

English Martyrs' Catholic School

Drama Curriculum Statement

Curriculum Intention

Drama education at English Martyrs' forms an essential part of the curriculum. The drama curriculum aims to develop a love of drama and performance, whilst developing the social and communication skills of every student. At the heart of the drama curriculum is the aim to encourage our students to embrace and enjoy the creativity that drama can bring to the individual. We believe that every student has something individual to offer and by fostering students of all abilities they are encouraged to be creative, experiment with ideas and have fun.

The drama curriculum journey begins in years 7 and 8 for all students and is offered as a GCSE option from year 9 to 11. If students are looking to further their dramatic knowledge and experience, they can choose to take it at A Level. The rich knowledge of specialist teachers ensures that students can study a variety of topics that are found within the drama and theatre industry. Students are offered the opportunity to demonstrate their own knowledge and skills through independent and group collaboration in both informal and formal performances.

Students at English Martyrs' come from a range of backgrounds and this diverse, active form of learning effectively engages the creative minds of young people. The experiences offered to our students provide opportunities for:

- raising self-esteem and confidence
- increasing employability
- developing social and communication skills
- promoting spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development
- promoting a sense of responsibility and ownership
- promoting an inclusive environment for social and economic change

Students are provided with a rich and varied curriculum in which they can feel inspired, motivated and experience equal opportunities. The curriculum embraces diversity and encourages students to sensitively reflect on the values, beliefs and attitudes of cultures from historical and present contexts. With the school ethos at the forefront of the work that takes place in Drama, we welcome students to think deeply about the impact of economic development, their own political voice and how they can be a force for social change.

As a Drama department we aim to give students a broad, creative and enjoyable experience to encourage a love of drama that will last a lifetime.

Curriculum Implementation

Students study a range of topics from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 5; these aim to engage, motivate and inspire our young people. The knowledge and skills of our students are predominantly developed through practical application. Students in all key stages are taught the disciplines involved in creating work through practical application; communication, collaboration, concentration, patience and planning are skills at the core of this subject. Combined with effective classroom resources, differentiated activities and homework tasks, our students develop deep learning and the confidence to share ideas, values and feelings in group work and whole-class activities.

Lessons are delivered using a variety of teaching methods. A range of resources is available for each scheme of work, activities are differentiated and students have the opportunity to engage in independent, small group and whole-class work. Interleaving and retrieval practice are a priority within lessons, and students are expected to use key dramatic vocabulary in both practical and written activities.

In Years 7 and 8, students complete a three-week homework project. This gives the students an opportunity to engage in a different type of creative project in Drama. In both projects students are asked to design a 3D model of a set and costume idea for a performance. At GCSE and A Level Homework and coursework tasks are set weekly and link directly to the topics being studied at the time. These are predominantly research based and assist in the development of skills and knowledge relevant to the course. In both cases homework and coursework is designed to develop evaluative and analytical skills to demonstrate knowledge of theatre design and performance.

Year 7 & 8 Drama

In Year 7, students are on a rotation with dance. They participate in one lesson per week in Drama and rotate to Dance halfway through the year. In Year 8, students participate in one lesson per week of Drama for the whole year.

Year 7	Year 8
Darkwood Manor	Dramatic Devices
Harry Potter	A Murder Mystery
	<i>The Terrible Fate of Humpty Dumpty</i>
	Shakespeare's <i>The Tempest</i>

Year 9 Drama

In Year 9, students have acquired the skills to begin to create their own performance work that embraces more mature themes and provides opportunity for questioning and reflecting on the wider world away from school. Students are allocated 2 hours per week.

Year 9
Documentary Drama: Homelessness
Script work: <i>Noughts and Crosses</i>
Physical Theatre
Production Design
Live Performance

GCSE and A Level students follow the Eduqas specification. Both specifications involve key areas of theatre making, performing and interpreting theatre. During their time in GCSE and A Level, each student is offered the opportunity to explore more advanced performance styles, create and develop appropriate and thought-provoking performance, and analyse and evaluate performance in an objective and critical way.

Eduqas GCSE Drama

Devising Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group performance influenced by a stimulus in the style of a practitioner/theatre company • A portfolio of supporting evidence (written report or presentation) • Written evaluation of the final performance
Performing from a Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance from an extract of a published play • Artistic intentions of character and performance report
Interpreting Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study play <i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i> • Answer questions based on an extract from the play • Live Theatre Review

Eduqas A level Drama

Performance Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group performance of a reinterpretation in the style of a practitioner/theatre company • A portfolio of supporting evidence (written report or presentation) • Written evaluation of the final performance
Text in Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group performance of a devised and scripted piece of theatre in the style of an alternative practitioner/theatre company • Portfolio of supporting evidence (written report)
Text in Context	<p>Study of three play texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you like it by William Shakespeare • Saved by Edward Bond • The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time adapted by Simon Stephens <p>Written exam based on extracts from each play.</p>

Co-curricular & Extra-curricular

Our Drama curriculum goes beyond timetabled lessons and exam classes. We offer extra-curricular opportunities for all students, whether they want to partake in Drama activities for the enjoyment of the subject or whether they want to build on their knowledge in preparation for exams. The extra-curricular opportunities provided for students are celebrated through live performances to family and friends.

- **Drama Club** – Aimed at Year 7 and 8 students, this provides an opportunity to extend performance skills they learn during timetabled lessons. In this relaxed and supportive environment, they can also experience working with peers they may not meet in lessons
- **Theatre Club** – Aimed at students who have a passion for theatre design. Activities set out to explore production design in a more detailed way than during a lesson. Linking with the Design and Technology department, students are given the opportunity to learn about set and prop design, costume and make-up design and lighting and sound design.
- **Shakespeare Festival** – This national festival provides an opportunity for our students to perform a play in front of an audience in a professional working theatre. This is an opportunity for Year 9 and 10 students to combine skills and create a new and innovative performance of a Shakespeare play.
- **Course support** – Students can make use of our facilities and receive extra support from staff during after-school rehearsals and revision sessions in preparation for exams.
- **Whole-school production** – This large production provides students from Years 7 – 13 with the opportunity to be involved in a fun filled and family friendly production. Working collaboratively with Dance, Design & Technology and Music, students perform in front of a live audience in our St Cecilia Auditorium.

Curriculum Impact

Students in Drama develop positive and respectful attitudes. They are aware that the Drama Studio is a safe and inclusive environment in which they are free to express thoughts and opinions without fear of judgment. Topics studied in Drama allow students to develop their ability to create well-informed, objective opinions so that everybody's 'voice' is heard. Consistent performance and feedback enable students to be resilient, build their confidence and be independent to move forward in both their learning and sense of character, preparing them for a better future.

The impact of Drama on students at English Martyrs' is far wider than that of timetabled lessons. It is evident through the engagement of students who have chosen to take the subject at GCSE and A Level and particularly those who choose to continue to be a member of the Drama department once they leave Key Stage 3. Drama at GCSE maintains a high uptake every year with a group of 26 students in the current year 11. At A Level, usually there are between 2-4 students opting for the subject with the number reducing by 50% when moving into A2. In 2021, this number spiked to 10 students opting for the subject at AS: and 100% of students continuing into A2. The impact can not only be seen in the numbers of those who choose to take Drama at GCSE or A Level, but the numbers of those who are involved in extra-curricular activities. There are currently over 150 students involved in Drama extra-curricular activities from across the whole school.

Drama offers students the opportunity to develop their understanding of their role in society and make connections with students they may not meet in the regular school day. They can form new and meaningful relationships that are recognised both in and outside of school. The use of script and improvised and devised work within this whole enjoyable curriculum has given students the opportunity to practice vocabulary and language, social interaction, and experience elements of culture to which they may not otherwise have been exposed. We passionately believe that it is the enthusiasm and commitment of students, combined with the experience and dedication of specialist staff that make this department a success and provide children with a prosperous future.