



English and Drama Department

Departmental Overview

English is a compulsory subject for Key Stage 3 (Years 7 - 9) and Key Stage 4 (Years 10 - 11). For GCSE, pupils take both English Language and English Literature exams. Drama is taught to all pupils in Key Stage 3, and then can be selected as a preference for Key Stage 4.

At A Level, our department offers A Level English Literature and A Level Drama and Theatre Studies.

English

Our English curriculum is intended to challenge, inspire and interest pupils and students, fostering a love of literature and a thirst to think critically about the world around them. Throughout Key Stage 3, we seek to introduce pupils to a diverse range of texts, aiming to engage them in imaginative stories and challenging ideas. We ask pupils to consider alternative interpretations, building discussion and debate into our study, encouraging pupils to build a respect for the ideas of others while maintaining their own viewpoint. We study a broad range of topics, building in opportunities for pupils and students to develop their creative and persuasive writing and speaking skills alongside their critical analysis. We believe passionately in the empowerment that fluency in reading provides. For this reason, we begin every lesson with independent reading. Each Key Stage 3 class has a Library lesson once a half term in which the Librarian introduces a new genre for pupils to try.

Key Stage 3

Year 7:

Autumn term: Introduction to prose and creative writing: Patrick Ness's *'A Monster Calls'*

Spring term 1: Poetry anthology; family bonds

Spring term 2: Introduction to persuasive writing

Summer term 1: Crime fiction: pupils read a series of short stories then write their stories with a twist

Summer term 2: William Shakespeare's *'The Tempest'*

Year 8:

Autumn term: The American novel: John Steinbeck's *'Of Mice and Men'*

Spring term 1: Exploration of the representation of gender in James Bond

Spring term 2: Developing an argument

Summer term 1: Poetry anthology: from subjugation to celebration – a study of different poetic voices

Summer term 2: Willy Russell's *'Blood Brothers'*

Year 9:

Autumn term: Gothic Literature: Susan Hill's *'The Woman in Black'* and Mary Shelley's *'Frankenstein'*

Spring term 1: Public speaking and speeches

Spring term 2: A comparison of romantic and modern poetry

Summer term 1: William Shakespeare's *'Macbeth'*

Summer term 2: Debating the death penalty

Key Stage 4

Year 10:

Autumn term 1: William Shakespeare's *'Romeo & Juliet'*

Autumn term 2: Power and Conflict poetry

Spring term 1: Language paper 1

Spring term 2: J. B. Priestley's *'An Inspector Calls'*

Summer term 1: Recap and revision of key exam skills and content

Summer term 2: Recap and revision of key exam skills, content, speaking and listening skills

Year 11:

Autumn term 1: Robert Louis Stevenson's *'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde'* or Charles Dickens' *'A Christmas Carol'*

Autumn term 2: Preparation for Paper 2. Non-fiction reading and writing skills

Spring and Summer terms: Power and Conflict poetry

Key Stage 5

Year 12:

Autumn Term

Exam Drama: Tennessee Williams's *'A Streetcar Named Desire'*

Exam Prose: Margaret Atwood's *'The Handmaid's Tale'*

Spring term

Exam Prose: H. G. Wells's *'The War of the Worlds'*

Exam Poetry: *Poems of the Decade*

Summer term

Exam preparation and coursework for A Level

Year 13:

Coursework: Students undertake an independent comparative study of two novels

Exam Drama: William Shakespeare's *'Othello'*

Assessment

All pupils and students complete a checkpoint and end of unit marked piece every half term. In Key Stage 3, the checkpoint is completed during week three or four and tests pupils' understanding of the key knowledge, concepts, vocabulary and aspects of grammar taught to that point. Pupils receive targeted feedback in order to show their application of the knowledge and skills taught in the end of unit marked piece. At Key Stage 4, each marked piece is focused on an exam question. Students in Key Stage 5 complete regular homework, timed essays and presentations to consolidate and develop their arguments about the set texts.

Extra-curricular opportunities

We have a thriving extra-curricular offer in the department. Our Debate Club learns the British Parliamentary debate format and has regular, lively debates both within school and with other schools. Our Creative Writing Club is a space for pupils and students to explore their creative writing skills.

We run regular trips to London and local theatres as well as literary events such as Wimbledon Bookfest.

Year 10 pupils also have the opportunity to take part in the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge.

Drama

'Actors are agents of change. A film, a piece of theatre, a piece of music or a book can make a difference. It can change the world'

Alan Rickman

Key Stage 3

At Key Stage 3 pupils have one lesson of Drama each fortnight. During these lessons, they explore a variety of topics and study play texts. They also learn how to create and participate in drama by developing their movement and vocal skills. They are introduced to a range of techniques such as still image, thought tracking, role play, narration, choral speaking, physical theatre and soundscapes.

Using these techniques, they create their own original devised pieces in the style of Greek Theatre, pantomime, Shakespeare, silent movies and many more.

In lessons, pupils learn how to explore, in an active and empathetic way, a range of topics. Pupils learn how to develop ideas, shape and edit work and to reflect on the final outcome.

Key Processes

Pupils learn how to maintain their focus and concentration during the lessons. They are expected to work effectively in a variety of situations and groupings. Creativity and teamwork are at the heart of drama and pupils are given the opportunity to express their ideas in imaginative ways. Drama encourages group and self- reflection and independent learning.

Lessons

Pupils are taught in mixed ability groups by a Drama specialist. Lessons take place, when possible, in the Drama Room or the Chapel. Pupils wear their school uniforms for lessons, but may take off their jackets and should make sure that they have no jewellery or other items on their person which could obstruct their work.

Assessment

Each term, pupils undertake a formal assessment, which usually takes the form of a devised group performance based on a topic they have been studying. As there are no National Curriculum levels for Drama, alternative Drama levels which link to GCSE grades are used. They are assessed on different elements including movement, voice, group work, use of drama techniques, characterisation and evaluation. Pupils record these assessment grades in their Drama books and note their targets for improvement.

Private Study

Private study is set and may take the form of a written task, such as 'writing in role', a design task, such as designing a set or costume, a research or thinking task or a group rehearsal.

Extra-curricular opportunities

As from this academic year, there will be a Key Stage 3 Drama Club run by Group 64 Putney Arts Theatre and LAMDA sessions for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, with opportunities to perform in assemblies, concerts and shows, such as the annual whole school production.





Key Stage 4

Drama is a popular option at GCSE, which combines devising and performance skills, with the study of scripts and issues. It is a highly creative course, offering pupils the chance to express their ideas and to shape them into an exciting performance.

Excellent attendance is vital for this subject due to the practical nature of lessons and the frequent use of group work.

Content

The GCSE Drama course begins with an introduction to higher level drama strategies and an understanding of the important role drama can play in society.

Pupils are exposed to a variety of texts and stimuli and encouraged to develop creative responses to them. The pupils undertake practical workshops, produce written work, including class notes, reviews and 'in role' writing, and study plays from different periods and cultures. They learn practical skills such as devising, mask work and how to incorporate music, props and costumes into their performances.

A trip to the theatre is an important and compulsory part of this course.

Assessment

Component 1: Devising- Centre Assessed worth 40% of qualification

In groups, pupils will create and develop a devised piece from a stimulus. They will then need to evaluate and analyse the devising process and performance in a portfolio.

Component 2: Performance from Text-External Examiner worth 20% qualification

- Pupils will perform two extracts from a published play, which could involve either a monologue or duologue or group performance.

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice - Written examination worth 40%

Pupils will sit a 1 hour and 45 minutes exam which will cover the following:

- Section A - answering a question on an unseen extract from the play they will be studying.
- Section B - pupils will have to answer two questions based on a theatre performance they have seen with their class. Pupils will be allowed to bring in theatre evaluation notes of up to a maximum of 500 words into the exam.

Extra-curricular Opportunities

GCSE Drama pupils will take part in a number of performances for events such as Celebration Evening. Year 10 pupils are encouraged to audition for the whole school production or to assist backstage. Pupils are given the opportunity to attend at least one play outside of school. GCSE pupils are also invited to watch the Key Stage 5 performances.



Independent Learning

Pupils are encouraged to join local theatre groups, such as Group 64, the Lyric Hammersmith Young Company or the Battersea Arts Centre. Our Library has a stock of plays and monologues for independent study. There are many theatres which offer discounted tickets or special events for young people, including the National Theatre, Lyric Hammersmith, New Wimbledon Theatre, Donmar Warehouse. Additionally, the National Theatre offer the opportunity to watch previous shows on their website as part of a streaming service.



Key Stage 5

'We must all do theatre, to find out who we are, and to discover who we could become.'
Augusto Boal

Drama and Theatre Studies is a popular option at A Level as it combines both academic rigour with the opportunity to perform, devise and review productions. Students study published texts, participate in practical workshops, see live performances, perform in individual and group pieces and create original devised plays.

Excellent attendance is vital for this subject due to the practical nature of lessons and the frequent use of group work.

Content:

The A Level Drama and Theatre Studies course begins with an introduction to higher level studies, including theatre history and an introduction to diverse practitioners. Students then undertake a performance of either a monologue or a duologue and a role in a group piece from two different published plays. A play text will be studied and practical workshops undertaken to explore aspects such as vocal awareness, interpretation, design, context and characterisation for their written examination.

Students are exposed to a range of challenging stimuli and go on to create a sophisticated devised piece underpinned by their own research and rehearsals. They also study two plays from different theatre contexts and write about them, including rehearsal techniques and original performance conditions in a final written examination.

Trips to the theatre, theatre workshops by professionals in the industry, after school rehearsals and performances are important and compulsory parts of this course.



- **Component 1:** Worth 40% of qualification. Group devised pieces based on a challenging extract from a performance text and influenced by a theatre practitioner.
- **Component 2:** Worth 20% of qualification. Students perform either a two-minute monologue or a five-minute duologue from a published play. In a group they will also have to perform a scene from another published script.
- **Component 3:** 40%
A two and a half hour written examination exploring the role of the actor, director and designer with two contrasting published play texts. They will also be covering questions based on a live theatre performance they have seen as a class.



Extra-curricular Opportunities

There are many opportunities for Drama and Theatre Studies students to be involved in extra-curricular activities. Drama students see professional theatre productions including those at the Donmar Warehouse, National Theatre and Young Vic. Students perform at events such as school concerts and Celebration Evening.

Independent Learning

Pupils are encouraged to join theatre groups, such as the Lyric Hammersmith Young Company, the National Theatre 'Entry Pass' scheme and the Battersea Arts Centre.

Our Library has a stock of plays and monologues for independent study and A Level students may also borrow scripts from the department's own 'library.'

There are many theatres which offer discounted tickets or special events for young people, including: National Theatre, Lyric Hammersmith, New Wimbledon Theatre, Donmar Warehouse etc. Additionally, the National Theatre offer the opportunity to watch previous shows on their website as part of a streaming service.

