**Drama Department Overview**

**New Staff**

**Department Overview**

Drama plays a key role in the specialist status of the school and is an important partner with Art, Music and Production Arts.  In department we currently have two full time members of staff working together to promote Drama throughout the school, where the specialism is often used alongside other departments work. In drama our work explores a variety of issues in the pupil’s everyday lives and we aim to make them aware of the choices they make within their community and the world around them. But at the same time we want each and every pupil to be challenged and for lessons to be fast paced and enjoyable!

We are extremely fortunate with the spaces we have to teach in. In January 2016 we moved into The Pavilion, along with Dance and Music – where we have the use of two state of the art drama studios which are fully equipped with lighting and sound. These studios are divided by a moveable bi-fold door, which opens into one larger performance space – which is used for exam work and smaller productions. In addition to this on the same floor we have access to 2 dance studios, which is extremely useful as extra space when exam groups are rehearsing or performing.

**Key Stage 3 Drama**

In key stage three all pupils are taught in form groups in years 7 and 8, where they get a lesson of drama a week. The curriculum offers pupils the opportunity to improve their confidence and interpersonal skills through performing, at the same time as learning a variety of theatrical techniques by taking part in a diverse range of Schemes of Work, with the influence of different theatre practitioners. These schemes challenge pupils to think about a diverse range of themes and issues within their lives, exploring different styles of performance and the impact it can have on different audiences. Pupils are assessed every half term on core skills developed in three different areas - Creating, Performing and Evaluating. Pupils have to comment on their learning and core skills developed through each unit of work in their logbooks – which they have to fill in at the end of each half term. Towards the end of year 8 pupils select which subjects they would like to take at GCSE – therefore the curriculum in year 8 drama is very much modelled on the 3 Components covered at GCSE, to give pupils a clear idea of what it would be like as an option subject.

**GCSE DRAMA**

GCSE classes are mixed ability and follow the new Edexcel GCSE course specification (starting 2016). It is a popular course, where each year we get usually forty pupils upwards, split into two classes, each taught by a drama specialist. Pupils start their GCSE course in year 9 and this year acts as a ‘foundation’ to develop core skills for the formal assessments for each of the three Component’s, which they start in year 10. The main focus in year 9 is for pupils to gain a greater knowledge and understanding of the history and purpose of theatre, the practice of influential theatre practitioners, developing devising skills, the role of the actor, theatre director, theatre designers, live performance analysis, text analysis and text performance.

Throughout the course, pupils have the opportunity to be assessed as performers, writers, directors, designers and theatre observers.  The course is 30% practical and 70% written, with one piece of coursework and a final written exam.  The course is split into 3 components; Devising, Performing from text and Theatre Makers in practice, which are taught over the 2 years.

**A Level Drama and Theatre Studies**

The students follow the new Edexcel Specification which is a two year A Level course (starting 2016). It is a popular course at A Level and numbers are very good each year, where there is just one class taught between both drama specialists. This specification consists of 3 components across the two years and mirrors the GCSE course; Devising, Text in Performance and Theatre Makers in practice. Once again the percentage weighting for this course is 30% practical and 70% written coursework and final exam. Throughout the course, students will complete a devised performance as writers, directors and performers, perform text work for a visiting examiner and analyse play texts and watch a live theatre production as part of their final 40% written exam.

**Enrichment**

As a Drama department we offer a variety of extra-curricular activities to the whole school.  One of the activities on offer is Drama Club for all year groups. One of the teachers in department would lead on this, where rehearsals take place one night after school each week to rehearse and put on a small scale annual production for two nights in the summer term, previous plays include; A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Alice in Wonderland, The Jungle Book, Blood Brothers. This has proved popular with Key Stage 3 pupils, as well as actively involving our GCSE and A Level Students who do not want to take part in the larger school production of a musical.

Each year one of the teachers in department would be expected to direct on a larger scale school production/musical. This is very much a collaboration with other departments within the school, such as Music, Art and Production Arts. This event brings pupils and students from all age ranges together and allows them to showcase and celebrate their talents in every area of the arts. Previous productions include; Fame, Oliver, Les Miserables, Little Shop of Horrors, My Fair Lady. Leading on this would mean extra commitment to rehearsals on a few Sundays nearer the time of the public performances.

Regular theatre trips to small and large scale venues for our GCSE and A Level pupils take place throughout the year, which is not only a requirement for the Component 3 exam but also encourages pupils to experience the variety of dramatic genres and add to the vibrancy and creativity of the department. Previous productions include; The Curious Incident of The Dog in The Night Time, The Kite Runner, Things I know to be True, The Jungle, War Horse.

The department also have close relationships with theatre companies such as Scene Productions, Trestle Theatre Company and Frantic Assembly where they deliver professional bespoke workshops for our GCSE and A level pupils, to support their own performance work and creative ideas as directors and designers.

In addition to this we are often asked to support other projects/events in the school, namely; Advent services, The Holocaust Memorial day and a Knife Crime educational video for Hertfordshire police and surrounding areas.

It is also expected that members of staff in department will have to work additional hours at lunch and after school to support practical and written exam work with both GCSE and A level classes.