Policy on gifted and talented in Drama

This policy describes how the drama department addresses the needs of gifted and talented students.

Identification

Students are identified as gifted and talented in drama using a variety of indicators. These may be quantitative, including data from Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs), Yellis, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and Fischer Family Trust (FFT), and from the department’s own level/grade descriptions. However, when assessing the level of talent in students of drama, qualitative judgements by teachers who know the students and their work may be of equal, or even greater, importance than quantitative indicators, even though their judgements may be subjective. Particular attention is paid to the identification of underachieving gifted and talented students.

Students who have been identified as gifted and talented are informed of their inclusion on the register of gifted and talented students in drama.

Parents/carers are informed if their child is on the register of gifted and talented students in drama. They are sent a letter informing them of the specific reasons for their child’s inclusion on the register, and an information sheet giving advice about how they can support their child’s learning.

If a student is removed from the register of gifted and talented students in drama for any reason, the student and their parents/carers are also informed.

Subject knowledge

The drama department recognises that gifted and talented students are best catered for in a culture of intellectual enquiry and of insistence on excellence; teachers in the department are therefore expected to refresh continually their collective subject knowledge and understanding.

Gifted and talented students may be resistant to teaching which they perceive to be based on limited subject knowledge; it is therefore important that teachers are open about the limits of their expertise and experience. Most importantly, the drama space is a place where gifted and talented students are expected to feel part of a dynamic of participation with the teacher and any other adults/older students who may be present in lessons.

Teaching and learning

It is recognised that the principles underlying good teaching and learning are appropriate for all students, including the gifted and talented. The department aims to set high standards for all, and to treat all students as if capable of the highest levels of achievement.

The curriculum is presented to students as a series of problems to be solved, not as a body of knowledge to be absorbed. All students are helped to understand how learning takes place in drama and what they can do to make the most of all learning opportunities.
A culture of risk-taking is of particular importance in supporting the development of gifted and talented students who do not wish to experience failure. Students are encouraged to experiment with language and form, and to be adventurous in their interpretation of texts.

Questioning is central to learning and to teaching. Drama teachers should be constantly working to develop the effectiveness, range, purpose and focus of the questions asked by themselves and by students in lessons.

In planning for differentiation, teachers are expected to take account of all abilities in the class. Activities should be challenging for all students, and all students should be encouraged to develop as independent and interdependent learners. Extension and enrichment activities should be available to all students, and should give gifted and talented students the opportunity to develop at the highest level. Gifted and talented students can occasionally present particular behavioural and emotional challenges in and out of drama lessons which form significant barriers to learning and may obscure the demonstration of particular talents. Such challenges can be preempted and offset through effective planning for differentiation and anticipation of opportunities to add further challenge to the task in hand.

Where possible, opportunities for higher level achievement are highlighted at the outset of each unit of work, since gifted and talented students may particularly benefit from being able to see how and where their lessons fit in with the big picture of their overall development within the subject.

**Assessment for learning (AfL)**

Effective assessment for learning recognises that there is no ceiling to intellectual development. Assessment for learning encourages and enables students to think and work beyond arbitrary subject limits and - of particular importance to gifted and talented students - beyond the limits of level and grade descriptors. Students should be made aware of how they can make exceptional progress.

**Teaching assistants**

Teaching assistants are valued in the department for their role in supporting the inclusion of all students, including those who are gifted and talented students, especially if they are underachieving or if they present specific behavioural or social difficulties. The dialogue between teachers and teaching assistants should specifically address the needs of gifted and talented students. Opportunities for teaching assistants to participate should be explored.

**Resources (materials and people, etc)**

The scope of departmental resources should take account of the full range of students’ attainment and potential. Gifted and talented students in drama should have access to challenging materials and texts. Students may be given opportunities to work with adults other than teachers in and out of drama lessons.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

Departmental monitoring and self-evaluation should pay specific attention to how well the needs of gifted and talented students are being met. The views of gifted and talented students as a group may be sought and considered, along with other groups.
such as girls, boys and ethnic minority students. The analysis of these views enables the department to assess how effectively it is contributing to the achievement of whole school strategies and targets for gifted and talented students, and to identify the next steps for improvement.