

“WE ARE SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE ON”

The Tempest
by St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Blackhill
at Mount Oswald Hub, 23rd March 2026
appraised by Lisa O'Hanlon

It is an absolute delight, in our 25th anniversary year, to be celebrating with St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Blackhill and to be marking this milestone with their wonderful production of The Tempest as part of Shakespeare Schools Theatre Festival's Spring season. Here are some of my highlights from the performance at Mount Oswald Hub.

Thank you for a wonderful adaptation of The Tempest. I really enjoyed your creative framing of the play through the two bored Gogglebox viewers and a very informative Siri (in a fabulously funny cardboard box costume!) It was a clever narrative device that helped to tell the story clearly while adding plenty of humour along the way. Lovely work!

Your decision to cast Prospero as female worked extremely well, and your costume choices were highly effective and creative. Prospero's gown, the blue satin capes for Ariel and the Spirits, and the attention to detail in the shipwrecked characters' torn shirts all contributed to a strong visual impact. I also noticed great attention to detail in your acting, and especially loved the rewind moment before the conclusion of the story. Really well done!

I was particularly impressed by how well you knew your play, which helped the technical rehearsal run very smoothly. You adapted quickly to the new stage, and your behaviour throughout was focused and professional. The cast demonstrated excellent listening skills, and it was a pleasure to work with you. As the day progressed and confidence grew, it was wonderful to see you fully commit to your characters and clearly enjoy performing in the evening.

Rowena also commented on how much progress you have made since your in-school workshop, which is fantastic to hear. You should all feel very proud of your hard work, determination, professionalism, and development.

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!

A MAGICAL AND GLORIOUS GOGGLEBOX THEMED THE TEMPEST BY A FOCUSED CAST OF SKILLED YOUNG ACTORS.

