

Drama

What is the aim of the curriculum? How does it demonstrate ambition for students?	Key Stage 3 Our Key Stage 3 Drama curriculum develops confident, creative, collaborative and committed learners through practical performance and the exploration of theatre history, practitioners and texts. Students build cultural capital by studying theatre from its origins in Ancient Greece, through Commedia dell'arte, mime, silent comedy and pantomime, to classic and modern plays and the contemporary work of companies such as Kneehigh and Frantic Assembly. Drama is practical at its heart: students learn by doing, watching, reflecting and refining. Our aim is to make Drama meaningful, enjoyable and accessible to all, giving every student the chance to find their voice, take creative risks and perform with growing confidence in front of others. The 4Cs (Creativity, Collaboration, Communication and Commitment) underpin every unit, developing transferable skills valued across education, employment and life, and reflecting our school values of Aspiration, Perseverance and Respect. Key Stage 4 At KS4, students can opt to study the WJEC Level 1/Level 2 Vocational Award in Performing Arts (Technical Award). This applied qualification mirrors the way the professional performing arts industry works: students reproduce existing professional work (Unit 1: Performing), create and refine original work in response to a creative brief (Unit 2: Creating) and respond to an industry commission by planning, promoting and pitching a performance (Unit 3: Performing Arts in Practice). Students become increasingly independent theatre-makers, taking ownership of their rehearsal process, artistic choices and evaluation. Because the course can be accessed through both performance and production routes, students whose strengths lie in acting, devising or technical design can all achieve highly.
How does the curriculum allow time for teaching, practising and revisiting content and for addressing gaps in student knowledge as quickly as possible?	Core skills and the 4Cs are revisited in every year group. Vocal and physical skills, characterisation, use of space, ensemble work and audience awareness are returned to in every unit with increasing complexity, so that students deepen and refine their skills rather than meeting them only once. Drama techniques and rehearsal processes (for example still image, thought-tracking, narration, cross-cutting, hot-seating, blocking and script annotation) are introduced in Year 7 and deliberately reused in new contexts in Years 8 and 9. By the end of KS3 they form the toolkit that students draw on independently at KS4. Every unit follows a consistent cycle of explore, rehearse, perform and evaluate. Lessons begin with retrieval of key terminology and techniques, and work in progress is shared regularly, so that misconceptions can be spotted and addressed quickly. Formative assessment is continuous. Teachers circulate during rehearsal, giving live verbal feedback and direction, and structured peer feedback against shared success criteria is built into each performance. Each unit ends with an assessed performance and a reflection using subject-specific vocabulary, which helps us to identify gaps in learning and plan support or challenge.

How is the curriculum designed to build students' knowledge and skills cumulatively? How does it pave the way for future learning?	What order is this taught in and why? Year 7 begins with the 4Cs and ensemble work, establishing the routines, trust and expectations needed for safe and productive practical work. Students learn foundational techniques such as still image, thought-tracking, narration and use of space, which every later unit builds on. Students then travel back to the origins of theatre in Greek Theatre, learning about the chorus, masks and the amphitheatre, and how choral speaking and unison movement create meaning. Mime and Silent Comedy develop non-verbal communication: precise gesture, facial expression, exaggeration and comic timing, drawing on the slapstick tradition of performers such as Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. The year closes with Kneehigh and Hansel & Gretel, where students apply Kneehigh's playful storytelling style (narration, multi-roling, live music, puppetry and direct address) to a familiar story, bringing together the vocal, physical and ensemble skills learned across the year. How do we build on these topics and rationale in Year 8? We revisit ensemble and physical skills at the start of Year 8 through Commedia dell'arte, which builds directly on Year 7 mime and silent comedy. Students learn stock characters, status, lazzi and exaggerated physicality. This leads naturally into Pantomime, the British descendant of Commedia, where students explore conventions such as the dame, audience participation, slapstick and direct address. Peter Pan introduces sustained script work: students interpret J.M. Barrie's text, learn to annotate a script, block scenes and create believable characters. Devising then gives students their first extended opportunity to create original work from a stimulus using the techniques they have gathered so far. Oedipus returns to Greek Theatre in greater depth, exploring tragedy, dramatic irony and the chorus as a performance tool. Finally, Metamorphosis, through Steven Berkoff's adaptation of Kafka's story, introduces total theatre and stylised physical performance, preparing students for physical theatre in Year 9. How does Year 9 prepare students for KS4? Year 9 begins with Tension and Stage Combat, developing control, timing and the safe choreography of conflict, alongside techniques for building tension such as pace, pause, silence and levels. Physical Theatre extends the Year 8 Berkoff work through the methods of Frantic Assembly, with students devising physically expressive sequences. Rehearsal Techniques introduces naturalism and Stanislavski's system (given circumstances, objectives, the magic 'if' and emotion memory) together with professional rehearsal methods such as hot-seating, off-text improvisation and role on the wall. Students then apply these in a second, more independent Devising unit, working to a brief, structuring a narrative and refining work in response to feedback. Blood Brothers by Willy Russell gives students the opportunity to perform a well-known modern play, exploring social class, the role of the narrator, multi-roling and the conventions of musical theatre. The year ends with Technical Theatre, where students learn about lighting, sound, set, costume and make-up design and the job roles involved in staging a production. How does it pave the way for future learning? The KS3 sequence is designed with the KS4 Technical Award in mind. Interpreting and performing published texts (Peter Pan, Oedipus and Blood Brothers) prepares students for Unit 1: Performing, where they reproduce existing professional work. The two devising units and the study of practitioners (Kneehigh, Berkoff, Frantic Assembly and Stanislavski) prepare students for Unit 2: Creating, which requires them to respond to a creative brief and draw on the work of at least two named practitioners. Technical Theatre introduces the production disciplines that students can choose in Unit 2, and the job roles, organisations and production processes they need for Unit 3: Performing Arts in Practice. At KS4, the teacher-led direction of KS3 gives way to increasingly independent rehearsal and creative decision-making.
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	One concept that is taught across more than one key stage: Rehearsal, review and reflection In Year 7 students learn to give and receive simple feedback using the 4Cs and set themselves a target after each performance. In Years 8 and 9 this becomes more structured: students annotate scripts, record blocking, use professional rehearsal techniques and evaluate their work using subject terminology. At KS4 it becomes a formal requirement. In Unit 1 students keep a reflective journal, rehearsal schedule and action plans; in Unit 2 they keep a development log and refine their work in response to professional, peer and audience feedback; and in Unit 3 they evaluate their planning, promotion and pitch in response to feedback from a commissioning panel. Students who continue to post-16 study use these same processes at Level 3 and beyond.
How does the curriculum highlight progression routes for the subject and future career paths (Gatsby Benchmark 4)	Students in Years 10 and 11 follow the WJEC Level 1/Level 2 Vocational Award in Performing Arts (Technical Award). The qualification consists of three mandatory units: Unit 1 Performing (internal controlled assessment, 30%), Unit 2 Creating (internal controlled assessment, 30%) and Unit 3 Performing Arts in Practice (external controlled assessment, 40%). It is graded from Level 1 Pass to Level 2 Distinction*. Its vocational focus, built around industry-style briefs and commissions, gives students a clear insight into how the performing arts sector works. The qualification provides a strong foundation for post-16 study, such as A level Drama and Theatre or Level 3 vocational courses in Performing Arts and Production Arts. What career opportunities does the study of your subject bring? The creative industries are one of the fastest-growing sectors of the UK economy. Drama develops communication, creativity, leadership, teamwork, resilience and problem-solving. Career pathways include acting, directing, stage management, lighting, sound, set and costume design, producing and arts administration, as well as teaching, law, media, games design, events, marketing and any other industry requiring the transferable skills of collaboration, commitment, communication and creativity. Through Unit 3, students also learn directly about the job roles and organisations that create performance work.

	Year Group	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
What will be taught?	7	The 4Cs & Ensemble: an introduction to Drama	Greek Theatre: the origins of drama	Mime: storytelling without words	Silent Comedy: slapstick and the silent film era	Kneehigh: physical and playful storytelling	Hansel & Gretel: performing in the Kneehigh style
	8	Commedia dell'arte: stock characters and status	Pantomime: conventions of a British tradition	Peter Pan: script work and characterisation	Devising: creating original work from a stimulus	Oedipus: Greek tragedy	Metamorphosis: Berkoff and total theatre
	9	Tension & Stage Combat	Physical Theatre: Frantic Assembly	Rehearsal Techniques: Stanislavski and naturalism	Devising: working to a brief	Blood Brothers: Willy Russell	Technical Theatre: design and production roles
	10	Introduction to the Technical Award. Unit 1 Performing: acting skills, styles and researching published plays	Unit 1 Performing: rehearsal processes and a practice performance of a published extract	Unit 1 controlled assessment (30%): research, rehearsal and reflective journal	Unit 1 controlled assessment: final performance, review and reflection. Submitted for May moderation	Unit 2 Creating: exploring practitioners and responding to a creative brief	Unit 2 Creating: devising and production skills; practice brief
	11	Unit 2 controlled assessment (30%): explore, develop and create original work to the WJEC brief	Unit 2 controlled assessment: performance or presentation, review and refine. Submitted for December moderation	Unit 3 Performing Arts in Practice: planning, promoting and pitching performance work	Begin Unit 3 external controlled assessment (40%, 20 hours) in response to the WJEC commission	Complete Unit 3: deliver pitch and evaluation. Submission in May	
What key threshold concepts / core skills / themes are covered each half term?	7	The 4Cs: creativity, collaboration, communication, commitment; trust and ensemble; still image, thought-tracking and narration; use of space; audience awareness	Origins of theatre; the chorus; choral speaking and unison movement; masks; amphitheatre staging; myth as storytelling	Non-verbal communication; precise gesture, facial expression and body language; miming objects and environments; focus and control	Slapstick and exaggeration; comic timing; Chaplin and Keaton; music to underscore action; performing physical comedy safely	Kneehigh's style: narration, direct address, multi-roling, live music and puppetry; imaginative, playful storytelling	Adapting a familiar story; applying Kneehigh conventions; combining vocal, physical and ensemble skills in a final performance

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	8	Stock characters; status; lazzi; exaggerated physicality and masks; improvisation; historical context of Italian theatre	Pantomime conventions: dame, villain and hero; audience participation; direct address; slapstick; links to Commedia	Reading and interpreting a script; stage directions; annotating and blocking; characterisation through voice and movement	Responding to a stimulus; structuring a narrative; cross-cutting, flashback and marking the moment; rehearsing and refining	Greek tragedy; the tragic hero and fate; dramatic irony; the chorus as a performance tool; heightened voice and movement	Total theatre; Berkoff's stylised performance; ensemble movement; non-naturalistic vocal work; adapting literature for the stage
	9	Building tension: pace, pause, silence, levels and proxemics; safe stage combat: distance, reactions, timing and control	Frantic Assembly: chair duets, round-by-through, building blocks; safe lifts and weight-sharing; physical storytelling	Naturalism; Stanislavski: given circumstances, objectives, magic 'if', emotion memory; hot-seating, off-text improvisation, role on the wall	Working to a brief; purpose and target audience; applying practitioner techniques; scripting; responding to feedback and refining	Social class and nature vs nurture; narrator and direct address; multi-roling; playing age; musical theatre conventions	Lighting, sound, set, costume and make-up design; stage configurations and sightlines; production job roles; health and safety
	10	Acting styles and genres; interpretation of character; voice, movement and gesture; research: playwright's intentions, context, themes, original and new audience (1.1, 1.2)	Rehearsal schedules; reflective journal; action planning; blocking and script annotation; line learning; types of rehearsal; health and safety (1.1.2)	Turning research into a clear performance intention; recorded rehearsal at the beginning and during the process; responding to direction; refining (1.1, 1.2)	Final performance (3 to 6 minutes per candidate): accuracy, control, communication, coping under pressure; responding to feedback; strengths and targets (1.2, 1.3)	Components of a creative brief: purpose, intended effect, audience, space/opportunity, scale and resources; the work of at least two named practitioners (2.1.1)	Devising through improvisation, scripting, blocking and narrative structure; production disciplines (lighting, sound, set, costume, make-up and hair); development log (2.1.2)
	11	Responding to the annually set WJEC context; generating and developing ideas; communication of character; creativity and quality of original ideas; development log (2.1, 2.2)	Performance (3 to 10 minutes) or presentation of designs; evaluating against the brief; professional, peer and audience feedback; refining (2.3). Contexts and types of performance organisation (3.1.1)	Production process, resources, budgeting and schedules; job roles; advertising, social media and promotional activities; pitching: clarity, communication and tone (3.1.2, 3.2)	Synoptic application of Units 1 and 2 to plan a performance for the commission; creating promotional materials; using practical examples in a pitch (3.1, 3.2)	Delivering the pitch; responding to commissioning panel feedback; evaluating planning, promotion and pitch; targets for future creative proposals (3.2.2, 3.3)	