



Impact report

2023–24

Our vision

A world where every child's imagination
is inspired by theatre.

Our mission

We create theatre *with* and *for* children
and young people, lighting up imaginations
and sparking creativity.



How Travelling Light makes a difference

our Theory of Change

Travelling Light is working towards a world where every child's imagination is inspired by theatre.

This means that children and young people...

Experience and share joy with others.

Live in neighbourhoods that are vibrant and creative places.

Have creativity at the heart of their development.

Engage with creative storytelling and play.

Share imaginative experiences that explore their feelings, ideas and place within the world.

Because they...

Experience theatre that is created with their stories at the heart.

Experience theatre in their communities.

Feel valued as individuals and artists.

Are at the centre of how work is planned, created and delivered.

To achieve this we create theatre *with* and *for* children and young people...

In our local community, from our studio in Barton Hill, Bristol.

In schools and early years settings, supporting the cultural entitlement of hundreds of pupils per year.

That 'travels light' to where children are, reaching children, young people and families who would not otherwise have the opportunity to experience theatre.

Productions

Inspiring imaginations
through theatre



When The Birds Sang

A co-production with Theatre Hullabaloo

781 children in Bristol watched *When The Birds Sang*, a new dance-theatre show for ages 4+, which we toured to schools in Bristol.

“ I have never seen anything like that before. That was amazing. ”

Year 1 pupil immediately after the performance.
This child had not seen any theatre previously and was transfixed throughout the performance.

“ The production of *When The Birds Sang* was thought provoking and different. Travelling Light's productions are unique. It is so good that they perform in schools otherwise our children would not see theatre. ”

Teacher

Inspired by children's own experiences, it combined contemporary dance and storytelling to celebrate the power of the imagination.

Independent evaluation showed that most children would not have experienced theatre if *When The Birds Sang* had not visited their school, and that the show enabled them to explore complex emotions through storytelling that did not talk down to children.





Igloo

1,203 children and their carers enjoyed *Igloo* – our show for the very youngest theatre goers (0-3 year olds) – which we toured to children's centres and community settings in Bristol and around the South-West.

**“ So wonderful,
simple and
inclusive. ”**

Audience feedback

We reached many children and their carers who would not otherwise experience theatre, both through targeted community performances and engaging with early years settings and children's centres.

“Working with Travelling Light has certainly enhanced their language development. In the sessions and following the performance, the open-ended nature of the work gave the children the chance to speak up...there was lots of play and many different narratives were going on.”

Nursery practitioner

Each show included a facilitated play session following the performance and audience members were given an Igloo picture book and a free activity sheet to enable families to continue with creative play at home.

Independent evaluation told us that *Igloo* supported children's speech and language. Children who watched *Igloo* were more able to articulate their feelings and emotions, and the accompanying play session and resources supported creative play in families' homes and in early years settings.





Creative Learning

Light Up School Learning

Light Up School Learning, our two-year project funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Teacher Development Fund finished in July 2023, having reached over 1700 children and 35 teachers over two years.

**“It's the best training
I have had in the
last fifteen years.”**

Teacher

The project involved artists working alongside teachers from five primary schools across Bristol, supporting them to use drama activities to improve pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Independent evaluation showed that *Light Up School Learning* had a significant impact on teachers and pupils, supporting pupils' speech and language, confidence, wellbeing, and engagement with learning. It enabled teachers to embed drama into their curriculum teaching.



Play In A Week and Arts Days

94 pupils took part in our Play In A Week projects at Bristol's Victoria Park Primary School and Dolphin School.

“There are some children who I rarely hear speak who come to life when Play In A Week is on.”

Headteacher, Victoria Park Primary school

“Play In A Week made me feel more confident on stage, made me feel happy and I looked forward to going to school!”

Pupil

Play In A Week celebrates the creative ideas and imaginations of children; valuing them as artists in their own right. A whole year group spend a week working with our artists to produce a play, developing their skills as actors, musicians, dancers and designers.

As part of our Creative Learning programme, a further 362 children took part in 32 creative workshops and Arts Days in schools during the year.

Youth Theatre

For young people aged 7-19



Our Youth Theatre groups enjoyed exploring their creativity, having fun and learning new skills in drama and storytelling, with weekly sessions in term time.

“It’s amazing and makes me feel great! I come to Travelling Light because I feel free when I act!”

Member of 7-10s

Youth Theatre members told us that they:

- Valued creativity, freedom and having fun within the groups.
- Experienced increased confidence, making them feel braver and able to express themselves.
- Have made friends through the groups.
- Felt welcomed and supported by facilitators, and the groups were an inclusive space where they could be themselves and feel part of a community.

We provide free and discounted places to make sure finance is not a barrier to young people attending, and this year 45% of our Youth Theatre received bursaries and free places.

Louder Than Words

Shortlisted for a national award



Louder Than Words, our youth theatre group for Disabled children and young people aged 7+, celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2023 and was shortlisted for the Fantastic For Families Audience Impact & Innovation Award, alongside 5 other organisations nationally.

**“ This is the first club
I have ever felt I fitted in. ”**

Participant

**“ Travelling Light really meets the
young people’s needs. Louder Than
Words has got a unique something
about it, and I am so grateful. ”**

Parent

The Audience Impact and Innovation Award recognises the achievements of creative organisations and their innovation and adaptability to reach and make a difference to families in need.

Our evaluation told us that participants valued feeling included and accepted in the group, and that it developed their wellbeing, self-esteem and friendships. Parents told us it is a unique service in Bristol and if it was not there their child would not be able to attend any other group.

Summer School for Disabled Young People



11 young people took part in a summer school for Disabled young people, which we ran in partnership with WECIL – West of England Centre for Inclusive Living.

“Whenever I have worked with Travelling Light, it’s a joy. The children always leave smiling. They don’t get bored. There is a difference I see in them when they are at Travelling Light. Travelling Light understand young people.”

WECIL staff member

Over the course of four days (one per week), young people created their own story; which celebrated the resilience, strength, imagination and creativity that is within all of us. The summer school ended with a performance for family and friends in our studio.

Evaluation showed that the project met a clear need for Disabled young people in the holidays.

Creative holiday workshops

In the school holidays **62 children** took part in **17 free creative holiday workshops with free healthy meals** through our partnership with food charity St Luke's Lunch.

“If St Luke's and Travelling Light weren't running this holiday club, he wouldn't have space to run and play. He gets to be a child, he has freedom to be himself.”

Parent

The partnership combines each charity's specialisms to provide free creative holiday activities in Barton Hill alongside healthy meals, tackling food poverty and lack of affordable activities locally in the school holidays. Activities included storytelling, craft making and drama games.

Evaluation with families showed activities supported children's confidence and creativity and brought families in the community together. It also provided a welcoming and accessible introduction to theatre with 7 participants going on to join our Youth Theatre.



**In 2023-24 we
were proud that:**

1,984

children and their carers watched our shows *When The Birds Sang* and *Igloo*, including **1,343** who took part in workshops and play sessions linked to the shows.

62 **children** in our local area of Barton Hill took part in **17 free creative holiday workshops** with free healthy meals, and **113 local community members** took part in our creative workshops as part of community events.

107 **children and young people** enjoyed creating theatre outside school as part of our Youth Theatre and Louder Than Words groups and our summer school for young Disabled people.

576 **pupils, 60 students and 20 teachers and early years practitioners** benefitted from our Creative Learning programme in early years settings, schools, higher and further education.

We provided employment for

38 **freelance artists** and facilitators, and approximately **475** **days of paid work.**

86% We achieved target Baseline for Theatre Green Book on our Igloo tour with **86% of our sets, costumes and tech materials** coming from a **reused or recycled source.**

YOU can help spark children's creativity and inspire their imaginations.

From families experiencing moments of shared joy when watching theatre for the first time, to young people finding a safe space to express themselves, creative opportunities can change lives.

Every year, we help thousands of children, young people and families to create, imagine and experience great stories.

As a children's charity, we rely on donations to keep providing opportunities to create and imagine for all children and young people, especially those who are the least able to seek them.

Support Travelling Light's work today.
Visit: travellinglighttheatre.org.uk/donate

In 2024-25 we will deliver:

Winter Lights

A community event in January 2025 with performances by young people based on the theme 'moments of joy': bringing together stories from young people and our communities, along with a lantern parade, workshops and installations.

Little Lights

A pilot project continuing our exploration of child-led creative play in early years, following on from *Igloo* and deepening our relationships with early years settings.

Light Up Language

A three-year project, working in depth with schools and early years settings using drama to support pupil oracy (speaking and listening).

Youth and Community programme

Continuing our regular engagement with local children, young people and families and providing safe creative spaces outside school from our studio in Barton Hill.

Creative Learning programme

Continuing our engagement with schools and education settings; and exploring new artistic ideas through research and development, including deepening our approach to working with children and young people in the development of our work.



**And we will
celebrate our
40th birthday!**

Celebrating 40 years

Since 1984, Travelling Light has been lighting up imaginations and sparking creativity through theatre.

“I really felt that it was Christmas eve. I thought it was BRILLIANT!”

Child feedback on *Boing!*

“Travelling Light brings us theatre at its most raw, most basic, most creative...Invention doesn't get better than this. ★★★★★”

Stage Talk on *Into The West*

During this time, **over 1.25 million children and young people** have experienced moments of joy and wonder through our productions and participatory work.

56 new theatre shows have lit up the imaginations of children and their families throughout Bristol, the South-West and all over the world.





Children and young people's creativity has been sparked through **hundreds of participatory projects**, from our weekly Youth Theatre groups to one-off workshops and activities in schools and our local community.



“ It's changed me so I became more confident and it surprised me so much, I became more brave. ”

Youth Theatre member

We have collaborated with and **provided employment for over 1,000 artists**, and supported the careers of many Bristol theatre professionals.



“ It was my first theatre out of school – it was the first show I saw – it was my first professional job – it was the first youth theatre I led. ”

Travelling Light Artist

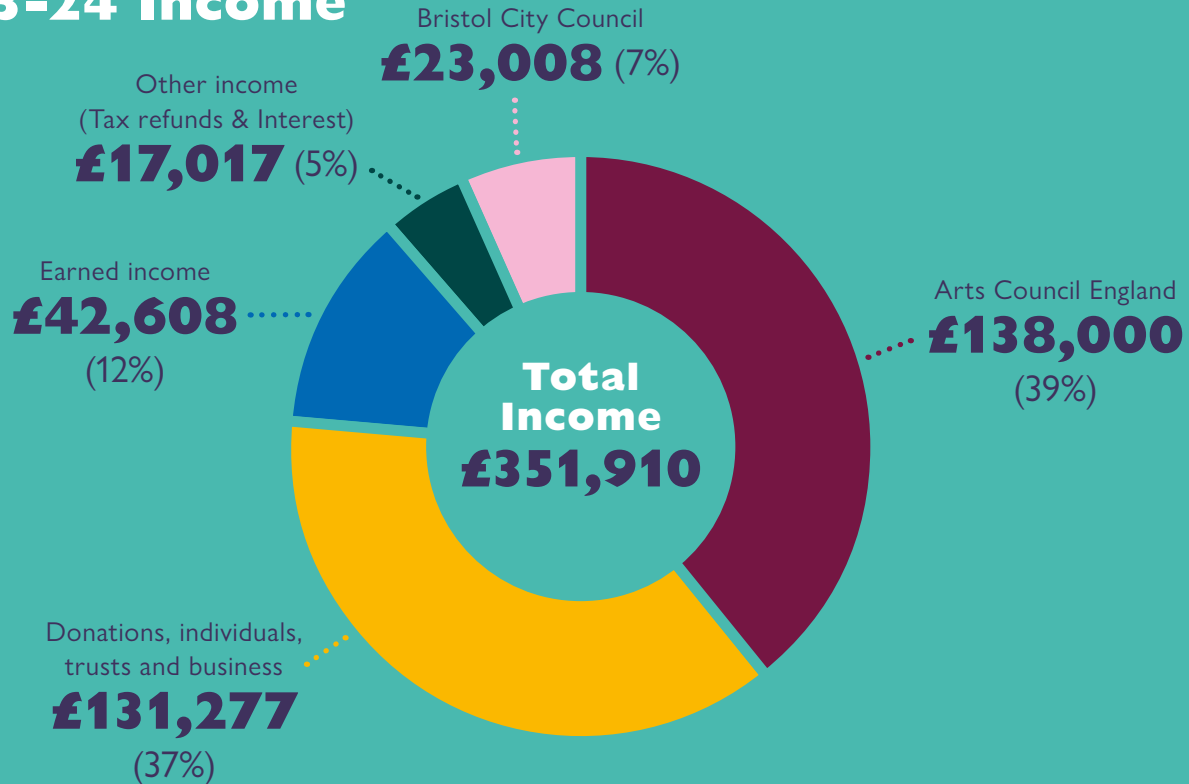
“ The way I shaped my work has been fundamentally changed because of Travelling Light – they have mentored me. I have challenged myself to do things in a different way. ”

Travelling Light Artist

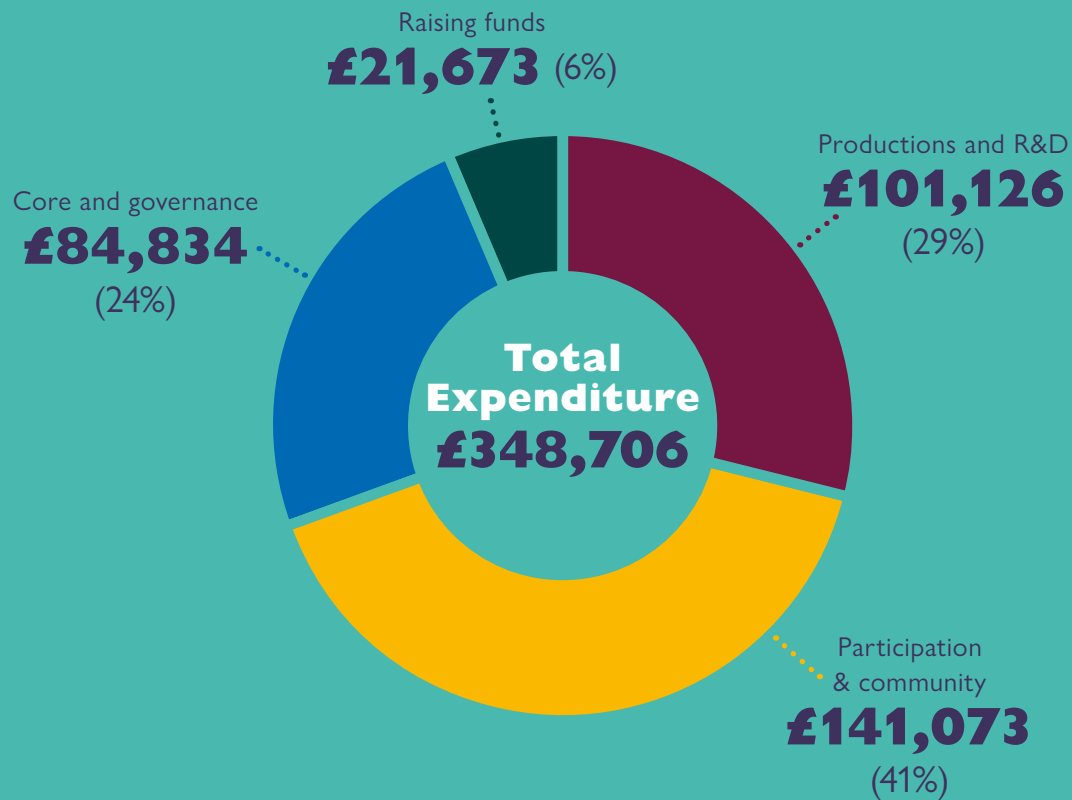


Financial information

2023-24 Income



2023-24 Expenditure



Full copies of our end of year accounts are available on request.

Thank you!

Staff

Ali Sully General Manager

Becky Vowles Production Manager – until Nov 2023

Dienka Hines CEO

Jamie Harber Marketing & Development Manager

Lizzy Stephens Artistic Director

Lou Betts Youth & Community Producer

Mike Akers Creative Learning Project Manager
(maternity cover) – from Dec 2023

Rachel Millett Creative Learning Project Manager

Sian Weeding Artistic Producer
(maternity cover) – Jun–Nov 2023

Trustees

Ian Stickland Chair

Jennifer Blackwood Vice Chair – until Jul 2023

Jenny Farmer until Mar 2024

Joanna Cross

Matimba Swana

Meera Pandya until Jan 2024

Toni Glazzard from Jul 2024

Yoma Smith

Creatives & Organisations

Amy Iles, Angela Athay-Hunt, Bath Spa University, Bristol Old Vic, Brunel Field Primary, Bruno Chavez, Camilla Adams, Carlota Matos, Casey Lloyd, Cashmore Nursery, Chaz Webb, Chris Woodward, City Academy, Claire Greenhalgh, Dan Canham, Dolphin Primary, Easton Community Centre, Easton Community Children Centre, Ed Felton, Ed Patrick, Edwina Bridgeman, Elaine Faull, Eliza Kilburn, Fifi Delaney, Georgia Jackson, GL4, Hannah More Primary School, Harry Kingscott, Hazel Province, Jessica Clough-MacRae, Jonathan Gamble, Kate Pasco, Kerry Russell, Laila Diallo, Laura Street, Lauren Filer, Liz Felton, May Park Primary, Megan Vaughan-Thomas, Merchants Academy, Nick Fogerty, Oasis Temple Quarter Secondary, Oldbury Court Children's Centre, Patrick Dineen, Rachael Duthie, Radstock Town Council, Raph Clarkson, Rebecca Braccialarghe, Richard Worsnop, Rosie Macari, Ruby Brown, Sarah Argent, SGS College, Shoscombe Primary, Sophie Marshall, St Luke's Lunch, St Nicholas of Tolentine Primary, Stevie Thompson, Theatre Alibi, Theatre Hullabaloo, Tiverton Community Arts Theatre, Trinity Centre, Trinity Henleaze United Reformed Church, University of Bristol, Valley Arts, Victoria Park Primary, Wambui Hardcastle, WECIL, Wellspring Family Hub, Wilkie Branson, Willow Vidal-Hall, Xahnaa Adlam.

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THE NISBET TRUST



**The Morel
Trust**

**Holiday Activities and
Food programme**

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Travelling Light

Just bring your imagination

🖱 travellinglighttheatre.org.uk

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

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