



Drama

Department

**FORTISMERE
SCHOOL**





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WELCOME

The Drama department is a truly special place. We offer students an experience they cannot get at any other school. Over the last 14 years we have used our amazing industry contacts to broaden our curriculum; from work experience, to masterclasses and backstage visits. I love the creativity our students bring to the course and their total commitment to us has meant that strong bonds have formed over the years. Many alumni are still involved in what we do; often bringing their work in or sharing their expertise.

Lauren Overs
Head of Drama



FACILITIES

We believe our students deserve the right to ignite and nurture their talent, confidence and Arts awareness, learning in specialist spaces with technical facilities that enhance the learning. We have 3 Drama studios and a fully fitted Theatre space seating 270. Our technical equipment includes computerised moveable lighting which we train students to programme and operate. We have Apple I Mac computers for video editing using Final Cut Pro, industry standard software. We have use of a recording studio and costume design spaces.



OUR PHILOSOPHY

ENABLING CREATIVE INNOVATION

Fortismere Drama is dedicated to nurturing imagination and creativity within our students. We are an outstanding, high-achieving, creative and forward-thinking department. Our varied provision spans beyond the curriculum, celebrating Drama, Theatre and the Arts in all aspects of school life.

Our students are creative, innovative thinkers and are encouraged to apply this skill across the curriculum. Innovation is at the heart of what we do in Drama; we believe our students deserve the right to ignite and nurture their talent, confidence and Arts awareness.

Co-operative learning practices underpin all we do within the Drama department; we believe that the self-awareness, confidence and analytical approach these practices foster, impacts across the curriculum and students' lives

We have committed, highly trained staff, many of whom are still engaged professionally within their discipline. Our staff are actively engaged with the Arts and are committed to offering our students experiences which reflect UK and Global Arts development. We are developing innovative cultural leaders of the future.

We believe that Drama can improve social tolerance, create positive social change, foster emotional intelligence and ultimately lead to documented improved academic performance for all of our students in every subject (Jægar, M. M., & Møllegård, S. 2017).

Students' aspirations are raised through confidence in their ability, specialist support and access to London's cultural offering. We believe that all students should be able to access, engage and create within a safe and exceptional Drama curriculum.

We provide innovative, engaging and challenging programmes of study for all students, across a range of abilities, at every Key Stage.

KS3 CURRICULUM



We are very proud of our curriculum which sits outside of the National Curriculum framework. Its content is fluid and allows us to meet the ongoing and changing needs of our young people. The broad programme of study covers many aspects of Drama from Theatre History and notable practitioners to contemporary issues in a weekly lesson. We have explored knife crime, HIV, mental health, climate change and diversity issues. We uphold British values through our teaching of respect and tolerance in all that we do. Students will learn skills related to drama performance, building the foundations to study GCSE, such as developing a character through voice and physicality, extending knowledge and understanding of issues through improvisation and developing vital social skills. Our students learn resilience as they develop constructive thoughts and arguments within adverse conditions created through role-play. The very essence of safe classroom-based activities can challenge their own thoughts and allow risk-taking. Key stage 3 Drama develops independence, leadership skills and a sense of increased self-confidence and self-esteem.

One highlight of our curriculum is our Year 9 Film Project. Students work in groups writing, filming, acting and editing their own short films. These films are then judged by an industry panel and the winning films are presented trophies and have their film shown on the big screen at our partner cinema The Phoenix in East Finchley. Over the years our industry panel has included inspirational people like Actor Larry Lamb, Actor/Writer Steve Pemberton, Actor/Writer Reece Shearsmith and Comedian Sean Lock.

Each year we do a large-scale Production giving students an opportunity to perform or be involved in our technical team. We run also theatre trips for every year group and a weekly KS3 Drama club.



KS4 CURRICULUM

The Drama Department at Fortismere is renowned for its wealth of experience, connections to the professional Theatre and Media industry and for the multitude of opportunities that it offers students. Drama is a hugely popular subject and our results are some of the best in the country.

Following on from a secure KS3 knowledge base, students follow the GCSE AQA syllabus which allows them to experience a combination of practical drama, the study of scripted drama, script writing, devising for performance and attending live professional performances. Students have the choice to be assessed on acting, design or technical skills throughout the course.

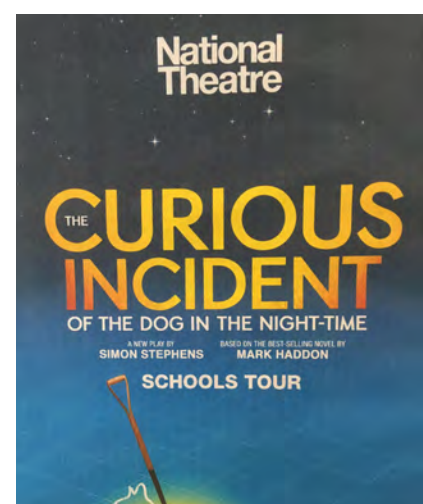
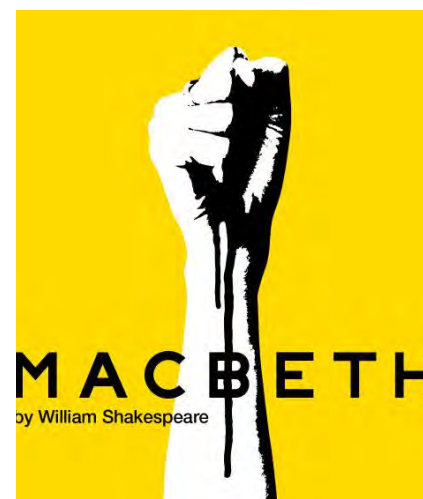
Dramatists tackle every aspect of human existence. To engage with Drama a student must be a psychologist, a detective, a historian, a philosopher, a sociologist, an artist and a collaborator. Studying GCSE Drama requires students to examine what it is that makes good theatre work: the play, the story, characters and language, the director's interpretation, the complex work of the actors themselves, and the technical and design elements that make theatre so alive. We offer students the chance to watch and engage with a wide range of theatre and students will benefit from visiting and working with some of the best Theatres in the country. GCSE students also benefit from in-school performances and workshops from places like the National Theatre and the Almeida


as well as having the opportunity to engage in exclusive Q&A sessions with a number of successful Theatre Producers, Directors and Writers.

GCSE students also work in the community and our popular Theatre In Education unit takes student work into local primary schools which is very rewarding.

We run a hugely popular accelerator Group for students that are considering studying Drama at Alevel. This group gives students a chance to watch Alevel work, join trips and extend, enhance and enrich their subject knowledge even further.

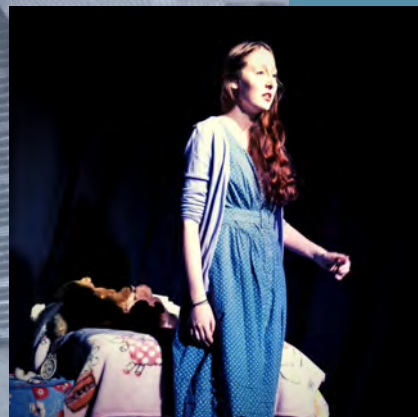
GCSE Drama is favourably recognised nationally by all Universities. Statistics show that Drama graduates have one of the highest employment rates. This is because the subject develops self-confidence and produces well-rounded, articulate people. Fortismere Drama department gives students the skills to communicate, develop and refine their ideas and the ability to adapt and respond to changing environments.



A large background photograph of three young people (two girls and one boy) looking intently at a smartphone held by one of the girls. They are outdoors, with trees and foliage visible in the background. The image has a soft, slightly desaturated blue tint.

**“DRAMA IS A VITAL SKILL, JUST
LIKE ENGLISH OR MATHS. IT
TEACHES YOU CONFIDENCE,
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, PUBLIC
SPEAKING, HOW TO LOOK AT
THINGS IN MULTIPLE WAYS, TO
WORK WITH OTHER PEOPLE AND
TO THINK ON YOUR FEET. BUT
MOST OF ALL IT IS BRILLIANT,
BRILLIANT FUN! I USE THE SKILLS
DRAMA TAUGHT ME IN SO MANY
WAYS EVERY SINGLE DAY.”**

**ALUMNUS LYDIA, CURRENTLY READING
CLASSICS AT CAMBRIDGE**



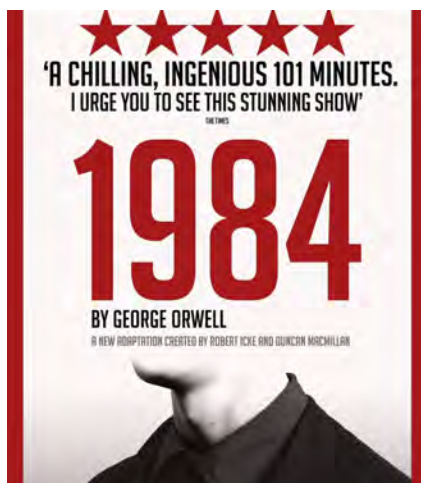
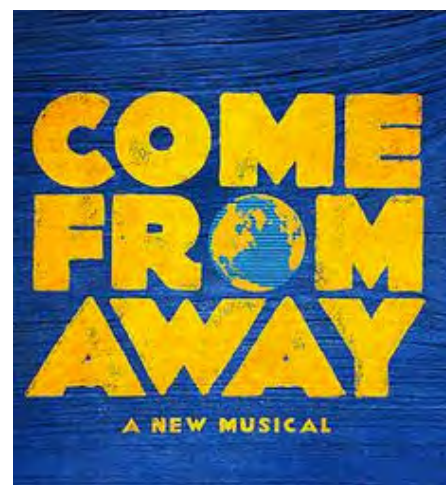
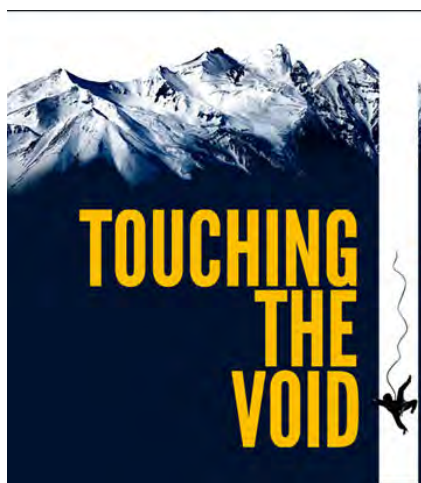
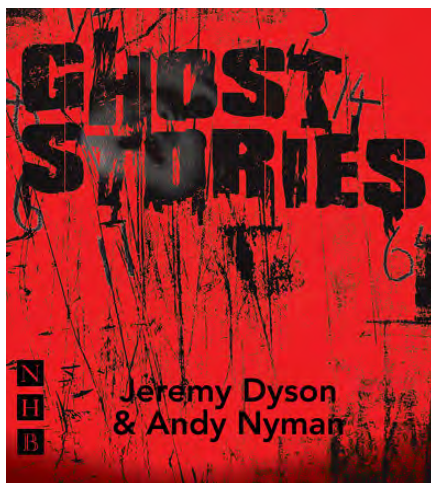
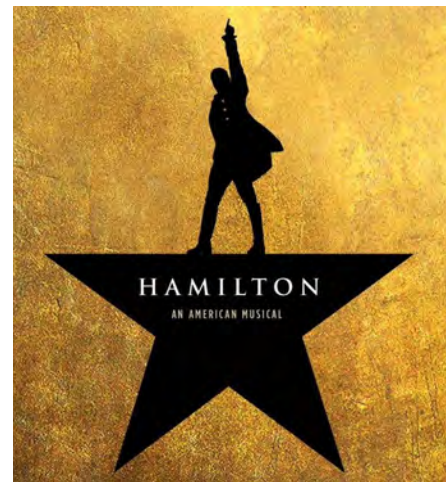
KS5 CURRICULUM



AQA Drama and Theatre Studies is a very popular choice and the department is extraordinarily active. Students continue to develop their ability to work as part of a team performing extracts from plays as part of their exam as well as devised work written by them. Plays such as 'The Glass Menagerie' and 'Hedda Gabler' are studied for the written exam. Over the years, N10 Productions, our in-house theatre company, has taken student work to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival - selling out and earning four and five star reviews! Year 13 devised productions have transferred to The Arcola Theatre in London. We have a play writing course called New Views working with The National Theatre, which offers sixth form students opportunities to work with professional playwrights. There are mentoring opportunities for sixth form students working with younger students and opportunities to run KS3 clubs. Students go to the theatre fortnightly and also work with a huge range of theatre companies and artists, DV8, Complicite, Frantic Assembly, Vamos Mask, etc and also perform at Alexandra Palace and other renowned venues. We ensure EPQ opportunities are available at Key Stage 5 and we have had student directing and designing shows for the department and for local festivals. We also offer audition support.

A Level Drama is recognised favourably nationally by many Universities. University statistics show Drama graduates have one of the highest employment rates. This is because the subject develops self-confidence and produces well-rounded, articulate people. Fortismere Drama gives students the skills to communicate, develop and refine their ideas and the ability to adapt and respond to changing environments. We are proud that many of our alumni have attended the nation's top drama schools (Rose Bruford, RADA, Central, Guildford, Bristol) and the top universities (Oxford, Cambridge, Exeter, Warwick, Bristol, Hull) to study Drama and English.

ENDLESS THEATRE VISITS





TRIPS

New York City and Beyond!

We take our students to the theatre all of the time, in every year group. We may see several shows at GCSE and more than 20 during the A level course. The Year 13 students go to New York City on a unique 'once-in-a-lifetime' school trip.

At A level all students work in the style of a practitioner (a theatre company or director) and we work with Punchdrunk, an immersive theatre company. Punchdrunk have a show called Sleep No More (an adaptation of Macbeth) in New York which is the purpose of our visit. We see lots of theatre, do workshops and immerse ourselves in the big apple.



Students devising and performing at the newly-refurbished Theatre in Alexandra Palace

MASTERCLASSES



The Drama Department hosts Masterclasses which allows students access to Theatre and Film professionals across all disciplines that enriches their curriculum and gives them a glimpse into a possible future career.

For example, last year we were able to host **Rupert Goold**, the Artistic Director of The Almeida Theatre. We had our very own 'Inside the Actor's Studio' and Rupert was so giving of his ideas, expertise and time. The Artistic Director of London's Young Vic theatre **Kwame Kwei-Armah**. Kwame spoke with such passion and gave all of our students an inspiring message about following their passions about working in the Arts industry and gave an insight into Contemporary Theatre. **Mackenzie Crook**, BAFTA-winning writer, actor, director, and comedian kindly came to work with our Year 12 Drama students; discussing his work on Jez Butterworth's hit 2009 play 'Jerusalem' in which he starred in. Theatre producer **Joseph Smith** came in to talk about his hit award-winning West End musical 'Come From Away'.

SUCCESS

As a large Drama Department, we are proud of the development and success the Department has achieved over the past few years. Drama and Theatre Studies is an academic A-level considered as an equal and valid subject choice by every university in this country (including Russell Group). We are AQA's (our exam board) **exemplar centre for top mark A Level group practical pieces** in the whole country. Videos of students' work is used by all examiners to benchmark the top grade. 25% of our cohort applied to Oxford or Cambridge last year! 3 Drama A-level students are now currently **studying at Oxford/Cambridge University**.

Drama and Theatre studies A-level gives our students fundamental skills in **Leadership, Creativity, Public Speaking, Project Management, Communications and Producing**. All key skills our government want for young people. The majority of our Drama alumni go on to **study at Russell Group Universities** or at Drama Schools. 90% of students go on to study a very wide range of Undergraduate Degrees; Law, Maths, Geography, Engineering, English, History to name a few. The GCSE and A-Level courses offers a Design option and students can be examined on costume/set/lighting/sound design as well as Acting. Our progress of SEN pupils and disadvantaged is excellent and these groups of students consistently achieve highly in this subject which often is not the picture in other subjects across their education.



We also have success in students getting into the best Drama schools in the world, including RADA and the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. A past student even **won a BAFTA** and this year a past student won his 3rd Fringe First Award and Stage Acting Award in Edinburgh.

Our department has been involved with New Views play writing competition at the National Theatre and had students given special commendations and they have gone on to produce the plays in the school. The Drama Department produces whole school productions with Staff and Students every year. Last year our Panto 'Aladdin' sold over 1000 tickets and raised thousands of pounds for the school.

PARTNERS

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT US

National Theatre

National Theatre

"I just wanted to let you know that a number of our team have already contacted me to tell me how impressed they were with your students and how engaged they were with the performance. They also felt really welcomed by the staff. It means such a lot to them when they are in a different school every day to have such a warm and welcoming experience to end the week - thank you!"

Charlie Bindels, Secondary and FE Programme Co-ordinator

ALMEIDA THEATRE

Almeida Theatre

"We have enjoyed a successful and rewarding partnership with the Drama Department at Fortismere School for many years. Students regularly attend our productions and are actively engaged and interrogative audience members. Alongside free tickets to our productions we provide students with workshops led by industry professionals and training in technical theatre skills. We also provide opportunities for students to join our Young Artists programme which includes our Young Company, Young Producers and Young Critics groups. The staff at Fortismere are fully invested in our Partnership and in the development of their students, it is always a pleasure to work with the school."

Jo Carey, Participation Associate

Donmar Warehouse

"We work with Fortismere to bring some of the best theatre-makers into the school to work with teachers and students, and then bring students to see our world-class work in our theatre in Covent Garden. Through our workshops we ensure that we are showcasing the different pathways in the industry, so students understand the wealth of careers available."

Phil McCormack, Education Manager

Jackson's Lane

"Over the past few years we have worked with Fortismere School Drama Department to deliver a number of drama and circus projects. It's always a pleasure to work with your students and staff and we are looking forward to future collaborations."

Natalia Cid, Senior Creative Learning Manager

DONMAR



Students backstage at 'Come From Away' Phoenix Theatre, West End

JACKSONS LANE
NORTH LONDON'S
CREATIVE SPACE

OUR ALUMNI

Our alumni include Grammy award-winning singer/songwriter Jess Glynne, Ray Davies CBE, Sir Rod Stewart CBE, Hollywood actor Ed Skrein and Hollywood film director Dexter Fletcher and over the decades we have cultivated a multitude of talent spanning all areas of the Arts.

Students also use the wide variety of skills, learnt through Drama, to engage in very successful careers outside of the Arts; Teaching, Law, Engineering, Civil Service, Design, Fashion and Healthcare are just a few.

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Drama was always my favourite subject and it felt like one of the few places in school I could truly be myself and express myself. I loved creating plays and studying them. One thing in particular I loved about the Fortismere drama department is that they didn't baby us or shy away from more gritty plays: e.g. 'Crave' by Sarah Kane and 'Shopping and F***ing' by Mark Ravenhill. Studying Drama at Fortismere definitely expanded my mind, my creativity and my understanding of the world.

Caterina Inchisa, Award-winning writer and comedian

Studying drama at Fortismere inspired me to pursue theatre and performance at university for both a BA and Masters degree, and led to a career of writing and directing shows and touring them around the country. The department's combination of rigorous academic analysis and collaborative, fun creative work gives students a varied experience and teaches techniques that are easily transferable to other subject areas and life skills. Fortismere's exam performances benefit from dedicated staff and professional technical equipment, and are always a highlight of the school year. I'm still good friends with many of the people from my Drama A level course and even sometimes work with them - studying and making shows together is a uniquely bonding experience that you don't gain from any other subject.

Billy Barrett, Award-winning Theatre Maker with Breach Theatre

I was offered my recent job mainly due to my ability to perform under pressure, my interpersonal skills and stellar communication. I owe these skills, and therefore my job, almost entirely to Ms Overs and the Fortismere drama department who helped me to improve and hone them. On top of real-world success, some of my fondest school memories are of the Drama department and the tight bonds I formed with the other students within it.

Matt Wickham, Engineer

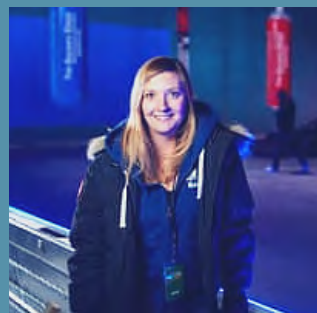
Drama was one of the lessons I always looked forward to attending. I was thoroughly supported throughout my time on the course, the department would go above and beyond to ensure all students could reach their full potential.

Tacara Newton-McIntosh, Teacher and Dancer

I wanted to do an extended project, Ms Overs kindly offered to help me direct a whole school production of Anthony and Cleopatra, which we took to the Shakespeare for School Festival... Drama at Fortismere fuelled my passion and creativity for the subject, I am incredibly grateful as I wouldn't be where I am today without it.

Rosie Kosky, Teacher

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CONTACT US

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