



THE DRAMA CURRICULUM

Curriculum Intent:

Our vision for Drama at Bournville School

Our ethos and moral imperative to provide quality education in Drama

Learning experiences in Drama are something that students should remember, ideally treasure, for life. They are vital opportunities to engage, explore and express. To gain and expand knowledge. To practice, experiment with and to master skills. To learn ideas and concepts from the best theatre practice across time and across nations, to learn how these work – and even subvert them. To truly collaborate and become absorbed in drama with enthusiasm, creativity and critical awareness, always keen to move progressively upwards and onwards, always keen to dig deeper.

Every decision we make in developing, enhancing, reviewing, deepening and keeping relevant a drama curriculum must be made in the best interests of the child. Each decision must be made to enable every child, regardless of socio-economic and cultural barriers, to value learning, to invest in themselves as theatre makers. Each decision must be made to help a child understand how the arts help us de-code, question and understand the strange and complex human world. How theatre, in particular, is a force for change, that it can hold that mirror up to both the beauty and brutality of nature, that it can produce felt responses that resonate, often for years. Bournville School's **Teaching For Excellence Model** helps embed this moral imperative; that we **CONNECT; DO NOW; GIVE THE OBJECTIVE/BIG PICTURE; EXPLAIN AND MODEL (in practical Drama, most often through specialist teacher and/or peer modelling) and in theory lessons through quality Cultural Capital of professional performance, plus specialist teacher modelling); into PRACTICE; REVIEW and of course impact ANALYSIS of performance decision as actor/director/designer; into REVIEW; into RE-PLANNING OF TEACHING.**

Quality First Drama Education should make us all, enquiring, active learners and citizens, rejecting homogenous, mainstream values that do not embrace diversity, do not question, put individualism first and serve to uphold assumptions that it is not worth attempting to make necessary social change. **Quality First Drama Education** must recognise that we prepare questions, enquiry, experiences to meet the needs of all students, and particularly the needs of SEND and Pupil Premium students; for example, the particular care on fresh modelling and Cultural Capital, always assuming that any student must see afresh quality professional exemplars in accessible performance that is live, on stage, on screen, plus director and designer decisions that are fresh, relevant and inspirational to young learners.

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This ethos and moral imperative stretches across the whole Drama Curriculum, from the first day of Year 7 through all aspects of GCSE Drama examination preparation and achievement – and through all our outstanding extra-curricular work.

It is in this way that Drama makes an invaluable contribution to students' acquisition and understanding and understanding of KASH: the KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, SKILLS and HABITS that enable young people to relish learning, become aspirational, develop and make the achievements they aspire to at GCSE level, and so secure the post-16 educational opportunities and experiences to enable them to reach (even exceed) their potential, to progress to their next stage in their chosen learning and to compete with others nationally.

How wonderful that Bournville's record of achievement in GCSE Drama proves we can achieve, even exceed, our aims and expectations! And that we can be proud that Drama has a curriculum that is

- balanced and broadly based
- promotes moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students
- is designed to prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life
- delivers broad-ranging Cultural Capital in the best professional practice from stage and screen (the best that has been thought and said)
- has strong contributions to make for the study of English, key aspects of Citizenship and solid cross-curricular links to Art, Design and Technology and Music

Our pedagogy and passion

The Subject Leader Drama teacher at Bournville School is a trained subject specialist in Drama, committed to ongoing learning in the arts and developing own theatre practice, largely due to extensive experience at Lancaster University (particularly in devising theatre, scripting, lighting design and rigging, sound operation, stage design, stage management) and the additional opportunities for performance as director and actor, musician (orchestral bassoon and flute, and occasional vocalist), front of house, stage management, Theatre in Education actor-teacher, rehearsal and performance photography and graphic design afforded as: a) in addition to degree, an employee of the Dukes Theatre, Lancaster: an Edinburgh Festival 'veteran'; and c) in the light of all this, someone committed to becoming a Theatre in Education actor-teacher, only to experience PGCE specialist Drama teaching and then realise seeing young people progress day to day, not just once a year if that Theatre in Education intervention, was even more interesting and impactful.

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With this experience in mind, it is our firm belief that all specialist Drama staff should be fully aware of how theatre has and will continue to enrich our own lives and will seek every opportunity for all students to experience that personal, social and cultural enrichment for themselves.

Drama specialists should be highly experienced in the dynamism of contrast, of conflict, of driving forward when we face dichotomies. We understand and embrace the opportunities that such clashes present.

To that end, we uphold the right to create and deliver both a Human Curriculum and a Knowledge Rich Curriculum at one and the same time, and be accountable for our choice and to use our blend of performing arts skill and experience to engage and extend the **KASH: the KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, SKILLS and HABITS** of young people so that they can excel as performers, directors and designers in Drama and the Performing Arts, and to employ Drama's many transferrable skills through Key Stage 3 and GCSE learning in other subjects, and take their **ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND HABITS** through to Further and Higher Education and into employment.



SPECIALIST STAFF SKILLS USED IN DRAMA TEACHING AND LEARNING, BOTH CURRICULAR AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR DRAMA:

DEVisING, SCRIPtING, DIREctION, MODEllING OF PERFORMANcE GENRES AND CHARAcTERISAtION AND CHARAcTER DEvELOPMENT, TEACHER IN ROlE WITH STUDENTS, MAsk MAKING, PRoP MAKING, PHoTOGRAPHy, COStUME MAKING, MUSIC PERFORMANcE, GRAPhIC DESIGN, MUSICIAN, LIghTING DESIGN AND RIGGING, SOUND OPERAtION.

This multi-arts blend of skills and interests applied to both curricular and extra-curricular drama had enabled our KS3 Drama students to find their key interests in the crucial curricular (and extra-curricular) strands of ACTOR/ DIRECTOR/ DESIGNER and for GCSE Drama students to a) consistently excel in the DEVISING DRAMA exam component in portfolio and practical performance and b) tackle the ARTISTIC INTENTIONS of the PRESENTING AND PERFORMING exam component with confidence in artistic choices, validated in their performances of play script extracts to an external examiner.

All in all, Bournville School Drama stands by the chosen topics and themes for the KS3 Curriculum – using a thematic and/or narrative base

a) to help students to explore The Human Curriculum

(for example, how Year 7 themes such as **The Human Zoo** help us explore how people are perceived and how stereotyping can be at one end a productive theatrical device and at the other offensive, discriminatory and at its extremes highly offensive and dangerous, a propagandist's valued weapon and so to be challenged at every turn)

b) to help students to link and refine their learning in The Knowledge Rich Curriculum

(for example, how Year 8 themes such as **The Bush of Ghosts** help us progressively build mastery of new theatrical techniques for vocal and physical characterisation, expand our toolkit of dramatic conventions and open our eyes to new approaches to stage design, all within a memorable thematic framework.)

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By the Spring Term of Year 8, The Knowledge Rich Curriculum pushes to the forefront, with a major injection of cultural capital in **Acting Without Words** (mastery of Mime, Mask and Modern Clowning). This approach continues into Summer Term of Year 8, with another major injection of cultural capital in **Page To Stage** (detailed exploration of both devised drama and staging scripted drama, going into more depth to unpick the skills of actor and director, script writer and stage designer). The aim is to create learning spaces in which students discover more about their own strengths and skills, to take pride in their progress and rise to high challenges.

Year 9 Drama has more explicit links to the type of learning experienced in GCSE Drama; for example focusing on the three perspectives of actor, director and designer, pulling in more scripted drama texts and modelling production choices and backstage revelations of method to move students to a foundation for positive, informed selection of GCSE Drama as an option subject. They will be ready to apply transferable skills in creating, shaping, designing and communicating drama to other core and option subjects. Their knowledge of the theatrical canon will give them confidence to take on fresh literary challenges in English Literature, to tackle different forms, movements and conventions (ways of seeing the word, and re-presenting it to an audience) in areas such as Art, Music and creative writing.

Crucially, a Human Curriculum and a Knowledge Rich Curriculum also feeds into the Bournville Schools values and Character Education, aka **The Personal Curriculum and Character Traits**, the focus being STRIVE:

STRIVE: The Personal Curriculum and Character Traits

<p>SELF DISCIPLINE Self-awareness and self-control, showing respect for others and own learning</p>	<p>Self-aware in contributing productively to a team and in developing vocal and physical characterisations to communication human behaviour, emotion and motivation.</p>
<p>TOLERANCE Respectful and considerate of other people of all backgrounds.</p>	<p>Supportive team workers and whole class groups, with practice that is safe emotionally and physically, regardless of people's different cultures, values or beliefs.</p>
<p>RESILIENCE Have the capacity to cope in spite of setbacks or barriers – learning from this and trying again.</p>	<p>Confident and creative makers of drama, willing to experiment and to move on and try new approaches when something doesn't work and needs refinement.</p>
<p>INITIATIVE Taking risks with an open mindset, understanding that mistakes or 'failures' are a part of the learning process</p>	<p>As makers, taking pride in individual strengths. As performers, using one's own voice and body with flexibility and versatility. Having fresh ideas going beyond a given brief and taking the leap to try them out.</p>
<p>VIRTUE Putting all learning and learners first. Knowing right from wrong, 'good' choices from 'bad'. Contributing to whole class learning – and even to whole school drives, events and fund raising.</p>	<p>Supportive team workers and whole class groups, giving advice and encouragement to others. Collaborative team workers, respectful audiences and reflective audiences who give considered constructive criticism.</p>
<p>EMPATHY Sensitive to how others think and feel. Willing to appreciate and accept human emotions, reactions, differences. Able to be open and to even ask or offer; even if/especially if that means initiating more difficult conversations or lines of enquiry.</p>	<p>Sensitive interpretation of characters and their experiences, keen makers of drama seeking to make audiences think and feel. Team workers who understand and adapt to the 'less good' times everyone can experience.</p>

The Curriculum, Pedagogy and Practitioners

In our school's approach to learning in Drama, the Human Curriculum is very much linked to the ethos and methods of Epic Theatre and particularly Bertolt Brecht, and to how that evolved into Drama In Education, with outstanding techniques for generating enquiry, and Process Drama.

In turn, the Knowledge Rich Curriculum looks for both breadth and depth in exploring theatre craft, and particularly in **Genre, Style and Semiotics** and **Characterisation and Technique**; it is vital to invest the curriculum with cultural capital, covering genres past and present and representing a global, not Western-centric, perspective. We should always strive hard to represent the best of what has been made, what has been said, what has resonated with audiences, therefore ongoing review of this curriculum is vital. This is particularly important as the socio-economic profile of the Bournville School student intake indicates varied barriers and deprivation; going to see live theatre is simply a rarity in our students' home experience, likely only to arise from a school visit.

Stanislavsky will be taken as a key practitioner in relation to an actor's interpretation of a published play; for example, in the four levels of reading, in the digging down to establish Inner Characterisation, to be united with Physical Characterisation and rehearsed through Units and Objectives, into unified performance.

We also seek further training opportunities for staff to develop skills in the RSC Rehearsal Room Method, with techniques such as 'interpolated questions' and 'punctuation shift'. Evidence suggests that in schools with diverse populations and/or with many students who struggle with reading (becoming disengaged as a result), such methods actively develop student confidence. Breaking text into more manageable chunks allows students to gain deeper understanding of meaning, to empathise with the feelings and thoughts of the characters and understand their motives – developing the detail and quality of written responses in both Drama and English Literature.

In understanding and embracing dichotomies as a key part of drama, we embrace the spectrum of theatre as a whole, an art unique in power. There can be no better theatrical reference than Bertolt Brecht to exemplify for our intentions for delivering

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both a Human Curriculum and a Knowledge Rich Curriculum. In addressing how modern theatre is the epic theatre, Brecht creates a table to show a certain shift of emphasis distinguishing '**Dramatic Theatre**' (the established theatre canon of predominantly Western art) and '**Epic Theatre**', namely Brecht's work to create the theatre as a space for both entertainment and education, as a force for social and political change:

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DRAMATIC THEATRE

plot

*implicates the spectator
in a stage situation*

wears down his capacity for action

provides him with sensations

experience

the spectator is involved in something

suggestion

instinctive feelings are preserved

*the spectator is in the thick of it, shares
experience*

the human being is taken for granted

he is unalterable

eyes on the finish

one scene makes another

growth

linear development

evolutionary determinism

man as a fixed point

thought determines being

feeling

EPIC THEATRE

narrative

*turns the spectator into an
observer*

but

arouses his capacity for action

forces him to take decisions

picture of the world

he is made to face something

argument

*brought to the point of
recognition*

*the spectator stands outside, the
studies*

*the human being is the object of
the inquiry*

he is alterable and able to alter

eyes on the course

each scene for itself

montage

in curves

jumps

man as a process

social being determines thought

reason

Brecht On Theatre, translated by John Willett (Methuen, London, 1964, ISBN 0-8090-0542-5)

As Brecht notes, 'the table does not show absolute antithesis but mere shifts of accent. In a communication of fact, for instance, we may choose to stress the element of emotional suggestion or that of plain rational argument.' As Drama specialist, we know that there is no sense that one particular theatre form is superior to another – there is a beautiful spectrum of choice. What matters is not so much WHAT, but more the HOW and WHY of our quest to make meaning. We can reference Brecht, in succinct form, again, on the issue of HOW and WHY – as he draws out core lessons from Stanislavsky:

'SOME OF THE THINGS THAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM STANISLAVSKY'

1: The feel for a play's poetry

Even when Stanislavsky's theatre had to put on naturalistic plays to satisfy the taste of the time the production endowed them with poetic features; it never descended to mere reportage. Whereas here in Germany even classical plays acquire no kind of splendour.

2: The sense of responsibility to society.

Stanislavsky showed the actors the social meaning of their craft. Art was not an end in itself to him, but he knew that no end is attained in the theatre except through art.

3: The stars' ensemble playing.

Stanislavsky's theatre consisted only of stars, great and small. He proved that individual playing only reaches full effectiveness by means of ensemble playing.

4: Importance of the broad conception and of details.

In the Moscow Art Theatre every play acquired a carefully thought-out shape and a wealth of subtly elaborated detail. The one is useless without the other.

5: Truthfulness as a duty.

Stanislavsky taught that the actor must have exact knowledge of himself and of the men he sets out to portray. Nothing that is not taken from the actor's observation, or confirmed by observation, is fit to be observed by the audience.

6: Unity of naturalness and style

In Stanislavsky's theatre a splendid naturalness went arm-in-arm with deep significance. As a realist he never hesitated to portray ugliness, but he did so gracefully.

7: Representation of reality as full of contradictions.

Stanislavsky grasped the diversity and complexity of social life and knew how to represent it without getting entangled. All his productions make sense.

8: The importance of man.

Stanislavsky was a convinced humanist, and as such conducted his theatre along the road to socialism.

9: The significance of art's further development.

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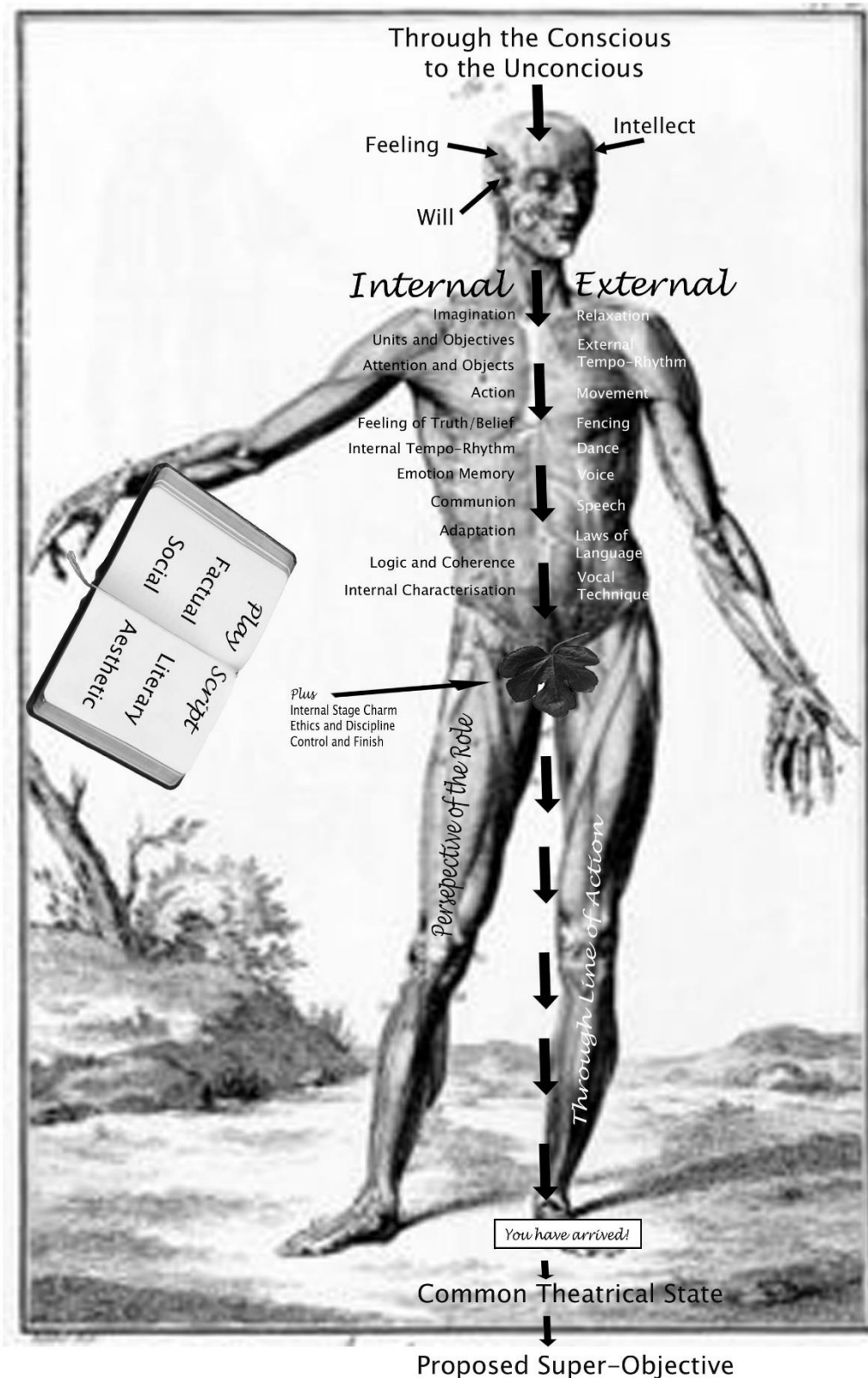
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The Moscow Art Theatre never rested on its laurels. Stanislavsky invented new artistic methods for every production. From his theatre came such important artists as Vakhtangov, who in turn developed their teacher's art in complete freedom.

'Was unter Anderem vom Theater Stanislawskis gelernt werden kann.' From *Theaterarbeit*, Dresden, 1952, p413

Re-quoted in Brecht On Theatre, translated by John Willett (Methuen, London, 1964, ISBN 0-8090-0542-5)

The Stanislavsky System



Drama and The Human Curriculum

It is the entitlement of Drama students to learn more about who we are, as individuals, as geographical, economic and social groups, and as the most self-aware species on the planet, capable of greatness and equally capable of causing catastrophic harm to fellow people and our world.

The Drama Curriculum must give us ongoing safe, structured and reflective opportunities to make sense of the world around us and the decisions that others try to make for us. The Drama Curriculum must be created, structured and sequenced in order for students to grow in confidence and self-esteem, in determination and resilience; to develop team skills and social adaptability that help us in the adult world.

It is the right of all Drama students for their voices to be heard, for their ideas to be explored, for their questions and concerns to be listened to and taken seriously. As teachers, we can structure time and space to use empathy and imagination to get to grips with the world, to explore cause and effect through safe fiction yet *be present*. In a complex, challenging and ever more confusing world where the future seems less and less certain, young people must be given space to explore what it means to be human.

As teachers fully appreciative of the power of the Human Curriculum, we are wholly responsible for learning environments, protocols that ensure students are safe both emotionally and physically, ready to explore and happy to experiment. As Drama teachers, we commit to relationships with students, we invest in the potential of each individual, we always recognise the inalienable right of all students to be heard, to experiment, to fail and go again. We respectfully push for students to have their efforts and achievements widely recognised for the amazing steps forward that they are. We know and are proud that Drama contributes substantially to students' personal development and positive behaviour and attitudes, to mental health and well-being.

To that end, and in addition to the **TEACHING FOR EXCELLENCE** model, plus all aspects of **QUALITY FIRST TEACHING** to meet the needs of all students, especially including our high proportion of Pupil Premium and SEND cohort, as Drama teachers we defend the right to stand by our subject grammar in the Human Curriculum: to use the power of process drama, to prioritise the importance of imagination in dramatic exploration, to drop into role when we know it's needed, to co-collaborate with learners when it is the best strategy, to shift between teacher, actor-teacher, facilitator as we know best in the right lessons at the right time.

With this in mind, it would be a disservice to our students not to extend learning experiences, professional links and enquiry through access to quality Theatre in

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Education. We seek links to TIE method, now explored in Year 9 Drama, appreciating that real understanding is felt and that telling young people what to think should not be a feature of TIE and TIHE work with young people, since this work takes a philosophical position that values experience of the world as personal, individual, subjective and interpretational.

Drama and The Knowledge Rich Curriculum

As Drama specialists, we invest in a beautiful/poignant/dark/heart-rending/disturbing/howlingly comic literary canon. We invest in rich oral traditions and multifarious means possible to re-present the world and/or dive deep in fictional realities. We love and treasure the rich knowledge of our subject and so cannot fail to appreciate the Knowledge Rich Curriculum.

We are committed to creating, reviewing, expanding a curriculum that, in line with the Ofsted framework with the focus on quality of education, is ambitious and has depth, that has breadth, balance and challenge. We seek to prepare students for their next stage of education, of employment, of life, empowered by the tools of our subject grammar and cultural capital, with confidence – ‘I know how this meaning is made, I know how this works, I can do it, I will not be marginalised’.

A Knowledge Rich Curriculum in Drama is there for the processes of theatre to be deconstructed and demystified so that the what, how and why of the ‘rules’, of the theatre canon are understood and appreciated – and then be broken and re-made, or joyfully subverted. We believe that theatre is art for all, and social and economic deprivation will not hold our students back; we must structure the sort of knowledge that has the greatest potential to explain the world and to give students culturally valuable knowledge and threshold concepts that can open a portal to previously inaccessible ways of thinking.

Our aim - progressively building student knowledge, understanding, analytical practice and performance/design skills via a well-chosen and clearly articulated curriculum, where teaching and learning is appropriately structured and sequenced – and delivered by subject specialists with consistency and passion.

Over three years, the KS3 Drama curriculum should empower students with declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge that maintains their understanding and appreciation of performance through adulthood, and an open mind-set to transfer and cross-relate knowledge and practice to other curriculum areas and wider life.

Over five years, extending into GCSE study, we should foster a life-long appreciation of the arts, aware of how meaning is collaboratively created and communicated and how quality live performance can, should and must make audiences think and feel.

With this in mind, it would be a disservice to our students not to extend learning experiences, professional links and enquiry through access to quality live theatre. We will value every opportunity to develop and sustain professional relationships with arts practitioners coming into school but, financial constraints notwithstanding, stand by the power of entering that auditorium, of first reading the stage space, of being

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present within that social gathering that sees and hears that piece of theatre live, as intended, as **felt**.

Our structured learning and feedback must ensure that students understand, appreciate and can analyse and review the artistic intention of the performance art they make and the professional theatre they are taught, pinpointing the techniques and conventions of how it is made and why it can produce a range of intended responses in the audience. Our students must be able to reflect on their feedback and own analysis, understand their progression and so be happy to take on aspirational targets that can take them into deeper thinking and deeper learning, into greater creativity, insight and perception – so to higher achievement in GCSE Drama, and transferring skills and understanding to other subjects and to Further and, hopefully, Higher Education.

For further reference:

REGARDING KASH AND KNOWLEDGE:

PLEASE SEE:

A) THE BOURNVILLE DRAMA CURRICULUM GLOSSARY

FOR OUR OWN SPECIFICALLY WRITTEN DRAMA GLOSSARY OF KEY DRAMA TERMS - AKA SPECIFICALLY WRITTEN FOR THE BOURNVILLE DRAMA CURRICULUM, WITH KEY EXAMPLES SPECIFIC TO THE BOURNVILLE DRAMA CURRICULUM AS) ALL MODELLED KS3 AND GCSE EXAMPLES RESEARCHED S LACKED TOO MANY SPECIALST TERMS WE USE AND B) THE EXAMPLES DID NOT MATCH OUR LEARNING

B) DRAMA DOES FRAYER DIFFICULT WORDS

ARTS SUBJECTS WERE ASKED NOT TO USE OUR SUBJECT-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY FOR THE LITERACY WORK USING THE FRAYER MODEL, THEREFORE WE CHOSE TO ENRICH OUR DRAMA STUDENTS' VOCABULARY BY SELECTING SOME OF THE 'MOST DIFFCULT WORDS' THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO BE FOR KS4 ONLY, BUT THAT KS3 PLUS LOVE APPLYING, TO SPECIFIC CHARACTERISATIONS, WITH SOME DESERVED PRIDE!