



DRAMA & THEATRE STUDIES

SPALDING HIGH SCHOOL

DEPARTMENT ON A PAGE & CURRICULUM INTENT

Department on a Page

The Drama Department aims to use the evolving, live, collaborative art of theatre to develop performers, artists and practitioners who have a life long love of the arts. Drama is about understanding people and human nature. Providing all students with creative opportunities that capture the imagination is at the heart of curriculum planning.

Drama frequently enjoys excellent retention across GCSE and A Level. Students secure grades that are in-line with their estimates and attain university placements, forging successful careers in the theatre industry.

Drama is currently taught by two teachers. One full time HOD responsible for all A Level and GCSE teaching, and an NQT who teaches KS3. Occasionally the department is supported by English teachers where there is a timetabling difficulty.

Currently all students experience drama in Years 7 and 8, with one lesson per fortnight in year 7 and once per week in Year 8. They are taught in their form groups. The Drama curriculum supports the English curriculum at KS3, and pupils explore similarly themed topics or plays, depending upon what is being studied that term. In Year 9, drama becomes an option subject and there are currently five mixed groups that experience drama once a week.

At KS4, the department follows the EDUQAS (WJEC) specification and there is currently one Year 10 class and two in Year 11. Students experience 5 lessons over a fortnightly cycle. The A Level Drama and Theatre AQA specification is followed at KS5 to allow for a greater range of groupings and opportunities.

This year, the department has staged an outstanding production of 'Chicago' as a joint production with music. Many theatre trips are planned throughout the year since this is an essential part of the specification for both KS4 and KS5, such as trips to Leicester Curve and the National Theatre and other smaller fringe theatre venues to provide a depth of experience.

Curriculum Intent

- To provide an engaging, exciting curriculum that fosters a life-long love of theatre and the arts through the teaching of engaging texts and topics that are thought provoking and allows the exploration of their own and other cultures.
- To provide all students with the emotional intelligence necessary to ensure they become positive contributors.
- To provide an environment where pupils are keen to experiment and take dramatic risks without judgement and develop the independence to explore topics and consider the possibilities of where they can take the work. They will do so by responding imaginatively to the experiences provided (including live theatre and workshop opportunities).
- To provide a broad education into the range of opportunities available in theatre including lighting and set design as well as acting. A goal is to create students who are able to successfully access employment opportunities in the future. Theatre is one of the subsectors of the creative industries, which is worth £101.5 billion, growing at nearly twice the rate of the UK economy in 2022.





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CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

Curriculum Implementation

YEAR 7 & 8: The Drama curriculum is taught through umbrella schemes. For terms 1& 2 and 5&6, these schemes mirror the English curriculum. Students have the opportunity to experiment with script interpretation and characterisation, devise original drama and explore a range of texts and media from classic to contemporary, including Shakespeare. Inclusive approaches are used in all lessons to enable even reluctant speakers and performers to develop the confidence to engage and enjoy Drama. The teaching is integrated with timely assessments and projected end points.

YEAR 9: Students are introduced to the vast range of career opportunities associated with drama and theatre, including technical and design roles. In terms 1 & 2, the students work as theatre companies, producing a play of their choice. Throughout this unit, the students conduct meetings, set deadlines and work collaboratively in their own discreet tasks to achieve an accomplished production. In terms 3 & 4, pupils work from stimulus to devise their own drama and experiment with a range of genre and dramatic convention. In terms 5&6, pupils study verbatim theatre and experiment with a range of topics, allowing them to develop the required skills in this style for GCSE.

KS4 (YEAR 10/11): Pupils follow the EDUQAS syllabus. Initially they will take part in a series of workshops exploring and developing devising skills inspired by a range of practitioners and genres of theatre. Pupils will also begin their studies in analysing and evaluating live theatre and begin work on the set text. There is a short unit exploring three different playwrights which assist the pupils with their own work in crafting scripts. All this groundwork in year 10 enables pupils to be successful in year 11. Pupils then will begin work on the devised unit, responding from a stimulus set by the board and selecting an acting or design role. During the second year, pupils will complete both practical assessments.—one devised and one scripted piece. The work on the set text will be continued and also ongoing development of analysis and evaluation of live theatre.

KS5 (YEAR 12/13): Pupils follow the AQA syllabus. Initially they will take part in a series of workshops focusing on an increasingly demanding selection of play texts and practitioners. This will lead into work for both Component 1 and 2 later in the year. Pupils study three complete texts, selected because of their diversity in terms of style and culture. Pupils supplement their studies by frequently attending live theatre performances, which are used to inform their own practice and assist them in preparation for the written exam in which they must analyse and evaluate live theatre.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR: The department runs a range of opportunities. This year, there has been a sixth form pantomime and a whole school musical. Students are able to take on technical roles as well as taking part as performers. A variety of trips take place throughout the year and these are often offered to all students, not just the drama students. Exam pupils are encouraged to invite parents and families in to watch their pieces, which is well supported.

Curriculum Impact

- Engagement and Enthusiasm: Based on recent peer assessments and Learning Walks, pupils are engaged and enthused by the curriculum. Pupil voice questionnaires are extremely positive. Many pupils express enjoyment in the curriculum and the opportunities that they are given, recognising the skills that they have developed and are keen to continue to develop as dramatists. Uptake for GCSE Drama is stable, despite the impact of the EBACC progress measure and the COVID pandemic.
- Excellent value added at A Level, and positive at GCSE.
- Many pupils choose to study drama related courses at University—75% in 2018, 80% in 2017. Many pupils gain places at reputable acting colleges such as RADA, LIPA, GSA, Arts Educational, Rose Bruford and Queen Mary. Many pupils form successful careers as actors or working within the industry.
- Becoming a Drama / Arts Prefect is a popular choice and pupils are keen to offer creative experiences.
- There is a buzz around the department and the school during performance events, including practical exams.

