

## Theatre Studies

Why do Theatre Studies? Apart from being accepted as an entry qualification for a vast range of Arts, Social Science and Humanities courses at degree level, it is also recognised as an academic A Level by major universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. Furthermore, the social and communication skills developed as an integral part of the course, are invaluable to 'life after school': whether you choose an academic, artistic, commercial or industrial career. The course will greatly enhance your cultural experience and provide you with a whole range of personal and group disciplines. In addition, by insisting on informed, accurate and critical analysis in all academic work, the course develops and deepens your intellectual abilities. The course demands a high level of analytical and evaluative skills and a huge amount of independent learning. It is, of course, hugely enjoyable!

You will spend your time:

- Devising and performing. This is a particularly exciting part of the course; working with others to create your own works of theatre. This always requires extra-rehearsal outside lesson time, but it offers in return particular rewards in terms of sense of achievement, art-making and shared experience;
- Developing your theatrical skills. Texts are approached not only from a performance perspective, but also from a directorial and design perspective. So you will be able to study the craft behind lighting, sound, costume and set design. You will explore the rôle of the Director in the theatre;
- Studying plays in performance: the theatrical, social and historical background to exam texts will be studied;
- Going to see as much live theatre as possible and becoming an informed audience member;
- Writing detailed critical essays on: the set exam texts, your own performance skills and the productions we go to see;
- Exploring the relationship between drama, theatre and society. Drama has always been related to its historical and social contexts, and both reflect and influence the manners, politics and attitudes which have been responsible for its birth. To establish the contexts, it is necessary to study the genres, fashions, philosophical movements, legislation, changing audiences and new artistic and scientific developments which provoke theatrical change.

The course is not and cannot be an actor's training course, designed simply to provide candidates with a showcase for their talent; very few do have the talent and determination to follow such a career. However, the advantages and benefits of an AS/A2 in Theatre Studies go far beyond the merely vocational; the value lies in the challenges and rewards that it offers of itself.

The examination is a combination of practical assessment (30% of A2) and written papers (70% of A2). The course demands the study of texts from a range of periods: Greek, Elizabethan, Restoration, Early Realism, Modern British, American and

European Drama. The course requires practical exploration of a range of styles: naturalism, physical theatre, expressionism, dance, commedia and high comedy. Texts will be studied in the context of relevant theatrical conventions and styles. We shall look at the impact of twentieth century practitioners such as Stanislavski, Brecht, Artaud, Grotowski and Berkoff. Their influence on contemporary drama will support the practical work we do.

You will have to perform both devised and scripted work at AS and A2. It is advisable to have taken the subject at GCSE and the following skills are needed to do well in the subject. An A Level Theatre Studies student should: be a confident and able performer; be critically perceptive; be curious; read widely; go to the theatre; write fluently; like working both collaboratively and independently and have a good understanding of stagecraft.