The sessions were pinned around expert storytelling. This introduced humour and a sense of fun to many of the sessions. The artists demonstrated their own styles of storytelling. One of the artists performed her stories from a storytelling chair. Other artists adopted a more mobile style of storytelling. Children were also shown differing styles of storytelling at the storytelling festival at the Cottesloe Theatre (National Theatre) where two different artists performed for them.

In *Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics*, too, some artists found their performance skills useful for elements of the sessions. Artists used storytelling skills at specific points. Some artists also used performance to illustrate how something could or should be done, whilst others used performance as an icebreaker or session-shaper. Some artists used performance as a fun way of keeping order. Others did not see their own performance as a workshop-leading strategy they wished to draw on.

### Instructor, facilitator and model

Artists displayed a variety of differing teaching techniques. The amount of direct instructional input differed between the programmes and between individual artists.

During the *Primary Shakespeare* sessions, children seemed to receive very little verbal instruction on how to 'act', whether the artist was wearing his or her instructor or performer hat (or both). Drama skills were conveyed to the children through modeling the artist or each other and through their active participation in drama exercises and improvisation. However, the session about Shakespeare's text did provide the children with a wealth of information about Shakespeare, his use of language and his plays. We did not observe references to either historical/contextual or contemporary acting techniques and styles. The children received some verbal instruction about what not to do in front of or as part of an audience.

The *Word Alive* programme had a more direct instructional element on how to tell stories. This included advice from the artists about the use of body language, voice, timing and rhythm. These basic principles were reinforced throughout the programme. Points made in these moments of direct teaching were reinforced throughout when children listened to the artists tell stories.

By the third programme, *Primary Classics*, the artists noted that the children were experienced performers and theatre-makers, requiring a surprisingly low level of instruction:

Their understanding of dramatic and theatrical concepts was quite staggering, which allowed me to work with real speed. I felt throughout that I was able to travel very quickly into exercises with very little preamble, explanation and scene-setting being necessary. Frozen images are a good example which we did early on – their understanding of what was being asked for was amazing – add to that their ability to create and then analyse and keep improving  
(Artist, *Primary Classics*, 2004)

Skills that artists deemed in need of improvement were, as in *Primary Shakespeare*, developed through experiential learning and from reflection on/modelling from these experiences. For example, during a game where children had to say their names out loud, one artist encouraged a girl to improve her performance-speaking by telling her that her contribution would have been fine if she were a mouse, but since she was not she should try again more loudly. She did so happily and confidently (*Primary Classics*, observation, 2004).

Artists used and created a range of learning environments. These included whole class discussions, games, working in friendship pairs and pairs selected by teacher or artist, and activities in self-selected or adult-selected groups. For example, one two-hour *Word Alive* session followed this sequence of learning styles: whole class discussion; team game; working in random pairs; performing to the class in pairs; whole class instruction; working in friendship pairs (*Word Alive*, observation, 2003).

Our observations suggest that children concentrated for longer when the artists used a range of learning styles throughout the session, rather than one continuous style. One example from the *Word Alive* programme illustrates differences between the range of styles employed. Session five focused on helping children make their own stories. Following the same programme outline, one of the two artists observed used whole class activities for 80% of the session and work in pairs and individually for 20%. The second artist used whole class activities for 70% of the session and a wider range of teaching styles: individual, pairs and groupwork in threes for 30%. The children who worked in this second class appeared in general to be more focused and engaged than the children in the first class.

The *Primary Classics* artists thought they were able to judge well which teaching techniques to use, and which learning styles suited their children because they got to know their class so well over the programme.

I'm completely in favour of long (i.e. 12) workshop programmes. This structure enables me really to assess the needs of a both individual children and the whole class and to design and adapt my work most effectively. It also allows breathing space, and reflection, two other important elements  
(Artist, *Primary Classics*, 2004)

### Encourager

Universally, artists encouraged children by offering praise and positive responses.

My lips are too dry to whistle! That was a joy to watch. You were superb. You told the story really clearly. You used your faces, with language used 400 years ago. Well done!  
(*Primary Shakespeare*, observation, 2002)

OK half an hour ago there were no stories and now we have lovely stories...a cat up a tree, a wolf with a servant called Tom...the room is filled with your lovely stories  
(*Word Alive*, observation, 2003)

Artists recognised that praise for drama work was particularly significant as it can encourage children's talents - which may not be otherwise appreciated in the classroom: 'What moved me most was that children who don't necessarily excel on a scholastic level were enabled to succeed creatively and often confound preconceptions about their abilities. Imagine how it must feel for children whose exuberance and spontaneity is usually discouraged to discover that these same qualities elicit praise and affirmation from the visiting artists!' (Artist, *Primary Shakespeare*, 2002)

During the *Word Alive* sessions, artists referred to the children as storytellers and directors. This positive view of children, full of trust and expectation, helped the children to be creative.

#### Rule-maker

Artists needed to set rules and boundaries for their sessions. This worked best when rules were established early in the programme and sustained throughout each session.

They used differing approaches to keep the children on task. The first approach resembled the authoritative approach common in schools, as in 'Put up your hand if you want to speak' and 'I'm not continuing until everyone is paying attention.'

A second approach focused on the creative process and brought children back on task by reminding them that they were participating in an artistic experience. We saw this particularly during the devising and rehearsing sessions, when the children were heavily focused on theatre-making and performing. Some artists used both approaches interchangeably, even within the same comment: 'I have to wait [until everyone is quiet before I begin]. Make sure the door of our imagination is open. Now listen.' (*Primary Shakespeare*, observation, 2002)

The artists shared the authoritative role with the class teachers, who were almost always present for each session. Children kept to the rules when the class teacher was supportive of the artist's rules but didn't try to take control. The artists were confident that ultimately discipline was the teachers' expertise and responsibility, and they respected that the teacher had to have an ongoing working relationship with the class outside their visits.

For me, the class teachers are the unsung heroes in this story and I think the artists have a lot to learn from their dedication and flexibility. In particular, I think the artists should listen humbly to the teacher's tips on classroom dynamics and behaviour management (*Primary Shakespeare* artist 2002)

#### Teaching literacy

Artists have a particular contribution to make to the teaching of literacy. Teacher's and children's comments about the *Word Alive* programme in particular demonstrate clearly how children have benefited from listening to stories, constructing and deconstructing stories in new ways and from opportunities to tell stories. This has particular resonance in relation to the current teaching of literacy in schools. The National Literacy Strategy with the daily 'Literacy Hour' has introduced a structured curriculum and pedagogy. As we noted earlier, comments from teachers suggest that opportunities for the expression of creativity and imagination have been diminished at the expense of ensuring consistency. This is the arena in which the National Theatre artists are

operating. Artists, when working at their best, can put life back into literacy. This important role should be recognised by the Government and supported. However, these opportunities come with a warning to arts education organisations. Their distinctive gift of creativity needs to remain distinctive. There is a fine balance between providing a programme that supports the school curriculum, and one that becomes stifled by its constraints.

### Supporters of cultural heritage

*Primary Shakespeare* and *Primary Classics* promoted, supported and reinforced the importance of Shakespeare and Marlowe, as part of our cultural and linguistic heritage. Artists were great believers in the importance of this work: 'great to see classic text spilling from their mouth effortlessly.' (*Primary Classics* artist 2004)

*Word Alive* promoted the importance of traditional tales and so artists could introduce children to a range of stories and songs from differing cultures. This had a two-fold benefit: giving children access to stories from cultures that may have been unfamiliar; and reinforcing stories from the children's own cultural background: 'And he told us this African story...the midgets, they kept going for one mile...I hadn't heard that one before.' (Black African boy, *Word Alive* 2003)

This aspect of the programme was reinforced when artists introduced stories from their own cultural heritage, which was in turn sometimes also shared by class members.

The storytelling festival at the National Theatre provided another opportunity for the *Word Alive* children to hear stories from a variety of cultural traditions.

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## Artists as employees and reflexive practitioners

Artists who took part in these programmes were acting as deliverers of a package. The package could be adapted by each artist, but there were clear areas to cover and suggestions of exercises through which to do this. Some artists followed the training notes in detail, whereas others interpreted them more freely. Discussion with artists on post-programmes suggested that some artists felt a tension between their role as a deliverer of a tightly prescribed programme and their professional skills as artists in their own right.

I felt a little constrained by the prescriptive nature of the programme, and didn't feel it necessarily played to my best strengths  
(Artist, *Primary Classics*, 2004)

Unlike *Primary Shakespeare* and *Word Alive*, where specialists were brought in for specific sessions, *Primary Classics* was designed so that one artist would deliver the entire programme. Although the artists appreciated working with their children for so many sessions, and thus getting to know their class well, some expressed uncertainty about leading work outside their field of expertise. Others found this a welcome challenge, but the overriding feeling was that experts should be brought in to work in tandem with the ongoing artist, thus reflecting professional theatre practice:

However, I was delighted to be trained in design, but I feel those areas ought to be taught by the professionals to make a true representation of how theatre works.

(*Primary Classics* artist continued from above)

Artists wanted room to reflect on their practice in schools, within the training days and during the programme: 'We did so many exercises and there was not time for reflection within the training – on what was being learned, or the experience of the body of artists that could have been shared' (Artist, *Word Alive* evaluation 2003). Artists suggested possible ways of increasing the opportunities for reflection: 'Maybe we could have a buddy system to test out ideas and experiences.' (Artist, *Word Alive* evaluation 2003)

Within the *Word Alive* programme, a mid-programme training day focused on the professional development of the artists. All artists said that they had benefited from and enjoyed working with the trainer (David Gonzalez, a New York performer) and each other. Such training opportunities offer the chance to develop new skills and are intended to make working on the programmes more satisfying for artists in terms of their longer-term goals.



David Gonzalez;  
Performer; *Word Alive*  
2003

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### Artists in partnership with teachers

The artists felt the programme was strongest when there was a good artist-teacher partnership, and where the school's management supported the programme: 'Five out of six of the schools I worked in gave a genuine commitment to the programmes, moving heaven and earth to make space for creativity in an extremely rigid and congested curriculum.' (Artist, *Primary Shakespeare*, 2002)

They thought meeting each other at the INSET was vital, as was regular contact throughout the programme, by telephone or short meetings about the sessions. As discussed above, this partnership was characterised by a division of responsibility in the sessions, and a shared commitment to getting the most out of the work. The artists saw the partnerships with the class teachers as successful in the majority of cases. However they were also realistic about the constraints on the teachers' time – and on where the boundaries of such a partnership were.

But of course, it's not really a partnership in the full sense of the word. For the most part, the artists have only a very vague sense of curriculum content and the teachers usually feel edgy about straying from pre-set curricular goals. It's a bit like a dance in

which the partners circle round each other, being careful not to step on each others' toes.  
And then that magical moment when they embrace and dance together!

(Artist, *Primary Shakespeare*, 2002)

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**Summary points:**

- Artists used a variety of roles: performer, instructor, rule-maker, supporters of cultural heritage, reflexive practitioner and partner with teachers in order to promote continuously interesting sessions and democratic partnership with children.
- Children concentrated for longer and participated more fully when artists used a range of environments for learning (whole class or group work/discussion, team games, paired work).
- Music, movement and puppetry/design sessions worked best when specialists led them. However, continuity, where one artist led all the sessions, was valued by teachers, artists and children.
- The programmes were strongest when there was good artist-teacher partnership. Liaison between (the very busy) teachers and artists varied in quality and quantity despite goodwill on both sides.

## 8 | Discussion, suggestions and concluding summary

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### **The value for children of the National Theatre's drama programmes:**

#### **Engaging with stories and plays over an extended period**

The *Primary Shakespeare*, *Word Alive* and *Primary Classics* programmes allowed children to be actively engaged over an extended period with stories/plays. This sustained engagement with experience differs from the succession of brief encounters offered in much of the literacy curriculum. It is valuable because during this engagement, children are engaged as experiential learners, where 'knowledge is not divorced from knowers, where personal feeling, spontaneity and intuitive responses are encouraged' (Salmon 1995: 24). Such encouragement enables children's creativity to flourish (Prentice et al 2003: 189). This creativity could be seen in the ways children worked from the stories and the play, listened, spoke and constructed their own stories, tableaux and scenes.

#### **Doing drama**

Our data show that children during each programme and over the three programmes learned how to do drama. They learned drama-making techniques - how to move, speak, work as a group, use movement and sound. They also learned theatre-craft - how a production is put together, the many skills involved in producing a show, how lighting, puppets, sound and actors contribute to the show's effect. They learned how to be a constructively critical audience, to listen, watch, participate, consider and discuss.

#### **Drama as an art form**

In all three programmes children became aware of drama as an art form. They were introduced to the ways in which dilemmas, choices and stories generally are worked up into a drama. Through their own shows and through story-telling and through watching the National Theatre shows, they became aware, as they indicated through their post-show comments, of the complexity that is a play. They could appreciate that a story-teller shapes the events to be recounted into a beginning, middle and end; projects them to the audience and interacts with the audience to increase their enjoyment and understanding.

#### **Tools for learning - confidence and self-esteem**

Here we point to possibly the main finding of the study. We suggest that through the National Theatre programmes, children are acquiring the tools for learning. Research evidence points to the importance of self-esteem among children, if they are to engage with learning at school (Brooker and Broadbent 2003; Riley 2003; Stoll, Fink and Earl 2003). Of particular interest here is the list of 'learning dispositions' developed by Margaret Carr (see Riley 2003): taking an interest; being involved; persisting with difficulty; communication with others; and taking responsibility. These Riley describes as the prerequisite skills and abilities without which no individual can develop into a proactive, autonomous learner (2003: 17). These are just the kinds of skills and abilities we saw being fostered and encouraged in National Theatre drama sessions.

Children learned to value their own and other's work, through being encouraged over time to

listen, discuss and assess; through the artists' praise and through both participating in and acting as audience to the products of their engagement. Our data point to children's confidence in their own abilities - for instance in their assertions that they had learned to construct and tell a story (*Word Alive* questionnaire data), and in teachers' unanimous claim that they had seen their children gain in confidence during the course of the programmes.

Children themselves are clear that they want respect as active learners (Blishen 1969; Burke and Grosvenor 2003); yet their self-esteem is at risk in top-down school agendas. The National Theatre programmes promote factors that help learning, as formulated slightly differently by Deakin Crick et al (2002): confidence that you can progress; curiosity; creativity; the ability to relate to a teacher; and the ability to talk about learning. Our data from observations point to many instance of good practice here. And the video recorded drama exercise with seven classes and their matches demonstrates the children's gains (assessed using these factors).

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### **Best practice for the National Theatre, children, teachers, artists and schools**

Here we follow the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach, by considering best practices and how they lead to benefits to the various groups of people and constituencies involved in the National Theatre programmes. We summarise what we have learned through the three years, and make suggestions as appropriate.

#### **Best practice for National Theatre Education Department to do good work**

The lists of best practices given below suggest that in many ways the National Theatre model comprises good practice.

**Extended programmes:** In terms of what is needed/useful for children, the National Theatre programmes constitute excellent practice. Their extended programmes offer time and opportunity for all children to contribute, to learn by practising, to make mistakes and not feel at fault; and they are generally positive and encouraging for the children.

**Drama festivals:** We have some suggestions here. We think the organisation and delivery of drama festivals could be revisited in order to consider best ways of sharing and appreciating each others' work, finding common ground, celebrating. A point made by teachers and artists is that children should have more time to prepare their own show, including a 'technical' or 'dress' rehearsal in the theatre, so that they present a high quality show of which they can be proud. The children themselves emphasised that they wanted to do so. A second point is that children should be present for the whole festival, so that they can see, enjoy and comment on each other's work.

**Reflections:** Perhaps in future, in the absence of an external research element, it would be good practice for National Theatre staff to do some reflection sessions with the children and teachers, so that they can identify and consolidate their knowledge of themselves, what they can do, what they have learned, and so that the National Theatre can continue to learn from the children.

**Exploration of social and moral issues:** It was good that challenging texts were chosen and



sessions to develop discussion with children of moral and social issues could be considered. Our experiences of working as researchers with the children suggest that there have been missed opportunities to explore the social and moral issues inherent in the texts and stories chosen, concentrating on the story and theatre-making, rather than engaging with the children. Children proved themselves to be both interested in and competent to discuss such issues and their relevance to their own lives.

**Specialists versus generalists:** Drama literacy is one of the strengths of the National Theatre programmes, so it is important to use artists appropriately trained and/or experienced. We recognise there is a balance to be struck between the value of using specialists in, for instance, puppetry and movement; and the value of continuity that one artist provides especially for the children and for artist-teacher productive relations.

**Technical sessions:** Given the children's demonstrated interest in how theatre is designed and functions, we think a technical session on what goes into the making of a show (sound, lighting, sets, staging, and the roles of actors, directors, and producers) would be an appropriate addition to National Theatre drama programmes. We have learned that 'our' 20 schools value drama. Many of them are offering drama work within the curriculum and also drama clubs (9 of 20 schools). Teachers recognise drama techniques as tools in their teaching, but also the intrinsic value for children of learning about drama as an art form and of learning to make drama.

**Going to the theatre:** Our data collected with the intervention children indicate their intense enjoyment of going to the theatre, and their critical capacity to reflect on the unique experiences offered there. We are strongly in favour of theatre being made available to children, both as audiences and as participators, and we value the National Theatre's work in this regard. We think the Albany provides a good local basis for generalising the effects of the National Theatre's work in school, as part of the work of social regeneration.

#### Best practice to enable children to learn

We have used the dimensions of learning proposed by Deakin Crick et al (2002) to consider best practice here. Their list of seven dimensions of learning is as follows:

##### Growth orientation: learning is learnable

**Critical curiosity** (opposite is passivity): discussion, finding out, challenging received ideas

**Meaning-making** (opposite is fragmentation): finding links between what one knows and what one is learning now.

**Resilience and robustness:** the ability to keep going and face challenge

**Creativity** (opposite is literalness): not being rule-bound, making new things

**Relationships/interdependence:** the value of others in helping one learn; value of others' contributions

**Strategic awareness:** being aware and reflective about oneself as a learner

Good practice according to these criteria will ensure that children experience instances of these happenings/abilities and learn their value. Our observations provide clear evidence that National Theatre programmes were offering many instances of good practice, and had an impact on children's approaches to learning.

**Growth orientation:** We saw children learning through experience that they could make and tell stories and could make drama happen. Artists' pedagogy showed children other kinds of knowledge and other ways of acquiring knowledge other than those generally current at school.

**Critical curiosity:** Group activities provided a forum for discussion of issues, of how to proceed. We often observed constructive and supportive criticism.

**Meaning-making:** Children were encouraged to make connections between the programme, personal knowledge and skills and school knowledge. Meaning-making took place also through children's physical and emotional engagement with plot, character and words.

**Resilience and robustness:** Good practice both assumes and encourages these. Good sessions allowed children to practise, fail and try again, and to recognise that they have the strength to do so (and that other people don't mock their failures).

**Creativity:** Undoubtedly, the programmes allowed them to exercise (and recognise within themselves) their creativity - through making drama, making stories and telling them effectively. Good drama and storytelling sessions (like many of the ones we saw) emphasise children's active participation in making something new.

**Interdependence:** Group work also enabled children to value others' contributions and to recognise that group activity may be difficult but is necessary to make drama happen. Artists generally made a point of praising children's achievements. Children learned that a successful performance depends on many people working together, but also on audience response. The value of interdependence fosters ways of working that are not competitive.

**Strategic awareness:** Good practice during programmes also allowed children time to reflect on, discuss and present what they had gained. Our own research conversations with children after sessions, after seeing performances and mid-way through programmes, also constitute good practice here. In classrooms, time for reflection on one's abilities and progress is not perhaps given much priority; but some teachers, especially in 2004, reported class discussions, especially about the National Theatre shows.

It's also been the stimulus for some written work, but especially oral work, in terms of discussing the performance and what we liked best. We did a lot of that after the performance and that produced some really good stuff... and we asked what we felt about it and what we disliked etc.

(Teacher, *Primary Classics*, 2004)

Perhaps the general point here is: that extended engagement with a topic (play, storytelling project) constitutes a key virtue: time, during which these seven dimensions can be identified, explored, developed. Good practice, then, may include giving children time. Time allows children not only to recognise that they have these abilities, but also to develop them (as they said).

It would seem that good practice in the National Theatre sessions is good practice for school-

based education generally. We know from teachers' comments that time was in short supply during their 'delivery' of the national curriculum, and was especially scarce during the literacy hour.

#### **Best practice for National Theatre relations with teachers**

Like National Theatre staff, we think programmes will be more effective where teachers are actively involved. We know that the National Theatre has tried various methods of ensuring teachers' involvement, but we also know that some - a few - teachers will not want this.

However, on the basis of our experience of the National Theatre programmes, we suggest that best practice requires careful attention to the teachers' roles.

**Informed choice:** It is good practice for teachers to meet the artists and other National Theatre staff when a drama programme is first discussed at the school.

**Timing:** Teachers have suggested that it would be useful for information about the proposed programme to be provided at the start of the academic year, so that they can think about implications for and plan work with the children around the programme and around their other curricular commitments.

**Flexibility:** Further, good practice requires National Theatre staff, artists and head teachers to discuss possibilities for allowing teachers to make best use of the programme with their children.

**Enjoyment:** Best practice allows opportunities for teachers, as well as children, to enjoy their participation in the programme. Teachers told us how much they enjoyed participating in sessions that use methods and skills they do not usually use. Going with their children to the theatre was a high point; teachers enjoyed the show and were delighted that their children did so too.

**Learning:** Best practice allowed teachers to learn different ways of working with children. It encouraged them to put these methods and skills into practice. It encouraged them to recognise their children's abilities.

These suggestions, of course, make huge demands all round, in the context of current education policies. Perhaps the key point here is that if policy-makers and schools wish to encourage the arts in schools, and the creative learning that these promote, then arts cannot just be bolted on to existing curricula and time-frames. Adequate time (again) needs to be devoted to making the best use of what the artists and arts organisation bring.

#### **Best practice for National Theatre collaboration with freelance artists**

Our points about best practice derive from observation of what worked well and from comments made by artists and teachers.

**Democratic work with children:** We observed that artists all worked democratically with children. We think best practice for the National Theatre is both to give overt recognition to this and to stress its importance, perhaps through discussions during initial training about children as citizens and active participants.

**Variety of methods:** We observed that children were most fully engaged for longer, when artists employed a range of methods, and a variety of activities.

**Training and evaluation sessions:** The training days generally constituted good practice, because they provided a firm basis of, and a sharing of knowledge and technique. Both training and evaluation days kept artists in touch with National Theatre thinking and with each other's ideas and practices. While all artists came to the training, only half came to the evaluation in 2004. So we think it is good practice for the National Theatre to emphasise the importance of attending the evaluation.

**Reflexive practice:** Artists found it valuable to reflect on their work. Best practice could include building in reflection/discussion sessions mid-way for the artists. Linking of artists with each other for informal information and discussion might be helpful.

**Structured programmes?** We observed both good and bad practices as artists 'delivered' the programme. There was sometimes tension between the value of a clearly defined programme and drama tool-kit, and the value of a flexibly delivered programme based on artists' own professional and creative judgment.

**Contact with teachers:** Teachers and artists have told us that regular contact is important for monitoring progress, for smooth running of sessions, and to encourage teachers to carry forward work with the children and progress it to another stage. Best practice includes encouraging this collaboration and suggesting ways of doing so. These include face-to-face conversations, text messaging, emails and faxing.

**Information co-ordinator:** She has an important function in keeping good records, so that artists and teachers know what is happening. Good practice was for all concerned to keep her abreast of changes (e.g. dates of sessions, cancellations).

## Conclusion

In our view, based on three years' work on this evaluation study, the National Theatre Education Department has offered a valuable service to children and to primary schools.

First, through the programmes, carefully designed to make art accessible, the children (and teachers) were offered the chance to engage with plays and stories that are of great artistic, social and moral value (not dumb-downed writing-for-children). Children and teachers highly appreciated their engagement with the language, stories, dilemmas, and characters.

Second, we think the children were enabled to develop their emotional sensitivity, responses and vocabulary, through the aesthetic experiences of engaging with drama. If emotional learning develops through aesthetic learning, literacy skills then develop in turn through emotional learning.

Third, unlike many arts interventions, the National Theatre has offered extended engagement, over two terms, and for these particular children over three years, with making drama. As we have noted above, this provision of time is key to the success of the work, for it allows people to practise, fail, consolidate, discuss and move on.

Fourth, through these extended and supportive programmes, children gained in self-esteem and self-confidence, which are commonly thought to be key factors enabling children to engage with and succeed in schoolwork.

Fifth, as the above points suggest, the National Theatre based its programmes not on children as objects to be taught, but as active and valued participants. The structure of the programmes assumed that children have contributions to make, that they can be trusted to work responsibly within each session, and that they have the staying power and commitment to work over the life of the programme towards understanding, and towards presenting a show of their own. These understandings of children are appropriate -and hence effective. The National Theatre programmes have placed the children centre-stage.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Data sources

#### Children

PS: Coded observations of in-school drama sessions 1-12 (3 per session)

WA: Coded observations of in school drama sessions 1-9 (3 per session)

PC: Coded observations of in-school drama sessions 1-12 (2 per session)

PS: Short whole class discussions after each drama session observed

WA: Halfway through small group interviews with four NT classes

PC: Halfway through small group interviews with all NT children

PS: Pre and post-programme questionnaires with all NT and match children

WA: Post-programme questionnaire with all NT and match children

PC: Post-programme questionnaire with all NT children

PS: Post-show discussions after NT's *Mini Tempest*: selected NT schools

WA: Post-show discussions after NT's *Word Alive*: selected schools

PS: Post-show discussions after NT's *Faustus* with all NT schools

PS: Pre and post Albany show discussions with four NT classes

PC: Pre and post Albany show discussions with all NT children

WA: Observation of video recorded drama exercise with randomly selected pairs of National Theatre and matched classes

PS: Optional SATs in English and Mathematics – NT and match classes

WA: Optional SATs in English and Mathematics – NT and match classes

PC: Folders: all NT classes

#### Teachers

PS, WA and PC: Observation of In-service training (INSET)

PS and WA: Pre-programme questionnaire with NT and match teachers

PS and WA: Post-programme questionnaire with NT and match teachers

PS, WA and PC: Informal discussions throughout the programmes

PS and PC: Recorded post-programme interviews

PS, WA and PC: Record of AOR teacher evaluation at the Albany

#### Heads

Interview and questionnaire re: arts in their schools 2002 and 2003

#### Artists

PS, WA and PC: Observation of artists' training days

PS, WA and PC: Informal discussions throughout the programmes

PC: Post-programme questionnaire

PS, WA and PC: Record of AOR artists' evaluation at the Albany

PS: *Primary Shakespeare*

WA: *Word Alive*

PC: *Primary Classics*



## Appendix 2: Observation codes used to record content, process and timing of in-school drama sessions

Context	snow unsettling the class, noise, interruptions
Profs	The professional exchange between artist and teacher – arrangements, discussions and work agreed upon
Teacher	Teacher's role and input
<b>Literacy skills:</b>	
L	Listening to artist, to each other, extended
R	Reading, lines of text, own work
W	Writing during the session
Sp	Speaking to others – artist, children, teach
<b>Specific literacy skills:</b>	
Reflex	Reflexive discussion
Sp Txt	Speaking lines of text or story language
New Voc	Hears and/or uses new vocabulary 'iambic pentameter'
Theatre/tech voc	Hears and/or uses theatre/drama literacy words like backstage, in the round, footlights
Design voc	Hears and/or uses set design vocabulary
<b>Creativity and imagination:</b>	
CR	Creativity – children's suggestions and ideas in response to a question – record it all
Credev	Creative development of the exercise/enterprise, where children re-shape and/or re-create or produce words or a piece of drama/sketch/impro that is original – describe
<b>Drama literacy/skills:</b>	
Drama rules	Drama rules, e.g. never turn your back to the audience
Wake body	Drama game/activity - physical
Wake mind	Drama game/activity - vocal
Wake all	Simultaneous physical/vocal
Impro	Improvisation
Role	Working in role/inhabiting a character
Cad	Cadence - if child uses tone or inflection
Face	Facial expression
Vox	Vocal expression, similar to cadence but includes innovative use of voice
An	Animation of body, voice
Kin	Kinaesthetic: ability to feel movements of the body
Space	Use of Space – moves around the room/squeezes into tiny ball
Spat	Spatial awareness of themselves, others on stage and audience
Move	Movement/gesture
Timing	Timing
Music	Sings/plays instrument or makes a soundscape
R	Rhythm of word or body
Perf	Performing story to class or group
Resp	Responding to a performance
<b>Staging and technical</b>	
Rules	Hears and/or uses rules of conduct within theatre/drama space
Tech	Uses or makes suggestions for lighting, props
<b>Theatre design/puppets</b>	
Design	Creative ideas, suggestions, planning, roughs
Making	Creative designs – drawing and making
Dex	Able to use scissors and other tools
<b>Social/personal</b>	
Con	Concentration – extended periods
TW	Team work
GW	Group work
Lead	leadership

### Appendix 3: A quantitative analysis of children's halfway through comments (*Primary Classics 2004*)

What have you enjoyed about doing <i>Faustus 2004</i> ?		
	N	%
Drama	171	66.5
Literacy	31	12
Art Design	14	5
Personal and Social	22	8.5
Artist	3	1
History	16	6
Total	257	100

What have you found difficult about doing <i>Faustus 2004</i> ?		
	N	%
Drama	71	40
Literacy	10	6
Art Design	2	1
Personal and Social	76	43
Artist	4	2
History	8	4
Nothing	7	3
Total	178	100

What have you learned doing <i>Faustus 2004</i> ?		
	N	%
Drama	74	42
Literacy	46	26
Art Design	12	7
Personal and Social	33	19
Artist	0	0
History	8	4.5
Nothing	2	1
Total	175	100

What do you remember about <i>Primary Shakespeare</i> in Year 3?		
	N	%
Drama	156	64
Literacy	10	4
Art Design	43	17.5
Personal and Social	23	9
Artist	12	5
History	1	0.4
Total	245	100

What do you remember about <i>Word Alive</i> in Year 4?		
	N	%
Drama	64	31
Literacy	90	43
Art Design	0	0
Personal and Social	27	13
Artist	26	12.5
History	0	0
Total	207	100

## Appendix 3 : continued

What have you learned/been taught in Years 3-5?		
	N	%
Drama	117	51.5
Literacy	51	22
Art Design	4	2
Personal and Social	43	19
Artist	9	4
History	3	1
Total	227	100

What, if anything, have you learned about yourself 2002-2004?		
	N	%
Drama	81	40
Literacy	21	10
ADT	1	0.5
P&S	101	49.5
Artist	0	0
History	0	0
Total	204	100

Differences in how teachers and artists teach		
	N	%
Fun	22	16
Topic	27	20
Express themselves	6	4
Engage with us	40	30
Their role	30	22
Role expert	4	3
Added value to school	5	4
Total	134	100

### Appendix 4: An analysis of the children's questionnaire data (*Primary Classics 2004*)

Variable label	Total Like	Total dislike	Total
Acting	182 (95%)	10 (5%)	192
Story of <i>Faustus</i>	173 (93%)	13 (7%)	186
Choices	138 (75%)	47 (25%)	184
Drama games	189 (98%)	3 (2%)	192
Movement	157 (83%)	31 (17%)	188
Sound and music	156 (82%)	34 (18%)	190
Characters	175 (94%)	11 (6%)	186
CM and Tudor life	113 (60%)	74 (40%)	187
Making puppets	184 (96%)	8 (4%)	192
Artists	171 (92%)	14 (8%)	185
See <i>Faustus</i> at NT	181 (90%)	8 (10%)	189
Research	130 (69.5%)	57 (30.5%)	187

Variable	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
New friends	127 (66%)	64 (44%)		191
People like me	174 (93%)	13 (7%)		187
Enjoy school	67 (35%)	14 (7%)	109 (58%)	190
Like assemblies	99 (53%)	22 (12%)	66 (35%)	187
Talk in front of class	67 (35%)	38 (20%)	85 (45%)	190
Speak clearly	155 (81.5%)	35 (18.5%)		190
Concentrate	155 (81.5%)	35 (18.5%)		190
Group work	169 (89%)	21 (11%)		190
Listen	164 (86%)	27 (14%)		191
Scene	165 (87%)	24 (13%)		189
Tell story	142 (75%)	47 (25%)		189
Act story	165 (86%)	26 (14%)		191

Variable label	Girl like	Girl dislike	Girl total	Boy like	Boy Dislike	Boy total	Total
Acting	97 (97%)	3 (3%)	100	85(92%)	7 (8%)	92	192
Story of <i>Faustus</i>	93 (94%)	6 (6%)	99	80(92%)	7 (8%)	87	186
Choices	72 (76%)	23 (24%)	95	66(73%)	24 (27%)	90	184
Drama games	99 (99%)	1 (1%)	100	90(98%)	2 (2%)	92	192
Movement	84 (84%)	16 (16%)	100	73(83%)	15 (17%)	88	188
Sound and music	89 (90%)	10 (10%)	99	67(74%)	24 (26%)	91	190
Characters	95 (98%)	2 (2%)	97	80(90%)	9 (10%)	89	186
CM and Tudor life	62 (62%)	38 (38%)	100	51(57%)	36 (41%)	87	187
Making puppets	96 (96%)	4 (4%)	100	88(96%)	4 (4%)	92	192
Artists	91(95%)	5 (5%)	96	80(90%)	9 (10%)	89	185
<i>Faustus</i> at NT	96 (99%)	1 (1%)	97	85(92%)	7 (8%)	92	189
Research	62 (64%)	35 (36%)	97	68(75.5%)	22(24.5%)	90	187

Appendix 4: An analysis of the children's questionnaire data (*Primary Classics* 2004) – continued

Variable	Girl Yes	Girl No	Boy Yes	Boy No	Girl Sometimes	Boy Sometimes	Total
New friends	68 (87%)	10 (13%)	59(65%)	32(35%)			191
People like me	88 (93%)	7 (7%)	86(93%)	6 (7%)			187
Enjoy school	43 (23%)	3 (1.5%)	24(13%)	11 (6%)	52 (27%)	57 (30%)	190
Like assemblies	54 (56%)	8 (8%)	45(49%)	14(15%)	34 (35%)	32 (35%)	187
Talk in front of class	38 (38%)	18 (18%)	29(32%)	20(22%)	43 (43%)	42 (46%)	190
Speak clearly	82 (84%)	16 (16%)	73(79%)	19(21%)			190
Concentrate	84 (84%)	16 (16%)	73(79%)	19(21%)			190
Group work	89 (90%)	10 (10%)	80(88%)	11(12%)			190
Listen	86 (87%)	13 (13%)	78(85%)	14(15%)			191
Scene	92 (94%)	6 (6%)	73(80%)	18(20%)			189
Tell story	68 (70%)	29 (30%)	74(80%)	18(20%)			189
Act story	89 (90%)	10 (10%)	76(83%)	16(17%)			191

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## Children engaging with drama

An evaluation of the National Theatre's drama work  
in primary schools 2002-2004



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