



Drama and Theatre Studies Curriculum

Intent

Curriculum Vision

'Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, instead of just waiting for it.' - Augusto Boal

From the amphitheatres to the digitally streamed immersive productions of lockdown, theatre continues to reflect our past, our present and our potential future on stage. Students explore, at greater depth, a diverse range of theatre styles and genres, enhancing their creative and reflective learning processes by analysing and evaluating professional works of live theatre. Students examine theatre history through performance texts, comparing traditional techniques with 21st century theatre practice.

Students are supported in the development of their own creative intentions, and are equipped to participate in a range of performance opportunities. These first-hand experiences allow students to discover why and how theatre is made, and to understand the context of theatre-making from a performer's, designer's and practitioner's point of view.

Theatre and the cultural industries continue to be fast-growing sectors in the UK and contribute £1.3 billion a year to the UK economy. Theatre is an essential tool for communicating historical, social and cultural issues and can influence change in society.

Concepts and Skills

Devising

- Understand the practices used in 21st century theatre-making.
- Explore drama and theatre through choices of form, style and convention.
- Study a variety of different theatre practitioners and styles when creating original work for performance including Theatre of Cruelty, Epic Theatre, Expressionism, Naturalism, Physical Theatre and Verbatim.
- Respond, rehearse and refine key drama skills from a range of different cultures, styles and genres.

Theatre Makers in Practice

- Interpret and understand drama and theatre.
- Analyse and evaluate a wide range of professional performance repertoires.
- Develop an understanding of how to interpret a text for performance, exploring the original social, cultural and historical context, and exploring how to make this relevant to a contemporary audience.
- Develop an artistic and creative vision as a director through the realisation of a performance text from page to stage.

Text in Performance

- Undertake theoretical research into how theatre practitioners inform their creative processes and practices when creating theatre for performance.
- Develop an understanding and appreciation of how the social, cultural and historical contexts of performance texts influence society.
- Undertake practical exploration and rehearsal of pre-existing work to develop theatre for a live audience.
- Present and perform characters on stage for both ensemble and solo performances to a live contemporary audience.
- Recognise and understand the interrelationship between performer, designer and director.
- Analyse and evaluate your own performance work and that of others in your group using subject-specific terminology.

Disciplinary Literacy

Disciplinary approach

In Drama and Theatre Studies we support the development of disciplinary vocabulary and the students' ability to read, write and communicate at an academic level so that they master the nuances of the curriculum. Terminology is developed across the students' learning journey and is embedded into every lesson, rehearsal and Enrichment activity. Keywords and concepts are displayed in the Frayer models at the beginning of each topic to support students' retrieval practice.

As working practitioners, our A-level students must communicate as academics using the correct terms and acronyms appropriate for thespians. The students will communicate their own their creative intentions as directors and dramatists through both practical and written means.

In addition to analysing, interpretation and evaluating different performance texts as actors and directors, students will examine practitioners' methodologies and professional live theatre through formal academic essays so they can immerse themselves in the breadth of the subject.

Interdisciplinary approach

To understand the depth of Drama and Theatre Studies it is vital to explore the organic connection to other disciplines such as Art, History, English Literature and Film Studies.

Intellectual autonomy

In order to develop intellectual autonomy and confidence, we foster the passion and ability of students in Drama and Theatre Studies to comprehend challenging texts, assimilate key concepts and synthesise them with prior learning.

Students are equipped to think critically and apply strategies independently so that they can form their own cohesive conclusions and be able to express them in writing. This is facilitated by a deeper understanding of the creative process of transforming a play from page to stage. Students will be exposed to a wide variety of live theatre and professional approaches to devising. In order to develop their autonomous directorial voice and unique artistic identity as a performer, they will participate in performances and workshops with contemporary theatre makers.

In addition, students have access to the following Key Stage 5 resources held centrally in our library:

Frantic Assembly: Book of Devising

Antonin Artaud: Theatre of Cruelty

An Actor Prepares by Constantin Stanislavski

Kneehigh Cookbook: www.kneehigh.co.uk

<https://www.punchdrunk.org.uk/>

<http://www.complicite.org/>

<http://essentialdrama.com/practitioners/brecht/>

<https://nouse.co.uk/2013/03/05/the-movements-the-theatre-of-cruelty/>

Application of Mathematics

The curriculum recognises the need for students to be able to apply mathematics effectively. In Drama and Theatre Studies students use and develop their knowledge of percentages, measurements, weights and ratios in order to understand the key mathematical components of stage design. This requires students to be able to accurately apply various mathematical elements when creating a theatrical design for stage.

Independent Study

In Drama and Theatre Studies students undertake both directed and self-directed independent learning activities that support the strengthening of long-term memory. Independent study helps our students achieve mastery in Drama and Theatre Studies and prepares them to manage their own time and motivation, which are key skills in both further education and the workplace.

Directed independent learning tasks set in Drama and Theatre Studies includes background reading to build knowledge and deeper connections to the existing frame of learning. Background reading can also help students to understand the social, historical and cultural context of the plays and playwrights they are studying.

Self-directed independent study in Drama and Theatre Studies involves retrieval practice, which is a crucial component of mastery.

Instead of revision being perceived as something that is crammed into a few weeks, independent study supports spaced practice throughout the curriculum. By repeatedly returning to content covered, students' knowledge has time to 'rest and be refreshed.'

We recognise that not all students process material at the same rate. Students who need extra support to achieve mastery are supported by targeted intervention in Drama and Theatre Studies where a staged or 'scaffolded' process is used to enable students to move from being dependent learners to autonomous ones. For example, students are taught a variety of methods for line learning and are able to use their independent study time to trial these techniques.

All students have access to our Academy library where a wide range of academic texts, journals and other resources are available.

Implementation

Overview Statement

The curriculum in Drama and Theatre Studies is sequenced coherently so that knowledge, concepts and skills are rigorously developed over time. This supports all students, including the most disadvantaged, and those with high levels of need, especially SEND. Planning is informed by Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction and Cognitive Theory which support students in building secure schemas.

Interdisciplinary links and the application of mathematics are explicitly referenced and exploited in order to deepen understanding. Vocabulary is developed in Drama and Theatre Studies using the principles outlined in the Frayer Model and students are equipped to be able to read, write and verbally communicate as a theatre practitioner. This is done by combining the theoretical study of theatre with highly practical teaching and a wide range of performance opportunities, with the chance to closely examine why and how theatre is made.

Students will create, develop and perform in three formally assessed performance pieces, either as an actor or a designer. Written documentation of the process and evaluation of these performances are crucial. Therefore, students develop analytical skills and an in-depth theoretical understanding of how

performance elements are applied to create meaning. Analysing and evaluating professional works of live theatre will be fundamental to students' learning to enhance their creative and reflective learning processes as practitioners.

Through the use of independent study resources in Drama and Theatre Studies, students learn at greater depth so that they can become masters in performance and gain the skills to be intellectually autonomous. Throughout the course, students will be required to use their independent study to participate in research and development of pre-existing and devised performances through rehearsal. Students will need to refine their performance skills as solo performers and as an ensemble, taking on the roles and responsibilities of professional theatre makers. In addition, students will be exposed to a variety of live theatre through streamed and live performances to inspire their own creative intentions.

Regular retrieval-based activities strengthen long-term memory and aid fluency, as do our cumulative mid-term and end-of-year assessments. Students will begin the course with explicit teaching on practitioners, applying theory to performance techniques that they will present to an audience. Practical skills are mastered over time through repetition and refining skills in rehearsal. As actors, students will be directed in performances before embarking on devising an original piece and taking on the role of a director.

Technology is employed via a number of methods to strengthen learning. Students will be required to complete independent research and we encourage students to watch digitally streamed theatre and listen to academic podcasts. Throughout the course, students have access to recording equipment to enable effective evaluation of both the work in progress and the final performance. Students have access to specialised lighting and sound equipment to enhance their performance and understanding of other theatrical elements involved in presenting a production to a live audience.

Character development is learned through key concepts of creativity, collaboration and empathy. In order to thrive in their studies, students will learn how to collaborate as part of an ensemble to create theatre that can emotionally impact an audience and communicate their interpretation of the character.

Impact

The Key Stage 5 curriculum builds upon learners' knowledge and understanding of devising, performing and interpreting performance. By developing their confidence in different theatre practitioners' approaches to developing a production, students will be able to use a wide range of dramatic conventions when developing both pre-existing and original work from page to stage for an audience.

The curriculum has a range of interdisciplinary connections, which help broaden students on their learning journeys with other disciplines such as Film Studies, English and History.

Academic progress in Drama and Theatre Studies is recognised through the Edexcel A-level Drama and Theatre Studies qualification which will provide students access to higher education and a career in the performing arts industries.