

Drama as a subject can be defined as the collaborative exploration and analysis of meaning through the enactment of events. It has long been a part of our young people's core entitlement within the National Curriculum Framework for English and here at Horizon Community College, Drama is available to all students as a discreet subject. Through Drama pupils can develop their emotional literacy and analytical awareness by seeing the world imaginatively from other perspectives. This imaginative engagement underpins the development of their critical thinking and schemes of learning are designed to support and develop student's skills in thinking, speaking, listening, reading, writing and critical analysis. Drama lessons at Horizon strive to promote individual self-confidence, encourage social co-operation and enhance creativity.

In Drama, all our pupils will have the opportunity to develop their skills in performance and appreciation. They will develop key functional skills, including working well with other people, improving communication, problem solving, independent learning, raising self-confidence and self-esteem. They will also develop an appreciation of empathy and sensitivity, as well as an awareness of social, historical and cultural contexts and influences within plays and other styles of dramatic presentation. In Year 7 pupils are expected to explore a range of drama techniques, skills, styles, genres and themes which are developed and extended in Year 8. By Year 9 the emphasis is increasingly on the choices they make for themselves when deciding how to interpret texts, develop ideas and explore situations through performance. When pupils are creating, performing and responding to drama, they are actively developing the skills and understanding that are central to progress in English. Drama helps pupils to recognise the layers of meaning that exist in texts and contexts, to develop their knowledge of dramatic conventions and their sense of audience. They do so as participants in making and presenting drama, and by stepping back to appreciate and appraise their own contributions and those of others. We aim to ensure that the schemes of work cover the two key areas of 'Script Work' and 'Devising.'

By Key Stage 4 Drama students will understand a wide range of play texts and an appreciation of the ways in which playwrights achieve their effects and communicate their intentions to an audience. Studying the Pearson BTEC EDEXCEL Level 1 / Level 2 TECH award in Performing Arts with an Acting focus, students are offered a focused vocational qualification that gives vital experience for students who are considering this as an area of employment or who wish to continue studying in further education. Over the two years students are assessed on a total of THREE components which all involve a balance of practical and theory work. Firstly, they develop their understanding of drama by examining the work of existing practitioners and the processes used to create performance. The set texts we study are **Blood Brothers by Willy Russell, War Horse by Nick Stafford and The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time by Simon Stephens**. The three performance styles we explore linked to these scripts are **Brechtian, Puppetry and Physical Theatre**. Students then experience a practical overview of skills, techniques and practices required for the discipline of drama. They apply these techniques to the rehearsal and performance process, to their own work and when interpreting that of others. Students are required to continually review their skills and techniques to understand their ability and progression.

In addition to the explicit links with English, Drama sits within the Performing Arts faculty alongside Music and Dance. Within Performing Arts, we strive for consistency in the delivery of our Teaching and Learning strategies. Progress and Progress Plus Routes are linked to the learning objectives each lesson and Kagan structures are used to promote collaborative learning whilst enhancing student's ability to articulate verbally their understanding. Expert questioning is purposely targeted to keep all learners engaged and probing is a technique used that challenges students to demonstrate deeper understanding. To further develop theoretical concepts, each student is issued a Knowledge Organiser which identifies the key terms and vocabulary which supports Home Learning tasks.

In addition to the formal, end of unit assessments, students undertake mid-unit progress checks which enable self-reflection and for the teacher to track where individuals are in their learning. The use of the department 'Bingo grids' allow an audit of the skills students have been developing and should be demonstrating within their work. At both KS3, linked to Age-Related Expectations, and KS4 linked to the BTEC TECH AWARD, these become a reference point to enable students to reflect upon their success, identify target areas not yet evidenced and aid their progress as they move towards final assessments.

The opportunities provided to all pupils out of school hours is something of which we are very proud. There is an exciting array of various activities on offer from trips to the theatre to see professional productions to students creating and performing productions of their own. 'Spotlight' is our extra-curricular Drama Club, open to students in all year groups with rehearsal sessions running several nights a week after school. Our repertoire is varied to include a range of musicals, contemporary and classical plays to broaden students' cultural experiences.

The Drama Department is led by teachers who are passionate about theatre and the arts. Still active performers themselves, we have first-hand experience of the industry and continually review and develop our own knowledge and expertise to keep the curriculum fresh, alive and relevant. We hope to instil that same enjoyment within all our pupils and pass on a love for exploring literature, devising, creativity and performing.