

## Performing Arts Faculty: Drama, Dance and Acting

### Curriculum Overview

All pupils are entitled to a curriculum that gives them access to powerful knowledge, creative expression and cultural capital. The Drama and Dance curriculum from Year 7 to Year 9 and the Acting curriculum from Year 9 to Year 11 are deliberately sequenced to build knowledge, skills and understanding over time, enabling students to interpret the world, communicate meaning, and develop confidence, discipline and empathy.

The curriculum is planned both vertically and horizontally to ensure that knowledge and skills are revisited, deepened and applied in increasingly complex contexts. Concepts introduced in KS3 Drama and Dance form the foundation for the specialist Acting focus in KS4, allowing students to progress securely from exploration to refinement, and from collaborative creation to disciplined performance.

#### **KS3: Drama and Dance (Years 7 to 8)**

In KS3, students study a broad Drama and Dance curriculum that enables them to explore stories, ideas, cultures and social issues through practical performance. Students learn how drama and dance communicate meaning using voice, movement, space, structure and symbolism. They explore a wide range of performance styles, techniques and genres including devised drama, scripted work, abstract theatre, physical theatre, melodrama, musical theatre dance, classical texts and socially purposeful theatre.

Dance units develop physical, expressive and choreographic skills through styles such as Bollywood, Bhangra and Musical Theatre, while Drama units develop character, narrative understanding, ensemble work and interpretative skills. Across KS3, students learn to collaborate effectively, rehearse constructively, respond thoughtfully to feedback and reflect on their own work and the work of others using appropriate dramatic vocabulary.

The KS3 curriculum prioritises creativity, inclusion and expressive confidence. Students investigate multiple perspectives, challenge assumptions and learn how performance can be used to explore themes such as power, identity, injustice, conflict and morality.

#### **KS4: Acting (Years 9 to 11)**

From Year 9 onwards, the curriculum shifts to a more specialised Acting focus, while retaining the collaborative and exploratory foundations built in KS3. Students develop the discipline, technical control and reflective habits required for sustained performance work. The curriculum emphasises characterisation, vocal and physical technique, rehearsal methodology, practitioner influence and audience impact.

Students study modern texts, practitioners and professional theatre, applying approaches such as Stanislavski, Brecht and physical theatre to scripted and devised performance. Formal rehearsal processes, evaluation and performance analysis are embedded, preparing students for GCSE assessment requirements and further study in performing arts.

Throughout KS4, students learn to make conscious performance choices, justify interpretations, refine technique and evaluate impact. They develop resilience, independence and professionalism, alongside the ability to articulate ideas clearly through both performance and written reflection.

**Key skills and concepts developed across the curriculum**

Performance and technique

Characterisation using voice, movement and physicality

Devising and interpreting performance material

Choreography, structure and narrative

Ensemble work, collaboration and rehearsal discipline

Creative decision making and problem solving

Evaluation, reflection and use of subject specific terminology

Confidence, resilience and expressive communication.

\*A powerful, knowledge-rich curriculum teaches both declarative knowledge (facts; knowing that something is the case; what we think about) and non-declarative or procedural knowledge (skills and processes; knowing how to do something; what we think with). There are no skills without bodies of knowledge to underpin them.

In some subjects, a further distinction can be made between substantive knowledge (the domain specific knowledge accrued e.g. knowledge of the past) and disciplinary knowledge (how the knowledge is accrued e.g. historical reasoning).

**Knowledge, skills and understanding to be gained at each stage\***

|               | Cycle 1   |   | Cycle 2  |   | Cycle 3   |  |
|---------------|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| <b>YEAR 7</b> | <b>Bullying</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding bullying as a misuse of power</li> <li>Exploring character motivation and behaviour</li> <li>Developing empathy through multiple perspectives</li> <li>Analysing cause and consequence in conflict</li> <li>Using drama to explore resolution and support</li> </ul>   | <b>Haunting of Bly Manor</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating suspense and atmosphere</li> <li>Using sound, silence and non verbal communication</li> <li>Developing character through backstory and subtext</li> <li>Exploring rumour, fear and perception</li> <li>Structuring narrative using tension and revelation</li> </ul>   | <b>The Twits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing character through facial expression, body language and levels</li> <li>Exploring cause and effect through scripted scenes and movement</li> <li>Understanding moral behaviour and consequences through narrative drama</li> <li>Using drama techniques to interpret and perform a text</li> <li>Evaluating performance using basic drama terminology</li> </ul>   | <b>Whole Year Group Indian Dance Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding stylistic features of Bollywood and Bhangra</li> <li>Using choreographic devices such as unison, canon and repetition</li> <li>Developing expressive skills through dynamics, facial expression and musicality</li> <li>Applying physical skills including coordination, strength and stamina</li> <li>Creating and performing group choreography with cultural awareness</li> </ul>  | <b>Rosa Parks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding discrimination, racism and segregation through historical drama</li> <li>Exploring motivation, choice and consequence through character action</li> <li>Using drama to examine power, protest and injustice</li> <li>Creating meaning through symbolism, physical theatre and choral speaking</li> <li>Developing empathy by exploring events from multiple perspectives</li> </ul>  | <b>Classical Themed Text 1 (The Tempest)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploring power, control and responsibility through character relationships</li> <li>Developing character using voice, movement and physicality</li> <li>Understanding subtext and hidden thoughts through thought tracking and voices in the head</li> <li>Creating narrative and atmosphere through movement, mime and sound pictures</li> <li>Examining conflict, forgiveness and cause and effect through Shakespearean drama</li> </ul> |
|               | <b>Conventions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revising and applying a wide range of drama techniques</li> <li>Exploring inner conflict and moral dilemmas through conscience alley and angel and devil</li> <li>Developing character through physical and vocal characterisation</li> <li>Understanding cause, effect and consequence within dramatic narratives</li> <li>Using abstract, non-verbal and improvisational performance to communicate meaning.</li> </ul> | <b>Melodrama (King Henry 8th Wives, Six Musical)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding the conventions of melodrama, parody and slapstick</li> <li>Creating characters using exaggerated physicality, voice and non verbal communication</li> <li>Using asides, flashback and still images to reveal inner thoughts and narrative</li> <li>Applying comic timing, over exaggeration and audience awareness</li> <li>Exploring historical figures and social attitudes through stylised performance.</li> </ul> | <b>The Crucible</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding prejudice, fear and mass hysteria through historical drama</li> <li>Exploring status, power and gender inequality through physical theatre</li> <li>Examining rumour, accusation and injustice through character action</li> <li>Creating meaning using abstract drama, choral speaking and symbolism</li> <li>Developing empathy by exploring intolerance and its consequences from multiple perspectives</li> </ul> | <b>Exploring Musical Theatre Dance Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding musical theatre styles and genres, including film, stage, jukebox and sung-through musicals</li> <li>Identifying and applying stylistic features of key musical theatre productions</li> <li>Creating choreography using gesture, expression, formation and dynamics</li> <li>Using lyrics, narrative and stimulus as drivers for movement and character</li> <li>Developing performance skills through unison, canon, duet and group choreography</li> </ul> | <b>Devising 1 (WW1 Trenches)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploring honour, duty and moral choice through devised drama</li> <li>Understanding the psychological impact of war, including shell shock and PTSD</li> <li>Using dramatic irony, symbolism and narration to communicate meaning</li> <li>Developing tension, fear and pressure through movement, mime and proxemics</li> <li>Examining justice, desertion and consequence through split scene and forum theatre</li> </ul> | <b>Classical Themed Text 2 (Romeo &amp; Juliet)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding rivalry, conflict and tragedy within a Shakespearean text</li> <li>Developing confidence with Shakespearean language, voice and script</li> <li>Exploring character relationships and motivation through drama strategies</li> <li>Creating tension and atmosphere using movement, mime and abstraction</li> <li>Examining choice, consequence and alternative outcomes through performance</li> </ul>                  |
| <b>YEAR 8</b> |   |   |  |   |   |  |

**Knowledge, skills and understanding to be gained at each stage\***

|               | Cycle 1  | Cycle 2   | Cycle 3   |  |  |
|---------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| <b>YEAR 9</b> | <p><b>Introduction to Year 9 (Girl in Da Hoodie, Hamilton, NT Macbeth)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing ensemble skills through collaboration, trust and shared performance</li> <li>• Understanding and applying the conventions of the Greek chorus</li> <li>• Exploring script work, characterisation and subtext through rehearsal</li> <li>• Analysing professional theatre and evaluating performance using drama vocabulary</li> <li>• Understanding staging, design and symbolism in contemporary theatre.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Abstract (7 Deadly Sins and the 38)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding abstract drama and the difference between realistic and symbolic performance</li> <li>• Exploring morality, conscience and human choice through the Seven Deadly Sins</li> <li>• Using physical theatre, movement and exaggeration to convey meaning</li> <li>• Creating atmosphere, symbolism and interpretation through sound and physical imagery</li> <li>• Developing narration and abstract character work to communicate complex ideas</li> </ul> | <p><b>Modern Text (Blood Brothers)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding fate, superstition and social inequality within a modern British play</li> <li>• Exploring character motivation, intention and subtext through rehearsal techniques</li> <li>• Applying staging, blocking and semiotics to communicate meaning</li> <li>• Developing vocal, physical and emotional characterisation</li> <li>• Evaluating performance choices using drama terminology and audience awareness</li> </ul> | <p><b>Practitioners (Bouncers and Shakers, Brecht)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding key theatre practitioners and their contrasting approaches to performance</li> <li>• Applying Brechtian techniques such as direct address, narration and episodic structure</li> <li>• Comparing naturalistic and non-naturalistic acting styles</li> <li>• Using physical theatre, comedy and exaggeration to communicate social meaning</li> <li>• Analysing playwright intention, context and audience impact through performance work</li> </ul> | <p><b>Devising 2 (TIE, Kindertransport, Nazi Propaganda)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding Theatre in Education and its purpose for social impact and awareness</li> <li>• Using historical stimulus to devise drama rooted in real events and lived experience</li> <li>• Exploring structure, climax and audience effect within devised performance</li> <li>• Examining propaganda, influence and moral responsibility through drama</li> <li>• Developing ensemble devised work that communicates message, intention and meaning</li> </ul> |
|               | <p><b>YEAR 10</b></p> <p><b>Component 2: Developing Skills &amp; Techniques in the Performing Arts (Blood Brothers)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing vocal, physical and emotional characterisation for sustained performance</li> <li>• Exploring fate, superstition and social inequality through dramatic conventions</li> <li>• Applying rehearsal techniques including blocking, montage, narration and still image</li> <li>• Using context, genre and performance style to inform interpretation and staging</li> <li>• Evaluating individual and group performance using drama terminology and rehearsal logs.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Component 1: Exploring the Performing Arts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the conventions and purpose of children's theatre</li> <li>• Analysing character, genre and stylistic features in a professional production</li> <li>• Exploring creative intention and interpretation through performance choices</li> <li>• Understanding the roles of actors, directors and designers in theatre production</li> <li>• Examining rehearsal processes and how ideas are generated and developed.</li> </ul>                     |   |  |  |