

## “Did my heart love ‘till now”

**Romeo and Juliet**  
by **Whitecote Primary**  
at **Leeds Carriageworks, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026**  
appraised by **Kayleigh Hawkins**



It is an absolute delight, in our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, to be celebrating with Whitecote Primary and to be marking this milestone with their wonderful production of Romeo and Juliet as part of Shakespeare Schools Theatre Festival's Spring season. Here are some of my highlights from the performance at Leeds Carriageworks.

The balcony scene using Roblox on phones was inspired - and the line "if love be honourable, sit next to me at lunch tomorrow" was so funny. This company understood something that so many miss: Romeo and Juliet were young, they were kids, and every choice in this production made that clear - particularly in the school disco!

I loved all the moments in the park, each bringing a wonderful sense of fun and imagination to the stage. From the comedic police chase to the fantastic shapes created on the stage, the steadiest bridge gymnastics ever and a fabulous dog cameo I was absolutely not expecting! It all combined to create a performance full of energy and humour.

And then - that final image. Those two children. Their last hug. Knowing they would never see each other again. The room shifted and you felt it. To move an audience from laughing out loud to heartbreak is a skill! It was a beautiful final scene with the classes singing, holding hands united.

We saw tired waring teachers, silly police officers, very busy first-aiders and young people full of colour and expression. The detail of characterisation was brilliant throughout, with every character so distinct and different from the others, and this made this world completely believable.

A shout out to Sasha who played a huge part in designing the lights and sound, and fantastically operated the sound on the night!

Performances like this show us that Shakespeare can live on, in the hands of young people, in fresh, exciting and reimagined ways. We hope to welcome you back to Shakespeare Schools Theatre Festival for another 25 years - and beyond!

Whitecote Primary

**This was a young, joyful, and heartwarming  
Romeo and Juliet from a hardworking and  
talented company.**