

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL



Arts and Culture Policy May 2017

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS

RESPONSIBLE PERSON - HEADTEACHER

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Riverside School believes in the transformative power of Performing Arts and this approach to education is reflected in our curriculum planning, embedded within our assessment tools, underpins the pedagogy of our Teaching and Learning framework and forms an integral part of the infrastructure of the systems used for measuring success used in school, all of which contribute to ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils and staff.

We are fully committed to ensuring that every pupil at Riverside School, has a meaningful, personalised and outcome-focussed experience through the Performing and wider Arts provision and as such, pledge for every single pupil to experience at least three high quality internal and/or external performances a year, both within our state of the art Performing Arts Hall and within West End professional theatres.

1. Curriculum

Pupils working at the earliest cognitive levels, experience fully immersive, bespoke Dance, Music and Drama experiences, as seen in our recent Sunseekers performance, whilst our pupils who have a gift for the Arts thrive, composing, performing and evaluating the arts through a diverse range of styles and genres, periods and cultures.

Pupils who are able to demonstrate the most sophisticated understanding of and achievement through The Arts, are currently undertaking their Bronze Arts Award. From September 2017, every Key Stage Three pupil will pursue the Discovery/Explorer level Arts Award, with the expectation that this accreditation will be expanded out to the wider school in September 2018.

Performing Arts in its widest sense, spans many elements of teaching and assessing, performing and reacting, experiencing and showcasing, immersing and observing. We think deeply about the 'why' of every project that we undertake. We encourage our pupils to be true artists and this can mean sharing the final product of a choreographed piece, the purpose of which is to refine performance skills, develop technique, connect with an audience and celebrate the culmination of a series of sessions by sharing the spectacle of a piece. It may also be in a context, where sound is the medium through which to develop engagement and communication, the learning is in the moment, the wonder found in the experience of reacting to an auditory context and enabling a pupil to manipulate that experience, based on their expressive and receptive communication.

As such, from September 2017, we plan to re-name our Performing Arts sessions, *Expressive Arts* sessions. Despite the adage, 'A name by any other rose...' we have discovered that at Riverside School, semantics shape thinking.

As aforementioned we are reflective practitioners, we know that the thinking behind the why of each of the initiatives that we undertake, dictates the approach and support adults offer. Movement, Sound and Drama sessions fall into one of two categories, based

on the objective of the session. Some are designed to illicit responses from pupils, to create a context through which to encourage communication, to enable the pupil to manipulate the environment around them (Sounds of Intent, Reactors and Responders sessions.) Others, are designed to prepare the pupils to develop Movement and Sound skills, in preparation for a form of sharing, through either public performance, or other forms of assessment (Creative Agents, public performances, Bronze Arts Award) although the disciplines are the same, the application of each differs widely and so must the approach and resulting role of each supporting adult in each of the sessions.

Our Expressive Arts team create the context, however supporting adults are the enablers. By placing a greater emphasis on the purpose of each session, thereby challenging each adult to consider their role, purpose, approach, reflection as an active and integral part of the objective of the session, we anticipate that staff understanding of the relevance of Expressive Arts, although already significant, will become profound. We very much look forward to exploring this approach from September 2017.

2. Staff

The Performing Arts team comprises of 4 full time Performing Arts Teachers, as well as a full time Performing Arts technician and is overseen by Assistant Head teacher Kerry Reed, who also has a specialism in Performing Arts. The Team is complimented by an additional Art Teacher, a second Music teacher and utilises the Performing Arts specialisms of the wider staff community, many of whom have Performing Arts expertise to an Under or Post Graduate level.

3. Governance

The Team is supported by Ayshe Chaban, Governor with responsibility for Arts and Culture. Ayshe is an invaluable member of the team and has played an integral role in bringing the vision for the Arts to fruition. An expert in Performing Arts herself, she has been heavily involved in shaping and cascading the strategic vision for the Performing Arts, securing our state of the art facilities, shaping our application for Arts Mark and offering robust and on-going challenge, to ensure the very best possible outcomes for pupils. Termly meetings with the Head of Performing Arts, have enabled her to support the team in applying for Arts Mark, planning the curriculum, the use of pupil voice, training opportunities for staff and Ayshe has been heavily involved in historical family projects.

4. Assessment

Through the Arts, our pupils are able to accomplish the seemingly unachievable and as such, the systems through which we capture pupil progression through the Arts, are reflected in our bespoke assessment tools kit. Progression in Music and Sound is

monitored through the Sounds of Intent Framework and pupils' responses to Dance, Drama and Music, are recorded on the Engagement Profile and Scale. Our Creative Agents, a cohort of pupils with a passion for the Arts are currently undertaking their Bronze Arts Award accreditation and we anticipate supporting the whole of KS3, in achieving their Discover Arts Award qualification from September 2017.

5. Facilities and resources

The Performing Arts Department boasts a professional quality, high spec. theatre (PAH) complimented by rake seating for 300 and a fully functioning lighting and sound rig.

Adjacent to the PAH, is a mirrored, fully equipped Dance Studio with Ballet Barres. The Music and Sound rooms hosts an eclectic mix of pitched and percussion instruments, and Colour Scape technology, The khoros, Sound Beam and Eye gaze Technology makes the Arts accessible for pupils working at the earliest cognitive levels and our links with professional artists, allow those who have a gift for the Arts to be truly challenged and extended. Our Art Space hosts interactive Art Installations and our Elie and Starlight Rooms create a multisensory Arts-based experience that pupils can manipulate and shape in response to their expressive communication.

6. Professional Learning

Our commitment to empowering all staff within Riverside School to be able to harness the power of Performing Arts to enable every pupil to be all that they can be, is evident within our comprehensive CPD programme. This programme develops the skills set of staff, both within our teaching team and beyond. Inset sessions feature a Performing Arts element, our weekly staff well-being programme, uses the Arts to provide staff with on-going enrichment opportunities in their pursuit of happiness and includes singing, stretch and relax and opportunities to develop their creativity through Art sessions, outcomes and impact is shared with the wider school community. Each is led by a specialist in the field and our internally produced, bespoke Performing Arts resource bank, offers teachers all of the tools that they will need in both literal and media form to deliver the highest quality sessions for pupils. Our 'Chance to shine' CPD creates a platform to identify and celebrate staff talent and uses these skills sets to exploit maximum opportunities for our pupils.

Riverside School strives to challenge societal expectations about what children with SEND can achieve and contribute. As such, we use Performing Arts to educate those around us, as to how our children can both thrive and lead others to success through bespoke Performing Arts initiatives, projects, curriculum shaping, Inset and partnerships and our pioneering Family Projects.

7. Partnership working

As aforementioned, we are keen to share our findings with those around and beyond us and so have supported several partnership organisations in shaping their approaches to performing arts provision. So far we have worked or have links with: Cleeve Park School, Darrick Wood School, Hope School, The Brit School, The Orpheus Centre, Marjorie McClure School, Reynolds School of Performing Arts, Doreen Bird College, the Well Child Charity. We have worked with many Performing Arts venues including: The Churchill Theatre, Her Majesties Theatre, Rich Mix and Trinity Laban. We have worked with many Performing Arts companies including: Springs Dance Company, Elevate Dance Company, Candoco, Thrift, Magpie Dance Company, Live Music Now, Graffiti Kings and Colourscape, Shakespeare Schools Festival.

Our dream for Expressive Arts is big and our vision is brave. Expressive Arts is a vehicle of transformative power in our context and although the impact of the Arts at Riverside School is already profound, we suspect that we have scratched the surface of what could be possible for our pupils, their families, staff team and wider community.

We believe that we are perfectly poised to make the seemingly unachievable achievable at Riverside School, in the months and years to come.