

*I love, love, love Stage Directions. Lots of people don't have imaginations but when they come here, their imaginations explode. (Summer Camp-CYP)*

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### Headline stats year 3

Number of unique young people engaged – 1,616

Number of in-person audiences – 1,523

Number of artists employed - 158

Number of schools – 15

Average increase in the practicing the 5 Creative Habits of Mind – 27%

### Headline stats for all three years

Number of unique young people engaged – 5,317

Number of in-person audiences – 2,388

Number of artists employed - 224

Number of schools – 37

## Activities in 2021-22

Two day residential for professionals

Onstage sessions

- Pendleton College
- St Paul's Cross Lane Primary
- St Paul's Peel Primary
- All Hallows RC High School
- Springwood Primary School (SEND)
- Oakwood Academy (SEND)
- Creative Camp Intensive Summer and Celebration
- Community Onstage at Ordsall (via SCL @Oasis Academy)
- Community Onstage at Eccles (via SCL @ St Patrick's High School)
- Community Onstage at Walkden (via SCL @ Coop Academy Walkden)

Offstage sessions

- Community Offstage (Technical) at The Lowry/Pendleton College
- Community Digital Arts with University of Salford
- Community Design & Fabrication with Walk the Plank
- Overall taster sessions in all the above

Legacy funds

- St George's Primary
- Lark Hill Primary
- The Albion Academy
- Buile Hill Academy

Careers event at MediaCityUK

End of year three-day festival at The Lowry

Theatre Trips

Professional Development Activity

Wraparound Activity to support School Culture

## Introduction

### About the Audience Agency

This report has been produced by The Audience Agency. The Audience Agency is a mission-led organisation, which exists to give people better access to culture, for the public good and the vitality of the sector.

We hope to contribute in increasing the number and diversity of people engaging with a broad range of culture, and the depth and scope of their involvement.

Our purpose is to lead insight-driven, audience-focused practice and policy. We put our knowledge and skills in creating and using insight at the disposal of the sector, as agents for positive change.

### Methodology

- Surveys aimed at the children and young people participating in the Onstage and Offstage activities across in school and community activity. These were a baseline survey and a post activity survey
- Audiences survey for the schools and other young people attending performances on visits that were facilitated by Stage Directions
- An artist and practitioner survey post activity
- Observations and intercept interviews during Onstage activity and key events e.g. the Careers Event and the end of year Celebration event
- Interviews with the range of stakeholders
- Ongoing evaluation carried out by Ensemble Leaders

## Learning across the three years

### **Discursive, bespoke, power-sharing**

The philosophy and approach of Stage Directions evolved over the three years of the programme as circumstances changed and new learning came to light.

### **Onstage**

The approach in year 1 of the project followed a defined structure during all of the Onstage activity. This focussed on upskilling CYPs on the range of core theatre genres (e.g. physical theatre, puppetry etc) through the delivery of the full range of taster sessions at each of the school and community settings at the beginning of their journey with Stage Directions.

Following this the CYPs selected the genre they preferred and from here they developed a performance alongside their dedicated Ensemble Leader and trainee.

However, this front-loaded learning was overwhelming for the young people, providing them with a high volume of specialist information before they had learned basic stage craft or taken the key step of learning how to operate as a team.

In years 2 and 3, as part of a broader programme of devolution of power and decision making from the Stage Directions team to key stakeholders, Ensemble Leaders were empowered to consider the best time to bring in external artists and to select them themselves. Ensemble Leaders were trusted to respond to the bespoke needs of their learners and/or the requirements of their high quality performance when considering which external artists to bring in to work with the CYPs, and when.

### **Change in activity offered through the programme**

In the first year there was also a larger programme in terms of the number of activity options for CYPs which were streamlined in the following two years, for example the BBC Blue Room and Writers' Room. This piloting of a range of activities was the learning phase in order that the core Stage Directions team could learn what was possible and how it responded to need at the right time.

### **Schools**

Stage Directions operated under pandemic conditions in year 2. This was a challenging time for schools and each school had very different needs. Ensemble Leaders began to work more closely with schools, and in a bespoke way, through operating as resident artists within the

schools. They fulfilled a range of functions from developing new digital resources with curriculum links to facilitating sessions with young people. Through this process, schools developed in their ability and confidence in working with artists.

Schools that have been involved in Stage Directions now have the confidence to commission and contact artists independently. At least two of the year 3 schools (St Joseph's and Springwood) have plans to continue to work with their Ensemble Leaders, including putting forward applications together with their Ensemble Leaders for further funding.

Legacy funding that was given to schools during year 3 allowed schools to consider when and how they might spend the budget available, be that through funding for world book day or for day trips. Overall, schools have become empowered, through this process, to make decisions and understand what quality creative experiences could be.

### **Peer learning**

Trainees learning group: weekly video remote sessions in which trainees read and discussed books about facilitation and theatre techniques guided by a theatre professional. Trainees were able to suggest books or topic that they were interested in. They also used this space to reflect on their in-person sessions to share approaches, challenges and ultimately enhance their work with young people.

### **Partnerships**

The Stage Directions core team had learned that by handing over some of the decision-making powers to creative partners resulted in the ability to test a range of approaches (where previously the approach had been front loaded taster sessions described above). This played to the strengths of different stakeholders, while allowing for different approaches in different settings, ensuring those approaches were most appropriate for that setting.

CHOL Theatre Company delivered their 'Imaginary Communities' co-creative format in primary schools. The flex within the 'Imaginary Communities' model, that allowed for co-creative methodologies, curriculum links as well as focussing on literacy, meant that schools felt reassured around both the academic and creative benefits of the Stage Directions programme.

Springwood, a SEND primary school, was matched with an Ensemble Leader who was expert in facilitating theatre activity for learners with autistic spectrum conditions. This artist was empowered to respond to the needs of the learners, alongside their teachers and support staff, in real time.



Stage Directions commissioned local theatre company DIY Theatre as expert partners in working with people who live with learning disabilities and use the arts. They were able to assist, advise Stage Directions practitioners as well as work directly with the young people through consultation work and creative exchange.

A strong partnership between Walk the Plank outdoor arts organisation and Stage Directions for the Summer Celebration in year 3 saw Walk the Plank operate as the sole producers of the final performance for this intensive camp. Walk the Plank were commissioned with the creative autonomy to bring in their expertise and resources including high quality staging, costume, musicians and acrobats.

The role of the Stage Directions core team, through these strengthening partnerships, became the planning and matching between different stakeholders, ensuring a good fit, communicating early and over the length of the project. Stakeholders across schools, Ensemble Leaders, City Council partners, CYPs and creative partners reported the swift and effective support they received from Stage Directions and, where relevant, the clear and detailed briefing.

### **Schools' Improvement Team**

Good communication between the Stage Directions core team, the schools and the Salford CC Schools' Improvement Team: the Salford City Council Schools Improvement Team played a significant role in easing the path to productive comms and positive decision making in the interest of both the Stage Directions programme and the individual schools. Early communication between Stage Directions and a range of staff in participating schools mean that if staff changes occurred there would be 'back up' staff who understood and championed the programme with both learners and other staff members.

*I know that [Ensemble Leaders and artists] who came into our school, you know, they were very well thought out, and it was very, it was picked for a reason, because of how the children had responded. (Headteacher-St Joseph's)*

### **Overall**

Over the three years Stage Directions become more and more an exemplar of the maxim that everyone is an expert, a way of working that the programme strove to practice.

The approach amounted to a democratising of power among the many stakeholders of the programme, providing bespoke activities, responding to need and supporting those who showed passion and interest in progressing.

## More children, families and schools from deprived and lower-engaged areas are experiencing and appreciating quality performances

Data in this section is taken from responses to the audience's survey and the participant baseline survey for year 3.

- Survey data from year three across participants and audiences indicates low attendance at or participation in arts and cultural activities.
- This analysis is corroborated through the interviews with parents at the performance events where parents had the opportunity to see their children perform.

### Participants

Teachers described the strong impact that the experience of visiting a world class theatre to see high quality performances had on their learners.

*Bedknobs and Broomsticks and The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* theatre performances at The Lowry was attended by learners from multiple Onstage Schools. Teachers described how these learners were inspired by the performance through seeing people their own age on stage and through the production quality. They also took direct inspiration from the set and costume they could see on stage.

*They loved the lights and because it was kids singing, they felt like it could be them.  
(Teacher-Oakwood)*

Springwood and St Paul's Cross Lane staff describe a level of engagement among their learners during a show, and the ongoing discussion following a show, as responses they had neither seen before nor expected among some of their learners.

*I've got one child now who if I say 'The Lowry', he will say 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe, Edmund, the witch, the lion'. The fact that he can remember that and not just the coach journey, it's incredible for him. (Teacher-Springwood)*

*We've got a group of boys who you can't capture the imagination on anything, but they were on the edge of their seats. They automatically thought they were going to the cinema. (Teacher-St Paul's Cross Lane)*

*I was sitting next to two boys who are usually pretty disassociated but [during the show] all the way through there was a running commentary, they just loved it. (Teacher-St Paul's Cross Lane)*

*It was their first experience of theatre and it was good that it was such a good experience, they all said they would go to the theatre again. (Headteacher-St Paul's Cross Lane)*

Teachers noted how positive it was that their learners' first experience of the theatre had been such positive ones, seeing spectacular performances including the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe. They felt, indeed the learners reported, that they would be keen to visit the theatre again.

An Ensemble Leader said she saw first hand how the exposure of her learners to different theatre genres employed in a professional setting had provided them with greater depth and range when it came to creating their own performance.

*St Josephs' saw the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe and Human. They were good because it gave them two very different examples of what performance is that was really helpful in the weekly session. (Ensemble Leader-St Joseph's)*

*DIY Theatre came into our school to do an interactive performance and they [the children] asked if they could do the same in their performance. (Teacher-Springwood)*

The Stage Directions core team ensured learners with additional needs were attended to so that they could get the most out of the performances, sometimes offering services the school, the learner and the learner's family did not know would be available. In this way, a parent who had not been to the theatre before understood more how she could facilitate that experience for her child.

*We've got a visually impaired girl and she got a soft touch tour before the show...the audio description lady was amazing, explaining how the stage was set up and what was on the stage...it was amazing...and her mum came so she could see what was happening too. (Teacher-Oakwood)*

Teachers were clear that their learners would likely not have had the opportunity to visit the theatre with their families and so the Stage Directions' theatre visits were offering them something that stretched them culturally and intellectually.

*Some of our children, their experiences, won't be as vast as some other children's experiences that they have from home or in life. And sometimes those children would find [being asked to co-create] difficult...whereas actually that really developed when those opportunities were presented to the children last year. (Headteacher-St Joseph's)*

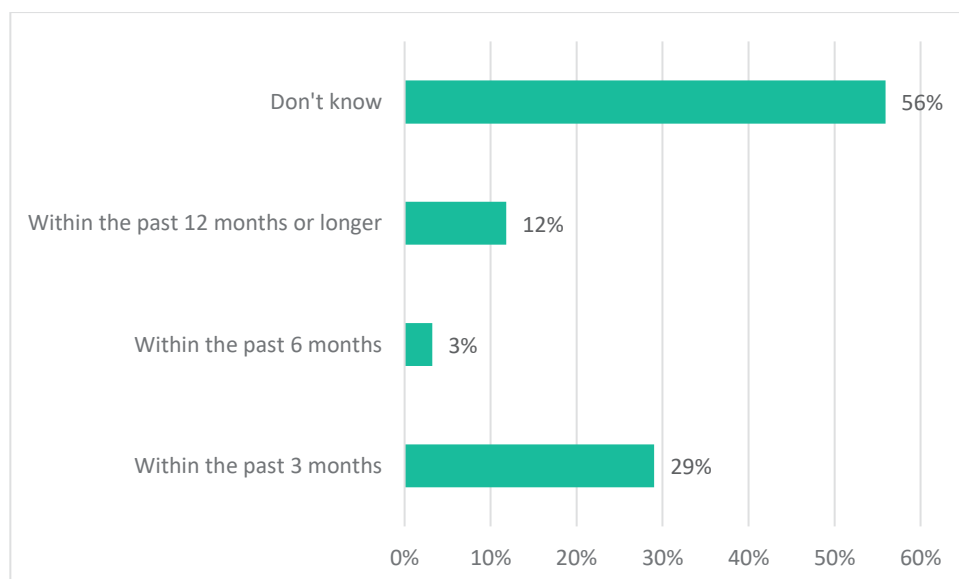
*It's all about the opportunities, the school is 10 minutes from [the Lowry] and they had no idea. This area of Salford, they just don't get to go outside of their comfort zone. (Teacher-St Paul's)*

*[Stage Directions] has been really needed in Salford because these children wouldn't have gone to the theatre otherwise...especially when I think about the visually impaired girl...I didn't have to ask Stage Directions, they offered it to us. (Teacher-Oakwood)*

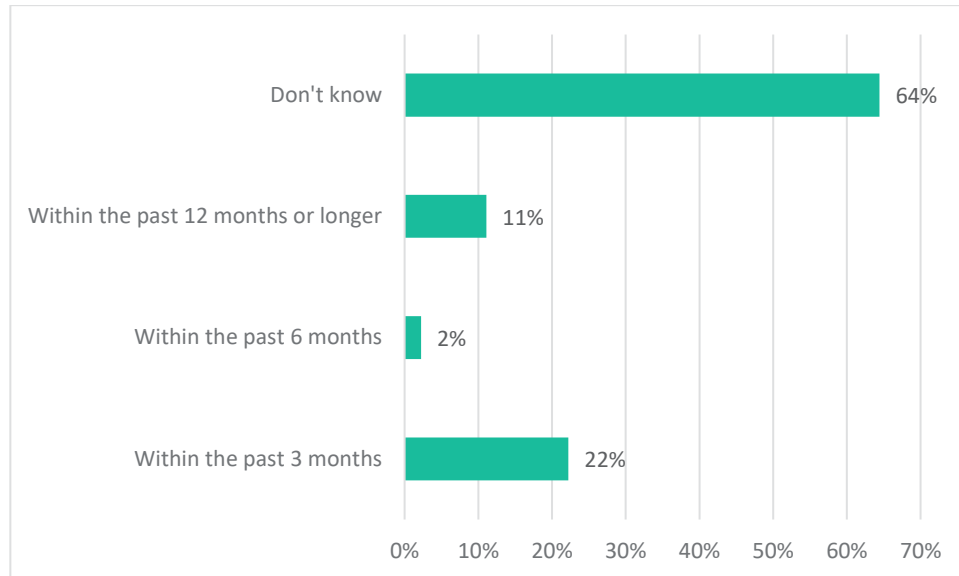
There was feedback from teachers and parents that the opportunities provided through Stage Directions, including the in school activity, the theatre visits and the intensive camps happening during school holidays were opportunities the young people would not have had otherwise. Parents described looking for such opportunities for their children.

### Visited a cultural venue outside of school

- 68% of participants either haven't been to a cultural venue outside of school in the past 12 months or long, or don't know if they have nor not.
- 75% of participants either haven't participated in cultural activities outside of school in the past 12 months or long, or don't know if they have nor not.



### Participated in cultural activity



Base: 90

### Participant deprivation indicators

- Based on available data there is strong evidence that Stage Directions succeeded in reaching CYPs who were less likely to have engaged in the arts in general and in theatre specifically before.
- 68% of schools participants live in the top five highest areas of deprivation using the English Index of Deprivation
- Primary and secondary schools taking part in the Onstage process all have higher proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and the Pupil Premium than the average for Salford
- 79% of Summer Camp participants event live in the top five highest areas of deprivation using the English Index of Deprivation

## Schools Onstage

	Proportion of pupils eligible and claiming FSM (2022)	% of pupils eligible for the Deprivation Pupil Premium (2022)
St Paul's Peel	48%	54.0%
St Paul's Cross Lane	41%	56.3%
All Hallows	28%	42.8%
Springwood	46%	53.4%
Oakwood	23%	56.8%
St Joseph's	37%	46.4%
Salford schools average	20%	39%

Data from DfE Schools Data release 2020

LSOA Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile	Frequency of decile	
1	19	37%
2	15	29%
3	2	4%
4	3	6%
5	2	4%
6	2	4%
7	2	4%
8	1	2%
9	6	12%
10	0	0

Data from participant survey. Base: 205

## Summer Camp Intensive

LSOA Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile	Frequency of decile	
1	34	17%
2	70	34%
3	18	9%
4	12	6%
5	5	2%
6	12	6%
7	28	14%
8	16	8%
9	0	0%
10	10	5%

Data from participant monitoring. Base: 52

### CYP are returning to other YPP activities

18% of participants who responded to the baseline survey in year 3 had taken part in Stage Directions activities before.

There were also some interesting case studies about a number of young people who chose to return to Stage Directions activity.

Participant A, a primary school aged learner, began Stage Directions in year 1, attending a community onstage group. Following this, Stage Directions took place in her school in year 2 and she took part. She chose to attend both of the summer intensive programmes in years 2 and 3. Asked why she chose to return, she had the following to say:

*I just really liked doing it, it was different from what I usually did and I just said to myself, I want to do this...you can express yourself without other people pushing you down. You feel free when you're on the stage, and it's the thrill of it as well.*

*(Participant A)*

Participant B, another primary school aged learner, attended one of the technical activities in year 2 after his parents had carried out some research for opportunities connected to the theatre for him. While he enjoyed that experience, they really wanted to offer him ‘a stage’ to express himself in the ways he liked to. They found this in the year 3 Summer Intensive.

*[My son] had done a little bit of drama but not that much, being silly and dancing, he really likes it. He’s usually silly at home but we don’t have a stage for him, here it’s really useful. We have been looking for a stage for him to perform. (Summer Creative Camp-Parent)*

Two Pendleton College students took part in the Onstage activity in both years 2 and 3. They were studying drama; however, the Stage Directions activity wasn’t mandatory, rather they chose to do it both years. The participants took part in the selection of the artists they eventually worked with through Pendleton, alongside their Ensemble Leader and the Stage Directions team. They chose to take part in the Summer Intensive in year 3 after being invited to do so by one of the artists involved in the delivery of the Intensive.

The Summer Intensive constituted a step up for the pair, as they were asked to take the lead with participants in their groups, given their past experience, in modelling behaviour that walked the Stage Directions line between fun and professionalism.

*They treated you like an adult, like a professional...they also brought the joy back to theatre, it was showing that it doesn’t have to be big and scary. Stage Directions shows that it is still enjoyable even if you want to [take it seriously] as a career.*



## Young people develop self-expression, agency and self-efficacy through artistic development and performance

*I think this is an amazing opportunity to work on a professional stage and it is a once in a lifetime opportunity and I am very grateful. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

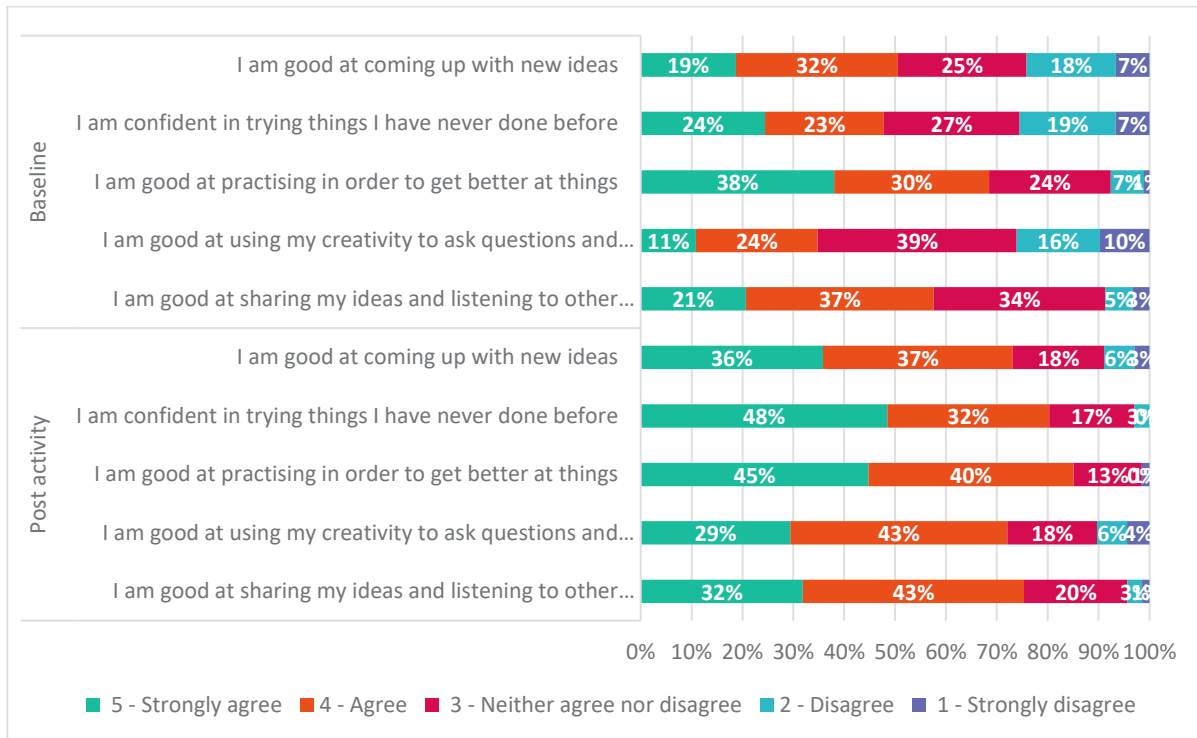
*I loved the Stage Direction because it showed us action and it should carry on because it gives children the opportunity to feel the love for drama and maybe become an actor. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

### 5 Creative Habits of Mind

Each of the questions below represent behaviours for each of the 5 Creative Habits of Mind and compare participants' self-assessment before and after the activity. This table only includes data from the schools that completed both the pre and post activity survey; St Paul's Peel, St Paul's Cross Lane and St Joseph's.

- The number of participants who said they demonstrated the behaviours of the 5 Creative Habits of Mind increased for every habit with the highest increase in inquisitiveness.
- **Imagination: I am good at coming up with new ideas.** 51% agreed with this before the activity and 73% did so afterwards, a 22% increase.
- **Persistence: I am confident at trying things I have never done before.** Before the activity 47% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement which increased by 33% to 80% after the activity.
- **Discipline: I am good at practising in order to get better at things.** This behaviour saw an increase from 68% to 95%, an increase of 27%.
- **Inquisitiveness: I am good at using my creativity to ask questions and explore.** Only 35% of participants were confident they displayed this behaviour before the activity, while 72% agreed with this post activity, an increase of 37%, the biggest increase across the five habits.

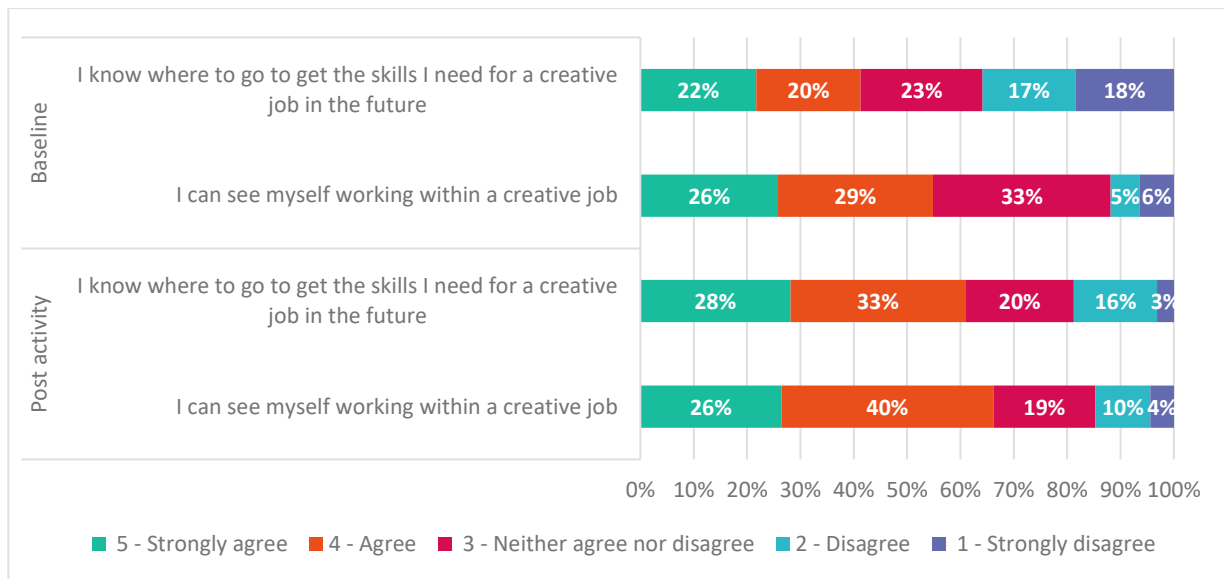
- **Collaboration: I am good at sharing my ideas and listening to other people’s ideas.** 58% of participants agreed with this pre-activity while 75% of them did so after the activity, a 17% increase.



Base Baseline: 92, Base Post Activity: 69

### Participants

- The proportion of participants with understanding of how to obtain the skills for a creative career and with a vision of themselves working in a creative field increased after they took part in Stage Directions.
- 42% of participants understood where to get the skills for future work before the activity while 61% did so afterwards, an increase of 19%
- 55% could see themselves working in a creative job before the activity while 66% could do so afterwards, and increase of 11%



Base Baseline: 92, Base Post Activity: 69

## In their own words

### What were the top three things that you learned?

#### Teamwork

The most common response, and therefore a core learning for the young people, was the development of skills relating to teamwork, usually through listening and understanding one another.

*Listen to people's ideas. (St Joseph's CYP)*

*I understand people more. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*How to work together better. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

#### Performance related skills

Young participants were able to articulate a range of performance related skills bringing together the use of their voice, body and imaginations to convey characters and situations to an audience through self-expression and improvisation. They also discussed skills that fed into the presentation of their final performances including making and giving expression to puppets, devising scenes and kite flying.

*And I learned how to express myself within the character. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*To project my voice. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*I learned how to stay in character. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*I know how to do movement. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*To improvise. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*Body Language. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*I got better at acting. (St Joseph's CYP)*

*To do a big voice. (St Joseph's CYP)*

*Changing your voice. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*I learned how to use my body. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*How to divide scenes. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*How to make puppets. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*Control Puppets. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*Kite flying. (St Joseph's CYP)*

### **Soft or transferable skills**

Responses around soft or transferable skills tell a cumulative story of self-acceptance and self-expression through learning the balance of interacting positively with others while have confidence in their own vision and capabilities.

*To express myself. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*To be me. (St Joseph's CYP)*

*Thinking outside the box. (St Joseph's CYP)*

*To be brave. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*Don't be nervous. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*Daring. (St Joseph's CYP)*

*Trust. (St Joseph's CYP)*

*To make friends. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*Practice makes perfect. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*Focus on yourself, not other people. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*To love what you are doing. (St Joseph's CYP)*

### **Did anything surprise you about Stage Directions?**

There was a very strong theme to indicate that the young people who took part in Stage Directions were surprised to learn that both they and their peers were capable of much more than they realised.

Their faith in their own acting, recall of lines, use of imagination and ability to work as ensemble grew throughout this project. Some recalled being surprised by specific individuals whom they had underestimated in this regard, and who confounded their expectations.

Others learned how 'brave' they were capable of being, particularly when it came to performing in front of others. They found they could take the risk to step outside of their comfort zones and ultimately enjoy the experience.

Some young people talked of their surprise at others' acceptance of their idiosyncrasies and for one there was surprise in the pride they felt in what they had achieved. Despite the time put in by the delivery teams to prepare them, young people from St Joseph's in particular were surprised by the reality of performing on a professional stage at The Lowry in front of their family and other schools, something it had been difficult for them to imagine prior to the event.

*Yes, I didn't think I would be good at acting and using my voice in different ways, and I didn't think I would remember all my lines but I did, and can. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*The thing that surprised me was how everyone knew more than they thought they knew. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*Learning my lines so quickly and I'm more confident in performing to an audience. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*How everyone learned their lines, acting, using my body, having more jokes with people. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*Yes things surprised me because I didn't know I could do drama. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*What surprised me was how good some people are at acting, and how good the class was working as an ensemble. And how good I was when I acted. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*Yes a lot of people had some great talents. (St Joseph's CYP)*

*I never knew the people that are usually not doing much are taking a big role in the play. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*Yes, because it really helped me be more active and I never thought I would be this brave. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*Yes I learnt how to perform in front of instead of being scared. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*What surprised me is that I could perform in front of people and the fact I've actually liked it is surprising. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*I realised it was really fun. (St Joseph's CYP)*

*I'm surprised on how I would be very sarcastic and other people had a sense of humour. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*I was surprised when we made a very large paper dinosaur, and I noticed I can be proud of myself. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*That we were performing in front of loads of adults and two other schools. (St Joseph's CYP)*

*Yes by being on a real stage and seeing my family. (St Joseph's CYP)*

### Young people's desire to continue

When asked through the survey if there was anything else they would like to say about the project the resounding message was a desire to continue. The young people who took part would like to have more opportunities to act, meet artists, perform on stage, and to develop their positive self-image and confidence.

*I would like to do more of this activity. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*I think it was very good because I love acting and I wish I could do it again. (St Paul's Peel CYP)*

*I would have to do it again. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*I would love to take part again because it made me more positive about myself. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*I want to do this again. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*I think that it's amazing because we got to meet so many new people and make a show but I really want to do it again. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*I thought it was great because it can help boost your confidence and because we got to take new experiences and I would love to do it again. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*I thought really excited and I would really like to do this again and I do not want to stop doing it. I really like acting a show on stage. (St Paul's Cross Lane CYP)*

*It was fun and I would like to participate in activities likes this again. (St Joseph's CYP)*

## Careers event

*The ability to just have fun and be yourself...It's really enjoyable and it's encouraging more people to just have a go. (YP-Careers Event)*

*It's been fun. (YP-Careers Event)*

*It's been brilliant. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I like how nice the staff have been to us. (YP-Careers Event)*

A careers event took place at Salford Quays/MediaCityUK in March 2022 for the Young People of Salford with the purpose of informing, inspiring and igniting young people's future aspirations around the Creative Industries. 300 young people from years 10 and upward from HE and FE institutions took part in the day attending workshops and talks in The Lowry and at Dock 10 and University of Salford.

*We would like to say a huge thank you for today! The students have had a wonderful experience and gained a great insight into careers in Theatre and the Media Industry... Our students and staff had a fantastic time at the event. (Vice Principal-UTC)*

*It was a fantastic day - a student of mine even described it as 'The best day of my life!' It also gave some student the opportunity to visit Salford Quays for the first time and visit the theatre for the first time. They absolutely loved being able to take art work/t-shirts etc home with them. (Teacher-Moorside High)*

Teachers and young people agreed that the workshops and activities that were interactive rather than discursive were more successful in engaging the young people. Examples of

successful activities provided were the stage fighting workshop, drag queen careers bingo and the arcade. Researchers observed that the protest table, tie die activity and karaoke were popular with the young people.

Researchers observing some of the talks described content that was quite targeted to those who had already made a decision to work in the creative industries, thereby thoroughly engaging young people with an active interest but while alienating those who hadn't considered this career. There is some learning here for the LCEP to consider how to tackle this in future Careers Events, for example targeting content to young people with different levels of prior interest and engagement with the creative Industries.

Overall, the ability to collaborate and interact was described by the young people as both enjoyable and rare in their experience.

*The students enjoyed participating in all the workshops on offer and were fully engaged throughout the day. The workshops were superbly planned and delivered and were very motivational for our students. (Vice Principal-UTC)*

*The pupils were keen for the sessions to be more 'hands on' and the pupils who took the most from the day were definitely the pupils who took part in the stage fighting workshop as this was practical in nature. Pupils also loved 'drag queen bingo' and felt that the two ladies running this activity were friendly, funny and knowledgeable. (Teacher-Co-op Academy Walkden)*

*Sometimes in the talking workshops, they [the young people] felt, and I could have been a bit more practical exploration. (Teacher-The Lowry Academy)*

*I loved the arcade part that was really interactive. We got to play games and it was fun. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Today's been very collaborative, very nice. Educational. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Was so fun and different to other trips where you go and just see. We went to a University last week and we just sat down and had to listen. Here they us involved. It was amazing. (YP-Careers Event)*

Among young people interviewed on the day reported the strong theme that emerged around learning about careers in the creative industries was the range of careers that were available to them. They described it as positive that they were able to try new things, leading them to consider new directions for their careers, consider more than one avenue in the creative



industries for the first time or find out new routes through which to obtain careers in the creative industries.

Young people also discussed ways in which their thinking about a future career had been developed through attending the careers day. There were some young people at the careers event who felt they would be unlikely to, or weren't sure if they would, choose a career in the creative industries. Even so their experience at the careers event presented them with new options to consider, broadening their horizons.

For some young people, a creative career had never been under consideration, however they left the event with a clear role in the creative industries in mind.

*Shows us the different careers in the creative media, the creative side of work. (YP-Careers Event)*

*It's encouraged me to try other things, so I know what else to look at. Not just one thing. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Learning how to get into the industry. You don't just have to do one specific thing, there's so many different things. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I started off in TV and film and how you got a job in there. It's been really interesting to find out what they [the professionals] went through, their teenage years and everything. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I know what I want to be and I know I've got a back-up plan in case that doesn't work out. But it has taught me that there are more options out there. If I don't get into the job that I want to do, there's still other things I can do. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I do have a back-up plan now if I don't do what I originally thought I was going to do. (YP-Careers Event)*

*There are more jobs that I think would be more fun to go to than sitting in an office or whatever. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I don't want to get involved in theatre but I learned that there are more jobs and more things going on than I thought before. (YP-Careers Event)*

*It's definitely made me want to get involved in the arts a lot more than I did before. I was a bit unsure before whether a career like this could happen but after talking to the people this morning, it's really inspired me to go out and do something. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I didn't think about theatre until today. I like the idea of being able to write. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Made me think about things to do. Always done art but now I know what's involved. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I have thought of acting and today was really exciting, get to know people. I've seen stage techniques, how to get into TV and film. (YP-Careers Event)*

Teachers agreed with the young people that the careers event fulfilled its aim of introducing young people to the range of jobs in the creative industries. There was particular praise for the representation of careers outside of performance, i.e. behind the scenes roles such as photography and graphics. Teachers were appreciative of the opportunity for their young people to take part.

*Thank you so much for putting on the Beginners' Call. I felt it was really useful for our pupils to see the different kind of jobs that are available in creative careers that go beyond simply being an actor etc. The information given on the day was really helpful. (Teacher-Co-op Academy Walkden)*

*It was extremely interesting to see a variety of different careers covered. We had many students from our school who are taking creative iMedia/Photography/Graphics who attended and so it was great to have them represented as creative careers as well as the usual Drama, Art and Music. (Teacher-Moorside High)*

*Thank you for our workshop last week the students were thrilled to be there and were really inspired by the conversations and the workshops you had on offer of different parts of the creative industry. (Teacher-The Lowry Academy)*

*Our students are in YR10, going into YR11 shortly and want them to find and understand the creative fields they want to be a part of and access. This was a brilliant chance to give them that insight into all the different opportunities not just acting. (Teacher-The Lowry Academy)*

*The event gave a great insight into the careers showcased and were very inspirational. We are very grateful that this opportunity was provided for our students. (Vice Principal-UTC)*

Through meeting professionals that they could relate to, conversing with professionals who offered encouragement and advice, and through completing activities (dancing or karaoke in

front of an audience) they had not tried before, young people described a sense of inspiration and new confidence as a result of the careers event. For some, this confidence and inspiration resulted in a new sense of empowerment and agency, with young people describing how they felt like their career was in their hands and would happen as a result of the choices they would make.

From the responses from the young people it appeared that the key ingredient to this sense of agency among the young people was their positive interaction with the professionals. Young people described feeling supported and encouraged while hearing advice including about how to deal with challenges they may come across in their future careers, as well as reassurance that they didn't have to know right away what they wanted to do in their career.

*I met someone who was part of the Stone Roses and it inspired me - he was from round here. It gives me hope to succeed. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I want to get into music and perform on a stage. Maybe in a band. (YP-Careers Event)*

*It's made me a lot more confident in what I want to do and how to do that. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Looking at acting, getting confidence. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I wanted to do voice acting so it's inspired me. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Confidence, when you get up and do karaoke and stuff. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Definitely for me it's the confidence of it all. Normally I would never have gone up there [on stage outside in Salford Quays] and danced and all that, but today I did. (YP-Careers Event)*

*For me, the confidence. No matter what, everyone's going to say something or do something but just be you and do what you want to do. (YP-Careers Event)*

*It's piled up my confidence more - It's not hard - if you really love a job and focus and you will get it. Everybody was inspiring. (YP-Careers Event)*

*You have the choice to be whatever you want. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I think the resilience side of things. A lot of the people this morning were talking about how to be resilient and patient. You're not going to get every audition you want to, you're not going to pass every exam you're going to do but know that one day you're going to do something. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Probably the support from everyone in the room. I don't know everyone but they're all so supportive, it's like you've known them forever and they really show they care. The pantomime dame was really great, really funny. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Got a lot of good advice. It's encouraging. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I don't really know what I want to do when I'm older but I was talking to someone before and they said 'it doesn't really matter right now, there's always later on. You don't have to be set on something.' (YP-Careers Event)*

*I think it's the employability skills side of it. This morning we got to speak to a lot of people in the industry and it was great having that expertise and knowledge right in front of us. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Learned how to get jobs and agents to start your career. (YP-Careers Event)*

In terms of specific creative skills that young people learned, young people talked a range of performance skills including stage make-up, stage combat, singing and juggling.

*I learned how to do stage make-up where they do fake cuts. It was fun. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I learned about the effects of stage make up and how to apply it. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Singing. (YP-Careers Event)*

*When we did the performance, we were learning about techniques. (YP-Careers Event)*

*I apparently riff amazing when I'm nervous! [Took part in karaoke stand]. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Learnt how to do fight scenes. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Throw juggling balls. (YP-Careers Event)*

*Stage techniques. (YP-Careers Event)*

Teachers had some feedback around improvements that they would like to see in any forthcoming careers events. These were predominantly logistical suggestions. Teachers would have liked there to have been a set lunch break for young people instead of coinciding it with the changeover between the different buildings at Media City. Indeed, movement between spaces overall was felt to be less organised than teachers would have liked. Teachers would also have liked an opportunity for young people from across the schools to get together at the end of the day, as they did at the beginning, as a way to sign off from the experience.

Teachers would like more time between being notified of the event, and the event taking place.

*Pupils were also keen to have a 'proper' lunch time and found it difficult to find time to eat when walking between the two buildings. (Teacher-Co-op Academy Walkden)*

*The only real challenge was the quite short turn around in the offer coming out and the date itself. We were a bit later than most as well due to a school holiday in the middle, but more adequate planning time would have been beneficial. (Teacher-Moorside High)*

*The room for improvements I would suggest would be moving from one workshop to another was a little chaotic at times. Especially if students from the same school were moving to different workshops. Also, the end of the day seemed a bit anti-climactic. It would have been nice to get back together at the end, similar to the start of the day, as a bit of a send off. (Teacher-Moorside High)*

## Schools and cultural organisations improve their abilities to engage broad and diverse participants and audiences

There were indications of a cross pollination of learning between schools and the creative practitioners acting as Ensemble Leaders delivering the Stage Directions sessions.

This was particularly in evidence at Springwood, where the EL worked closely with the Teacher who shared ideas with him about how to inspire the children's imagination (e.g. through sharing the board-maker learning tool). In turn the class teacher had learned about different performance activities which she hopes to continue during lunchtime clubs after Stage Directions has left the school. Similarly, the Class Teacher at St Paul's Cross Lane is planning on using some of the exercises she has seen in the sessions to use with the children during regular class time.

### Trainees learning and development

It is clear that the trainees working alongside the Ensemble Leaders in each of the weekly sessions in schools have mastered a variety of facilitation skills through practice and observation. During year three, one of the trainees were in their second year working with Stage Directions.

### Working with young people with disabilities

Two trainees working on Stage Directions in year 3 during their first year as graduates had the new (to them) experience of working with children with special educational needs. This exposure to and practice of theatre with people with these needs resulted in a greater understanding of both how to facilitate in this way and the capabilities of different people. Ultimately, these trainees described learning to approach people as individuals, irrespective of a diagnosis, knowing that requirements, behaviour and preferences vary between all people and even sometimes in the same people on different days. There was a sense of demystification of working with people with special educational needs, and a growing confidence that they would be able to do so again in the future.

*One of the things that Stage Directions gave me which I didn't otherwise have was the experience of working with young people with disabilities, because I was in a specialist school for young people with additional needs...I haven't been shown [during my studies] how to do workshops for young people who aren't neurotypical. (Trainee-Springwood)*

*It made me appreciate working with other young people who maybe have more barriers to the arts. It really made me kind of think about when I do my workshops, like how accessible are they? And if they're not well, how can I make them more accessible?  
(Trainee-Springwood)*

*Some of the young people in our group had special educational needs. But the ones that had special educational needs weren't ever the kids that we necessarily had issues with of wanting to participate. When I was younger, I wanted to help people with special educational needs. And then as I got older, I was like, 'Oh, that is a that is a difficult job they need so much support'. With a group that was mixed ability I realised, no, they just need just as much as everyone else does, just in a different way. And that also means they participate in a different way. And they can bring different things...I don't think I would have ever realised that until putting it into practice and working with all of the young people as individuals. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

### **Providing experience**

While trainees have previously had a sense of the benefits of creativity and theatre making for children and young people, through Stage Directions they built a deeper understanding about how these activities benefit people. Most notably, trainees agree that they have seen a growth in confidence among the young people. There was also a feeling that the sessions had led to a greater ability in the young people to express themselves and to do so articulately and using the appropriate theatrical language. They are also showing better teamwork skills, supporting one another in their performances.

Working with Stage Directions has had an impact on the way trainees think about their own careers. As younger professionals in their early 20's, mostly recent graduates, Stage Directions has been key in helping them to solidify the possibility of continuing to work in the arts sector, proving important formative experience along with contacts in the industry and a peer group they can call upon in the future. One trainee currently working with children with special educational needs has made a firm decision that this will be an area he would like to continue in.

*I came straight out of uni when I got offered the role [at Stage Directions]. And I was still very much in a sense of not knowing whether I wanted to go into teaching or not, because I'm not experienced working with young people...And I've enjoyed it, it's very much changed what I want to do. When I finished uni, it was either I'm gonna go into*

*teaching or I want to do admin pathetic companies, but I quite recently decided, I want to do facilitation full time. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

*Before I started, I was really nervous. I'd done a module at uni but it was during COVID. So I obviously didn't get to put any of it into practice. So yeah, everything that I've learned, I've learned on the go. I never thought I'd be that good at working with young people in like more of a casual kind of way. And it's really interesting seeing how I've worked with young people and how like, even at 14, they are so grown up but so young at the same time. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

### **Exposure to new artforms**

A key element of the Onstage sessions was that Ensemble Leaders could, at their discretion, bring in other artists to work with the young people if the Ensemble Leaders felt they could add to the final performance or that the young people would derive learning or inspiration from it. This meant that the trainees, along with the young people were exposed to this learning and in this way developed their own interest and skills in artforms including puppetry, physical theatre, stage combat, music for theatre and storytelling.

*We did a workshop on stage combat. I've never done that before...So that was really exciting. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

*We did the workshop about storytelling, I would never have thought of that way to bring out creating stories...I've learned more techniques on how to do things. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

*[The Ensemble Leader] made sure that we worked with so many different like practitioners when they came in to the school. That's been really useful seeing what practices exist, who's out there. (Trainee-Springwood)*

### **Formal training**

Stage Directions offered trainees the opportunity to take part in specialist training including the Arts Award Advisor training and NSPCC safeguarding training for SEND young people. Trainees, often newly graduated, felt they wouldn't have had this training otherwise given the cost. This resulted in giving greater opportunities for these trainees outside of their Stage Directions experience, finding themselves far more desirable to future employers for having this training on their CV. More than that, they found that their practice in facilitated sessions became more thoughtful and accessible overall as a result of the training, and they felt greater confidence in ensuring safeguarding for the young people they worked with.



*Finances is such a big barrier to do [Arts Awards Advisor Training] because it's dead expensive when you when you look at it as someone who is just entering the freelance world...It's opened up a lot for me. It's one of the things that makes [future employers see me as legitimate]. (Trainee-Springwood)*

*The NSPCC training for safeguarding SEND young people, made a massive difference...in the sense of my practice has changed in how I notice things and how I use communication tools. All the [training] has made me on paper more desirable as a facilitator. (Trainee-Springwood)*

*I've got my Arts Award training, which is brilliant. And I know [Stage Directions] gave me the push to look at other stuff...Because for ages I was looking at jobs and it was like, 'Oh, you need DBS'. And I thought, I don't need that. And now that I think about it, I didn't do I didn't apply for loads of jobs, because I needed a DBS for it. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

## Networks

Ensemble Leaders, Artists and Trainees all described their networks as being strengthened through their connection with Stage Directions. Stage Directions gave practitioners an opportunity to get to know one another over longer or shorter periods of time and to understand each others strengths. These networks have already proved fruitful with a number of the practitioners planning to or already working with people they met through Stage Directions on other projects.

Trainees describe how, between them they now have a group of peers with whom they can seek advice, empathise and discuss, something they talk about as important during this fledgling stage of their careers. For these trainees, their new connection with The Lowry also means that they at least feel they would be able to approach The Lowry, and crucially, know who to approach, if were looking for opportunities or resources in their career.

*I've bought a puppet online, and we worked with a puppetry company. So I know that I can email them and be like, 'Oh, I worked with you in Stage Directions. I've just got my first puppet, can you direct me to [resources or further training]. (Trainee-Springwood)*

*I worked with [The Stage Directions comedy artist] facilitating workshops in the summer for young people. It's good that she has seen me in that setting now working with those*

*young people and doing that performance. It's just strengthening those sort of relationships that I have with different organisations and people. (Trainee-Springwood)*

*The summer camp was great, I met loads of practitioners and facilitators, which is great for me, because I have lots of work that I need freelancers for. It was great to meet a pool of facilitators that clearly are great at what they do. It's almost a cheeky way to watch people facilitate and see if they're right for facilitating for your company. (The Knotted Project)*

*There are quite a few people in the same position of me [trainees], that I went to the same university as them...But we didn't speak that much during uni. Now, I know that they're into the same kind of things as me. They also want to go into facilitation. I can speak to them about that sort of stuff...I know that they've got skills that I could ask them about, I could ask them for advice for, I know that there are projects that if I wanted to do, I could trust them to come on board. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

*It used to scare me asking it the Lowry [about opportunities], there's so many teams and it's such like a huge business that you could end up anywhere within it. You never know, if you go into the right person. Now, I feel a bit more confident, I've got more awareness...especially in terms of the learning and development team...I can, go and knock on and say, like, hiya or, you know, send an email. (Trainee-Springwood)*

### Teacher learning and development

Teachers described a range of key learning as a result of their connection with Stage Directions.

One key learning was, perhaps expectedly, around the strength of theatre techniques in a school setting. Where previously some teachers would actively avoid drama methodology prior to Stage Directions, there is now less of a fear of how young people will respond to it. Indeed, there is a growing sense of how young people can benefit through these methods. Teachers have seen how the approaches Stage Directions practitioners use have built resilience, team working skills, imagination and emotional intelligence in the learners.

The Teacher from Springwood has continued to use the exercises she saw through Stage Directions with learners in her normal classroom setting in order to help them to expand their understanding of the range of emotions, and to communicate these with others. The Ensemble Leader at Springwood delivered activities outside of the weekly sessions such as a fun

lunchtime club and a nurture session, created to target the needs of different children, and made possible through the artist in residence model employed by Stage Directions in year 3. The Headteacher worked closely with the Ensemble Leader to build plans for the future in the continuation of the delivery of these sessions beyond Stage Directions.

Teachers not directly associated with the Stage Directions programme at St Joseph's have begun to find ways to work with the curriculum while incorporating aspects of co-creation in order to empower the learners in the way that they have seen through Stage Directions. It is important to note that this is being done in subjects not traditionally associated with this approach, such as science. This clearly demonstrates the impact of Stage Directions outside of the weekly sessions.

The Teacher from St Paul's Cross Lane deepened her understanding of co-creative practices as a result of working closely with CHOL over two years. Other teachers not directly associated with Stage Directions had the opportunity to work with CHOL

*[Stage Directions has] made me more willing to try like things like drama, because you almost have that block, I think it's just going to be chaos and turn into silliness, which, at the beginning of last year is exactly what happened. Whereas now, I feel like I've got some strategies to teach the children how to work in a team. And so it's building in that resilience within that collaborative working, that we can use some of the strategies that [I've seen through Stage Directions]. (Teacher-St Joseph's)*

*We do dance and art [outside of Stage Directions] but we often don't touch drama because we're a bit scared and think 'how do you do it'. The emotions [activities that happened through Stage Directions], I'm going to use, they [the children] need it. (Teacher-Springwood)*

*I've been working with [the Ensemble Leader] looking at how we can extend and embed some of that practice so we can use his experience as a legacy. We've done some other project alongside the [weekly session]. (Assistant Head-Springwood)*

*We had the weekly sessions, a lunch club that was more about fun and excitement, then an afternoon nurture type session. So, we have targeted so many different things. (Assistant Head-Springwood)*

*When you're looking for artists, it's always a risky business when you don't have specialist recommendation. (Headteacher-St Joseph's)*

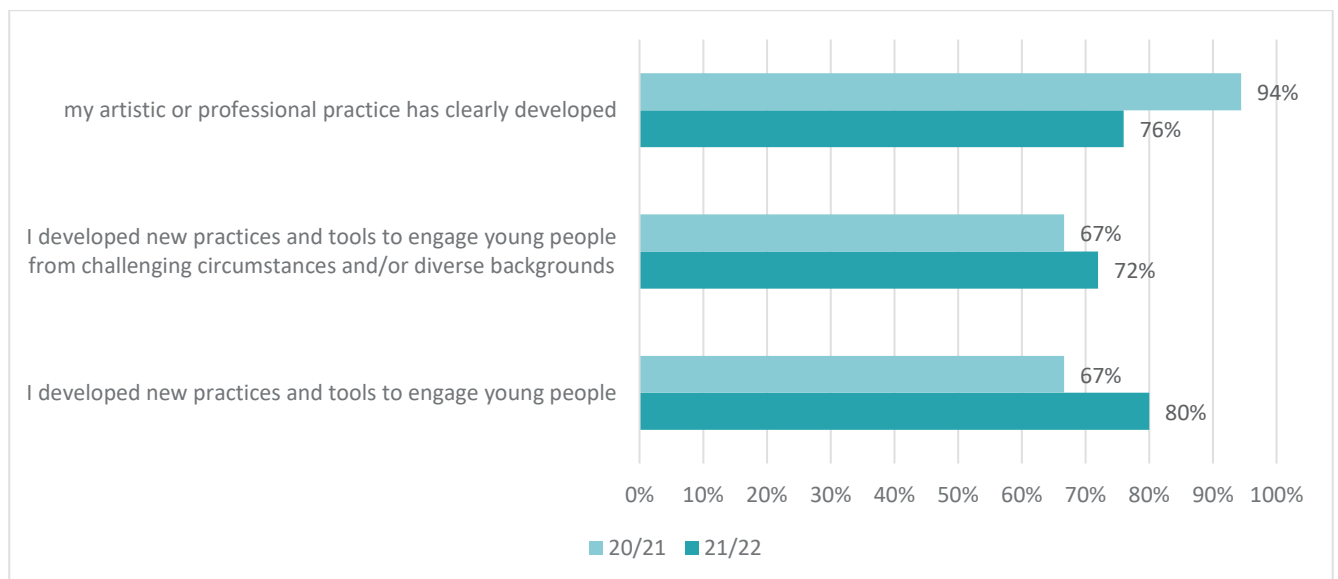
*We follow the national curriculum to the letter, it's what we have to do. Sometimes as a teacher, it's taking that step back and thinking, 'how might the children do this? Can I give them ownership of this?' [One of the teachers not directly involved with SD] has tried to do it with the science, asking them what practical activity they would want to do. It's spreading that across the curriculum. (Teacher-St Joseph's)*

*Overall, in school other teachers have benefitted from working with [the Ensemble Leader], she's given them a different way to present something...teachers have requested to work with [the Ensemble Leader]. (Headteacher-St Paul's Cross Lane)*

*The first class [during Stage Directions year 2] were brilliant at co-creation, and they couldn't let it go whereas this group [during year 3] haven't been that confident. I've learned how you'd adjust that co-creation depending on that group you've got. (Teachers-St Paul's Cross Lane)*

### Ensemble Leader learning and development

- The artist and practitioner survey shows an increase in the development of new practices and tools to engage young people overall, and the same for young people from challenging and/or diverse backgrounds
- While the majority of artists agreed that their professional practice clearly developed as a result of Stage Directions, in both years 2 and 3, a higher proportion agreed with this statement in year 2. This is likely as a result a high number of practitioners being in their second year working on the programme.



Ensemble Leaders had the opportunity to work with young people with backgrounds and abilities that they had not had the opportunity to before.

*My organisation is based in a Lake District, so it's a much less diverse community. Working with the Lowry, and working in Salford, especially on that celebration event, which was super accessible, it was free for the young people like giving it genuine access to everybody...socio economic factors, the fact that a lot of young people who generally wouldn't be able to access this. A lot of people that we're working with had never done theatre before, or never, had an experience like this before (The Knotted Project)*

It was clear that the length of time Ensemble Leaders were afforded to work alongside the same group of learners, as well as a teacher who knew them well, provided a different opportunity for their own development. The Springwood Ensemble Leader, experienced in working with SEND children, made new discoveries for his practice. These were mainly centred around the expectations that it is useful to place onto learners with additional needs. Where in the past he may have continued to push for traditionally imaginative and improvised responses from learners, through working with the teacher, he came to see the value in allowing some learners to choose from options instead of coming up with their own ideas. Learners still benefit from having the opportunity to practice performance and recall.

Learners at Springwood were presented with choices through the Boardmaker tool, something that the Ensemble Leader there got more practice in deploying throughout year 3 and continues to use the resources from Springwood in other settings.

*That was the most profound thing for me as a practitioner that happened in the project was, because I was with them for so long. There were a few things that I could see that I couldn't developmentally move forward. With imaginative play I've seen little moments where I thought, 'Oh, they are actually imagining something new'. [With other learners] I could tell that there was two or three that don't have the cognitive ability, maybe they will, I wouldn't want to ever say never. It really hit home with me that actually, some do need to make a choice out of 10. And at this time, that's the that's the most they can do. They're not going to think of a new idea. Whereas other times, I've just kind of driven through and thought I would be able to wave a bit of a magic wand. Having [the class teacher's] experience and just seeing their journeys and seeing their behaviours for a lot longer... It's a tricky one. I do understand you can get learned patterns of behaviour as well. But I actually think that they are almost as valid. Because what they're doing is*

*recalling something that's not improvised or imagined, like I would want to play it with a mainstream group. They're just thinking new ideas, is something that they're recalling, and it's something they get to do. So I wouldn't want to block it. But I think this idea that [the class teacher] knew them so well gave other techniques, I suppose, of continuing playing the exercise with them, but with some more resources. (EL-Springwood)*

*Boardmaker, the communication aids, I had used a bit [before Stage Directions]. But for me, my practice working with [the class teacher], I realised that there was an even bigger palette of choices of how you can use it. She was then making resources for me that I'm still using today. You have to pay for Boardmaker. So I could, as a freelancer pay for the actual package, the licence and I might one day because I use it a lot. The sort of level of the complexity of the communication. And it's really like, been a massive, I've used it again already in several projects (EL-Springwood)*

For one Ensemble Leader much of the learning was around co-creative practice, which he had used before, but Stage Directions had given him a chance to look at from a range of perspectives and in a range of circumstances. Additionally, this Ensemble Leader found more assertiveness through Stage Directions which he feels has helped him professionally.

*[I was able] to explore what co-creation meant, and when it wasn't when and when it was successful, it was very useful. (EL-Pendleton)*

*I had to give tough feedback to [the artist] at times, which was good in terms of my professional development, because I learned, I want it to be much more assertive. (EL-Pendleton)*

Ensemble Leaders also reported learning and development around using different platforms for the delivery of sessions.

*[The challenges of COVID have] made me much more flexible about how I work...I'm much looser, more response. (Ensemble Leader-St Joseph's)*

### Capacity in the local and regional cultural sector has been built

The Trainees working alongside the EL's in sessions report an increased appreciation of the cultural sector in Salford. Along with their growing number of connections through Stage Directions, this has resulted in an even more positive sense of Salford as somewhere they can

remain to live and work. This is significant given that most Trainees this year are Salford University graduates who would not be guaranteed to stay in Salford to continue their careers.

Additionally, the strong networks developed through Stage Directions have resulted in tangible job offers for a number of trainees who are now or will soon be working with artists and Ensemble Leaders they have met through the programme. Some discuss how this amounts to a way of providing them with a secure start where they can feel confident knowing they are working with people they have previous experience with.

One trainee has found that her connections in Salford, and her positive experience of community through Stage Directions, has helped to solidify her vision for her fledgling theatre company, which is now actively giving back to the theatre community of Salford through offering a platforms for actors.

Some practitioners noted that Stage Directions played a role in supporting the sector through pandemic conditions. At a time when many practitioners were leaving the industry to retrain or find alternative work, Stage Directions ensured theatre practitioners were supported both through the Stage Directions community and financially. It may be difficult to quantify the exact impact on the sector overall, however practitioners associated with Stage Directions reported a positive impact on themselves during this time.

Stage Directions during COVID also offered many practitioners their first opportunity to create digital resources and deliver session remotely, practices that they have gone on to use again and again, giving them greater flexibility in how they deliver for the sector overall.

*I'm moving back Salford in a month, which is exciting, because I do think it's a great place. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

*I'm now working with [an Ensemble Leader] and [an artist from Stage Directions] on a project in Blackpool teaching young people resilience through fit making. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

*Carrying on working with [the Ensemble Leader] is gonna be really good. So it's something new, but it's not quite as scary because I'm with someone I know. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

*There's definitely people I will continue to work with that I met on that project...nice to see other people's practice and the way they work...it's nice for you as a practitioner just to have a little bit of like, do the warm ups and be like, Oh, I haven't done this exercise*



*in a while. Oh, this is fresh. I like that one. I'll take that. You always like developing your practice with those kinds of projects, which is great. (The Knotted Project)*

*My theatre company, we now have a basis of what we are about, which is community. We are planning on running things at least twice a year for new artists, new directors, new writers, bringing those people together and create...And I don't think I would have had that without seeing how important that is for people [through Stage Directions] and how few choices people have...[we did] a monologue night of eight actors from around Manchester, some of them weren't represented, some were. We invited loads of people to go and watch it. And now some of them have agents that didn't have agents before...We are really heavily connected to Salford because we're really lucky that the University of Salford we went there, and as alumni, they've, they allow us to use their space. (Trainee-All Hallows)*

*A lot of people left the industry [during COVID]. So people that you had worked with in the past, got new jobs, or retrained or kind of left the industry entirely, which is sad. So there was definitely that element. And yeah, just when you can't be in a room with people like our work, yes, digital is great. Yes, you can do it. But like, you have to be in a room with people able to be like, working tactile with each other. Like, it's just, that's what we do. So it's, yeah, I think it definitely broke down a little bit over COVID. (The Knotted Project)*



## Communities (schools, families and broad public) and young people feel better connected to their locality through high quality performances

In year three children and young people from across the Onstage and Offstage programmes, children not taking part in Stage Directions but in the schools where sessions were taking place, and children benefitting from legacy funding had the opportunity to go to a range of theatre performances.

Stage Directions also produced a three-day theatre festival at The Lowry during which each of the schools that had taken part in the Onstage sessions performed in the Quays theatre in front of packed audiences of parents, guardians, teachers and learners from other schools performing on that day. Through this experience the CYPs worked with professional technicians from The Lowry and performed on a professional stage.

Stage Directions also held two performances on the final day of the Summer Creative Camp to which parents and guardians were also invited to attend. The performances took place outdoors on the University of Salford, New Adelphi Campus. Through this experience CYPs experienced being part of a performance that was professionally produced by outdoor arts theatre company Walk The Plank, working with technicians, musicians and using high quality set and costume.

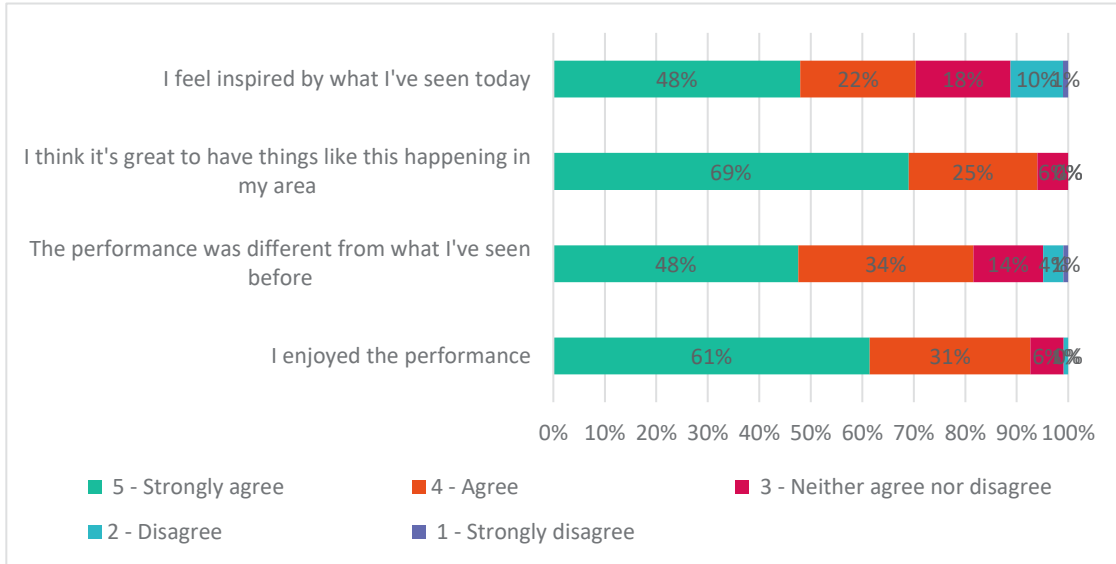
- 70% of adults and children attending performances that were either produced as part of the Stage Direction programme or they had access to via the Stage Directions programme agreed or strongly agreed that they felt inspired by the performances they saw.
- 94% of these audiences were pleased to see performances like these in their local area
- 82% said the performances were different from performances they had seen before
- 92% agreed that they enjoyed the performance
- 70% of audiences either haven't visited the theatre in the past 12 months or long, or don't know if they have nor not.

*It's my first time at The Lowry. (Parent-Springwood)*

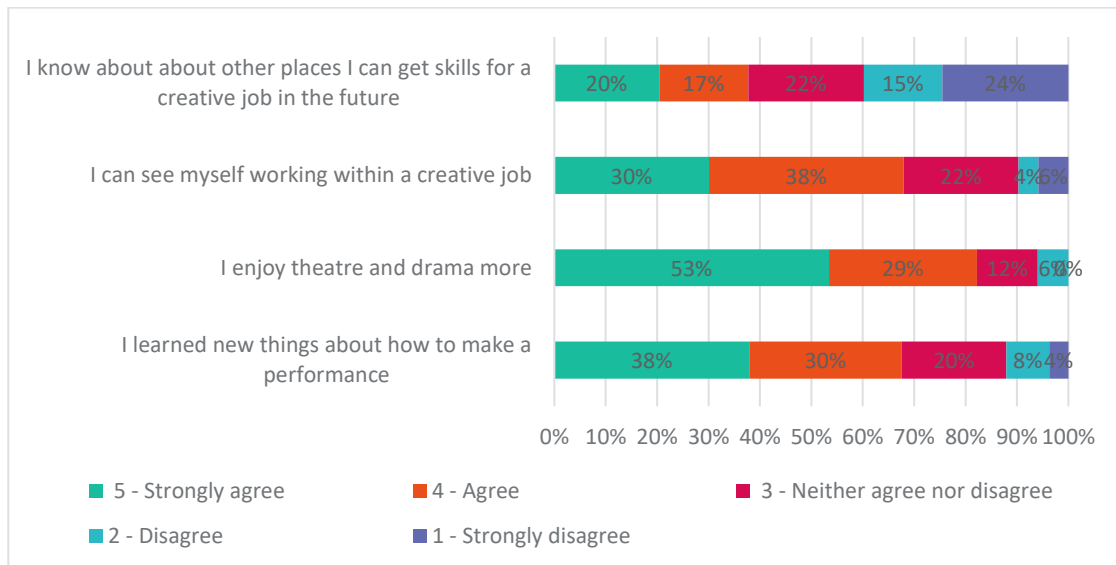
*Some parents might not choose to go to the theatre, or they might have not be able to access the arts in that manner due to various different reasons. So to have the all the*

*parents [at the end of year Celebration event at The Lowry was great]...And even when the children came down the staircase [to be picked up by their parents], they were greeted with a big kind of tunnel of light. It was it was lovely. (Headteacher-St Joseph's)*

**Response to performances by audiences**

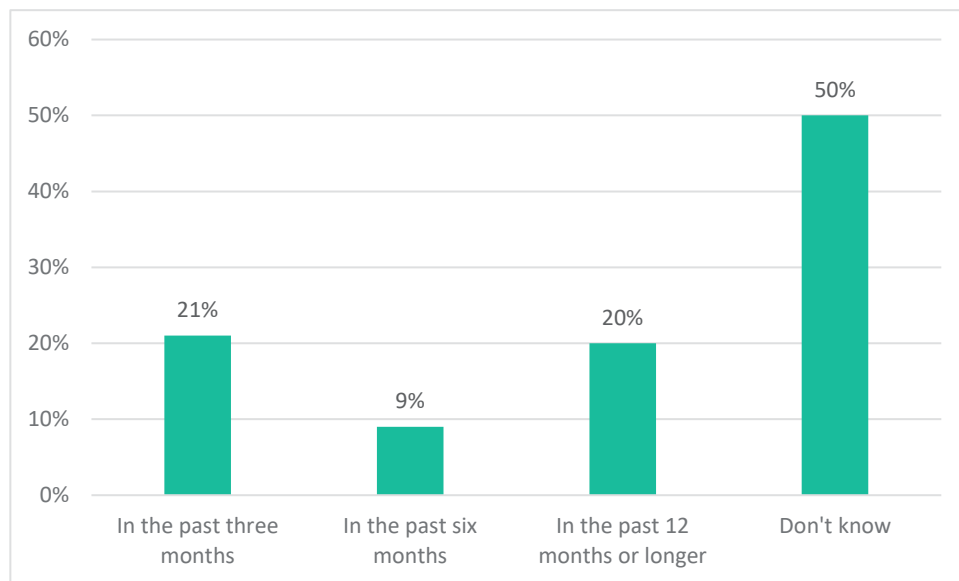


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### Last visit to the theatre



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- Teachers reported pupils who were fully engaged throughout performances when they visited The Lowry, telling their friends about the show afterwards. One teacher appreciated the access provision for a student with a visual impairment. Teachers reported that Lowry visits were the first experience of theatre for many pupils and that the majority of pupils wished to attend the theatre again. Teachers felt that children appreciated seeing a range of performances to inform their own creative styles. Schools would wish to bring classes to theatre again, but transport is a barrier, one which Stage Directions was able to assist them in overcoming during the programme.
- Parents felt pride in seeing their children perform at The Lowry Theatre, saying that the children had also made Salford proud with their performances.
- That the children and young people were able to carry out their final performances in The Lowry, for some parents 'one of the best theatres in Salford', was significant. Performing at The Lowry was a dream come true, with the validation this brings to the CYPs creating greater confidence in themselves.
- Parents attending the performances for the Summer Creative Camp were similarly impressed with the quality of the performance. They felt that opportunities such as the Summer Creative Camp were very rare in Salford, with one parent describing having searched for 'a stage' for their naturally performative child for some time ahead of finding this opportunity.

### **Response from parents attending the end of year performances at The Lowry**

*It's brilliant that they've got the chance to do this...they've done Salford proud. (Parent-St Paul's Cross Lane)*

*It helps him be more confident in himself...It's amazing to perform at The Lowry, I can't imagine him performing on the stage. Stage Directions is a good opportunity for the children with disabilities, it helps them to be like other children, for them to know they can do things that other children can do. (Parent-Springwood)*

*My son said it was a dream coming to The Lowry. (Parent-St Joseph's)*

*I never imagined when he joined Springwood that I'd see him performing at one of the best theatres in Salford. (Parent-Springwood)*

### **Responses from parents attending the performances for the Summer Creative Camp**

*I've not heard of anything else like this happening in Salford. [My son] can get out and meet people, have fun with them. It's inspired him, he's got the confidence for acting now. (Summer Camp-Parent)*

*[My daughter] has done a little bit of choreography she's worked with the younger ones which she's never done before. She's kept all the records of everything she has done. They've set up their own physical theatre group. Stage Directions have given them loads of advice and helped them over the last two years. They've had such a fantastic time and they've been able to embrace every bit of it. She's worked with a lot of different people [through Stage Directions], it's built her confidence. (Summer Creative Camp-Parent)*

## LCEPs gain better understanding about cross sector partnership and working is significantly extended

### Partnerships

In year 2 we reported the strengthening of the partnerships between the range of cultural, civic and education partners involved in Stage Directions which was a result of on the ground regular communication and positive decision making. This built trust and understanding between the partners.

The remaining challenge in year 2 was staff changes in schools resulting in a loss of some buy in from schools at times. This challenge appeared to be entirely overcome in year 3. Ensemble Leaders operated as artists in residence in the schools, which had been the case in year 2 but this was more effective here as they were able to work in person for, in most cases, an entire year.

The artist in residence model was positive for the Ensemble Leaders in creating a strong partnership with the school. As an artist in residence they were able to fully immerse themselves into the culture of the individual school, build solid relationships with teaching staff and young people. All this amounted to a rarer and ultimately more supportive experience for the Ensemble Leaders and for a greater appreciation of the benefits of performance activities and new learning for the schools.

*I was quite lucky in the shape of mine was an artist in residence. I could really build that rapport and what's brilliant about it is that you feel valued. You got really good support around in any potential challenges that might be, you don't feel alone. And a lot of the other times as a freelancer, you're alone. (EL-Springwood)*

Stage Directions forged greater connections and partnerships with existing theatre companies in the third year. These included DIY, The Knotted Project, CHOL, ThickSkin and Walk The Plank, with CHOL, DIY, ThickSkin going on to be awarded NPO funding for the first time in the 2023-26 Investment Programme from Arts Council England.

The Stage Directions core team had learned that by handing over some of the decision-making powers to creative partners resulted in the ability to test a range of approaches (where previously the approach had been front loaded taster sessions described above). This played to

the strengths of different stakeholders, while allowing for different approaches in different settings, ensuring those approaches were most appropriate for that setting.

CHOL Theatre Company delivered their 'Imaginary Communities' co-creative format in primary schools. The flex within the 'Imaginary Communities' model, that allowed for co-creative methodologies, curriculum links as well as focussing on literacy, meant that schools felt reassured around both the academic and creative benefits of the Stage Directions programme.

A strong partnership between Walk the Plank outdoor arts organisation and Stage Directions for the Summer Celebration in year 3 saw Walk the Plank operate as the sole producers of the final performance for this intensive camp. Walk the Plank were free to bring in their expertise and resources including high quality staging, costume, musicians and acrobats.

The Knotted Project are co-creation specialists who, through Stage Directions, had the chance to work on a project that was, as they described it, genuinely co-creative from start to finish.

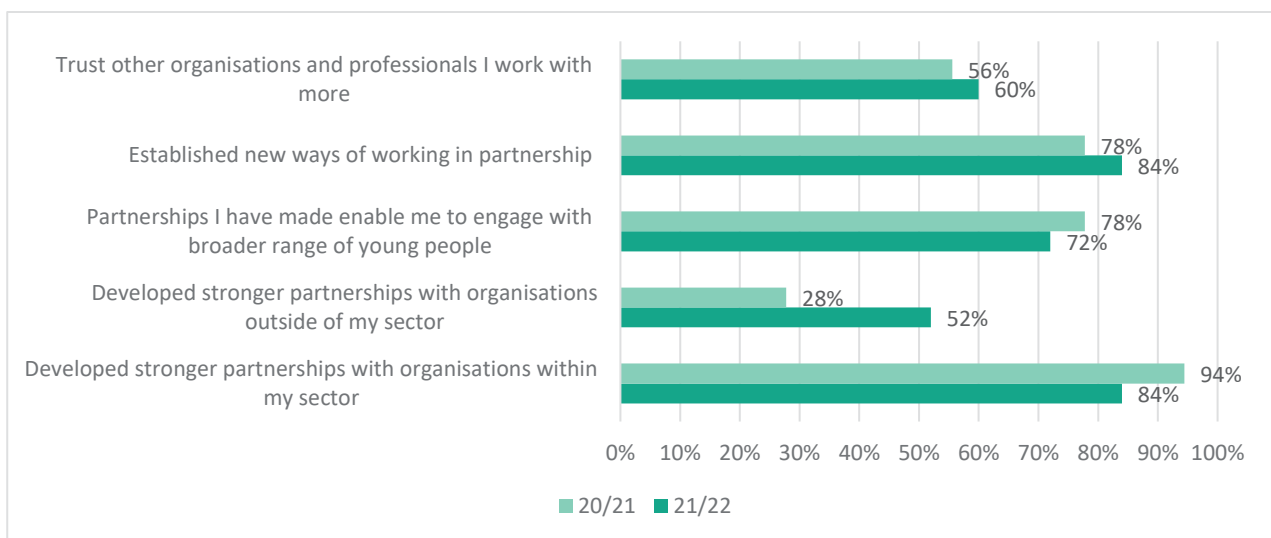
The role of the Stage Directions core team, through these strengthening partnerships, became the planning and matching between different stakeholders, ensuring a good fit, communicating early and over the length of the project. Stakeholders across schools, Ensemble Leaders, City Council partners, CYPs and creative partners reported the swift and effective support they received from Stage Directions and, where relevant, the clear and detailed briefing.

*Our focus is co creation and work with young people, developing talent and in community setting, so it's the perfect partnership. And it's nice to be able to have a project that is genuinely co created from start to finish. So from back when we were doing taster workshops in schools to see who wanted to pick physical, they're genuinely came from the young people. And again, with the celebration camp, it was a co-created piece of work with young people upskilling them in physical theatre, and new skills and new ways of devising and techniques. But also what are their ideas and what's coming from them. (The Knotted Project)*

### Artist survey- partnership responses years 2 and 3

- Survey responses show that artists and practitioners developed strong partnerships overall in both years 2 and 3
- Artists were most likely to have developed partnerships with organisations in their own sector and least likely to have developed partnerships outside of their sector

- The biggest increase on the partnership measures between years 2 and 3 was the development of partnerships with organisations outside of their sector. There were also increases in trust and establishing new ways of partnership working between years 3 and 3
- There were decreases in partnerships facilitating engagement with a broader range of young people that previously and developing stronger partnerships with organisations in the sector between years 2 and 3. However, there were a higher number of artists and practitioners in year 3 who engaged for a shorter length of time, for example, delivering a one off session for an Ensemble Leader in a school



Base: 20/21-18, 21/22-25

## The LCEP

For the wider LCEP Stage Directions has had a positive impact on Salford's reputation across the ten Greater Manchester Authorities. The LCEP is currently planning a pilot of further professional development for teachers within Salford, something they feel may not have been able to happen without Stage Directions strengthening the structure of the partnerships.

Through Stage Directions the LCEP feels they have proven that Salford can deliver high quality and high impact creative programmes for children and young people, as well as schools and creative practitioners. They feel they are in a strong position to build on this and attract further funding in the future.

*I've started sitting on other strategic boards across Salford across Greater Manchester, and also with the GM networks...I get the sense that Salford LCEP is perceived very*

*positively and as an LCEP that has managed to achieve a lot and a lot of that had a lot of actual real time impact on real people on young people on the education providers within the city. It's kind of a bit of a trailblazer...for Salford as a city in terms of its place within GM. Within the cultural conversations and awareness within GM having that is a positive thing... it's been good to kind of profile of the city and to kind of be able to showcase some of the positive things we do, I think, also for the perception and reality that we're really good at partnership working. (LCEP Chair)*

*An LCEP [in another GM local authority are], who are trying to set up at the moment have phoned me [to discuss our] experience, how we run ourselves, the communications and the constituent members of the steering group. So that's been positive. (LCEP Chair)*

*Internally within the city [Stage Directions has] shown that as a group, we have a track record for delivering really good work. And that's impactful. We're doing it with people, not to people...And therefore sets us on a good footing for other offers or programmes that we might want to initiate ourselves or to support as a group. This school year we're piloting a CPD offer for teachers living or working in Salford. And that's directly off the back of the LCEP steering group working well together...Together we have more clout, we have a single voice. We have shared resources...a unified message...I think the fact that Stage Directions came along, and it was an LCEP project and has worked well and the group has come to galvanise around that has meant that those structures are in place. (LCEP Chair)*

*Having hosted Stage Directions is really positive in a climate where everyone's struggling. It's allowed the city to prove that we can do really high quality work and have really high quality impacts and legacy In terms of the partnerships and networks...they're even stronger. And I think that's a real opportunity for us. And possibly can have been a way of showing slash convincing senior leaders within the city that this kind of creative programme is something that's worth getting behind. And it's really great is the kind of support around creative careers, working with teachers and supporting them to gain experience and confidence in commissioning artists themselves. But also that supporting young people in the first few years of secondary schooling, considering being creative within their career [during the careers event] putting them in touch with practising artists and people working in the creative industries, I think is a really positive thing. It'd be wonderful to see how they can be built into our city's general working practices. (LCEP Chair)*



## Legacy

### Schools legacy- legacy funding

Schools that took part in year 2 of Stage Directions received their legacy funding from the programme which they used during year 3, and year 3 schools are currently in the process of working with the Stage Directions core team to consider how they will spend their legacy funding.

The legacy funding from Stage Directions also came with a programme of support from the core Stage Directions team, who assisted schools in their decision making in response to the individual needs of the schools. The core team also helped schools to access skilled creative professionals to deliver activities where necessary.

With the legacy funding going forward schools are empowered, informed and experienced to make decisions for themselves in obtaining creative experiences for their learners that will best benefit each individual school.

### Schools that had legacy funding in year 3

#### St George's CE Primary School

In the 2021/22 academic year, St George's CE primary, who took part in Onstage Stage Directions activity in year 2 carried out a programme of legacy creative activities for their learners.

Activities the learners at St George's took part in, and the number of learners that did each activity are listed below.

Bringing Books to Life (Footlights Theatre)	238
Introduction to Shakespeare (Altru)	120
Conservation Animation Workshop (Chester Zoo)	28
Beauty and the Beast (Palace Theatre)	61

Room on the Broom (Lowry Theatre)	90
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Teachers and the Headteacher at St George's reported positive outcomes for their learners through the legacy programme, as well as feeling empowered now to rely less on the Stage Directions team and make decisions for themselves selecting specific programmes of activities and artists whom they know will benefit their learners the most.

*It has been a positive experience using the Legacy Fund. [The core Stage Directions team] has been amazing and has helped to make the whole process simple and easily accessible. (Teacher-St George's)*

*This fund has enabled us as a school to provide valuable opportunities for our pupils that would normally be out of reach. It has had a significant impact on the pupils involved - particularly at KS2. (Teacher-St George's)*

*The children have had the opportunity to work with a variety of professionals as well as visiting theatres to see productions. (Teacher-St George's)*

*It has had a direct impact on our pupils' personal development. They have experienced things outside of the curriculum which they would not have been able to access otherwise. Many of our children have been inspired to further their talents in Creative Arts. (Headteacher-St George's)*

*Looking forward, we would continue to provide our KS2 pupils with the opportunity to work with professionals to create Shakespeare plays. In addition, we would like to book Dominic Berry (or another professional poet) to inspire creative writing and a love of modern poetry in our pupils. (Headteacher-St George's)*

### The Albion Academy

27 students across Year 9 were invited to watch Blood Brothers at The Palace Theatre. Students were selected for their hard work and engagement in drama lessons and also because they have shown interest in choosing the subject for one of their GCSE options.

*It was a great opportunity to be able to take a select group of students to see Blood Brothers - a play they studied in drama in Year 8. It was lovely to see them recognise particular scenes that they had worked on in class and see how it can be done on a professional level. There were a lot of tears at the end so it was so lovely to see how theatre can touch young people in that way! (Teacher 1)*

*A great show which the students enjoyed and really got into the storyline. Students enjoyed the humour and were touched by the sad bits ! I could hear them discussing this in the interval and on the way home. A first-time experience for many of them. (Teacher 2)*

*It was a once in a lifetime experience. (Learner feedback)*

*It was amazing. (Learner feedback)*

*You appreciated the hard work of the actors. There were some really memorable scenes that I will always remember. (Learner feedback)*

*You can really see how it can inspire people to want to go into drama in the future. (Learner feedback)*

*As my first time at the theatre, I really enjoyed it. (Learner feedback)*

### Lark Hill Primary School

The Ensemble Leader for this primary school was invited to back to deliver a number of legacy session with a range of learners. This school also used the legacy funding to pay for theatre visits. Activities made possible through the legacy fund included the below activities:

Sessions with an artist	135 (inc. 62 yr 5 and 75 yr 6 learners)
A single drama session with an artist	88 (yr 1 learners)
Transport and tickets to watch 'Stickman' at The Lowry	64 (yr 2 learners)

*More children have had the opportunity to experience high quality theatre performances. (Assistant Head-Lark Hill)*

*More children have had the opportunity to participate in high quality drama teaching. (Assistant Head-Lark Hill)*

*CPD for staff - watching [the artist] has increased staff knowledge and confidence at teaching drama. (Assistant Head-Lark Hill)*

*[The artist] has supported the year 6 production. (Assistant Head-Lark Hill)*

*Children have been able to thrive through drama and some children's confidence has increased. (Assistant Head-Lark Hill)*

### Schools that will have legacy funding after the close of the programme

*We've had an email about the legacy funding, which is just absolutely amazing. It just continues, it's wonderful. It will impact the school and the children. Not just in the class, who took part in the Stage Directions, but we'll think about how to use that, that money so it's, inspiring for all the children at St. Joseph's, immersing them in the arts, and also using some of those practitioners possibly that we worked with last year and any other recommendations [Stage Directions have] because that's always good to know, as well. (Headteacher-St Joseph's)*

### Schools' legacy- activities not funded by Stage Directions

It is telling of the success of the programme that at least two of the schools involved in year 3 have plans to secure external funding to continue with performance activities with artists in their schools. Indeed, one of the strongest legacies of this project has been the forging of ties between schools and artists. Ensemble Leaders from both St Joseph's and Springwood are in the process of completing applications for external funding. These Ensemble Leaders describe a situation in which the level of trust has been so well developed between themselves and the schools, and the benefits of this kind of activity so self-evident, that this is a natural next step. Additionally, there was a sense that, although one year of activity was of clear benefit to the learners, and indeed, for most Ensemble Leaders, far longer than they would usually be able to deliver sessions for the same groups of participants, a longer timeframe of two or three years could result in deeper and more powerful impacts. Ensemble Leaders had built strong partnerships with the schools and developed positive learning practices between them. They felt that the learners that they worked with had come a long way in confidence and understanding. Despite this, these Ensemble Leaders felt that they had only just begun to scratch the surface of the potential for agency, creativity and freedom of expression these young people were capable of.

The teaching staff at St Joseph's has ambitions for the learners have the opportunity to share their voices even wider within their community than they have done so far through Stage Directions, a sentiment echoed by one of the artists also working on Stage Directions.

*I'm interested in how projects like this are the start of the relationship with a school...I would like to think about this over three years rather than one. We're building understanding that will enable us to do better deeper work. I'm seeing this as a starting point. (Ensemble Leader-St Joseph's)*

*The children had created this wonderful piece of art which was performed for their parents and our close school community. But actually, we were talking about how the children's voices can be heard to that wider community as well. Because the performance that the children created, it wasn't imposed upon them what they needed to do, it was created and cleverly brought out by [the Ensemble Leader]. It's helping them to succeed, but also through their own voice, but also for a wider audience as well. (Headteacher-St Joseph's)*

*We've been so blessed to be involved in the project. We will take things forward...And those children have been very, very lucky, they've taken a lot from it as well. It's done them the world of good. (Headteacher-St Joseph's)*

*I want to take this project that to the Arts Council with a colleague from Springwood. The reason why that [funding application] is so strong is because I've already got quotes from them saying we'd like to work with [the Springwood Ensemble Leader]. But also I feel like I want to enrich the learners there and they've got specific things that I'm interested in trying to develop. And so if I hadn't done this project, I wouldn't have had that exposure. (EL-Springwood)*

*These kinds of projects have to happen up and down the country, I've said this a million times now. It feels like a fresh new model, co creation, it's really not, but I feel it should be the way forward in how you work with young people, especially. The traditional model [of theatre-making] doesn't bring as much to the table as co creation can, genuinely drawing on young people's lived experiences makes the work more authentic, more community focused, more inspiring. Everything. It should be developed and rolled out further and not lose those schools connections, and [consider] what can happen in the community, and how can it just go to the next level. (The Knotted Project)*

Artists who worked on Stage Directions have already begun to be independently approached by schools in Salford to invite them to come and work with them. This is a change in the way that schools are often able to deal with artists. As one Ensemble Leader mentioned, it can be difficult to maintain relationships with schools when they are not already existing or when schools haven't been shown the benefit of performance activities.

*I've had a few schools in Salford get in touch recently wanting to book us for physical theatre, including three Stage Directions schools. (The Knotted Project)*

*Communicating with schools can be difficult. Sometimes, they don't get back to you. (EL-Springwood)*

Oakwood, a SEND high school which took part in year 3 of Stage Directions will be re-introducing drama as a subject for their learners for the first time in over 10 years. The classes will be delivered by the Teacher who worked with Stage Directions on the Onstage programme in year 3.

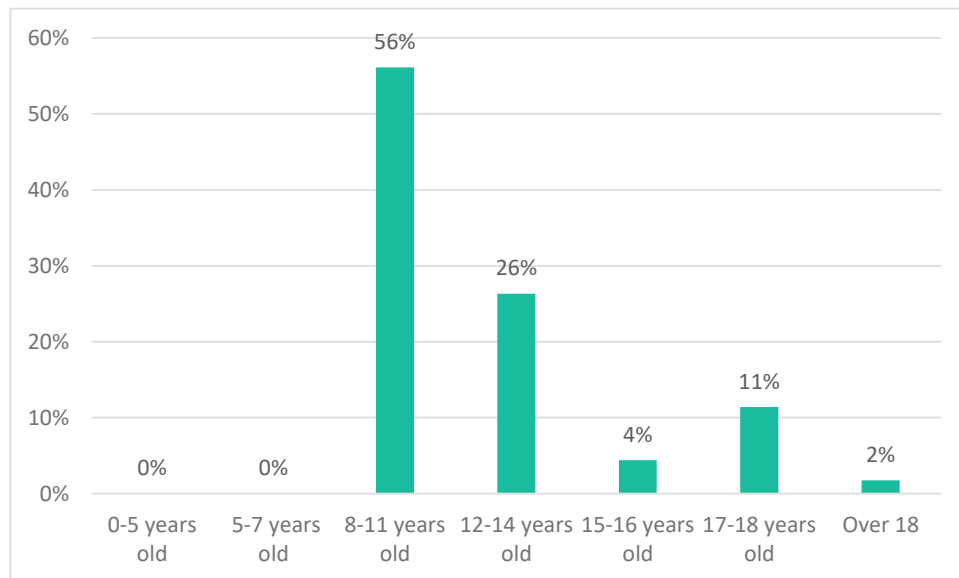
*They'll be doing Arts Award, potentially up to silver, which will be the qualification they'll get at the end of the year because we don't do GCSE's in our school. (Teacher-Oakwood)*

## Participant baseline and Audiences surveys demographics

### Audiences

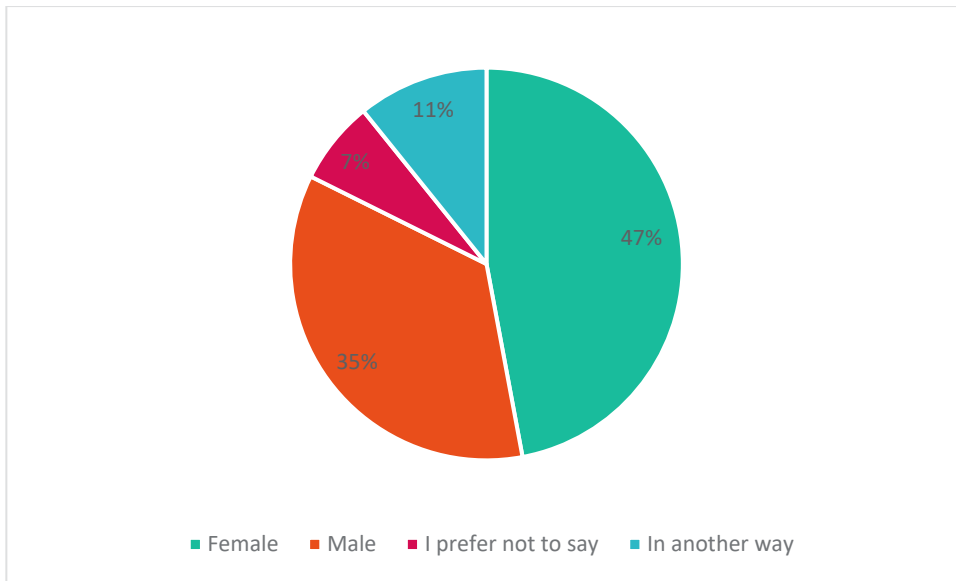
- More than half of the CYP audience surveyed were aged between 8-11 year old, just over a quarter were 12-14 years old.
- Just under half of audiences were female and 35% were male, with 11% identifying in another way and 7% preferred not to say.
- 61% of audience identified as White British, with the second most common Black or Black British: African at 12%
- 10% of audiences responding to the survey identified as disabled.

### Age



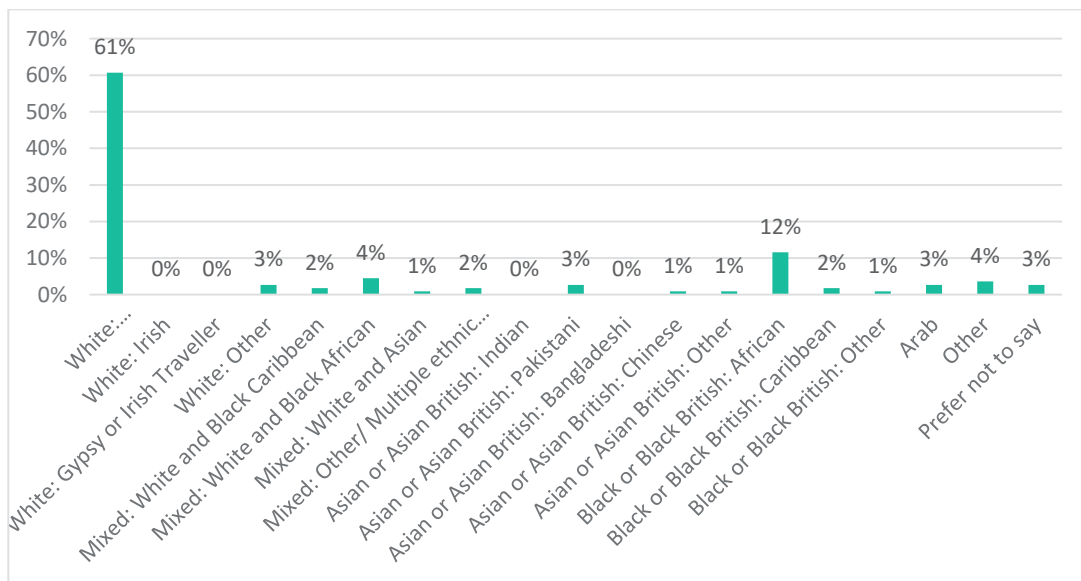
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### Gender



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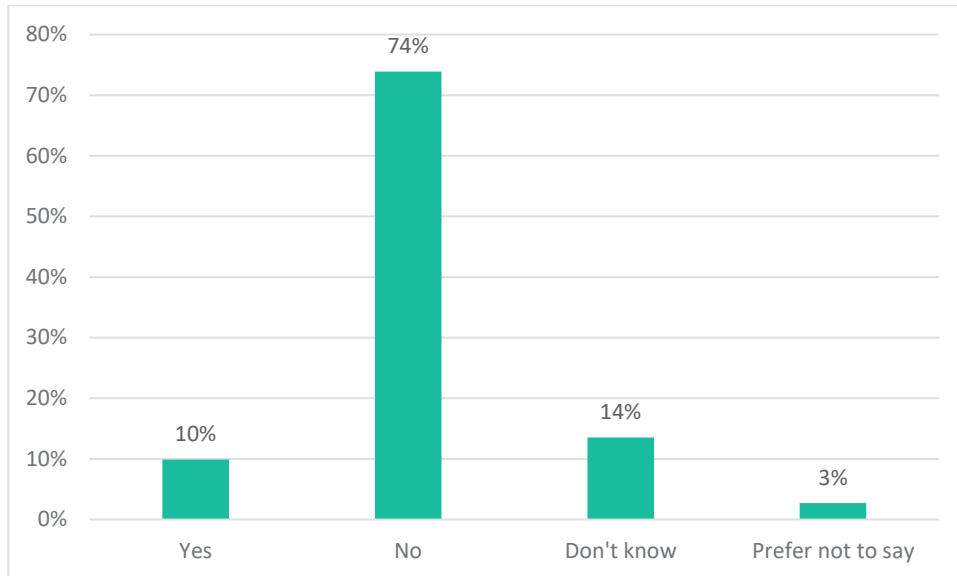
### Ethnicity



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**Disability**

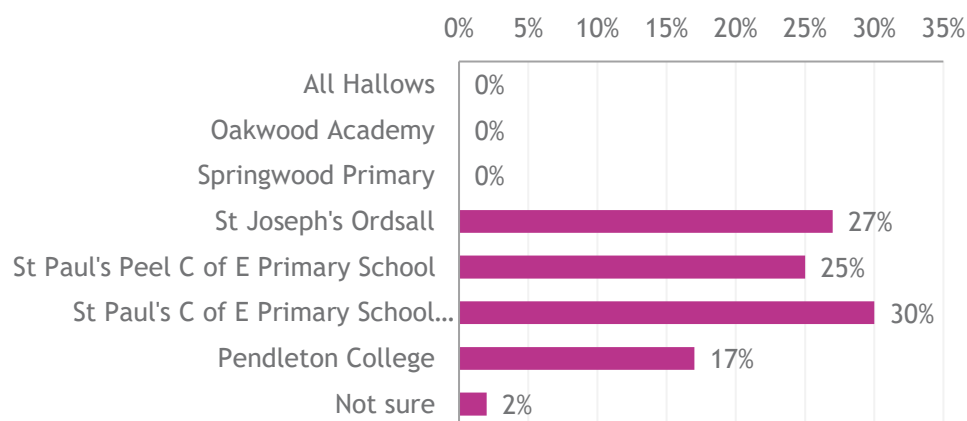


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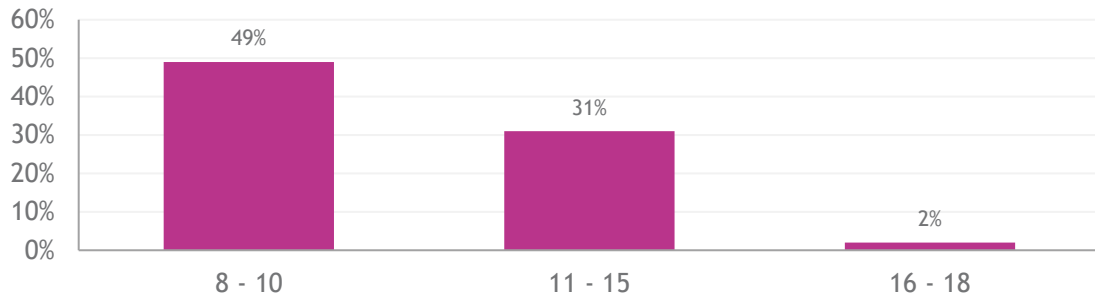
**Participants**

- The responses to the participant survey reflect the demographics of the three non-SEND primary schools and FE college, therefore the picture here is not complete.
- Most significantly, the survey tells us the 4% of the participants have disabilities, while the proportion is likely to be much closer to 51% when we consider the SEND schools combined with those who declared themselves as disabled on the survey
- The proportions for the age ranges of the participants is broadly similar to the proportions recorded through monitoring.

**School attendance**

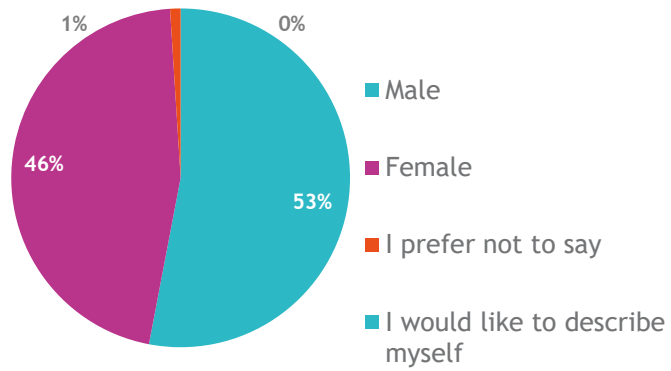


Age



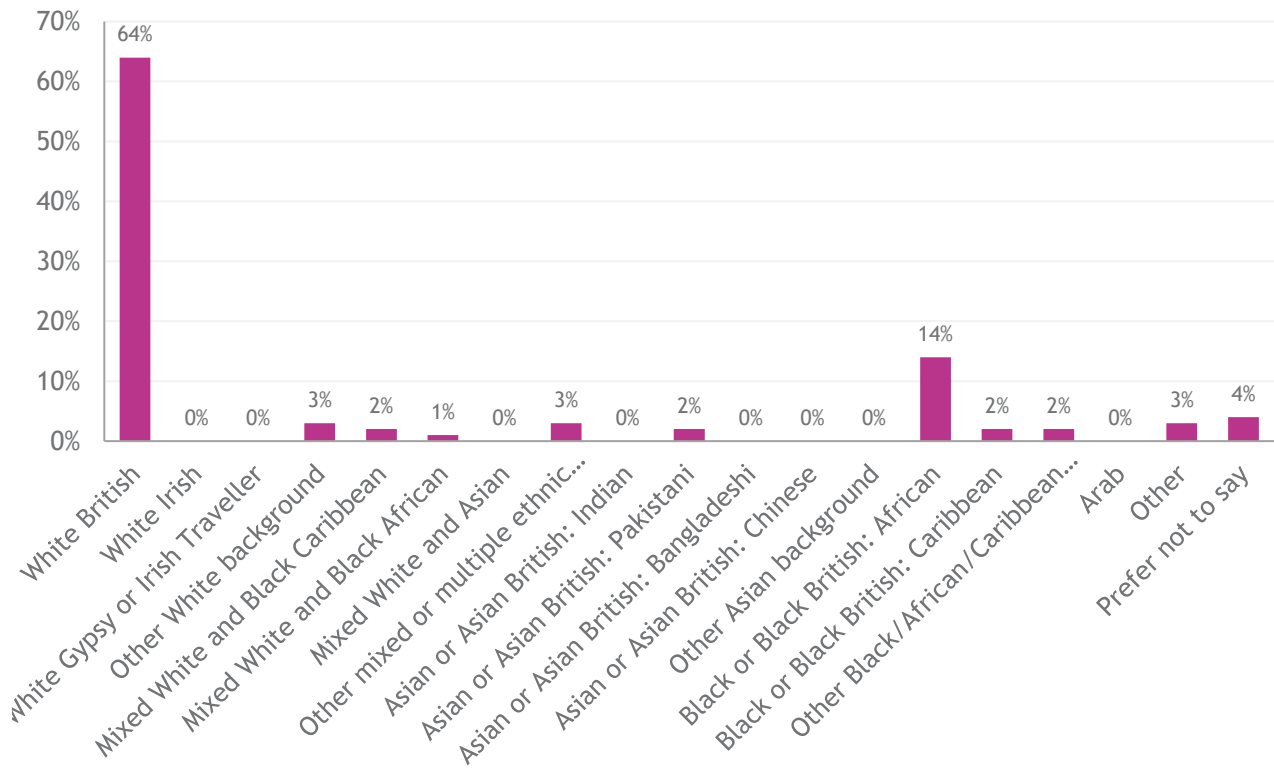
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Gender



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Ethnicity



Base: 99

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 - 5 Creative Habits of Mind

#### Collaborative

- Giving and receiving feedback- wanting to contribute to the ideas of others and hear how one's own ideas can be improved
- Sharing the 'product'- creative outputs matter to have impact beyond the creator
- Co-operating in a way appropriate to the situation- meaning working collaboratively when needed, not necessarily all the time

#### Inquisitive

- Wondering and questioning- beyond simply being curious, posing concrete questions to help them think through and develop new ideas
- Exploring and investigating- acting on responses/outcomes to questioning to find out more
- Challenging assumption- appropriate scepticism, not taking things at face value with examination

#### Disciplined

- Developing techniques- whether skills acquired are new or established the creative individual will practice in order to improve.
- Reflecting critically- after ideas are generated, evaluation is important, using decision-making skills to act on the evaluation
- Crafting and improving- taking pride in work, attending to details and correcting errors

#### Persistent

- Tolerating uncertainty- important when actions or goals are not fully set out
- Sticking with difficulty- tenacity, helping to get beyond familiar ideas and come up with new ones
- Daring to be different- a level of self-confidence as a pre-requisite to sensible risk taking

## Imaginative

- Playing with possibilities- manipulating, trying out and improving ideas
- Making connections- seeing patterns and bringing together ideas, reflections and observations from different places
- Using intuition- making connections that may not happen through analytical thinking alone