

Drama Curriculum Intent

Students arrive at Dorothy Stringer with no experience of specialist Drama teaching. Their skill base is basic so teaching needs to start from foundations skills, building with the presumption that we are preparing all of our students for the demands of the GCSE course and for study and employment in the Creative Arts post 16.

Drama is committed to provide, in an aspirational environment, creative and academic learning of the highest standard. Through a rich and varied programme of study, students develop the vital skills to become resilient, collaborative and brave learners. Dynamic and engaging units of work, developed to meet the needs of our students, are carefully sequenced to promote enjoyment and progression through the key stages. This range of practical, creative and critical skills help prepare students for an ever changing world and engender their love and respect of the Arts.

We want our students to take risks, to make mistakes, to solve problems and to find solutions together, in a safe but challenging environment. Our innovative and varied curriculum allows students to experiment with and develop a practical understanding of: improvisation, script and devised and physical theatre. Our students will be introduced to the practises of contemporary theatre practitioners to enrich their work and expose them to up to date and important current developments in theatre. We use subject specific terminology and encourage students to use correct Drama vocabulary to plan and feedback on practical work.

Extra-curricular activities are at the core of the drama experience and offer an essential opportunity for students to further their experience in creating, performing and responding to theatre both as a participant and as an audience member.

Drama Curriculum Implementation

Key Stage 3

Year 7 and 8 receive a weekly 1 60 minute Drama lesson in mixed ability groups.

Units of work last for one half term and build on their prior knowledge.

The focus of learning is the development of Drama skills and techniques which will allow them to work creatively as part of an ensemble.

Year 7 Curriculum Content: introduces the foundation skills necessary for successful participation in creating, performing and reflecting on live theatre.

Unit 1: Introduction to Key Drama Skills and Performance Techniques

Unit 2: Creating Drama from a Narrative: Two Islands

Unit 3: Developing the Voice in Performance

Unit 4: Building Mood and Atmosphere: Darkwood Manor

Unit 5: Responding to Script from Page to Stage: Scary play

Unit 6: Exploring Narrative through Drama: Dragons at Fiveways

Year 8 Curriculum Content: builds on students' emerging knowledge and understanding of the creative process: creating, performing and reflecting.

Unit 1: Developing Drama from a Narrative & Tension Building Devises: The Box

Unit 2: Improvisation and Performance

Unit 3: Devising Theatre: Paper Birds Theatre Company

Unit 4: Puppetry in Performance inspired by Gyre & Gimble Puppetry

Unit 5: Developing Approaches to Script from Page to Performance: Noughts and Crosses

Unit 6: Developing Approaches to Script from Page to Performance: Noughts and Crosses

Year 9: Year 9 students opt for Drama from a choice of 5 Creative and Practical subjects.

They receive 4 60-minute Drama lessons a fortnight in mixed ability groups.

Units of work vary in length from one half term to a term depending on the focus of the learning.

A high percentage of the students who choose Drama in Year 9 go on to select it as a GCSE option in Year 10 and 11.

To that end, the Year 9 curriculum embeds the learning in Year 7 and 8 whilst introducing the skills, techniques and language key to success in GCSE Drama. Students are challenged, stretched and expected to engage in focused learning in the same way that will be required of them in Year 10 and 11.

The curriculum deepens the students' knowledge and practical exploration of style and genre whilst continuing to develop core performance skills. Students are assessed in the Term 3 using GCSE Drama Devised Theatre marking criteria in an aim to clarify how and why marks are awarded.

Curriculum Content:

Unit 1: Documentary Theatre exploring knife crime and the Stephen Lawrence case.

Unit 2: Exploring 20th Century Theatre Practitioners: Improvisation & Script

Unit 3: Physical Theatre Techniques inspired by Frantic Assembly and 'A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time'

Unit 4: Approaches to Text in performance though 'A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time'

Unit 5: Creating extended non-naturalistic Devised Theatre through character-based narrative: 'Sam Smith'

Unit 6: 20th Century Playwrights: Scripted extracts in performance.

Key Stage 4 GCSE Drama

Year 10 and 11: receive 5 60 minute lessons a fortnight in mixed ability groups. GCSE Drama is non-selective.

We study EDEXCEL Drama GCSE which aims to engage students through encouraging creativity, focusing on practical work which reflects twenty-first century theatre practice and developing skills that will support progression to further study of drama and a wide range of other subjects.

The course places strong emphasis in developing students' ability to create and shape their own performance work. Students will acquire a breadth and depth of knowledge over the two years; including an understanding of how theatre practitioners and genres have influenced theatre, how to use these influential features to shape their devised performances, how to respond imaginatively to a range of stimuli, and how to interpret a script for performance.

During the course students will therefore, study and perform texts, see several live pieces of theatre, create devised theatre for formally assessed practical exams, and develop skills in writing in order to analyse the development and success of their own work, a set text and the live theatre they have seen.

The course provides a solid foundation for Drama and Theatre Studies A-level, whilst also being an effective platform for a range of career and study choices, as it develops transferable skills such as creativity, self-confidence, communication, evaluation and team work.

Curriculum Implementation

Year 10: builds on KS3 learning and introduces students to the demands of the GCSE course both in terms of developing practical performance techniques, written reflection and preparation for the written exam.

Term 1: Theatre Makers in Practise (In preparation for Component 3: Written Paper)

This component focuses on the work of theatre makers and the theatrical choices that are made by crucial members of the creative and production team in order to communicate ideas to an audience.

As theatre makers, students will be develop their knowledge and understanding of the ways in which drama can create meaning for an audience through performance.

Students will explore practically how a complete performance text might be interpreted and realised from 'page to stage'.

This exploration will give students an insight into how texts may be brought to life for an audience and the creative roles within this process. **Set Text:** DNA by Dennis Kelly. Introduction to the written paper (Section A)

Term 2/3a: Component 1 Devising (Practical Response) Centre marked

This component deals with devising, which is an exciting and challenging opportunity to work collaboratively with others to explore a range of stimuli in order to create an original performance piece.

Devising is essential for the development of new theatre and performance; it allows for personal development and exploration. It allows both performer and designer the opportunity to stretch the limits of their creativity and imagination, while exploring a theme or topic of interest to them and their intended audience.

Students will develop skills in group work, research and negotiation, while also developing creativity, performance and design skills.

Students will consider the impact that they can make on an audience, as they develop the ideas that they want to communicate.

There are three areas of focus.

- 1) Creating and developing a devised piece from stimuli.
- 2) Group performance/design realisation of the devised piece.
- 3) Analysing and evaluating the creative process and group devised performance.

Term 3b: Component 1 Devising (Written Portfolio)

Analysing and evaluating the creative process and group-devised performance

In the form of a 2000 word written portfolio, all students must reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the devising process.

Students must analyse and evaluate:

-ideas explored and research undertaken

-decisions made and the rationale behind them

-their collaborative involvement

-content, genre, structure, character, form, style, and language

-the final performance and the effectiveness of their contribution to it

-the realisation of their intentions. All students must also be aware of, and be able to use, appropriate subject-specific terminology.

Year 11: revisits and builds on the implementation of practical skills exploring pre and 20th Century texts. Explores the demands of the written paper (Section A and B) embedding the knowledge first learnt in Year 10.

Term 1: Mock Component 2 Performance From a Text. Mock Component 3 Theatre Makers in Practise

Students are introduced to the demands of Component 2 and 3 through the preparation for and practise of the performance and mock assessment of 2 scripted extracts from a choice of 3 plays by Simon Stephens (Port, Herons and Punk Rock).

Rigorous preparation then takes place for mock Section A of Component 3 Theatre Makers in Practise (written exam) based on their experience and understanding of the set text (DNA Dennis Kelly) first practically explored in Year 10.

Term 2a: Component 2 Performance From Text (Externally Marked)

Understanding a performance text is fundamental to the subject, as this provides students with opportunities to explore plot, structure, narrative and stories from around the world and from different time periods. It encourages them to develop empathy skills, as they consider different characters and develop methods of communicating ideas and themes.

This component deals with developing knowledge, understanding and skills in exploring and performing from a performance text. Students will interpret this text and rehearse and refine two key extracts, leading to a final performance. They will demonstrate and use a wide range of acting and/or design skills to communicate their interpretation in performance. The extracts are prepared for performance to an external examiner in March.

Term 2b/3: Component 3 Theatre Makers in Practise

This component focuses on the work of theatre makers and the theatrical choices that are made by crucial members of the creative and production team in order to communicate ideas to an audience. As theatre makers, students will develop their knowledge and understanding of the ways in which drama can create meaning for an audience through performance.

Students will explore practically how a complete performance text might be interpreted and realised from 'page to stage'. This exploration will give students an insight into how texts may be brought to life for an audience and the creative roles within this process.

Students will also analyse and evaluate their experience of a live theatre performance as informed members of the audience. They will develop skills to recognise the meaning created in the theatre space in order to communicate ideas to an audience. This will give them a more critical and varied approach to their own work as theatre makers.

Content

There are two areas of focus:

1. Study of one complete performance text: DNA by Dennis Kelly
2. A live theatre evaluation: Live theatre performance March of year of exam (Back-up school production seen by all GCSE Drama students)

Component 3 examined in May of Year 11 in a 1 hour 45 minute written exam.

Training and Employment Beyond Dorothy Stringer

Students leave Dorothy Stringer with a life-long love of Theatre and a commitment to the Arts.

Our broad and engaging curriculum, rigorous specialist teaching, the students' exposure to the very best productions and practitioners and the high expectations for performance standards prepare our students for the best post 16 Drama training available.

Despite being out of the catchment area for Brit School, our students annually gain places on the Acting and Community Arts Practise post 16 Diploma courses, successfully competing in audition with students who have trained in the college since the beginning of KS4. Students apply for A Level and BTC Performing Arts courses at local 6th Form colleges and are active in their extra-curricular performances.

Beyond 6th Form, Stringer alumni attend the best Drama schools and universities for Acting and Performing Arts training.

Alumni destinations currently include:

RADA	Rose Bruford
Central School of Speech and Drama	LAMDA
Guildhall School of Acting	Mountview School of Acting
Bristol Old Vic	Royal Scottish Conservatoire
Royal Welsh School of Drama & Music	East 15 Acting School

We are immensely proud of our alumni achievements and recognise the important part they play in inspiring our current students to aspire to careers in the Arts. We sustain close relationships and encourage our alumni to return to Stringer to share their growing knowledge and experience through practical workshops and aspirational in-house training with current KS4 students.