

INTENT: A powerful, knowledge-rich curriculum

By the end of their education, a student of Drama at Dixons Fazakerley Academy:

- Will understand the roles, responsibilities, and skills that performers and practitioners need to make an effective piece of theatre.
- Will have knowledge of a range of theatrical styles, genres, and practitioners from across the globe and be able to implement this knowledge through performance.
- Will be able to critically analyse dramatic texts and live performances, demonstrating appreciation of theatre in various forms and from a variety of cultures.
- Will have developed an enquiring mind, an active imagination, a strong sense of personal and cultural identity and a respect for diversity in all aspects of life.
- Will have developed their confidence, communication, leadership, and creativity and be able to collaborate with others in a supportive and empathetic way to work effectively as part of a team.
- Will develop their confidence in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Our unifying 'sentence' is:

"The Drama department ensured that all students experienced a stimulating curriculum, which encouraged creativity, appreciation of the arts and built talented professionals".

In order to deliver a powerful, knowledge-rich curriculum we have selected knowledge by:

- Ensuring our curriculum is centred on two core strands: the study of professional works and scripts and the creative freedom to develop themselves as playwrights and performers through the use of stimuli. These core strands are taught through a variety of dramatic structures, theatrical styles, genres and traditions to support the building of schema, enabling students to retain knowledge in their long-term memory. This also enables students to develop their understanding of the commonalities and differences between practitioners and their professional work.
- The Drama curriculum is built upon developing and understanding theatrical literacy. Key vocabulary is introduced each lesson via the Frayer Model and knowledge organisers. It is continually revisited and reinforced through continuous low-stakes quizzing. This helps with knowledge retention and supports flexibility of application.
- The level of rigour and challenge develops through each year and key stage and has been planned coherently, building towards cumulative substantive, disciplinary and procedural knowledge. The knowledge of techniques builds in difficulty and complexity across the years. In addition to this, the complexity of the performance pieces and the devising activities develops in conjunction with the theoretical knowledge of drama as the curriculum builds and develops. This has been mapped coherently across the curriculum. An example of this is in the teaching of mime theatre in year 7. This is built on throughout year 8 with the study of Elizabethan theatre where the use of body language becomes exaggerated. This is further developed in year 9, where students need to consider their own body language and characterisation when responding to a given stimulus.
- Knowledge of the key components of drama is built on with increasing complexity. This knowledge can then be used to respond to a given theatrical work or in the creation of effective pieces of drama with a clear purpose and intention, supporting the understanding of a wide variety of dramatic styles.
- Considering the origins of theatre, ensuring that our students are aware of where it started and how it has developed over time.

The threshold concepts in our subject are:

- Responding to a stimulus- in everyday life, we will be given a number of scenarios where we must respond to situations in a positive way. By responding to a stimulus, we are building knowledge of how to respond to the circumstances that we face in everyday life in a variety of different ways, ensuring that we analyse the effectiveness of our response. This unlocks creativity whilst being relevant to everyday life and developing essential techniques that are relevant in the world of work.
- Performance and communication- drama provides opportunities for people to share emotions, intentions and meanings. When we perform, not only do we deepen our understanding of drama as a language, we develop our own methods of communication and expression. This can be on an individual basis or an experience we share with others.

- Context and charactersation- in order to fully appreciate the literary works of great practitioners, we need to understand the background to the text and the circumstances in which it was written. This helps us to fully embrace a script and take on the role of specific characters when we come to perform it.
- Critical appreciation- when we perform a piece written by a professional practitioner, it is important for us to understand and honour their intentions. Careful attention must be paid to elements such as staging, lighting, costume and stylistic features to ensure the work is replicated accurately and fulfils the intention of the writer. Understanding the theory behind professional works, approaches to the technical side of theatre and how it has been applied in different contexts ensures a well-rounded view and understanding of all areas of theatre.

In order to achieve a true understanding of Drama, topics have been intelligently sequenced based on the following rationale:

- Our curriculum is centred on two core strands: the study of professional works and scripts and the creative freedom to develop themselves as playwrights and performers. These core disciplines are taught through a variety of contexts to deepen their knowledge of drama in its earliest form through to modern day texts. This supports the building of schema, enabling students to retain knowledge in their long-term memory. This also enables students to apply their knowledge of various dramatic styles to their own devised, creative works.
- The Drama curriculum is built upon developing theatrical literacy. Key vocabulary is introduced each lesson via the Frayer Model and knowledge organisers. It is continually revisited and reinforced through continuous low-stakes quizzing. This helps with knowledge retention and supports flexibility of application.
- The level of rigour and challenge develops through each year and key stage and has been planned coherently, building towards cumulative substantive, disciplinary and procedural knowledge. The curriculum has been planned backwards with the end point in mind. This includes university requirements, knowledge required to study the subject at KS5 and foundational knowledge required to study the subject at GCSE. The knowledge of specific performance techniques and the purpose of these techniques builds in difficulty and complexity across the years. It is a spiral curriculum where the same techniques are revisited but build in complexity supporting the students to become masters within the subject. In addition to this, the complexity of the performance pieces and the given stimuli develops in conjunction with the theoretical knowledge of drama as the curriculum builds and develops. The techniques thread through the entire KS3 curriculum and support the development of knowledge within the subject at KS4.
- Students will develop their confidence whilst demonstrating commitment, concentration and their ability to communicate with others, building on fundamental skills that will equip them for the world of work. The performance pieces that they work on become increasingly more challenging in literary content, performance directions and theatrical context ensuring that students understand the nuances of effective theatre whilst being able to evaluate their work and the work of others with increasing discrimination and awareness to inform their practice as thespians. This supports the building of schema through disciplinary tasks.

The Drama curriculum will address social disadvantage and actively seeks to tell the stories of the marginalised by:

- Heavily contributing to the development of cultural capital, through the study of plays and playwrights from different countries and cultures.
- The extra-curricular program we have on offer provides a rich cultural experience. Students are given the opportunity to explore their own theatrical passions and celebrate their own cultures through performance. This can be through the study of existing professional works or in the devising of their own pieces of drama. The KS3 drama club provides an opportunity for our students to study a range of different texts and plays whilst preparing pieces for performance in our Christmas and summer showcases. This helps our students to make positive contributions to the community whilst developing their social skills and knowledge of our world.
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- Literacy and oracy is the key to education and a successful life, and Drama is an important vehicle in promoting this. The subject depends on frequent application of Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary, which stems from essential elements of the English language. This inspires and challenges students to engage with all literature available to them; developing their understanding of a variety of texts and playwrights. Oracy is developed through performance where all students are supported to express themselves fluently and correctly, preparing them for life after school.
- Providing the opportunity for all students to play different roles within performance pieces. This takes place within classroom lessons and extra-curricular activities. Giving the students the opportunity to study a range of plays and scripts from a variety of playwrights and experience traditional and contemporary theatre builds their cultural capital and appreciation of the world we live in.

We fully believe Drama can contribute to the personal development of students at Dixons Fazakerley Academy by:

- Being a creative outlet for many students placing an emphasis on self-expression. Students are immersed in group and individual activities within a safe and supportive environment; developing respect for the theatrical preferences of others whilst sharing a mutual love of theatre, thus contributing to a feeling of community.
- Providing a knowledge rich curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities to support the development of well-rounded individuals that are able to succeed: learning to work collaboratively, boosting confidence, developing the ability to interact socially whilst fostering talents and developing new skills. This supports students in their quest to pursue a rewarding career that leads to a purposeful and happy life.
- Using the knowledge gained from the study of Drama to build tolerance and acceptance in modern society. As we expose students to diverse and varied cultural texts, they begin to build up the tools needed in order to become positive citizens.

At KS3 and KS4, our belief is that homework should be interleaved-revision of powerful knowledge that has been modelled and taught in lessons. This knowledge is recalled and applied through a range of low-stakes quizzing and practice.

Opportunities are built in to make links to the world of work to enhance the careers, advice and guidance that students are exposed to:

- We have a programme of visitors and visits linked to careers in Drama and the arts. For example, we have links with LIPA who come in and deliver workshops to students in all key stages. Students are also given the opportunity to visit a local theatre to experience live theatre thus increasing their appreciation of drama and the arts whilst developing their understanding of the roles within the industry.
- Each topic taught has a 'careers spotlight', where students will explore a profession linked to that particular unit of work. Where the practical nature of the subject is explored, professions linked to this are explored. For example, when the students study the play and musical 'Blood Brothers', they will develop their understanding of how the play has been constructed, how it is staged and the props, costumes and set needed for a successful production. They will perform excerpts from the play and explore the career of an actor, set designer and director; careers that are linked to the topic of exploration.

We teach beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum by:

- Drama is not a national curriculum subject. We support the curricula in place across the school with a variety of cross-curricular links. Whilst Drama is not a compulsory subject at KS3, it is part of their entitlement at KS4, therefore we choose to deliver it as part of our curriculum offer.
- English-we support students with their reading and oracy, encouraging fluency and a good understanding of texts through carefully chosen scripts. We encourage our students to develop the habit of reading for both pleasure and information. When writing scripts, they are expected to write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language to suit the context, purpose and audience. We develop competency in the art of speaking and listening through performance to others.
- DEAR- Blood Brothers is a text that has been chosen for reading within DEAR time and is also studied by Year 9 during Cycle 1 in their drama lessons. This play was first performed in Fazakerley in 1981 which makes it part of our local cultural context and it is important for us to celebrate this with our students.
- We study approaches to theatre through different periods of history, looking at the origins of theatre in Ancient Greece (Year 7 C1 English) as well as Elizabethan theatre (Year 7 C2 and year 8 cycle 2 English).
- PDS-social issues/skills and protected characteristics