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THE BISHOP FRASER TRUST
A CHURCH OF ENGLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Curriculum Intent

KS4 Drama

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE
LUCEAT LUX VESTRA

BURY CE HIGH SCHOOL

Curriculum Vision

Our Key Stage 4 Drama curriculum enables every student to "let their light shine" through performance, creativity and the exploration of different perspectives. Students develop the knowledge, practical skills and confidence to express ideas clearly, work collaboratively and engage thoughtfully with the world around them.

Rooted in our Christian values, Drama encourages students to explore questions of identity, inequality, relationships and moral responsibility. Through the study and creation of theatre, they learn to recognise the experiences of others, challenge assumptions and approach different viewpoints with empathy and respect.

Our curriculum develops:

- Respect, through listening, constructive discussion and sensitive engagement with the ideas and experiences of others.
- Responsibility, through preparation, purposeful rehearsal and ownership of individual contributions to shared work.
- Resilience, through responding to feedback, refining work and developing the confidence to perform and communicate ideas.
- Creativity and curiosity, through interpreting texts, exploring theatrical techniques and devising original drama.

Students experience a knowledge-rich curriculum that connects practical exploration with the study of texts, theatrical conventions and professional performance. In keeping with the Bishop Fraser Trust's vision of "life in all its fullness", we aim to develop thoughtful, articulate young people with an enduring appreciation of theatre and the skills to contribute confidently beyond the classroom.

Curriculum Design

Our KS4 Drama curriculum builds on the performance, collaboration and evaluative skills established at KS3. Through the AQA GCSE Drama course, students develop their understanding of how theatre is created, performed and experienced by an audience.

Learning connects three complementary areas: understanding drama, devising drama and performing texts. Students apply their knowledge practically and learn to explain, analyse and evaluate theatrical choices in writing.

Key features of our curriculum include:

- Secure subject knowledge: students develop an accurate understanding of theatrical terminology, performance and design skills, dramatic conventions and the roles of theatre-makers.
- Text and context: through studying Blood Brothers and scripted extracts, students explore character, relationships and dramatic intention, considering how social and historical contexts inform interpretation.
- Practical exploration: students develop vocal and physical skills through purposeful rehearsal. They explore how space, interaction and design choices communicate meaning to an audience.
- Creative independence: students progress from teacher modelling and guided exploration towards making, justifying and refining their own artistic decisions.
- Connected practical and written work: rehearsal, performance and discussion provide evidence for analytical writing. Written reflection helps students identify improvements and make more purposeful practical choices.
- Inclusive challenge: explicit vocabulary teaching, modelled examples, structured rehearsal tasks and writing support enable students to access demanding work and develop increasing independence.
- Engagement with professional theatre: students analyse live performance, examining how acting and design choices work together to create meaning and audience impact.
- Knowledge and skills are revisited across the course so that students become increasingly precise in performance, informed in their creative choices and confident in their analysis.

End Points

End Point 1: Performance and Interpretation

Students can interpret characters and dramatic intentions, using controlled vocal and physical skills to communicate meaning. They rehearse purposefully, sustain their contribution to performance and refine their work in response to feedback.

End Point 2: Theatrical Knowledge and Understanding

Students can use accurate theatrical terminology to explain how performance and design choices create meaning. They demonstrate secure knowledge of the set text and can explain how relevant contexts inform character, relationships and staging decisions.

End Point 3: Devising and Creative Development

Students can develop original drama from a stimulus, selecting and applying appropriate theatrical techniques. They collaborate responsibly, document the development of their ideas and explain how rehearsal and feedback shape the final work.

End Point 4: Analysis and Evaluation

Students can analyse and evaluate their own theatrical work and professional live performance. They support judgements with specific examples, explain effects on an audience and use precise subject vocabulary in clear, developed written responses.

Year 10 overview

Topic title	Practitioners & Launch of Devising
Declarative knowledge	• To know the key features, philosophies, and techniques of Brecht, Artaud, Stanislavski, and Frantic Assembly. • To know how different stimuli can be interpreted to generate original performance ideas. • To know the stages of the devising process including research, improvisation, structuring, and refinement.
Procedural knowledge *'Know how'*	• To be able to apply practitioner techniques when devising original material. • To be able to structure and refine devised material to communicate meaning. • To be able to collaborate effectively in groups, generating and developing ideas through rehearsal.
Prior knowledge	Builds on KS3 experience of Melodrama and Physical Theatre. Extends ability to apply techniques independently.
Future knowledge	This unit lays the foundation for later GCSE study by strengthening devising, rehearsal, and evaluative skills, preparing students for advanced exploration of set text and live theatre analysis in Year 11.

Critical Knowledge	• Know the key features of Brecht's Epic Theatre (breaking the fourth wall, placards, narration, social message) and how they aim to make the audience think. • Know the key features of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty (sensory effects, shock, emotional impact) and how they aim to make the audience feel. • Know the key features of Stanislavski's system (given circumstances, subtext, objectives, realism) and how they make performance believable. • Know the key features of Frantic Assembly (physical theatre, lifts, chair duets, movement motifs) and how they use movement to communicate meaning. • Know how to apply at least one technique from each practitioner when devising new material. • Know how to work safely and cooperatively in rehearsals, listening and contributing ideas. • Know how to explain simple performance choices using drama vocabulary.
Key vocabulary	**Genre** – A category of drama, such as tragedy, comedy, or melodrama. **Comedy** – Drama designed to entertain and amuse. **Tragedy** – Drama that deals with serious themes and often ends unhappily. **Melodrama** – Exaggerated drama with clear moral opposites and heightened emotion. **Naturalism** – A realistic style that aims to represent life faithfully. **Physical Theatre** – A style that emphasises movement more than dialogue. **Epic Theatre** – Brechtian theatre that reminds the audience they are watching a performance. **Commedia dell'arte** – An Italian performance style using stock characters, masks, and physical comedy. **Documentary Theatre** – Drama based on real events using factual source material. **Musical Theatre** – Performance that combines song, dance, and dialogue. **Theatre in Education** – Theatre created to educate and engage a specific audience, often young people. **Theatrical Conventions** – Recognisable techniques such as mime, tableau, narration, flashback, and slow motion. **Choral Speaking / Movement** – A group speaking or moving in unison. **Performance Conventions** – Shared stage rules understood by performers and audience. **Performer Manipulation** – How a puppet or object is controlled in performance. **Multimedia** – Use of text, sound, images, video, or digital content in drama. **Projection (design)** – Slides, film, or images projected on stage. **Special Effects / Pyrotechnics** – Technical effects such as explosions, smoke, or flashes. **Stimuli** – A starting point or inspiration for creating drama. **Devise** – To create a performance, usually from a stimulus. **Creating** – Building drama through exploration, experimentation, and problem solving. **Collaborate** – Working together effectively as a group. **Research** – Gathering information to support ideas and decisions.

Topic title	Development of Devising Piece & Portfolio
Declarative knowledge	• To know how to refine and rehearse devised material for clarity and impact. • To know how design elements (lighting, sound, set, costume) can enhance meaning. • To know how to evaluate and justify creative decisions within a portfolio.
Procedural knowledge	• To be able to rehearse with focus, discipline, and responsiveness to feedback. • To be able to integrate technical and design elements into devised work. • To be able to produce structured portfolio entries reflecting intention, rehearsal, and refinement.
Prior knowledge	Builds on KS3 Theatre in Education, where students planned, structured, and refined performances. Extends integration of design elements.
Future knowledge	This unit lays the foundation for later GCSE study by strengthening devising, rehearsal, and evaluative skills, preparing students for advanced exploration of set text and live theatre analysis in Year 11.
Critical Knowledge	• Know how to refine and rehearse devised material so it communicates a clear message or intention. • Know how to use basic design elements (lighting, sound, costume, set) to support meaning in performance. • Know how to document their creative process using notes, prompt scripts, or portfolio entries. • Know how to explain the influence of chosen practitioners on their devised work. • Know how to describe what worked well and what could be improved, using drama-specific vocabulary. • Know how to collaborate safely and respectfully during rehearsal, contributing ideas and responding to feedback.
Key vocabulary	**Develop** – Adding detail to make ideas clearer or more complete. **Refine** – Making small changes to improve the work. **Communicate Meaning** – How performers share ideas with the audience verbally, physically, and non-verbally. **Effect** – A moment designed to create a particular audience reaction. **Set** – The physical stage environment. **Props** – Objects used by actors or placed on stage. **Dressing** – Decorative items added to the set. **Furnishings** – Furniture and practical decorative items on stage. **Flat** – A lightweight scenic panel used to create part of the set. **Construction Materials** – Materials used to build scenery, set pieces, and props. **Costume** – Clothing worn by performers. **Accessories** – Additional costume items such as hats, jewellery, or scarves. **Fabric / Texture / Colour** – Visual and tactile design choices that help communicate style, mood, or period. **Prosthetics / Make-up / Greasepaint** – Materials used to alter a performer's appearance. **Gum** – Adhesive used to attach prosthetics, wigs, or facial hair. **Lantern** – General term for a stage lighting unit. **Lamp** – The bulb inside a lantern. **Fresnel** – A lantern producing a soft-edged beam of light.

	Profile – A spotlight producing a narrow, hard-edged beam. **Flood** – A lantern that produces a broad wash of light. **Birdie** – A small display luminaire using a Par 16 lamp. **Gel / Filter** – Material placed in front of a lantern to change the colour of light. **Gobo** – A metal pattern placed in a lantern to project a shape or texture. **Intensity / Levels** – The brightness of a light state. **Fade / Crossfade** – Gradual transition between one lighting state and another. **Blackout** – All stage lights go off at once, leaving complete darkness. **Focusing** – Aiming a lantern at a chosen area of the stage. **Positioning / Rigging / Fly** – How equipment is placed or moved above the stage. **Cyclorama / Gauze** – Types of backdrop used for scenic and visual effects. **Strobe / Smoke Machine** – Effects used to create atmosphere or spectacle. **Shadow** – Use of darkness and silhouette as part of visual design. **Soundscape** – Layered sound used to create atmosphere. **FX (Sound Effects)** – Specific sounds added to enhance action or realism. **Amplifier** – Equipment that increases a sound signal for speakers. **Microphone** – Equipment that captures live sound. **Reverb / Echo** – Reflected sound used naturally or artificially for effect. **Distortion** – Unwanted sound interference caused by overloading equipment. **Volume / Pitch / Intensity** – Key controls that shape how sound is heard.

Topic title	Written Exam Preparation – Set Text (and Live Theatre)
Declarative knowledge	• To know how to analyse and evaluate set text extracts in terms of acting and design. • To know how to structure extended evaluative writing for live theatre. • To know exam strategies for timing, clarity, and use of subject-specific terminology.
Procedural knowledge	• To be able to write extended analytical responses using drama terminology. • To be able to reference specific performance and design examples to support points. • To be able to evaluate live theatre impact using precise analytical vocabulary.
Prior knowledge	Builds on KS3 analysis of Shakespeare, An Inspector Calls, and live theatre reviews. Consolidates evaluative skills first introduced in Urban Legends and Physical Theatre units.
Future knowledge	This unit consolidates KS4 skills and prepares students for progression to A Level, BTEC Performing Arts, or further study in creative industries. Students leave with cultural literacy, critical thinking, and artistic confidence.
Critical Knowledge	• Know how to analyse set text extracts, commenting on acting, design, and intended audience impact. • Know how to structure extended responses using paragraphs, embedded examples, and clear argument. • Know how to use drama-specific terminology accurately when discussing performance and design. • Know how to evaluate live theatre, explaining what was effective and why. • Know how to refer to practitioners, context, and production choices to support their ideas.

Key vocabulary	**Plot** – The sequence of events in a drama. **Character** – A person portrayed in the performance. **Dialogue** – Spoken conversation between characters. **Language** – The style and wording used in speech or script. **Form / Style** – The overall dramatic shape and how it is presented. **Mood and Atmosphere** – The feeling created for the audience. **Social, Cultural and Historical Context** – The time, place, and wider circumstances influencing the drama. **Period** – A specific historical time represented in performance. **Ethnic Authenticity** – Accurate and respectful cultural representation. **Time** – How time is presented, structured, or manipulated in drama.

Year 11 overview

Topic title	Final Development and Performance of Devising Piece
Declarative knowledge	• To know how to finalise and polish a devised performance. • To know how practitioner influence, design, and performance choices should align with artistic intention. • To know the role of rehearsal discipline in achieving a professional performance standard.
Procedural knowledge	• To be able to refine devised work with precision, focus, and consistency. • To be able to integrate performance and design elements coherently. • To be able to perform with sustained energy, focus, and clear audience impact.
Prior knowledge	Builds on KS3 devising projects such as Urban Legends, Crime and Punishment, and Theatre in Education. Strengthens independence and professional rehearsal discipline.
Future knowledge	This unit consolidates KS4 skills and prepares students for progression to A Level, BTEC Performing Arts, or further study in creative industries. Students leave with cultural literacy, critical thinking, and artistic confidence.
Critical Knowledge	• Know how to refine and polish devised work so that it aligns fully with their artistic intention. • Know how to integrate practitioner techniques, design elements, and performance skills coherently in the final piece. • Know how to maintain energy, focus, and character throughout a full performance. • Know how to respond to notes and feedback to improve their work. • Know how to work as part of an ensemble, following cues and supporting others on stage. • Know how to reflect on the effectiveness of their performance using drama-specific terminology.

Key vocabulary	**Accent** – A way of speaking linked to a region or country; used to show character background. **Body Language** – Non-verbal communication through movement and positioning. **Facial Expression** – Use of the face to show emotion. **Gesture** – Movement of body parts to convey meaning. **Posture** – How a performer holds their body to show status, confidence, or emotion. **Gait** – The way a character walks; can indicate age, mood, or personality. **Clarity of Diction** – Clear pronunciation so the audience understands dialogue. **Projection (vocal)** – Directing the voice so it can be heard clearly by the audience. **Pitch / Tone / Volume** – Vocal variation used to express emotion and meaning. **Inflection / Intonation / Phrasing** – Changes in vocal delivery that shape meaning and sustain interest. **Pause** – A break in speech used for emphasis, realism, or tension. **Timing / Pace / Rhythm** – The speed and flow of lines and movement in performance. **Emotional Range** – Ability to show a variety of emotions convincingly. **Character Interaction** – How characters communicate and respond to one another. **Character Motivation** – The reasons behind a character's actions. **Subtext** – The hidden meaning beneath the words spoken. **Cue** – Signal to carry out a technical or performance action.

Topic title	Written Portfolio Completion & Submission
Declarative knowledge	• To know how to structure a portfolio to explain, justify, and evaluate the devising process. • To know how to link decisions to artistic intention, practitioner influence, and audience response. • To know how to write with clarity, accuracy, and subject-specific vocabulary.
Procedural knowledge	• To be able to write reflectively about the creative process using drama terminology. • To be able to edit and refine written work for clarity and depth. • To be able to meet formal deadlines for completion and submission.
Prior knowledge	Builds on KS3 evaluative writing and consolidates written reflection skills.
Future knowledge	This unit consolidates KS4 skills and prepares students for progression to A Level, BTEC Performing Arts, or further study in creative industries. Students leave with cultural literacy, critical thinking, and artistic confidence.
Critical Knowledge	• Know how to structure a portfolio clearly with sections that explain, justify, and evaluate the devising process. • Know how to link creative decisions to their artistic intention, chosen practitioners, and intended audience impact. • Know how to use drama-specific vocabulary accurately when writing about performance and design. • Know how to reflect honestly on strengths and areas for improvement. • Know how to meet deadlines by planning, drafting, editing, and submitting work on time.
Key vocabulary	**Artistic Intention** – The purpose or message behind a performance. **Evaluate** – Judging the strengths and weaknesses of a performance.

Topic title	Performance of Scripted Work
Declarative knowledge	• To know how to interpret, rehearse, and perform two contrasting scripted extracts. • To know how to apply vocal, physical, and interpretative skills in sustained performance. • To know how to use stagecraft and proxemics to support character and meaning.
Procedural knowledge	• To be able to create and sustain a detailed character in performance. • To be able to rehearse scripted work with focus and polish. • To be able to apply blocking, proxemics, and stagecraft to communicate meaning to an audience.
Prior knowledge	Builds on KS3 scripted work and extends performance maturity and stamina.
Future knowledge	This unit consolidates KS4 skills and prepares students for progression to A Level, BTEC Performing Arts, or further study in creative industries. Students leave with cultural literacy, critical thinking, and artistic confidence.
Critical Knowledge	Critical Knowledge • Know how to interpret and rehearse a script to create a believable character. • Know how to use vocal and physical skills to communicate character and emotion to an audience. • Know how to apply blocking, proxemics, and stagecraft to communicate meaning clearly. • Know how to sustain character and focus throughout a performance. • Know how to explain their performance choices using drama-specific vocabulary. • Know how to reflect on what worked well and what could be improved.
Key vocabulary	**Performance Space** – The area in which actors perform. **Staging Configuration** – The layout of the acting area and audience. **End-on / Proscenium Arch** – Audience faces one side of the stage directly. **Thrust** – Audience sits on three sides of the acting area. **In the Round** – Audience surrounds the stage on all sides. **Traverse** – Audience sits on two opposite sides of the acting area. **Promenade** – Audience moves around the venue to follow the performance. **Centre Stage / Upstage / Downstage** – Stage positions used to place performers and action. **Spatial Relationships** – Distance and positioning that suggest relationships or status. **Levels** – Differences in height that help communicate power or focus. **Stage Directions** – Instructions in a script about movement, position, or delivery. **Entrance / Exit** – How actors come on to or leave the stage. **Composite Staging** – A stage setting where several locations are represented in the same space and isolated or highlighted by lighting each area separately.

Topic title	Final Written Exam Preparation & Revision
Declarative knowledge	• To know the structure, content, and expectations of the GCSE Drama written paper. • To know strategies for effective revision and exam technique. • To know how to apply accumulated performance, design, and analytical knowledge under timed conditions.
Procedural knowledge	• To be able to plan and write under timed conditions. • To be able to recall key terminology and apply it accurately in written answers. • To be able to structure answers clearly using evidence, analysis, and evaluation.
Prior knowledge	Builds on all KS3 and KS4 learning. Draws on accumulated performance, design, and analytical skills. Prepares students for progression to A-level or vocational theatre study.
Future knowledge	This unit consolidates KS4 skills and prepares students for progression to A Level, BTEC Performing Arts, or further study in creative industries. Students leave with cultural literacy, critical thinking, and artistic confidence.
Critical Knowledge	• Know the structure and expectations of the written exam paper. • Know how to plan and structure answers under timed conditions. • Know how to recall and use key drama terminology accurately in written responses. • Know how to manage their time and check their work for accuracy and clarity. • Know how to draw on examples from set text, devised work, and live theatre to support their ideas.
Key vocabulary	**Production Values** – The combined impact of lighting, sound, set, and costume. **Professional Theatre** – Theatre in which performers are paid. **Amateur Theatre** – Theatre in which participants are usually unpaid. **Digital Recording / Live Streaming** – Theatre recorded or viewed on screen. **Specialism** – A chosen performance or design role within a production. **Functionality** – The practical capabilities of technical equipment or systems.