

The Drama Curriculum at Our Lady's Catholic High School

Our Drama curriculum develops creativity and individuality; we strive to encourage pupils to develop their self-confidence and use this to think and express themselves with flair and conviction in a range of situations. Our very high expectations of behaviour and achievement for all pupils, allows them to thrive over their time in drama, show tolerance and understanding to their peers and reach their potential.

Drama is an important subject for all pupils as it improves self-confidence in readiness for expressing themselves and preparing them for other life situations such as interviews and presentations. It promotes a variety of life skills such as team work, analysis and development of ideas, research and listening skills when working in peer groups. All pupils at KS3 are offered the performing experience. For some this is a passion which they can only get in school. This ensures we give equal opportunities for all to thrive in Drama. We have many pupils who are so inspired that they want to pursue it as a career.

Pupils are given opportunities through practical role-play and written drama activities to experience the world around them and begin to appreciate situations from more than one perspective. Through drama, we encourage students to question and challenge their perception of the world and develop the soft skills employers seek.

Drama is part of the KS2 and KS3 National Curriculum for English, our pupils come from primary school with varying experiences of performing, with some pupils having studied privately for several years.

It states; all pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Other references in the curriculum document include:

- Role-play and other drama techniques can help pupils to identify with and explore characters. In these ways, they extend their understanding of what they read and have opportunities to try out the language they have listened to.
- Drama and role-play can contribute to the quality of pupils' writing by providing opportunities for pupils to develop and order their ideas through playing roles and improvising scenes in various settings
- Pupils should become more familiar with and confident in using language in a greater variety of situations, for a variety of audiences and purposes, including through drama, formal presentations and debate.
- Reading, re-reading, and rehearsing poems and plays for presentation and performance give pupils opportunities to discuss language, including vocabulary, extending their interest in the meaning and origin of words. Pupils should be encouraged to use drama approaches to understand how to perform plays and poems to support their understanding of the meaning. These activities also provide them with an incentive to find out what expression is required, so feeding into comprehension.

At KS4 Drama content and assessment is covered by the AQA exam board criteria building and extending the skills learnt above.

Our curriculum is continually reviewed to cater for the changing needs of pupils to ensure progress is made by all.

The curriculum is designed to ensure SEND and Disadvantaged pupils can access it fully. Careful consideration is given to every pupil in each class and actions put in place to support them. This may be costume and props being provided, scripts printed in different sizes and colours, staff member helping pupils verbalise their work.

We actively encourage all pupils to use subject specific terminology such as; upstage, pitch, projection. We have a Periodic table of Drama which we actively encourage students to use in their verbal explanations.

Assessment is both formal and summative, so that pupils feel supported in their learning and know how to progress. The most vital element of assessment in Drama is via ongoing feedback, which is 'drip-fed' throughout the progression of practical drama work; this process is integral to success in creative outcomes.

We offer a range of extracurricular activities including Performing Arts Club, whole school production, local dance festivals, theatre trips, competitions and other external events when they arise. All pupils are encouraged to participate and bespoke support is given to our more vulnerable pupils. In addition, we contribute to the 'wider' curriculum on Enrichment activities and our support of the Artsmark status within the school.

All Key Stage 3 students at Our Lady's are taught Drama for 1 lesson each week. Lessons are both theoretical and practical and are centred on developing a range of Drama knowledge, skills and techniques that not only will prepare students for Drama in Key Stage 4 and beyond but are also invaluable across all other subject areas. Students are taught how to engage imaginatively and intellectually with drama forms and conventions through scripted and devised performances.

Year 7 introduces students to the concept of social and performer status before examining the skills necessary to construct thoughtful and believable characters. We explore forms of performance poetry, characterisation, mime and visual images as a stimulus for developing storylines and characters. Year 7 also introduces pupils to the basics of physical theatre, dance/ movement. Introduction of T.I.E.

Year 8 builds on the foundation laid in year 7. Students develop their understanding and appreciation of different performance styles and genres. A good working definition of "Style" is how something is done. Students learn that theatrical styles are influenced by their time and place. Students experiment and develop skills in physical theatre, storytelling, mime, melodrama, poor theatre and theatre in education.

Year 9 Students study a variety of theatre practitioners including Stanislavski, Brecht, they apply the techniques and theories of key practitioners to GCSE style projects such as; "FACE", "The Stones" and a variety of different styles of scripted work. This means that students can create performances for different audiences and purposes using various genres, styles, conventions and traditions successfully by the end of KS3.

Drama is part of the open option process at KS4, which allows all pupils to choose it. Those that do will further develop the above skills but more importantly will allow pupils to develop their ability to express themselves creatively with like-minded people who all share a love of the Arts. It also allows pupils to learn in a creative and practical way which can be excellent for allowing all pupils to achieve. It is also a platform for pupils to develop and refine their drama skills to a much higher level

and into more performance opportunities both in and outside of school. Furthermore, it allows pupils to use it as a stepping stone for going onto A-Level, degree level and professional acting.

At KS4 Pupils, through a variety of improvised activities are nurtured into a safe caring family drama group so all learners feel safe and part of the group. This is of vital importance if pupils are to develop their drama skills to the highest of their abilities. The development of much more detailed and thorough skills in dialogue development and emotional range in their acting, both in terms of vocal and physical skills are developed.

Students are provided with a wide range of creative, exciting and stimulating opportunities allowing them to explore their interests in drama in ways that are personally relevant and truly developmental in nature. Individual strengths are recognised and the enthusiasms and areas of expertise of our pupils explored within their project themes. Students practise the skills, disciplines and techniques they have learned and continue to learn in order to communicate ideas, feelings and meanings about drama.

At KS4 pupils study for 5 hours per fortnight.

At KS4 pupils successfully follow the AQA GCSE Drama syllabus where students complete three components:

1. Understanding Drama - Assessed in a written exam in Year 11 (40%)
2. Devising Drama - Assessed through a devising log and performance (40%)
3. Texts in Practice - Assessed in performance by a visiting examiner in Year 11(20%)

Year 10

Pupils are introduced to Component 2, the devised work element of the examination. Researching and devising drama based upon themes such as Hillsborough disaster and social media. Pupils are guided through teacher led workshops and given opportunities in small groups to develop and experiment with their drama ideas using a wide range of skills taught in KS3 including, monologue, dialogue movement, physical theatre, set. props.

Performance skills are developed with these devised pieces being performed at Open evening and to selected staff members.

The use of physical theatre is explored in more detail, in the style of Frantic Assembly. This also leads to pupils learning how to sequence work and use the set in a much more skilful and creative manner.

Pupils are introduced to Component 1, act 1 of the set text "Blood Brothers" in a practical way. Teacher led analysis of each page of the script is supported by pupils acting out each section and analysing their own and peer work. The group are introduced to how to direct a piece of script and given the opportunity to do so using different small sections of the text. This helps them verbalise what they are doing in preparation for this written section of the exam.

During Term 2b and term 3 pupils work through their final Component 2 of GCSE Drama Exam.

Year 11

Pupils further study Component 2, the set text "Blood Brothers" in a practical way. Teacher led analysis of each page of the script is supported by pupils acting out each section and analysing their own and peer work. The group are introduced to how to direct a piece of script and given the opportunity to do so using different small sections of the text. This helps them verbalise what they are doing in preparation for this written section of the exam.

During the second term pupils follow component 3 - texts in practice (practical). Pupils work in their own groups on their 1 and 2nd sections of their individual scripts. Rehearsal techniques and acting skills are continually refined. Pupils do mock performances before the final examination in front of an external examiner.

Term 3 pupils are taught in detail, Component 1, how to answer the 3 sections of the written examination. All lessons contain some practical element with pupils acting and verbally analysing their acting before trying written questions much interaction takes place to ensure all learners know what they are doing.

Across both Key Stages, pupils are encouraged to be able to communicate their understanding and opinions of themes, contextual studies and drama performances. Oracy and literacy are there to support the practical activities that take place within drama lessons and therefore should be integral to pupils' work. Pupils are given opportunities to read information relating to tasks, and are encouraged to verbalise their answers to specific drama questions, particularly related to the written paper at GCSE.

Subject specific vocabulary is introduced as project work progresses, with word banks and exemplar material provided for those pupils less confident about written work.