

Vixen

Impact Evaluation Findings



Introduction

In autumn 2021 Travelling Light toured its new production *Vixen* to Bristol primary schools and community settings.

Vixen is an original story about an 11-year-old girl who is turning into a fox. The 45-minute play includes themes of friendship, loss, belonging, community, immigration, transition and change.

Independent Evaluator Dr. Elaine Faull was commissioned to evaluate the impact of *Vixen* on the pupils that experienced it.

The evaluation involved eleven classes from seven schools. Overall, 287 children were observed and participated in the evaluation.

The evaluation included semi-structured discussion, a visual questionnaire asking the children how they remembered feeling, and an arts-based writing and drawing method. The evaluation also included observation of children's reactions during the performance.

The evaluation report provides insight into the impact of the performance on school children by listening to their responses initially and over time.

This document provides a brief summary of the findings.

To read in more detail, contact us for the full evaluation:

admin@travellinglighttheatre.org.uk



Children's first experience of theatre

Travelling Light's visit was children's first experience of theatre. This was particularly the case in years 3 and 4, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

- Through touring to schools Travelling Light aims to ensure children from all backgrounds have access to high quality theatre performance, often for the first time.

How did children engage with Vixen?

From observations, it was clear all children from all ages and abilities were engaged and captivated throughout the performance. They used words such as 'amazing', 'awesome', 'captivated', 'curious' and 'funny' to describe their experience.

- Teachers were surprised by the heightened level of engagement, concentration, and involvement from their classes, which far exceeded their expectations, particularly from those children with additional learning, behavioural or emotional needs.



What did the children say?

**“ I felt several emotions...
I felt sad, I felt happy, and
I felt I was going to explode
(laughs) because I hadn't
seen anything like it before. ”**

(Comment from a Year 4 child who
had not experienced theatre previously)

**“ I really liked it. I felt a bit sad
about her Mum. I felt weird inside –
a bit happy a bit sad but together. ”**

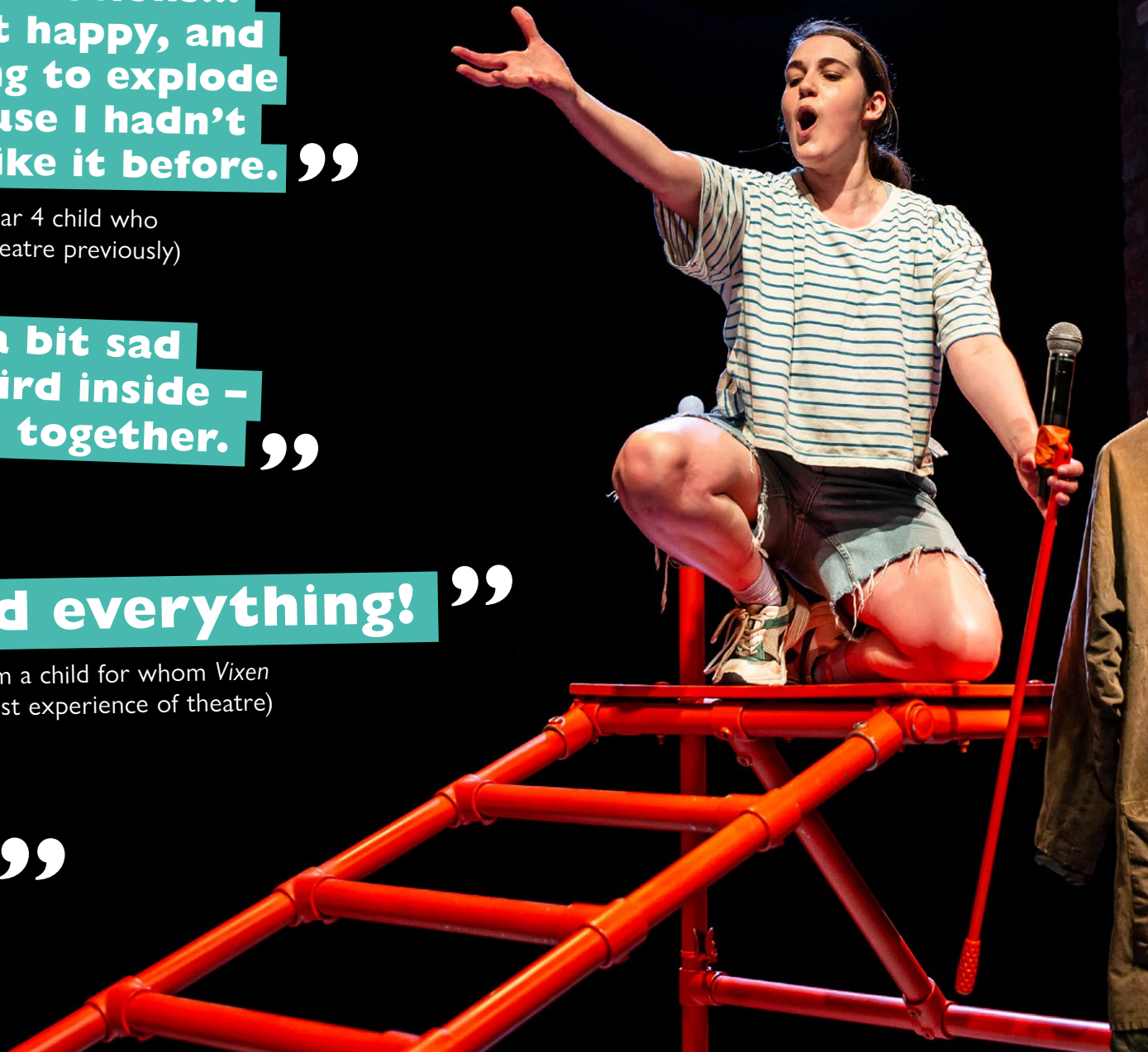
(Comment from a Year 4 child)

“ I enjoyed everything! ”

(Quote from a child for whom Vixen
was their first experience of theatre)

**“ I loved it... it was
the best thing ever. ”**

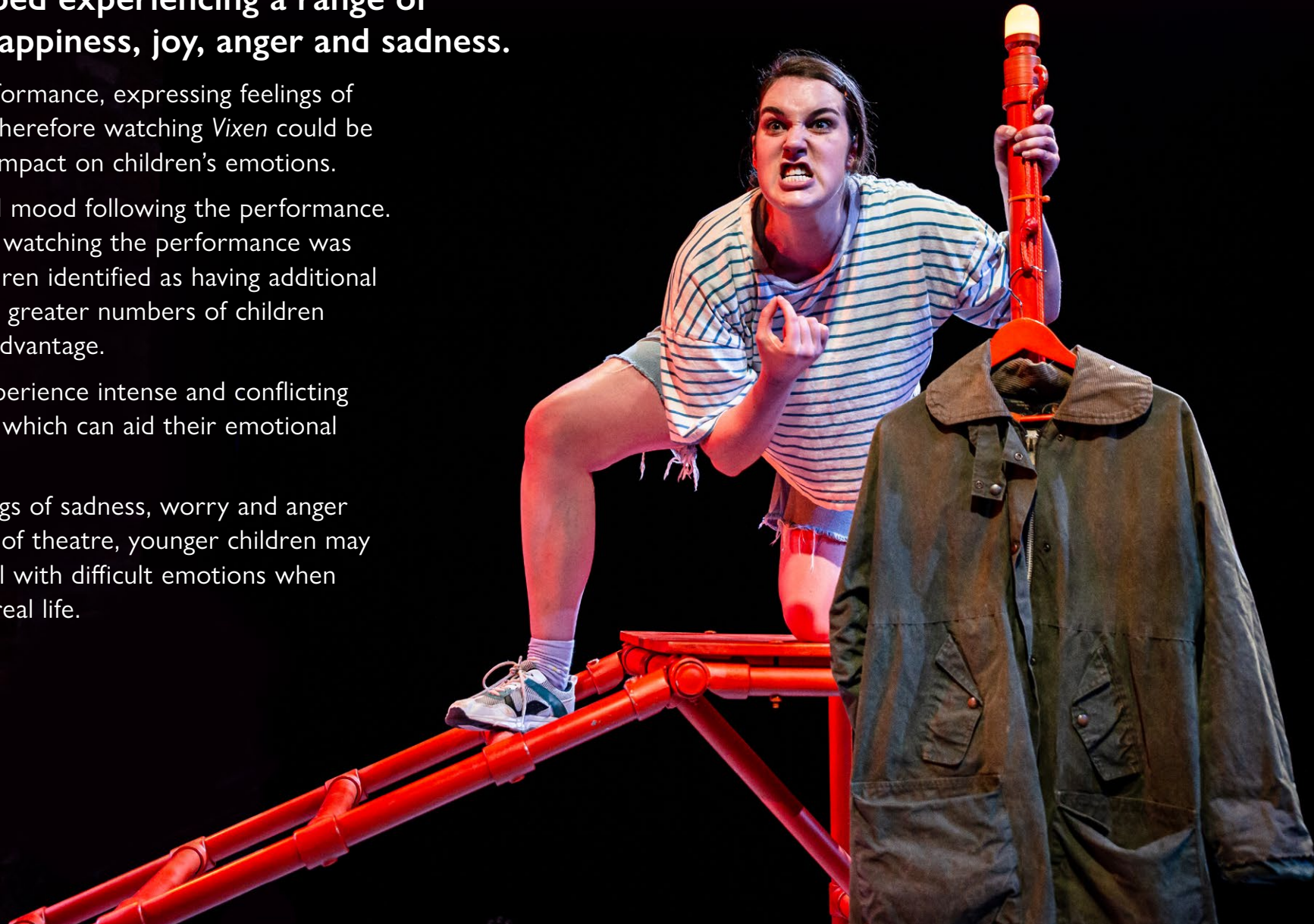
(Comment from a Year 4 child with additional needs)



What was the immediate impact of watching the show?

The children described experiencing a range of emotions, such as happiness, joy, anger and sadness.

- Children enjoyed the performance, expressing feelings of enhanced happiness and therefore watching *Vixen* could be seen as having a positive impact on children's emotions.
- Children had an improved mood following the performance. The positive change from watching the performance was more pronounced in children identified as having additional needs and in schools with greater numbers of children experiencing financial disadvantage.
- Children were able to experience intense and conflicting emotions in a 'safe' space which can aid their emotional development.
- Having experienced feelings of sadness, worry and anger within a mediated setting of theatre, younger children may be more confident to deal with difficult emotions when they experience them in real life.



What was the long-term impact of watching the show?

The emotional impact of the performance was seen to be long-lasting for many children. Most children remembered in more detail, and in greater depth up to three months after the performance than post-performance.

- The older classes focussed on the narrative, whilst the younger class remembered more of the emotional aspects.
- Most children enjoyed remembering and reliving the performance.
- In most cases children remembered far beyond teacher expectation.
- Over time some children recreated aspects of the narrative, adapting it to fit their own understanding and experience.
- Children who were revisited after 5–12 weeks provided different and more detailed responses than their immediate post-performance reflections. This was evident in all classes who were revisited.
- This would suggest that the children have continued to reflect on the performance for the details to have moved from their short-term memory and entered their long-term memory.



Conclusion

Teachers and children were delighted to welcome Travelling Light into their schools. They enjoyed having a high-quality artistic event visit the children and provide a break from the everyday culture of the school.

Many children and teachers spoke of their engagement in the performance, particularly in the interwoven themes of relationships and diversity within the narrative.

From evidence gathered during this evaluation it is clear watching the performance of *Vixen* had a positive impact on children; improving their mood, extending their emotional literacy, introducing and building their understanding of theatre. This evaluation has shown that this impact goes beyond the instant enjoyment and is longer lasting.





Travelling Light

Just bring your imagination

▶ travellinglighttheatre.org.uk

f [travellinglighttheatre](https://www.facebook.com/travellinglighttheatre)

@ tl_theatre

Photos by Camilla Adams

The
Courtts
Foundation



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Registered Charity Number: 1065012