

Year 10 and 11 GCSE Dance

Students will follow the AQA Dance GCSE course. The specification for this is available at:

<http://store.aqa.org.uk/qual/newgcse/pdf/AQA-4230-W-SP.PDF>

What do we learn?

Students will undertake a range of practical projects to prepare them for their final assessment pieces. These will take the form of both choreography and performance projects and students will now be expected to choreograph for each other as well as for themselves. In performance pieces students will be encouraged to develop their performance skills, both technically, artistically and aspects such as the intention of the piece will become integral to developing a good performance. Through these practical projects, students will consider questions such as:

- What do we mean by *dynamics* in Dance and how can we use dynamics to develop our work?
- How can we create and develop a *motif* in Dance to give our work coherence?
- How does the intention of a piece of Dance influence my work as a performer in that piece?
- How can we develop our basic understanding of dance relationships, such as *contact* and *counterpoint* to produce more sophisticated pieces of work?
- What is the relationship between the dance and the accompaniment?
- How can we develop our understanding of travel paths and stage directions to improve our work as choreographers?

In addition, we will undertake an in-depth study into four professional works, considering the impact of the choreography, costume, setting, lighting and accompaniment on our appreciation of these works. We will use themes and motifs from these works to influence our practical learning and to reinforce the work done in the classroom. Our four professional works for study are currently:

- *Still Life At The Penguin Café* by David Bintley
- *Swansong* by Christopher Bruce
- *Rosas Danst Rosas* by Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker
- *Nutcracker!* by Matthew Bourne

We will consider questions such as:

- How does the choreographer convey their intention to the audience?

- What effect do costumes and lighting have on an audience's reaction to a work?
- How are different dance styles and genres blended to create an effect?
- In what ways are dances structured?
-

What do we hope to achieve?

The course is designed to offer students an increasingly detailed knowledge of Dance. Students should become confident at discussing professional dance using accurate technical vocabulary. In addition, students should have a greater awareness of their strengths and areas for development as choreographers and performers, as well as the factors that influence an audience's appreciation of a work of dance. All students should take the opportunity to perform in the summer term Dance Showcase to help them develop their skills and confidence both as performers and choreographers.

In order to fulfil their requirements for GCSE certification, students will, in particular, be expected to:

- produce a short solo choreography that incorporates and develops three motifs from one of the professional works we have studied. (The choice of motifs from a professional work will vary each year according to the strengths of the group in question)
- choreograph an extended solo or group piece exploring a stimulus or theme
- perform a group choreography that is influenced by one of the professional works we have studied. (This choice of professional work will vary each year according to the strengths of the group in question)
- perform a short solo work set by the examination board, displaying accuracy and technical proficiency
- display a good knowledge and critical appreciation of the four professional works studied

How can parents/carers support the learning of their children?

- Ensure that they bring appropriate equipment to lessons. (For practical lessons this should include jazz shoes or bare feet and comfortable clothes for dancing in e.g. jazz pants, leggings or tracksuit bottoms. Please note: trainers or socks are not appropriate footwear for Dance)
- Continue to encourage your child to listen to a range of music outside their normal listening experience. Students need to select their own music for their choreography and choices outside the usual range of listening of many teenagers will facilitate

stronger choreography. In particular, encourage your child to listen to film soundtracks and instrumental music

- Discuss dance, in any context, that you might watch on the television or in the theatre. In particular, encourage your child to see links to the professional works we are studying. For example, the Beyonce video *Countdown* borrows heavily from *Rosas Danst Rosas*;
- Encourage and support your child in taking up performance and training opportunities that arise e.g. join a dance class outside of school or take part in the school production. In particular, it is very valuable for students in years 10 and 11 to perform their works in the school's summer Dance Showcase as this will encourage them to view their work professionally.