Drama

“Study, find all the good teachers and study with them, get involved in acting to act, not to be famous or for the money. Do plays. It’s not worth it if you are just in it for the money. You have to love it.”

Phillip Seymour Hoffman

Drama at Noel-Baker
Drama is a building block of life. To have the opportunity to express yourself in a way not defined by pen and paper, to learn the best that has been thought, created and performed in Drama. Drama helps individuals view the world differently and lets the pupils explore their creative potential whether it is on stage or behind the scenes.

Key stage 3 Drama
All students in Year 7, 8 and 9 receive one hour of Drama each week. The curriculum covers a wide range of topics and disciplines that include, creating, performing and responding. The pupils will mainly work in small groups but there is also the opportunity to work as individuals and also on whole class pieces. Students will explore a wide range of topics from Greek Theatre to musicals and modern styles of theatre.

Year 7 Drama

Unit 1: Basic Techniques; using the theme of Heroes and Villains, this unit teaches the basic techniques of still image, narration, slow motion and flashback. The students learn not just what the techniques are but how they can be used in a performance. Students also explore how to create characters using a range of vocal and physical techniques to perform them to an audience.

Unit 2: Greek Theatre; this unit teaches the students about ancient Greek theatre and the role of the chorus. The students explore what the role of a chorus was and how they communicated to very large crowds in large open spaces.

Unit 3: Scripts and Characterisation; in this unit, the students discuss the themes of bullying and morality through the exploration of the script ‘The Terrible Fate of Humpty Dumpty’. The students explore what happened to the main character as well as the varying reactions of the ‘gang’. The unit has a focus on how to create and perform effective characters as well as being able to interpret a script.

Unit 4: Trestle Masks; this unit teaches the student about the theatre company ‘Trestle Theatre’ and their style of performance. The students explore the use of masks and the impact this has on the physicality of their performances. The students learn how to communicate a plot line without the use of words.

Unit 5: Devising from a stimulus; this unit will give pupils the opportunity to create their own pieces based on the same stimulus. They will use the skills and techniques they have already been learning and then giving the basics of devising to create completely original pieces of work.

Unit 6: Musical Theatre; this unit will be using the forthcoming school production as the base. Pupils will learn how dance, music and acting work together in musical theatre. They will also learn a brief history of musical theatre and how it has evolved over the years.

Year 8 Drama

Unit 1: Shakespeare – A Midsummer Night’s Dream; this unit will give the students a chance to explore Shakespeare from a practical point of view. We have chosen A Midsummer Night’s Dream so the pupils can explore the different types of characters, the fairies, the lovers and the mechanicals. They will also get an understanding of Elizabethan Theatre and the performing skills needed in order to perform three scenes from the play.
Unit 2: Verbatim Theatre; this unit introduces the style of verbatim to the pupils. They use a real life event which is the 1960s criminal case of Derek Bentley and the famous line ‘let em ‘ave it’. They explore the case through drama and create performances based on the case focusing on the use of intonation.

Unit 3: Slapstick – Silent Movies; this unit will give the pupils the chance to bring out their silly side. The skills they are developing through mime and comedy culminate in a silent movie which is then filmed and made to look like a silent movie from the 1920’s.

Unit 4: Commedia dell’arte; this unit explores a 16th century form of theatre that focuses on character types. The students explore the ‘stock’ characters using specific physical movements and gestures associated with the characters. They will get the opportunity to create their own versions of this style of comedy theatre.

Unit 5: Practitioner – Stanislavski; this unit will focus on the beliefs of theatre practitioner Konstantin Stanislavski. Students will explore his views in a practical way and get them to question whether they agree or disagree with his views. They will learn about how Stanislavski used to train his actors and then put this ideas into practice. Practitioners are vital to know and understand if pupils in year 9 are thinking on continuing Drama through to GCSE.

Unit 6: Devising from a stimulus; this unit will give pupils the opportunity to create their own pieces based on the same stimulus. They will use the skills and techniques they have already been learning and then giving the basics of devising to create completely original pieces of work.

Year 9 Drama

Unit 1: Physical Theatre; this unit introduces the pupils to Physical Theatre and how to create and perform in this style. They will be using the poem ‘Jabberwocky’ from Lewis Carroll’s Alice through the looking glass as their stimulus. This unit will develop the pupil’s ability to work in groups and to think in a creative way which they may not have done before.

Unit 2: Frantic Assembly – The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time; this unit will be a continuation from Physical Theatre as they are now going to develop their skills by focusing on the work of Frantic Assembly who are a UK Physical Theatre company. They have created many pieces of work but we will be focusing on the novel ‘The Curious Incident of the dog in the night-time’ by Mark Haddon. The pupils will be using the same kind of devising process that Frantic Assembly use in this production. Our aim is to get the pupils ‘flying’ by the end and perform a section of the play.

Unit 3: 60’s Kitchen Sink Drama; in this unit, students will explore a style of theatre borne from 1960’s Britain. Through studying extracts of the play ‘A Taste of Honey’, students will explore themes such as unemployment, poverty, racism and teenage pregnancy.

Unit 4: Practitioners – Brecht; this unit will focus on the beliefs of theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht. Students will explore his views in a practical way and get them to question whether they agree or disagree with his views. They will work on extracts of Brecht’s own plays. Practitioners are vital to know and understand if pupils in year 9 are thinking on continuing Drama through to GCSE.

Unit 5: Devising from a theme; this unit will give pupils the opportunity to create their own pieces based on the same stimulus. They will use the skills and techniques they have already been learning and then giving the basics of devising to create completely original pieces of work.

Unit 6: Scripted Performance – ‘Our Day Out’; the final unit of the year will be the pupils working on a scripted performance. They are going to study ‘Our Day Out’ by Willy Russell. They will look at
how to read and perform scripts and focus on characterisation culminating in performances of key extracts.

**Key stage 4 Drama**
Currently at key stage 4 we offer BTEC Tech Level 1/Level 2 in Performing Arts in Year 11 and in Year 10 we are running GCSE Drama (Eduqas syllabus). Students receive three hours of lesson time in Year 10 and Year 11 each week.

**Year 10 GCSE Drama:**

**Component 1: Devising theatre: 40%**
During this internally assessed unit students participate in the creation, development and performance of a piece of devised theatre. Students use either the techniques of an influential theatre practitioner or a genre, in response to a stimulus set by the exam board.

During this component, students must produce:
- A final performance
- A portfolio of written evidence
- An evaluation of the final performance

**Component 2: Performing from a text: 20%**
During this externally assessed unit students will be assessed on either acting or design.

All students study 2 extracts from the same performance text and from this they are to select moments that they will combine to make one performance. This performance is performed to a visiting examiner from the exam board.

**Component 3: Interpreting theatre: 40%**
This externally assessed unit is a formal written examination.

**Section A: DNA, by Dennis Kelly**
Students answer a series of questions about the text DNA. They must consider how the text is constructed and how performances create meaning.

- The characteristics of the performance text.
- The social, cultural historical context of the theatrical conventions of the period in which the play was written.
- How meaning is interpreted and communicated

**Section B: Live Theatre Review**
Students will select one question from a choice of two to answer. They will be required to analyse and evaluate how meaning is communicated through the role of theatre makers in a contemporary professional performance.

**Year 11 BTEC Tech Level 1/Level 2 in Performing Arts:**

**Component 1 – Exploring the Performing Arts**
In this component pupils will study three different pieces of professional repertoire in different styles of theatre. They will take part in practical workshops which explore these different styles, explore the different roles and responsibilities that take place and how to perform in the different styles.
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The assessment of this component is done through videos of the workshops that take place and a written portfolio which evaluates the different styles and the three professional pieces.

**Component 2 – Developing Skills and Techniques in the Performing Arts**
In this component pupils learn how to perform an extract of their choice from professional repertoire. The pupils start by taking part in workshops which develop the skills needed in rehearsal and for performance. They can either work as an individual or in a group. The choice of the performance is up to the pupils and can be in any style they choose.

The assessment for this component is the performance but then written coursework evaluating the skills they have developed, the rehearsal process and then the final performance.

**Component 3 – Performing to a Brief**
This is the externally marked component of the course. Pupils are set a performance brief by the exam board in which they need to create a piece that is 7-15mins in length. Throughout the process they also have to complete three written elements which are done in exam conditions. In these sessions they write an ideas log, skills log and then a final evaluation. The video of the performance and the three elements are sent off to be marked.

**Drama Enrichment activities**
The main bulk of our enrichment sessions take the shape of rehearsals for the school show. But we don’t just stop there, we also offer Drama club which is open to all years. This is an excellent opportunity for pupils to further develop their knowledge and excitement for the subject.

Noel Baker Music Department offers the following extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities.
- Production rehearsals (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday after school in the school theatre; these rehearsals run from September to December)
- KS3 Drama club and KS4 Drama club (From January to July)

We are extremely lucky with the Drama facilities at Noel Baker. We have two large Drama Studios, one which is rigged with lighting and a fantastic theatre that can hold up to 300 people. There is a sliding door between the back of the theatre and one of our Drama studios which we use as our backstage area for productions. We also have a full rack of lighting and sound system and the use of 12 head microphones. The seating is in the bleacher style which can be moved back to use all of the floor space.

**Further studies and career progression in music**
Options in Drama after GCSE can be A Level, BTEC Level 3 or even could possibly go to a drama/performing arts college. Many universities and employers like to have students and employees who have varied post 16 qualifications, Drama can be favoured as it shows skills in time management, communication, team work, resilience, confidence, commitment, dedication, and creativeness. There are a vast number of career options available in Drama, such as: performing, directing, costume, lighting, sound, set design, education, drama therapy, journalism, radio and TV, theatre in education, front of house and many more.