

Performing Arts Department at Upper Wharfedale School

This is an excellent opportunity for the successful candidate to join a forward-thinking and supportive Visual and Performing Arts Faculty, which includes the subjects of PE, Art, Drama and Music. The Performing Arts department, which encompasses Music and Drama is one of the subject areas within this faculty, and has been led by a highly enthusiastic, dedicated, innovative and adaptable teacher who has been committed to getting the most out of every student.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum for Music currently consists of learning how to read and write music, rhythm and pulse, different types of scale and form and structure. In year 8 students then look at African drums, and "junk" percussion instruments using the rhythm skills learnt in Year 7, moving onto music of different cultures, including reggae, samba, and blues. In year 9, students explore popular music and learn about the different instruments and styles that create "pop" music, using this knowledge to create their own pop song. Students then start to prepare for Key Stage 4 by learning about musical features and start developing musical theatre techniques.

The Key Stage 3 course of study for Drama currently consists of learning about basic conventions that improve performance. Students use these conventions to explore themes including fairytales, bullying, resilience, and portraying characters. In Year 8 students will look at the journey to develop characters, storytelling, pantomime, and finishing by devising their own piece. In Year 9 students debate controversial issues such as Death Row and how to put these issues into performance. Students then learn about Greek Theatre using musical theatre to perform Greek Mythology, using scripts and learning how to turn text into drama and translate it to the stage.

Although we currently do not offer dance, we would be very interested in delivering this within our curriculum.

Students who choose to study Music or Performing Arts at Key Stage 4 are currently entered onto the BTEC music and BTEC Performing Arts courses. Both of these include research, writing coursework and responding to briefs. Students will be assessed in performance on stage and ability to record in music. There is also an externally set exam.

Outcomes at Key Stage 4 have been consistently strong, although we are seeking to improve these even further. Performing Arts is a popular subject within school, although the amount of students opting for this in KS4 is variable. Many students volunteer and audition for places in the school's annual musical theatre show.

The Visual and Performing Arts faculty pride ourselves on the extra-curricular offer we provide. Pre-Covid restrictions we ran trips to High Adventure, Beverley Park and the Ardeche for outdoor and adventurous activities. Upper Wharfedale perform very well in sports fixtures against much larger schools, and we have close links with Grassington festival for Art. The organisers of the festival come into school, introducing topics for our students to work on, discussing careers in the Art world and displaying the students' work in the town of Grassington. Students' work also has been chosen to be displayed during the festival itself, which creates tremendous pride amongst the students. The school choir would meet once a week and perform for our community during church services and for our local residents for whom we have provided afternoon tea and a Christmas carol service. The annual Musical Theatre production is a huge success and has gone from strength to strength. We regularly have over 50 students involved from lighting and sound to stage performance - it is a highlight of the year. The Performing Arts department also puts on a summer showcase which allows any student to perform a skill or talent of their choice in front of an audience. Our students love to be involved with our faculty; under normal circumstances lunchtimes and after school times are very busy for all members of the faculty. Students often take up the opportunity to work in the Art room during lunch times, working on personal projects or completing part of the work for the curriculum, use the sport hall to continue developing their sports skills and meet in the Performing Arts and Music room to use the practice rooms to continue with their Music or Drama.

Excellence for all


The Performing Arts Department and the Visual and Performing Arts faculty at Upper Wharfedale is highly successful and ambitious. Staff at all levels work cohesively together, sharing ideas and resources with the common aim of continuing to improve teaching and learning, which is at the heart of all that we do.

Ben Richardson

Assistant Headteacher

Director of Learning: Visual and Performing Arts

