

Subject sentence – What do we do?

Drama and Performing Arts is more than just an opportunity to learn performance skills but quite often can be an avenue through which students realise how their unique individualities are to be celebrated and valued. Built on a culture which fosters a love of learning alongside working hard and being kind, Drama and Performing Arts has been thoughtfully considered, is engaging and relevant in content. Furthermore, these subjects and learning further the future choices and opportunities for our students.

How does Performing Arts equip students with powerful knowledge?

Group work forms a large part of the tasks students are exposed which develops an understanding of, and ability to participate in, relentlessly positive collaboration. This, alongside extensive character analysis and depictions, helps to build sympathy, empathy and respect for all people. Pupils are taught and expected to engage in analysing, critiquing, questioning and challenging different bodies of work from that of peers and themselves to local and well known specialists.

What skills and cultural capital do students gain in Performing Arts?

The scripted pieces of work chosen for Drama and Performing Arts have been picked specifically to engage students with content and concepts which reflects the diversity of life. These expose students to a wide variety of characters, scenes, settings and perspectives. Opportunities to engage with professional productions and experienced specialists also enable students to better understand the future careers and opportunities that studying Drama and Performing Arts leads to.

How is the Performing Arts curriculum designed?

We are unapologetic about the spiral nature of Performing Arts. Skills and concepts explored at a rich and in-depth level in KS4 are explicitly covered at earlier stages in students learning. This includes key threshold concepts of Creation, Rehearsal, Performance, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation.

How do you use retrieval practice?

Within Drama and Performing Arts, students begin each lesson with an opportunity for retrieval through Do Now tasks which are guided by recent learnings. Whilst these may relate to theoretical understanding, activities and tasks involved in performance also build in opportunity for retrieval of practical skill and application.

What content do you not cover (that others might) and why?

Within Drama and Performing Arts, Students do not have a Shakespeare cycle as a part of their learning. This decision has been informed by the assessment requirements as well as cooperation and conversation with departments where Shakespeare will be taught such as English. Similarly, certain cycles will be influenced by cooperating, conversing and collaborating with local theatre productions so that learning can be enhanced by students' exposure to professional examples and first hand experiences of viewing theatre.

What opportunities exist for students to develop wider understanding of performance or engage as members of the audience?

Through St James Electives Programmes, which builds opportunities for development in Creativity, Action and Service, KS3 students are able to participate in up to three Performance Showcases per year. St James's Performing Arts Department has also partnered with Exeter University's Community Theatre Project allowing for Performing Arts students to support the development of our Performing Arts learning whilst sharing and presenting their higher-education developed skillset.

