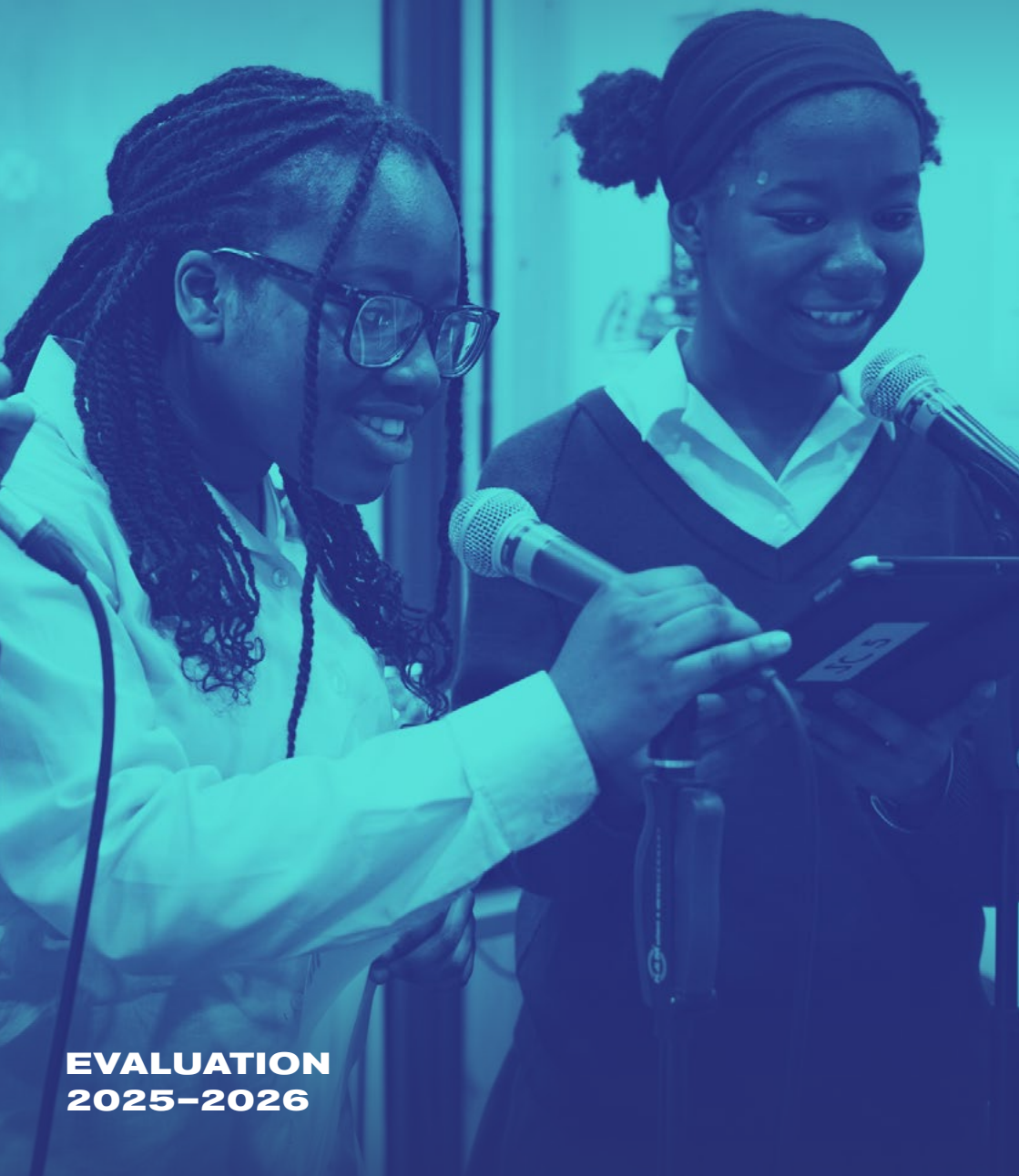


SCHOOLS CLUB AT THE OLD VIC



**EVALUATION
2025-2026**

Education & Community at The Old Vic	2
Schools Club	3
Programme	6
Student information	16
Student outcomes	20
Teacher outcomes	24
Case study	26
Impact	28
Ideas for the future	35

THE OLD VIC EDUCATION & COMMUNITY TEAM

Participation Coordinator
Suzie Carney
 Education & Community Coordinator
Sophia Chimonas
 Education & Community Director
Hannah Fosker
 Participation Manager
Charlotte Gaughan
 Education Manager (Primary)
Tom Latham
 Education Manager (Schools Club)
Becky Rathkey
 Education & Community Intern
John Rice-Murphy
 Head of Education & Community
Flo Schroeder
 Community Manager
Jemima Senior
 Education Manager (Take the Lead)
Alice Watson

OLD VIC THEATRE FACILITATORS

Jess Alade
Harriet Beynon
Zoë Carvalho Morris
Esmée Cook
Mark Conway
Katy Daghorn
Shane Dempsey
Pepa Duarte
Arden Fitzroy
Sophie Gibbs
Amelia Glydon
Louie Keen
Olivia Kennett
Hayley Konadu
Lucy Laverty
Lydia Le Brocq
Angela O'Callaghan
Aoife O'Sullivan
Lana Rathbone
Rishi Rian
Dominique Santarelli

CPD LEADERS

Toby Ison
Anna Ryder
Mark Stevenson
Ben Vardy
Christian Wallace

WORKSHOP CONSULTANTS

Ibrahim Sesay
Marshall Stay
Mark Stevenson
Zoë Thomas Webb
Zoë Wilson
Ella Zgorska
Roberta Zuric

EVALUATION

Editor
Becky Rathkey
 Design by
James Cunningham Graham
 Photography by
Jonny Ruff
Marshall Stay

With generous thanks to all
 Old Vic staff and Associates

SCHOOLS CLUB

Generously supported by
**The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, Tina Alexandrou, The Broughton
 Family Foundation, CHK Foundation, The John S Cohen Foundation,
 Kate Downey & Rob Knox and The Hearn Foundation**

SCHOOLS CLUB

Schools Club is a free programme that provides bespoke workshops, theatre tickets, educational resources and exclusive opportunities with The Old Vic for teachers and students. Every year The Old Vic partners with 40 London state secondary schools and engages with up to 30 students in each school. Schools watch four Old Vic productions and receive four workshops, each focusing on a different theatre discipline.

Schools Club supports the curriculum and works with schools and students with less access to arts provision. The programme is designed to introduce participants to a range of non-performance roles and develop an interest in theatre, encouraging the next generation of theatregoers and theatre makers. Now in its seventeenth year, we pride ourselves on our commitment to supporting teachers and students as schools continue to be stretched, with drama continuing to lose students to STEM subjects. This programme is designed to work with a range of students including those who are studying drama at GCSE or A Level, those who are interested in drama or design roles, as well as students who have never been to the theatre before. Schools Club allows theatre to be open to everyone.

‘At its essence, what you do in Schools Club changes lives’
Schools Club Teacher

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY AT THE OLD VIC

Our renowned education and community projects inspire learning and connection. Each year we work with over 9,000 people of all ages, from five to 100+, in London and beyond, as well as a further 25,000 through our online learning platform, The Hub. We reach people at all stages of life to support skills development, employment prospects and wellbeing.

Our programmes build community cohesion, open up access to the arts and develop the emerging theatre professionals of tomorrow. We do this through a range of initiatives, including free theatre tickets, workshops delivered at The Old Vic, in schools, in the community and online, and through innovative employability and training programmes.

Our programmes are free to access and focus on engaging with communities who are underrepresented in the theatre industry, or who have limited access to it.



Schools involved with Schools Club 2025–26 were:

Alperton Community School, Ark Greenwich Free School, Beacon High School, Bishop Challoner Catholic School, Bolder Academy, Camden School for Girls, Central Foundation Boys' School, City Academy Hackney, City of London Academy Islington, Cricket Green School, Ernest Bevin Academy, Friern Barnet School, Gladesmore Community School, Haggerston School, Hammersmith Academy, Harris Boys' Academy East Dulwich, Harris Girls' Academy Bromley, Ian Mikardo School, Isleworth & Syon School, La Retraite Girls' School, Laurel Park School, Leigh Academy Bexley, Morpeth School, Notre Dame RC Girls School, Oaklands School, Prendergast Ladywell School, Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School, Sacred Heart Catholic School, St Augustine's CE High School, St Thomas The Apostle College, The Archbishop Lanfranc Academy, The Grey Coat Hospital, The Urswick School, Thomas Tallis School, Walthamstow Academy, Wanstead High School, Whitefriars School, Woodbridge High School, Woodmansterne School and Sixth Form and Wren Academy Enfield.



‘The Old Vic Schools Club has really built up my confidence in the different aspects of off-stage work and I’ve had a brilliant time’

Schools Club Participant

‘Through the combination of in-school workshops on production and design roles and seeing four Old Vic productions across the year, students have gained practical industry awareness, increased confidence, and a stronger sense of their future creative choices in GCSE and beyond’

Schools Club Teacher

RECRUITMENT AND CRITERIA

Applications for Schools Club 2025–26 opened in May 2025. Applications were open to all state schools within the M25. A link to an online application form was sent to all secondary schools on The Old Vic's schools database. In addition, the Education & Community team conducted targeted outreach to schools and alternative education providers who had not taken part in the programme previously. Application information was also made available through The Old Vic's website, and the project was advertised through the theatre's social media channels.

126 Schools applied to take part in the 2025–26 Schools Club programme. **40 schools** were selected to take part. Out of the 40 schools that were accepted, **13 schools** were entirely new to the programme. This year one Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school and one alternative education provider were selected.

The application form asked teachers why they thought their students would benefit and how they as teachers would benefit. Teachers were also asked how they would use the programme to boost drama provision within the school and how they would choose students to participate. Questions were designed to ensure a broad range of students had access to the programme.

Teachers used a variety of methods to select students including:

- Liaising with other departments, such as art, design and textiles to seek students outside of drama, who may be interested in non-performance theatre roles
- Prioritising students from backgrounds that are currently underrepresented within non-performance roles in the industry
- Choosing students who required additional support in building confidence
- Choosing students who would not otherwise have the opportunity to access any cultural capital
- Offering places to students on pupil premium
- Offering spaces to SEND students
- Prioritising Year Nine students to encourage GCSE sign up
- Asking students to complete an application form
- Choosing GCSE and/or A Level groups to support their learning.

In total **1,110 students** took part in the programme, with students ranging from Years 9–13. 82% of students had never been to The Old Vic before. This year 34 out of the 40 schools selected to work with Year 10 students as part of their cohort, suggesting that the programme works particularly well for those in their first year of GCSE drama.



‘What was most useful about the project was that it helped me realise theatre was for me’

Schools Club Participant

DELIVERY

Welcome meeting for teachers

A welcome meeting for teachers was held at the start of the programme, which took place in person. The meeting explained how the project would operate and offered teachers the opportunity to ask questions and share what CPD (Continuing Professional Development) workshops they would like to see throughout the year. All teachers were sent a Schools Club Members' Pack containing key project information before the meeting. Teachers had a mid-point meeting with the Education Manager online in March to feed back on the highlights and challenges of the project so far and to provide suggestions for the future. Teachers filled in evaluation forms for each workshop and then completed a final evaluation on the project once the programme had finished.

In-school workshops

Workshops were two hours long and were created by The Old Vic's Education Manager in collaboration with relevant external artists. Workshops were delivered by pairs of lead and assistant facilitators, with all pairings taking part in a two-day training session. These training sessions ensured that all schools received the same high standard of delivery. They also allowed facilitators to contribute to the workshop plan and ensured they were confident in using the required technology to deliver the sessions. Workshops were designed to support the work students were doing in their GCSE and A Level classes. Adaptations to the workshops were created for those schools not studying GCSE or A Level, in collaboration with the lead teacher.

This year for the first time we were able to invite schools to bring their groups to our new Clore Learning Centre for their final workshop. 27 out of the 40 schools were able to take up this opportunity. We delivered workshops for the other 13 schools on site at their school, as this was more practical for them.

Workshops aimed to:

- Give students a voice and the opportunity to express themselves
- Introduce students to non-performance roles
- Build skills in non-performance roles
- Support the work students were doing in their GCSE or A Levels
- Teach students practical drama techniques that they could then use in their lessons
- Explore the themes or context of each play.



‘This project has inspired my students to believe in their creative potential, challenge themselves artistically, and see theatre as a powerful way to communicate their ideas’

Schools Club Teacher



PRODUCTIONS

The four productions for the year were: *Mary Page Marlowe*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Arcadia* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Production One: *Mary Page Marlowe* Workshop Focus: Directing

Students took part in a pre-show workshop on directing. The workshop introduced students to the play and the non-linear narrative. The workshop took the students through several directing exercises closely linked to the rehearsal process.

'The content of this workshop was brilliant — the way students were able to practically understand different stage configurations and experiment with non-linear storytelling was brilliant!' Schools Club Teacher

91% of students agreed that overall, the workshop was excellent.

87% of students agreed that as a result of this workshop, their theatre knowledge and skills were developing.

'Normally I do workshops because I want to miss lessons. But this was genuinely worth it and I enjoyed myself.' Schools Club Participant

Production Two: *A Christmas Carol* Workshop Focus: Costume

Students took part in a post-show workshop looking at the various roles within a costume team including costume designer, costume supervisor and costume maker. Participants altered shirts using a variety of materials to create their own costumes for the Fezziwig Christmas party scene in *A Christmas Carol*.

'The students thoroughly enjoyed the workshop. With mixed ages from Years 9–13, there was a wonderful atmosphere of collaboration as students shared ideas and worked creatively across year groups. The workshop leaders were kind, patient and supportive throughout. Students were eager to dive into making and creating, and the outcomes were great — highly creative, and on brief. Students presented their work with genuine pride in their achievements.' Schools Club Teacher

93% of students agreed that overall, the workshop was excellent.

89% of students agreed that as a result of this workshop, their theatre knowledge and skills were developing.

'I liked making the actual costume and also seeing Rob Howell's original designs for the costume of the ghosts. Drawing the design for the costume my group made was also very fun and interesting.' Schools Club Participant

Production Three: *Arcadia* Workshop Focus: Props

Students had a pre-show workshop which introduced them to the key characters in the play and the timeline of events. The workshop then focussed on the role of a prop supervisor, exploring sourcing props sustainably and using a tracker from the Theatre Green Book. Finally, students explored the role of a prop maker and created props using a variety of materials.

'Possibly the best ever workshop. The use of the text to identify the prop supervisor role, leading into the practical task was great. The students loved making the props and largely worked individually within their groups, they were really proud of their products. Of all the workshops this was the one that genuinely caused a lightbulb moment for some students in the room about a potential career. I have never done anything like this and will be looking to introduce this into a scheme of work soon. Really inspiring.' Schools Club Teacher

93% of students agreed that overall, the workshop was excellent.

89% of students agreed that as a result of this workshop, their theatre knowledge and skills were developing.

'I really liked making my own props and I thought it was useful to understand different jobs in props.' Schools Club Participant

Production Four: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* Workshop Focus: Sound

Students took part in a workshop in our Clore Learning Centre which focussed on the role of sound in a production. Students used microphones and a range of materials to explore Foley techniques. They then worked in groups and used iPads and materials in the room to make and record sounds. Finally, they used an app called 'Go Button' to mix and programme their sounds to present to the rest of the group.

'Best workshop of the year, I came away with great lesson ideas for my GCSE classes.' Schools Club Teacher

93% of students strongly agreed or agreed that this workshop was excellent.

90% of students strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of this workshop, their theatre knowledge and skills were developing.

'It was incredibly informative and insightful to be able to explore how sound can be used and manipulated to create a mood or a specific atmosphere.' Schools Club Participant

CPD

Teachers were offered the opportunity to take part in CPD (Continued Professional Development) sessions throughout the academic year. These sessions were programmed following consultations with teachers, to ensure that they were genuinely helpful to their development.

Lighting

A full day CPD led by the Director of Technical Services, Christian Wallace, and education associate, Mark Stevenson, alongside technician Toby Ison. Teachers spent the day exploring all elements of stage lighting from health and safety to rigging, programming and operating, as well as the creative design side. Teachers also explored low-cost lighting effects using torches, gels and festoon lights.

'What a fantastic experience, with industry specialists. An invaluable CPD, for teachers/technicians within a school setting, to gain or further their knowledge on lighting within a professional setting.' Schools Club Teacher

Q&A with the Associate Director of Arcadia

Anna Ryder, associate director on *Arcadia*, led a Q&A with teachers about the production and the role of an associate director. She also answered questions on how to teach directing to students.

'Thank you so much for the event last night; so interesting to hear from Anna on her thoughts and reflections.' Schools Club Teacher

Devising Ensemble Theatre with Ben Vardy

Led by education associate Ben Vardy, teachers were taken through a number of practical exercises to generate ideas for ensemble theatre. Teachers were given a pack at the end of the session with further exercises to try with their students.

'It was absolutely fantastic. The level of detail, the facilitation, that it was so engaging and practical, the clarity of description and intention behind each exercise, the flow and structure that was well thought out, the richness of the content, the connection between exercises and the clear visibility around how to use them with students and how to layer them.' Schools Club Teacher

ADDITIONAL CPDS

In addition to the programmed Schools Club CPDs, teachers from the programme were also able to attend CPDs linked to our primary programme. These were:

How to sustainably design your show

Learn strategies for creating imaginative, eco-friendly sets and costumes.

How to direct casts of young actors

Develop directing techniques to guide and empower young performers on stage.

'The best CPD was the directing young cast workshop. That changed my practice immediately.' Schools Club Teacher

'The Lighting CPD was particularly inspiring, providing some simple but effective ways to support students across all key stages to consider and incorporate lighting into their work. This is something we are now building into our Key Stage Three and Key Stage Four schemes of learning'

Schools Club Teacher



ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Post-show Q&As

This year we were able to deliver two post-show Q&As with members of the cast and creatives for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* after matinee performances. Students were able to ask questions about the production and about career journeys.

'I just wanted to say a huge thank you to the cast and movement director for talking to our young people. It was so inspirational for them to be able to ask questions after the show.'

Schools Club Teacher

Student Forum

Now in its second year, the Student Forum includes 10 students from across the Take the Lead and Schools Club programmes. The students met over four sessions led by the Education Managers Alice Watson and Becky Rathkey between Mar and Jul 2026. During those sessions the group had a tour of the building and met with the Head of Education and Community, Flo Schroeder and Executive Director, Laura Stevenson. The main purpose of the groups this year was to advise us on an upcoming careers day planned at The Old Vic for the 2026–27 academic year.

Additional Resources

This year we were able to offer additional resources to teachers alongside specific productions, in order to support students in their understanding of various aspects of the productions.

Arcadia

A resource pack was sent to teachers in advance of their trip to the production, including a glossary of terms used in the play, an interview with the Costume Designer, an article on the maths and science within the play, a character connections sheet and a full synopsis.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Teachers were sent an information sheet detailing the context of the play so that they could brief their students before attending the production. An additional workshop plan was also sent to teachers to do independently with their students, exploring the themes of power and freedom through ensemble movement.

'The workshop notes that we get are also really helpful as we can use these in our teaching, as I have done recently with One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest when I was doing a movement/ensemble workshop.'

Schools Club Teacher

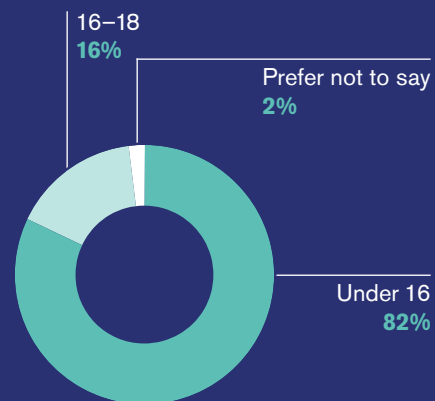
Work Experience

At the end of the programme participants were invited to apply for a week of work experience at The Old Vic from the 06–10 Jul. The programme was exclusively for students who had completed our Schools Club or Take the Lead programmes. 20 participants attended, of which 10 had been a part of Schools Club. At the start of the week the participants were asked the question: How can theatres like The Old Vic grow and maintain new audiences? Participants were asked to keep that question in mind throughout the week and let that question guide their final event. Participants took part in workshops led by different departments at The Old Vic and with external artists. At the end of the week participants worked together to produce their event. They created a theatrical-based press conference called 'Shaping The Old Vic — What is The Future of Theatre?.'

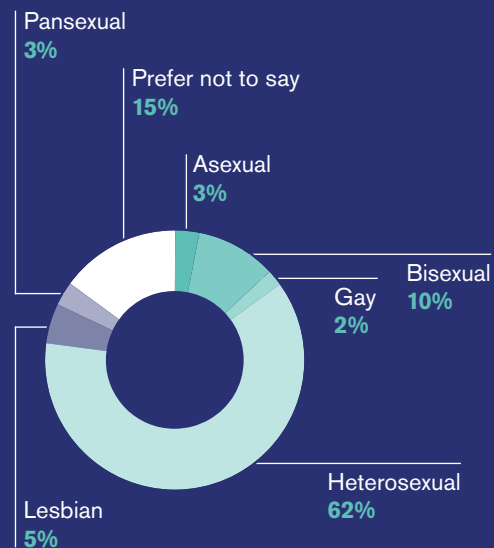
'This experience has given me a sense of community and a sense of belonging — thank you!' Work Experience Participant



AGE

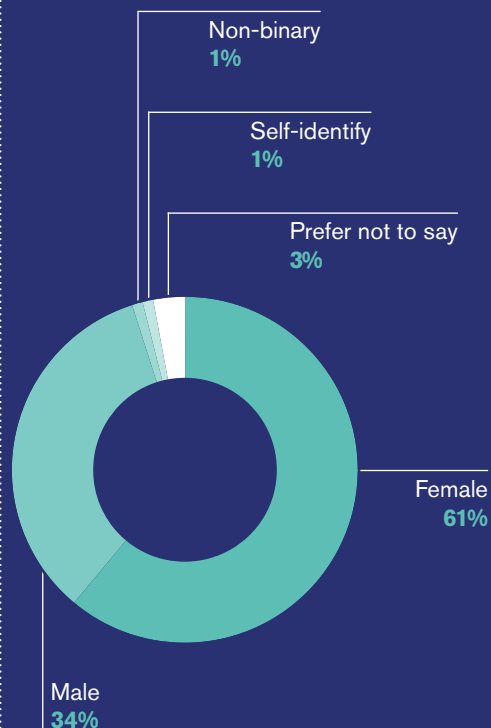


SEXUAL ORIENTATION



No participants selected 'Self-identify' but participants specified: Questioning, Queer, Omnisexual and Straight

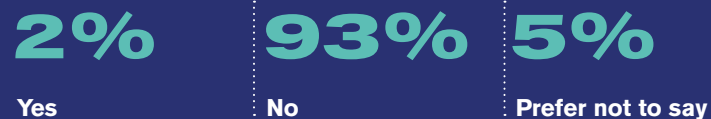
GENDER



Self-identify (Participants specified: genderfluid)

IDENTITY

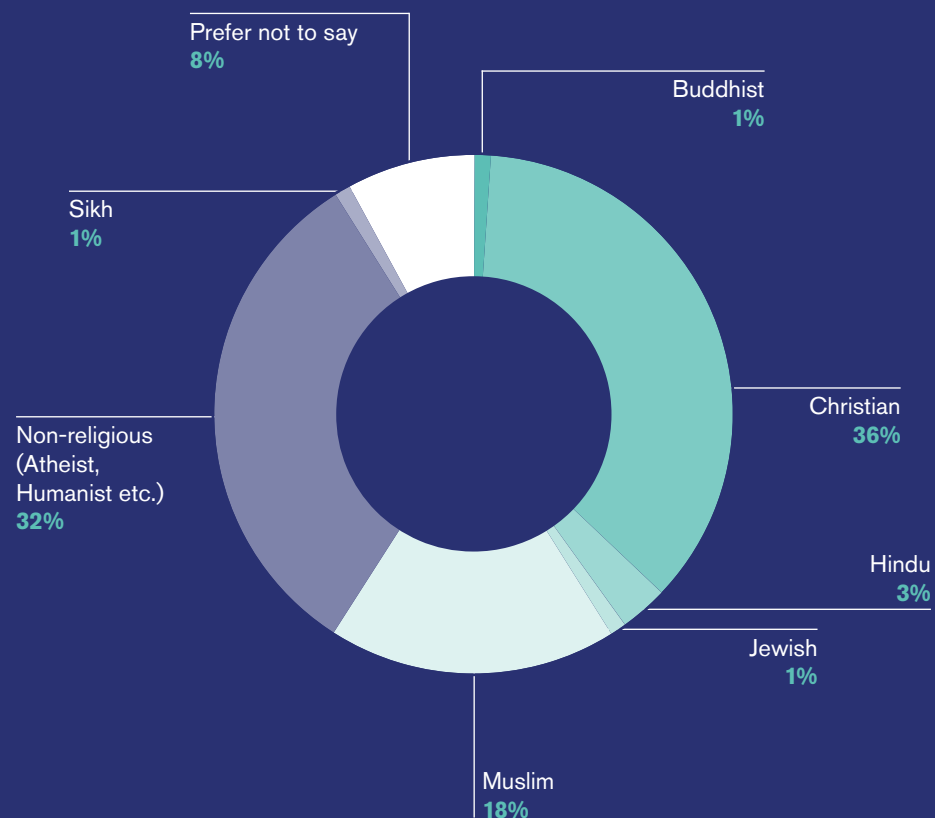
Do you identify as trans?



ETHNICITY



RELIGION AND BELIEF



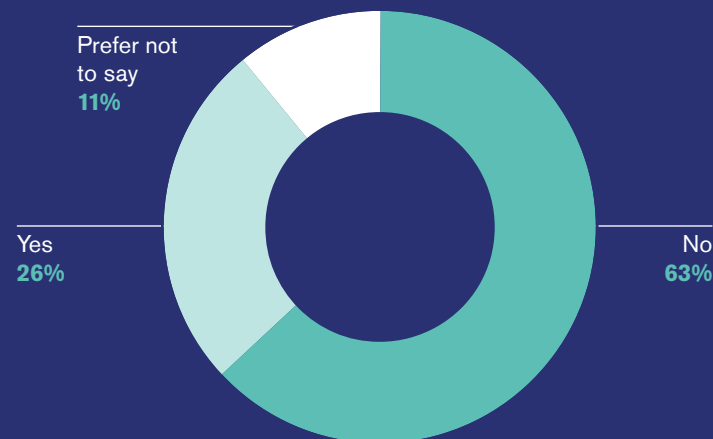
‘Thank you for making these workshops such a fun and inclusive experience’

Schools Club Participant

‘Amazing experiences not only for theatre but also skills for other opportunities’

Schools Club Participant

DISABILITY



Of the participants who selected yes:

(able to select more than one response)

3% Hearing (e.g. deafness or partial hearing)

20% Learning, concentrating or remembering (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia)

21% Mental health (e.g. anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder)

4% Mobility (e.g. difficulty walking short distances, climbing stairs, lifting and carrying)

21% Social or behavioural (e.g. neurodiverse conditions such as autism, attention deficit disorder or asperger's syndrome)

8% Stamina or breathing difficulty

9% Vision (e.g. blindness or partial sight)

7% Other (Participants specified: epilepsy and heart condition)

88% Prefer not to say

STUDENT OUTCOMES

A TOTAL OF

1,110 **82%**

students participated in Schools Club 2025–26.

of students had not visited The Old Vic before.

QUALITY AND IMPACT



of students strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of the programme, they felt comfortable and welcomed at The Old Vic.



of students strongly agreed or agreed that the workshop leaders were excellent at creating a welcoming and inclusive environment.



of students strongly agreed or agreed that overall, the Schools Club programme was excellent.

‘This project has been incredibly useful in developing new skills and giving me helpful insights into the theatre industry, helping me understand my options’

Schools Club Participant



of students strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of the programme, they would like to attend theatre regularly

of students strongly agreed or agreed that by being in the Clore Learning Centre they felt connected to The Old Vic.



of students strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of the programme, they felt connected to The Old Vic.



of students strongly agreed or agreed that taking part in the project had helped them in their studies.

SCALE

Students were asked on a scale of 0–100, to what extent they felt that The Old Vic is an inclusive environment. The average score was:



Students were asked on a scale of 0–100, how likely they would recommend this project to a friend. The average score was:



STUDENT OUTCOMES

KEY PRACTICAL SKILLS

90%

of students strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of the programme, their theatre knowledge and skills were developing.

KEY PERSONAL SKILLS

64%

of students strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of the programme, their confidence in themselves had improved.

61%

of students strongly agreed or agreed that during the project, they did something they didn't know they were capable of.

'The Schools Club workshop leaders are incredible. We have high SEN and pupil premium, who generally have low confidence, but the workshop leaders were kind and positive and worked one to one, which led to students actually standing up and presenting to everyone. We, as teachers, found this extremely emotional and were completely impressed with what they brought out in our students'

Schools Club Teacher

QUALITY AND IMPACT

100%

of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that:

Overall the project was excellent

As a result of this project, their students felt comfortable and welcome at The Old Vic

As a result of this project, their students' theatre knowledge and skills were developing

This project had given their students the skills and experiences to help them with their creative steps

As a result of this project, they now have greater confidence using drama activities linked to non-performance roles with their students

This project had inspired their students to visit The Old Vic more frequently.

96%

of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that:

As a result of this project, their students felt connected to The Old Vic

During this project their students did something they didn't know they were capable of.

'Working with you on Schools Club has strengthened my practice by giving me new, concrete ways to embed non-performance roles into GCSE drama and by enabling me to use the productions and resources to deepen students' critical engagement with live theatre'

Schools Club Teacher

95%

of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that:

As a result of this project, their students would like to attend theatre regularly.

90%

of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that:

As a result of this project, their theatre knowledge and skills were developing.

76%

of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that:

As a result of this project, the amount of drama had increased in their school.

SCALE

Teachers were asked on a scale of 0–100, to what extent they felt that The Old Vic is an inclusive environment. The average score was:

99%

0 (not very inclusive)

100 (very inclusive)

Teachers were asked on a scale of 0–100, how likely they would recommend this project to a colleague. The average score was:

100%

0 (not likely at all)

100 (extremely likely)

TEACHER OUTCOMES

‘It makes the roles more special and more important in my mind than how it was before’

Lee is a Schools Club participant in Year 11 who got involved with the programme when he opted to take drama GCSE at his school. Lee had been to the theatre a few times before when he was younger but hadn’t been for a while and hadn’t ever been to the theatre on a school visit before taking part in this programme.

When asked what we would have seen him doing on the project, Lee described a typical in-school workshop. Describing the workshop leaders as *‘nice and friendly’*, Lee explained how each workshop followed a similar format with a warm-up icebreaker to get everyone engaged before delving into whatever discipline was being explored that session. Lee recalled the workshop on sound: *‘We got given, iPads and then we would go around the room, try to make specific sounds to create an atmosphere, and then we would present it in the end’*.



When reflecting on what he found most useful about the project, Lee said that it *‘introduced me to how theatres work’*. Lee went on to explain that it provided him with an awareness about different theatre roles such as directing, sound and props. Having learned about the roles it made him more interested in theatre generally and left him wanting to be involved more.

Lee was clear that being part of Schools Club had made him want to attend theatre more. Going into more detail, Lee explained, *‘if we didn’t have this, there wouldn’t really be an incentive for me to go and do it’*. Lee shared that finances and travel can make it difficult to visit the theatre regularly but that he was keen to carry on going.

Lee had some interesting thoughts when reflecting on whether Schools Club had developed his theatre skills. He said that whilst he had definitely developed skills, he also felt that he could have developed more had the project had more engagements in his school or if the individual workshops had been longer, *‘I wish we had more time with it’*.

When discussing how much the project had helped him with his next creative steps, Lee talked more specifically about the skills he had developed on the project in non-performance roles and how they had helped him. In particular, he highlighted the prop-making work that he did on *Arcadia* and that that workshop, *‘really helped me express my creative side’*. Lee explained that since completing Schools Club he has got involved with prop making for a local pantomime after his interest had been sparked in the Schools Club workshop.

Finally, when asked about whether he would recommend this project to others, Lee said that yes, he would, even if they didn’t enjoy theatre or drama. Lee explained that *‘it’s a neat little thing to do’* and went on to explain why, *‘you get a free trip to the theatre and you get to learn cool and interesting things’*.

‘Now theatre’s been shown to me more and it’s more interesting now. And I want to be a part of it more’

Schools Club Participant

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

One of the key aims of Schools Club is to develop participants' knowledge and skills in non-performance roles. Following the ambition of last year, we continued to introduce a wide range of non-performance roles within the workshops to provide both students and teachers with a broader knowledge of careers within the industry. This year we covered the roles of costume supervisor and props supervisor, as well as exploring Foley within the sound workshop.

Many students reported that they did not know these roles existed before the programme and that the programme had, *'opened my eyes to the world of theatre, further than just performing'*.

'This project has inspired me to think more about the non-performing aspects that work together to make a performance.' Schools Club Participant

What was particularly noticeable in student feedback this year was the number of students who commented that they learned skills in the workshops that they would not have been able to learn in school.

'I learnt so many new things I wouldn't have learnt at school.' Schools Club Participant

'Hands-on workshops give an insight and experience we can't teach in the classrooms, and gave them tangible skills in technical theatre.' Schools Club Teacher

'The exposure they gain through this programme broadens their horizon with regards to possible areas of interest, increasing the experience and knowledge they are able to draw on when applying and interviewing for higher education courses'

Schools Club Teacher

Teachers reported that as a result of doing the programme, more students became interested in the design routes for GCSE and A Level drama and some also reported that students were looking to study design at university.

'One student has applied to do costume design at university. Schools Club helped to secure her choice with how much she enjoyed the costume workshop near the start of the academic year.' Schools Club Teacher

Developing theatre skills was another strong outcome of the programme with 90% of students and 90% of teachers agreeing that as a result of the programme, their theatre knowledge and skills were developing. 100% of teachers agreed that as a result of the programme, they now have greater confidence using drama activities linked to non-performance roles with their students, demonstrating the impact of the workshops and CPD this year.

'As a teacher, this experience has had a huge impact on my own confidence in teaching design. Being part of the workshops and learning alongside the students has been invaluable. Watching the workshop leaders guide the sessions and seeing the students' ideas develop throughout the process has given me so much more confidence in delivering design lessons myself.' Schools Club Teacher

Teachers also reported that as a result of the knowledge and skills gained, they were able to create new schemes of work and also felt confident to share this new knowledge with the rest of their department, building a legacy of the programme within their school.

'It's enabled me to create more schemes to embed design across the whole curriculum.' Schools Club Teacher

'This project has been incredibly useful in developing new skills and giving me helpful insights into the theatre industry, helping me understand my options'

Schools Club Participant

SUPPORTING GCSE DRAMA

Schools Club aims to promote drama in schools and support teachers to tackle the decline in students selecting drama for GCSE. According to the Cultural Alliance Report Card, entries for GCSE drama have dropped by 41% since 2010. This year 76% of teachers said that as a result of the programme, drama had increased in their school and many teachers that had chosen Year Nines for the project commented that there was an increase in students taking up GCSE drama as a result.

'We have gone from seven students at GCSE to 20. By targeting Year Nines the impact is significant!'
Schools Club Teacher

'If we are going by numbers, my current GCSE group is 14 pupils. Next year we have 60.' Schools Club Teacher

'Uptake at GCSE has increased. With only five students in the current Year 11 class, this has increased to 14 incoming to Year 10 in Sep 2026.' Schools Club Teacher

Many teachers commented this year that the workshops had directly impacted their students' work as part of GCSE drama in a number of different ways. For some it was a deeper engagement in the course in general, for others it was taking more creative risks as a result of being inspired by the productions they had seen. Some had directly used the technical skills learned in workshops into their GCSE pieces.

'They were subsequently able to apply their new knowledge directly in their GCSE devising exam. They successfully downloaded and utilised appropriate software. The workshop leaders had encouraged them in such a way that they felt confident to experiment with different sounds and their piece more than benefited from this.' Schools Club Teacher

'I am developing new ideas and a range of techniques that will be benefitting me in my upcoming GCSEs.'
Schools Club Participant

'This project has fed directly into their GCSE Drama course study, giving students key skills and creative confidence and inspiration'

Schools Club Teacher

'The project helps teach me skills which will help in my drama GCSEs and is one of the main reasons I am choosing drama GCSE'

Schools Club Participant



CLORE LEARNING CENTRE

This year for the first time in the history of the programme we were able to invite participants to The Old Vic for one of their four workshops. Out of the 40 schools, 27 were able to attend a sound workshop in our new Clore Learning Centre. The aim of bringing participants to the Clore Learning Centre was to deepen their connection to The Old Vic and to be able to experiment with more technical equipment that we are unable to bring into schools. Participants reported that being able to use the equipment was useful to them and teachers reported that getting to come to The Old Vic was a highlight of the programme for their students. Some schools were able to attend their workshop in the morning and then see a matinee in the afternoon, which was a significant moment in their participants' experience. 74% of participants said that being in the Clore Learning Centre made them feel connected to The Old Vic.

'The visit to The Old Vic's education space for the sound design workshop, followed by a matinee performance of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and a post-show talk, came at a crucial moment in their creative process. Students have since identified this experience in their coursework as a significant moment that shaped and inspired their work.' Schools Club Teacher

One of the intended outcomes of the workshop in the Clore Learning Centre was to strengthen participants' connection to The Old Vic. Overall connection to the building was 72% so more work still needs to be done. However, 96% of participants said that as a result of the programme, they felt comfortable and welcome at The Old Vic, which is the highest we have ever had on the programme; this suggests that the additional visit to the space might have had an impact on their overall experience at The Old Vic. When asked about what worked well about the Clore Learning Centre, the response was overwhelmingly positive — many students commented on how the space was 'safe', 'inclusive', 'engaging' and 'spacious'.

Many students also directly commented on how connected to the building they felt as a result of being in the Clore Learning Centre, especially if they were there on the same day as a matinee.

'I feel very connected and immersed in The Old Vic, especially when hearing the tannoy announcements for the actors.'
Schools Club Participant



'Our students this year particularly enjoyed the opportunity to come to The Old Vic's Clore Learning Centre'

Schools Club Teacher



TECHNICAL THEATRE OPPORTUNITIES

This year we delivered two technical sessions — a lighting CPD for teachers and a sound workshop for students. Both were standout moments of the project and hugely successful and helpful in providing teachers and students with new knowledge and skills. This year was our first year using the Clore Learning Centre and the Greene Studio for workshops. Now that we have a better idea of what we can offer in these spaces, we can build in a technical workshop each year for both teachers and students. What will be key is ensuring that these sessions are not stand alone but equip teachers and students to be able to continue developing their skills back in their schools and enable them to share their learning with others.

STUDENT FORUM

The Student Forum has been a successful additional offer to the programme for the last two years but more work needs to be done to fully immerse the participants within the organisation. Time needs to be spent on building up participants' knowledge of The Old Vic and how we work before the participants begin to consult with us. To achieve this, we have decided that the forum should be a two-year commitment for participants. We also think that four engagements a year is not enough, so will look to increase that. Within the two years, participants should see at least two Old Vic productions, one of these should be near the start of their engagement with us. We will continue to invite staff members to the forum to meet the participants and hear their ideas. We want to ensure that participation in the Student Forum is a meaningful experience and that participants feel fully confident to set the agenda for meetings, share ideas and advise us on our projects.

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

The Old Vic
The Cut, London SE1 8NB
0344 871 7628
oldvictheatre.com

The Old Vic Theatre Trust 2000 Charity No. 1072590
The Old Vic Endowment Trust Charity No. 1147946