

DRAMA

Drama is taught primarily through the art form of theatre, whether it be pupils in Key Stage 3 creating devised work that they then perform to each other in class, pupils in Key Stage 4 creating devised work and scenes from existing plays for external assessment, or pupils from all years appearing in productions performed to the public.

We are particularly proud of our shows. We aim to produce work of the highest standards possible in a high school, with an emphasis on challenging texts, original music, ambitious acting and beautiful and creative production. Past shows include *The Enchanted Road*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, and *Mermaid*.

Drama is taught in both a classroom and a larger space shared with Music that can be converted into a black box studio theatre. Larger scale shows are performed in the School Hall, which can be converted into a theatre space for up to 250 people.

We use a variety of learning approaches in Drama including discussion, role-play, group and individual writing, skills workshops and rehearsals.

All pupils study Drama in Key Stage 3, where pupils gain not only knowledge and understanding of the history of theatre and the art form of acting, but also learn the skills of relaxation, self-expression and teamwork, leading to greater confidence and better understanding of self and others.

We aim to make Drama lessons as safe and inclusive as possible: pupils learn how to perform and how to analyse and evaluate each other's performances in a supportive environment based on mutual respect and appreciation.

Year 7

Pupils learn how to manipulate their attention to create effective performances. They learn how to relax efficiently and how to use mental images as a way of accessing their imagination in a practical way. They present performed work to the class and learn how to analyse and evaluate. They learn the basic principles of improvisation both in small and large groups and begin to analyse scripts from the point of view of an actor. They also learn how to take direction and how to analyse their work from the point of view of an audience.

Year 8

Pupils develop their ability to work in more stylised conventions. They develop their physical skills through mime and scenes without spoken language. They learn more extreme styles such as expressionism and total physical theatre, and they stage their work using a greater variety of methods such as split stage, angel and devil on the shoulder, and direct address to the audience. They create more detailed scripts and develop their specialised vocabulary further.

Year 9

Pupils develop their ability convey meaning in their work. They are encouraged to create characters that are unlike themselves in their outlook, and they experience more challenging and contentious topics. They show more independence in their creative decisions and are required to demonstrate more rigour in their analysis and evaluation. They study published scripts and learn conventions and terms used in the theatre industry.

GCSE

Pupils study the OCR Drama course. Students study live theatre production and classic and contemporary plays concentrating on the roles of actors, directors, designers, sound and lighting technicians and costume and prop makers.

They work practically as actors, writers and/or designers on an original piece of theatre written and performed by themselves; they appear in a showcase performance of two scenes from an established play performed to a visiting examiner, and they sit an exam where they write about a set text from a theatrical point of view and write about a live performance that they have seen. Practical activities are supported by written portfolios in which students explain and illustrate their ideas and contributions.

Devised theatre project- 30% of total mark:

Pupils work in a small team as an actor/writer or as a designer or sound or lighting technician creating a piece of original theatre. Pupils are marked on the quality of their contributions to the project and on the quality of their individual written portfolio.

Showcase performance- 30% of total mark:

Pupils appear in two scenes from a published play assessed live by a visiting examiner from OCR. Pupils are marked on the quality of their performance and on a written submission explaining their creative intentions.

Traditional written examination (end of Year 11) – 40% of total mark:

Pupils answer questions on a set play text and evaluate a live performance they have seen. GCSE Drama is ideal for students who like to combine academic and practical study. Students develop useful transferable skills including critical and creative thinking, teamwork and negotiation, confidence and presentation skills and meeting deadlines.

How can I help my child?

Pupils attend live performances as part of the course, but if you can take your child to see any additional live theatre including telecasts, this will help enormously, particularly if you encourage them to discuss what they have seen critically and comparatively. Some pupils get involved in youth theatre groups and workshop classes outside of school and, of course, we offer a major production project most years, rehearsing in the Spring Term.

Arthur Short : Subject Leader