

Curriculum intent and rationale

The aim of the drama curriculum is to teach students, through a knowledge-based curriculum consisting of both substantive and procedural knowledge, how to make effective choices about all elements of performance, from the volume of their voice, to the best type of lighting to use, to create meaning for an audience. This approach enables students to reach a level of mastery within the subject and to develop their interpersonal, decision making and problem-solving skills.

Students also learn how to express decisions in written work which, to begin with, is scaffolded through their pre-existing knowledge of the practical element of the subject. Alongside this, students learn procedural knowledge of how to evaluate and analyse performance. This enables them to write critically about their own and other's ability to create and perform drama, which fosters a mindset of continual improvement and development within performance.

To broaden their understanding of what drama is and how it can be performed and used, students develop their substantive knowledge and study different types of theatre from within Europe at different times. They also explore different practitioners from around the world and investigate the different aspects and techniques of individual types of theatre.

The curriculum is sequenced through the different elements of performance, from the most basic and continuous element of performance (characterisation), through to more complicated and thought-provoking elements. Students explore naturalistic performance and how it is achieved through to abstract performance, such as that from Artaud.

Students in Year 7 firstly learn about the subject through theory, to ensure they fully understand the basics of the subject. The substantive knowledge initially focuses on the performance of emotion and the creation of character, using a variety of skills, such as their use of voice. Students then start to focus on these skills through performance and begin to learn about an array of theatrical techniques. They then build on their substantive knowledge of theatre, by learning about how drama and theatre has evolved around the world, which begins with the oldest and most basic type of performance they will learn about, Greek theatre, to a more recent and complex type of theatre which is still performed today, pantomime.

In Year 8, students begin to develop their procedural knowledge of how to analyse and evaluate performances, in order to deepen their understanding of performance and enable them to make far more skilled decisions when it comes to their own performance choices. They

then explore Boal and his open-minded and thought-provoking 'theatre of the oppressed' Students learn how theatre can be used as a tool to enlighten others and to challenge stereotypes and discrimination. They go on to develop their knowledge of more advanced drama techniques, whilst learning about the disciplinary element of current issues regarding discrimination and inequality around the world. Practically, students investigate issues such as homophobia and gender inequality, which is explored upon using Boal's theatre already learnt.

The curriculum for Year 9 focuses on influential practitioners from around the world. Students build upon their Year 8 work on Boal and learn about different practitioners and their individual types of theatre. During this year, students begin to deepen their substantive knowledge of how theatre has been developed and reformed, due to beliefs about governance, what theatre represents and what it offers to its audience.

Students begin with realism by looking at Stanislavski and work their way towards the mindbending work of Artaud. They then apply this practitioner work by devising performances and create their own performance, influenced by a specific practitioner. Finally students apply this knowledge in a different context and learn how to perform from a script in a more abstract way, compared to the more naturalistic approach they will have used before. Students begin to look at GCSE level texts, through both a written (Noughts and Crosses) and practical (DNA / Hard to Swallow) lens. Even though some students may not take drama at GCSE level, it is important that they start to explore more complicated texts, with more controversial themes and with more performance potential.

By studying higher-level texts, students develop their decision making, problem solving, and analysis skills. Students decide how, among all of the performance styles and choices, to perform more sensitive content, eliminating anything that could distract from the meaning of their performance and what this could communicate to their audience members, all whilst ensuring they are taking into account the playwrights intentions.

During Key Stage 3, there is one major assessment at the end of each unit-of-work. If the unit-of-work is focused around learning practical skills, techniques or ways of devising and performing, the students are assessed through a well-rehearsed and refined practical performance in the final week of the half-term. Alternatively, if the unit-of-work is theory based and has a superior focus on their written work, the students complete a written assessment, based on the content that was taught and their ability to apply the learnt knowledge.

Regardless of the assessment type, the criteria is taken from the GCSE specification, as used in Key Stage 4. Students are not expected to already be at a GCSE level in Key Stage 3. The GCSE specification is used to challenge them in the content of their assessment and to encourage them to look at their assessment holistically, rather than focus on smaller elements, which may lose their impact if presented individually and undeveloped. This method enables students to aspire towards mastery in drama. During Key Stage 4, students are assessed using the GCSE criteria at a GCSE level. This ensures they are aware of what criteria they need to reach for each component, to achieve high-level pass grades in the drama.

In Year 10, the students begin the two-year GCSE, following the AQA specification. They complete all three components of their GCSE.

Year 10 students complete component two, with the study of a given stimulus and the creation of a ten-minute performance. Their performances are supported by a 2,000-word devising log. Afterwards, students look at *Blood Brothers* for component one. They develop disciplinary knowledge about the context and background of *Blood Brothers* and how this has influenced the storyline and the characters. In the final term, students work on their final practical performances for component three, which are assessed in their final year.

In their final year, students continue with their component three performances. They rehearse the performances which started in Year 10 and they perform these for an AQA examiner in December. Their performances are supported by a statement of dramatic intent, which the students write themselves. Statements of dramatic intent contain the students' aims for their performances and for themselves as actors.

In Year 11, students prepare for a written exam, for component one. To prepare, they revise and gain more in-depth substantive knowledge of the theory that they will have learnt throughout Years 7-10. Theory regarding stage types, how to create meaning for an audience through performance, and design choices through their disciplinary knowledge of *Blood Brothers*. They also deepen their substantive knowledge of how to evaluate and analyse choices made by others, through the disciplinary knowledge of a live production.