The Learning and Performance Network

Learning in Partnership
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Introduction

This report provides commentary on and insight into the experiences of a sample group of teachers whose schools have all participated in the Learning and Performance Network. It provides a detailed analysis of the opinions and responses of Learning and Performance Network partners and beneficiaries as well as the artists and arts professionals responsible for developing and managing it. The report specifically focuses on teacher reflections, acquired through 40 in depth interviews conducted with schools that had completed the full 3 year LPN programme term between the years of 2006 and 2012.

The stated purpose of the Royal Shakespeare Company is to create the finest experience of Shakespeare in performance, shared with the widest audience in Stratford-upon-Avon, across the UK and around the world. One of its five strategic aims is to ensure that children and young people have ‘vivid, accessible and enjoyable experiences of Shakespeare’s work to enable students of all ages to develop a life-long relationship with his plays and with live theatre.’ The RSC sought to develop a national programme that could transform experiences of Shakespeare’s work for children and young people in the classroom, in performance and online. The company wanted to develop a programme that responded to their national remit and provided opportunities to conduct research into the impact of RSC approaches to Shakespeare on the lives and attitudes of young people, particularly those who would not normally access the company’s work. In 2006 that programme was launched as the Learning Network which later became the Learning and Performance Network.

Over the past ten years the Learning and Performance Network (LPN) has worked in long term partnership with 507 primary, secondary and special schools, 11 regional theatres and 1,320 teachers reaching and an estimated 690,000 students. The programme’s main aim has been to ‘Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with, and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare.’

This report maps the evolution of the programme model. It should be read alongside Voices from the Network, the RSC’s publication to mark the 10 year anniversary of the LPN as well as the formal research papers that have been written about the LPN by academics from the University of Warwick and the University of Nottingham.

The report will be of interest to the programme’s host, The Royal Shakespeare Company, the programme funders, including Arts Council England, The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, City of London Corporation and The Grimmitt Trust; operational partners, the 11 regional theatre partners as well as the programme beneficiaries the school communities, teachers and students that took part in the LPN programme between 2006 - 2016.
The findings from this report will also serve to inform the development of the Learning and Performance Networks’ successor, the RSC Associate Schools Programme due to commence in September 2016.
Executive Summary

The following executive summary presents the top level findings of the Learning and Performance Network Programme Impact Evaluation Report 2016. Started in 2006 and due for completion in 2017, this evaluation draws upon the survey responses of 40 schools from across the life of the project; the views of a wide range of LPN stakeholders; as well as the findings from desk research and analysis.

2.1 Programme Context

For many students their first experience of Shakespeare will be at school, as a compulsory author for study. The RSC was aware that some teachers faced an uphill struggle to get their students enthused and excited about Shakespeare. Possessed with the fundamental belief that Shakespeare belongs to everyone; the RSC was convinced that there was a better way to introduce even the youngest of children to the work of the nation’s greatest playwright.

“Drawing on strong parallels between the way RSC actors and directors work in rehearsal, RSC’s Education work begins by deliberately building a spirit of one group with a shared purpose – this is about us rather than me. In rehearsals at the RSC, actors explore the whole world of the play: they tackle the language, characters and motivation, setting, plot and themes. By ‘standing in the shoes’ of the characters and inhabiting the world of the play, students can similarly be engaged fully: head, eyes, ears, hands, bodies, and hearts are involved in actively interpreting the play”.

In 2006 the RSC’s Education team wanted to develop a national partnership programme with schools that could allow teachers and students to try out these ways of working in more intensive ways, tracking their impact of student learning and engagement. The LPN was born.

2.2 Programme Aim

The Learning and Performance Network is the RSC’s long term partnership programme with schools and theatres across England. It seeks to ‘Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare’. A quality led, national programme, the Learning and Performance Network has focused on schools whose students are least likely to access the RSC’s work.

2.3 Programme Delivery

To extend the reach of the programme the RSC Education team decided to utilise a hub and cluster engagement and delivery model. Over time and responding to the changing requirement of schools and to education policy the model evolved. Between 2012 and 2013

1 RSC Education: introduction to teacher professional development courses, 2015
eleven regional theatres were invited to become partners in the programme. Theatre partners working alongside the RSC to recruit local schools and in delivering programme content.

The LPN required schools and theatres to commit to a three year programme of work. This was the optimum length of time that the RSC considered necessary to develop a community of practice. At the time the programme started, the RSC was also establishing longer term contracts with artists with the aim of building an ensemble company. The LPN mirrored this commitment to long term, developmental relationships.

The findings in this report focus on the impact of the programme on two distinct school groups that had completed a full three year programme, those schools joining the programme between 2006 and 2012. The two groups are made up of:

1. **23 LPN hub schools** that held a direct relationship with the RSC, a regional theatre partner and up to 7 cluster schools. Alongside its regional theatre partner hub schools took responsibility for the recruitment of up to 7 cluster schools as well as hosting and providing the venue for performances, workshops, teacher development days and First Encounter productions.

2. **17 LPN cluster schools** that held a direct relationship with a hub school and a less direct relationship with the RSC and a regional theatre partner.

Since its inception in 2006 the LPN has supported 507 schools, 1,320 teachers and upward of 690,000 students.

### 2.4 Changing Classroom Practice

A prerequisite to transform how children and young people first experience Shakespeare was to change classroom practice by inspiring and empowering teachers with a new skill set and confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare.

Aligned to the programme’s aim the three principal objectives for joining the LPN programme cited by potential LPN hub school teachers were:

- To build confidence in the teaching Shakespeare.
- To find new ways of bringing the work of Shakespeare to life for young people.
- Through partnership and collaborative working to use the arts to bridge the transition between primary and secondary school for students and to share and to acquire new skills and learning.

At survey both hub and cluster school teachers reported that they had a sense of excitement about joining the programme and working with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Based on the approaches used by the RSC in rehearsal, teachers were given the opportunity to take part in a range of extensive learning opportunities and theatre led experiences. These ranged from intensive courses in Stratford-upon-Avon to one and two day courses delivered by RSC practitioners in school and at regional theatres.
“Just the quality of everything was excellent, the teaching, the materials, the RSC are world leaders for a reason and everything I encountered was of the highest standard”

Head of Arts, Secondary School, West Midlands Region

To estimate to what degree RSC approaches had been implemented into classroom practice and to understand how the programme had affected teaching practice, hub and cluster schools were asked a series of questions. Responses included:

- 100% of surveyed hub and cluster schools reported that they had successfully implemented RSC approaches into their teaching of Shakespeare.
- 100% of hub and cluster schools reported that participation in the LPN programme had enhanced their skills, knowledge and confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare.
- 100% of hub schools and 76% of cluster schools confirmed that RSC approaches had successfully connected students to the text.
- 100% of hub schools and 94% of cluster schools reported that the implementation of theatre led techniques had also permeated to other areas of their teaching practice.
- 70% of hub schools and 41% of cluster schools stated that other teachers at their school had to some degree applied RSC approaches into their classroom practice.
- 100% of hub schools and 76% of cluster schools also cited that a new skill set had been developed in communicating and actively involving their students in learning about Shakespeare.
- 96% of hub schools and 65% of cluster schools cited that their teacher leadership skills had been honed through participation in the programme.

A classroom teacher of 20 years affirming “this is the missing bit in education” and later “it’s rejuvenated my teaching practice, the best thing we’ve ever done”.

Teachers reported that participation in the programme was significantly different to any type of professional development previously experienced. An English teacher of 19 years stating that the training and support received through the programme had “regenerated my practice, raised my profile within the school and rejuvenated my passion for Shakespeare”.

For a programme that was directed at English and drama teachers a poignant comment was made by a Head of English from a secondary school in the West Midlands region, “Bringing drama into the classroom was not something I would have considered; the active approach in engaging children with the text is a no brainer; it makes sense, it just works”.

2.5 Impacting on the Experiences of Children and Young People

Having implemented RSC approaches into classroom practice, teachers were asked about the impact of the programme on their students.
• 100% of surveyed hub and cluster schools reported that RSC approaches had helped their students understand the language of Shakespeare, and that students wanted to learn and to do more.
• 100% of hub and cluster schools confirmed that use of RSC approaches had increased student confidence in the classroom.
• 96% of hub schools and 88% of cluster schools reported that RSC approaches had made a connection with hard to reach students in that they wanted to be part of the group.
• 87% of hub schools and 47% of cluster schools confirmed that the programme had encouraged student to student mentoring.
• 87% of hub schools and 47% cluster schools reported that the programme had made a significant contribution to improving student literacy attainment levels; a caveat to these responses being that these are the opinions of the teacher under interview and not necessarily representative of all teachers at a school.
• 78% of hub schools and 59% of cluster schools cited that other teachers at the school had noticed an improvement in student performance, attitude and behaviour.

A classroom teacher from Shropshire recounted the noticeable difference RSC approaches had made to students in her class. Taking the text and breaking it into small doable parts, exploring the meaning of words through the use of RSC approaches, talking about how characters might feel in certain situations seemed to build confidence in the youngest of children. Gradually, children who had previously been afraid to perform in front on an audience “came out of their shell, they were no longer embarrassed, they totally owned what they were doing on stage”.

To understand the programme’s influence further, teachers were asked about the set up or continuation of Shakespeare and theatre led activities at their current school as a result of participation in the LPN.

• 87% of surveyed hub schools and 41% of cluster schools have taken students to see a Shakespeare play.
• 83% of hub schools and 59% of cluster schools have set up or participated in a Shakespeare led event.
• 74% of hub schools and 41% of cluster schools have set up extracurricular theatre led activity such as a lunch time or after school club.
• 57% of hub schools and 47% of cluster schools have taken students on additional school trips to see live theatre.

A classroom teacher from the West Midlands affirmed participation in the LPN as “taking on something that we wouldn’t have otherwise done” and that being involved in the programme had given students a massive confidence boost. Teaching staff and students from the school travelled to Stratford to watch and to take part in the Regional Schools Celebration. The teacher explained how this lively group of young children sat and watched, “no one spoke, no
one misbehaved; the children were engrossed in the performance. The children seemed to be aware that they were part of something incredible”.

### 2.6 Impact on the Wider School Community

In partnership with regional theatres, live theatre has been brought into school communities across the country. In school, at regional theatres and at times in public spaces, LPN students have brought live Shakespeare performance to audiences made up from parents, family, friends and the general public.

- 96% of surveyed hub schools and 82% of cluster schools confirmed that participation in the LPN programme has raised the school’s profile within the local community.
- 82% of hub schools felt that they were recognised in the local community for their Shakespeare expertise.
- Perhaps not surprisingly, only 18% of cluster schools thought that they were recognised in the local community for their Shakespeare expertise. The hub school frequently organising LPN events and activities and acting as the host venue.

The programme has encouraged schools to take live Shakespeare performance into the heart of their local community. A cluster of schools from Canterbury for a second year LPN project took as their focus the history plays of Richard II, Henry IV, Parts I and II and Henry V. At sites in and around Canterbury Cathedral 140 students from Years 3 to 10 (7 – 15 year olds) performed scenes from the plays. The schools also performed twice more at The Marlowe Theatre to an audience of 300 made up mostly of families and members of the general public.

Fantastic feedback was received, about the day especially from the general public and from parents, some commenting that they didn't like Shakespeare at school but watching the performances were really exciting. It is interesting to note how these kinds of activities bring in new audiences to the theatre. At The Marlowe Theatre’s most recent festival (March 2016 focusing on A Midsummer Night’s Dream) 41% of the audience were new bookers to the theatre.

### 2.7 Meeting the Programme Aim

At survey and with all schools having completed the full 3 year programme, the majority of hub (100%) and cluster (88%) schools confirmed that the programme had more than brought about a significant change in the way students experienced and engaged with the work of Shakespeare. Thereby fully meeting the programme aim to ‘Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with, and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare.’
2.8 Programme Sustainability

To understand the long term effect and sustainability of the programme schools were asked if the LPN continues to influence classroom practice and impact on student learning. A key measure was whether teachers continue to use RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice. At survey, 96% of hub school teachers and 82% of cluster school teachers confirmed that they continue to use RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice.

An English teacher from a secondary school in Yorkshire cited how she continues to train colleagues within the department in the use of RSC approaches. Last year the school’s English ‘A’ level results were 91% A to E grades against a national average of 66% a result that was in the opinion of the teacher, attributable to the continued use of RSC approaches in the classroom.

Hub and cluster school teachers that had confirmed current use were asked why they had continued to use RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice.

Overwhelmingly teachers reported that they continue to use RSC approaches “because it works” in capturing the imagination of students, offering an open door into the world of Shakespeare, developing students understanding and enjoyment of the text.

“Because it engages regardless of ability and background, it removes the barriers to accessing Shakespeare; it makes lessons memorable and fun so that students can make effective progress.”

English Teacher, Secondary School, Yorkshire & Humber Region

A priority for the work of the RSC is to ensure that children and young people have vivid, accessible and enjoyable experiences of Shakespeare’s work. For some schools the LPN has had a lasting legacy; Shakespeare and RSC approaches have become an integral part of the school’s curriculum, something that their students expect and look forward to.

“We define ourselves by our Shakespeare work, we have staff apply to the school because of our Shakespeare work; it’s in every corridor, we eat live and breathe it”

Classroom teacher, Primary School, Yorkshire & Humber Region

A further indication about the sustainability of the programme was to understand to what extent schools had remained in contact with other cluster schools within the context of the LPN relationship.

- 65% of surveyed hub schools and 35% of cluster schools reported that they had continued contact with other cluster schools within the context of the LPN relationship.
60% of hub schools and 67% of cluster schools that had remained in contact with other cluster schools had done so to participate in a Shakespeare led performance or festival.

These are important markers demonstrating the legacy of the LPN partnership both for schools and for local communities.

To support and inspire schools in accessing Shakespeare’s work, RSC Education offers an extensive range of practical and online resources. With Shakespeare as its focus, it was pertinent to ask if schools continued to access the work of RSC Education.

- 91% of surveyed hub schools and 71% of cluster schools continue to access the RSC website.
- 91% of hub schools and 71% of cluster schools continue to use the RSC Toolkit for teachers.
- 48% of hub schools and 18% of cluster schools have attended RSC professional development for teachers.
- 44% of hub schools and 6% of cluster schools have subscribed to RSC Live Schools’ Broadcasts.

Surveyed hub and cluster schools consistently awarded good to excellent quality ratings to all of the above resource provided by RSC Education.

Where teachers had left their original LPN school to start work at another, 86% of surveyed teachers reported that they continued to use RSC approaches at their new school as part of their classroom practice. Teachers citing that approaches engaged young people with the work of Shakespeare and to their learning regardless of age or academic ability.

“Because children learn best actively, the approaches are fun and allow accessibility to difficult text which leads to higher outcomes”

Head Teacher, Primary School, West Midlands Region

2.9 Conclusion

The Learning and Performance Network has offered participating schools an unrivalled 3 year opportunity to access the work of Shakespeare. Since its inception in 2006 the LPN partnership has reached 507 schools, 1,320 teachers and upward of 690,516 students. Utilising approaches that are based in the real world of actors and directors, teachers have moved from one type of classroom practice to another. Students have been captivated and irresistibly drawn into the world and language of Shakespeare, understanding that they are part of something very special and wanting to learn and to do more.
“The children enjoy it so much; they absolutely punch the air when they go into a Shakespeare lesson, they are excited, something which is often missing in schools nowadays”.

Classroom Teacher, Primary school, North East Region

Evidenced in Section 6 Programme Impact and Section 7 Programme Legacy of this report, the programme aim continues to be fully met, to ‘Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with, and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare.’ In meeting the programme aim the immediate and long term impact of the LPN has also led to a much deeper effect for students and for their teachers.

Participation in the programme has boosted students’ self-esteem and for many acted as a keystone to their learning. Teachers have reported that RSC training has re energised their classroom practice and ignited an enthusiasm for Shakespeare which has been passed onto to their students. In observing the positive effect RSC approaches have made to student learning and confidence, teachers want to continue to provide creative learning opportunities that connect young people to something outside of their norm.

“I am just so grateful we’ve done it, the single most amazing thing I’ve ever done, I can’t really put it into words, it’s ingrained into the way we teach.”

Head of Media Studies/English Teacher, Secondary School, South West Region

By actively exploring Shakespeare’s work and by drawing comparisons to modern day life student’s appreciation of diversity and different cultures has been expanded. The programme has provided young people with a platform to express ideas and opinions, offering a level playing field to students regardless of background or academic ability. Teachers report how students have been inspired by the programme, providing them with the confidence and self-esteem to achieve for the future.

“Students and teachers have been invigorated by the programme. Shakespeare is part of our national heritage and it must not be lost.”

Head of Drama, Secondary School, South West Region

The sustainability of the LPN is evident. The hub and cluster model used to engage schools and to deliver programme content has proven efficient and cost effective in its reach. The quality of programme content and expertise provided by the RSC and regional theatre partners has formed the basis of a robust learning partnership. When teachers were asked why they had continued to use RSC approaches, overwhelmingly the reply came back “because it works”.

Attitudes towards the Learning and Performance Network remain highly positive. At survey 100% of teachers that had served a full programme term confirmed that they would recommend a RSC Education support programme to other schools.
“Everything they gave us has made the school what it is today and we can’t wait for the new RSC Associate Schools’ programme to start.”

Classroom teacher, Primary School, North West Region

The Learning and Performance Network has established a strong community of practice, the RSC, regional theatre partners and schools have been linked together by a common bond. Reaching across the country the LPN has shared learning and expertise with school communities, often those that are least likely to access the work of Shakespeare. With an enduring legacy in place and a committed network of schools keen to resume, the Learning and Performance Network is well positioned for its next iteration, the RSC Associate Schools Programme due to start in September 2016.

2.10 Report Recommendations

The Learning and Performance Network has successfully engaged and delivered programme content to school communities across the country in support of the programmes’ main aim. It is it the recommendation of this report:

1. That RSC Education should continue to work in long term partnership with schools and regional theatre partners in transforming the way students’ access and engage with the work of Shakespeare.

2. Considerable skill and expertise in the teaching of Shakespeare continues to be built in schools that have participated in the programme. Taking into account the long term effect of working with schools, RSC Education should consider development of a stratified approach to future programme development:

   The programme should look to develop strategies that actively accommodate new teachers joining a school and in supporting schools where a teacher may leave.

   For teachers that leave their original school to start work at another, although the ethos of the programme often remains with the teacher, the effect of the programme can diminish. The programme should examine other ways of supporting teachers at their new school.

3. RSC Education should extend the reach of the programme to areas of the country that to date have had least contact with the LPN, in particular in the East of England.

4. RSC Education should continue to enlist the support of regional theatre partners and actively review the inclusion of other potential compatible partners to further extend the reach of the programme.
5. As a partnership led programme a steering group should be established from representatives of RSC Education, RSC Practitioners, regional theatre partners and teachers with input from students.

6. RSC Education should set up and implement a formal evaluation plan. Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data at 18 month intervals throughout the lifetime of the programme.
The Learning and Performance Network Programme

This section of the report presents an overview of the Learning and Performance Network, the programmes’ context and rationale, its constituent elements together with a review of programme delivery and management arrangements.

3.1 Context and Rationale

For many young people their first experience of Shakespeare will be at school. In 2006 a common experience for students was of reading Shakespeare as a ‘book’, rather than experiencing his work as a play for performance. As a compulsory author for study in all state secondary schools in England, the RSC was aware that for some teachers it was an uphill struggle to get their students enthused and excited about Shakespeare. Many students held a preconceived idea that Shakespeare was difficult, a necessary chore that required completion and was unlikely to be enjoyed. Possessing the fundamental belief that Shakespeare belongs to everyone the RSC was convinced that there was a better way to introduce even the youngest of children to the work of the nation’s greatest playwright.2

The RSC draws strong parallels between the way RSC actors and directors work in the rehearsal room and the ways students can work in their classrooms; therefore all of the work undertaken in schools is inspired by and rooted in the way that actors and directors work in the rehearsal room. The RSC uses the term ‘Classroom as rehearsal room’ as a short hand to describe this knowledge transfer. The term ‘rehearsal room approaches’ was first used by Rex Gibson (Teaching Shakespeare: A handbook for teachers).

RSC rehearsal rooms are essentially places of exploration and shared discovery, in which a company of actors and their director work together to bring Shakespeare’s plays to life. To do this successfully they need to have a deep understanding of the text, to get the language ‘in the body’ and to be open to a range of interpretive possibilities and choices. The ways in which they do this are both active and playful, connecting mind, voice and body.

The RSC’s Education work begins by deliberately building a spirit of one group with a shared purpose – this is about us rather than me. This is done through games that warm up the students’ brains, voices and bodies, and practitioners continue to build this spirit by shared, collaborative tasks that depend on and value everyone’s contributions.

In rehearsals at the RSC, actors explore the whole world of the play: they tackle the language, characters and motivation, setting, plot and themes. By ‘standing in the shoes’ of the characters and inhabiting the world of the play, students can similarly be engaged fully: head, eyes, ears, hands, bodies, and hearts are involved in actively interpreting the play. In grappling

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2 RSC Education: Stand up for Shakespeare, a manifesto for Shakespeare in schools. Published March 2008.
with scenes and speeches, they are also actively grappling with the themes and ideas in the play, experiencing them from the point of view of the characters.  

There are significant amounts of documentation in print\textsuperscript{4} and online that provide a detailed analysis of the RSC’s approach.

In 2006 the RSC’s Education team wanted to develop a national partnership programme with schools that could allow teachers and students to try out these ways of working in more intensive ways, tracking their impact on student learning and engagement. The LPN was born.

3.2 Programme Aim and Strategic Fit

With initial funding provided by the Higher Education Funding Council of England, Creative Partnerships and Arts Council England, in 2006 the RSC Education team launched the Learning Network (later to become the Learning and Performance Network). The programme aim was to ‘Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with, and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare’ for communities of schools across the country in areas of low cultural engagement.

The Learning Network underpinned the then stated purpose of the RSC to:

- **Connect with Shakespeare** – and help others to connect, responding to his plays through the work of contemporary actors, writers and artists. To deepen understanding and the enjoyment of Shakespeare through creative learning.

- **Defined by ensemble** - create work through the principles of ensemble, collaboration, trust, mutual respect, and a belief that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

- **Engage with the world** - broaden and deepen relationships with audiences and artists, producing bold, progressive work that engages with the world in which we live.

3.3 Programme Engagement and Delivery Model

The RSC’s Education team chose to use a hub and cluster engagement and delivery model. The model served three purposes:

- To facilitate the recruitment of schools onto the programme.
- As a knowledge flow mechanism to assist with the exchange of learning between organisations.
- As an advocacy tool, the RSC team understanding that teachers influence other teachers.

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\textsuperscript{3} RSC Education: Introduction to Professional Development, published 2015
\textsuperscript{4} i. Transforming the Teaching of Shakespeare by Joe Winston ii. https://www.rsc.org.uk/education/impact-and-research/
The hub and cluster engagement model 2006-10 During the first 4 years of programme operation, RSC Education managed the recruitment of LPN hub schools onto the programme with the support of different strategic partners. Initially they worked with Specialist Schools and Academies Trusts, then Local Authorities and then Creative Partnerships.

On recruitment, each hub school took on the responsibility to recruit up to 7 cluster schools to form a distinct hub and cluster partnership. In most cases a pre-existing relationship between the hub and its cluster schools assisted the process. For example, a hub secondary school working with its feeder primary schools.

Each year from 2006 until 2010 a new cohort of schools was recruited onto the programme, 10 hub schools and up to 70 cluster schools. The figure below demonstrates a typical annual LPN hub and cluster engagement model during this period.

Figure 1. The LPN Hub and Cluster Engagement Model 2006 –10
The hub and cluster delivery model 2006 - 10  The model supports the process of distributing learning and practice throughout the cluster. The model also exhibiting the potential to provide an efficient and cost effective method for the RSC to deliver programme content to a greater number of schools than working on a school by school basis.

In this model, the RSC acts as trainer/adviser/mentor to the hub school. In turn the hub school shares learning with the other schools in its cluster (supported by additional input from the RSC). The ultimate recipients and beneficiaries of shared learning and practice being each school’s student population. The figure below demonstrates the likely flow of learning and practice through the LPN hub and cluster model during this period.

Figure 2. The LPN Hub and Cluster Knowledge Flow Model 2006 – 10

Within each hub and cluster school are a number of other teachers that are not in direct contact with the LPN programme. The capacity to reach these teachers is also provided for in the model. Having acquired new learning and practice hub and cluster school teachers are able to return to their own schools to share practice with other interested teaching staff. This necessarily involves the development of leadership skills by the hub school teachers which the RSC sought to support. At survey almost all hub (96%) and just under two thirds of cluster (65%) school teachers confirmed that participation in the programme had honed their leadership skills.
Illustrated in the above figure, an additional outcome that became apparent at interview was that a number of hub school teachers had demonstrated RSC led approaches in schools that sat outside their LPN cluster.

There was also strong evidence provided by hub (87%) and cluster (47%) school teachers that participation in the programme had encouraged student to student mentoring. Demonstrating that the effectiveness of the hub and cluster model to act as a knowledge flow mechanism had in some instances reached beyond its original teacher to teacher focus.

In 2011 (with five cohorts of schools having been recruited) following a review of the programme a decision was made not to recruit a cohort of schools for the 2011-12 academic year. While continuing to deliver support to earlier cohorts, the team took time to reflect on the feedback received from participating schools and to take into account the changing educational landscape in order to gauge what changes were required to the programme model.

Schools that had completed the 3 year programme voiced a strong opinion about wanting to continue and benefit from the LPN relationship. For the RSC changes in the education system meant that partners who had previously assisted in the hub school recruitment process (for example Creative Partnerships and Local Authorities) were either no longer in existence or no longer had the infrastructure in place to support the recruitment of schools into the programme. The RSC team also reflected that recruiting 10 new hub schools into the programme each year placed heavy demands on resources and that fewer hub schools would allow a closer relationship with cluster schools (that ultimately became six hub schools recruited annually as opposed to ten). Some schools had also cited that travelling to Stratford-upon-Avon on a regular basis and obtaining teacher cover for school trips could at times raise issues indicating that a more local connection might provide greater benefit.
It was clear that for schools that had reached the end of the formal 3 year programme there was an ambition to continue with the work and association with the LPN. Already understanding the strength of working in partnership and wanting to support the development of strong regional relationships, RSC Education started to explore the possibility of working with regional theatre partners in the design and delivery of the programme.

**The hub and cluster engagement and delivery model 2012-16** Between 2012 and 2013 eleven regional theatres from across the country were invited to join the LPN programme as theatre partners.

In collaboration with the RSC’s Education team and using local knowledge and networks regional theatre partners were able to identify and to recruit schools onto the programme. Thereafter and illustrated in the figure below regional theatre partners and RSC practitioners’ jointly led and delivered programme content matched to the needs and priorities of LPN schools.

**Figure 3. The LPN Hub and Cluster Knowledge Flow Model 2012-16**
A summary of the main role and characteristics of the LPN hub and cluster model is provided in the table below.

**Table 1. Roles and Typical Characteristics of a LPN Hub and Cluster Spoke**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Partnership Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Royal Shakespeare Company</strong></td>
<td>Programme host organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment of regional theatre partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint recruitment of hub schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trainer/advisor/mentor to hub and cluster schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venue for watching and taking part in performance, festivals, student workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and teacher development days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Regional Theatre Partner</strong></td>
<td>Advisor/mentor to hub and cluster schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint recruitment of hub and cluster schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venue for festivals, performance, workshop and teacher development days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working alongside RSC staff and artists in the delivery of the programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Hub School</strong></td>
<td>Programme beneficiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Host organisation to cluster schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment of cluster schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venue for festivals, performance, workshops and teacher development days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Up to 7 Cluster Schools</strong></td>
<td>Programme beneficiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td>Ultimate programme beneficiary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Typical Characteristics**

- Hub and cluster schools (typically) located in the proximity to regional theatre partner
- Schools located in areas of (typically) low cultural engagement with students likely to have limited access to Shakespeare performance or to live theatre
- Often but not exclusively a pre-existing relationship between hub and cluster school e.g. a secondary school with feeder primary schools or a primary school working with existing learning partners
- Mixed school demographic - secondary, primary, special educational needs, further education
- Mixed teacher demographic - English, drama and creative arts teachers but also other specialist subject teachers, SEN and classroom teachers and Literacy Coordinators
- Mixed knowledge, confidence and experience of teaching Shakespeare
- Diverse student demographic
- Specified focus on transforming experiences of Shakespeare for children and young people
3.4 Recruitment of Learning and Performance Network Schools

**LPN Hub Schools** Throughout the lifetime of the programme the RSC’s Education team has worked with a number of education and theatre led organisations in the recruitment of potential hub schools. The assistance provided from trusted ‘gatekeeper’ organisations that held a pre-existing relationship with potential LPN schools proved to be invaluable.

Between 2006 and 2010 the RSC team worked initially alongside Specialist Schools and Academies Trusts, Local Authorities and Creative Partnerships to recruit hub schools onto the programme. This entailed identifying and targeting schools that might benefit most from a long term partnership programme with the RSC.

Between 2012 and 2013 eleven regional theatre partners joined the programme. Targeting schools matched to their local priorities, theatre partners worked with the RSC team on the recruitment of hub schools onto the programme. Schools joining the programme continued to be in areas of low cultural engagement.

To ensure that potential hub schools understood and demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment to a three year programme of RSC support, schools underwent a rigorous two part recruitment process.

The first stage involved the completion of a formal application detailing what they hoped their school would achieve from participation in the programme. School profile information was provided as well as listing other local schools that would join with the hub school to form the cluster. A crucial element for the successful implementation of the programme was always going to be having the backing of the schools’ Senior Leadership Team. As part of the application process each school was asked to provide a written statement of support from their Head Teacher.

For schools that successfully completed the initial stage, the second stage of the process was a visit to the school by members of the RSC Education team. Potential hub school teachers were interviewed alongside students and members of the Senior Leadership Team. The schools were also asked to make a presentation about what joining the programme might mean to them and to their local community.

**LPN Cluster Schools** The recruitment of cluster schools onto the programme was the responsibility of the hub school and from 2012 jointly with regional theatre partners. Often but not exclusively the hub school was in a pre-existing relationship with its cluster schools. The initial invite to join the programme had in many cases been extended by email to a member of the Senior Leadership Team at the school who had then passed it onto the appropriate classroom teacher or head of department.
Both hub and cluster schools recognised the natural potential of the programme to build upon already established links between the schools. In some cases hub schools also used the programme to build new links with schools in their area.

3.5 The Three Year Learning and Performance Network Journey

The programme’s overarching aim was to transform how children and young people first experience and engage with Shakespeare’s work. While providing flexibility in its approach, each year of the programme focused on the achievement of an intended outcome:

Year 1: Transforming classroom practice and confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare

The first year of the programme concentrates on building teacher skills, knowledge and confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare.

Invited to the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon, lead teachers for the hub school and regional theatre practitioners take part in 5-6 days of immersive professional development spread over an academic year. Typically the training will be delivered in two day bursts on a Friday and Saturday (thereby limiting classroom release time but not wholly reliant on the teachers own time). The continuing professional development (CPD) focuses on building familiarity and confidence in the use of theatre led approaches to the teaching of Shakespeare, all inspired by the real world work of RSC actors and directors in the rehearsal room. The CPD days include attending evening performances in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. At survey hub school teachers recalled the importance of their time in Stratford motivating them to become fully engaged with the programme.

“Coming up to Stratford, the workshops and then seeing the performance, brought the play to life. Using ‘the whoosh’ and other tools, setting the scene provided a new way of working”

English and Media Teacher, Secondary School, South East Region

“Going to Stratford and working with like-minded people, all learning together”

Head Teacher, Junior School, Yorkshire & Humber Region

Over the following months momentum and confidence builds, teachers and theatre practitioners acquiring new skills and knowledge. Ongoing CPD and student workshops in Stratford, in the hub school and at regional theatres are hosted and delivered by RSC practitioners and regional theatre practitioners. Other members of the RSC’s Education Department also attend training and there is a constant thread of communication between the RSC Education team, the school and theatre partners. The LPN partnership grows in strength as the year progresses.

For the duration of the programme hub schools and/or regional theatre partners host additional CPD days for teachers and hold student workshops for schools within their region.
Year 2: Building synergy within the cluster

Second year LPN activity concentrates on building the dynamics of the cluster. Hub school teachers disseminate learning to colleagues at their own school and work with their cluster schools on a project that is based on a chosen Shakespeare text. Supported by the RSC and where appropriate, regional theatre practitioners the schools agree on the nature and subject of the project.

For example, during the 13/14 academic year the focus of a second year project for a cluster of schools in the North East region was to improve student literacy, particularly in writing. The year started with a teacher training day on *The Tempest*; in the February the hub school ran a whole school ‘Shakespeare Week’ which culminated in a performance involving every class in the school, and watched by over 300 children. During the spring term the cluster worked on *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; and in the July held a celebration event which used theatre-based approaches to present the students’ written work, to parents, members of the senior leadership team and to governors for each school in the cluster.

“I wish I could bottle the atmosphere. The children are full of Shakespeare, they can’t get enough”.

Classroom Teacher, Primary School, North East Region

Teachers continue to attend additional training days throughout the year to develop their practice and schools are encouraged to take part in student workshops.

To deepen engagement, a number of special events and activities are made available to schools. These include watching RSC Live Schools’ Broadcasts⁵; the RSC Youth Ensemble⁶; RSC Backstage Pass⁷ and in 2016 the opportunity for children from LPN hub and cluster schools to appear in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream: A Play for the Nation*⁸ – as Titania’s fairy train.

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⁵ RSC Live Schools’ Broadcasts A free live broadcast that brings RSC productions into the classroom.
⁶ The RSC Youth Ensemble An opportunity for LPN school students aged 14-18 years old to participate in a residential course in Stratford leading to a performance on RSC Courtyard Theatre stage. Two residencies took place in 2008 and 2009 focusing on *A Midsummer Night’s Dream and The Winter’s Tale* respectively. See Section 7 Legacy.
⁷ RSC Backstage Pass 30 young people from schools across the country came together for a work experience pilot. The 3 days included tours of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre; introductory sessions with different internal departments; a design and lighting demonstration; shadowing Front-of-House assistants; meeting some of the Henry V cast and creative team; backstage shadowing; producing marketing campaigns for Henry V, and re-creating parts of the Henry V set in a Paint Workshop, all culminating in final presentations from the students demonstrating what they had learnt and experienced over the 3 days.
⁸ *A Midsummers Night’s Dream 2016* As part of the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the death of Shakespeare, 580 children aged between 7-12 years old from 28 schools from across the UK are taking to the stage in theatres in their area to take on the roles of Titania’s fairy train in the RSC’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream: A Play for the Nation.*
Year 3: LPN Regional Schools Festival and Regional Schools Celebration  By year three the LPN partnership is flourishing. There is a confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare, communication with and visits to the regional theatre partners are ongoing and young people have a growing enthusiasm for Shakespeare’s work. In its third year the final step of the programme is to provide schools with a platform to inspire students to take ownership of Shakespeare through performance.

The activity of the cluster focuses on the production of two Shakespeare led festivals. One festival that is held within the locality of each cluster and the other that brings all schools in their third year to Stratford for a celebration of young people’s performance live on stage. With all schools within the cohort using the same edit of a chosen Shakespeare text in 2015 the festival took the plays of Henry IV, Parts I and II and Henry V in the RSC production of The Head that Wears the Crown.

LPN hub and cluster teachers are assisted in production by RSC practitioners and by regional theatre practitioners. The practitioners take on the role of ‘Director Mentors’ to hub school teachers, supporting them through CPD days and ongoing mentoring to create a coherent festival of work involving their cluster schools. Regional theatre partners in many instances also provide the venue for the local festival, accommodating audiences made up of students, family and friends from across the local community. Members of the RSC Education team also attend and support the festivals.

Later in the summer term and using the same Shakespeare text student representatives from each LPN school along with teaching staff are invited to Stratford-upon-Avon to take part in a Regional Schools Celebration. Under the direction of RSC practitioners and, where appropriate, regional theatre practitioners 2 children from each hub and cluster school in each region form a new ‘company’ and meet to rehearse one scene from the play. Teachers are again supported by RSC ‘Director Mentors’. Rehearsals take place during the summer term and culminate in a performance on either the Royal Shakespeare Theatre or Swan stages. School audiences, teachers, families and friends are also invited to the performance as well as RSC funding organisations, the RSC board, the wider company and other stakeholders. The day presents an exciting opportunity for schools, regional theatre partners and the RSC to mark the achievements of three years of work together.

“The children were obsessed and enthralled by the Henrys, to watch the children at the theatre in Stratford was incredible, they took away so much more than I expected, their enthusiasm, they all loved it.”

Classroom Teacher, Primary School, West Midlands Region,
The Regional Schools Celebration 2015
3.6 The Addition of Small-Scale Touring to the Programme

The LPN has been the driver in developing a coherent national small-scale touring strategy for the RSC. Previously entitled Young People’s Shakespeare and now called ‘First Encounters with Shakespeare’ the touring strategy builds on the principles and structures of the LPN.⁹

The hub school and regional theatres can programme and host daytime and evening performances of the RSC’s First Encounters with Shakespeare productions, designed specifically for 8-13 year olds. Daytime performances are for students and evening performances for parents, older students and the local community. The tours ensure that live theatre experiences are at the heart of the network and further deepen the connections made with local communities who do not traditionally access the RSC’s work or the work of their regional theatre.

3.7 The Role of the RSC Practitioner

For the Learning and Performance Network the role of the RSC practitioner has been central to effective programme delivery. The CV of an RSC practitioner is rooted in theatre based disciplines and the ethos of RSC rehearsal room practice as actors, teachers and directors working across a variety of regional and national cultural and academic organisations. Often crossing from one role to another, the RSC practitioner may act as student workshop leader or CPD advisor/mentor; RSC director on performance based projects such as the Regional Schools Celebration or as a project manager working with the RSC Education team and regional theatre partners in helping schools to deliver their Year 2 LPN projects.

“...the RSC practitioners are fabulous - they relate to teachers - primary school teachers have 13 subjects to teach (and rising) - they don't speak down to teachers - when you go to the RSC they treat teachers as professionals.”

Classroom Teacher, Primary School, North East Region

At interview RSC practitioners felt that their remit was to inspire teachers by passing on new skills and strategies, giving teachers the confidence to connect students with Shakespeare’s work. Practitioners commented that teachers participating in the programme were on a journey. Recalling that over that first weekend in Stratford it was important for teachers to be valued as professionals. Sharing skills, building confidence, giving teachers a voice to build a bond within the group, a view also reiterated by teachers and by the RSC Education team.

The LPN programme has been able to draw upon a team of experienced and expert freelance RSC practitioners, all of whom have worked as actors or directors with the company or as staff members of the RSC’s Education Department. Involved in programme delivery and

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⁹ RSC report to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation: 2013-3014
development the role of the RSC practitioner has been a major contributor to the success of
the programme.

3.8 The Role of Regional Theatre Partners

One of the most significant changes to the programme occurred between 2012 and 2013 with
RSC Education inviting eleven regional theatre partners to join the LPN partnership. The
programme needed to evolve to meet the changing educational landscape in which it operated
and respond to the feedback provided by the schools that it supported.

Sustainability beyond the input of the RSC was essential if the ambitions of the LPN were to be
fully realised. The RSC undertook research during 2011-2012 with a representative sample of
hub schools who had been involved in the LPN since its inception in 2006-2007. It was
apparent from the research that LPN schools wanted to continue with the programme beyond
its three year term and to do so the programme would need to establish a stronger regional
foothold. Building strong regional partnerships with a local theatre company would add
considerably to the LPN offer during the three year partnership period, and offer a foundation
for local sustainability.

The RSC wanted to work with a network of theatres that would provide a natural pathway for
schools to access a high quality live theatre experience in their region. Continuing to use the
hub and cluster relationship model the partnership between the RSC and regional theatres
proved to be mutually beneficial; both the RSC and regional theatre partners shared the
ambition of connecting to audiences in communities with low cultural engagement.

The inclusion of regional theatres in the partnership since 2012 has allowed schools to forge
closer links with their local theatre. Schools have gained access to a local live theatre venue as
well as to performance/drama led expertise while continuing to benefit from their relationship
with the RSC. In partnership with the RSC and regional theatres, schools have been given the
opportunity to work with different practitioners picking up on distinct aspects of performance
and being able to perform in different types of spaces.

At interview some regional theatre partners felt that the programme had “put them on the
map”. An association with the RSC had provided them with a key into local communities that
previously had been hard to reach, describing the programme as a ‘long term investment with
schools’. The 3 year programme duration meant that regional theatre partners had the time to
deepen their relationship with schools, helping to establish stronger more sustainable
relationships within the local community.

For regional theatre practitioners without an in-depth knowledge of Shakespeare working
alongside RSC practitioners helped them to gain greater insight into Shakespeare’s work. The
importance of building knowledge within the partnership was underpinned by the programme
supporting 12 regional theatre practitioners to achieve a Post Graduate Award in the teaching of Shakespeare from the University of Warwick. Regional theatre practitioners and teachers who took a similar PG Certificate working together at sessions led by the University of Warwick and by RSC staff.

The introduction of regional theatre partners in 2012 has widened the offer and the appeal of the LPN programme to schools. The relationship between the RSC, regional theatres and schools has connected local school communities with local theatre making and theatre going. For example, Hall for Cornwall provided a range of theatre making workshops for students involved in their regional festival (led by Treviglas Community College). The festival gave young people the chance to perform Shakespeare live on stage to a theatre audience of over 400 people but also supported them in other significant ways. Sam Colborne, Lead for Creative Arts at Treviglas Community College,

“Hall for Cornwall provided us with backstage tours; hosted CPD sessions and events, put us in touch with local artists; helped us with lighting and technical expertise and were fantastic in supporting us in delivery of our local festival; we were able to access resources that otherwise would have been out of reach”

While Michael White, Head of Arts Development at Hall for Cornwall, recounted how the LPN relationship has allowed the theatre to build relationships within its local school community,

“The LPN provided us with a long term investment with local schools. The reputation of the RSC is strong and schools have a strong remit to engage with the work of Shakespeare.”

The enthusiasm and commitment of regional theatre partners to participate in the LPN programme is apparent. The programme has built a network of strong and sustainable relationships between the RSC, regional theatre partners and schools.

At survey regional theatre partners were asked about their inclusion in future programme delivery beyond the duration of the LPN. Theatre partners reflected that something would be lost in the momentum and legacy of the programme by its ending. However, theatre partners were also conscious that, like any other arts organisation, cuts in future funding might become an issue which could affect their continuation in the programme. It was therefore important that within their own organisation inclusion in future programmes should be recognised as having a strong fit with the theatre’s long term strategic priorities.

3.9 Post Graduate Certificate and Post Graduate Award in the Teaching of Shakespeare

The Post Graduate Certificate (for teachers) and Post Graduate Award (for artists) in the teaching of Shakespeare were developed in partnership with the RSC and the University of Warwick as part of the initial launch of the network in 2006. The PG accreditation aimed to
provide a reflective opportunity for teachers to track their own practice development in the context of broader educational theory and practice. The training commitment was for approximately 5 days over a 12 month period. At the end of the training period teachers were required to submit a 10,000 word essay for the PG Certificate route and artists were required to undertake an assessed workshop and complete a 2,500 word essay for the PG Award route.

By 2016, 115 teachers had gained a PG Certificate and 12 regional theatre practitioners had gained a PG Award in the teaching of Shakespeare.

In autumn 2013 the RSC began a consultation about the future of the LPN. A key recommendation was to discontinue the postgraduate qualifications from 2014 and instead build the capacity of LPN teachers as both leaders of the programme and reflective learners.

3.10 Future Programme Delivery

The RSC Associate Schools Programme Launched in September 2016 the RSC Associate Schools Programme continues to build on the achievements of the Learning and Performance Network. The main aim of the programme remains unchanged, to transform classroom practice and in so doing change the way children and young people first experience and connect with the work of Shakespeare and live theatre.

At survey a number of LPN teachers felt that when the 3 year programme had come to its natural end, something had been lost. The Associate Schools Programme will address this requirement by allowing all participating schools the opportunity of continuing on a rolling two year renewable basis.

For more information about the RSC Associate Schools programme visit the RSC website https://www.rsc.org.uk/education/associate-schools-programme
Evaluation Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Started in 2006 and due for operational completion in 2017 the RSC Education department has commissioned an in-house final impact evaluation of the Learning and Performance Network Programme. The report seeks to assess to what extent the programme has achieved its principal aim to ‘Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with, and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare.’

The findings of this evaluation report will be of interest to the host organisation, the Royal Shakespeare Company; the principal funders, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Arts Council England; the eleven regional theatres that partnered with the LPN; the programmes’ principal beneficiaries, the schools across the country that took part in the programme and to the organisations in the wider cultural sector.

4.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The brief provided for the final evaluation of the Learning and Performance Network identified the following research aims and objectives:

Research Aims:

i. Estimate and assess the sustained impact of the LPN experience in hub and cluster schools that have completed their 3 year programme tenure but where LPN lead teachers remain in post.

ii. Estimate and assess the sustained impact on lead LPN teachers who have subsequently left their original LPN school and started working at another.

iii. Estimate and assess the impact of regional theatre partners since their inclusion in the programme from 2012.

iv. Provide evidence to inform the development of the RSC Associate Schools programme.

v. Identify the essential criteria for the set up and continuation of effective learning partnerships with schools.

Research Objectives:

i. Has the programme met its overall aims and objectives?

ii. What benefits has the programme delivered and for whom?

iii. Does the LPN continue to have impact for teachers and for students?

iv. What has been the effect of the LPN experience on teaching practice?

v. To what extent are RSC led approaches being used in English and in drama lessons?
vi. To what extent do LPN hub schools that are no longer engaged in the formal programme continue to access and engage with the work of Shakespeare.

vii. To what extent do LPN hub schools and cluster schools that are no longer engaged in the formal programme continue to work together?

viii. To what extent do LPN hub and cluster schools that are no longer engaged in the formal programme continue to access and engage with the work and the support offered by the RSC and its Education Department?

ix. Identify and evidence the legacy of the programme for LPN schools membership between 2006-12 i.e. those schools that have completed a full 3 year programme term.

x. What lessons have been learnt? i.e. the drivers and the barriers for the success of the programme.

4.3 Research Methodology

The approach to the research methodology was to gather evidence from the sample LPN population to include:

Programme Beneficiaries – hub and clusters schools from across the country

Strategic Partners – the network of regional theatres and team of RSC practitioners

RSC Leadership and Management – the RSC Director of Education and RSC Education team

To provide quantitative and qualitative data and taking into account that previous online teacher surveys had resulted in a poor response rate, it was decided to conduct a series of in-depth telephone interviews with schools that had participated in the programme.

All LPN hub and cluster schools that had completed the 3 year programme between 2006 and 2012 were sent an email inviting them to take part in the evaluation process. As an incentive to interview a book token reward was offered to teachers for use in their school for each completed interview.

Between October 2015 and January 2016 a total of 40\textsuperscript{10} in depth telephone interviews were conducted with hub and cluster schools that had participated in the programme between 2006 and 2012. The respondent interviewed was in all cases a member of the teaching staff that had been directly involved in the programme. A structured question set with provision for verbatim comment was developed in consultation with the RSC Education team.

\textsuperscript{10} Of the 423 schools that participated in the programme between 2006 and 2012 40 schools agreed to interview (23 from hub schools and 17 from cluster schools) representing an overall research sample size of 9%. The 23 hub schools that agreed to interview represented a 37% sample and the 17 cluster schools that agreed to interview represented a 5% sample. The low take up of interviews by clusters schools may in part be due to their less direct relationship with the RSC and over time email contact details becoming redundant – there was an email bounce back rate of 21% for cluster schools.
Telephone interviews were also conducted with 2 students that had taken part in the LPN and RSC Youth Ensemble in 2008. See Section 7 Programme Legacy.

A series of semi structured face to face meetings were held with the following members of the RSC Education’s strategic management team:

- RSC Director of Education
- RSC Head of Teacher Professional Development
- RSC Programme Developer: Learning and Performance Network
- RSC Programme Coordinator: Learning and Performance Network

A series of semi structured telephone interviews were conducted with other strategic partners:

- 4 Regional Theatre Partners
- 4 RSC Practitioners

A degree of secondary research was also undertaken by examining the applications of potential LPN hub schools to provide profiling information and to examine and categorise the original expectations of schools taking part in the programme.

Consideration of the findings from earlier LPN evaluation reports and case studies also served to inform the development of the question set and compilation of this report. With particular reference to the findings presented in An Evaluation of RSC Education’s Learning Programmes authored by the University of Nottingham.

4.4 **Respondent Profile**

The findings in this report focus on the impact of the programme on two distinct school groups that had completed a full 3 year programme of activity between 2006 and 2012. The two groups consisted of:

1. **23 LPN hub schools** that held a direct relationship with the RSC, a regional theatre partner and up to 7 cluster schools. Alongside its regional theatre partner hub schools took responsibility for the recruitment of the cluster schools as well as hosting and providing the venue for performances, workshops, teacher development days and First Encounter productions.

2. **17 LPN cluster schools** that held a direct relationship with their hub school and a less direct relationship with the RSC and regional theatre partner.

The following tables provide profiling information for LPN hub and cluster schools that took part in the evaluation process.
For hub and cluster schools that had participated in the programme the survey respondent response rate as might be expected, increased as the passage of time decreased. The years 2009 to 2012 achieving the highest survey response rates.

Table 2. LPN School Survey Respondents 2006-12 by: Cohort Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LPN Cohort Year</th>
<th>LPN Hub Schools</th>
<th>LPN Cluster Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below demonstrates the geographic spread across the English regions of LPN hub and cluster schools that took part in the survey. The highest number of surveyed hub schools originated from the South East (22%) and from Yorkshire and the Humber (22%). While for cluster schools the West Midlands region (35%) produced the highest survey response rate.

The regions of the East Midlands (4%), East of England (4%) and conversely the West Midlands (4%) provided the lowest number of interviews conducted with LPN hub schools. For LPN cluster schools located in the regions of the East Midlands, East of England and in London there was a zero response rate to the survey. A low survey response rate for schools based in the East Midlands and the East of England was likely as in recent years the programme has had limited activity in those regions.

Table 3. LPN Survey Respondents 2006-12 by: Geographic distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions of England</th>
<th>LPN Hub Schools</th>
<th>LPN Cluster Schools</th>
<th>All LPN Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and the Humber</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent Base: 23 LPN Hub Schools 17 LPN Cluster Schools 507 All LPN Schools Figures have been rounded up
For LPN hub schools that took part in the survey the majority (70%) were classified as secondary schools. For LPN cluster schools that took part in the survey the majority were (71%) were classified as primary schools. This is of significance and is a point of consideration when reviewing the report findings in Section 6 LPN Programme Impact and Section 7 Programme Legacy.

Table 4. LPN Survey Respondents 2006-12 by: School Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>LPN Hub Schools</th>
<th>LPN Cluster Schools</th>
<th>All LPN Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed (primary and secondary/special)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent Base: 23 LPN Hub Schools   17 LPN Cluster Schools   507 All LPN Schools   Figures have been rounded up

Where respondents have been classified by their teaching role, specialist subject teachers in English, drama, the arts and creative arts made up the majority of LPN hub school survey respondents. With English teachers (30%) representing the largest single group of teachers.

Not surprisingly for LPN cluster schools, with the majority being classified as primary schools, the largest single group of survey respondents were made up from classroom teachers (53%).

Of interest is the commitment made by hub schools that have allocated resource to creating specialist Shakespeare teaching/co-ordinator roles (13%).

Table 5. LPN Survey Respondents 2006-12 by: Teaching Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Role*</th>
<th>LPN Hub Schools</th>
<th>LPN Cluster Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Head Teacher</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Drama/Arts/Creative Arts</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head/Assistant Head of English</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Teacher</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama Teacher</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teacher</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Role: Literacy Co-ordinator/Leader</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Role: SEN Co-ordinator</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Role: Specialist Shakespeare Teacher/Co-ordinator</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent Base: 23 LPN Hub Schools   17 LPN Cluster Schools   Multiple Roles Possible*
4.5 **In Summary**

- 40 in depth telephone interviews were achieved for LPN hub and cluster schools.
- By year the highest survey response rate was from schools that had participated in the programme from 2009 to 2012.
- By region the highest survey respondent rate for hub schools was from the South East (22%) and from Yorkshire and the Humber (22%). For cluster schools the highest survey response rate was from schools in the West Midlands region (35%).
- The regions of the country that had least contact with the programme over recent years had the lowest respondent survey rate, namely the regions of the East Midlands and the East of England.
- The majority of hub schools (70%) responding to the survey were classified as secondary schools, while the majority of cluster schools (71%) responding to the survey were from primary schools.
- By teaching role, English, drama, the arts and creative arts made up the majority of teachers surveyed from LPN hub schools. For LPN cluster schools, the largest single group of survey respondents were made up of classroom teachers (53%).
- A small number of surveyed hub schools (13%) have created specialist Shakespeare teaching/co-ordinating roles.
Programme Management and Delivery

This section of the report provides observation and commentary on the management and delivery arrangements of the Learning and Performance Network programme. Key outputs for the programme are provided along with an analysis of whether the programme has demonstrated value for money and any areas of programme additionality.

5.1 LPN Management and Governance

The team that manages the delivery of the Learning and Performance Network programme are part of the RSC Education team. The team structure over the past ten years has evolved but at time of survey was managed and coordinated by 4 full time members of staff. The team works with other members of the RSC Education team and other RSC departments to utilise marketing expertise, research and administration capabilities.

RSC Education is responsible for the recruitment of regional theatre partners in to the programme and thereafter alongside regional theatre partners the recruitment of hub schools. The team also co-ordinates and manages the activity of each cohort of LPN schools as they progress through their 3 year programme of support. Working closely with regional theatre partners and RSC practitioners the team co-ordinates schemes of work matched to the identified requirement of each school. To ensure that the programme delivers a quality led package of support the team constantly monitors programme delivery by use of informal and formal feedback methods including: review of education reports completed by RSC practitioners for each activity or event; ongoing personal contact with LPN teachers by email, telephone and in person; regular attendance in Stratford and across the country at teacher CPD sessions, student workshops and at LPN events/initiatives/festivals; annual partnership review meetings with hub schools and regional theatre partners. The RSC along with third parties, for example the Teacher Development Agency and Creativity, Culture and Education, have commissioned and acted on a number of internal and external research and formative evaluation reports since its inception in 2006.

5.2 Key Programme Outputs

The table below illustrates the extent to which the Learning and Performance Network partnership has engaged with schools and regional theatre partners from across the country since its inception in 2006.

Over the past ten years the programme has reached 507 schools, 1320 teachers and an estimated 690,512 students. To extend its reach still further, between 2012 and 2013 the programme recruited 11 regional theatre partners.
Table 6. Key LPN Programme Outputs 2006 - 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruited Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hub schools engaged in the programme</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster schools engaged in the programme</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers attending INSET</td>
<td>1,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers that gained a PG Cert in Teaching Shakespeare</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teacher training days delivered</td>
<td>10,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students engaged in the programme</td>
<td>690,516*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Theatre Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional theatre partners engaged</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional theatre partners that gained a PG Award in Teaching Shakespeare</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on a cumulative estimate of the average number of students in a class that were likely to be taught by LPN hub and cluster teachers between 2006 and January 2016

Between 2006 and 2014 LPN hub school teachers were offered the opportunity to complete a Post Graduate Certificate in the teaching of Shakespeare, and regional theatre practitioners a Post Graduate Award in the teaching of Shakespeare in association with the University of Warwick. By 2014 115 teachers and 12 regional theatre partner practitioners had completed their respective qualifications.

The table below demonstrates the geographic spread of the 11 regional theatre partners that were recruited onto the programme between 2012 and 2013.

Table 7. LPN Regional Theatre Partners 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theatre Partner</th>
<th>English Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curve, Leicester</td>
<td>East Midlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermission Youth Theatre</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Royal, Newcastle</td>
<td>North East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grand, Blackpool</td>
<td>North West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury</td>
<td>South East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuffield Theatre, Southampton</td>
<td>South East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall for Cornwall, Truro</td>
<td>South West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Vic Theatre, Newcastle under Lyme</td>
<td>West Midlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alhambra Theatre, Bradford</td>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull Truck Theatre</td>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York Theatre Royal</td>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Programme Development

The ability of RSC Education to effectively respond to feedback from schools and to adapt to changes in education policy has contributed to the success and sustainability of the programme. These have included:

- Increasing the number of hub school teachers recruited on to the programme from 2 to 3; ensuring programme continuity should a teacher leave a school.
- Originally the programme sought to recruit one drama teacher/specialist and one English teacher/specialist from each hub school. This has not always been possible, although the emphasis on English teachers / Literacy coordinators being at the heart of the programme has remained.
- Programme content for Year 2 and Year 3 was reversed to concentrate effort in the third year on performance, culminating in the production of the Regional Schools Celebration.
- In 2012 and 2013 the RSC Education Department took the strategic decision to strengthen the programmes’ regional foothold by inviting eleven regional theatre partners to join the partnership. See Section 3 The Learning and Performance Network programme.
- During the lifecycle of the programme RSC Education have constantly updated and refreshed programme content and initiatives. These have included offering schools the opportunity to take part in the RSC Youth Ensemble; the Regional Schools Celebration; the RSC’s First Encounters with Shakespeare tour; RSC Backstage Pass and most recently the inclusion of LPN students in Titania’s fairy train for the touring production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream – A Play for the Nation*. In addition to a comprehensive bank of website content for schools to include teacher packs, online performances, interactive learning resources and participation in RSC Live Schools’ Broadcasts.

5.4 Programme Additionality

The evidence presented in Section 6 LPN Programme Impact and Section 7 Programme Legacy demonstrates that the programme aim of transforming the way young people engage and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare has been fully met. The programme has also delivered number of unexpected outcomes that have added value beyond the programme’s original aim.

**Value Added** Since 2006 the programme has successfully engaged with 507 schools, delivering support to 1,320 teachers and over 10,000 teacher training days. An estimated 690,512 students\(^{1}\) have been reached by the programme connecting children and young people with the work of Shakespeare. Notwithstanding the teacher training element and with an average

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\(^{1}\) 690,512 students reached. Estimate based on the average number of students in a class that were likely to be taught by LPN hub and cluster teachers.
annual cost of £200,000 across the 10 years of programme this has equated to an average cost of £2.89 per student reached.

In addition to LPN teachers and students being directly supported, other teachers and schools that sat outside a direct relationship with the LPN have also benefitted from programme delivery:

- Other teachers from supported LPN schools - for example where a supported English teacher has returned to school and has demonstrated use of RSC led approaches to colleagues across the English department.
- Teachers from non LPN schools – at survey teachers reported that they had at times led on demonstrations of RSC approaches at schools outside the LPN relationship.
- Other students from who have watched LPN students perform in festivals or attended other Shakespeare led events at a school or at a regional theatre e.g. the RSC touring production of First Encounters with Shakespeare, the Regional Schools Celebration or participation in RSC Live Schools’ Broadcasts.

Where LPN schools had confirmed continued use of RSC led approaches, teachers were asked to estimate the percentage of students at their school that year on year had been reached by the programme. For use as an indicator only, on average hub school teachers estimated that 87% of students at their school had been reached by the programme while cluster school teachers provided an estimate of 51%.

**High Programme Attainment** At survey 100% of LPN hub and cluster teachers confirmed that participation in the programme had increased their skills, knowledge and confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare. 100% of teachers citing that they had implemented RSC led approaches into their teaching practice and that because of this 100% of students better understood the language of Shakespeare and wanted to do more.

“We knew it was going to work but didn’t know how great the effect was going to be”

Head of English, Secondary School, West Midlands Region

The majority of hub (96%) and cluster teachers (82%) confirmed that they continue to use RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice. Teacher attitudes to future programme delivery remain high, with 100% of hub and cluster teachers confirming that they would recommend membership of a RSC Education programme to other schools.

**Re-energising Teaching Practice** To transform how young people engage with and experience Shakespeare it was necessary for teachers to move from one type of classroom practice to another. This could only be achieved by providing teachers with a new confidence and skill set in the teaching of Shakespeare. At interview it was clear that the programme had not only effected a change in classroom practice but had also brought about a profound change in the way they viewed their abilities and credentials as a teacher.
“One of the best things that I have done, it has genuinely made a difference.”
“I really can't stress how much difference it has made to me professionally.”
“I am just so grateful we've done it, the single most amazing thing I've ever done, I can't really put it into words, it's ingrained into the way we teach.”
“The whole experience was fantastic, loved it. New skills, new friendships were made, we did things that we wouldn’t have otherwise done”
“It was really one of the most professionally fulfilling experiences that I have had.”
LPN hub and cluster teachers

Programme Flexibility Student involvement in live theatre performance was a natural expectation for a performance based programme. However not all young people want to be centre stage. For those students that had chosen not to take part in a performance some regional theatre partners were able to offer an alternative experience in theatre production and stage management. For example, a secondary school in the North East reported that a 90 strong stage management lunchtime club had been established with help provided by their regional theatre partner.

Literacy Attainment Never a direct aim of the programme, hub (87%) and cluster (47%) school teachers reported that participation in the LPN had made a significant contribution to the improvement of student literacy attainment levels. A caveat being that these are the opinions of the teacher under interview and not necessarily representative for all teachers at a school.

For a primary school in the North East literacy attainment data showed a rise of 2 sub levels across the whole of a LPN class. In examining the data the Head Teacher turned to her colleague and said, “It’s got to be the Shakespeare”.

A classroom teacher from Yorkshire attributed improved literacy levels to implementing RSC approaches in the classroom. “Grammar, script writing, punctuation and spelling and using poetry to express thoughts and feelings, the activities really engaged the children in the experience of learning, bringing it to life”. The same teacher received an Ofsted grade of Outstanding for all classes that featured RSC approaches.

Anecdotally, a small number of teachers cited that literacy and attainment levels for boys had been improved by actively reengaging them with their learning, particularly boys struggling with reading, language skills and writing.
A primary school teacher in the North East had used RSC approaches to improve children’s writing, particularly with boys, “RSC approaches engaging children with the text, they became immersed in the plot and characterisation, which spurred them on and naturally led to independent writing”.

“I think Shakespeare is fantastic and I love the atmosphere and all the old language”  
Classroom teacher quoting a Year 6 boy, North East Region

**Student Confidence and Self-esteem** 100% of surveyed teachers reported that the programme had increased student confidence in the classroom. Teachers cited that this was especially relevant for young people living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage where aspirations can be low. Teachers felt that the programme had helped young people to find a voice, providing them with the confidence and self-esteem to achieve for the future.

**Cultural Enrichment and Understanding** By creatively exploring Shakespeare’s themes and characters teachers felt that student appreciation of different cultures and the diversity of the world in which they share with others had been expanded.

**British Cultural Heritage** At survey teachers reported that of equal importance to the appreciation of other cultures was that the programme had given students an understanding of and connection with British cultural heritage.

**Values and morals** A view for some teachers was that the programme allowed students to observe in safety the consequences of the decisions that are made by Shakespeare’s characters which parallel the everyday decisions that some students may face in real life.
Programme Impact

This section of the report explores the journey of hub and cluster schools joining the Learning and Performance Network (LPN) programme between 2006 and 2012. From point of application to completion of the 3 year programme the report identifies the initial objectives and attitudes of schools joining the LPN; examines to what extent teachers have implemented RSC led approaches and analyses the resulting impact on classroom practice, for young people and also for the wider school community. The inclusion of regional theatres as strategic partners in the programme from 2012 is also examined.

6.1 Programme Aim

The Learning and Performance Network aims to ‘Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare’. A quality led, national programme, the Learning and Performance Network has focused on schools whose students are least likely to engage with Shakespeare’s work.

6.2 Teacher Objectives for joining the LPN

As part of the evaluation process a review of successful LPN hub school applications was undertaken. Aligned to the programme aim, schools were asked in their application to set out their main objectives for joining the LPN programme.

At survey LPN hub school teachers were asked to confirm their original objectives for joining the programme. The three main objectives for joining the LPN identified by potential hub school teachers were to:

- Bring the work of Shakespeare to life for young people
- Build confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare
- Through partnership and collaboration use the arts to bridge the transition between primary and secondary school for students and as a cluster, acquire and share new skills and learning

At interview teachers were then asked to apply a satisfaction rating of between 1 (low) and 5 (high) to determine how closely that expectation had been met from their participation in the programme. The results are demonstrated in the table below. In terms of the programme meeting the expectation high satisfaction levels (4-5) were applied by hub school teachers to all three objectives; bringing the work of Shakespeare to life for young people (94%), building confidence in teaching Shakespeare (88%) and through partnership and collaboration working, use art to bridge the transition between primary and secondary school for students and as a cluster, share and acquire new skills and learning (87%).
Table 8. Objectives for Joining the LPN and Attributed Satisfaction Levels by LPN Hub Schools 2006 - 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives Identified</th>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring the work of Shakespeare to life for young people: making the experience enjoyable, rather than as a text to be read at a desk.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build confidence in teaching Shakespeare: explore new approaches to strengthen knowledge and build confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership and Collaboration: use the arts to bridge the transition between primary and secondary school for students and as a cluster share and acquire new skills and learning.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent Base: 23 LPN Hub Schools  Satisfaction Levels (1-2) less than expected; 3 as expected (4-5) more than expected  Answers are not mutually exclusive

Significantly, and with answers not mutually exclusive, these findings illustrate that at point of application potential LPN hub schools clearly understood the purpose and the mechanisms that would underpin the programme’s success.

Having completed the 3 year programme and reflecting on their experience these results demonstrate that the majority of hub schools felt that the programme had more than met their original objectives for joining the Learning and Performance Network.

6.3 Teacher Attitudes to Joining the LPN Programme

At survey both hub and cluster teachers reported that they had felt a sense of excitement about working with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Welcoming the idea of learning from and being associated with a theatre company that they considered being a ‘world leader’ in Shakespeare performance and expertise.

Throughout the lifetime of the programme teachers were given the opportunity to take part in a range of extensive learning opportunities ranging from intensive courses in Stratford-upon-Avon to one and two day courses delivered by RSC practitioners in school and at regional theatres.
“Just the quality of everything was excellent, the teaching, the materials, the RSC are world leaders for a reason and everything I encountered was of the highest standard.”

Head of Arts, Secondary school, West Midlands Region

For teachers whose subject area was not directly involved in performance some did have a concern about joining the programme. A small number of English teachers were apprehensive about the use of theatre led approaches to teaching Shakespeare having only ever taught students who were sat at desks. While some classroom teachers felt nervous about tackling Shakespeare as a new subject, something that they had only studied at school many years ago and not with the fondest of memories. It was not lost on teachers that feeling anxious and unsure about what they perceived as a difficult subject often mirrored the reaction of their own students.

A number of secondary school English and drama teachers also saw the programme as an opportunity to strengthen links between the two departments. This was part of the programme’s original ideal; to consciously develop greater synergies between English and drama departments in schools.

6.4 Changing Classroom Practice

To estimate to what degree RSC led approaches had been implemented into classroom practice hub and cluster teachers were asked a series of progressive questions. At the end of each question set teachers were given the opportunity to provide examples about how RSC approaches had been implemented into classroom practice.

Demonstrated in the figure below, 100% of surveyed hub and cluster school teachers reported that they had successfully implemented RSC approaches into their teaching of Shakespeare. 100% of hub school teachers and 76% of cluster school teachers were also able to confirm they had used RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice to connect students to the text.

A deeper effect for the majority of hub (100%) and cluster (94%) school teachers was that the implementation of theatre led techniques had also permeated to other areas of their teaching practice.

By design the LPN hub and cluster model provides the potential to share learning and practice from school to school and from teacher to teacher. At survey over two thirds of hub school teachers (70%) and just over two fifths of cluster school teachers (41%) stated that other teachers at their school had to some degree applied RSC approaches into their classroom practice.
In conversation with teachers, it became evident that there was more than one story to tell about how RSC approaches have been introduced into classroom practice. With Shakespeare at its core, these ranged from the use of simple techniques to introduce a theme or story to a class for the first time; to creating complete schemes of work across a specific year group or in some instances where RSC approaches have been embedded into “the very fabric of the school’s learning”.

A primary school teacher of 20 years affirming “this is the missing bit in education” and later “it’s rejuvenated my teaching practice, the best thing we’ve ever done”.

Teachers reported that use of RSC approaches captured the imagination and submerged students into the world of Shakespeare long before they even opened a text book. Students were compelled to learn and wanted to do more.

When a secondary school teacher from the South East region led on RSC approaches in INSET it had a profound effect across the English department. “It completely changed the way we teach Shakespeare full stop; we use edited scripts and teach Shakespeare using creative approaches as a way into the text to improve practical writing”. For example, a group of Year 9 students were introduced to Romeo and Juliet by being asked to create the opening scene, a market place in Verona and to explore what might be happening in that space. The characters in the
scene were gradually introduced, how they looked, their role and purpose. This allowed students to understand the world of the play long before they have opened a book.

A secondary school teacher from the south coast cited how an RSC scheme of work entitled ‘An Introduction to Shakespeare’ had been adopted across the English department for all Year 7 students which had instinctively led to a deeper understanding of the text. While the Head of Performing Arts from a school in the South East region applied RSC approaches throughout the school in drama, music and in dance.

A primary school teacher in the North East had used RSC approaches to improve children’s writing, particularly with boys, “RSC approaches engaging children with the text, they became immersed in the plot and characterisation, which spurred them on and naturally led to independent writing”.

6.5 Impact on Classroom Practice

A prerequisite to transform how children and young people experience Shakespeare for the first time was to change classroom practice by inspiring and empowering teachers with a new skill set and confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare.

Demonstrated in Figure 5 below, 100% of surveyed hub and cluster school teachers reported that participation in the LPN programme had enhanced their skills, knowledge and confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare. With 100% of hub school and 76% of cluster school teachers also citing that a new skill set had been developed in communicating and actively involving their students in learning about Shakespeare.

A principal function of the LPN hub and cluster model is its ability to facilitate shared learning (See Section 3 The Learning and Performance Network). It was also envisaged that both hub and cluster schools teachers would return to their own schools and by observation and instruction pass on learning and practice to other non LPN teaching staff. At survey, the majority of hub schools (96%) and almost two thirds of cluster schools (65%) reported that their teacher leadership skills had been honed through participation in the programme.
A secondary school teacher from the south west region reflected the views of many, citing that every training session held in Stratford-upon-Avon or at school was so important in the way teachers were able to acquire new skills and confidence, “The aspiration was to give us some idea about how to teach Shakespeare but what it’s done is so much more, massive”.

Teachers reported that participation in the programme was significantly different to any type of professional development previously experienced. At interview an English teacher of 19 years affirmed that the training and support received through the programme had “regenerated my practice, raised my profile within school and rejuvenated my passion for Shakespeare”.

For English teachers that had experienced RSC approaches for the first time the impact on their classroom practice had been significant. The unifying effect of the ensemble had in some cases led to a massive improvement in the student teacher relationship, creating mutual trust and leading to students being more open and ready to learn. A Head of English from a secondary school in the West Midlands region citing, “Bringing drama into the classroom was not something I would have considered; the active approach in engaging children with the text is a no brainer; it makes sense, it just works”.

Head of Drama from a secondary school in the South East region felt that the programme had developed closer links between the English and drama departments at her school. The English department realising that the drama department was a valuable resource.
6.6  Impacting on the Experiences of Children and Young people

The aim of the LPN programme was to bring about a significant change in the way young people engaged and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare. As the ultimate beneficiary, teachers were asked about the impact of the programme on their students. 100% of hub and cluster school teachers reported that RSC approaches had helped their students understand the language of Shakespeare, and that students wanted to learn and to do more. 100% of surveyed teachers also confirmed that use of RSC approaches had increased student confidence in the classroom.

The majority of surveyed hub (96%) and cluster (88%) school teachers reported that RSC led approaches had made a connection with hard to reach students in that they wanted to be part of the group.

Never a direct aim of the programme, hub (87%) and cluster (47%) school teachers reported that participation in the LPN had made a significant contribution to the improvement of student literacy attainment levels. A caveat being that these are the opinions of the teacher under interview and not necessarily representative for all teachers at a school.

Figure 6. LPN Surveyed Teacher Responses: Impact on Student Learning and Attitudes

![Graph showing teacher responses]

Respondent Base: 23 LPN Hub Schools; 17 LPN Cluster Schools

A classroom teacher from Shropshire recounted the noticeable difference RSC approaches had made to students in her class. Taking the text and breaking into small doable parts, exploring
the meaning of words through the use RSC approaches, talking about how characters might feel in certain situations seemed to build confidence in the youngest of children. Gradually, children who had previously been afraid to perform in front on an audience “came out of their shell, they were no longer embarrassed, they totally owned what they were doing on stage”.

The impact of the programme for children and young people who had challenging behaviour or who were withdrawn and often excluded themselves from school life at times was profound. A classroom teacher from the Yorkshire and Humber region cited how a very young boy at the school had never wanted to join in group activities and not wanting to be associated with the school had even refused to wear school uniform. After taking a role in a school performance of The Tempest a few days later the child arrived at school wearing a school uniform taking pride in his achievement, proud to wear the schools’ uniform.

Teachers felt that the draw of using theatre led approaches for students with challenging behaviour was that the lesson doesn’t feel like a lesson in a traditional sense. Students are not physically restricted by sitting at a desk and the strong practical and interpretive element allowed for many different viewpoints i.e. there are rarely right or wrong answers. Given an equal voice, students who had previously excluded themselves, wanted to become part of the group.

A special educational needs teacher reported how many students at the school have a broad spectrum of learning abilities. Using RSC approaches, in particular physical props and symbols seemed to strike a chord, students remembering the story line week on week. At the Regional Schools Celebration in 2015, The Head that Wears the Crown (exploring Henry IV, Parts I and II and Henry V) a profoundly deaf girl, who rarely speaks, held the tennis ball high and shouted out the word “War”, seeming to sense the importance of the moment. The same teacher reporting, “We have children who have not been directly involved coming down the corridor saying ‘when is it going to be my turn’?”

A classroom teacher from Yorkshire attributed improved literacy levels to implementing RSC approaches in the classroom. “Grammar, script writing, punctuation and spelling and using poetry to express thoughts and feelings, the activities really engaged the children in the experience of learning, bringing it to life”. The same teacher received an Ofsted grade of Outstanding for all classes that featured RSC approaches.

The programme has captivated and engaged the youngest of primary aged children with the work of Shakespeare. A kindergarten teacher described how three children in her class had won the hearts and minds of an audience by taking on the form of the gold, silver and lead caskets in a school performance of The Merchant of Venice.

The passion for Shakespeare for a primary school in the North East was apparent when a classroom teacher likened the school to a stick of seaside rock, “If you cut us in half you would
see Shakespeare imprinted into our being”. A Year 6 girl from the same school was quoted as saying “I can’t imagine a world without Shakespeare”.

Use of RSC approaches was of particular significance to a secondary school in Cumbria in developing peer to peer mentoring role models. Inspired by being involved in the LPN each year the school hosts a Shakespeare festival. Performance roles in the festival are allocated by age, with older students taking on lead roles and younger students forming part of the chorus. While older students appreciate the privilege of being awarded a lead, at the same time they work with younger aspiring students in developing their performance skills. The following year the younger students are able to ‘move up’ the performance role ladder. The school has found that this approach has been invaluable. Older students enjoy the responsibility and recognise the implication of acting as role models to younger students. While younger students unconsciously learn about the discipline of being part of the ensemble and understand the requirement to progress their role in the following year’s Shakespeare festival.

For children and young people who may not want to take centre stage in performance, working as an ensemble has offered alternative opportunities. A classroom teacher from Yorkshire recalled how a dyslexic boy in her class who had a fantastic personality and sense of humour had opted not to take a speaking role in a performance of *As You Like It*. Instead, the young boy became wholly immersed in the backstage production of the play, using his skills and ideas he shone through receiving praise and acknowledgement from his peers and from teaching staff.

When a traumatised Afghanistan boy who had lost both parents arrived at a secondary school in the South East, performance led approaches were used to introduce him to English as a subject and to Shakespeare. Over time he became enthusiastic about English and “grew to love his Shakespeare lessons which became his favourite topic”. His English teacher was delighted in the way the boy’s confidence grew and by the progress that he made in his school work attributing his development to use of active approaches.

A classroom teacher from the West Midlands provided a summation of the programme’s impact for students in her class:

- An increase in student confidence, particularly in some ‘lower ability’ students.
- The building of decoding, inference and comprehension skills
- Inspiring an enthusiasm of Shakespeare for many Year 5 students.
- Expanding the aspirations of the children.
- A greater understanding and love for our literary heritage.
- The opportunity to work with peers from other schools, backgrounds and age groups.
For a programme whose focus was to engage children and young people with the work of Shakespeare, it was pertinent to ask if teachers had started or continued with a Shakespeare or theatre led activity at their current school as a result of participation in the LPN.

The table below demonstrates the extent to which hub and cluster schools have started or continued with a Shakespeare or theatre led activity at their current school as a result of their participation in the LPN programme. At survey 87% of hub schools and 41% of cluster schools have taken their students to see a Shakespeare play; 83% of hub schools and 59% of cluster schools have set up or participated in a Shakespeare led event. While 74% of hub schools and 41% of cluster schools have set up extracurricular theatre led activity such as a lunch time or after school club.

Where teachers were not able to confirm the set up or continuation of a theatre led activity as a result of their participation in the LPN programme, this was typically because it was already a routine activity at that school.

Figure 7. LPN Surveyed Teachers who Confirmed Start Up or Continuation a Shakespeare or Theatre led Activity as a Result of Participation in the LPN

The LPN programme has in many cases motivated and heightened a school’s interest in taking students to see a live Shakespeare performance. The influence of the programme has led to students enjoying and wanting to do more Shakespeare led activities in their own time. In some schools this demand has been met by the setup of Shakespeare and theatre led lunchtime and afterschool clubs.
A number of teachers at interview spoke about how the programme had allowed many of their students to experience live theatre for the first time. This was the case for a secondary school in Cornwall, who wanted to use the power of live performance in school and at its regional theatre to connect students to the work of Shakespeare.

“We wanted to do it well, creatively, students have engaged and have expressed real enjoyment, without the programme we wouldn’t have done it – we want to continue.”

A classroom teacher in the West Midlands described being part of the LPN as “taking on something that we wouldn’t have otherwise done” and that being involved in the programme had given students a massive confidence boost. Students from the school travelled to Stratford to watch and to take part in the Regional Schools Celebration. The teacher described how this lively group of young children sat and watched, “no one spoke, no one misbehaved; the children were engrossed in the performance. The children seemed to be aware that they were part of something incredible.”

6.7 Impact on the Wider School Community

Teachers and their students have engaged and connected with the work of Shakespeare. It was a natural progression and an expectation of the programme that the RSC, schools and later on regional theatre partners should work together to produce live Shakespeare performance. In school, at regional theatres and at times in public spaces, each cluster of schools were able to perform Shakespeare live to audiences made up from parents, family, friends and the general public.

At survey hub (96%) and cluster (82%) school teachers confirmed that participation in the LPN programme has raised the school’s profile within the local community. The majority of hub schools (87%) felt that they were recognised in the local community for their Shakespeare expertise. Perhaps not surprisingly, only a small number of cluster schools (18%) thought that they were recognised in the local community for their Shakespeare expertise.
The LPN has been able to create a sense of pride in the school and in its local community. The ability of the programme to affect the image of a school within the community is demonstrated in the following example. John Cotgrave, Director of Drama Development & Honley Shakespeare Ensemble Co-ordinator at Honley High School in West Yorkshire recounted that at the time when the school undertook the relationship with the RSC the school’s reputation was at an all-time low. Over the proceeding months the LPN partnership managed to capture the imagination of teachers, students and the hearts and minds of parents. With a common purpose and by working in partnership, the school was able to take part in an incredibly successful Shakespeare festival.

The support provided by the RSC along with the commitment of teachers and students to the festival revolutionised the profile of the school. Parents were adamant about the continuation of the relationship with the RSC and the delivery of future Shakespeare festivals. To date the ‘Shakespeare experience’ has become the school’s USP with many parents now sending their children to the school because of the Shakespeare connection.

In addition to schools showcasing a Shakespeare performance on stage at a regional theatre or in school, the programme encourages schools to be exciting and innovative by taking Shakespeare into the heart of their local community.

A second year LPN project for a cluster of schools from Canterbury took as their focus the history plays of Richard II, Henry IV, Parts I and II and Henry V. At sites in and around Canterbury Cathedral 140 students from Years 3 to 10 (7 – 15 year olds) performed scenes...
from the plays. The Boar’s Head Tavern scene was held in a crypt, Henry IV’s death in the Cathedral itself, and the battle of Agincourt played out in nearby parkland.

Following the performances in the town centre, the schools performed twice more at The Marlowe Theatre to an audience of 300 made up mostly of families and from members of the general public.

Fantastic feedback was received, about the day from the general public and from parents, some commenting that they didn’t like Shakespeare at school but watching the performances were really exciting. It is interesting to note how these kinds of activities bring in new audiences to the theatre. At The Marlowe Theatre’s most recent festival (March 2016 focusing on *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*) 41% of the audience were new bookers to the theatre.

A Head of English in Birmingham also spoke about how the LPN partnership had improved the profile of the school in the local community and that students liked that their school is considered to be special, a ‘Shakespeare expert’.

At interview an English teacher in the East Midlands recalled how the programme had helped boys in her class to connect with their fathers. The boys had taken part in a local Shakespeare festival, with assistance provided by their fathers in rehearsal. The boys had gone from being withdrawn and non-verbal to being able to speak confidently in the performance. The parents of the boys after seeing the festival had stopped her in the street to express their delight in the way their sons had engaged with the work of Shakespeare.

### 6.8 Forming and Sustaining Relationships

Partnership and collaborative working lies at the foundation of the Learning and Performance Network. Over the past ten years the LPN partnership has evolved and grown into an effective cultural learning partnership by delivery of:

- A shared vision that Shakespeare belongs to everyone and that collectively it is possible to transform the way children and young people experience and engage with the work of Shakespeare.
- An efficient hub and cluster engagement and delivery model to engage partners and to deliver programme content.
- A 3 year programme that continually refreshed programme content, offering schools a range of creative and collaborative learning opportunities. See Section 3 The Learning and Performance Network.
- Provision of a common focus for each year of the programme that could be tailored to meet the requirement and priorities of each school.
- Fostering an environment of trust and mutual respect within the partnership. Offering flexibility in approach, ensuring open and regular lines of communication and acknowledging the different priorities and constraints that individuals/organisations within the partnership have to operate within.
• An effective and committed management structure.
• Being receptive to consultation and reacting positively to feedback to inform programme development.
• Shared responsibility and resource.

6.9 Impact of Regional Theatre Partners

Between 2012 and 2013 the RSC took a strategic decision to invite 11 regional theatre partners to join the programme. Detailed in Section 3 The Learning and Performance Network Programme, the role of regional theatre partners in delivery of the programme’s main objective has been significant.

As an integral part of programme delivery from 2012, the RSC, LPN schools, teachers, students and local communities have been welcomed into local theatres. Parents, family and friends have been able to watch sons, daughters, nieces, nephews and grandchildren take part live Shakespeare performance on a local theatre stage.

Regional theatre partners have built relationships with their local schools in supporting Shakespeare performance in school and at a local theatre venue. Acting as director/mentors; hosting teacher and student workshops; providing theatre tours; assisting in technical production and wider theatre studies regional theatres have opened the door into the world of the theatre to schools across the country. Regional theatre practitioners have worked with local schools to build student confidence in understanding and actively interpreting Shakespeare’s work.

At interview regional theatre partners expressed the view that an association with the RSC had helped in providing a long term investment with schools. While meeting the programme aim regional theatre partners have been vital to the success of the LPN, adapting their offer to meet the requirement of each cluster of schools.

A summary of the type of activity that has been undertaken by regional theatres with their local schools as well as the resulting outcomes is provided below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Theatre Partner Activity</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing development, advice and opportunities to support hub and cluster local schools in Shakespeare and theatre performance.</td>
<td>RSC INSET for 15 teachers was hosted at Hull Truck Theatre, introducing <em>Twelfth Night</em> and explored ways of generating written responses through use of theatre led approaches. For schools in Southampton a series of twilight CPD sessions in school were led by a Nuffield Theatre practitioner and supported by RSC INSET and mentoring. Other CPD sessions focused on the use of active approaches to generate quality written responses, both creative and analytical, until the end of the year when effort shifted to performance outcomes in preparation for Year 3.</td>
<td>• Building knowledge and confidence within the cluster in the use of RSC approaches to transform how children and young people first experience Shakespeare. • Developed relationships within the LPN partnership for closer collaborative working. • Provided a convenient and conducive setting that complimented the programmes premise. • Regional theatres partners have enabled schools to take part in local live theatre. Encouraging students to gain a sense of ownership of Shakespeare’s work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of a local theatre venue to host continuous professional development sessions for LPN hub and cluster teachers and for student workshops.</td>
<td>York Theatre Royal held a 12 week core programme of work on <em>King Lear</em> for an 8-11 year old group and on <em>Richard III</em> for 16-19 year olds. Hall for Cornwall hosted workshops with local professionals in acting, movement, costume design and technical skills for 40 students from Treviglas College.</td>
<td>• Acted to complement practical approaches used in the classroom giving a greater depth of understanding in connecting students to the text. • Provided insight into the world and work of theatre. Allowed students to experience how performance is a multi-disciplinary approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSC practitioners and regional theatre practitioners have worked together in delivery of training for LPN teachers and students.</td>
<td>Hull Truck Theatre set up a 90 strong stage management lunchtime club with a school in Hull.</td>
<td>• Not all young people want to be center stage. LPN schools were able to work with local theatre partners to ensure the inclusion of all students front of house and backstage. • New exciting opportunities and strategies have been introduced for schools to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acting as venue host to a school’s Shakespeare performance or end of year festival live on stage to a whole school/community audience. In 2015 Hall for Cornwall hosted a production of the RSC’s *The Head that Wears the Crown*. 196 children and young people took part with Treviglas School as the LPN lead, inviting students from neighbouring secondary schools and 6 of their feeder primary schools also performing. The performance was watched by over 500 friends and family. 450 students from schools in and around Hull saw a performance of *The Tempest* by AJTC Theatre Company at Hull Truck Theatre.

- Over a 10 year period thousands of students, their families and friends have been given the opportunity to access local theatre and to see a Shakespeare production live on stage.
- Regional theatres have been able to engage with target audiences in hard to reach local communities.
- Exciting opportunities have been introduced for the schools to introduce new strategies and theatre led approaches to teaching Shakespeare.

Collaborative working between schools and regional theatres.

Regional theatres have provided an accessible and local ‘go to’ source of theatre expertise. With funding provided through the Independent State School Partnership, a joint venture between schools and York Theatre Royal saw the hosting of a day of active Shakespeare work for 52 students from across the city.

- Schools and theatre have worked together to host events and festivals that celebrate the work of Shakespeare.
- A dialogue has opened up between schools and regional theater partners about what worked best and what didn’t work. In meeting the programme aim regional theatre partners were able to adapt their offer to meet the requirement of schools.

### 6.10 In Summary:

- The majority of LPN hub schools felt that the programme had more than met their initial expectation in bringing the work of Shakespeare to life for young people; building confidence in teaching Shakespeare and using art as the mechanism for partnership and collaborative working.
- 100% of surveyed hub and cluster teachers reported that their skills, knowledge and confidence in teaching Shakespeare had been enhanced through the programme.
- 100% of surveyed hub and cluster teachers reported that they had successfully applied RSC approaches to teaching Shakespeare.
• 100% of surveyed hub and cluster teachers stated that RSC approaches helped students understand the language of Shakespeare, and that students wanted to learn and to do more.
• Over three quarters of surveyed hub and cluster teachers have used RSC approaches to successfully connect students to the text of Shakespeare.
• 100% of surveyed hub and cluster teachers confirmed that use of RSC approaches had increased student confidence within the classroom.
• Over 80% of surveyed hub and cluster teachers reported that use of RSC approaches had made a connection with hard to reach students; they wanted to be part of the group.
• Over 80% of surveyed hub and cluster teachers reported that participation in the programme had raised the school’s profile within the local community.
• The programme provided flexible and innovative performance led opportunities to take Shakespeare into the local community.
• Fantastic feedback was received from parents and the general public who had watched LPN schools in a Shakespeare live performance in the local community.
• Regional theatre partners have played a significant role in the success of the programme.
• The LPN has built an effective cultural learning partnership model.
Programme Legacy

The previous section of this report examined the immediate and medium term impact of the LPN programme. In this section the sustainable effect of the Learning and Performance Network is assessed for school communities beyond the 3 year programme term.

### 7.1 Meeting the Programme Aim

At survey and with all schools having completed the full programme, the majority of hub (100%) and cluster (88%) schools confirmed that the programme had more than brought about a significant change in the way students experienced and engaged with the work of Shakespeare. It may therefore be concluded that the programme has fully met the programme aim to ‘*Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with, and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare.*’

Figure 9. The Extent to which the LPN has met the Programme Aim

### 7.2 Programme Sustainability

A key measure to gauge the legacy and sustainability of the programme was to find out if teachers continue to use RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice.

The figure below demonstrates the extent to which hub and cluster teachers continue to use RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice. The majority of hub (96%) and cluster
(82%) school teachers confirmed that they continue to use RSC approaches as part of their teaching practice.

Figure 10. LPN Hub and Cluster Schools that Continue to use RSC Led Approaches as Part of Classroom Practice

Respondent Base: 23 LPN Hub Schools; 17 LPN Cluster Schools

Hub and cluster school teachers that had confirmed continued use of RSC led approaches, were asked an open question about why they continue to use those approaches as part of their classroom practice. A summary of their responses is provided below.

Because it Works Overwhelmingly, teachers reported that they continue to use RSC approaches “because it works” in capturing the imagination of students, offering an open door into the world of Shakespeare, developing students understanding and enjoyment of the text.

“Because it engages regardless of ability and background, it removes the barriers to accessing Shakespeare; it makes lessons memorable and fun so that students can make effective progress”

English Teacher, Secondary School, Yorkshire & Humber Region

Teachers acknowledge that the language of Shakespeare can be challenging. Recalling instances where before LPN involvement, students had met the onset of study with a groan, having little understanding of the language and nothing in common with the worlds in which Shakespeare and his characters operate. One secondary school teacher recounted that many of her students thought that Shakespeare was the domain of the ‘elite’.

Where teachers have implemented RSC approaches into classroom practice, students’ negative perceptions of Shakespeare have in many cases had a complete turnaround. The approaches have provided the key to unlocking Shakespeare’s language, thereby making it accessible to
students regardless of age, background or academic ability. Teachers felt that both they and their students have taken ownership of the text having been given ‘permission’ to unpick and edit the text in a way that they had never done before.

“Children are motivated to learn, they are switched off if they are bored, the physical movement helps them to remember and want to continue, that transfers into their work”

Deputy Head Teacher, Primary School, North East Region

Inclusion The power of the ‘ensemble’ – using the power of performance has unified students in a common purpose. Hub and cluster school teachers felt that teacher to student and student to student relationships had improved, often with the most challenging of students shining through. A secondary school teacher in the West Midlands recalled how a student in her class was often aggressive sometimes kicking tables over. The use of the ensemble in the classroom “seemed to iron out unhealthy dynamics, a lesson not feeling like a lesson in the traditional sense, the boy felt that he was able to join in, he became someone we could praise”.

A further example of how the programme has continued to influence the behaviour of hard to reach students came from a classroom teacher in Yorkshire. The teacher explained how every year even the most hard to reach students seemed to step up and excel, particularly in speaking roles. One young boy who was constantly in trouble and whose dad was in the judicial system had really connected with Shakespeare – the effect was transformational. Taking on the role of Hamlet, on the night of the production his mum was in the audience and was moved to tears by his performance. The young boy’s perception of school as a place to learn had completely changed resulting in a noticeable improvement in his end of year exam results. On the odd occasion when he does have a wobble he is reminded about what he is capable of, “The experience was just such a powerful thing in his life, and year after year we have similar stories, it’s part of what saves some of them”.

Early Years Engagement The ability of the programme to reach across all age groups has meant even the youngest children in primary school are excited about learning Shakespeare. Teachers too felt inspired by the enthusiastic reaction of their young students. During the course of the evaluation classroom teachers were able to cite examples of how performance had engaged students with the stories and the language of Shakespeare.

“The children enjoy it so much; they absolutely punch the air when they go into a Shakespeare lesson, they are excited, something which is often missing in schools nowadays”.

Classroom Teacher, Primary School, North East Region

A classroom teacher from the West Midlands recalled her student’s reaction to Shakespeare, “the children consider Shakespeare to be cool, they got it, it gave them a buzz, using words confidently, knowing their meaning, asking ‘when are we doing Shakespeare?’ Each year student’s write a few words about what was the best thing you did this year, one young boy wrote in capital letters SHAKESPEARE.”
Programme Flexibility A driver behind the sustainability of the programme has been the way teachers have been able to adapt RSC approaches to meet curriculum needs and priorities. For some primary schools this has meant teachers working on a class by class basis using RSC approaches to explore a particular Shakespeare theme or topic. While a primary school in Yorkshire involved the whole school in a performance of The Tempest and Henry IV, Part I. Each year group performed a different scene from the plays when not on stage children sat and watched understanding and enjoying the performance – “it was so good”, classroom teacher comment.

The Shakespeare Connection There was a consensus of opinion that regardless of length of service, specialism or school type, knowledge and confidence in the teaching of Shakespeare has been increased from participation in the programme. Established English and drama teachers felt the programme had reconnected them with what they loved about teaching and had reignited a passion for Shakespeare. Newly established teachers felt that use of RSC approaches had worked in connecting students to their learning.

“I am just so grateful we've done it, the single most amazing thing I've ever done, I can't really put it into words, it's ingrained into the way we teach”.

Head of Media Studies/English, Secondary School, South West Region

7.3 Programme Legacy

Classroom Practice A legacy of the programme for hub and cluster school teachers came from the quality and depth of experience provided by RSC practitioners. One secondary school teacher cited, “the passion in the way we were taught meant that I am able to pass on that passion to my students and to other teachers”.

An English teacher from a secondary school in Yorkshire described how she continues to train colleagues within the department in the use of RSC approaches. Last year the school’s English ‘A’ level results were 91% A to E grades against a national average of 66% - a result in the opinion of the teacher was attributable to the continued use of RSC approaches in the classroom.

A special needs teacher of 30 years reflected on how the programme has fundamentally changed her teaching practice, “I could never imagine doing Shakespeare with children who have special needs, and now to be in place where it is an integral part of our school, its expected.”

Children and Young People A priority for the work of the RSC is to ensure that children and young people have vivid, accessible and enjoyable experiences of Shakespeare’s work to enable students of all ages to develop a life-long relationship with his plays and with live theatre. For some schools the LPN programme has built a lasting legacy. Shakespeare and RSC
approaches have become an integral part of the school’s curriculum, something that their students expect and look forward to.

“We define ourselves by our Shakespeare work, we have staff apply to the school because of our Shakespeare work; it’s in every corridor, we eat live and breathe it”

Classroom Teacher, Primary school, Yorkshire & Humber Region

A teacher from a primary school in the North West region cited how children in the school regard Shakespeare as their “rite of passage” and that should a Shakespeare lesson be cancelled “there is chaos, crying and pleading...it’s embedded, it’s part of who we are”. Each year students from Year 6 are taken to Stratford-upon-Avon to take part in a student workshop and to see a live Shakespeare performance.

Teachers felt that the LPN had allowed students to take on something that they wouldn’t have otherwise been able to do; that it “raised student’s self-esteem and perception of themselves, allowing them to be the best they could be”, Head Teacher, Primary school, Yorkshire & Humber region.

The Wider Community  Schools reported that their profile within the local community had been improved from an association with the LPN programme. Some schools reporting that having an association with Shakespeare expertise continues to be a selling point for the school.

Provision of live performance continues to be of importance to schools with many continuing to be involved and participating in live performance through Shakespeare festivals and productions. At interview hub and cluster school teachers reported that for some students the programme provides their first taste of watching live theatre and taking part in performance.

A number of classroom teachers reported that Year 6 parents had commented that they hoped the Shakespeare work would continue at their child’s secondary school. Ironically it was some of these parents that had initially been “dragged” by their children to watch a Shakespeare performance.

For schools that are no longer involved in the formal programme, its main aim, to ‘Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with, and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare’ continues to be delivered.

7.4 Forming and Sustaining Relationships

A further indication about the legacy of the programme was to gauge to what extent schools had remained in contact with other cluster schools within the context of the LPN relationship.
Almost two thirds of hub schools (65%) and over one third of cluster schools (35%) reported that they had continued contact with other cluster schools within the context of the LPN relationship.

Table 10. Continuation of the LPN Hub and Cluster School Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LPN School</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hub Schools</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster Schools</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent Base: LPN Hub Schools 23 LPN; Cluster Schools 17

Where hub (60%) and cluster (67%) schools have remained in contact the principle reason for the continuation of that relationship has been to participate in a Shakespeare led performance or festival.

27% of hub schools that remained in contact with other schools in their cluster did so to participate in drama led workshops and to offer teacher mentoring.

These are important indicators to the legacy and the sustainability of the LPN programme both for schools and for local communities.

Table 11. Reason for Continued Contact with other Schools within the Cluster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Continued Contact</th>
<th>Hub School %</th>
<th>Cluster School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in a Shakespeare led performance or festival</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate with other schools in drama led workshops</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To offer teacher to teacher mentoring</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receives RSC information from hub school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers from cluster school visit hub school to see a school performance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent Base LPN Hub Schools 15; LPN Cluster Schools 6  *Caution Low Base

7.5 RSC Youth Ensemble

The RSC Youth Ensemble provided an opportunity for LPN school students aged 14-18 years old to participate in a residential course in Stratford-upon-Avon leading to a performance on the RSC Courtyard Theatre stage.

Two residencies took place in 2008 and 2009 over a period of two weeks. During that time the group of young people rehearsed together, had access to RSC associate directors, voice coaches, technical staff the costume department and the RSC Education team. On an evening,
eating together and sharing their experiences and where ever possible watching live RSC performances, the group evolved into a true ensemble. The focus of the two weeks culminating in the ensemble producing a live performance of *A Midsummers Night’s Dream* (2008) and *The Winter’s Tale* (2009) on one of the RSC stages in Stratford to which family and friends were invited.

The following narrative provides further insight into how this type of immersive experience can impact on the lives of the young people that took part in the RSC Youth Ensemble. Matt and Becky are two former LPN students who in August 2008 had both taken part in the RSC Youth Ensemble in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Matt had always wanted to study drama, and was already involved with the National Youth Theatre, attending Stagecoach Theatre Arts at weekends. When Matt’s drama teacher from St Robert of Newminster (an LPN hub school) asked if he would like to take part in the RSC Youth Ensemble, Matt jumped at the chance.

Becky recalled that at age 15, being asked to take part in the Youth Ensemble in Stratford upon Avon was a “big thing for me”. Becky was a student at Fred Longworth High School (a LPN cluster school) in Greater Manchester. Becky explained that she had visited Stratford a couple of months earlier with her school to take part in the LPN Regional Schools Celebration, with Becky performing a chorus role in *Henry V*. Linking drama to the study of Shakespeare was ideal for Becky, who thoroughly enjoyed the practical aspect of learning rather than being sat at a desk. Becky felt that going back to Stratford to join the RSC Youth Ensemble presented a unique opportunity that, like Matt, she was keen to accept.

Upon arrival in Stratford Matt described how RSC staff and the other students extended a warm welcome and a feeling of community. Becky was aware that while other members of the group shared different social backgrounds, culture and came from different parts of the country, they all shared a common purpose. Shakespeare had provided the spark for something that by working as an ensemble they could take on and achieve.

Over the next two weeks and under the guidance of an RSC Associate Director and RSC practitioners, the ensemble rehearsed *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Using the same techniques as professional actors, analysing and experimenting with the text, Becky and Matt brought the written word of Shakespeare to life through performance. For Matt the approach of the RSC practitioners was something that he had never experienced, “they encouraged us to make mistakes, to make new discoveries, they conveyed their passion, you wanted to experiment and try new things”. Taking on the role of Oberon, Matt realised that “creating great theatre comes out of a collaborative process”.

65
Becky described her sense of pride knowing that her family, including her grandfather, had travelled down from Manchester, to watch her perform in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the RSC Courtyard Theatre in Stratford. Becky was also delighted to find that she had discovered a new skill as an actor, that in her role as Puck, she could make the audience laugh!

An added high point for all the young people that took part in the Youth Ensemble was performing for and meeting the Prince of Wales, Becky describing the day as “surreal”.

The play was also performed at the ‘Dell’ a dedicated open garden space set aside for performance. Matt described how they all felt that they had been transported into the world of the fairies “it was a magical experience for us all and for our mums, dads and our teachers”.

Becky went on to take an advocacy role as an RSC Youth Ambassador, helping and supporting younger students in her local area to connect with and enjoy the work of Shakespeare. When Becky was 17 she was invited back to the RSC to act as compere for RSC Regional School’s Celebration. “Seeing other people do it and knowing how good it could be was really humbling, how the RSC made us feel part of it”.

The experience inspired Matt to learn more about Shakespeare, “living and breathing it for those two weeks I fell in love with it”. Since graduating from Arts Educational School with a BA (Hons) in Acting, Matt has become a professional actor taking roles on the London stage and in television.

Reflecting on her involvement in the LPN and Youth Ensemble Becky felt that she had been given a view of a wider world, a world from which she was not excluded. The programme gave Becky a sense of self-worth and that “I could really do something well”. Becky went on to achieve a first class degree in Theatre and Performance at the University of Warwick and already a commissioned officer is due to graduate from one of Her Majesty’s Armed Forces training colleges later this year.

“It was a phenomenal experience. It inspired us to pick up a Shakespeare text and to get up and do it…I can’t recommend it enough” Matt.

“It is a big part of who I am and it has never left me. I am overwhelming grateful and hope that you continue; as with me you don’t know whose life you can change” Becky.

### 7.6 Uptake of RSC Education Resource

RSC Education aim to make first encounters with Shakespeare vivid, accessible and enjoyable for children and young people. To support this aim RSC Education offer all schools an extensive range of practical and online support and resources in the form of: teacher professional resources.
development, student workshops, free live school broadcasts, events, conferences and online teacher packs, videos, interactive learning resources, image galleries and the RSC Toolkit for Teachers¹³.

To assess to what extent schools continue to access the work of RSC Education teachers were asked about their usage of a specified RSC Education resource. Where teachers confirmed usage they were then asked to attribute a quality rating of between 1 (extremely poor) to 7 (excellent) to each identified resource used.

Since formally leaving the LPN the two RSC Education resources that have been most used by hub and cluster teachers were the RSC website (91% and 71% respectively) and the RSC Toolkit for teachers (again 91% and 71% respectively).

The least used resource by hub schools was RSC student workshops (39%) and for cluster schools was jointly, RSC Student workshops (6%) and the RSC Live Schools’ Broadcasts (6%).

There was a notable difference in levels of RSC Education resource usage between hub and cluster schools. The greatest difference being in the uptake of RSC Live School’s Broadcasts, hub schools 44% and cluster schools 6%. This may in part be explained by the majority of hub schools being from secondary schools while the majority of cluster schools being from primary schools. Secondary school students having a greater propensity to sit through a full length Shakespeare performance.

¹³ The RSC Toolkit for Teachers – Circulated to all state primary and secondary schools a practical, drama-based approach to teaching and appreciating Shakespeare’s most popular plays with all activities linked to a specified Key Stage framework objective. The publication included an accompanying CD-ROM, worksheets, a bank of drama activities with an explanation of how each works. Along with structured lesson plans, starter, main, development and group activities that fit within standard lesson time with suggestions for homework tasks.
Upon completion of the 3 year programme almost all hub schools (91%) had continued to access two or more RSC Education resources; just under half had taken part in RSC teacher professional development sessions and two fifths of hub schools had subscribed to RSC Live School Broadcasts and attended RSC student workshops.

Having established which RSC Education resource had been used by schools since completion of the programme teachers were then asked to attribute a quality rating of between 1 (extremely poor) up to 7 (excellent) to each identified resource accessed.

For the two most used resources, hub and cluster school teachers awarded high satisfaction ratings (6 to 7) to the RSC website (67% and 67%) and to the RSC Toolkit for Teachers (76% and 58% respectively).

The RSC Education resources that scored the highest attributed quality rating (6 to 7) from both hub and cluster school teachers were for RSC professional development for teachers (100%) and for RSC student workshops (100%).

Consistently good to excellent quality ratings were awarded by hub and clusters schools to resource provided by RSC Education. Only the RSC Live School’s Broadcasts received a marginally ambivalent score of 4 (neither good nor bad) by hub schools that had accessed the broadcast. In most cases this was due to technical issues in connecting, or buffering during the live broadcast.
Figure 12. Uptake and Quality Rating attributed to RSC Education Resource by Hub schools since Leaving the LPN programme

Respondent Base: 23 LPN Hub Schools

Figure 13. Uptake and Quality Rating Attributed to RSC Education Activities by Cluster Schools since Leaving the LPN Programme

Respondent Base: 17 LPN Cluster Schools   *Caution Low Base
7.7 Impact for Teachers who no Longer Teach at Original LPN School

The Learning and Performance Network has been in operation since 2006. During that time it was likely that some supported LPN teachers would leave their original LPN school. An evaluation aim was to assess if the LPN continued to impact on the classroom practice of those teachers that had left their original LPN school and started work at another school.

A total of 7 teachers (from 5 hub schools and 2 cluster schools) reported that they had left their original LPN school and moved to a different school to teach. This sub set of 7 teachers equating to 18% of the survey sample size.

To assess if the LPN continued to impact on the classroom practice of teachers that had left their original LPN school and started work at another the research examined:

- To what extent had teachers continued to use RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice at their new school.
- Where use was confirmed, to determine why teachers had continued to use RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice at their new school.
- Where use was not confirmed, establish why teachers had not continued to use RSC approaches as part of classroom practice at their new school.
- To what extent teachers had continued to engage with Shakespeare or theatre led activity at their new school.
- To what extent teachers had continued to access the work of RSC Education at their new school.
- What had been the legacy of the LPN programme for that teacher.

The figure below demonstrates that 86% of teachers that had left their original LPN school continued to use RSC led approaches at their new school as part of their classroom practice.
For the one teacher that had not continued to use RSC approaches at her new school this was because, with no history in place for this type of programme, there was no support from the school’s Senior Leadership Team.

Where use was confirmed teachers were asked why they had continue to use RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice. The majority of teachers citing that RSC approaches capture the imagination of students offering an open door into the world of Shakespeare, developing students understanding of the text. Teachers reported that RSC approaches engage young people with their learning, that working as an ensemble meant inclusion for all students regardless of age or academic ability and that approaches improved student self-esteem.

“Because children learn best actively, the approaches are fun and allow accessibility to difficult text which leads to higher outcomes”

Head Teacher, Primary School, West Midlands Region

The Head of Drama from a secondary school in the East of England recalled how a student from his GCSE group had been reluctant to take part in a local Shakespeare festival but by using RSC approaches “we’ve just seen her grow enormously in confidence and in enthusiasm”.

Teachers too felt that their teaching practice and self-esteem had grown by being involved in the programme. One teacher reporting that he felt the connection with the LPN programme had given him the edge over other candidates in his job application for his new school.
At survey teachers were asked, with the programme formally ended whether they had started or continued with Shakespeare and or theatre led activities at their original LPN school and or at their new school.

Taking students to see a Shakespeare play remained consistent at 57% while set up of a Shakespeare led event had reduced by half to 43%. Set up of extracurricular theatre led activity had also been greatly reduced from 71% to 29%.

Figure 15. Started or Continued with Shakespeare or Theatre led Activity where LPN Teacher has left Original LPN School to Work at Another School

To further understand to what extent teachers that have left their original LPN school engage with the work of Shakespeare teachers were asked if they continue to access RSC Education resource. For comparison the figure below demonstrates the degree to which RSC Education resource continues to be accessed by:

- Teachers who have remained at their original LPN hub
- Teachers who have remained a their original LPN cluster school
- Teachers who have left their original LPN school and started work at another

Use of the RSC Education website and RSC Toolkit for teachers was the most used RSC Education resource for all surveyed teachers.

The least used RSC Education resource for teachers that had left their original LPN school was RSC professional development for teachers (14%). This was perhaps not surprising as it the resource to which a teacher would not usually commit to as an individual.
7.8 Future Programme Development

Attitudes to future programme delivery remain positive, at survey 100% LPN hub and cluster teachers confirmed that they would recommend membership of an RSC Education led support programme to other schools.

Table 12. LPN Schools that Would Recommend Membership of RSC Education Support Programme to Other Schools?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LPN School</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hub school</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster school</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent Base: 23 LPN Hub Schools; 17 LPN Cluster Schools
Teachers were asked about what in their view could be improved in the development of future programme content. A summary of their replies is provided below.

**Cross cluster working** Where a school type is in a minority within a cluster i.e. one secondary school working with a number of primary schools or vice versa, explore the potential to connect that school with other similar school types for cross cluster networking and collaboration working opportunities.

**Expansion of online content** For teachers that had continued to use RSC approaches beyond the stated 3 year term more online resource was cited as an ongoing requirement. For some teachers there was a specific requirement of more online resource for KS1 and KS5 studies. Teachers viewed the RSC Education website as a trusted and expert source of online content.

**Curriculum and examination board alignment** At interview some teachers mentioned that it would be useful to have programme content matched to the requirements of the curriculum and the syllabuses of examination boards.

**English teachers** English teachers cited that the programme needs to encourage more schools and more English teachers to engage with the programme, to find ways of getting them over their fear of practical teaching.

**More opportunities to see and to take part in live theatre performance** Hub and cluster schools wanted more opportunities for students to see and to take part in live Shakespeare performance either within their own locality or in Stratford upon Avon.

**Support for teachers that leave their original LPN and move to another** Should a teacher leave their original LPN school the programme should look to support that teacher in their new role. Alongside exploring the opportunity for the new school to join the Associate Schools Programme.

**Expand the international reach of the school** Using Shakespeare as a common bond to expand the reach of the classroom to other schools beyond the UK.

### 7.9 In summary

- 100% of hub schools and 88% of cluster schools confirmed that the programme had met the programme aim to *'Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare’*.
- 96% of hub schools and 82% of cluster schools confirmed that they continue to use RSC led approaches as part of their teaching practice.
- The principal indicators that demonstrate the legacy and sustainability of the programme were confirmed as:
  1. Teachers reporting that they continue to use RSC led approaches ‘because it works’ in unlocking the language of Shakespeare making it accessible to all students regardless of age, background or academic ability.
(2) Teachers also felt that using the power of performance unified students in a common purpose, and in many cases had a transformational effect on hard to reach students, allowing them to shine through.

(3) There was a consensus of opinion by teachers that regardless of length of service, specialism or school type that confidence and knowledge in the teaching of Shakespeare has been increased by participation in the programme.

(4) The programme offered a flexible programme of support that can be adapted to meet the curriculum needs and priorities of schools.

(5) Schools reported that their profile within the local community had been improved. Some schools reporting that having an association with Shakespeare expertise continues to be a selling point for the school.

(6) Parents of Year 6 students expressed an ambition that Shakespeare work would continue in their child’s secondary school.

(7) The programme has provided a framework for sustaining relationships between schools. Most often to take part in a Shakespeare led performance or festival.

(8) LPN students that had taken part in the RSC Youth Ensemble described the experience as “phenomenal” and as a “big part of who I am and it has never left me”.

- Since leaving the LPN the two RSC Education resources that have been most used by schools were the RSC Education website and the RSC Toolkit for teachers.

- The RSC Education resources that scored the highest attributed quality rating (6 to 7) by 100% of surveyed schools were for RSC professional development for teachers and for RSC student workshops.

- 86% of teachers that had left their original LPN school and move to another continued to use RSC approaches as part of their classroom practice.

- 100% hub and cluster teachers confirmed that they would recommend membership of a RSC theatre led support programme to other schools.

- Areas identified by surveyed teachers for future programme development included cross cluster working and collaboration; alignment of content to curriculum and examination board requirements; more opportunities to see and to take part in live theatre performance and expansion of online content.
Lessons Learnt

The Learning and Performance Network has successfully established a partnership network between the RSC, school communities and regional theatres. Schools from across the country through interaction with the RSC and regional theatre partners have been able to access a range of high quality learning experiences. Students have engaged, enjoyed and have taken ownership of Shakespeare’s work in performance. Surveyed teachers universally confirmed that they would recommend membership of an RSC Education programme to other teachers, a testament to their high opinion and regard for the LPN programme.

Over the past ten years the programme has evolved to meet the changing needs of the partnership. The following section aims to capture the benefit of experience and knowledge gained over that time with observation provided by RSC Education, RSC practitioners, LPN hub and cluster teachers and regional theatre partners.

8.1 Changing Classroom Practice

Unique in its Proposition The LPN programme has offered a unique three strand proposition that attracted the interest of schools.

- Appealing to primary, secondary, special needs and further education the programme offered schools an accessible and rich experience in connecting students to Shakespeare’s work.
- Teachers were open and motivated by the prospect of learning new skills using RSC approaches, moving from one type of classroom practice to another.
- Schools and regional theatre partners were drawn to the offer of working with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Welcoming the idea of learning from and being associated with a theatre company that they considered a ‘world leader’ in Shakespeare performance and expertise.

Buy in of the School Leadership Team (SLT) The influence of the LPN programme has been greatest where the SLT of the school has recognised the value of the programme. The continued support of the SLT is a critical factor in the sustainability of the programme during its 3 year life and beyond.

A classroom teacher from a primary school in the North East cited how she and her Head Teacher had examined literacy attainment data for her class. Noting that literacy attainment levels had risen by 2 sub levels across the whole class, the Head Teacher turned to her and said “It’s got to be the Shakespeare”.

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For the one hub school teacher that had not continued to use RSC led approaches this was because the teacher had moved away from the original LPN hub school. On arrival at a new school and with no history of this kind of work in place the teacher lacked the authority to influence the Senior Leadership Team.

**Programme Flexibility and Variety** With an aim of bringing about a significant change in the way young people experience and engage with the work of Shakespeare each year of delivery had a specified outcome that focused teacher and student effort. (see Section 3 The Learning and Performance Network).

Avoiding a one size fits all approach has been of significance. With Shakespeare at its centre, schools have worked with RSC Education, RSC practitioners and regional theatre partners to develop schemes of work matched to their specific needs and priorities.

For a secondary school in the South West region the focus of the LPN programme had been to enable students to experience Shakespeare through live performance. The school wanted to embrace the opportunity to produce innovative and creative performances that would naturally lead to students’ engagement and enjoyment of Shakespeare’s work. "Without the programme we wouldn’t have done it...we want it to continue". Lead for Creative Arts, Secondary school, South West region.

**Teacher Capacity** Increasing the recruitment of hub school teachers from two to three has better facilitated the dissemination of practice and knowledge through the cluster. Where a teacher has left a school the responsibility of programme delivery/administration has not rested on one individual, allowing time to recruit a third teacher to resume a full complement.

For the future consideration should be given to facilitating hub school teachers as mentors to interested cluster school teachers to encourage more active involvement in programme delivery or towards the formation of new clusters.

**Programme Content** Resource and commitment should continue to be allocated to refresh and update programme content to maintain the enthusiasm and interest of teachers and students.

At interview teachers expressed a requirement for more online resources. Use of online collaborative tools and technologies should be utilised by the partnership to share learning, projects and best practice within the network and as a means of advocacy with other schools.

8.2 **Forming and Sustaining Partnerships**

**The Hub and Cluster School Relationship** Teachers tend to believe other teachers. A pre-existing relationship between the hub and cluster school greatly assisted in the recruitment of
cluster schools onto the programme. Hub schools have provided the credibility needed to encourage and convince cluster schools to join the partnership.

There may be additional chances for schools to work and to learn from each other by providing cross cluster working and interaction. For example, where an established cluster is located close to a new cluster; or where a cluster can lend specific experience or expertise by an identified area of interest, or where a secondary or primary school is in isolation within a cluster and would welcome interaction with other secondary or primary schools from other clusters.

**A Recognised Strategic Priority** Making Shakespeare accessible for children and young people is a priority for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Recognised in its strategy and in its artistic programme the company has allocated resource and capability driving the fundamental belief that Shakespeare belongs to everyone.

**Regional Theatre Partners** The partnership between the RSC and regional theatres has provided schools with a connection into a local opportunity for theatre going and theatre making. At interview some teachers commented that for some students the programme was their first experience of live theatre. The inclusion of regional theatre partners in the programme has allowed schools to gain insight into professional theatre making offering local expertise and resource. Students and their families have been able to enjoy their local theatre, providing the potential for a lifelong relationship with live theatre.

**Learning in Partnership** With the groundwork in place LPN schools, regional theatre partners and the RSC have been encouraged to work collaboratively on a number of learning opportunities. These have included the RSC Youth Ensemble, the annual Regional Schools Celebration, RSC Backstage Pass Work Experience, RSC Young Researchers project and most recently to join the Dream 16 team, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* – A play for the nation. These initiatives have kept schools interest and focus, producing tangible results to showcase students work and achievements.

**Programme 3 Year Term** Schools, regional theatres partners, RSC practitioners and the RSC’s Education team felt that the designated 3 year period had allowed for a full programme of activity to be developed and delivered. There was also a consensus of opinion that the term of the programme had helped to foster trust and understanding a common bond, an essential component for successful partnership working.

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14 RSC Young Researchers Project Children and young people from seven primary and secondary schools across England who worked with the RSC’s Education team and University of the First Age on a research project about the RSC Schools’ Broadcast series.
RSC Education and RSC Practitioners  The constancy of personnel involved in the LPN management team and RSC practitioners has built capability and expertise in development and delivery of the LPN of the programme. The team have been able to respond to the needs of schools and have built strong trusting relationships with hub school teachers and regional theatre partners.

The LPN management team have been able to draw upon a skilled and experienced team of RSC practitioners matched to the requirements of schools participating in the programme. For example where a school needs support in delivery of a Key Stage 2 writing project or where a school may need the experience of an assistant director for a whole school performance of a Shakespeare text.

The task for RSC Education has been in coordinating the timetable and logistics of a team of freelance practitioners. Where practitioners may have other demands on their time and where the specific expertise of a practitioner based in the south east may be required to work with a cluster of schools in the north east.

Geographic Reach  The LPN programme has continued to reach school communities across the country. A priority for the programme has been to work with schools whose students are the least likely to engage with the work of Shakespeare.

Future programme delivery is well placed to further monitor and to extend its reach to school communities who in recent years have been underrepresented in the programme, in particular the East Midlands and East of England.

Online Collaboration  Use of distinct online collaborative tools and technologies could be utilised in future to facilitate shared learning, special projects and best practice within the partnership.

8.3 Impacting on the experiences of children and young people

Making Shakespeare Accessible  Where Shakespeare is introduced in a shallow way it can leave young people feeling disconnected, bored and even stupid. As a theatre company the RSC has been able to provide schools with a unique physical interpretation of the text allowing students to feel liberated, special and that if I can do this I can do anything.

Engagement with Learning  The ability of the LPN programme to change how children and young people have engaged and connected to the work of Shakespeare is evident. Underpinning this achievement the programme has in many cases acted as a keystone for learning attainment. In Section 6 Programme Impact and in Section 7 Programme Legacy, surveyed teachers recounted that by physically connecting students with the text had led to a deeper understanding which stimulated independent writing. At survey 100% of teachers confirmed that RSC approaches had helped students to understand the language of
Shakespeare and that they wanted to learn and to do more. 100% of teachers also confirmed that use of RSC approaches had increased student confidence in the classroom.

**Inclusion** Use of RSC approaches have allowed students to explore and to discover Shakespeare’s work collaboratively, building on a concept of ‘us’. Working as an ensemble and operating in an environment where everyone’s opinion is of equal value has inspired students. Teachers reported that for students that have experienced socio-economic disadvantage and low aspirations participation in the programme has increased confidence and built self-esteem. That by mastering what some might consider a difficult subject students’ had realised they can reach outside their norm and to go on to achieve for the future.

**Student to Student Mentoring** Students that progress year by year within schools that remain in the programme will develop greater insight and understanding of Shakespeare’s work. The research findings demonstrates that the programme has encouraged student to student mentoring (confirmed by 87% hub schools and 47% in cluster schools). There is natural fit with the premise of the programme in accommodating an approach that could further foster student to student learning and practice.

**Continuation** At survey a number of hub school teachers, particularly those that took part in the programme pre 2012, felt that the LPN had provided them and their students with an intense experience. This report provides robust evidence about how use of RSC approaches have successfully connected students to the work of Shakespeare and in many cases to their learning. However, when the three year programme had come to its end and with no formal links in place, a small number of teachers felt the effect of programme had been diminished. A sense of loss also being borne by some students,

“The children felt bereft. They had been part of something that was now gone. They kept asking “when are they coming back? Why aren’t they coming back?”

English and Drama Teacher, Secondary School, East Midlands Region

In response the launch of the RSC Associate Schools Programme (ASP) in September 2016 will address this issue by allowing schools to renew their commitment to the programme on a 2 year rolling basis.

**8.4 Impacting on the Wider Community**

**Raising the School Profile** The majority of hub (96%) and cluster (82%) teachers confirmed participation in the programme had raised the schools profile in the local community. In some cases the image of the school had been transformed, with schools using the Shakespeare connection as a USP. In schools, in regional theatres, on the stages at Stratford and even as ‘flash mobs’ in town centres, parents and the general public have been drawn to watch live
Shakespeare performance. Some parents commenting that they didn’t like Shakespeare at school but watching the performances were really exciting.

There may be an opportunity for schools to further engage with local communities by the offer of Shakespeare Insight sessions in schools or at regional theatres aligned to the text or theme of the festival under development.
Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has assessed the impact of the Learning and Performance Network and reviews the extent to which it has met its principal aim, to transform children and young peoples’ first experience of Shakespeare. The report also examines the legacy and sustainability of the programme gathering qualitative and quantitative data. The views of a wide range of stakeholders and schools that took part in the programme have been obtained and taken into account. In this final section, the report’s conclusion and recommendations reflect the principle report findings, the opinion of survey respondents and the observations of the report’s author.

9.1 Conclusion

The Learning and Performance Network has offered participating schools an unrivalled 3 year opportunity to access the work of Shakespeare. The programme has utilised an effective hub and cluster model to engage with schools and to deliver programme content. Since its inception in 2006 the LPN partnership has reached 507 schools, 1,320 teachers and upward of 690,000 students. Utilising approaches that are based in the real world of actors and directors, teachers have been encouraged to move from one type of classroom practice to another. Students have been captivated and irresistibly drawn into the world and language of Shakespeare, understanding that they are part of something very special and wanting to learn and to do more.

“The children enjoy it so much; they absolutely punch the air when they go into a Shakespeare lesson, they are excited, something which is often missing in schools nowadays”. 

Classroom Teacher, Primary School, North East Region

Evidenced in Section 6 Programme Impact and Section 7 Programme Legacy, the programme has fully met its principal aim to ‘Bring about a significant change in the way young people experience, engage with, and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare.’ In meeting the programme aim the immediate and long term impact of the LPN has also led to a much deeper effect for students and for their teachers.

Participation in the programme has boosted student’s self-esteem and for many acted as a keystone to their learning. Teachers report that RSC training has re energised their classroom practice and ignited an enthusiasm for Shakespeare which has been passed onto to their students. Observing the positive effect RSC approaches on student learning and confidence, teachers want to continue to provide creative learning opportunities that connect young people to something outside of their norm.
“I am just so grateful we've done it, the single most amazing thing I've ever done, I can't really put it into words, it's ingrained into the way we teach.”

Head of Media Studies/English Teacher, Secondary School, South West Region

The programme has provided young people with a platform to express ideas and opinions. By actively exploring Shakespeare’s work and by drawing comparisons to modern day life student’s appreciation of diversity and different cultures has been expanded; young people have been able to observe the consequences of the decisions that are made by Shakespeare’s characters which sometimes parallel the everyday decisions that some students may face in real life. The LPN programme has offered a level playing field to students regardless of background or academic ability. Teachers report how students have been inspired by taking part in the programme providing them with the confidence and self-esteem to achieve for the future.

“Students and teachers have been invigorated by the programme. Shakespeare is part of our national heritage and it must not be lost.”

Head of Drama, Secondary school, South West Region

The sustainability of the Learning and Performance Network is evident. The hub and cluster model used to engage schools onto the programme and to deliver content has proven to be cost effective in its reach and efficient in making the best use of valuable resource. While the quality and variety of programme content delivered through the expertise of RSC practitioners and regional theatre partners has formed the basis of a robust learning partnership.

The majority of surveyed schools that had completed the 3 year programme continue to use RSC approaches, utilise two or more RSC Education resource and have encouraged student access to Shakespeare led events and live theatre activity. When asked at survey why teachers had continued to use RSC approaches, overwhelmingly the reply came back “because it works”.

“Because it engages regardless of ability and background, it removes the barriers to accessing Shakespeare; it makes lessons memorable and fun so that students can make effective progress”

English Teacher, Secondary School, Yorkshire & Humber Region

The demand by schools for continuation of the LPN remains high. All surveyed teachers confirmed that they would recommend a RSC Education support programme to other schools.

“Keep going; keep the profile that Shakespeare is for everyone.”

Head Teacher, Primary School, Yorkshire & Humber Region
“Everything they gave us has made the school what it is today and we can’t wait for the new RSC Associate Schools’ programme to start.”

Classroom teacher, North West region

The Learning and Performance Network has established a strong community of practice between the RSC, regional theatre partners and participating schools. Reaching across the country the LPN has shared learning and expertise with school communities that are least likely to access the work of Shakespeare. Children and young people involved in the programme have taken their enthusiasm home and into the heart of local communities, challenging negative perceptions and supporting the view that Shakespeare belongs to everyone.

With an enduring legacy in place and a committed network of schools keen to resume, the Learning and Performance Network is well positioned for its next iteration, the RSC Associate Schools Programme due to start later in 2016.

To focus the future content and delivery of the Associate Schools Programme this report suggests consideration of the following report recommendations.

9.2 Report Recommendations

The Learning and Performance Network has successfully engaged and delivered programme content to school communities across the country in support of the programmes’ main aim. It is the recommendation of this report:

1. That RSC Education should continue to work in long term partnership with schools and regional theatre partners in transforming the way students’ access, engage and take ownership of the work of Shakespeare.

2. Considerable skill and expertise in the teaching of Shakespeare continues to be built in schools that have participated in the programme. Taking into account the long term effect of working with schools, RSC Education should consider development of a stratified approach to future programme development:

The programme should look to develop strategies that actively accommodate new teachers that join an Associate School and to support schools where a teacher may leave.

For teachers that leave their original school to start work at another, although the ethos of the programme often remains with the teacher, the effect of the programme can diminish. The programme should examine other ways of supporting teachers at their new school.
3. RSC Education should extend the reach of the programme to areas of the country that to date have had least contact with the programme. In particular in the East of England.

4. The programme should continue to enlist and develop the relationship with regional theatre partners. RSC Education should also actively review the inclusion of other potential compatible partners to further extend the reach of the programme.

5. As a partnership led programme an Associate Schools Programme steering group should be set up from representatives of RSC Education, RSC practitioners, regional theatre partners, and teachers with additional input from students.

6. RSC Education should prepare and implement a formal evaluation plan to monitor the effectiveness of the programme and to inform future programme development. Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data at 18 month intervals throughout the lifetime of the programme.
Appendix I

Ethos of RSC Approaches
Example of notes that are provided to teachers who have taken part in an INSET explaining the ethos of RSC approaches and the thinking that underpins it.

Introduction

“You do not understand Shakespeare fully [...] until you have spoken the text aloud [...]. This is because there is something in the physicality of the language [...] which is not only an intrinsic part of the rhythm and form of the writing, but also of the underlying motive and reasoning of the characters involved. And I believe young people of whatever academic ability [...], given the right opportunity to speak the language, latch on to this in a remarkable way and I know it excites them and makes them want more.”

Cicely Berry RSC Voice Director

All the work of RSC Education – including the course you took part in today – is underpinned by a deep connection to the artistic practice of the Company. In particular, we make very strong connections between the rehearsal rooms in which our actors and directors work and the classrooms in which you and your pupils work. Rehearsal rooms are essentially places of exploration and shared discovery. A company of actors and their director work together to bring Shakespeare to life so that it is fresh and coherent for each audience that sees it. To do this successfully they need to have a deep understanding of the text, to get the language ‘in the body’, to speak it as if it is ‘fresh-minted’, and to be open to a range of interpretive possibilities and choices. The ways in which they do this are both active and playful, connecting mind, voice and body. They are also approaches that young people take to readily, allowing them to explore complex language confidently and openly.

To do this we begin by deliberately building a spirit of one group with a shared purpose – this is about us rather than me. We often do this with games that warm up our brains, voices and bodies, and we continue to build this spirit through the day by shared, collaborative tasks that depend on and value everyone’s contributions. The ways in which we work encourage young people of all ages to discuss, speculate and question: there is rarely one right answer.

At the heart of the pedagogy you have experienced is the idea of young people encountering Shakespeare as fellow artists. Working with his language in the same ways that actors do, they can create outcomes that offer real insight into the text, in which they can take great pride, and which are often genuinely beautiful. For the actor in the rehearsal room there is little distinction between play and work; they make plays for a living. It can be very helpful to point this out to the young people we teach. The playful approaches we asked them to commit to and take seriously are real work in the real world.

We place the text at the core of everything we do. Whatever the age of the young people you teach, active, playful approaches can make Shakespeare’s language vivid, accessible and enjoyable. His words have the power to excite and delight all of us.
Building a classroom culture that values and celebrates this pedagogy takes time. For many young people, it may make demands on them that are unfamiliar, even uncomfortable to begin with. But persist and the rewards can be great as young people grow in confidence, embracing and unlocking this extraordinary literary inheritance.
The Learning and Performance Network has been Supported by:

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