

# Experiences on stage at Launde

## Intent

At Launde, we use performance to enrich the curriculum for the children, provide valuable oracy development throughout the children's time at school as well as providing a different medium to retrieve information learnt in class. We believe passionately that the opportunities are children get to be on stage help develop their voice and embed their curriculum learning in a very special way.

We believe that through drama and development of stage presence, pupils are able to develop and demonstrate their creative talents and communicate with others with confidence and presence through the spoken word, song and dance. As with all arts, drama involves imagination and feeling, and helps children make sense of the world. Their increasing knowledge and understanding of how the elements of drama work enables them to effectively shape, express and share their ideas, feelings and responses to a range of audience sizes. In addition, the exploration of the world through drama encourages children to challenge and to question but also has the potential to bring about social change.

We know that participation in structured arts activities can improve learning, attainment, employability, health and social engagement (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2017) for the children nurturing and supporting the children's individuality and providing them with skills to ensure their voice is heard.

The photograph on the right is of one of our ex pupils, Jassa Ahluwalia, who went on to be an accomplished actor and writer and came back to visit the school in 2021.

We teach performance and drama on stage to:

- develop pupils' self-confidence and sense of self-worth
- develop pupils' respect and consideration for each other by encouraging turn-taking, acknowledgement of ideas, appropriate and safe behaviour, and focused listening;
- develop imaginative and creative processes and responses by involving pupils in a range of drama methods and activities;
- develop the capacity to express ideas and feelings through drama
- provide opportunities to see and hear different types of performance and drama;
- develop oral and physical skills, including using language and movement appropriate to role, through drama activities and responding to drama;
- enable pupils to build on skills attained and to progress their emotional and practical achievements;
- offer pupils the opportunity to experience aspects of theatre by rehearsing and presenting their work to others



## Drama and the 2014 national curriculum

The 2014 National Curriculum has a clear focus on the development of spoken language from Years 1 to 6, whilst children in the Foundation Stage follow the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, which has continued to develop its emphasis on speaking and listening, play, role play, rhyme and song. Drama skills are taught as an integral part of the English Curriculum and in a range of subjects beyond this.

## Spoken language

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar, and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers



ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others, and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions.

Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate. All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances. Statutory requirements which underpin all aspects of spoken language across primary education form part of the National Curriculum. These are reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing domains which follow.

### **Teaching and learning being on stage in the foundation stage**

Children in Reception are introduced to drama through simple games, activity poems, action rhymes, structured play, character exploration and other activities based on traditional stories, simple speaking and listening activities and the opportunity to present and respond to improvisation. Pretending to be others in imagined situations and acting out situations or stories are important activities in the dramatic curriculum for the Foundation Stage.

The imaginative role-play and other play situations provide many opportunities for very young children to experience and develop their early drama skills and knowledge, and to learn about the world. Drama supports the development of Foundation Stage Early Learning Goals in many ways. Children can suggest their own ideas for planning and creating a role-play. Then, as they play, the teacher or other adult can intervene sensitively as an active participant. This validates and extends the narrative of the play, supports appropriate language and allows the children to explore the power of their roles. Creative drama develops alongside imagination, confidence and language. As children engage in these drama activities, they become increasingly aware of the use of space and the way body language communicates meaning.

Drama is an ideal context for children to retell and understand traditional and contemporary stories, as well as for sharing their own personal responses and ideas. They may use a stage block to represent a bridge or pretend the classroom is a giant's cave, while taking on the roles of characters they have met in the story. Quality drama gives children a living context in which they can create narratives, draw on patterns of language and speak confidently.

The teacher (or other adult) supports the drama's development by taking the part of a relatively low-status character in the story (teacher-in-role). Drama provides a meaningful context for all children at the Foundation Stage to experiment in role with language for different purposes, whether or not English is their first language.





Through drama, the teacher provides new opportunities for children to begin to make sense of a range of events, situations and feelings that go beyond the everyday. They have a greater chance to understand what they hear when gesture, sign, facial expression and other symbols are used.

### **Being on Stage in Key Stage One and Key Stage Two**

Pupils are enabled to enjoy drama as a subject in its own right, and as a learning medium across the curriculum. Pupils at this age unselfconsciously mix drama, dance, music, visual art and aspects of media in assemblies, concerts and less formal events. In class drama, children may work in groups, pairs, or

as individuals during drama activities such as improvisation and role play. The class teacher may work with these groups/individuals, but more often will use a whole-class approach. Exploring a story imaginatively in drama can include what may happen before the story begins or at the end, as well as beyond the events of the story. The opportunity to act out a story to others can be a highlight of the school experience for some pupils, particularly if they find other means of expression more difficult.

Primary school pupils benefit from visits to and from theatre companies. This may help them to understand the process of making, performing and responding to plays and provide insights into a range of cross-curricular themes and issues, enhancing the teaching of other subjects, such as history and citizenship.

During Key Stage 1, pupils move from make-believe dramatic play for themselves to a more consciously planned form of drama, which may involve communicating with an audience. Good practice at Key Stage 1 involves pupils in activities such as exploring their ideas through devising scenes. They can work with a teacher-in-role, enacting their own stories for others through small group play making, using symbolic 'costumes' and props to stimulate drama narratives. Pupils become increasingly aware of their audience and act out stories using voice, movement, gesture and basic sound effects. When they talk about dramas they have seen or in which they have taken part, they can differentiate between them and explain how effects were achieved.

During Key Stage 2, pupils use a wider range of dramatic devices and techniques. Increased control of voice and body means that they portray more precisely defined characters. Pupils produce work with a clear story line and structure. They become familiar with forms such as shadow puppets, mime and chorus work, and those in other media, like animation. Pupils may learn lines and write short scripts which grow out of practical exploration of a story. They make connections between broader dramatic traditions and their own work, suggesting improvements. They may also experiment with simple technical effects and equipment, such as digital camera and video. Both improvised and scripted drama provides a strong stimulus for writing. By writing from the point of view of a particular character (writing in role) children are enabled to express their understanding of the roles, events or situations they have experienced. They can also write as young playwrights, developing their improvised drama into scripts. As a result of teachers' skilful intervention, drama helps children's writing come alive, resulting in written work that features more effective vocabulary, striking imagery, pace and style.

Drama teaching often explores issues, ideas and dilemmas relevant to pupil's lives and investigates the



behaviour of individuals and the nature of relationships. It therefore makes a particular contribution to personal, social and moral education. Drama is a social activity requiring pupils to communicate, co-operate and collaborate. It fosters creativity and thinking skills, raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence through self-expression.

As children progress through Key Stage 2, they will be introduced to subject specific terminology, ensuring they develop an understanding of the subject area itself. Pupils will be able to refer to specific explorative strategies such as still image, thought tracking or marking the moment, as well as staging techniques



such as proxemics and levels. As children reach Year 6, they will begin to express how the assured use of the strategies may impact the audience or how they have been used to communicate specific intentions.

## **Implementation**

### **Curriculum Organisation**

Drama is taught through class presentations and assemblies often in relation to a topic or other curriculum area.

The learning of drama skills is enhanced in a variety of ways:

- By visits from touring theatre companies and Theatre in Education practitioners;
- Visits to theatres for backstage tours and to watch performances;
- Opportunities to perform in local and national theatre festivals;
- Opportunities to perform at school in assembly, for celebrations and at the end of term;
- Opportunities to attend external drama workshops;
- The use of audio-visual and IT equipment (for watching or listening to plays).

At Launde Primary School, drama teaching does not follow specific schemes of work allowing sufficient flexibility to meet the needs and skills of individual classes and teachers. There is a programme of links to areas of the curriculum in each year group which the teachers then prepare an assembly to the school and parents of the children in the class.



## **Inclusion**

By its very nature, drama is an inclusive subject area. It forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children, and through our teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to show progress. Pupils will work in a range of groups and pairs over the course of the year, learning from and providing support to each other each time throughout. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language, making reasonable adjustments to achieve this.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Through the vast nature of the subject, there are great opportunities to develop opportunities for SMSC.



- the studying of different texts - classical, contemporary, etc. can provide challenging starting points and give an appreciation of language and literature;
- exposure to great literature and poetry and its place within a culture can lead to appreciating moral or social aspects, for example Dickens social commentary or knowing that we can learn a lot about other cultures from its writing;
- drama and stories which create opportunities for moral judgements;
- shared activities – shared reading, group drama, corporate writing that lead to an understanding of an appreciation of the importance of the group and other people's point of view;
- knowledge of our language and its influence on our culture and the importance and value of other languages and cultures;

- awareness of traditional tales and their cultural background.

## Assessment

Assessment will take the form of classroom observation whilst children are devising, performing or assessing drama in order to determine the quality of their work and to what extent they are meeting learning objectives. It will also take the form of questioning, during and after the drama, in order to ascertain their knowledge and understanding of a concept. Where appropriate pupils should be involved in their own assessment in order that they develop a capacity to appraise, reflect upon, respond to and talk about their own learning using appropriate drama terms.



To ensure progression in each key stage, pupils should be able to:

- explore ideas and/or issues through a variety of drama skills and techniques of increasing complexity;
- devise and improvise structuring dramas of different kinds;
- use drama skills and knowledge to interpret a range of texts;
- prepare and perform both scripted and devised dramas for various audiences, using a selection of media;
- use and develop their knowledge of drama from different times and cultures, as well as classic and contemporary practice;
- reflect on, evaluate and analyse the structure, meaning and impact of their own work and the work of others as both participant and audience.

The National Curriculum for English is used to inform teacher assessment at the end of the academic year.

## Resources

Classroom teachers will collect items which may be used as a stimulus for drama activities, such as poems, stories, fables, myths, songs, musical extracts, playscripts, historical documents and photocopies of works of art. All children have access to an appropriate hall for practical drama sessions with access to the school stage area.

The stage area has been blacked out for successful lighting and colour mixing. The area includes a series of professional LED stage lights and an up to date sound system. These are controlled through professional standard lighting desks. All teachers have access to a range of drama reference books and scripted plays which are stored in the appropriate Key Stage areas.



## Impact

The main measurement of impact in the drama teaching will be the quality of class assemblies and annual productions will demonstrate the children's progress in communication skills, confidence and self-esteem. Where drama teaching is at least good pupils will:

- show an increased self-confidence in performance evidenced through public speaking, school productions and/or class work e.g. debates;
- demonstrate respect and consideration for each other;
- apply drama strategies creatively and imaginatively in a range of contexts;
- express ideas and feelings through drama;
- providing constructive and reasoned responses to drama work;
- work constructively as a member of a group using quality communication skills;
- have developed oral and physical skills, including the use of language and movement appropriate to a role

Group and one class assembly, which is scheduled at the beginning of the academic year. In addition, Year 6 stage a Leavers' Production as their final opportunity to share their talents with the Launde community. All pupils are actively involved in these performances and take on their own acting role, but many also take on additional support roles such as set designing and prop making, allowing them to understand the various aspects of developing and staging a production. Each performance takes place on the school's stage which makes use of professional standard lighting and sound systems.

