



### **A Headteacher's advice to any school considering working with us**

1. Forget everything you thought you knew about Shakespeare and your students. We are a non-selective school and used to be, academically, one of the lowest achieving schools in the country. Introducing new techniques and a more active way of teaching Shakespeare has had a massive impact on literacy levels and aspirations and we are now one of the highest achieving non-selective schools in the country.
2. Get the whole school involved - especially the parents. Initially we encountered some resistance but we sent information home and held sessions where we invited parents to ask questions. The combination of their own children's enthusiasm and seeing Shakespeare performed live in their local theatre has completely transformed opinions. It has brought people together and helped develop a renewed sense of pride and joint purpose within the whole community.
3. Get your staff on board. Some may initially find the idea of Shakespeare – and particularly plays they aren't familiar with – daunting. But taking that leap of faith is well worth it. Learning techniques the actors use in rehearsals has not only reinvigorated our own teaching practise but we often use the techniques in other areas of learning. We also harness the students' enthusiasm for Shakespeare in other subjects like History where students have re-enacted the battle of Agincourt and looked at how accurate Shakespeare's account of history actually was.
4. Get students up on their feet. One of the first things we changed was to push all the desks to the side of the classroom and get students to move around the room, playing games to unlock the language and bring out the rhythm and meaning of the words. The students love it, the energy is infectious and the learning just happens.
5. Be prepared to work hard. This is about going the extra mile but the rewards are plentiful including students who aren't afraid to take on a challenge; who believe in their own abilities; who think critically and for themselves; have higher aspirations and improved attitudes to learning. Ultimately what that means is that students and staff are happier and the children want to achieve and aspire to more.