

DRAMA Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Herschel Grammar School Drama Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Curriculum Intent

Transferrable skills
Honour of traditions
Equal opportunities through Diversity
Appreciation
Team work
Responsibility
Enjoyment

Curriculum Implementation

Educational trips
Varied schemes of work
Educational workshops
New Views Scriptwriting schemes as part of the National Theatre
Theatrical productions
Shakespeare Schools Festival

Curriculum Impact

Happiness & wellbeing
Understanding of self and the external world
Mindfulness
Assessment
Narrative
Skills that our well-rounded students can transfer to any workplace

Through education, we have the privilege of engaging directly with children and young people who:

- are passionate about the natural world
- want to do their best to protect it
- can influence their wider communities

Throughout this document, whenever the following icon is used , it indicates that the teaching and learning is linked to one or more of the following:

- nature
- the causes and impacts of climate change
- careers in the green economy
- the importance of sustainability

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Year group	Year 7
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Rationale for sequencing	Many students arrive at Herschel with little to no experience of Drama. Year 7 introduces the fundamental principles of communication, allowing students the opportunity to develop and analyse these within a safe and supportive environment. Topics link to the KS3 English curriculum and students begin to develop confidence and suitable terminology.
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Term 1	
Half term	Half term
“Moving into Drama” Students are introduced to the rules and expectations of the department and are gently lead into a variety of activities that help to develop confidence, teamwork and co-operation. The focus for this half term is to understand the importance of communication through the 5 Acting Skills: Facial Expression; Gesture; Body Language; Voice and Space. Students work towards developing simple skills and are introduced to Explorative Strategies including how to create a clear Scenario, the use of Frozen Image in performance and the creative use of Transmogrification (the use of an item on stage for which it was not intended 🌀). Students explore the importance of the Drama skills in the outside world and develop understanding of the department’s efforts to help them develop into well-rounded, multifaceted individuals. There is an Educational Visit arranged to give the students an opportunity to see a live theatre show. This half term ends with a Baseline Performance Assessment.	“Pantomime” A traditionally British performance style that offers students the opportunity to explore traditional archetypes. Students explore this comic style utilizing strategies such as audience participation. We explore the traditional use of fairy tales and discuss how to alter to suit a modern and diverse audience. The Drama department runs a Year 7 trip to see a Pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Windsor in December. This helps support student learning and understanding in preparation for their final assessed performances. Performances are created utilizing tools already developed in prior learning to perform a modern Pantomime suited to a Year 7 target audience.
Term 2	
Half term	Half term

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“Gloom Manor” Students continue to develop knowledge and understanding of communication through the genre of horror. In this topic, our focus is on learning how to create tension and atmosphere through performance mediums such as lighting, sound and music. Explorative strategies such as sound collage, split-scene, hot-seating and whole-class in role are introduced and analysed. This topic links beautifully with Year 7’s study of “Gothic conventions” in English. Home learning that allows the students to use their imaginations to recreate Gloom Manor through model boxes, videos and maps is an opportunity to promote re-use and recycle themes, linking to National Theatre’s efforts to reach net zero. 🌍 Performances are created utilizing tools already developed in prior learning to perform a horror story reflecting upon “The Life and Times of Mrs Gloom”.	“Kabuki Theatre” Students are introduced to their first topic of world theatre, exploring the culture and traditions of this ancient Japanese art form. This topic links beautifully with Year 7’s study of myths, legends and fairytales studied in English. Strategies and Devices explored include the use of ‘Mei’ in order to mark a dramatic moment, as well as the Element of Semiotics created through colour symbology and the transmogrification of props 🌀. Performances are created utilizing tools already developed in prior learning to perform a traditional Japanese folk tale.
Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
“Elizabethan Theatre” Students are introduced to the history and culture surrounding Elizabethan theatre and develop an understanding of how Proxemics might be used on a traditional Elizabethan Thrust stage. Students explore a variety of Shakespearian scripts through activities that develop understanding and confidence of the traditional language in preparation for further textual study with the English department. Performances are created utilizing tools already developed in prior learning to perform a 2-minute scripted performance in the Elizabethan style. Students link context to school-wide celebrations of “Culture week”.	“Presenting & Performing Text” Year 7 & 8 students explore a scripted text based upon a recent option to attend a theatre production or an impending school production. Examples include “Bugsy Malone” and “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time”. Students spend this last half term developing rehearsal skills when exploring the text in detail - specifically techniques in blocking and the use of proxemics to create meaning for the audience. Students can take on the opportunity to play the role of Designer (Lighting, Sound, Costume, Set Design) in this module and Actors are expected to have learnt their lines. This links beautifully with Component 2 of the GCSE with professional industrial links made. The Design element is an opportunity to promote re-use and recycle themes, linking to National Theatre’s efforts to reach net zero. 🌍

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	There is an Educational Visit arranged to give the students an opportunity to see a live theatre show.
Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Baseline Performance Assessment – Term 1A Rehearsal, Performance, Response assessment – Term 1B
Term 2	Performance assessment – Term 2A Rehearsal, Performance, Response assessment – Term 2B
Term 3	Performance assessment – Term 3A Rehearsal, Performance, Rehearsal, Response assessment – Term 3B

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Year group	8		
Rationale for sequencing	Students extend on prior learning and learn a variety of Explorative Strategies to add to their Communication Tool Box. Once again, sequencing links to the Herschel KS3 English curriculum.		
Term 1			
Half term		Half term	
“Commedia del’ Arte” Linking to prior learning of “Pantomime” students develop their understanding of the historical, cultural and social relevance of this traditional artform and practice skills in the art of comedy through traditional Italian Stock characters. There is a rehearsal focus on characterisation and comic timing using traditional lazzi and grummalot techniques, which reflect the ethos of a traditional Commedia troupe. Historical links to “Black History Month”. Students can also link the Stock character of Pantelone to Scrooge when studying “A Christmas Carol” in English. Performances are created utilizing tools already developed in prior learning to perform a 2-minute performance in the Commedia style. There is an Educational Visit arranged to give the students an opportunity to see a live theatre show.		“Mask” Students learn about a variety of types of mask used in improvised performance. Year 8 link this performance style to the Dramaturgs of Jacques Lecoq and theatre company Complicite in order to develop an understanding of physical communication in performance. A clear focus on the use of space and a common language is developed through “The Seven Levels of Tension” and Trestle’s Basic and Intermediate masks. The lessons on “Neutral Mask” and “Clowning” offer students the opportunity to explore their own identities, offering opportunities for self-analysis and reflection, linking beautifully with how these skills can be used in a wider context outside of Drama, as well as linking to the English GCSE Speaking and Listening exam. Improvised performances are created utilizing tools already developed in prior learning to perform a rolling performance of comic mask.	
Term 2			
Half term		Half term	
“Ancient Greek Theatre” This is an extended project lasting an entire term that offers the students opportunities to work in theatre companies as Actors or Designers (Lighting, Sound, Costume, Set Design.) The Design element is an opportunity to promote re-use and recycle themes, linking to National Theatre’s efforts to reach net zero. 🌍 Students learn about the history and culture associated with Ancient Greek theatre as well as the link to Ancient Greek gods and myths. Students draw upon previous learning and link Ancient Greek comedy to “Commedia” and “Pantomime” and explore how to semiotically communicate a traditional Ancient Greek tragedy in a five-minute final assessed performance.			

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The entire term offers them an opportunity to rehearse in a detailed manner, exploring the various technologies the studio has to offer with professional industrial links made.

This topic links to “Cultural Poetry” & “Moving Images” studied at this time by Year 8 in English.

Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
“Titanic” Students explore this real-life tragedy in a respectful manner that explores the historical, social, political and economical context of the time. Students learn how to communicate this information through their performances, exploring the differences between first and third class on-board experience. Explorative strategies such as “Role on the Wall” and “Hot-Seating” are used to create complex and believable characters. “Thought-tracking” is also used to help communicate detailed character soliloquies to the audience and “whole-class in role” offers students the opportunity to empathise with the Titanic victims. Links to “Contexts & Meaning” studied in English by Year 8 at this time. Performances are created utilizing tools already developed in prior learning to perform a 2-minute performance in an emotive performance that often sees many students perform over and above expectation. Students link within the context of their identity to school-wide celebrations of “Culture week”.	“Presenting & Performing Text” Year 7 & 8 students explore a scripted text based upon a recent option to attend a theatre production or an impending school production. Examples include “Bugsy Malone” and “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time”. Students spend this last half term developing rehearsal skills when exploring the text in detail. Specifically techniques in blocking and the use of proxemics to create meaning for the audience. Students can take on the opportunity to play the role of Designer (Lighting, Sound, Costume, Set Design) in this Unit and Actors are expected to have learnt their lines. This links beautifully with Component 2 of the GCSE with professional industrial links made. The Design element is an opportunity to promote re-use and recycle themes, linking to National Theatre’s efforts to reach net zero. 🌍 Links to “Contexts & Meaning” studied in English by Year 8 at this time. There is an Educational Visit arranged to give the students an opportunity to see a live theatre show.

Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Performance assessment – Term 1A Rehearsal, Performance, Response assessment – Term 1B
Term 2	Rehearsal assessment – Term 2A Rehearsal, Performance, Response assessment – Term 2B
Term 3	Performance assessment – Term 3A Rehearsal, Performance, Response assessment – Term 3B

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Year group	9	
Rationale for sequencing	Students extend on prior learning and learn a variety of Explorative Strategies to add to their Communication Tool Box. Although still linking to KS3 English, this Year offers the students to explore work as if a GCSE Drama student, with greater emphasis on analysis and evaluation in preparation for GCSE Drama and English.	
Term 1		
Half term		Half term
“Devising with Physical Theatre” This unit has been created to mirror the Component 1 Devised Unit of the Drama GCSE. Students learn and explore new physical explorative strategies in order to create a devised performance that reflects a piece of stimulus from Black heritage as part of “Black History Month”. The work of theatre company Frantic Assembly is explored, challenging the students to communicate meaning through movement and dance. There is an Educational Visit usually arranged to give the students an opportunity to see a live theatre show.		
Term 2		
Half term		Half term
“The Woman in Black” This is an extended project lasting an entire term that offers the students opportunities to work in theatre companies as Actors or Designers (Lighting, Sound, Costume, Set Design.) The Design element is an opportunity to promote re-use and recycle themes, linking to National Theatre’s efforts to reach net zero. 🌱 This term is very much reflective of The Component 2 of the Drama GCSE with professional industrial links made. Students explore various scenes from this scripted classic and learn how to create atmosphere and tension on a limited budget through a variety of explorative strategies – revisited from prior learning. The entire term offers them an opportunity to rehearse in a detailed manner, exploring the various technologies the studio has to offer. Final performances often see many students perform over and above expectation.		
Term 3		
Half term		Half Term
“Babyfather” A script about teen pregnancy that offers students the opportunity to explore GCSE Drama Practitioner Stanislavski, as well as explore a situation very different to the lives of Herschel students. Links well with English Year 9 study of “Romeo and Juliet” where the emphasis is on the relationships of the characters and their emotions. Year 9 students are offered the opportunity to attend the Activities Week Arts Residential to Cornwall where they participate in Watersports, Art, Music and Drama activities in order to further develop Herschel’s well-rounded and multifaceted individuals.		

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Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Rehearsal and Response assessment – Term 1A Rehearsal, Performance, Response assessment – Term 1B
Term 2	Rehearsal and Response assessment – Term 1A Rehearsal, Performance, Response assessment – Term 1B
Term 3	Rehearsal and Response assessment – Term 1A Rehearsal, Performance, Response assessment – Term 1B

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Year group	10	
Rationale for sequencing	Students are introduced to the OCR GCSE Drama course. The first 2 terms offer an opportunity to re-visit, learn and practice the relevant criteria. In term 3, students complete their Component 1 Devised exam.	
Term 1		
Half term		Half term
An Introduction to GCSE Drama with a multi-faceted lesson whistle-stop tour of Historical theatre that has shaped communication and performance, as we know it today. Students also study a variety of key Drama practitioners including Constantin Stanislavski, Bertolt Brecht and Antonin Artaud. There are lots on mini in-lesson performances for students develop confidence in themselves as well as nurture their own identities within the group in a trusting way. Students complete a Drama Audit to ensure knowledge of Key Stage 3 learning is secure.		
Term 2		
Half term		Half term
Component 3 “Performance and Response” (AO3, AO4) Students study the exam paper, set text “Blood Brothers” by Willy Russell exploring how context, themes and issues can be communicated from the point of view of Director, Actor or Designer. Students rehearse and perform scenes from the play and are assessed on the C2 criteria. Students study a second script in preparation for a mandatory theatre trip in order to be able to complete Component 3, Section B of the written exam “Live Performance Review”. Post-trip, students explore how meaning was communicated to the audience through Acting, Directing and Design skills. The Design element is an opportunity to promote re-use and recycle themes, linking to National Theatre’s efforts to reach net zero. 🌱		
Term 3		
Half term		Half Term
Component One “Devising Drama” (AO1, AO2, AO4) Students devise and prepare a performance based upon the one of ten stimuli of the exam board’s choosing. Internally assessed performances take place at the end of June with Coursework portfolios completed weekly as part of Home Learning. The completed Coursework Portfolio is due September of Year 11. The Design element is an opportunity to promote re-use and recycle themes, linking to National Theatre’s efforts to reach net zero. 🌱		

Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Year 10 GCSE Theatre History and introduction to Practitioners
Term 2	Year 10 Mock Component 3 “Performance and Response” exam paper Component 2 “Presenting and Performing Texts”

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Term 3	Formal Component One “Devising Drama” performance and coursework Assessment (worth 30% of final GCSE)
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Year group	11	
Rationale for sequencing	Students complete Components 2 “Presenting and Performing Texts”& 3 “Performance and Response” (worth 70% of their GCSE exam).	
Term 1		
Half term		Half term
Students revisit Component 3 “Performance and Response” exam paper Sections A & B (AO3, AO4). Revising key themes and issues and exploring practically how they can be communicated through performance and Semiotics. Students prepare and perform extracts from “Blood Brothers” as part of Component 3 revision and as part of a mock performance exam for “Presenting and Performing Texts”.		
Term 2		
Half term		Half term
Component 2 “Presenting and Performing Texts” (AO1, AO2) Students study and practically explore the chosen text for this component (text choices change annually to suit the individual students of the cohort). Students then prepare 2 short excerpts to be performed to an external visiting examiner. Students may perform monologues, duologues or in small groups. Please note students may only perform a maximum of one monologue. Students also complete a 2 x A4 page Concept Proforma that documents their rehearsal and performance choices prior to the assessment. These are sent to the examiner 2 weeks before the performance exam. The Design element is an opportunity to promote re-use and recycle themes, linking to National Theatre’s efforts to reach net zero. 🌍		
Term 3		
Half term		Half Term
Students spend the remaining lessons revisiting and revising criteria for the final 90-minute Component 3 “Performance and Response” exam paper which usually takes place May/June (AO3, AO4)		N/A

Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Year 11 Mock Component 3 “Performance and Response” exam paper Year 11 Mock “Presenting and Performing texts” assessments
Term 2	Year 10 Mock Component 3 “Performance and Response” exam paper Component 2 Performance exam “Presenting and Performing Text” (worth 30% of final GCSE)
Term 3	Component 3 “Performance and Response” exam paper (worth 40% of final GCSE)